

The Sword and Dagger Techniques of François Dancie

By Rob Runacres

Introduction

The following is an outline of the rapier and dagger techniques stated in François Dancie's *L'espée de combat* of 1623. It is not a stand-alone interpretation, but an aide-memoire to the original text available [here](#), or the forth coming translation by Rob Runacres and Thibault Ghesquire. Readers therefore should be aware that Dancie's core principles are not outlined, but require study to understand the techniques summarised below.

Terminology has, in the main, been kept to French. A glossary will be provided in the translation mentioned above.

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Any errors are my own.

Introductory Techniques

1.
 - a. Lunge in *quarte* between the enemy's weapons, with your dagger to the rear
 - b. Retire, covering the adversary's sword with yours. If they disengage and *caver* to strike you, drop to your left knee and strike them under the armpit, parrying with the dagger
 - c. If they strike a *revers*, move forward and knock them to the floor
 - d. Or, stepping back, parry with the sword.

2.
 - a. Lunge in *seconde* above the enemy's dagger
 - b. Retire, covering their sword
 - c. Feint to attack in the same manner and *caver* from *seconde* to *quarte*
 - d. Retire, covering their sword.

3.
 - a. Half-thrust in *quarte* between the weapons, forcing the enemy to parry
 - b. Retire with a void of the body, but keep the feet still
 - c. In the tempo the enemy returns to guard, thrust in *quarte* between their weapons
 - d. Retire covering their sword.

Against an Advanced Dagger

1.
 - a. *Caver* to between the enemy's weapons and lunge in *quarte* to their right shoulder
 - b. If they disengage to strike you to the outside, *caver* and strike them above / below the sword or dagger, as appropriate.

2.
 - a. Feint to strike in *quarte* between the enemy's weapons
 - b. Upon the enemy's parry, lunge, turning from *quarte* to *seconde*
 - c. Do the same under the enemy's dagger in *seconde* by dropping to one knee
 - d. If the enemy parries low and strikes as you attack, *caver* from *seconde* to *quarte*, parrying their sword, and thrust *quarte* to their right shoulder while retiring with the body alone
 - e. If the enemy receives the *seconde* (as per b.), but strikes at the same time, make a *half-volta*, parrying with the sword point low and the dagger hand thrown back
 - f. Retreat while making a downwards strike to the enemy's head and return to guard out of measure.

3.
 - a. Feint to the outside and, when the enemy parries, strike in *quarte* to their right shoulder
 - b. Place the sword between the enemy's weapons; hold the weapon high and angled to the right
 - c. Feint, and when the enemy parries with the dagger, raise the sword over the dagger and strike to the throat
 - d. Retire out of measure while parrying.

4.
 - a. Starting with the sword high, turn the hand and make a short thrust to feint under the enemy's dagger forcing them to parry, then redouble with a *seconde* over their dagger
 - b. Retire with the body alone forming a guard of half-*seconde*, thereby making an invitation between the weapons
 - c. Parry the attack with the dagger and riposte to their right shoulder. The sword should strike at the same time as the parry.

5.
 - a. Make a large circle around the tip of the enemy's dagger, opening up your weapons and advancing your sword
 - b. As he strikes, parry with the sword
 - c. Pass with the left foot and seize the enemy's sword with your dagger, cutting his sword hand and then thrusting them between their weapons or above.

Against the advanced sword

1.
 - a. If the enemy is in *quarte*, feint to seize their sword to the inside with your dagger, forcing them to *caver* below
 - b. Parry below and lunge to their right side in *quarte*.
2.
 - a. If the enemy is in *tierce*, feint to seize their sword to their outside with your dagger so they attack above the dagger
 - b. Redouble the parry and lunge in *quarte* to the right side, lunging in the tempo of their attack.
3.
 - a. Engage the enemy's sword to the outside, forcing them to strike to the inside
 - b. As they move their foot, strike the enemy in *quarte* to the right shoulder then retire.
4.
 - a. Holding the sword high, engage to the inside, forcing the enemy to attack to the outside over yours
 - b. In the tempo that the enemy changes, lean to the left side and lunge to their right shoulder in *tierce*
 - c. Retire in *seconde*
 - d. If the enemy retreats rather than attacks, and disengages their sword but remains in measure, take their tempo to lunge, extending along their sword to strike them in the right armpit
 - e.
 - i. If the enemy moves to the outside and does not attack, but instead presses on your blade, *caver* while taking their sword with your dagger and strike them between their weapons
 - ii. Press forward and sweep their right foot.
5.
 - a. If the enemy is timid and holds the sword advanced without attacking, pass with the left foot and find the enemy's sword with yours to the outside
 - b. When the enemy *cavers* beneath, seize it with your dagger and strike them around their dagger
 - c. Alternatively, engage the enemy's sword to the outside
 - d. *Caver* to the inside, pushing forward over the enemy's dagger
 - e. When they go to parry, *caver* and strike them under the left armpit in *quarte*.

6.
 - a. Beat the enemy's sword to the inside
 - b. Lunge in *quarte* to the right shoulder
 - c. Withdraw from measure by bending the knee back and counter as the enemy attacks
 - d. Repeat the attack to entice the enemy to come forward and seize your sword with their dagger
 - e. In the tempo the enemy moves their foot, seize their sword with your dagger and thrust their throat in *seconde*.

