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or
Hanko Döbringer
fechtbuch from 1389

Translation and transcription by
David Lindholm and friends.
Here begins Master Liechtenauer’s art of fencing with the sword, on foot and on horseback, in armour and without. And before all things you should know and understand that the sword is only one art and it was devised and thought out hundreds of years ago. This art is the foundation and core and it was completely understood and known by Master Liechtenauer. Not that he himself devised or thought out what is described, but he travelled and searched through many lands since he wanted to learn and experience this art. And this art is quite earnest and righteous, and it goes from the nearest in search of the closest and goes straight and right when you wish to strike or thrust. So that when you want to attack someone it is as if you had a cord tied to the point or edge of your sword and this leads the point or edge to an opening.
For you should strike or thrust in the shortest and nearest way possible. For in this righteous fencing do not make wide or ungainly parries or fence in large movements by which people restrict themselves. Many Masters of play fighting [Leychmeistere] say that they themselves have thought out a new art of fencing that they improve from day to day. But I would like to see one who could think up a fencing move or a strike which does not come from Liechtenauer’s art. Often they want to alter or give a new name to a technique, all out of their own heads and think up wide reaching fencing and parries and often make two or three strikes when one would be enough or stepping through and thrust, and for this they receive praise from the ignorant. With their bad parries and wide fencing they try to look dangerous with wide and long strikes that are slow and with these they perform strikes.
that miss and create openings in themselves. They have no proper reach in their fencing and that belongs not to real fencing but only to school fencing and the exercises for their own sake. But real fencing goes straight and is simple in all things without holding back or being restricted just as if a string had been tied or as if they had been connected. When you strike or thrust at another in front of you, then no strikes or thrusts before or behind, nor besides or wide reaching movements or many strikes will help if you hold back and lose the chance. Instead you must strike straight and direct to the man, to the head or to the body whatever is the closest and quickest. This must be done with speed and rather with one strike than with four or six which will again leave you hanging and giving the opponent a chance to hit you.

The first strike [Vorschlag] is a great advantage in the fencing as you will hear in the text. Therefore Liechtenauer says that only five strikes with other techniques should you use in real fencing. And he teaches these straight and
simple and does them as quickly and as direct as possible. And you will lay under you all the drumming and new inventions by the [Leychmeistere] or play masters since these [five strikes] are the foundation of his [Liechtenauer's] art. Note and know also that it is not possible to explain the art of fencing as well with words as one can show it with the hand. Therefore open your mind and ponder well and the more you train yourself in play the more you will think of it in earnest. For practice is better than art, your exercise does well without the art, but the art is not much good without the exercise. Know also that a good fencer should before all things know his sword and be able to grip it well with both hands, between the cross guard and the pommel since you will then be safer than if you did grip it with one hand on the pommel. And you will also strike harder and truer, with the pommel swinging itself and turning in the strike you will strike harder than if you were holding the pommel. When you pull the pommel in the strike you will not come as perfect or as strongly. For the sword is like a scale, if a sword is large and heavy then the pommel must also be large and heavy to balance it like a scale.

rechter kunst slecht und gerade dar blegen noch dem aller nehesten und schiresten / als mag is nu[e]r dar komen / und lest alles trummel werk / und new funden unterwegen von den leychmeistere dy doch gruntlich aus syner kunst dar komen / Auch merke das / und wisse das man nicht gar eygentlich und bedeutlich von dem fechten mag sagen und schreiben ader aus legen / als man is wol mag / czeigen und weisen mit der hant / Dorumbe tu of dyne synnen und betrachte is deste vas / und ube dich do-rynne deste mer yn schimpfe / zo gedenk-stu ir deste vas in ernste / wen ubunge ist besser wenne kunst / denne ubunge tawg wol ane kunst aber kunst tawg nicht wol ane u[e]bunge Auch wisse das eyn guter fechter sal vo[e]r allen sachen syn swert gewisse und sicher fu[e]ren und fassen mit baiden henden / czwischen gehilcze und klos / wen alzo helt her das swert vil sicher / den das hers bey dem klosse vasset mit eyner hant / Und slet auch vil harter und su[e]rer / alzo / wen der klos o[e]ber wirft sich und swenkt sich noch dem slage das der slag vil harter / dar kumpt / den das her das swert mit dem klosse vasset Wen alzo czo[e]ge her den slag mit dem klosse weder das her nicht zo vo[e]lko[e]mlich und zo stark mo[e]chte dar komen / Wen das swert
Also know that when you fence with another you should step with caution and be sure in them [the steps or movements] as if you were standing on a scale and adapt accordingly if you go forward or backward as is fitting. Easy and quickly with good heart and good knowledge or sense you should go and without fear, as you will know hereafter. You should also show reach in your fencing as is suitable and not step too wide, so that you can pull back and be ready for another step backwards or forwards. Often two shorter steps will happen before a long one. And often you must make a short leap with short steps, and often you must make a good step or leap. And what you would try readily in earnest or in play, should be hidden from him so that he does not know what you intend to try against him.

