



Kingdom of Lochac  
Royal Guild of Defence

Punta Dritta - January 2008

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## From the Editor

Greetings and welcome to your latest issue of the journal of the Royal Guild of Defence. The short number of articles this issue is more than compensated for by the contribution of a substantial work from Guildmaster Don Henry Fox on the Renaissance Schools of Defence (the period basis for our own Guild!).

Some business to be getting on with. As I am now approaching three years as Provost Secretary, and we have in that time significantly increased our Provost ranks, it is my intention to step down from this position. See the article below for more information about this vacancy and the small duties that come with this important post in support of the Lord Guildmaster.

As reported in the July 2007 issue, it was agreed at the Guild meeting held last Festival that an effort should be made to provide more structured teaching at Festival, including actual classes to be included in the A&S collegia program. Being now 'only two weeks 'til Festival', any Guild member with an interest in providing a class at Festival is asked to contact Guildmaster Silfren. The function of the Guild is to promote and foster period combat techniques in the SCA, and Festival is the ideal time to communicate your ideas to a large and interested audience.

*Punta Dritta* is also a means of communicating in more detail your ideas and views on period styles of

defence, and we are always looking for new material for the journal. With Guildmaster Don Angus Galbraith now working with the Kingdom Rapier Marshal to promulgate the new cut and thrust rules, there will be new avenues to be explored in applying our fencing manuals. Think about it, the write what you thought down and send it in!

My best wishes to you for the coming months and I hope to see you out there, learning, teaching and fighting.

Provost Owain Cantor ap Hughe  
Provost Secretary

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## Expressions of Interest: Provost Secretary

The Provost Secretary is the officer of the Guild responsible for providing administrative (and moral) support to the Lord Guildmaster. The current holder of this position, Provost Owain Cantor ap Hughe, has advised that he will be standing down from the position at MidWinter Coronation, in July 2008.

Expressions of Interest are now sought from Provosts in the Royal Guild of Defence to take up this important post of service to the Guild. The duties of the Provost Secretary are to:

- ensure the proper announcement and reporting of Prizes, in accordance with the ordinances of the Guild;
- report to the Body of Guildmasters on the activities of the Guild;
- publish the twice-yearly journal *Punta Dritta*;
- maintain the Guild web site;
- advise the Lord Guildmaster and Body of Guildmaster on the application of the Guild ordinances; and
- conduct such other tasks as may be required by the Lord Guildmaster.

Provosts interested in serving the Guild through this role are invited to submit a brief expression of interest to the Lord Guildmaster, [Don Dameon Greybeard](#), before the holding of the May Crown Tournament. The decision on the appointment will be made by majority decision of the Body of Guildmasters, with the appointment to take effect from MidWinter Coronation.

[A digression from the incumbent: sounds all very grand, but the fact is that there's not that much to do - making sure Prizes are checked with the Lord Guildmaster, getting contributions for *Punta Dritta* and a bit of web-work. This is a low workload job and only really calls for some basic web-ministering skills - and based on my own abilities, I mean really basic.]

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# Reports on Prizes in the Kingdom of Lochac

TO ALL WHO PROFESS SKILL AT ARMS, BE IT KNOWN THAT

## Aneala

On the Twenty-first day of July, at the Aneala Fencing Schola:

Scholar Kane Greymane, sponsored by Provost Dona Sabine d'Ricold da Forli, did play his Free Scholar's Prize in the following weapons: Rapier. The candidate was examined by Free Scholar Catalina de Gata, Journeyman Prospero de Aqua and Provost Somerled of Redcliffe. His examiners did agree that the candidate had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate him to the rank of Free Scholar; and

Scholar Alicia Esperanza, sponsored by Provost Dona Sabine d'Ricold da Forli, did play her Free Scholar's Prize in the following weapons: Rapier. The candidate was examined by Free Scholar Catalina de Gata, Journeyman Prospero de Aqua and Provost Somerled of Redcliffe. His examiners did agree that the candidate had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate her to the rank of Free Scholar; and

Scholar Walter of St Basil, sponsored by Provost Dona Sabine d'Ricold da Forli, did play his Free Scholar's Prize in the following weapons: Rapier. The candidate was examined by Free Scholar Catalina de Gata, Journeyman Prospero de Aqua and Provost Somerled of Redcliffe. His examiners did agree that the candidate had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate him to the rank of Free Scholar; and

Scholar Pantera de la Vale Obscurito, sponsored by Provost Dona Sabine d'Ricold da Forli, did play his Free Scholar's Prize in the following weapons: Rapier. The candidate was examined by Free Scholar Catalina de Gata, Journeyman Prospero de Aqua and Provost Somerled of Redcliffe. His examiners did agree that the candidate had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate him to the rank of Free Scholar; and

Journeyman Donncadh Baillie, sponsored by Lord Guildmaster Don Dameon Greybeard, did play his Provost's Prize in the following weapons: Rapier; Rapier and Dagger; Case of Rapier; Rapier and Buckler; and Rapier and Rotella. The candidate was examined by Provosts Dona Sabine d'Ricold da Forli and Somerled of Redcliffe, and Guildmaster Don Henry Fox. His examiners did agree that the candidate had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate him to the rank of Provost.

