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The collection of Lew the Jew in the lineage of German Fight Books corpus

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I. INTRODUCTION

The collection of teachings compiled by Lew the Jew is one of the main keys to understand the lineage of the different teachings, according to the different known sources at hand for the German corpus. Several similar collections (containing textual teachings without illustrations) are known¹:

Peter von Danzig in 1452 (Roma, Biblioteca dell'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei e Corsiniana, 44 A 8): A contemporary collection which compiled some of the same texts -, but with different authorial attribution -, and glossed the same verses.² (hereafter referred to as Rome version)

Hans von Speyer in 1491 (Salzburg, Universitätsbibliothek, M.I.29): A later collection that is mainly copied from the collection of Lew the Jew, but with other additional teachings.³ (hereafter referred to as Salzburg version)

* Acknowledgment: This research note is part of the work for a forthcoming study by Dierk Hagedorn (collection Bibliothek der Historischen Kampfkünste, by VS-Books). I thank him for his revisions and help. I also thank Rainer Welle for his revisions on the table of content and relevant advices.

¹ To this list might be added the miscellanies containing similar collections amongst other type of material, like the anonymous Hausbuch from 1389 (Nürnberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum, 3227a), or the one authored by Paulus Kal (Wien, Kunsthistorisches Museum, KK5126, hereafter referred to as Vienna version). The collections or miscellanies containing illustrated parts might also be added to get the full picture, like the 1443-1448 miscellany by Hans Talhoffer (Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, Chart. A 558, hereafter referred to as Gotha version), the anonymously authored book from Glasgow, 1508 (Glasgow, Glasgow Museums, E.1939.65.341, hereafter referred to as Glasgow version), the "Goliath", 1510-20 (Kraków, Biblioteka Jagiellońska, Germ. Quart. 2020, hereafter referred to as Krakow version) or the Fight Book ascribed to Albrecht Dürer, 1512(?) (Wien, Albertina, 26-232). This list can be expanded in the later course of the 16th c.

² Wierschin, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des Fechtens*, ms 31; Hils, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des langen Schwertes*, ms 42; Leng, *Fecht- und Ringbücher*, ms 9.9; edition and translation by Hagedorn, *Peter von Danzig: Transkription und Übersetzung*.

³ Wierschin, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des Fechtens*, ms 32; Hils, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des langen Schwertes*, ms 43; no edition or translation to date.

Sigmund Ringeck 1504-1519 (Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek, C.487): A copy of a lost contemporary collection to Lew the Jew collection, which compiled some of the same text - but with different authorial attribution -, and glossed the same verses.⁴ (hereafter referred to as Dresden version)

A careful study of the collection of Lew is therefore a milestone for research purpose on the German Fight Book corpus, since on the one hand it is one of the earliest source, on the other hand it (or its unknown copies) may have served as a model for later collections. A philological study of different texts is indeed leading the researcher and the practitioner to a better understanding of the circulation of the martial knowledge, as well as the Fight Books as objects, may they be collections for mnemonic purpose, theoretical media for technical discourse amongst specialists, notes for personal use, didactic texts or consumer items as proposed by Forgeng.⁵

During a research phase in the preparation of a study of the Augsburg version by Dierk Hagedorn (forthcoming in the collection “Bibliothek der Historischen Kampfkünste” by VS-Book, including an edition and translation), I contributed to the research on the manuscript and its content. I did a codicological description and research on its lineage within the Fight Book corpus. In this research note, I share some of the preliminary results regarding its composition and reception. It includes a short update on the studies already carried out, with additional data regarding interesting research directions, while awaiting the publication of the study.

II. THE MANUSCRIPT

Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. I. 6. 4°. 3 – paper, II+124+II – 140x175mm – ca. 1460 – Bavaria

The manuscript has received little scholarly attention and the available descriptions do not meet the actual standards for codicological description.⁶ We therefore propose a description with a brief discussion of the matters relevant for this edition.

⁴ Wierschin, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des Fechtens*, ms 4; Hils, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des langen Schwertes*, ms 16; partial edition in Wierschin, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des Fechtens*, pp. 87-166, and English translation in Lindholm, *Sigmund Ringeck's Knightly art of the longsword* (2nd ed.).

⁵ Forgeng, “Owning the Art”.

⁶ The manuscript is briefly described in Wierschin, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des Fechtens*, ms 16 and Hils, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des langen Schwertes*, ms 5. It is not included in Leng, *Fecht- und Ringbücher*, since it is not illustrated. The compiler has received two notices: Hils “Lew (Der Jude Lew)” and Welle, “Meister Lew”. Lastly, a 19th c. description: von Colberg: *Oettingen-Wallersteinsche Sammlungen in Maibingen*. The manuscript is briefly addressed in: Welle: „...und wisse das alle böbischeit kompt von deme ringen“, pp. 43, 66-7, 73 (n°4); Anglo, *The Martial Arts in Renaissance Europe*, p. 23, 129, 256; Bergner and

II.1. Dating and origin

According to Wierschin and Hils, and based on the 19th c. description of the manuscript from the Oettingen-Wallerstein collection then in Maihingen, the manuscript was dated of ca. 1450. Our analysis of the watermarks tend to postpone it of a decade to ca. 1460.⁷ Both paper come from the Bavarian region. This confirms the hypothesis of a Bavarian origin based on the Bavarian dialect used by the compiler.

II.2. Provenience

The first possessor of the manuscript is unknown and it bears a possible possession mark of an unidentified character at the last page (124v: *Jeremias propheta* [?] *Hanns deichsler*). According to the stamp on the inside pastedown (*P. Öttingen Wallerstein'sche Bibliothek*) and to the previously cited entry of the manuscript in 1860, it was then in the Oetting-Wallerstein collection and entered in the University Library of Augsburg in 1980. Based on its cover (wood covered by red leather with gilded decoration and two clasps), the manuscript was re-bound of the 17th c. and its leaves were ploughed to size and gilded on the edges. The added guard-leaves are also identifiable from the period even if they do not bear watermarks. This observation leads us to believe that it shared the provenience of the rest of the collection kept today in Augsburg, that can be tracked down to the Marcus Fugger's collection after 1579, prior to its acquisition in 1653 by the Prince Ernst Oettingen-Wallerstein.⁸ We dare even hypothesise that it was in the belongings of Paulus Hector Mair (like most of the rest of the collection of Fecht- and Turnierbücher of the collection kept today in Augsburg), even if it does not bear the ex-libris of the Fight Book author and collector.⁹ The study of the filiation of the texts and the works of Paulus Hector Mair tend to confirm this hypothesis.

II.3. Content

The manuscript contains a collection of various authors compiled by Lew the Jew (explicit 123r: *Hie hat ein ende des juden kunst den man nant den lewen, als sich zuroß wol gepürt*). On the

Giessauf, *Würgergriff und Mordschlage*, p. 27; Haage and Wegner, *Deutsche Fachliteratur der Artes*, p. 260; and in Jaquet and Walczak: "Lignitzer, Hundsfield or Lew?"

⁷ Watermark 1 (1-84): tower with battlements (similar to DE2220-Codst_219_447, WZIS: after 1451, South Bavaria). Watermark 2 (85-124): cross formy, pommetty at the ends, with pedestal (similar to DE1935-Mscr_Dresd_M_67_71, WZIS: ca. 1460, North Bavaria).

⁸ See Lehmann, *Eine Geschichte der alten Fuggerbibliotheken*. For a history of the Oettingen-Wallerstein collection, see Hägele, "Von Pamplona nach Augsburg. Die spanische Bilderbibel in der Sammlung Oettingen-Wallerstein", pp. 13-21. See also the page "Geschichte der Oettingen-Wallersteinschen Bibliothek" of the University Library of Augsburg.

⁹ For a similar case – but bearing the ex-libris –, see the study of the provenience of another 15th c. Fight Book in Welle, *...und mit der rechten faust ein mordstuck*, pp. 20-24. On Paulus Hector Mair, see Mauer, "Sammeln und Lesen - Drucken und Schreiben". No exhaustive study on the Mair Fight Book corpus to date.

table below are listed the different sections. Most of them are not entitled, but described in rubrics preceding the sections. We have standardised the title with original text transcribed, and translated within brackets. The authorial attribution are listed as ascribed in the manuscript and alternative authorial attribution are indicated within square brackets. The incipit (after the rubric) and explicit are indicated.

II.4. Collation and foliation

Figure 1 present the collation of the manuscript composed of 124 leaves in 14 quires ($2V^{20}+7IV^{76}+1IV(+I)^{85}+1V(-I)^{94}+3V^{124}$), guarded by two 17th c. double guard leaves ($II+124+II$). The collation is supported by quire signature and the location of the watermarks (all located in the fold, except for quire XI and XII). The two codicological units (paper 1: 1-84; paper 2: 85-124) were merged probably during the time of writing, at the latest prior to the original binding. Two quires (X and XI) are uneven. A material lacuna can be observed between folia 94 and 95 (end of the wrestling section ascribed to Ott the Jew), and would correspond to another material lacuna, replaced by the inserted folio 85 (beginning of the wrestling section), but bound with the previous quire (X) since it bear a quire signature. It is possible that the quire XI was damaged (external bifolio wrapping the quire with the beginning and the end of the section) and only the first part of the folio was either replaced by a new folio or the folio 85 is the original part of the bifolio, whereas the second part is lost. Without other material evidence, this discussion has to stay speculative. This material loss happened before the re-binding of the 17th c., since the continuous 17th foliation (1-125, including the first of the two end guard-leaves) runs throughout the uneven quires.

II.5. Writing and decoration

The manuscript is written with a bastarda of one main hand, with a writing frame of 115x148mm, ruled 87x133 from 87r onwards (second codicological unit). It is rubricated throughout the text, with initials of 3-4 lines, some pointed in red, and one initial in blue of 14 lines (85r). The manuscript bears three inscriptions from later hands: 2nd guard-leaf: table of content of a 17th c. hand; 124r: end counting (*124 Blatt Vrstg*); 124v: possible mark of possession (see above).

