

## Cologne Fechtbuch (English translation)

This is a work in progress, so far it just covers the longsword section. I am still putting it online because I have no idea if or when I will be able to finish it.

The aim of this translation is just to help get grammatical and lexical problems out of the way, it is not to impose any interpretation of the actual techniques I might favour, so I try to remain as neutral as possible. In some parts, no amount of philology is going to make the text clear or unambiguous, this is especially true of the “flourish” described in paragraphs 2-3; but in the notes below I try to lay out the main difficulties explicitly so at least the various options on how to deal with this passage are on the table and open for informed disagreement between interpreters.

I do have my interpretation of stuff, but this is subject to evolution. I presented a workshop on the “flogel” which also included a take on the “flourish” part in Leyden (ILHG, Sept 2013) and again in Schönbühl (swiss-hema, Nov 2013), and if you are interested you can ask me about it, but this document I do not want to burden with my private opinions (although the “glossary” section is partly coloured by them, hopefully clearly marked as such).

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### Notes on the translation:

I aim for a translation as close to the original syntax as long as it remains comprehensible to the English speaker. If this results in awkward English syntax, so be it, the point of this is helping you to figure out the intended meaning not to provide smooth reading.

Liechtenauerian terms left untranslated:

*oberhau, mittelhau, leger, wechsel, verzucken, versetzung, durchwechsel, alber, ochs, pflug, vom tag, sprechfenster, überlaufen/unterlaufen.*

I leave those untranslated as “familiar” technical vocabulary (but I give their usual spelling over the Ripuarian one) even though the terms do not necessarily have their strictly Liechtenauerian meaning in this text. I am not consistent in this, and I do translate Liechtenauerian terms if the translation feels natural, e.g. “opening” for *blösse*, “binding” for *anbinden* (this I may change back to untranslated, as when used as a verb the translation becomes awkward, atm I retain *binde ihm an* = “bind him”), *stück* = “play” (could also be “technique”, or “sequence”), *brechen, bruch* = “counter”, *versetzen* (verb) = “displace” (but *versetzung* I left untranslated); *winde* (noun) in paragraph 22 I translate as “a rotational movement” as I do not think the Liechtenauerian technical term is intended but *wind* (verb) in paragraph 34 I give as “wind” as the meaning seems to be Liechtenauerian.

non-Liechtenauerian terms left untranslated:

*schilt, stortz, flogel, gassenhau, guldenhau*

I leave these untranslated as technical terms in this particular text because it would be misleading to just given an English meaning – these terms are used as proper names and not used descriptively. In some cases the translation would be obvious (*guldenhau*=“golden strike”, no problem), but in other cases it is tricky; so *schilt*=“shield”, but *stortz* may have a range of meanings (see glossary). Stuff like “iron gate” and “lion” I translate as the meaning is obvious, and the figurative / technical nature of the term is clear in any case.

rhyiming couplets: I do not bother trying to give a verse translation of these, but when you peruse the English translation it is important to realize you are looking at the literal translation of a rhyiming couplet (explaining weird phrasing or choice of words, either because they are “inherited” Liechtenauerian verses or simply in the interest of producing a rhyme), so I set

these in blue. The rhyming words are:

(5) *dingen/misselingen*

(6) *oben/loben*, possibly also an original *treiben/leiben* [but here rendered *drybe/lebe*]

(7) *gern/lern*

(14) *seiten/beiden/schreiten; andern/wandern*

(18) *gesicht/nicht*

(28) *hewe/frewen*

(29) *hewe/frewen; wilt/schilt; libe/vermide; verware/am faren[sic?]; gern/erlern*

(37) *lang/anfang; fass/mass*

(38) *m[ue]t/guet*

Also, be aware of apparent synonyms not evident from the translation, e.g. *hawe* (the verb, see glossary), *strych*, *slach* all mean "strike" but there might be nuances. Use the English translation to get a grasp of the sentence structure, then still consult the German text to check which lexemes were used. It is pointless trying to render these nuances in translation [etymologically the words are English *hew*, *strike*, *slay*, but obviously the semantics are different]: there is a single occurrence of *smiszen*, which is etymologically *to smite*, and as the semantics fit reasonably well I set this instead of another "hit" or "strike".

For more comments on individual terms (and on the syntax of the garbled paragraphs 2-3) see the glossary at the end.