## River Haven

On the Fifth Day of August, at the North of Border Fencing Fest IV:

Scholar Marcus de la Mancha, sponsored by Guildmaster Don Henry Fox, did play his Free Scholar's Prize in the following weapons: Rapier. The candidate was examined by Journeyman Konrad von Strassbourg, Provosts Emrys Tudur, Sommerled of Redcliff and Owain Cantor ap Hughe and Guildmaster Caleb Adolphus. The examiners did agree that the Scholar had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate him to the rank of Free Scholar; and

Scholar Wulfric Greycloak, sponsored by Guildmaster Don Henry Fox, did play his Free Scholar's Prize in the following weapons: Rapier and Cane. The candidate was examined by Journeyman Konrad von Strassbourg, Provosts Emrys Tudur, Sommerled of Redcliff and Owain Cantor ap Hughe and Guildmaster Caleb Adolphus. The examiners did agree that the Scholar had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate him to the rank of Free Scholar; and

Scholar Wulfgar Strongarm, sponsored by Guildmaster Don Henry Fox, did play his Free Scholar's Prize in the following weapons: Rapier and Cane. The candidate was examined by Journeymen Konrad von Strassbourg and Giles Leabrook, Provosts Emrys Tudur, Sommerled of Redcliff and Owain Cantor ap Hughe and Guildmaster Caleb Adolphus. The examiners did agree that the Scholar had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate him to the rank of Free Scholar; and

Scholar Wulfstan Bloodaxe, sponsored by Guildmaster Don Henry Fox, did play his Free Scholar's Prize in the following weapons: Rapier. The candidate was examined by Journeymen Konrad von Strassbourg and Giles Leabrook and Provosts Emrys Tudur, Sommerled of Redcliff and Owain Cantor ap Hughe. The examiners did agree that the Scholar had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate him to the rank of Free Scholar; and

Scholar Orm the Red, sponsored by Guildmaster Don Henry Fox, did play his Free Scholar's Prize in the following weapons: Rapier. The candidate was examined by Free Scholar Marcus de la Mancha, Journeymen Konrad von Strassbourg and Giles Leabrook and Provost Owain Cantor ap Hughe. The examiners did agree that the Scholar had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate him to the rank of Free Scholar; and

Scholar Rugen Axegrinder the Red, sponsored by Provost Sommerled of Redcliffe, did play his Free Scholar's Prize in the following weapons: Rapier. The candidate was examined by Free Scholars Marcus de la Mancha, Wulfstan Bloodaxe, Wulfric Greycloak and Orm the Red, and

Journeyman Konrad von Strassbourg and Giles Leabrook. The examiners did agree that the Scholar had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate him to the rank of Free Scholar; and

Scholar Emilio de Batista, sponsored by Provost Sommerled of Redcliffe, did play his Free Scholar's Prize in the following weapons: Rapier and Dagger. The candidate was examined by Free Scholars Marcus de la Mancha, Wulfstan Bloodaxe, Wulfgar Strongarm, Wulfric Greycloak and Orm the Red, Journeyman Konrad von Strassbourg and Giles Leabrook and Guildmaster Don ibn Jelal. The examiners did agree that the Scholar had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate him to the rank of Free Scholar; and

Journeyman Giles Leabrook, sponsored by Guildmaster Don Henry Fox, did play his Provost's Prize in the following weapons: rapier and parrying gauntlet; rapier and baton; rapier and dagger; rapier and buckler; and rapier. The candidate was examined by Provosts Emrys Tudur, Sommerled of Redcliff and Owain Cantor ap Hughe and Guildmasters Caleb Adolphus, Silfren the Singer and ibn Jelal. The examiners did agree that the Journeyman had most successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate him to the rank of Provost.

## Aneala

On the First Day of October, at the Anealan Championship, Free Scholar Catalina de Gata, sponsored by Provost Dona Sabine D' Ricold da Forli, play her Journeyman's Prize in the following weapons: rapier, rapier and cloak, rapier and dagger. The candidate was examined by Journeyman Prospero ap Aqua, and Provosts Donnchadh Baillie and Dona Sabine d'Ricold da Forli. The examiners did agree that the Free Scholar had successfully played the Prize and did acknowledge and elevate her to the rank of Journeyman.

## Prize announcements

TO ALL WHO PROFESS SKILL AT ARMS, BE IT KNOWN THAT

## Canterbury Faire

I, Provost Emrys Twdr, do give leave and license to our Free Scholar Emilio de Batista to play his Journeyman's Prize against all Journeyman, Provosts and Guild Masters in their subtle mystery at these weapons, viz: Single Rapier, Rapier and dagger, Rapier and Baton. These letters are to give notice that our said Free Scholar will be at Canterbury Faire in Southron Gaard on Tuesday the Fifth Day of February ASXLI, to perform and do his uttermost for the achievement and bearing away of the Prize.

Furthermore...

I, Provost Luan an Fael, do give leave and license to our Scholar Bengamin of Darton to play his Free Scholar's Prize against all Free Scholars, Journeymen, Provosts and Guild Masters in their subtle mystery with Rapier and Cloak. These missive is to give notice that our said Scholar will be at Canterbury Faire in Southron Gaard on Tuesday 5th of February ASXLII, to perform and do his uttermost for the achievement and bearing away of the Prize.

Furthermore...

I, Provost Luan an Fael, do give leave and license to our Scholar Gordon of Darton to play his Free Scholar's Prize against all Free Scholars, Journeymen, Provosts and Guild Masters in their subtle mystery with Single Rapier . These missive is to give notice that our said Scholar will be at Canterbury Faire in Southron Gaard on Tuesday 5th of February ASXLII, to perform and do his uttermost for the achievement and bearing away of the Prize.

Furthermore...

We, Provosts Emrys Twdr and William de Cameron, do give leave and license to our Journeyman, Martuccio Lorenzo Cavilcanti de Medici to play his Provost's Prize against all Provosts and Guild Masters in their subtle mystery at these weapons, viz: Single Rapier, Rapier and Dagger, Rapier and Baton, Rapier and Cloak, Rapier and Buckler. These letters are to give notice that our said Journeyman will be at Canterbury Fair in Southron Gaard on Tuesday 5th February ASXLI, to perform and do his uttermost for the achievement and bearing away of the Prize.