1r-53v	Verses and anonymous glosses of Johannes Liechtenauer, <i>künst</i> [des fechtens] (Art of fighting) <i>Jûnck ritter lern got lieb hab frawen vnd Junckfrawen ere ... Das vindestu alles vor In den stucken geschriben etc.</i>
54r-63v	[Martin Hundsfield], <i>kunst fechtens In barnasch auß den vier butten zu fus und zu Kampffe</i> (Shortened sword from the four guards), ascribed to Lew the Jew <i>[54v] Itemdas ist die erst hut Njm dein Swert zu baide hende vnd schütt das krefftlighen ... [63v] vnd winde albeg mit dem ansatz vnder die üchsen In die hut etc.</i> Including partial verse of Johannes Liechtenauer, <i>Kampfffechten</i> (54r), unattributed <i>[54r] [v]Er absynnet fechtens zu fus begünnet Der schick sein sper ... So solt Im naben vnd weislichen wart des vaben etc.</i>
64v-70r	[Martin Hundsfield], <i>vtterrhaben vnd auffsteen Im kampff</i> (Holding down and getting up in armour), ascribed to Lew the Jew <i>Item wann er felt so vall mit Im albeg zu der rechten seitten ... vnd druck nit wider pis er sichert etc.</i>
70r-83v	[Andreas Liegnitzer], <i>das kurtz Swert zum kampff</i> (Shortened sword for armoured combat), ascribed to Martin Hundsfield (Mertein hundsfelder) <i>Item nymdas Swert pei der rechten hant pej dem pind ... So würfstu In für dich etc.</i>
84rv	[Andreas Liegnitzer], <i>stuck mith dem puckler</i> (pieces with the buckler), ascribed to Martin Hundsfield – partial copy <i>Das erst stuck mit dem puckler aus dem oberhaw ... das geht auch zu beiden seitten etc.</i>
85r-94v	Ott the Jew, <i>Ringē</i> (Wrestling) – partial copy <i>Item In allen Ringen sullen sein drej dingke ... Item wann du einem mit beden [interrupted]</i>
95r-123r	Verses and anonymous glosses of Johannes Liechtenauer, <i>zu Rosß</i> (on horseback), ascribed to Lew the Jew <i>Jagen von der prust zu seiner rechten hant ... So mag dich bart nyemant on schaden von dem Rosß gewerffen</i>
123v-124r	[Martin Hundfeld] verses for combat on horseback, ascribed to Lew the Jew. <i>Czu Roß streitten ... vnd vornen mit Darnarch Im Zawm linck pain sunder Im drave</i>

Table 1: Table of content of Augsburg version. Table by the author. Table in colour to be found on the online version of the article.

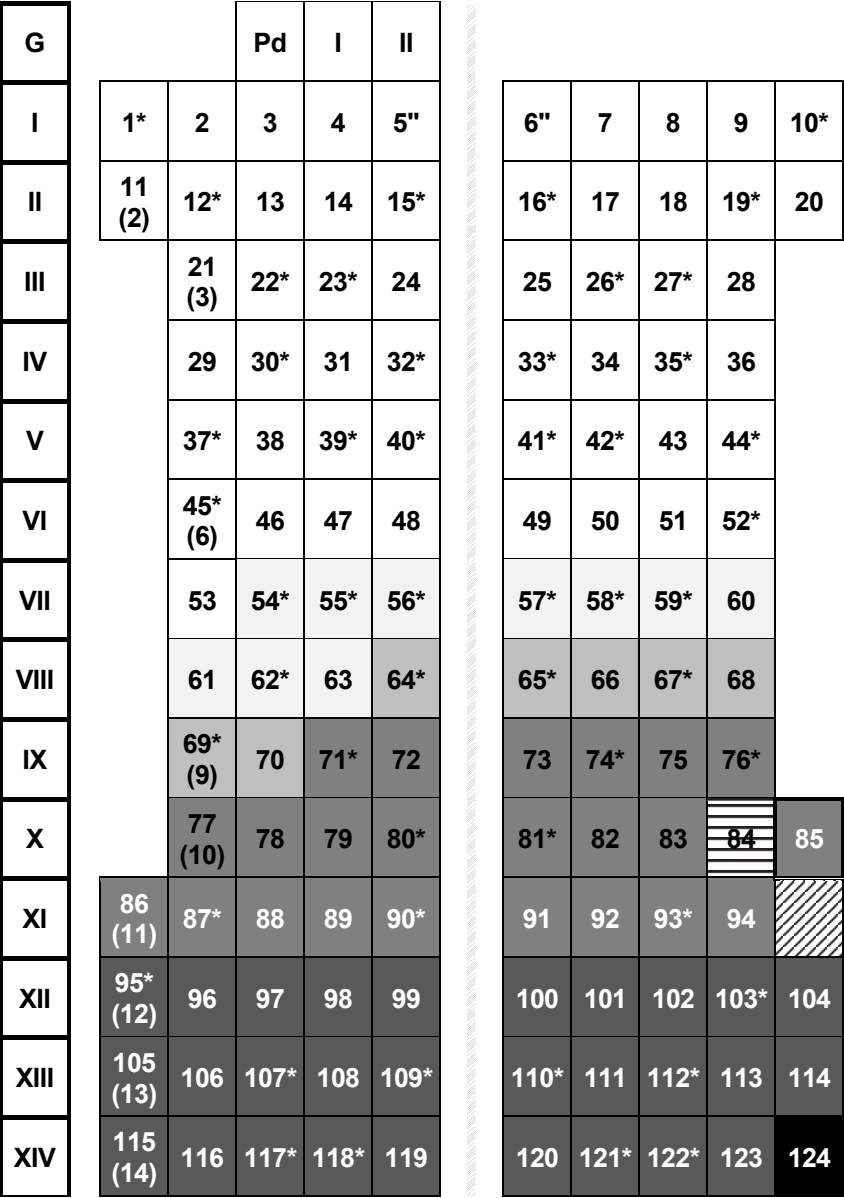


Figure 1: Synoptical diagram of the structure of the quires. Diagram by the author. Table in colour to be found on the online version of the article.

I	Quire		Inserted leaf	(1)	Quire signature
	Material loss	*	Watermark		

III. AUTHORIAL ATTRIBUTION AND TRADITION OF THE TEXTS IN LATER COLLECTIONS

The manuscript is composed of a collection of different texts and the compiler attributed several sections to Lew the Jew, while other manuscripts show discrepancies regarding this ascription. In a previous article, we addressed the same issue with a focus on several texts attributed to either Lew the Jew, Martin Hundsfeld or Andreas Liegnitzer.¹⁰ In this 2014 article, we have studied the different teachings independently, rather than studying the collection as a whole. This method allows us to have a more detailed understanding of the processes of faithful, partial or unfaithful copies within the different collections. For more clarity, we will refer to the different teaching with their translated title given in the rubrics or with an alternative title when no relevant information can be found in the rubrics. To avoid misunderstandings, we refrain to refer to it by its authorial attribution when discrepancies are observed between collections, and we add the incipit and explicit of each teaching in the table 1. Below are presented some of the conclusions found in previous studies, updated with our latest research.

III.1. Case study of armoured and unarmoured combat teachings ascribed to Lew the Jew and Martin Hundfeld

The collection contains several teachings for armoured fighting, including "Short sword from the four guards", "Holding down and getting up in armour", "Short sword for armoured combat", "Fighting on horseback"; as well as a partial copy of the unarmoured fighting teachings: "Pieces with the buckler". These texts are ascribed to either Martin Hundfeld, Andreas Liegnitzer or Lew the Jew in the different collections mentioned above (for a detailed study, see the above-mentioned article).

The philological tradition of these texts is stable throughout the different versions, although several are fragmentary. The main difference lies in the authorial attribution and the different introductory rubrics. The observation of the authorial attributions highlighted in table 2 allows a first level in the inquiry of the lineage of the different collections. The two older collections, the versions from Rome (Peter von Danzig) and Augsburg (Lew the Jew) fundamentally differ and would constitute two distinct branches in the filiation: The first branch is therefore composed of Rome (Peter von Danzig), Krakow (illustrated faithful copy of Rome), Vienna (Paulus Kal), and Glasgow. The second branch is composed of Augsburg (Lew the Jew), and Salzburg (Hans von Speyer). A more careful and detailed analysis, including line-by-line comparison reveal that the sources at hand are actually incomplete to get the full picture of the philological tradition. There is at least one missing piece in the lineage that can be identified: an earlier version (urtext) of the Dresden version. Several other urtexts can be speculated, but this lies outside the scope of this research note.

¹⁰ Jaquet/Walczak, "Liegnitzer, Hundsfeld or Lew". Rainer Welle, offered a notice (Welle, "Meister Lew") where he addressed the questions of tradition and described the manuscript as well

A closer look at the teachings compiled in the collection, compared to later versions, sheds light onto the authorial project of the compiler. The first two teachings "Short sword from the four guards", "Holding down and getting up in armour" are ascribed to the compiler, whereas the Rome version and its branch ascribe it to Martin Hundsfeld. These teachings are part of the same section, since they form a unit, always copied next to each other in all versions and it lies outside the glosses of the verses of Johannes Liechtenauer, always forming the core of these collections. Noteworthy in the Augsburg version is the first couplet of the verses of Johannes Liechtenauer for armoured combat (*kampffechten*) following the introductory rubric (54v). Thus, it places this text as replacement of glosses. Since the compiler presents a gloss of the verses for armoured combat of Johannes Liechtenauer (95r-123r) attributed to Lew the Jew, which is apparently an original work of the author (no copies found in later versions)¹¹, it can be speculated that he "plagiarised" the text of Martin Hundfeld – or at least presented Lew as the original author. Another evidence supporting this speculation is that the compiler copied without authorial attribution all the verses for armoured fighting on horseback (without their glosses)¹² attributed to Martin Hundfeld at the end of the gloss (123v-124r).