## Notes on the manuscript

(formerly) Historisches Archiv Köln *Best. 7020, 150*. ("Best." is for "Bestand", former signature: *W\* 8 150*, where "*W\**" is for [Ferdinand Franz] Wallraf, d. 1824, left his library to the city of Cologne. nb. "Best. 7020" is not the signature, but the name of a group of >300 mss). Written in the early 16th century in or near Cologne ("Riparian" dialect); 23 foll. (of which 3 empty). It has just the Fechtbuch (no other texts, apart from a brief metallurgical recipe on fol. 1v). It was destroyed in 2009 (building collapse due to tunnel excavation beneath). Black-and-white scans are online at [historischesarchivkoeln.de](http://historischesarchivkoeln.de) [use google site search with the search term "Fechtregele"]; The Fechtbuch has Longsword, Ringen, Messer/Dagger, Javelin (Sauspiess), Staff. The longsword section is on foll. 2r-8r and can be divided into 38 paragraphs.

The manual is listed by Hils 1985 (as "non-Liechtenauerian"), but afaik its content only became accessible to "the community" in 2009; the text was edited by M. J. Bauer ([adeva.com](http://adeva.com)), along with colour reproduction of the ms. [fortunately, these scans were made for Bauer just before the ms. was destroyed] Also to 2009 dates a transcription of Slovakian origin (*Corona* of Pezinok, [gesellschaft-liechtenawers.eu](http://gesellschaft-liechtenawers.eu); it isn't clear to me if the Slovakian text is also based on Bauer or if it was transcribed from microfilm, in any case it has a (moderate) number of errors). My own (2010) transcription is here: [freywild.ch/wiki/index.php?title=Kölner\\_Fechtbuch](http://freywild.ch/wiki/index.php?title=Kölner_Fechtbuch) – this is just based on the Slovakian text, cross-checked with Bauer's text, atm it still contains some errors which I hope to weed out while completing this translation. There is a French translation, informed by Bauer's commentary, by Daniel Jaquet (2010) at [gagschola.ch](http://gagschola.ch). There is now also an English translation by James Wallhausen (2012) at [paleo.eskrimology.co.uk](http://paleo.eskrimology.co.uk), but so far it is close to unusable (many errors; it is also not informed by either Bauer's or Jaquet's translation).

## Cologne Fechtbuch, Longsword section (paragraphs 1-38)

(1) [2r] Hyr hebet sich aen der text vnd zedell ym langen sweerd Zom eersten mach gudt bossenn vnd streck dy arm fry wastu dan fichts das wapent sich.

Here begins the text and epitome in the long sword.

Firstly, take proper stance and stretch the arms freely , what you then fight will cover itself

(2) Item dy .V. hewe vernym also, den ouer hewe van der rechter achselin myt langer snyden vnd mach

bossen myt dem lincken voysz des gleichen yst auch der linck ouer hewe mach bossen myt dem rechten voysz vnd hawe myt der langen snyden durch ym deen koff ym stortz :-

Learn the five strikes as follows, the upper strike from the right shoulder with the long edge, and take proper stance with the left foot, likewise the left upper strike, take proper stance with the right foot and strike with the long edge through his head in[to?] the stortz.

(3) Item hewe veder vmb durch ym den koff yn schylt vnd vidder vmb durch ym den koff yn stortz, vnd lech das swert vff den ruck laysz esz syncken vff dy rechten syten Keer den knouff gegen den man vnd den ort hynder vsz so komstu yn den rechten myttel hewe Hewe vur ewech vmbden koff yn den lincken myttel hewe, vmd vidder vmb yn den koff yn dy rechte weschel myt der langenn snyden nydder myt der kortzen snydenn [2v] vff vmb den koff yn den lincken weschell. das synt dy .V. hewe dy eyn ycklin[g]er leren sail der anders recht fechten wil:-

Strike again through his head in[to?] the schilt and again through the head in[to] stortz, and place the sword on the [its?] back, let it descend on the right side, turn the pommel against the man and the point backward, so you come into the right mittelhau, strike forward to the head into the left mittelhau, and again to the head into the right wechsel with the long edge downward, with the short edge upward to the head into the left wechsel. These are the five strikes which every man who wants to fight properly in other respects has to learn [first].

(4) Item hyr volgt nach der text vnd gloysz dar na man hewen sael.