**LONG LIVE THE CROWN OF LOCHAC!**

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## Chronicle of Events in the Royal Guild of Defence

by **Provost Owain Cantor ap Hughe**

The rank of Members of the Royal Guild of Defence in the Kingdom of Lochac is determined by the playing of Prizes. These Prizes constitute an examination of the fitness of a Member to hold rank, according to their knowledge and application of period techniques, as tested by Members at or higher than the rank to which the candidate aspires.

The [Chronicle of Events](#) is now available on the Guild web site. It records for posterity the Prizes that

have been played since the creation of the Kingdom of Lochac in July AS37 (2002). It has been drawn up by the best efforts of the Provost Secretary, according to the available records, including announcements of Prize results in the Guild journal and on the Fencers List.

All members and interested parties are invited to view this historical document and are encouraged to report any inaccuracies they may identify.

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# The Renaissance Schools of Defence

By Guildmaster Don Henry Fox

## Introduction

The Renaissance schools of defence were one of the major places a gentleman gained an education in the Renaissance period. The important thing about these schools of defence is that they were designed to teach the combat arts of the period. The various other aspects, which went into a gentleman's education, some of which were taught at these schools, was part and parcel of the education package that these schools offered. The focus of these schools however, was combat and it is important to recognise this.

This particular piece will focus on the schools themselves, and also the skills that were taught there. It will also examine, briefly, those schools, which followed the Renaissance schools, and also the military academies, which started where the Renaissance schools left off.

## Historiographical Problems

In the research of the Renaissance schools of defence, there are at least two historiographical problems, which the researcher will run into during their research. These problems have to be acknowledged but also they need to be worked around to the best ability of the researcher. The research of these schools of combat arts can focus on what was taught at the schools, and also what the schools themselves were like. There are, however problems with both;

“The schools of arms are even more obscure than the men who taught in them. Not only do we lack documentary evidence about the day-to-day running of those establishments, we do not even know what they looked like.” (Anglo, 2000:12)

This is an obstacle for the researcher, but it is up to the researcher to find ways around such problems. One way is to examine schools which followed chronologically, these schools and see what can be traced back to the previous schools. There is also information, which is

contained within the documents, and treatises of the period, which allude to the schools at these, can be used also. Pictures are less useful in a lot of circumstances due to the fact that;

“Not one of these masters, who generally supervised the illustrations to their own work, has envisaged the combats as taking place within a school or even within any sort of pedagogical context.” (Anglo, 2000:12)

This is less of a problem with later Renaissance schools and treatises such as Thibault's are useful to get an idea of what they looked like from one point of view. The problem is that; “It is rare to find early representations of schools of arms which encourage confidence:” (Anglo, 2000:14). This is especially so if it is the education element that is being sought. In a lot of cases there is a great deal going on in the picture, and it is sometimes difficult to tell whether it is a “school” setting or a prize playing situation, especially if one examines the background of the pictures.

From these issues it is obvious that the researcher has a great deal of work to do if they are able to garner what these schools were like and what they taught. As has been previously stated the best method for solving these problems is to examine what came before and what came after, and also to examine the various period treatises for information about these schools. Armed with this information, it should be possible to gain an idea of what these schools were like, and what skills they taught.

## General Information

“Good, bad and indifferent - societies and schools of instruction devoted to the martial arts were evidently a common feature of medieval and renaissance city life.” (Anglo, 2000:11)

Schools of defence were a common feature of society during the medieval and Renaissance period. With this in mind it is strange that there is so little specific information about these schools. It is important to establish what these schools were about before any sort of discussion about their history is delved into. There needs to be established a general idea what they were all about besides the simple fact that they taught the combat arts of the periods in which they existed. The schools organised themselves into;

“a craft guild with clearly defined levels of achievement and length of apprenticeship in the various grades of expertise, was much the same everywhere with the aspirants proceeding from the rank of scholar, through that of provost, and to master” (Anglo, 2000:9)

This is the same as all the craft guilds of the periods, which are being discussed and more so the Renaissance period. The levels of achievement, length of apprenticeship for the various

grades and examinations to progress through these levels gave this guild an aura of legitimacy, and in this period this would be necessary for this guild to prosper as they did. What is also important is an examination of the history of these schools and how they evolved which will be discussed in the next section.

## Evolution/History

“English, and indeed Western martial arts in general have a much longer pedigree than most people realise. For example legislation aimed at banning martial arts schools (Scholes of Fence) in London proves that martial arts schools existed in England at least as early as 1180 AD.” (Brown, 2002)

The long history of schools of defence must be recognised. It is by examining the history of a particular phenomenon that it is placed in its historical context, and from this the historian, and reader is able to garner various pieces of information and understand how and why this phenomenon came about. Early schools of defence did not have the respect of those found in the Renaissance period, in fact they were thought of on the same level as circuses, brothels and other houses of ill repute. It is important to examine this to demonstrate how they changed from such to places of education and learning for the upper levels of society.

“Attendance of a school of arms is, like public bathing and fornication, a form of moral depravity; and those who taught or studied there are as contemptible as the fool whose genitalia are being critically evaluated by three nude lady bathers. [early medieval scene] ... vast alteration which had taken place in the status of continental masters in the course of the Renaissance ... all this activity now takes place in a room devoted to the martial arts of the University of Leiden.” (Anglo, 2000:14)

This change happens in the state of the schools themselves, but also in the social image of the schools by members of the society. It is interesting that such a change can come over such a historically small amount of time. In the scheme of history such a period of change is significant as it underlies a great change in attitude. It is important to discover how this change came about that such schools were originally illegal and their attendance was of concern for the citizenry to become required by the upper classes as part of their required education.