Nonetheless, the compiler did also ascribe works to other authors in three cases. The first is the "Shortened sword for armoured hand" (70r-83r), ascribed to Martin Hundfeld (ascribed to Andreas Lignitzer on the Rome version and its branch). This text follows the previous section discussed above (54r-70r) and deals also with armoured fighting on foot, thus expanding the discussion of this repertoire. It is followed by another text, not explicitly ascribed to Martin Hundfeld, but following the previous section, dealing with unarmoured fighting techniques with sword and buckler, "the pieces with the buckler" (84rv). This version is fragmentary compared to the Rome version (80rv), ascribed to Andreas Liegnitzer containing 6 pieces (*stücke*), whereas the Augsburg version contains only three. It lies at the end of the quire X and is ended by an abbreviation meaning "et caetera" (84v). The next section is written on another paper (see codicological description), probably indicating that the project suffered an interruption at this point.

¹¹ Without having access to the urtext of the works attributed to Martin Hundfeld or Andreas Liegnitzer, this observation can be disputed of course. Further research and a synoptical edition of these work would allow to shed light on the matter.

¹² Rome, ff. 97v-100r (attributed to Martin Hundfeld); Vienna, ff. 126r-127v (attributed to Martin Hundfeld); Krakow, ff. 192v-196r (attributed to Martin Hundfeld).

III.2. Case study of the wrestling teachings ascribed to Ott the Jew

The last work ascribed to another author is the wrestling teachings of "master Ott, who was a baptised Jew",¹³ outlining both the same confession as the compiler,¹⁴ and that the author has passed away at the time of the writing. This text also has a less stable philological tradition throughout the collections, but bears no disputed authorial tradition. As for the texts from Martin Hundfeld and Andreas Liegnitzer, the urtext is lost or unknown. Rainer Welle, in his 1993 dissertation studying the tradition of this text, demonstrated that there are possibly two missing versions in the lineage. His conclusion towards the location of the collection of Lew the Jew in the lineage of later collection is similar to ours (Fig. 2).

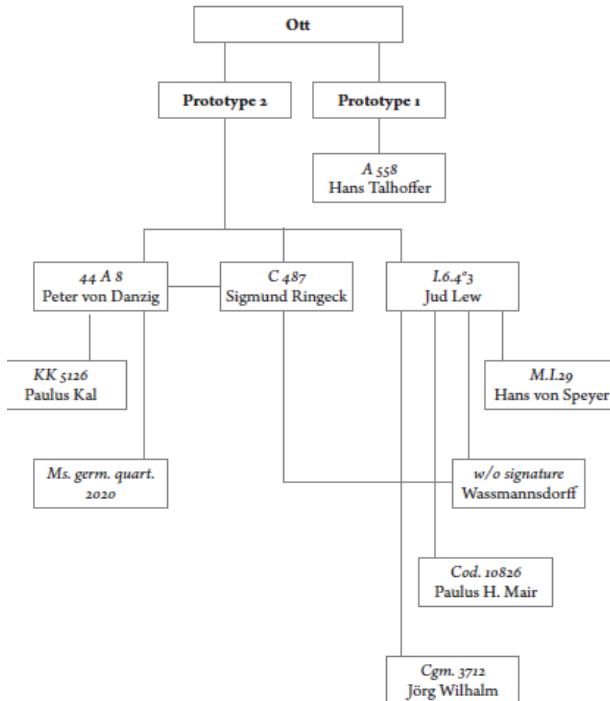


Figure 2: Stemma codicum of the tradition of the wrestling teachings of Ott the Jew. A 558 = Gotha version, 44 A 8 = Rome version, C 487 = Dresden version, I.6.4°3 = Augsburg version, M I 29 = Salzburg version, P 6126 = Vienna version, ms germ. quart. 2020 = Krakow version. © Rainer Welle, 1993.

¹³ 85r: *Hie heben sich and die Ringen die maister Ott gedicht hat, der ein getauffter Jud gewesen ist.* An English translation and study of this text by Finley, *Medieval Wrestling*. The reference study is Welle, *...und wisse das alle hōbischeit kompt von deme Ringen*.

¹⁴ On Jewish bearing arms, see Wenninger, "Von jüdischen Rittern und anderen Waffentragenden Juden"

The copy compiled in the Augsburg version is fragmentary, interrupted at 94v in the middle of a piece. It outlines a material loss at the end of the uneven quire XI. The last inserted leaf (85) of quire X bearing the beginning of the text with a large initial in blue ink indicates that the bifolio wrapping quire XI is missing, probably damaged. The repair at the time of the binding (insertion of leaf 85 in quire X to keep the structure) indicates either that the half leaf 85 has been remade and inserted, or that it was the original part of the damaged bifolio, of which only 85rv has been kept. The quire signature at the bottom of 85v confirm this theory, but since the leaf does not bear any watermark, we cannot document whether it was remade or is the original.

The comparison of the version from Augsburg with the two earliest ones (Gotha and Rome) confirms the Rainer Welle's conclusions towards possible missing versions between the urtext and the known versions, since there are discrepancies in each version, which are echoed in the later collections in each branch.

IV. CONCLUSION

If Lew the Jew was indeed the compiler (which is not supported by enough evidence), he acted as a collector before being an author himself. The only possible original section authored by him would be the glosses of the verses for armoured combat on horseback. Even that could be disputed, but we have no other sources to clarify that matter.¹⁵ We could even picture him as a plagiarist, since he would have ascribed texts authored by others to himself, even if he ascribed three texts to two other authors. These authorial attributions however, shows discrepancies compared to other collections.

The collection is the first witness of a tradition branch, which can be followed up until the late 16th c. Indeed, some of the texts compiled bear the same authorial attribution in the version from Salzburg, but also in later collections, such as those attributed to Jörg Wilhalm, Hans Czynner and Paulus Hector Mair (not addressed in this research note).¹⁶ As briefly shown in the case studies above, the manuscript is a key to understand the lineage of the Middle High German Fight Books. The other texts (verses and glosses of Johannes Liechtenauer's art of fighting for unarmoured combat, 1r-53v, and for armoured combat on horseback, 95r-123r) were left aside from this research note, demanding further research. Moreover, each text demands further investigation and definite critical editions in order to shed light on the tradition of the great variety of texts included, as well as a systematic study of each collection. We hope that the transcription and translation offered in the forthcoming book will draw attention of other researchers and scholars to take up these endeavours.

¹⁵ See the short discussion in Welle, "Meister Lew".

¹⁶ The reference are noted in Welle, "Meister Lew" and Jaquet/Walczak, "Lignitzer, Hundsfield or Lew".

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How to Defend in Water: The French Sailors' Surprising Method of Self-defence (1921)

Julien Garry, translated into English by Eric Combet
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I. SOURCE MATERIAL CATEGORISATION

As I was researching for potential sources on French military combat, I happened to discover a significant quantity of military manuals, all with similar origins. Either they were productions of the Ministry of War, a French political organ inseparable from military science in the nineteenth century, of the school of Joinville-Lepont or,¹ at seldom occasions, of the Ministry of the Navy (formerly known as the Ministry of the Navy and the Colonies)

The traditions and martial knowledge² described in this type of sources can be divided into two categories³: the first is what we chose to call war fencing, that is the handling of military weapons destined to be used on the battlefield, and combat sports practiced in the barracks and destined to develop the soldier's abilities.

I.1. War Fencing

There are several types of war fencing: bayonet fencing,⁴ principally for the infantry; fencing with sabres on foot, destined to officers and to sailors; and fencing on horseback, with a saber or a cavalry lance (Fig. 1).

Here are some examples:

For bayonet fencing: Ministry of War, *Pas gymnastique. Escrime à la bayonnette et supplément à l'école des tirailleurs en usage aux chasseurs d'Orléans et dans plusieurs corps de l'armée* (Paris: Blot, 1849).

¹ The School of Joinville-Lepont, also known as the "Normal Military School of Gymnastics of Joinville", was created in 1852 and played an important role in the evolution of military martial arts and associated sport practices. The school assured the training of sword-masters and military provosts.

² The acronym HEMA will be introduced further ahead.

³ These are not, as we will see, the *only* existent categories.

⁴ See Garry, *La baïonnette, histoire d'une escrime de guerre*.

For Sabre fencing: Ministry of the Navy and the Colonies, *Manuel pour l'enseignement de la gymnastique et de l'escrime* (Paris: J. Dumaine, 1875).

For fencing on horseback: Ministry of War, *Décret portant règlement sur les exercices et les manœuvres de la cavalerie* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1911).