Here follows the text and gloss according to which one should strike. [diagram]

(5) Item nach deser figuren sall man hewen, alle hewe durch das gesicht mit gestreckten armen vnd mach gut bossen yn allen dyngen so mach dir nyt misseligen.

According to this figure one should strike, all strikes through the face with stretched arms, **and take proper stance in all things / so nothing may go wrong for you.**

(6) [3r] Item hyr nach volget der zedell des langenn swerts wastu starck wils dryben das fecht myt gantzem lebe beyd vnden vnd obenn dy zwei dyng dryb starck das will ich lobenn.

Here follows the epitome of the long sword: **that which you want to execute with strength, fight with your whole body, both above and below / these two things perform strongly, that I will praise.**  
[drawing of a knot(?)]

(7) Item erschrecks du gern keyn fechten nummer enlern, Wer fechten will der sall haben eyn hertz alsz eyn lewe vnd sall al so scharff seen alsz eyn valck vnd sall also behende syn alsz eyn vogel.

**If you frighten easily, don't learn no fighting** [Liechtenauer's verse with a double negation]  
He who wants to fight should have a heart as a lion and he should see even as sharply as a falcon and he should be as swift as a bird.

(8) Item dy vyer bloyß ym swerd vernym also, dy zwo ouer bloyß am haupt dy ander zwo vnder bloyß zo beyden syten vnder deen armen.

Learn the four openings in [the discipline of] swordfighting as follows, the two upper openings on the head, the two lower openings on either side under the arms.

**(9)** Item dy veyr leger vernym al so. lege das swert vff dy rechte aschel vnd setz dyn liff yn wage myt guden bossen des glychen yst auch der lynck ouerleger stell den rechten voyß vur.

Learn the four leger as follows, place the sword on the right shoulder and put your body into the balance with proper stance; likewise for the left upper leger, set the right foot forward.

**(10)** Das rechte vnder leger v[er]nym also stell den lyncken voyß vur vnd lege das swert myt dem geholtz [3v] vff das rechte bey den ort dem man gegent das gesicht, des glich yst auch der linck vnder leger keer das swert denn ort dem mann gegen das gesicht.

Learn the right lower leger as follows, place the left foot forward and place the sword with the hilt on the right leg with the point to the man's face, likewise for the left lower leger, turn the sword with the point towards the man's face.

**(11)** Item dy vyer an bynde ym swert vernym also bynde ym an myt der kortzen snyden an dy lincken ouer bloyß trydt vort vnd byndt ym myt der langen snyden an dy rechte ouer bloyß tryt vort vnd slage ym nach der lyncken vnder bloyß myt der kortzen snyden vnd tryt vort vnd slage ym nach der rechten vnder bloyß myt der flech.

Learn the four bindings as follows, bind him with the short edge on the left upper opening, step to, bind him with the long edge on the right upper opening, step to, and strike him to the left lower opening with the short edge and step to, and strike him to the right lower opening with the flat.

**(12)** Item eyn stuck heyst der flogel bynde ym ouen mit der kortzen snyden vnd slage ym nach der rechten vnder bloyß mit langer snyden. vnd bald myt der kortzen nach der ouer bloyß vnd hewe durch van dem man yn das lyncke vnder leger.

A play is called the flogel: bind him above with the short edge and strike him towards the right lower opening with the long edge and immediately with the short edge to the upper opening and strike through from the man into the left lower leger.

**(13)** Item eyn stuck heyst das verzocking. do als wul-[4r]stu ym recht anbinden vnd bynd ym lincks an vnd do als wulstu ym lyncks an bynden vnd bynde ym rechts an vnd hewe dich starck myt der langen snyden van dem man yn den lyncken vnder leger so bist tu nicht bloyß zo vinden.

A play is called the verzuckung: do as if you would bind him on the right and bind him on the left, and do as if you would bind him on the left and bind him on the right, and strongly strike with the long edge from the man into the left lower leger, so you are not found exposed.

**(14)** Item eyn stuck heyst der durch weschell. fry van beyden syten so machs du des mans woel beyden vnd hewe myt schryden fry van eyner bloyß zoder andern so machs frolich wandern.

A play is called the durchwechsel:

Freely from both sides / so you may well [bind] the man / and strike with stepping / freely from one opening to the other / you may pass serenely

[c.f. the same rhyme in (59)]

(15) Item eyn stuck dy yser porte geheysen. lege dich yn das lynck vnder leger vnd layß den ort synckenn vff dy erde vnd hewe den flogell vnd strych vß der rechten syten vur yn schylt vnd vß der lincker syten widder vff yn stortz so komstu vß der ysern porten yn den gassenhewe.