“we have moved from a house of ill-repute to an academic community. What was once a naughty activity forbidden to students has become a part of their normal curriculum.” (Anglo, 2000:14)

In the area of legislation in England, can be seen a change from a profession which was banned from the City of London, and seen on the same level as beggars, vagrants and other undesirables. To places of skills which are seen as a requirement for a man to call himself an educated gentleman. This change happened over time, and in some situations, the legal

situation was not exactly clear;

“In England during the middle of the 15th century it was probably safe to admit to running a school of fence, though legislation of the 13th and 14th centuries forbidding such schools was still in force. The professional fencing teacher was classed with the rogues and vagabonds, and with such a stigma didn't encourage lively, analytical and discriminating minds into the profession.” (Worsfield, 2003)

The big question at this point in time would be why the change? What changed so dramatically that such a person's status as a fencing master could change from that of a vagabond to that of an admired professional? The level of instruction of the particular masters could be one reason, the admittance to the particular profession previously was somewhat arbitrary, and organisation of such admission could account for the increase in status. It is generally true, that until a group of professionals is organised into a particular structure, their worth is seen as less. But once the structure is organised then they are seen in a much better light by society in general.

“The “Ancient Masters” of England were a governing body of swordsmen who regulated the teaching of the sword and other arms. Though almost certainly respected, they were not always officially recognised by the state. In fact, they were not even legally recognised for much of history. Even when Henry VIII chose to directly patronise and officially recognise the Company of Maisters (English Martial Artists), they were still technically classified as vagrants.” (Lovegrove, 2001)

This recognition by Henry VIII is important to the development of the schools of defence which are seen in the Renaissance, previous to this as has been stated, they were considered vagrants and not productive members of society. When such a group is officially recognised by the sovereign of a particular state, this is an important step forward for the organisation. But still the group was not officially organised, could it be because they lacked a sense of unity amongst themselves. It is important for an organisation to function properly and be recognised by a sovereign, that the organisation is seen as being unified and abiding by the same principles and searching for the same sort of things. It is also important that the numbers be substantial enough that the group is large enough to be significant enough to be recognised.

“During the whole of the 16th century every master advocated a different system, consisting of his own favourite tricks. It was only when a sufficient number of schools had been formed, substantiated by a sufficient number of treatises that any basis to the art and science of swordsmanship became recognized.” (Worsfield, 2003)

Once an official organisation is set up there will always be those who choose to set up their schools outside the purview of the organisation, but take the advantage which the organisation has presented to them in the form of legitimacy. As such the Italians who arrived from the

continent, mostly did not apply to join the organisation, but used its legitimacy to found their schools and prosper. In this period, the aspect is also important to this discussion, as it is the Italians who were seen as being at the height of fashion and therefore to learn from such a master was to be seen at the height of fashion and therefore much more popular. As such, it is important to look at these Italian masters and their influence on the schools of defence.

“A gentleman wanting to learn the 'Noble Arte of Defense' would have learned from masters coming from the continent. Masters such as Bonetti, Jeronimo and Saviolo all set up schools mainly in the Outward and Bankside sections of London. As in any decent martial art training, Italian 'fencing was taught using Italian terms for the various techniques. Ranking in a school of defense was similar to the system in the trade guilds. In order for a student to rise within the school, they would 'play the prize', a pastime as popular as boar and bear baiting.” (Bankside School of Defence, 2003)

Bonetti, Jeronimo and Saviolo, all earned the irk of the Company of Maisters in England as they were seen as a threat to the standing of the corporation, and mostly because they refused to accept any jurisdiction of the corporation. This is especially evident if George Silver's *Paradoxes of Defence* is read. They were also seen as a threat due to the popularity of their particular style in England, and the threat that this was to the corporation. More or less, the Italians were seen as an “invasion” of England and the subordination of the English Martial Arts by the Italians.

Another significant master who did not come to England was Achille Marozzo. He is seen as significant due to the advances he made in the art of defence. His *Opera Nova* espouses his theories and demonstrates them. Interestingly;

“Marozzo mentions that his master in the Art was the famous Guido Antonio of Lucca, "from whose school," he quaintly adds, "have issued more warriors than ever came out of the Trojan Horse".” (Worsfield, 2003)

It must be considered that such a significant number of individuals are important as it demonstrates the popularity of the particular school of defence in Italy. The art of defence being so popular on the continent is the reason why the Italian masters who came to England were so popular, and the reason that they were seen as such a threat to the established order. Going back to Bonetti, it was he, which is credited for introducing the rapier to England when he arrived and set up his school;

“It was around 1576 that the Italian Master Rocco Bonetti, opened a school in Blackfriars, for the teaching of the newly introduced rapier.” (Worsfield, 2003)

While Bonetti can be thanked, or cursed, for introducing the rapier to England, one must examine Signior Bonetti himself and understand that it was the attraction to the popularity of

the rapier, which he brought with him, which earned him his money and respect. It is also the important aspect of fashion, which must be taken into account to find out the reason for the popularity of the rapier and indeed, Bonetti's school.

“He [Rocko] was a brash and disagreeable man but his school prospered with the support of the nobility for it was the fashion of the time to emulate the styles and manners of the continent.” (Anonymous, 2002)

## Description of the Schools

Now it is important that the schools are described. This will be done from what little information there is available to us. The description of any one particular school is not possible except at its most basic level, and as such the description of such schools in general must be extracted from those sources which are available to the researcher. What is necessary is to start with a generalised description that will allow the reader to gain some idea of what these schools looked like.