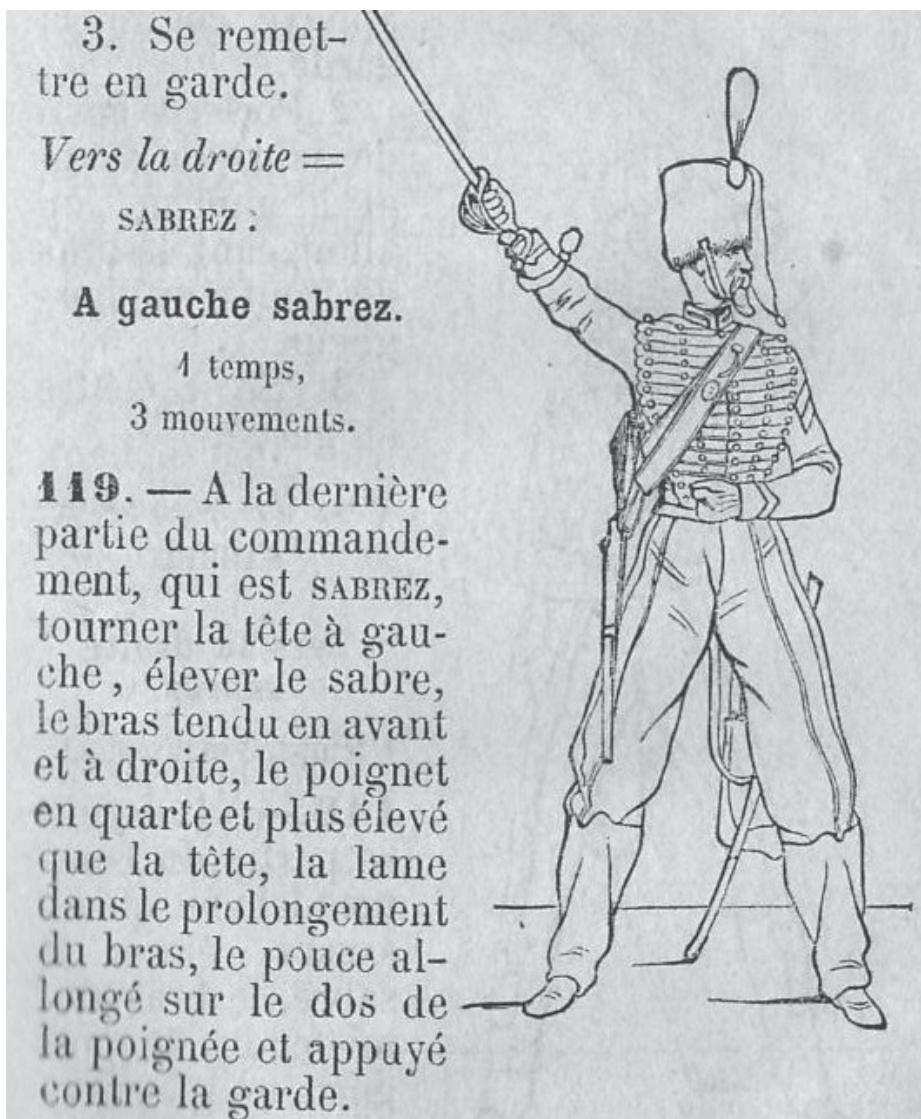


Fig. 1 : "To the left, strike!" Cavalry manual, 1873

I.2. Combat Sports

They are taught to soldiers in the barracks, not with the objective of being useful on the battlefield, but for them to assimilate gymnastic and martial values. Thus, these sources, while keeping a martial angle, provide the soldier with a set of exercises aiming at developing his mental and physical abilities. These combat sports for the barracks are most often: French boxing, "civil" fencing (i.e. fencing with a foil or a sword), and combat with canes or with long sticks known as "batons de Joinville" (Fig. 2).⁵

Here are some examples of texts containing lessons of combat sports:

Ministry of War, *Règlement d'éducation physique* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1910).

Anonymous, *Pour tout le monde, école du soldat, escrime* (Paris: Félix Verney, 1870).⁶



Fig. 2: Gard with the stick, manual of gymnastics, 1893.

I.3. Self-Defence

Aside from these two categories of military art of combat, there is a third one, limited and very recent in the historiography of this topic: self-defence. It appeared in the military manuals in the twentieth century and was the prerogative of French kick-boxing or cane

⁵ Referring to the Normal Military School of Gymnastics that created and developed it.

⁶ This text has the particularity of not being a production of the Ministry of War, but the result of a civil initiative.

civilian enthusiasts, such as the well-known George Dubois or Emile André.⁷ The first manuals destined to military instructors to include techniques of self-defence appeared in 1917 from the turmoil of the First World War.

Example: Center for Physical Instruction of Joinville le Pont, *Notice sur le corps à corps* (Paris: Devambez, 1917).

This art of combat, most frequently practiced bare-handed, that is simultaneously intended to be practical, i.e. used in real situations, and an indoor exercise, is very often absent from martial studies. The reason to this omission is clear: it is difficult to imagine that the French army (or any modern army for that matter) would have completely abandoned self-defence today. However, if the need for this praxis still exists, defining a clear continuity between what self-defence was and what is currently is a hard task. Which parts of these methods have been forgotten? How much is still passed down? For if no rupture in transmission can be found,⁸ self-defence cannot be considered as part of HEMA, but part of the European Martial Arts, as a "living" art of combat.

Conversations with currently serving militaries about their methods of self-defence revealed that the modern practice of this art is sometimes far from its ancestor, more closely related to other contemporary methods such as krav-maga. Indeed, if the pertinence of throwing an Adrian helmet⁹ was clear in 1917, it would be much less obvious in the twenty-first century (Fig. 3).

⁷ Dubois, *Comment se défendre dans la rue*, and André, *100 façons de se défendre dans la rue sans arme*.

⁸ Some official definitions of HEMA such as that of the French Federation of HEMA, insists on the rupture of transmission as a crucial point in the qualification of a martial art as "historical". However, this assertion is debatable and needs interpretation as it is the case here. See "Préambule" in "Charte Française des AMHE".

⁹ The Adrian helmet, made of sheet of metal and weighting less than a kilogram, was used by the French army since 1915. It was also sold to France's allies.

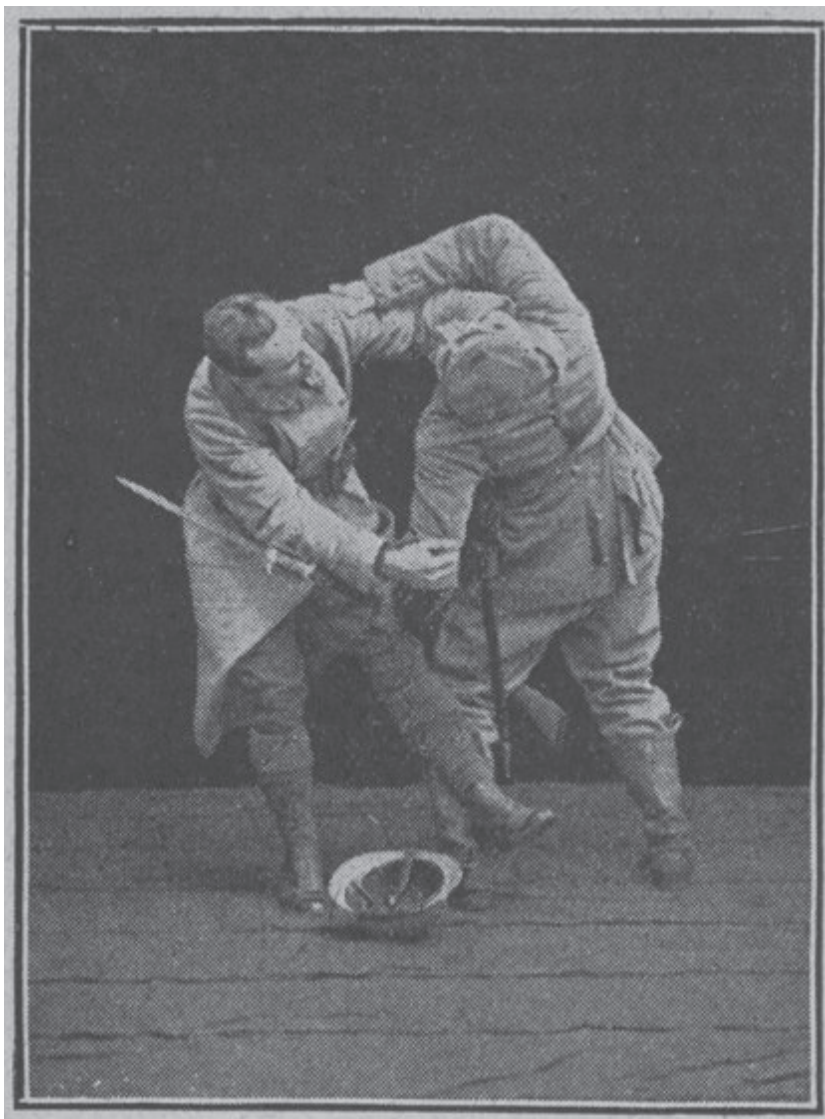


Fig. 3: Throwing the helmets to disarm your opponent

Therefore, we choose to consider this forgotten part of the history of military arts of combat as part of the Historical European Martial Arts. However, the reader must always keep in mind that if one part of this practice has been forgotten, one might still be alive today.

II. THE 1921 MILITARY REGULATION:

The central text of this research note is an extract from a manual published in 1921 and destined to military instructors of the National Navy.¹⁰ This substantial text (440 pages) was integrated to the manuals on March 23, 1921, less than three years after the armistice on November 11, 1918. It is a physical training regulation that contains a set of practical exercises that potentially cover all that a soldier would know. Similarly to the regulations for infantry and cavalry, this text tackles several military arts of combat. No military fencing here but, but several combat sports: French kick-boxing and two types of wrestling, nothing very original for a publication of the time.

After that starts a long chapter in which the different swimming techniques are presented. Because this manual is destined to sailors, there is no mention of exercises like swimming on a chair or suspended to a rope, that were used to put infantrymen in real-life situations (and show that ridicule never killed a soldier, see Fig. 4).



Fig. 4: *An infantry footman learning to swim, manual of 1893.*

Lessons are substantial, covering various types of swimming such as front crawl and breaststroke; but they also tackle the problems of swimming with clothes on and describe how to carry someone unconscious or semi-conscious.

¹⁰ National Navy, *Règlement d'entraînement physique des équipages*. We based our research on a reprint (1928) of the original version (1921).

Then comes a very unusual chapter, simply entitled "Se defendre étant appréhendé" (How to defend when grabbed) addressing the very particular situation of having to defend in water, with examples and illustrations.

This manual, with its curious application in water, stands out as an exception in the already exceptional practice that is self-defence (practice that only became part of the official manuals in 1917).

In this situation, however, don't even think of throwing your helmet or getting out your hidden knife, for your adversary is a particular one, and killing him is not the issue here. On the contrary, that person is drowning and in need of your help, which doesn't make the danger less real, as the victim, driven by fear and a primal instinct of survival, will grab you as hard as possible and put you both in danger.

