

16th Century Sword and Cape from Italian Masters

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Specific Masters

Year	Author	City Tradition	Details
1531	Manciolino, Antonio	Bologna	NFF, DFF, HC
1536-39	Altoni, Francesco (di Sandro)	Florence	DFF, HC, TC
1536	Marozzo, Achille	Bologna	NFF, DFF, HC, TC
1545-50	Altoni, Francesco (di Sandro)	Florence	DFF, HC, TC
1553	Agrippa, Camillo	Rome	DFF, FT, HC, TC
1568-59	Marozzo, Achille	Bologna	NFF, DFF, HC, TC
1570	Digrassi, Giacomo	Venice (?)	NFF, DFF, HC, TC
1572	Dall'Aggochie, Giovanni	Bologna	NFF, DFF, HC, TC
1575-1600	Altoni, Francesco (di Sandro)	Florence	DFF, HC, TC
1580-90	Cavalcabo, Heironymus	Rome	DFF, HC

- NFF – Non-dominant Foot Forward
- DFF – Dominant Foot Forward
- FT – Feet Together
- HC – Held Cloak
- TC – Thrown Cloak

CONTEXT IS CRITICAL:

Know what the rules allow or prohibit according to the context of what you are doing.

Throwing a cape/cloak at an opponent is **prohibited in SCA combat sports**.

Throwing a cape/cloak at an opponent is **allowed in a non-competitive practice** as part of the Historic Combat Studies A&S program.

- <https://www.sca.org/historic-combat-guide/>
- https://www.sca.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/AandS_martial_public_proposal.pdf

Historical Sources and Modern Translations/Interpretations

https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Masters#16th_Century_Masters

Altoni, Francesco (di Sandro) [https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Francesco di Sandro Altoni](https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Francesco_di_Sandro_Altoni)

- *The Monomachi by Francesco Altoni*, translated and introduction by Stephen Fratus, 2024, Art of Arms Publishing, ISBN 9-798333-149688, pp.79-82

Agrippa, Camillo [https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Camillo Agrippa](https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Camillo_Agrippa)

- *Fencing: A Renaissance Treatise by Camilla Agrippa*, Edited by Ken Mondschein, 2009, Italica Press, ISBN 978-1-59910-129-3, pp.84-87

Cavalcabo, Giralomo [https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Girolamo Cavalcabo](https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Girolamo_Cavalcabo)

- *Treatise or Instruction for Fencing: by Hieronymus Cavalcabo of Bologna and Patenostrier of Rome*, translated by Rob Runacres, 2015, renaissanceswordclub.com, No ISBN listed, one page, no page numbers

Dall' Aggocchie, Giovanni [https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Giovanni dall'Agocchie](https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Giovanni_dall%27Agocchie)

- *The Art of Defense: On Fencing, the Joust, and Battle Formation by Giovanni dall' Aggocchie*, translated by W. Jherek Swanger, 2018, Lulu.com, No ISBN listed, pp. 60-73
- The Complete Dall Agocchie Cheat Sheet by Reiner van Noort, 2016, Lulu.com, No ISBN listed, 15 pages on sword and cape, no page numbers

Di Grassi, Giacomo [https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Giacomo di Grassi](https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Giacomo_di_Grassi)

- *The Way to Employ Arms with Certainty Both for Offense and Defense by Giacomo di Grassi*, Newly translated from the Italian, and notated, by W. Jherek Swanger (2013), Raleigh, North Carolina, Lulu.com, No ISBN listed, pp.38-43, 83-85

Fallopia, Alonso [https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Alfonso Fallopia](https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Alfonso_Fallopia)

- *New and Brief Method of Fencing by Alfonso Fallopia of Lucca*, translated by Anna M Galea, 2025, no publisher listed, purchased through Amazon.com, ISBN 9798308488392, pp. 42-47

Manciolino, Antonio [https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Antonio Manciolino](https://www.wiktenauer.com/wiki/Antonio_Manciolino)

- *The Complete Renaissance Swordsman: A Guide to the Use of All Manner of Weapons—Antonio Manciolino's Opera Nova (1531)* translated and with a New Illustrated Introduction by Tom Leoni, 2010, Freelance Academy Press, ISBN 978-0-9825911-3-0, pp.132-135

- *How to Fight and Defend with Arms of Every Kind* by Antonio Manciolino, translated by W. Jherek Swanger, 2021, No ISBN listed, pp.119-126

Marozzo, Achille https://wiktenauer.com/wiki/Achille_Marozzo

- *The Duel, or The Flower of Arms for Single Combat, Both Offensive and Defensive* by Achille Marozzo, translated by W. Jherek Swanger, 2018, Lulu.com, No ISBN listed, pp.126-130

YouTube Channels and Websites

- Chicago Swordplay Guild <https://www.youtube.com/user/ChicagoSwordplay>
<https://www.chicagoswordplayguild.com/>
- Saint Louis School of Arms <https://www.youtube.com/@KenHardingswordplay> and <https://swordclass.org/>
- Academie Duello - <https://www.youtube.com/@AcademieDuello> and <https://www.academieduello.com/courses/at-home-learning/>
- Ilkka Outto <https://www.youtube.com/user/celgus> and <https://marozzo.com/>

General Themes of 16th C. Sword and Cape

- Assumes you have previously gained a solid foundation in single sword, then sword & dagger.
- Your sword point generally remains toward the opponent, regardless of your sword hand location or orientation.
- You are using the sword in your dominant hand and the cloak in the non-dominant hand.
 - Agrippa strongly advises using cloak with dagger in cloak hand.
 - Marozzo teaches large dagger and cloak separately from sword and cloak.
- Thrust defense – sword as primary, cloak can support as would a dagger.
 - Cloaked hand can beat opponent's sword in same tempo as your sword parries.
- Cut defense – cloak can defend body or leg alone, but is better with sword; defend head with both (but minimize time of blocked vision)
 - If you are Dominant Foot Forward (DFF), after you parry, pass to Non-dominant Foot Forward (NDF) and use cloak hand to smother opponent's sword at hilt.