“All of these establishments have some family resemblance in that they are the resort of gentlemen and even of Olympian gods and are, therefore, respectable. But I suspect that only the fifteenth-century scene reflects the style of most plebeian schools of arms in the Middle Ages and Renaissance: plain, violent and dissolute.” (Anglo, 2000:17)

This statement refers to several figures, which can be found in Anglo (2000), and it is from these pictures that such conclusions can be made. It is clear that there are two conflicting ideas about what the schools of the Middle Ages and Renaissance looked like. One is highly respectable and neat, and the other is much lowlier. It must be understood that in general both impressions are correct as there would be in existence, both ends of a spectrum of the schools; the lowly plebeian schools and the upper class schools of the gentlemen and nobility. For the purposes of this investigation it will be the upper class schools, which are the focus. In Anglo (2000) there is a description of Rocco Bonetti's school of Elizabethan London which has been taken from George Silver's *Paradoxes of Defence*, which gives a good description of what one of these schools would look like from a certain point of view.

“Rocco had acquired a fine house in Warwick Lane ‘which he called his Colledge, for he thought it great disgrace for him to keepe a Fence-schoole’. The walls of the school were adorned with the arms of his noble pupils and their rapiers, daggers and ‘gloves of male and gantlets’. Around the floor were seats for the gentlemen to watch the lessons. A large, beautifully appointed square table was provided, with ‘inke, pens, pin-dust, and sealing waxe, and quiers of verie excellent fine paper gilded’ ready for Rocco's patrons to write their letters and dispatch them while still watching the fights - in much the same way as a modern gymnasium might supply a fax machine and the Internet. ‘And to know how the

time passed, he had in one corner of his schoole a Clocke, with a verie faire large Diall'. More significantly, however, 'he had within that schoole, a roome the which was called his privie schoole, with manie weapons therein, where he did teach his schollers his secret fight, after he had perfectly taught them their rules'." (Anglo, 2000:17)

As can be seen in the description above, Bonetti's school was outfitted with all of the highest refinements of the period, and presents itself as a school of arms for the nobility and gentlemen. The display of the various arms of the patrons of the school, referring not only to the weapons that they used but also their heraldic arms, as can be shown by the fact that the weapons are mentioned separately.

The supply of paper, ink, wax and pens is important as it avails the students of some of the assets of the school other than its teaching and allows them to also conduct their business while at the school. This is much the same as a modern gym would give the more affluent patrons access to postage and Internet services. The presence of a large clock also demonstrates the wealth of the school as in this period such a thing would have cost a great deal of money and such an expenditure would have not been possible for a poor school.

The school also demonstrates the important division between more and less experienced students by the use of a separate room for the teaching of extra skills once the students had learnt their drills and basic skills.

"The orderliness of Swanenburgh's scene was probably typical of academic schools of instruction, and later examples are often similar if less detailed." (Anglo, 2000:15)

The picture of Swanenburgh's school in Anglo (2000) is also a good demonstration of a wealthy school of the period, and also an academic one. The detail in the picture is useful for the researcher as it shows various different facets of the school, and various different skills, which would be taught, at such a school. The room is rather large so that the various skills can be practised in comfort without having to worry about being any other person's way. The training circle depicted on the floor would be used for teaching footwork and movement while fighting with various weapons. Both military and civilian weapons are depicted in the picture and this alludes to the importance of knowledge of both to the gentleman of the period.

## Training Method

To have a complete perspective of the Renaissance schools of defence it is important examine their training methods to understand what exactly was being taught at the schools. What needs to be understood is that the training methods of these schools have a long history and the masters of the schools had a lot of history to examine in choosing the training method, which they used.

“it is clear that what we know today as katas or forms were utilised by our European ancestors many centuries ago.” (Brown, 2002)

It is clear by this comment that such katas were designed to allow the students at the schools to repeat the actions until they were firmly lodged in their muscle memory so that actions would come from the unconscious. This is a large step in understanding to know that this form of training did exist and is in no way unique to modern schools. The unconscious was not neglected at any level and it must be understood that a certain amount of philosophy was also integral to the training of the students at these martial academies.

“Nor were our martial predecessors lacking in moral and philosophical beliefs and guidance. The ethics of English, and indeed European, martial arts masters, or maisters of defence as they were called by the English, would have drawn approving nods from their Oriental counterparts.” (Brown, 2002)

This idea of moral and philosophical thought is important, as it is this, which the whole idea of the duel is centred around. Duels were a matter of honour between the two combatants, and honour being very philosophical in nature is important to be recognised as significant and important to the study of any martial art. These ethics would have involved what was considered to be honourable and what was not. The weapon choice of students at these schools was broad and covered weapons of both a civilian and military nature, though, the rapier was not introduced into England until the sixteenth century. Until that time the weapons would have been those which were “native” to the country in which the school was found.

“When enrolled in the English school the scholar normally trained in two weapons, although sometimes three weapons were learned. Weapons included the longsword, the backsword, and the sword and buckler.” (Lovegrove, 2001)

It is important to know that these schools were based on the Renaissance scientific ideals, and as such were based on empirical evidence of what worked and what did not. With this basis, it is easily understood that what was taught in the schools of the Renaissance was part of a martial arts system. Not just an accumulation of knowledge presented in a very rough form for the students to work through and then attempt to understand the application of the lessons, which have been learnt. “We already know that our ancestors taught martial arts SYSTEMS and did not rely on Hollywood ‘Hack & Bash’ or unskilled ‘Hit & Hope’ tactics.” (Brown, 2002)

In the sixteenth century with the development of the rapier, and new form of combat was developed which was based on the teachings of the older methods but was not heavily reliant on the same methods that were used in these ideas. “Camillo Agrippa (1553) revealed the efficiency of the thrust, rather than the cut, as the basis of all fighting schools.” (Bankside School of Defence, 2003). This is an important step to be recognised, previous to Agrippa most of the attacks and defences, which were taught, were taught on the basis of the cut as

the most viable attack. Agrippa's intervention meant that a change to the use of the thrust as primary was developed and instituted in the schools of the sixteenth century.