From this point on, the aim is not to hurt but to control this temporary adversary. The following transcription of the original source (translated into English) might help the reader making his own opinion:

Transcription of pages 286, 287, 288 of the manual:

6° How to defend when grabbed (Fig 5 and 6).

To avoid being grabbed by someone you intend to save but who struggles in the water, always get close to him from behind and grab him either by his armpits or by his arms above the elbows. Hold him firmly tight. If he tries to turn around to grab his rescuer, don't resist, but move around with him to stay behind his back.

The rescuer can find himself grabbed in different ways by the person he intends to save:

1° By the wrists;

2° By the arms;

3° By the neck;

4° By the torso;

5° By the legs;

6° From behind;

7° By the clothes.

Generally speaking, to get free from someone's grip before it gets too strong, use some wrestling parries, especially the front tackling that consists in pushing the opponent away by pressing your arm on his neck.

If the drowning person has managed to grab you firmly, use one of the following techniques to break free:

1° Being grabbed by the wrists: turn your wrists around to the inside and stretch your arms laterally (Fig. 5).

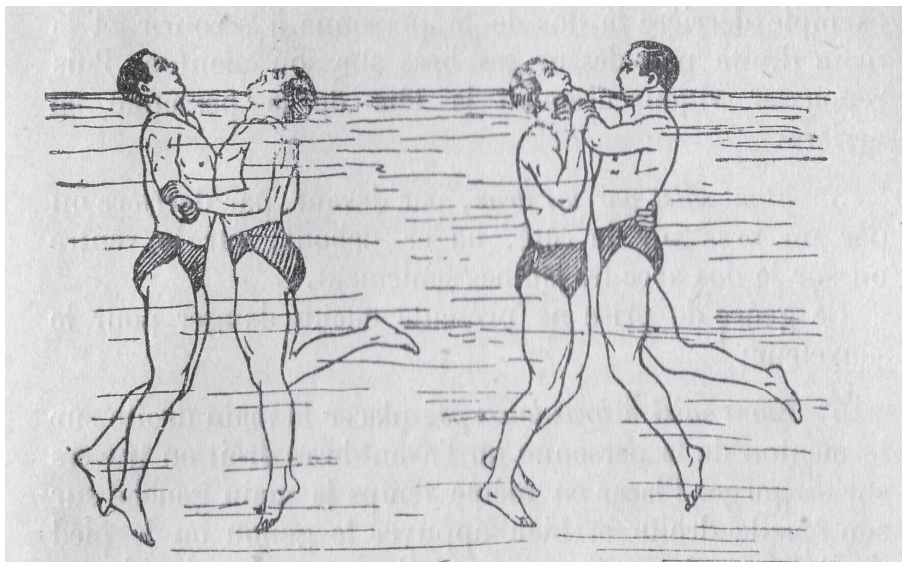


Fig. 41. — Défense du sauveteur appréhendé.

A gauche : manière de se dégager étant saisi par les poignets.

A droite : manière de se dégager étant saisi à la taille et par un bras.

Fig. 5: Règlement d'entraînement physique des équipages, fig. 41.

2° Being grabbed by the neck: Place your left hand on the back of your adversary while your right hand goes above his hands and onto his chin. Then vigorously push his head backwards.

3° Being grabbed by the arms: (to your front, to your back, or by one arm on the side) just swim on your front or back using only your legs. This kind of grabbing is not dangerous for the rescuer.

4° Being grabbed by the torso: Place your right hand on your adversary's chin or your right arm on his throat. At the same time, place your left hand on his right shoulder and press on his stomach with one of your knees or feet. Then push him away vigorously with your hands, knees and feet serving as a fulcrum.

5° Being grabbed by the legs: Swim with your arms to maintain your head above water. As the adversary must necessarily be under water, he won't be able to maintain his grip for long and will either suffocate or fall unconscious.

There is nothing to fear from this kind of grip, no matter how heavy the adversary may be, for it is always possible to float if you swim with your arms.

6° Being grabbed from behind: Fall instantly on your back and swim vigorously with your legs. In this position, either the adversary's head will be submerged, causing him to suffocate, or he will maintain his head above water and the rescuing will be successful.

7° Being grabbed by your clothes: grab one or several of the adversary's fingers and twist them vigorously.

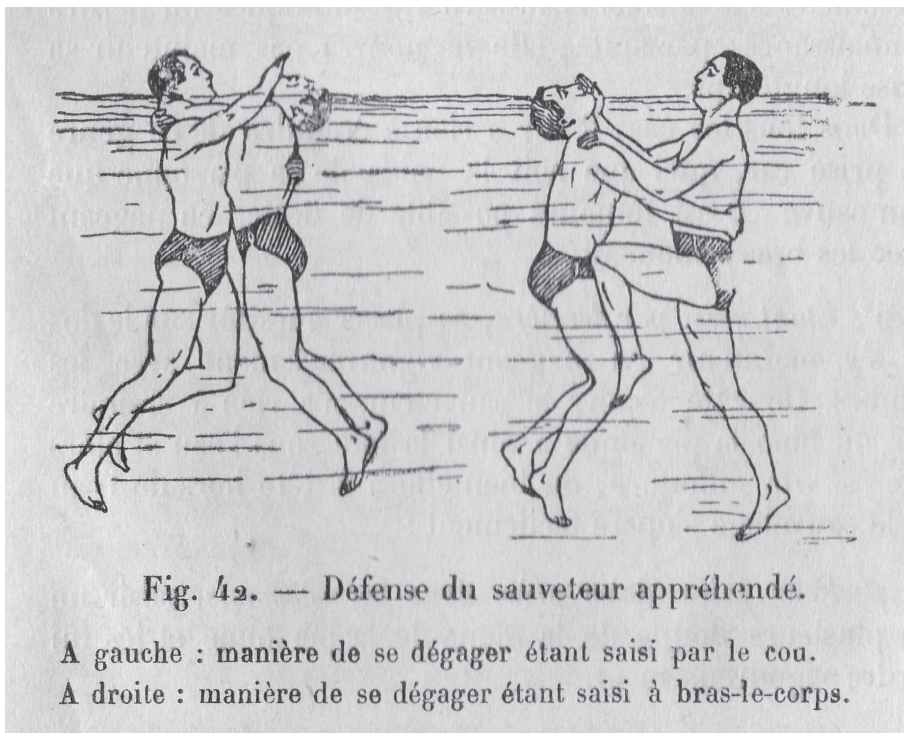


Fig. 6: Règlement d'entraînement physique des équipages, fig. 42

As you may now realize, this type of self-defence is all but ordinary. It comes with several unique problematics, such as the necessity to keep your head above water (thus using more energy as you must simultaneously swim and fight) and the inability to use either your arms or your legs when you swim.

As it is a rescue, one must always try not to hurt the "adversary", the difficulty being the victim's tendency to condemn both him and his rescuer. Moreover, and even though it is

not written, it appears that the rescuer's life comes first, implying that he can drown the victim if need be (techniques 5 and 6 clearly show that).

Besides, the water element offers a new possibility in this type of combat: using gravity to maintain the adversary below the surface, causing him to suffocate and allowing the rescuer to handle him without risks.

III. A SOURCE THAT BRINGS UP NEW QUESTIONINGS:

A source like this Navy Manual, although very rare, is not the only occurrence of this uncommon type of martial art. Mickaël Vieillard, who compiled lots of documents regarding HEMA, published on his website a list of sources revolving around water.¹¹ This list contains an extract from a periodical journal that use to cover many types of HEMA: *La Vie au grand air: revue illustrée de tous les sports*.¹² This article, signed by a Mr Géo Lance, is devoted to water rescue. Lance briefly evokes the possibility of the adversary struggling back, as well as the necessity to break free from a grip, and describes some of the techniques from the sailors' method without going into much details (Fig. 7)...

¹¹ Vieillard, "Les AMHE dans l'eau", in *Mikarmatura*.

¹² See Lance, "Comment on sauve ceux qui se noient". It was also in this kind of periodical that the first methods of defense for ladies with a bicycle were published.



Fig. 7: Illustration from Lance, "Comment on sauve ceux qui se noient"

The civil background of this art of combat allows us to believe that, once again, the French martial life of the nineteenth century influenced the development of military arts.¹³

This art of combat in water, born at the time of the first global conflict, back when everything was put into manuals, can be considered as part of the gigantic list of military traditions covered by the Historical European Martial Arts. However, a similar form of practice still exists nowadays and is taught to lifeguards in the eventuality of a victim fighting back and putting the life of the lifeguard in danger.¹⁴ These techniques, although quite similar, left the movements that can hurt the victim aside and, most importantly, are taken out of the military context. However, though they are still taught, these methods are kept out of the official lifeguard's manuals and are only transmitted orally. This brings up the question of public acceptance: is it morally correct to hurt a victim for his/her own good? Moreover, the fact that it is orally transmitted reveals the desire to limit the accessibility of this method and shows us that it belongs to a very specific category of professionals. Thus, it is possible to establish a connection between this type of combat and the police-officer's manuals of self-defence written at the same time¹⁵ (also reserved to a very specific category of professionals for ultra-specific applications.)

Finally, these sources allow us to question the concept of the "opponent" by showing us that an opponent is not always someone with malicious intends. The whole domain of martial arts generally distinguishes two different kinds of adversary: the sparring partner, with whom the practitioner can develop his skills and learn, and the enemy, whose aim is to harm the practitioner, and often to hurt him or even kill him. This source adds a third category to this list: the involuntary adversary, who means no harm but can put the rescuer's life in danger. In this case, the aim is double: the rescuer must preserve his own life while saving the adversary's. In a way, this specific martial art might be the only one where victory implies saving the opponent's life...

This method is, in many respects, quite original. A combat in a dangerous environment, an enemy you must save, the possibility of drowning someone to save him, all these paradoxes are what make this sailor's art of self-defence unsettling, surprising, and most certainly unique.

¹³ As it is the case, we have demonstrated it, for most types of war fencing, see Garry, *La baïonnette, Histoire d'une escrime de guerre*.