A play is called the iron gate: place yourself in the left lower leger and let the point descend to the earth, and strike the fogel, and strike from the right side forward into the schilt and from the left side again upward into the stortz, thus you come from the iron gate into the gassenhau.

[c.f. (64) in the messer section:

*Item eyn stuck heyst der gaßen hewer sychstu eyn ader zween vur dyr staen so hew fry vß der rechter syten vnd frysch vff vß der lincken als fry van eym ynden andern so moyßen sy wychen ader verdenn geslagen:-*

“A play is called the gassenhauer [“alley-striker”]: if you see one or two standing against you, so strike freely from the right side and freshly upward from the left, freely from one to the other, so they must retreat or are hit.”

To interpret “*gassenhau*“ also adduce the description from Wittenwiler (a ms. which may be just slightly older than this one and has surprising parallels)]

(16) Item eyn stuck heyst der pluck. den pluck vernym [4v] also wendt vß dem rechten leger yn den lincken vnd vß dem lincken widder yn rechten so sichstu was der man vff dych dryben will ader stycht her du kanß ym brechenn.

A play is called the plough: learn the plough as follows, turn from the right leger into the left, and from the left again into the right, so you see what the man would perform against you, or if he thrusts you may counter him. [*drawing of a bagpipe*]

[cf. 71, 75 in the messer section. The *p* of the first *pluck* is developed into the “knot” drawing also seen in paragraphs 6 and 21]

(17) Item eyn stuck heyst der olber. den olber vernym also kere den ort yn dy lucht vnd halt den schilt vur den koff was der man slecht van dach das kan man dar myt brechenn:-

A play is called the alber: learn the alber as follows, turn the point into the air and hold the shield in front of the head; what the man strikes vom tag [viz., from above] you may counter with this.

[nb. I am unsure if *schilt* is the technical term used before, or if it is here meant to refer to a part of the sword, presently the translation suggests the latter. It is tempting to attribute significance to the spelling variant *schilt* vs. *schylt*, but this seems tenuous; cf. a second occurrence of *schilt* in the Lichtenauerian verse in paragraph 29]

(18) Item eyn stuck heyst der schilder. den schilder vernym also schyl lincks vnd slach rechts, vnd schil rechst vnd slach lincks. so veruerß du den man mit dem gesicht des frewet her sych nycht.

A play is called the schilder [sic]: the schilder learn as follows: squint to the left and strike right, and squint to the right and strike left, **so you confuse the man with your glance / in this he does not rejoice.**

[*schilder* should be *schilher* “squinter” but the manuscript reading (twice) is clear. This may

represent a mechanical scribal error, and might indicate that the text was copied from an older manuscript; at least we should be on the lookout for other candidates for mechanical transcription errors.]

**(19)** Item eyn stuck heyst der scheller. den scheller vernym also schelle eyn mael. Zwei. dry. vidder syne clyngen so machst du yn bloyß vynden:-

A play is called the scheller ["bell-ringer"]; the scheller learn as follows, ring once; twice; thrice; against his blade so you may find him exposed [*drawing of a drum*]

**(20)** Item eyn stuck heyst der verkerer. den verkerer [5r] vernym also lech dyn swerd vuer den koff. layß den ort hinder nidder sincken vnd kerre yn vff dy recht syten vnd vff dy lincken flucks van eyner zo der ander so kan er sich vur dyr nyt huden so machs du yn gare balde bloyß vynden so yst der verkerer gerecht:-

A play is called the verkerer ["turner, inverter"]: the verkerer learn as follows: place your sword in front of the head, let the point descend backward and turn it towards the right side and to the left, rapidly from one side to the other, so he may not protect himself against you, so you may find him exposed very soon, thus the proper verkerer.