It is now important that the primary sources are examined to discover those training methods, which were recognised as useful by the masters and teachers of the period, which is being discussed. It is from the perspective of these theorists and practitioners that the modern researcher and enthusiast are able to understand what was taught, how it was taught and for what reason it was taught. The principles of any form of martial art are what the particular fighting art is based upon and it is through an understanding of these principles that a further understanding of the schools is possible. Vincentio Saviolo in *His Practice in Two Bookes* sets out the importance of the principles of the martial arts.

“every man which shall not understand these measures and principles, incurres the danger of his life: and who so despiseth these grounds which are necessarye as well for the schoole as the combat, it may bee to his confusion & dishonour, and losse of his life: wherefore everye one which makes profession of this art, should seek to learn them and understand them.” (Saviolo, 1595)

To totally understand Saviolo's principles it is necessary to read his entire treatise. To know the principles which he set out this is the only method that is possible for a complete understanding. As the above quotation describes without these principles, a person who engages in mortal combat is lost before he starts, and it is vital that the principles are understood before any combat is started. George Silver extols the old methods of teaching as the best method, and that the new teaching methods have something to be desired of them. This could, of course, be Silver's support of the old English methods, and his offence against the “invasion” of the “Italianate” rapier and its teachings.

“There is no manner of teaching comparable to the old ancient teaching, that is, first their quarters, then their wards, blows, thrusts, and breaking of thrusts, then their closes and grips, striking with the hilts, daggers, bucklers, wrestlings, striking with the foot or knee in the cods, and all these are safely defended in learning perfectly of the grips. And this is the ancient teaching, and without this teaching, there shall never scholar be made able, do his uttermost, nor fight safe.” (Silver, 1968)

His derisive approach to the rapier is further exemplified in further statements in his treatise *Paradoxes of Defence*. He complains that the correct methods are no longer being taught and that when a weapon is taught all forms of attack and defence should be taught and not to just focus on one particular attack for one particular weapon.

“There is in my opinion in our fence schools an evil order or custom in these days used, the which, if it might stand with the liking of our Masters of Defence, I think it necessary to be left. For as long as it is used, it shall be hard to make a good scholar. That is this,

at the single sword, sword and dagger, & sword and buckler, they forbid the thrust, & at the single rapier, and rapier & dagger, they forbid the blow.” (Silver, 1968)

He further then complains about the attacks which are not taught in the schools, which he feels are basic to the successful use of weapons. “Besides, there are now in these days no grips, closes, wrestlings, striking with the hilts, daggers, or bucklers, used in fencing schools.” (Silver, 1968). He feels that these are all necessary for the successful use of weapons and the protection of the body in combat. He then goes on to explain that without the correct teaching and the inclusion of such maneuvers in the teaching that students are not taught the correct method. The result is that students are not able to stand up against even a person who has had no martial training whatsoever.

“He being fast tied to such school-play as he has learned, has lost thereby the benefit of nature, and the plowman is now by nature without art a far better man than he. Therefore in my opinion as long as we bar any manner of play in school, we shall hardly make a good scholar.” (Silver, 1968)

What is also important to be realised is that there is a great difference between the fighting that is done at a school and that which is, or was done on the duelling field. The fight at schools is limited by the pedagogical nature of the school, in comparison to the live or die nature of the duelling field in the Renaissance. Much has been said of this difference and it is important for the reader to realise that there is a great deal of difference between the two.

"But I say there is great ods betwixt fighting in the field and playing in the fence-schoole, for in the field being both sober, I meane if it be in a morning upon cold blood, then every man will as much feare to kill as to be killed, againe a man shall see to defend either blow or thrust in the field then in a fence schoole, for a man will be more bold with a foile or a cudgell, because there is small danger in either of them." (Swetnam in ARMA, 2003)

In a lot of ways this comes down to the situation and the psychology associated with it. In a school there is less chance of injury or even death, on the duelling field, on the other hand, there is a high chance of injury or death (as this was the purpose in most cases). This also changes what moves would be used on the field that may not be used on in the school. The actions, which could be used on the field of the duel, may not be used in the school as they may be far too dangerous and may injure the students. It also must be understood that such techniques were no doubt taught to the students so that they are able to handle a serious encounter, but in the situation of the school they would be used only in a practice session due to their danger to fellow students. What also must be understood is that not all of the schools held the same reputation. Some were more well thought of than others and to be able to claim that a gentleman went to a particular school for their education in arms would place that gentleman above others who could not afford to do so.

## Training by Reputation

“In many cases the rapier man purchased their tuition by the “label” that came with it, thinking that a couple of lessons under an Italian master would make them the equal of an English swordsman of several years’ experience. No doubt that this notion of false security led to many the death of a boastful young man.” (Lovegrove, 2001)

This is where that old saying, "a little knowledge is a dangerous thing", comes to be more and more true. To be able to claim that a particular Italian master taught a gentleman at this particular school in the Renaissance period was to say that the best training had been paid for. It is a similar thing today in the difference between those who get their schooling at a private school and those who go to public schools. Training by an Italian master especially in Elizabethan England said that the individual was at the height of fashion, and that he had the money to spend at a fencing school to ensure that he was up with the latest techniques.