¹⁴ We would like to thank Mathieu Cotterau, certified rescuer, for the fruitful discussions on this topic.

¹⁵ Example: Ministère de la guerre, *Manuel d'exercices physiques spéciaux à l'usage de la gendarmerie*. It describes several techniques of self-defense destined to handle dangerous suspects.

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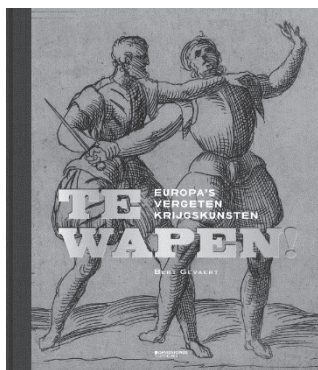
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Acknowledgment: I would like to thank Guillaume Vaillaut and Eric Combet for their precious advice and proofreading, as well as the members of De Taille et d'Estoc, for their priceless good will, even when confronted to the strangest of sources.



Gevaert, Bert, *Te Wapen! Europa's vergeten krijgskunsten* (Leuven, Davidsfonds, 2016)

ISBN: 978-90-5908-723-1.

Reviewed by Alwin Goethals, SwArta (BE).

Over the last couple of decades, the popularity of historical European martial arts is growing worldwide. In Belgium and the Netherlands, at least for the past 10 years, the community of H.E.M.A.-practitioners greatly expanded and the arts were promoted in several areas through the efforts of dedicated people. Bert Gevaert, author of present work, is one of those people. I've seen him evolve from a passionate enthusiast with the sword (or "gladiophile", as he often calls it himself), to a researcher of various H.E.M.A. aspects.

Writing a book on H.E.M.A. was one of the goals Gevaert already had in mind for some years. In 2015 he finally translated his thoughts into words on paper and composed the first Dutch reference work on the historical European martial arts. It's written in a clear and pleasant style and turned out to be a beautiful hardcover of 318 pages, illustrated with no less than 200 photos, including many from historical fencing books.

From the foreword on, Gevaert manifests himself as a true storyteller by discussing a demo fight in a style worthy of a historical novel. The connoisseur will be able to identify certain techniques in this description and the inexperienced reader gets a first image of historically justifiable sensation.

After citing some personal reasons for writing his book, some general points are adduced in the introduction: known prejudices are addressed, problems of reconstruction are discussed and the revaluation of the European martial arts is commended.

The methodology of the author and the structure of the book are also explained in detail in the introduction. The various sources of research are discussed: alongside normative and informative literature, specific areas of research such as paleo-pathology and experimental archeology are given equivalent attention. Fencing masters and manuscripts pass before the reader's eye for a first time and various aspects of the European sword are looked into: symbolism, features, typology, etc. Apart from this, Gevaert also discusses the place of the martial arts in their historical culture and class society.

The arts and their masters are chronologically and geographically defined and accommodated. The book covers the period from 1320 to 1630 and the chapters are, as a logical consequence, divided from the 14th to the 17th century.

The first chapter is called: "the 14th century: writing for insiders". The scant information we have on the first fencing masters is gathered and questioned there. Secondly, the

specific art of fighting with sword and shield is discussed according to various sources: the early medieval French literature, the Scandinavian epic and of course the I.33 manuscript. Well-known elements of this work on sword and buckler open a door to discuss the use of martial arts by clerics and the attitude of the Church towards violence. Finally, the 14th century would not be treated without introducing the great Liechtenauer as founder of the German arts. He is therefore viewed from multiple perspectives and the application of his doctrine is interpreted in the context of duel and battlefield.

The second chapter is titled: “the 15th century: reign in armour”. In this chapter, the Italian masters Fiore dei Liberi and Filippo di Vadi get their well-deserved attention and from the German tradition there’s Hans Talhoffer and Paulus Kal who receive sufficient tribute. This in addition to the direct ‘heirs’ of Liechtenauer. To make it more complete, “Die Blume des kampfes”, the “Gladiatoria group”, the “Codex Wallerstein” and the English fight books are presented as well.

Following the masters of the longsword, Hans Lecküchner appears as authority of the long knife and “Le jeu de la hache” as major source for combat with poleaxe. After a brief presentation on the “Bem Cavalgar”, by the hand of Portuguese King Edward I, the list of historical masters is concluded with Pietro Monte, of who is rightly pointed out that he still doesn’t get the attention he deserves.

As the title of the chapter expresses, the steel plate armour is extensively discussed as 15th century combat equipment. Both forging, price, aesthetics, disadvantages and persistent myths are examined. Additionally, general principles of fighting in armour are covered, together with the different forms: on foot and on horseback, for fun or in earnest.

“The sixteenth century: fighting with honor.” In this third chapter Gevaert talks about the last manuscripts (including Goliath, folios from a Dutch fight book and Dürer’s MS 26-232) and the first printed fight manuals (including Pauernfeyndt and Egenolph). Great attention goes to Paul Hector Mair and his achievements. Joachim Meyer too is awarded with a couple of pages, and after an introduction on the rapier and a discussion of the Bolognese school, many notorious figures get reviewed throughout the chapter: Giovanni de’ Medici, Camillo Agrippa, Camillo Palladini, Henry Saint Didier, Giacomo Di Grassi, Vincentio Saviolo and Georg Silver. The 16th century wouldn’t be the 16th century without talking about la verdadera destreza, the montante, the masters of defense, the marxbrüder and the federfechter. All these get covered. An additional focus went out to fighting to the highest bleeding wound, mensur and theatrical fighting (fencing duels in Shakespeare). The chapter concludes with a detailed discussion of the duel. Besides general principles of duelling, Gevaert talks about the duel of honour in Italy, France, England, the Holy Roman Empire and the Netherlands.

The final chapter, “the 17th century: play for pleasure”, again summarizes the life and work of some renowned masters: Nicoletto Giganti, Salvator Fabris, Capo Ferro and Gérard Thibault. The latter, and fencing in the Dutch republic in general, enjoy special

attention. In addition to the phenomenon “Thibault”, his *Académie de l’Espée* and *album amicorum* are looked into.

As member of the St. Michael’s guild in Bruges, Gevaert is the best person to talk at length about the Flemish fencing guilds. Among others he discusses their origin, development and internal organization.

In addition to the subdivision of the book in time periods, different specific subjects are discussed separately. These “loose” threads provide an interesting variation per chapter. They include subjects like female warriors, terrible injuries, strange weaponry, extraordinary historical figures and famous duellists as for example Descartes and the Danish astronomer Tycho Brahe.

In the epilogue, the evolution and decline of historical fencing is looked into, with attention for its rediscovery in the 19th century. The history of edged weapons is also considered from socio-economic point of view.

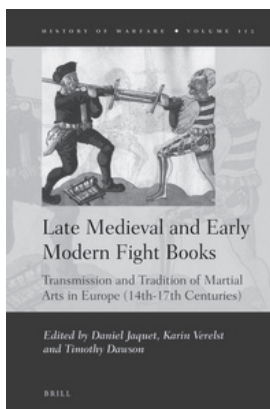
Finally Gevaert shares his view on the future of historical European martial arts. He puts forward several disciplines whose research can be useful for the current revival. Amongst those: art history, history (archival research), languages and literature, law, osteology....

On a practical level the importance of local and international umbrella organizations are cited, with the Belgian SBSN and international IFHEMA as examples. Different proposals are made that are worth considering with regard to the evolution of tournaments and the promotion of HEMA to a wider audience.

Those who are interested in picking up H.E.M.A. after reading the book, are provided with a list of H.E.M.A. associations in Belgium, a list of known manufacturers and dealers of weapons and equipment and an list of some online sites with useful information (including Hroarr, Wiktenauer and other known sources). For the understanding of both the inexperienced reader and practitioner, a general list of German swordsmanship terminology is included as well.

This reference book is clearly and deliberately written for a wider audience than the academic world. Yet, Gevaert wrote as objective as possible and provided endnotes per chapter and a bibliography of primary and secondary sources at the end of the book. This allows the interested reader to do some further reading or start some research.

Although historical criticism was not applied, Gevaert does not omit to put certain theories in question (this in the text and in endnotes). Propositions that are uncertain for the author are brought with caution. Although such a work is never quite complete, Gevaert has delivered a creditable performance.



Daniel Jaquet, Karin Verelst and Timothy Dawson (eds.), *Late Medieval and Early Modern Fight Books : Transmission and Tradition of Martial Arts in Europe (14th–17th centuries)* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2016), coll. History of Warfare, n°112.

ISBN: 978-90-0431-241-8

Reviewed by Jeff Lord, The Massachusetts Center for Interdisciplinary Renaissance Studies – Umass, Amherst

Late medieval and early modern fight books : transmission and tradition of martial arts in Europe (14th–17th centuries) is an attempt to create a comprehensive overview of the study of Historical European Martial Arts (HEMA). Almost two decades removed from the publication of *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe* (Sydney Anglo's seminal monograph on the topic), this is a most welcome undertaking. HEMA is a growing field and a work such as this is very necessary for it to develop in a productive manner. With the goal of increasing visibility and the focus of scholarly attention, the editors have assembled some of the most well-known voices in HEMA practice and scholarship to contribute chapters to this endeavor. The individual content of most chapters is quite strong and well-researched; where the book struggles is in matters of its identity and intended audience. Indeed, any attempt to properly classify and identify what constitutes HEMA and how to study it is invariably going to encounter similar difficulties.

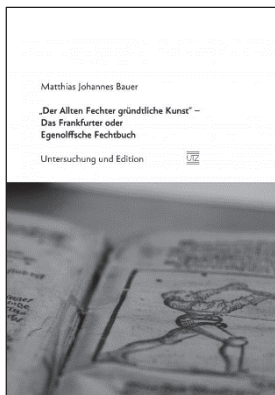
The book is divided into three sections. The first concerns matters of theory and methodology in the interpretation of historical combat manuals or “Fight Books”. The second section deals with the various backgrounds of four, particular fighting arts (i.e. each of these chapters details the martial traditions of a specific time period and geographical region). The final section is reserved for specific case studies and commentary on martial culture.