**(21)** Item eyn stuck heyst der ocks. den ocksen vernym also sets den knouff an dy brust den ort dem man gegen dem gesycht vnd drynge starck zo ym vnd hewe yn den flogel vnd flucks vß der rechten syten yn schyll[*sic*] slach vß dem schylyt nach der lincken ouerbloyß vnd swyndt nach der rechten so muß er versetzen ader wyrt hart geslagenn:-

a play is called the ochs: the ochs learn as follows, set the pommel on the chest with the point towards the man's face and drive strongly towards him and strike the flogel, and rapidly from the right side into the \*schilt [ms. has *schyll*], strike from the schilt towards the left upper opening and swiftly towards the right, so he has to displace or he is hit hard. [*drawing of a knot(?)*]

[cf. 69, 74 in the messer section; *ocks* is clearly from Liechtenauer *ochs* "ox", but note that in (69) it seems to be associated with the unrelated but homophone *ockßen* "arm-pit":

*Item eyn stuck vß dem ocksen stoß den ort dem man starck gegen das gesycht vnd slach yn mit dem flogell hew vnder syn rechten ockßen*

a play from the ocks: thrust the point towards the man's face and strike him with the flogelhau under his right arm-pit.]

**(22)** Item eyn stuck heyst der sprech vincer. das vernym also mach eyn winde vur dem kopf das dyn armen krutzwerß synt so sychstu dar zußen vß was der man dryben will vnd gayn gare grosse streych dar nach [5v] vß dem sprech vincer du kanst yn zo beyden syten slagen lyncks ader rechts:-

A play is called the sprechfenster, that learn as follows, do a rotational movement [*ein winden*] in front of the head so that your arms are crossed, so you may look out from between them [to see] what the man would perform, and after this there proceed very great strikes from the sprechfenster, you may hit him on either side, left or right.

**(23)** Item eyn broch komt vß der sprech vincer. so dyr eyn man starck zom kopf sleget valle ym mit der kortzen snyden vuer syn clynge stoysz ym syn swerte weck so entbloyß du ym syn kopf:-

A counter follows from the sprechfenster: as a man would strike you strongly towards the head, fall with the short edge on his blade, push his sword away, so you expose his head.

(24) Item eyn stuck heyst der gulden hewe. do alß wolstu ym rechst an bynden vnd bynd ym lincks an slage ym zween ader dry slege nach en andern nach siner rechten ouer bloyß so yst der gulden hewe recht:-

A play is called the guldenhau ["golden strike"]: do as if you would bind on his right and bind on his left, do two or three consecutive strikes towards his right upper opening, thus the proper guldenhau.  
[c.f. (73) in the messer section]

(25) Item eyn broch ouer den gulden hewe. Wan du suchs das eyner den gulden hewe bruchen wyll so slage ym mit der kortzen snyden an syn linck ouer bloiß was er dan slecht das kanstu versetzen vnd tryt zo ruck vnd hewe dich mit dem gulden [6r] hewe van dem man durch yn sturtz vnd lechs dich in das linck vnder leger so bistu widder gewapent:-

A counter against the guldenhau: when you perceive that one would use the guldenhau, strike with the short edge towards his left upper opening; what he strikes then you may displace, and step backward and strike through with the goldenhau from the man into the stortz, adn place yourself in the left lower leger, so you are again covered.

(26) Item eyn stuck heyst der dryangel. den dryangel vernym also lech dich in dy rechte weschel vnd schrydt myt dym rechten voyß vff syn rechte syt vnd stoß mit der kortzer snyden ym syn swert vff, vnd springe myt dynem lincken voyß hynder yn so vynstu yn bloyß am kopf:-

A play is called the triangle, the triangle learn as follows, place yourself in the right wechsel and step with the right foot towards his right side and with the short edge push his sword upward, and jump with your left foot behind him so you find him exposed on the head.

(27) Item eyn broch vuer den dryangel. wan du sychs das eyner den dryangel bruchen will so lege yn den schylt vnd tryt zo ruck vnd versetz em myt der gulden versetzynge slage ym nach der neyster vuer bloyß:-

A counter against the triangle, when you see that he would use the triangle, place [yourself] in the schilt and step backward and displace him with the gulden versetzung ["the golden displacement"], and strike towards his nearest opening.