ist recht zam eyn woge / den ist eyn swert gros und swer / zo mus der klos auch dornoeh swer syn / recht zam noch eynen wogen / Auch wisse wen eyner mit eyme ficht / zo sal her syner / schrete wol war nemen / und sicher in den seyn / wen her recht zam of eyner wogen stechen sol / hindersich / ader vorsich czu treten / noch deme als sichs gepu[e]rt / gefu[e]ge und gerinklich / risch und snelle / und gar mit gutem mute und guter gewissen ader vornunft sal deyn fechten dar gehen / und an alle vorchte / als man das hernoch wirt ho[e]ren / Auch saltu mosse haben yn deyme gefechte dornoeh als sichs gepu[e]rt / und salt nicht czu weit schreiten / das du dich desto vas eyns / andern schretes irholen mages / hinderdich / ader vordich czutuen / noch deme als sich wo[e]rde gepuren / Auch gepuren sich oft czwene korcze schrete vor eynem lagen / und oft gepu[e]rt sich das eyner eyn lewftcheyn mus tuen / mit korczen schreten / und oft das eyner eynen guten schret ader sprunk mus tuen / Und was eyner redlichs wil treiben czu schimpfe / ader czu ernste / das sal her eyme vor den ogen / fremde und vorworren / machen / das iener nicht merkt was deser keyn im meynt czutreiben/
And when you close with him thinking that you have the correct measure and believe that you can reach him, and then you shall go at him quickly and with speed to the head and to the body. You will hit or miss and win the first strike [Vorschlag], and not let him come to anything as you will hear hereafter in the true teaching. You should always look for the upper openings [Blossen] rather than the lower, and go over his hilt with strikes or thrusts artfully and quickly. For you have better reach over the hilt than under it and you are also much safer in all your fencing. The upper touch is much better than the lower. But it may also happen that you are closer to the lower opening and therefore seek it, as often happens. Also know that one should close in with him from the right hand side in the fencing, and in all things in fencing and in wrestling you take him better like this than straight on. And if you know this technique and make use of it, then you are not a bad fencer.
Also know that when you wish to fence in earnest, then you shall have a finished piece in [your mind], any [technique or strategy] you want that is complete and correct and hold it in all seriousness and firmly in your mind when you want to close with him as if you would say “This is what I intend!”. And then you will have success with the help of God and not go wrong. You do what you should when you bravely rush the opponent with the first strike [Vorschlag] as you will know hereafter.
To all fencing belongs the aid of God with the right, leap straight and sound, choose a ready sword, before [Vor], after [Nach], weak [Weich], strong [Hart] and “In that instance” [Indes], note that word. Strike [Hewe], thrust [Stosse], cut [Snete] and press [Drucken], guards [Huten], covers [Schutze], stabing [Stossen], Jeffrey Hull made the suggestion that Stossen might also refer to pushing someone’s body, either away or to the side. This is also a possible interpretation) feeling [Fuhlen], withdrawing [Zucken], turning [Winden] and hanging [Hengen], pulling back [Rucken], strike [Streiche], leap [Sprunge], grab [Greiffen], wrestling [Rangen] knowing [Visseheit] and daring [Kunheit], caution [Vorsichtikeit], cunning [List] and wisdom [Klugheit], reach [Masse] and secrecy [Vorborgenheit], reason [Vernuft], intuition [Vorbeachtung] and readiness [Fetikeit], practice and good cheer, with agility step well. In these verses are fundamentals and principles, and what belongs to them are named. All the skills of fencing you should consider correctly, as you hereafter will really hear and read, all simply and after its nature. Fencer, do this and the art will become clear. From the sword, do good and wide covers.
Motion/movement [Motus], note that word well, it is to the fencing a heart and a crown, it is the very matter of fencing. All that it contains and all the fundamentals will be mentioned by name and made well understood hereafter. When you fence with another, then in this you are well taught, and remain fast in movement, and do not tarry when he starts to fence with you. Then make without limit and end that which is skillful. Be quick and steady without faltering, at once so that he cannot strike. That is fortunate and he will be hurt, when he cannot strike away, as the other cannot part without being beaten. And after the teaching that is here described, I say truly, that the other cannot defend without danger. If you have understood this he will not come to strikes. Here note that constant motion [Frequens motus] holds the beginning, middle and the end of all fencing according to this art and teaching. That is you should quickly do the beginning, the middle and the end without delay and without any hindrances from the opponent and not letting him strike at you. That concept comes from the two words before [Vor] and after [Nach], that is the first strike [Vorschlag] and the after strike [Nachschlag], in the middle.
This is the general foreword to the unarmoured [blossfechten] fencing on foot, note this well.
Young knights learn to love God and honour women that your honour may grow. Practice knightly things and learn arts that help you and grant you honour in war. Wrestle well; grab the lance, spear, sword and falchion. Do this manly and make it useless in other hands. Strike threefold and hard in there, rush in regardless if you hit or miss, so that in understanding this you will be known as a wise man. This you shall know, that all things have length and measure. Do what you wish to do with good understanding. In earnest or in play have good heart with measure. Thus you beware and look with good cheer; this is what you shall do and how you go against him. For good heart and force makes your opponent weak, govern yourself after this; never give an advantage for nothing. Do not be rash; do not first do four or six (I believe Döbringer is referring to strikes. But it might also be opponents). With your overconfidence be moderate, which is good for you. He is a brave man who fights his own weaknesses. It is no shame to flee when four or six (foes) are at hand. Do not strike at the sword but wait for the openings.
This is a general teaching of the sword. If you want to display skill, go with the left and follow right with the strikes, and left with right is how you will fence with strength. If you only strike after, you will have little joy from his art, strike him wherever you wish, and no changer [Wechsler] will come within your shield. To the head, to the body and do not forget the withdrawing [Zucken]. Do with the entire body what you wish to do firmly. Hear what is bad; do not fence above left if you are a right hander. And if you are a left hander then leave the right behind and fence rather from high left to low (on the right).