As mentioned previously, many of the individual chapters are quite strong. Several of the chapters in the first section effectively caution the readers as to the limitations of the methods described. The authors are careful not to overreach in their conclusions. HEMA, as practiced in the last two decades, has always been a blend of critical reading and physical interpretation, both of which carry their own sets of strengths and weaknesses. The range of chapters presented give multiple approaches without privileging one over another. The chapters in the second portion present a great deal of information, sometimes to their actual detriment. The final third section of chapters provides examples that help to make the theory of the earlier chapters more concrete in terms of context.

Something that the work does not adequately address is the difficulty in deciding what, exactly, constitutes HEMA. It would be extremely challenging, if not impossible, to satisfactorily make that decision without inventing some arbitrary standards. Furthermore, we have suppositions about what the “corpus” of fight books is, or what manual is part of what tradition. Even with a brief *status quaestionis*, the reasoning behind how those suppositions are formed is not always clear. Given the sheer amount of material available, it is a necessity that practitioners of HEMA narrow their focus. But how we make those decisions feels important and also absent from this book. If the work is to help to define what is included in the study of HEMA it would be very beneficial to the discussion for the reasoning behind its decisions to be transparent.

One question that is never answered satisfactorily is that of audience. Although the stated target is “a wider academic readership,” it is uncertain if the work has actually hit its mark. It seems that experienced HEMA practitioners would find many of the overview chapters to be insubstantial. It is also unclear how much use some of the interpretive methodologies described in the first section would be to further other interpretative work. This is not to diminish the efforts of the authors to develop methodologies that work for their own projects, merely a concern about their applicability to other practitioners, let alone the reader with a decided academic bent. The chapters in the second section could all be books in their own right and may be of limited use to serious scholars of those subjects. So novices looking for an overview would likely benefit from those chapters as jumping-off points, but will likely find others (such as those on scientific methodology) somewhat opaque.

Late medieval and early modern fight books: transmission and tradition of martial arts in Europe (14th–17th centuries) is a near panoptic collection of well-researched information on the study of HEMA and it succeeds on many levels, bringing together a diverse group of voices on a variety of subjects. Where it struggles is in bringing those subjects together into a cohesive whole, instead becoming a collection of essays with varying degrees of utility for an unclear audience. These struggles are to be expected when attempting to create a work such as this, particularly in an emerging field and these criticisms should not distract from the necessity of this work. For HEMA to evolve as an area of academic inquiry, books like this need to be published. Otherwise, conversations about the audience, the corpus, and how practitioners can effectively utilize this information will not readily happen.



**Matthias Johannes Bauer,
 “Der Alten Fechter gründtliche Kunst” –
*Das Frankfurter oder Egenolffsche
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Matthias Johannes Bauer is a productive scholar in the field of Historical European Martial Arts studies. He has written numerous articles and book chapters dealing with Fight Books from the perspective of his field of expertise: German studies with a focus on linguistic aspects. He is mostly known amongst HEMA aficionados for his edition of the unicum called *Kölner Fechtbuch*¹ or his work on Andreas Paurneindt².

Der Alten Fechter gründtliche Kunst – *Das Frankfurter oder Egenolffsche Fechtbuch: Untersuchung und Edition* (“The old fencer’s core art” – the Fight Book of Frankfurt or of Egenolff: study and edition) is the publication of his PhD dissertation (defended in 2016 at the University of Duisburg-Essen). The publication is in German, with an English abstract. It offers a reference work regarding the corpus of the four different editions of the printed books by Christian Egenolff in Frankfurt between 1530 and 1558. He studied twenty-three versions of the four known editions, which is the complete mapping of known sources for that matter. The author points out that this source is the first renowned printed German fight book with several editions. His work represents the first scientific edition and study about this specific source, which is relevant at least for fields such as “ancient German technical literature (altgermanistische Fachliteraturforschung), language science and dialectology (Sprachwissenschaft und Dialektologie), mediality (historische Medienkunde) and local history of Frankfurt (Frankfurter Regionalgeschichte)” (14).

The first part (15-90) includes: a codicological study of one version (17-24); a study of the philological and iconological tradition (25-56); an analysis of the content and composition (57-68); a linguistic study (69-80); and a short analysis of the historical and literary context (81-88). The second part (91-196) is a state-of-the-art critical edition, followed by the reproduction of the Padeborn version as the third part (197-296). After bibliographical references (299-312), it ends with a booklet in colour (315-319), gathering eight images, including details of the book cover and four coloured engravings.

¹ *Langes Schwert und Schweinspiess: die anonyme Fechthandschrift aus den Verschütteten Beständen des Historischen Archivs der Stadt Köln* (Graz: ADV, 2009).

² *Paurneindts Fechtbuch aus dem Jahr 1516* (Nordstedt: BoD, 2014).

The codicological study (17-24) details one example kept in Padeborn, which is a collection (Konvolut) of different codicological units bound together. It is a fine description, with all relevant details about this example allowing the author to discuss dating amongst other matters. He does not (yet) explain why he chose this specific one³, nor does he propose a comparative codicological description of the other twenty-two sources at hand (shorter descriptions in appendices would have been an added value).

The analysis of the tradition of the text and images (25-56) is primarily descriptive and limited to the comparison between the four editions, and he did include a discussion of the historiography (35-41). The results are laid down by tables and image concordance. The data is not discussed much by the author. The section ends with a typographical analysis, a discussion about dating and the establishment of tradition grouping used in his edition.

The analysis of the content and composition (57-68) is rather short. It discusses the content in the books and maps the items constituting the different sections, with a long list of technical terms (61-68). It does not discuss the tradition of the different texts within the broader corpus of Fight Books.

The linguistics aspects (69-80) forms one of the most interesting (and new) part of his research. He explains the different kind of variations observed with detailed examples and demonstrates how the text is corrupted in the course of the four editions. This raises relevant questions for the study of Fight Books⁴.

The last section of the first part was to me a little disappointing. The literary-historical context (81-88) gathers in only nine pages the discussion about the context of the production, the printer, the place, and the connection of the book with the broader corpus of Fight Books. The most interesting research questions are outlined here, but the author does not go in details. Nonetheless, the basis is laid down, and the desiderata for further research (89-90) maps some of the endeavours left to be undertaken. One must also be reminded that this book is the product of a PhD dissertation, which is limited in both scope and time.

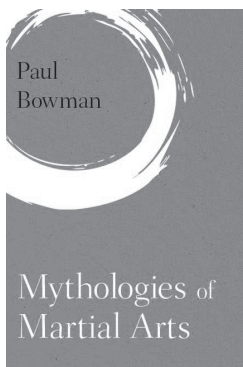
The second part (91-196) is the critical edition, introduced by a detailed section on editorial norms (93-96) and accompanied by an exhaustive critical apparatus. This is an excellent work led by a specialist, including all variations between the different versions. The third part (197-296) offers a black and white reproduction of the version kept in

³ The reason for the choice of this version is only mentioned in p. 56 and 89, where he outlines that this collection is one of the key for dating issues.

⁴ Outlined with a broader scope in two book chapters published elsewhere. "Fechten lehren mitt verborgen vnd verdeckten worten", in *Das Schwert – Symbol und Waffe*, ed. by Lisa Deutscher, Mirjam Kaiser and Sixt Wetzler (Rahden: Leidorf), 163-170; and "Teaching How to Fight with Encrypted Words", in *Late medieval and early modern fight books: transmission and tradition of martial arts in Europe (14th-17th centuries)*, ed. by Daniel Jaquet, Karin Verelst and Timothy Dawson (Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2016), 47-61.

Padeborn. Size and definition of the images are sufficient to allow reading of both text and engravings.

So, all in all, this study is a reference work for the fight books printed by Christian Egenolff. The critical edition is exhaustive and definitive. The book provides also a complete black and white facsimile. The HEMA practitioner might be sad, for there is no translation or technical glossary in this book, but as the author demonstrates, the tradition of the text and the images became somehow corrupted in the course of the different editions. This fact questions the use of translation and interpretation without a careful study of the variations found in the different versions, for which all relevant material is included. The scholar will find there a useful and well-documented resource for the study of Egenolff's fight book and can blindly rely on the edition made by one of the best specialists in the field.



Paul Bowman,
Mythologies of Martial Arts (Martial Arts Studies, 2),
London/New York: Rowman and Littlefield,
2017, xxiii + 186 p. ISBN: 9781786601926 (pbk.)

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«Die Mythosforschung ist zum Berührungspunkt mannigfaltiger Zweige der Gelehrsamkeit geworden: [...] Historiker und Soziologe, Literaturwissenschaftler und Grammatiker, Germanist und Romanist, Keltenforscher und Slawist, sie alle reden darüber, je unter sich. Auch vor Logikern und Psychologen, vor Metaphysikern und Epistemologen ist die Mythologie nicht sicher – um von den Gästen ganz zu schweigen, den Theosophen, den heutigen Astrologen oder den Szientisten. Schließlich ist noch die Psychoanalyse hinzugekommen, uns beizubringen, dass der Mythos ein Tagtraum der Menschheit sei [...]. Als sich zu guter Letzt der arme Anthropologe und Volkskundler dem Fest anschloss, war kaum ein Krümel für ihn übrig. Wenn ich einen Eindruck von Chaos und Konfusion vermittelt, wenn ich angesichts der unglaublichen Mythologie-Debatte und all dem Staub, den sie aufgewirbelt hat, Beklommenheitsgefühle hervorgerufen habe, so habe ich erreicht was ich wollte.»¹

Thus wrote famous ethnologist Bronislaw Malinowski in 1926. Had he known that, almost one hundred years later, a branch of academia had developed that called itself “martial arts studies” - he would hardly have been surprised to hear that it, too, has its own take on mythology, which comes in the form of a short monograph. “Mythologies of Martial Arts”, the second title in the new Martial Arts Studies book series at Rowman & Littlefield, has been written by Paul Bowman, professor of cultural studies at Cardiff University, UK. To those interested not only in HEMA research, but in martial arts studies in general, Bowman is of course well known: as the organizer of the Martial Arts Studies conferences at Cardiff University, editor of the online Martial Arts Studies journal, founder of the aforementioned book series and director of the Martial Arts Studies research network, he is one of the key figures and active motors in the formation of this new field.