(28) Item das krom anbyndung. dy krom anbyndung vernym [6v] also do wy du wuls ym recht anbynden vnd byndt ym myt der langen snyden lincks an vnd zock wy du ym wuls rechts anbynden vnd blyue an der seluer syten slage yn dy recht ouer bloyß mit der kortzen snyden swyn[dt] nach der lyncken vnd hewe dich aff myt der gulden hewe des mach er sich nyt frewen:-

The crooked binding: the crooked binding learn as follows, do as if you would bind him on the right and bind him with the long edge on the left and twitch as if you would bind him on the right and remain on the same side, strike to the right upper opening with the short edge, swiftly towards the left, and [strike downward with the golden strike / in this he may not rejoice.](#)

(29) Item wer sycht vff eyens ander hewe der darff syn konst nyt frewen, hewe ouen aff was du wylt, sich kompt keyn wescheler yn den schilt zo koff zo lybe dy zuck nyt vermyde ych sach dyr verware schoe[n kyn] man am faren. erschrecks du gerne keyn fechten nummer erlernen. Es yst keyn besser versetzung dan dy man myt den streyche duy.

He who watches another's strikes / may not rejoice in the art / strike from above downward as you like, no wechler touches the shield / to the head and the body / do not leave out the twitching / I tell you truly / [...] no man [...] / if you frighten easily / don't learn no fighting / there is no better versetzung than those one does by striking.

[this is garbled Liechtenauerian verse, hard to say if the deviations are actual re-interpretations or just garbled reception]

(30) Item eyn swert nemen. das vernym also byndt dem mann ouen an vnd gryff myt der lyncker hant [7r] vszen vff syn arm mit verkerter hant yn syn gehultz vnd ruck nach dyr so nymstu ym das swert:-

A sword-taking [disarm], this learn as follows, bind the man above and with the left hand grip his arm from the outside, with upturned hand in his hilt, pull towards you, so you take his sword.

(31) Item auer eyn swert nemen. das vernym also do als wuls du ym starck anbynden vnd valle ym myt dynem gehults vuer syn clynge vnd myt der lincker hant an syn gehultz ruck starck zo dyr so nymstu ym das swert vnd steyst ym kampff:-

Another sword-taking, this learn as follows, do as if you would bind him strongly and fall with your hilt in front of his blade and with the left hand on his hilt, pull strongly towards you, so you take his sword and you stand in the duelling-position

[*kampf* means "duel", as opposed to *fechten*="fighting", with the intended meaning "armoured combat", so presumably "stehst im kampf" means "you find yourself in the guard position assumed in armoured combat", in other words, half-sword]

(32) Item eyn fry stuck wy man den man werffen sall ym swerdt. das vernym also byndt ym starck ouen an vnd gryff yn mit dyner lincken hant an syn rechten elenbogen stoyß ym starck vff an syn gesicht so wyrff du yn vff syn ruck:-

A free play how one may throw the man in swordfighting, this learn as follows, bind him strongly above and grip him with your left hand on his right elbow, strongly push him upward towards his face, thus you throw him on his back.

(33) Item wan du eyn man vff den koff wyls smißen. do wy du ym starck wuls anbynden vnd gryff mit dyner lincker hant zußenn syn gehultz vnd ruck [7v] starck nach dyr so machs du ym den koff bloyß:-

If you want to smite a man on the head, do as if you would bind him strongly and grip with your left hand between his hilt and pull strongly towards you so you expose his head.

[*zußen*=*zwischen* "in between", see (22); of course "in between his hilt" on its own does not make obvious sense, but perhaps the intended meaning is "on the hilt in between his hands"]

(34) Item eyn ouer lauff ym swerdt wy du eyn man werffen sals. das vernym also do we du ym wuls recht an bynden vnd byndt ym kromß an wynd myt der kortzen snyden vff syn klyngen gryff mit dyner lincker hant an dyn clynge lege ym das swertan den hals vnd tryt mit dynem lincken voyß hynder synen lincken, ruck yn starck nach dir so moyß er vallen:-

An überlaufen in swordfighting, how you should throw a man, this learn as follows, do as if you would bind him on the right and bind him crookedly [cf. 28] and wind with the short edge on his blade, grip your blade with your left hand, place the sword on his throat and step with your left foot behind his left, pull strongly towards you, so he must fall.

(35) Item eyn vnder lauff ym swerdt. das vernym also do wy du ym wuls hoch an bynden vnd stoefs myt krutz ym syn gehultz ouer sych, so gryffsdu yn da mit ader wa du yn geuaßen machs:-

An unterlaufen in swordfighting, this learn as follows, do as if you would bind him high and with your cross push his hilt upward, so grip him with that, or wherever you may get hold of him.