Specific Master: Alfonso Falloppia

These drills are taken from Anna M Galeas's translation of Falloppia's *New and Brief Method of Fencing*.

- *New and Brief Method of Fencing by Alfonso Falloppia of Lucca*, translated by Anna M Galea, 2025, no publisher listed, purchased through Amazon.com, ISBN 9798308488392, pp. 42-47

Basic Stance

Falloppia's treatise does not include illustrations; however, Marozzo's illustration of the guard called *coda lunga alta*, shown here, is very similar. Falloppia gives detailed instructions on how to go from wearing the cape to being ready to defend yourself. That's not necessary for SCA combat sports, so we'll skip that, as we have only 45 minutes for class.



Attack and Defense

Vocabulary

- Forte – the “strong” portion of the blade near the hilt
- Imbrocatta – a level or descending thrust with your hand higher than (or at the level of) your sword’s point
- Mandritto – a descending forehand cut, going from dominant side to non-dominant side

Text

If an enemy strikes a cut at your head, either forward or reversed, I want you to parry with the forte of your sword, meeting them in that time at their face. Take a long step with your right foot, resolving forward.

If they strike at your leg while you are in this reversed form, raise your sword fist a little and deliver a perpendicular imbrocatta., bringing your right leg forward with your arm extended. Take care to void your body a little, because you will want to enter with less danger, but not much.

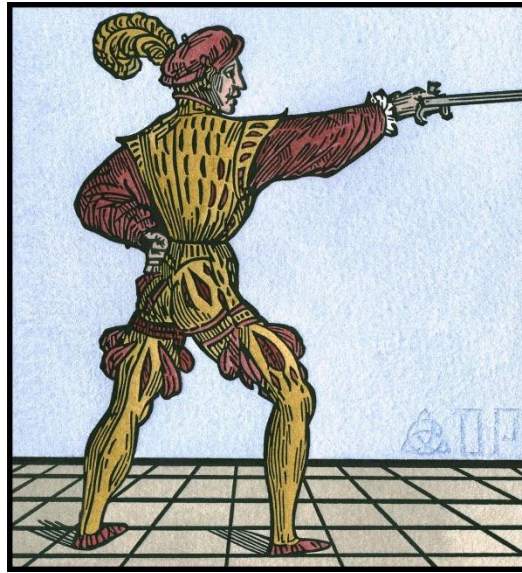
If they strike a mandritto at your leg, I want you to defend that same part with the part of the cape which hangs down, and turn your fist to strike a thrust in the middle of their chest, where you will find the most exposed part. Take care not to cover your face with the arm of the cape because an enemy can catch you with a thrust to your torso, or strike a cut to your left, while you cover your face.

And well if they cut to your head, forward or reversed. I don’t want you to parry with your cape, but that you strike them in the face, governing them with the forte of your sword, as I have told you above.

If the enemy does these, you can follow with a wound, making decisions step by step, being aware of what your enemy can do.

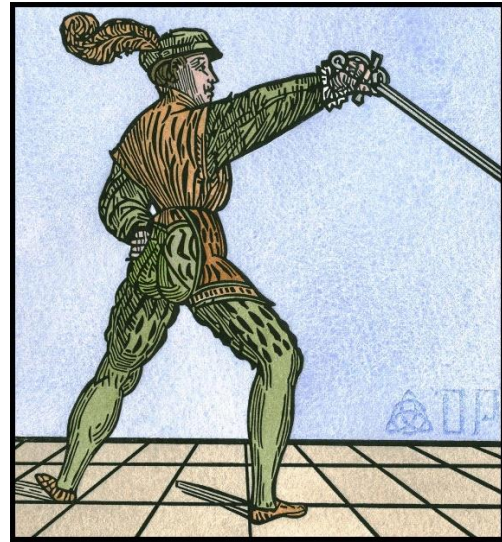
Technique #1

If an enemy strikes a cut at your head, either forward or reversed, I want you to parry with the forte of your sword, meeting them in that time at their face. Take a long step with your right foot, resolving forward.



Technique #2

If they strike at your leg while you are in this reversed form, raise your sword fist a little and deliver a perpendicular imbrocatta., bringing your right leg forward with your arm extended. Take care to void your body a little, because you will want to enter with less danger, but not much.



Technique #3

If they strike a mandritto at your leg, I want you to defend that same part with the part of the cape which hangs down, and turn your fist to strike a thrust in the middle of their chest, where you will find the most exposed part. Take care not to cover your face with the arm of the cape because an enemy can catch you with a thrust to your torso, or strike a cut to your left, while you cover your face.



Note: Don't lean as far forward as Fabris shows. Ideally, your cloak should be on the inside of their sword, not the outside (as Fabris shows here).

Questions?

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