Of course, this sort of thing did lead some to be boastful, and this boasting led to arguments and often duels. The perceived advantage of the teaching of the Italian master only would come to fruition after the training had been completed, and not during it, though the student’s skill would increase during the time. A small amount of training, even from an Italian master was no match for years of experience.

What is useful to say, especially with regard to the overall topic of discussion, is that the Renaissance schools of defence often thrived due to their reputation, or the privilege of having an Italian master running the school. The reputation of the school is what attracted its clients, and therefore made it money. If a gentleman went through a particular school and then was killed in a duel, questions would be raised about the school’s teaching methods. The school’s reputation, however, did not rest upon the outcome of one particular student’s duel; it was built up over time.

These schools of arms were, in a way, schools that would be recognisable by today’s standards. Admittedly they did not have the same curriculum, but there were gradings and examinations for the students to pass through to get to the next level.

## Examinations

“European martial artists ... took gradings, which the English called prizes. In England these events were held in public to prove that there was no cheating or favouritism. Prizes were incredible feats of courage and endurance that not only tested a man’s technical ability but his mettle as well.” (Brown, 2002)

These examinations, as has been stated, were public events watched by all that were in the area. There was a small fee to be in attendance, but watching the prize-playing became an

English past-time. Each time a particular member of a school which was recognised by the London Masters of Defence wished to attain the next rank, he had to fight a prize. This ensured that the candidates were skilful enough to be accepted at the various ranks within the organisation. To be able to play a person's prize the particular candidate would have to be nominated by their master and this master would present them to the other masters for their examination.

“The examinations were public occasions and took place before the masters, provosts and scholars, together with a large lay audience. The master who had taught the candidate presented him to the other masters; the tests with various weapons followed; and then, if successful, the candidate's new grade was publicly proclaimed and he took a solemn oath to observe all the rules appertaining to his art.” (Anglo, 2000:9)

The public proclamation of the candidate's new rank and the oath were two of the most important parts of the process. This allowed the public to know that the candidate had successfully attained the desired rank. Also, if it was a master's prize, that interested parties could petition the new master to be taught by him and were assured that the candidate would treat them with respect and follow the rules set down by the masters. The oath was taken publicly to ensure that the candidate was aware that everyone would know if he broke his oath, and also to ensure that he understood the importance of the oath that he had taken. But this process only happened at the end of a successful prize-playing, first was the ordeal of the prize itself.

“He would have to fight three bouts apiece with every answerer with each weapon he was prizing at. So, for example, if a scholar (basic rank) was playing his free scholars prize which usually involved two weapons (typically, broadsword and quarterstaff) and ten students turned up to fight him he would have to fight a total of sixty bouts with virtually no respite since the fights were continuous.” (Brown, 2002)

The rank of free scholar was only the second step along the process to becoming a master. The third step was that of the provost, or assistant master, and only then would he reach the rank of master. Each one of the intervening prizes increasing the number of weapons that were used in the prize, and also the skill of the opponents that the candidate would have to face. Along with the actual ordeal of the prize-playing, to achieve the rank of master, or doctorate, the candidate also had to prove that he was sufficiently capable of teaching and that his knowledge of fencing theory was sound. This particular process was watched by all of the masters.

“if anyone wished to achieve the excellent rank of a doctorate his wisdom would first be diligently examined. And the same procedure had applied to Masters of Fencing. Anyone intending to teach the art had first to demonstrate his knowledge of fencing theory before being confronted with a bad student - whose performance he had to

criticize and correct - and then with various able students. The whole procedure was assessed by established masters who only granted a privilege when satisfied as to the candidate's competence" (Anglo, 2000:9)

Needless to say that once a person had successfully attained the rank of Master of Fencing, he had earned the title with a great deal of effort. The only rank above that of master was the Ancient Masters who were selected from amongst the masters to lead the corporation. This gives a very rough idea about the examination process that went into gaining the various ranks within a school. In this way the schools of defence in the Renaissance period were in basic terms a lot like modern schools. It was from this basis that the schools of the next period were based, as will be demonstrated in the next section.

## Later History

Due to the lack of detail about the Renaissance schools of defence, it is useful to examine those schools, which came afterwards. This is on the basis that these schools were often based on the principles of the Renaissance schools, which were in existence before them. To this point this particular section will examine one school in particular, that being the school of Domenico Angelo of the eighteenth century. Angelo wrote a book about the school that he set up and it is useful to examine this text to get an idea of what this school was like.

"The School of Fencing by Domenico Angelo London 1787 was the first fencing manual to emphatically insist on the value of fencing as an exercise and sport of skill to be practiced for the improvement of health, poise and grace. Domenico Angelo founded the most famous school of fencing in Europe, which flourished for 150 years. It was established in the heart of London in the middle of the 18th century, when the pistol was replacing the sword in duelling." (Worsfield, 2003)

It is interesting that at this point in time that the sword was being replaced by the pistol in duelling, and yet Angelo's school was still able to flourish by teaching the art of the sword alongside the use of the pistol. As is noted above, the sword was still being taught on the basis that skill with the sword was a useful exercise, as far as health and the body was concerned. Not only did it do these things but it was also considered good for the character of the individual taking such lessons. It is the scientific study of the use of the sword as a weapon which can be most attributed to the Renaissance schools of defence. The extra elements of character building, and an education in the etiquette of the use of the sword, especially in duelling, can also be attributed to the Renaissance schools of defence.

"His book did much to advance the Art of Fencing in France that it was considered by the French and English to take first place as a school for the science, a position formerly held by Italy. No doubt the Italians felt that the "title" had never changed hands." (Worsfield, 2003)

The success of this book also demonstrates the declining influence of the Italian schools of fence and the emergence of the French. Of course, there was still a great deal of debate about which school was truly still the head of the science of fencing. Through the often strange patterns of history it was to be fashion which dictated which would be the most popular just as it was fashion which dictated the change from the rapier to the small-sword. It must also be understood that it was not only the small-sword that was being taught but various other weapons as well.