(36) b Item swech vnd sterck vernym also oben by dem ort yst dy swech vnd der myttel deyl der cly[n]gen yst dy sterck das sulles du myt der kortzen snyden seer dryuenn:-

(37) [8r] a Item swech vnd starck kortz vnd langk yst aller konst eyn anphanck dar vff dicht vast alle konst halt lengen mayß:-

(b) weak and strong learn as follows, near the point is the weak, and the middle part of the blade is the strong, this you should [perform energetically] with the short edge

(a) [weak and strong, short and long / this is the beginning of all art / on this you may rely / all art has length \[and\] measure](#)

[the letters (a) and (b) might indicate that the paragraphs should be read in reverse order; (37) is a Liechtenauerian verse and (38) is a gloss on it. “perform energetically” needs improvement; the reading *dryuenn* at the bottom of the page is suspect; the translation of *swech und sterck* would properly be “weakness and strength [of the blade]”, I am just using “the weak” and “the strong” because these have become familiar in “Liechtenauerian English”]

(38) Item eyn stuck heyst der leue. den vernym also setz dych yn dy wage vnd mit dynem koff nyt zo hoych hewe vß vyer orten myt stercken so hastu des leuen moyt vnd byst vur ander zween ym stryt guett.

A play is called the lion, this learn as follows, set yourself in the balance, and with your head not too high strike from four points[or “places”?] with strength, [thus you have the lion's courage / and may count for two others in battle.](#)

[it isn't clear if the claim is just a hyperbolic “you will fight as well as two men”, or if the intention is specifically that “you will be able to fight against two opponents”]

## Glossary

**hewe:** [“strike”] In understand that the English translation as “cut” is the most appropriate, and “strike” may seem awkward (in modern English the noun “a strike” evokes bowling or baseball, or at least a blow with a blunt object). It's fine to use “cut” for *hau*, but you need to remain aware that there is also the contrasting term *schnitt*. so your translation will be in trouble if you encounter a passage where the two occur together.

**possen:** a difficult word. It does indeed mean “jest” etc. from the late 16th c., but not before. Its earliest meaning seems to be “figure, form”, and only later “grotesque, carnevalesque figure” and corresponding behaviour. In our text it means “proper form, stance” (Bauer is aware of this). Grimm's dictionary for this word cites none other than Paulus Hector Mair as an early authority for this word (in the title of his 1550 work on the history of Augsburg): *eines ieden geschlechtes und der verordenten personen schilt, helm und zeichen in künstliche possen [...] gestellt*. In our sense of “proper form”:  
Fischart *Bienenkorb* (1588): *die römisch kirch stellt die h. schrift erst in bossen* . “the Roman Church first ordered the Holy Scripture into *proper form*”.

**umb:** means “around”, but this is a preposition with lots of syntactical applications, so you cannot just blindly translate “around”. In the “five strikes” there are two possibilities, and either one isn't feasible without assuming scribal errors. It's (1) *wider umb* meaning simply “again” or “back” vs. (2) *haw umb* “strike around”. For (1) c.f. *Wir seyen all von aschen komen, und werden auch das selb wider umb* “...that we all came from ashes and will again turn back into the same” and *wider umb reyse* = “the journey back home”.  
Now consider: *hewe veder vmb durch ym den kopf*. This may mean (1) “strike again through the face” or “strike again around through his face”. The reading of *hawe umb* “strike around” is not necessary, or indeed contrived. But then there is *Hewe vur ewech vmb den kopf* (no *veder*), translating “strike forward [*vur ewech* = “vorne weg”, not “für ewig”!] around the head”. It is difficult to reconcile striking “forward” and at the same time “around the head”, assuming your own head is intended. More likely, in *vmb den kopf* it is now understood that this is about *his* head (face) that is to be struck, so “strike forward toward [his] head”, immediately followed by *vnd vidder vmb yn den kopf* “and again into the [his] head”. It is almost inconceivable that the text is mentioning *his* head, sometimes without the 3rd person pronoun, and keeps using *umb* to say “strike again”, and only in one instance in *hewe vmb den kopf* the *umb* now suddenly means “around” and *kopf* now means your own head! My conclusion is that this description of “basic strikes” does not involve rotating movements “around the head”, it's simply about basic strikes executed to the face as shown in the diagram, but considerably messed up by syntactic accidents. But the text is so garbled that others may easily come to different conclusions.