7.
 - a. Enter into measure and slowly move your dagger on their sword
 - b. Pass, beating their sword with the dagger
 - c. Strike with *quarte* or *seconde* as appropriate.

8.
 - a. Disengage the sword from the outside to the inside, running to the outside of the dagger
 - b. As the enemy goes to parry, *caver* to the inside and strike them in *quarte* to the right shoulder while leaning to the right side, and covering their sword with the dagger.

9.
 - a. Feint to the enemy's head, extending both weapons, the sword towards their left eye and feinting to seize their sword with the dagger
 - b. As the enemy strikes underneath, parry low with the dagger and thrust below their sword in *quarte*
 - c. Retire by voiding the body back and leaning on the left knee then
 - d. Strike between their weapons
 - e. Retire, covering their sword.

10.
 - a. The enemy in *tierce*, place the sword over the dagger and, beginning to lunge, feinting in *quarte* below
 - b. *Caver* and finish the lunge in *seconde* above the dagger
 - c. If the enemy strikes in the first tempo, *half-volta*
 - d. Return to guard, covering the enemy's sword.

11. If the enemy passes in trying to seize your sword with their dagger
 - a. *Volta*, striking the enemy in *quarte* between their weapons
 - b. Or, strike above or below their dagger, covering their sword with their dagger.

12. If the enemy passes to the outside, trying to seize your sword with their dagger
 - a. Drop to the left knee striking them under the left armpit
 - b. At the same time parry their sword to the inside with your dagger.

The Posture of the Left Foot Advanced

1. If you are in this stance and the enemy waits
 - a. Advance by bending the front knee and feint towards their left eye to make them parry with the dagger
 - b. Strike below their dagger, passing with the right foot; your sword should defend against theirs
 - c. If they attempt to disengage, follow their sword with your dagger and strike where convenient.
2. If the enemy advances their dagger and withdraws the sword
 - a. Place your sword beneath their dagger
 - b. Pass, striking your opponent above their dagger while finding their sword with your dagger
 - c. If they do not withdraw, strike their left leg and push them over with the dagger hand.
3. The enemy in the same stance
 - a. Place your sword to the outside of their dagger hand
 - b. Place your dagger next to your sword
 - c. Raise the point of your sword over their dagger and strike them in *quarte* to the right shoulder, seizing their sword with your dagger
 - d. Withdraw, covering their sword.
4. The enemy approaching with the sword advanced
 - a. Feint to seize their sword with your dagger from the inside
 - b. Parry below when they *caver*
 - c. In the same tempo pass and strike them with a *quarte* to their right shoulder
 - d. Alternately, feint to seize their sword from the outside
 - e. Parry
 - f. Pass and strike them in *quarte* to the right shoulder
 - g. If they hold their dagger at the right shoulder, thrust above in *seconde*.
5. If the enemy is waiting for you
 - a. Pass with the right foot and feint under their dagger while beating with the foot
 - b. As they parry, strike above in *seconde* with a full lunge
 - c. If the enemy strikes you in the same tempo, make a half-*volta*
 - d. Reset, covering the enemy's sword.
6. Following the technique above
 - a. Feint by advancing the sword on the enemy's dagger, opening your weapons in invitation
 - b. The enemy will strike between your weapons and parry your sword with their dagger
 - c. Lower and bend to the left side and parry with your dagger, enter and strike above their sword in *seconde*
 - d. If they retire and parry, strike above the dagger
 - e. If he parries again, strike below, and continue to assault.

To Attack the Posture of the Left Foot

1.
 - a. Feint to the dagger, and if the enemy defends,
 - b. Caver to the inside between the weapons or
 - c. If the enemy attacks, strike them to the part they uncover
 - d. If they try to disengage, seize the sword with the dagger to strike them again.

2.
 - a. Alternately, starting in *tierce* to the outside, feint to strike towards the left eye to the outside of the enemy's dagger in *quarte*
 - b. If they parry, caver and strike between their weapons.

3.
 - a. Adjust the sword to between the enemy's weapons
 - b. Make an *appel* in *quarte* between the weapons with a pass
 - c. The enemy rushes to parry and riposte
 - d. Lean to the left side, knee to the ground, parrying to the outside of the enemy's sword and strike below in *tierce*
 - e. Withdraw, covering the enemy's sword with your hand down and your sword point high to force the enemy to disengage and seize your sword on the inside with his dagger.
 - f. As you withdraw and they do this, offend them below in *quarte*.

4.
 - a. Pretend to strike hard to the outside of the dagger
 - b. As they parry, drop to the left knee, parrying their sword with the dagger and strike them beneath in *quarte* and *tierce*
 - c. Withdraw, covering the enemy's sword with your hand down and your sword point high to force the enemy to disengage
 - d. Strike below and to as many places as possible
 - e. Stop when tired, covering their sword with yours.

5. If the enemy allows you into measure
 - a. Adjust your sword to the inside of their dagger
 - b. Swiftly lunge them under the left armpit
 - c. Retire swiftly, covering their sword.

6.
 - a. Feint to the outside of the dagger as if to strike the left eye
 - b. As the enemy parries, turn the hand to *quarte* and strike below.