“This heavy military sabre, and its counterpart the naval cutlass, with their wide circular cuts, was long used in fencing schools and still practiced at the beginning of this century [18<sup>th</sup>].” (Worsfield, 2003)

These military weapons were considered important for study especially for the gentleman of the period, as it was these weapons which officers would use in a military situation. As far as the civilian styles of the time it was the *épée de combat* which would replace the rapier in matters of honour where swords were to be reverted to for duelling.

“The "epee de combat" evolved in the mid 19th century to prepare fencers in the schools for the more serious encounters.” (Worsfield, 2003)

It is this weapon that the modern weapon, the *épée* in sport fencing, was based upon. The foil was based on the practice weapon that was used in the schools for drilling and practice. The rule of right of way was designed to protect the face in the school due to the fact that fencing masks were not being worn during this period. The sabre of the modern game is loosely based on the sabre that was taught in these schools, initially meant for horse combat hence the upper body being the target.

These were essentially civilian schools devoted to studying civilian weapons, for an examination of the education in the military weapons of the period it is necessary to look at the military academies of the period. These will be addressed in the next section so it is possible to examine both the civilian and military modes of sword combat.

## Military Academies

The growing complications in warfare “all led to an increasing demand for a specialist military education which would produce leaders and captains able to cope with these new factors.” (Anglo, 2000:282). This is the reason given for the growth and development of military academies towards the end of the sixteenth century and on. Military academies are linked to the subject of Renaissance schools of defence on the basis that it was the ideas behind the scholastic elements of those schools that the military academies were based.

“each of these academies made provision for instruction not only in up-to-date

theoretical military sciences and mathematics but also in all the old skills of personal combat as recommended by chivalric and humanistic authors: riding, gymnastics, wrestling, weapon handling in general, and fencing in particular.” (Anglo, 2000:282)

This gives us an idea of an holistic curriculum which was taught at these school much the same as what was taught at Angelo’s school above, and the Renaissance schools of defence. The idea behind this was to provide the students with a complete education, rather than just telling them how to use the weapons of their profession. Though the use of the sword in such schools for warfare where the firearm was dominating the battlefield has always been questioned by some historians.

“The precise role of sword instruction in these academies is difficult to determine but, in practical terms, it was probably only to teach budding young officers how to kill their peers on the duelling field:” (Anglo, 2000:285)

The sword, was however, considered by some theorists to be an important part of a military education as it was considered that this weapon was the last refuge of any military man in a combat situation. It is in this idea that we also gain a further link to the Renaissance period and the ideas of the schools on which the education in the sword is based.

“That disputatious Elizabethan soldier Sir John Smythe roundly declared that the sword was the ‘last weapon of refuge both for horsemen and footmen’; and this was not only true in the sixteenth century but remained so to the latter half of the nineteenth.” (Anglo, 2000:283)

Hence, according to Sir John Smythe, an education in the use of the sword was an essential part of any military man’s education, just as an education in the use of the sword was an essential part of the gentleman’s education in the Renaissance. This highlights one of the basic principles of all of the schools, Renaissance and later, military and civilian, the use of the sword was considered to be useful to men in all periods where at some point in time its use was the last recourse in a hostile situation.

## Conclusion

The Renaissance schools of defence were an essential part of the landscape in any city of the Renaissance. For the gentleman of the period whose life often relied upon what he was taught and what he learnt at these schools, these schools assisted him to survive in the time in which he lived. It was not, however, only martial skills that were taught at these schools but also the etiquette of the sword, and also about the all-important duel.

Historiographical issues are a part of all research, and none so much as the study of

Renaissance schools of defence. It is important to recognise that what can be collected and collated today is only a small amount of the information which is necessary to understand what these schools were all about and what was taught there. Only through an examination of various other sources is it possible to gain any sort of accurate idea about what these schools were like. So it is obvious that through the research, which has been done a general idea of what these schools were like, can be accessed and this used to understand them and appreciate them more fully.

General information about the schools is useful and it gives us an idea about what the schools were about and how they functioned from a very basic point of view. The general information is useful as it leads to more specific information. Knowing that the schools had a ranking system allows the researcher to understand that there were specific levels of achievement in the schools that a particular student had to progress through. This gives us the idea that such schools did have a form of pedagogical standard for the students to progress through in order to successfully complete their education.

These schools of defence were not a Renaissance idea but began much earlier in history, and it was only during the Renaissance period that such schools really began to establish themselves as true educational institutions. It must also be recognised that previous to their acknowledgement as legitimate organisations, these schools were not thought of very highly but were considered to be lowly, and even disreputable. The ordinances of the city of London highlight this point. It must have taken a great change in attitude for such a change to take place in the status of the schools. In many ways this can be attributed to fashion, as it was these schools which were teaching the latest styles of civilian combat. It was also recognised that in single combat skill with the sword was the deciding factor, and this skill came from the schools of defence.

To truly appreciate the schools it is necessary to look at each important detail and examine it. It is only through this process that these schools can be understood. From a general point of view it can be seen that these schools became legitimate educational organisations with their own ranking systems and methods of examination. It is also important to note that going to one of these schools did not necessarily guarantee success in an armed situation.

The later history of the schools is useful to examine to fill in those details which are absent from the historical record, but also to see how the schools influenced the later periods and the educational organisations of those periods. For the gentleman of the Renaissance period these schools were essential for the learning of those skills, which would keep them alive in a martial encounter, and it is this that is the most important part of the existence of these schools.

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