“Mythologies of Martial Arts” takes up several of the strands Bowman laid out in his last book “Martial Arts Studies: Disrupting Disciplinary Boundaries”. As the title implies, it deals with the ideological narratives that surround, permeate, and define martial arts, and the ways they are practiced, perceived, and culturally dealt with. While Bowman's theoretical approach is deeply rooted in (mostly French) postmodernism, and indebted to Hegelian and Marxist thought, his ideological impetus is that of the Anglo-American

¹ Malinowski, Bronislaw, ‘Die Rolle des Mythos im Leben’, in Malinowski, Bronislaw, *Schriften in vier Bänden*, 4/2, ed. by Kramer, Fritz (Syndikat: Frankfurt a. M. 1986; orig. 1926), p. 141.

cultural studies. The methodological differences between these cultural studies and their German and French counterparts, and their practical consequences, have to be understood to fully appreciate Bowman's book: Continental Kulturwissenschaften (and similarly the disciplines of medieval and early modern history, of social anthropology, etc.) explicitly forbid themselves to morally judge what they are researching, and try to analyse, understand and describe neutrally (no matter how and if this might be truly possible). Cultural studies, on the other hand, were from their outset designed as political projects; they do not only want to understand the world, but also want to change it.² Bowman is an exponent of the latter branch, and he will not shy away from conclusions and judgements that, e.g., a Swiss researcher might well harbour personally, but not put forth in academic writing. To Bowman, all mythology is on the verge of creating hierarchies of power, power that can and often will be abused, and result in injustice. Consequently, he perceives the eradication of mythology as an act of liberation (p. 94), especially where it comes to myths of authenticity, origin, and lineage (chapters 5 and 6). Uncommon as such statements (in themselves ideological) might be for readers from a different academic tradition, they do not diminish the accuracy and worth of the book's observations and interpretations. And these are excellent.

As he has himself pointed out continuously throughout his writings and lectures, Bowman is horrified of anything fixed, of the definition of the fluid, of static truths. He perceives culture(s), the martial arts therein, and its/their narrations of martial arts as network of meanings, attributions, and "supplements", each of which does not exist by and of itself, but is merely constituted by and helps itself constituting the other cultural condensations in this network. Referring to Stuart Hall, Bowman thus calls for a "conjunctural analysis" which understands any given phenomenon within its contextual dependencies and temporal fluidity – a perspective that, even if the terminologies might be different, might come natural to many of us. He applies the principle of the conjunctural analysis with great success on his subject, the popular martial arts discourses of the 20th and 21st century. His angle is never straightforward, but (maybe exactly because of that) his results are even more convincing. The predominant questions in many martial arts discussions, be they among practitioners or academics, are: "what is?" and "what was?" The questions raised (and often quite satisfyingly answered) in the book are much more: "how do/did they imagine it to be?", "how do/did they tell others and are/were themselves told to imagine it to be?", and most of all "why do/did they want to imagine it to be that way?"³ Guided by these questions, Bowman discusses the status of Asian martial arts in the West, matters of cultural exchange and assumption, of ethnicity

² For a further discussion of these differences in regards to martial arts studies, see: Wetzler, Sixt, 'Martial Arts Studies as Kulturwissenschaft: a possible theoretical framework', *Martial Arts Studies Journal* 1 (2015), pp. 20-33. For an in-depth discussion of the two closely related disciplines, see: Musner, Lutz, 'Kulturwissenschaften und Cultural Studies: Zwei ungleiche Geschwister?', *KulturPoetik* 1.2 (2001), pp. 261-271

³ Of course, "they" could be exchanged with "we".

and orientalism; the notion of qi in Western and Eastern discourses; authenticity and lineage; changing aesthetics in combative movement in action cinema; discourses of gender; the ping-pong of “mythological” narratives between East and West; and also the “mythological” undercurrents in martial arts studies themselves.

However, Bowman’s “addiction” to the notion of instability and fluidity might also be the reason for what I perceive to be the main weak point of the book: being called “Mythologies of the Martial Arts”, it lacks a theoretical discussion of the terms “myth” and “mythology” (often used interchangeably, which seems also the case in this book). This is problematic insofar, as both terms have been inflated to such a degree and used in so many different contexts, that it is nowadays impossible to know what someone speaks of when he uses either of them – the introduction quote from Malinowski describes the chaos aptly, and if anything, the situation has gotten worse in the last hundred years. Bowman starts his text with a reference to Roland Barthes. This is no wonder, given his affinity to the French thinkers of the 20th century. Barthes’ understanding of the myth as condensed ideology fits neatly into Bowman’s discourse analysis, and is made good use of here. However, in other parts, the book shifts to much more old fashioned notion of myth as the opposite of logos, without explicitly stating it: In the line of Stanley Henning’s work, which aims to “debunk” the popular Chinese martial arts histories, myth is here a synonym for “historical lie”. The book would have benefited from a short introduction into the possible meanings of the term myth, and a clearer awareness which of these meanings it is referring to at which point. Such a categorization – explicitly not supposed to a final definition, and thus well-fitting for Bowman’s approach – has been given by Jan and Aleida Assmann,⁴ and already made fertile for martial arts studies in an article edited by Bowman himself.⁵

The second point of critique is of much less importance, but might be a lot harder to swallow for readers with a HEMA background: When Bowman writes martial arts, he means “Asian martial arts” in 95% of the cases. Often, he would list “wrestling, boxing, and martial arts” besides each other, thus juxtaposing Western and Eastern traditions. In this respect, his unwillingness to define what martial arts are (though well grounded) pose a problem – intuitively, Bowman has already decided that martial arts “are from the East”. This notion is historically not true, as martial arts can be found almost anytime and everywhere. And even if understood in terms of the attitudes of popular culture (that, for a long time, might indeed have separated European fencing, boxing, and wrestling from the Asian styles), it is no longer true in the 21st century: After the MMA watershed, one can doubt that martial arts are still first and foremost Asian (or “marker of Asian-ness”).

⁴ Assmann, Jan and Aleida, ‘Mythos’, in *Handbuch religionswissenschaftlicher Grundbegriffe IV: Kultbild-Rolle*, ed. by Cancik-Lindemaier, Hildegard, Cancik, Hubert, and Gladigow, Burkhard (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1998), pp. 179-200.

⁵ Wetzler, Sixt, ‘Myths of the Martial Arts’, *JOMEC Journal* 5 (2014), available at: <http://goo.gl/VP8OLA> The article touches on several points also discussed in Bowman’s book.

Today, MMA rules supreme, and is felt and regarded as a Western or Global phenomenon; it is as much boxing, as it is muay thai, as much jiu jitsu as it is wrestling, as much sambo as judo (speaking, absolutely in line with Bowman, not about sambo's history as a direct offspring of judo, but about its perceived Russian-ness). MMA is as much US-American, Brazilian, and Russian as it is Japanese or Thai (and remarkably non-Chinese, by the way). The iconic figure of the MMA is no longer the samurai, nor the Shaolin monk, but (thanks to the movie "300") the Spartan warrior, and the MMA-movie "Warrior" is in no need of any Asian characters or allusions.

Thirdly, in contrast to many HEMA researchers, Bowman seems less interested in the transmission and execution of martial arts techniques themselves than in the narratives being told about them. This is no shortcoming in itself; but at several points in the book (for example in the discussion of taiji principles, p. 165), one gets the impression that the author is at risk of falling himself into the "mythological trap", rephrasing common ideas what martial arts will do with a body.

Nevertheless: "Mythologies of Martial Arts" is a treasure hoard of thought and new ideas, and an ammunition belt (if one needs that) for any discussion of the self-stylization of martial arts. The book must be most highly recommended. The term "inspiring" is used inflationary, but here, I use it with full intention. While reading the book, every second or third page there was a moment when I would have liked to call the author (or anyone from my martial arts studies colleagues) to discuss what I had just read. This is not supposed to mean that I would agree with everything written there: For example, one wants to ask if the rather negative view on myth should not be balanced with the productive capacity of myths, and with what Blumenberg called "Arbeit am Mythos" (work on myth). Also, the scholar of European martial arts tradition feels compelled to point out how well known Asian styles were already around 1900 in the West, and that techniques of kicking (described, by Bowman, as purely Asian) were beautifully illustrated in a German "kickboxing manual" from 1863.⁶ But even at the points where the reader disagrees, his engagement with the book does not come to a standstill; Bowman's very personal, often humorous and enjoyable style of writing positively invites disagreement, and seems to look forward to the discussions it may catalyze.

The fact that Bowman is oriented more towards Asian than European martial arts leaves the HEMA researcher with countless opportunities for studies on the basis of this book; research that goes beyond the "Faktengeschichte" (history of facts, dates, and techniques) which is so common to HEMA studies. The text can at once be a toolbox and a mirror for any research into historical HEMA practice, modern HEMA training, or (para-)academic HEMA studies themselves.

⁶ Happel, Jakob, *Die Boxkunst* (Leipzig: Weber, 1863). Online: <http://digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/ihd/content/titleinfo/2461557> (accessed 30. MAR 2017)

And finally – and here, we can acknowledge and share the “ideological impetus” mentioned before – “Mythologies of Martial Arts” may call the HEMA scene to challenge their own mythologies: mythologies of the allegedly clear intentions behind the fight books, of the “authentic” resurrection of lost practices, and most of all of the ethnicized “art of our forefathers”.