**leger:** I don't have a good English translation, it expresses a “resting position” into which the sword is being “laid”, in the lower *leger* explicitly resting on the thigh (what we call “plough”), the upper ones on the shoulder (what we call “vom tag”, **not** “ochs”). Nb. the ms. does have the terms “ochs” and “pflug”, in what is clearly “Lichtenauerian influence”, but they have dropped out of the “Leger/Huten” system, so to speak, and become terms for special actions.

**schilt:** [“shield”], here interpreted as a left guard, may be JL's left ochs, may also be lower, the defining feature is assumed to be the mostly extended (as opposed to the leger) and uncrossed (as opposed to the stortz) arms.

**stortz:** this word may indeed mean “stumble, fall; drop, plunge” [modern *Sturz*], but it has the original sense of “to turn over, invert” (as in “tumble down head first”), and in this period it also means “lid, cover”. Since it parallels “shield”, this is the most likely sense: “a shield position, but upside down, a 'lid' or 'cover'”, i.e. with the hands crossed, i.e. on the right side. I know there is a *sturtzhow* even in 1467 Talhoffer but note the consistent absence of the *hau* element here. This begs the question, is the *sturzhau* so called not because it “plunges” but because it originates from a *sturz* position?

**flogel**: this is clearly the same term as the “flugel[hau]” in other mss. but it does not necessarily describe the same action. It apparently involves a “tempo-and-a-half” attack to two opposite openings, one with the long and the other with the short edge. It is not called a *hau* in this passage, as it apparently is a sequence of actions (as opposed to a single *hau*), but further down, in the messer portion, a *flogel hew* occurs five times. E.g. (67) *eyn stuck heyst das retlyn bruch den flogellhawe iij mayl an ey m stuck* “a technique is called the little wheel: use the *flogelhau* four times in sequence”.

The word *vflügel* “wing” is medieval (13th c.); the form *vlogel* is Low Franconian (Middle Dutch), and also consistent with Riparian (Reimchronik der Stadt Cöln 3860f. *Coelne als eme was gesaicht / vnder sine vlogel hain braicht*). Speculation: clearly interpreted as meaning “wing” later on, it may have been *flegel* “flail” at first. Now *flegel* “flail” had an Upper German variant *flögel* (but not *flogel*) This would not be the only example of fencing terminology becoming messed up because it traversed dialectal boundaries (c.f. *vom Dach* vs. *vom Tag*). German fencing develops primarily in Upper German territory (Augsburg, Nuremberg etc.) but with significant reception in Middle German lands, and in the case of Cologne even reaching the boundary to Low German. A *flegel-flügel* confusion is unprovable speculation, but it serves as a caveat not to base too much of our interpretation of the *flogel* on its supposedly being somehow “wing-like”.

By the mid 1500s, the *flügelhaw* had become not just an integral part of the post-Lichtenauerian system, it was considered one of the basic attacks first taught to a beginner, i.e. alongside *Oberhau*, *Unterhau* and *Mittelhau*.

*er sprach, der kunst zu eim eingang  
lert man ober und unterhaw,  
mittel und flügelhaw genaw [...]*

Hans Sachs, *Fechtspruch* (1545)

ed. Keller 1870 [books.google.ch/books?id=rxQ3AAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA209](https://books.google.ch/books?id=rxQ3AAAAAMAAJ&pg=RA1-PA209)

This both compares and contrasts with our text, where *oberhau*, *unterhau* (presumably, in my interpretation, but not so called!) and *mittelhau* are discussed as the basics, and *flogel* as an important technique further down.

***gassenhewe***: also in Wittenwiler. In both mss. a combination of two *unterhaus*, considered a special technique (indicating that the *unterhau* is now[?] rare and reserved for special tricks). It's reminiscent of the *drei häue* thing of the “other masters” section in GNM3227a.

***mittelhewe***: one of the basic strikes, but note how it is not used one single time in the ms. after the basic introduction. So what is a *mittelhau* for? Meyer uses it to cover a retreat or to distract. It may be in origin synonymous the “*zwerchhau*” (before the latter was raised to special status of a “*verborgener hau*”) as “any horizontal cut”, which would explain the term's scarcity in the Lichtenauer tradition. Also c.f. Meyer “*ein uberzwerchen Mittelhau*” (nb. *uberzwerch* is not “more-than-zwerch”. For Meyer, *mittel*, *zwerch* and *uberzwerch* are one and the same, meaning “across, traversing, at an angle”).