Before [Vor] and after [Nach], from these two things the whole art stem, weak [Weich] and strong [Hart], in an instant [Indes] note that word well. Thus you may learn with work and defend artfully, if you frighten easily, do not learn how to fence. Knowledge [Kunheit] and skill [Rischeit], cunning [List], prudence [Vorsichtikeit] and wisdom [Klugheit], this fencing desire and cheerfully do. Do not strike to the sword; instead go for the openings [Blossen], reason, secrecy, reach, foreknowing and readiness [Vornuft, vorborgenheit, mosse bevorbetrachtunge, hobsheit, fetikeit].

Here follows a general teaching (Glosa generalis hiuius sequitur)

Before all know and note that the point of the sword is the centre and also its centre and core and from this comes all fencing and all returns to it. So the hangings [Hengen] and the turnings [Winden] is the hanging in and the going around of the centre.
and from these good fencing will be done, and it is so thought out and discovered that a fencer who like so always strikes or thrusts at the point [of the opponents weapon] do not always hit well. But with these techniques striking [Hawende], thrusting [Stechende] or cutting [Sneydende], stepping in or out [Abe und czutreten], stepping around [Umbeschreiten] or a leap [Springen], will hit the other. And if someone shoots or steps forward with the point and lengthens or moves it forward, the other cannot hurt or shorten you with turnings [Winden] or stepping out [Czutreten]. Then the opponent cannot come into safe techniques and pieces such as the strike, thrust or cut. For Liechtenauer’s art is founded on principles of all the fencing skills and on the art of the sword. Strikes, thrusts and cuts as you will hear later here, how to do techniques and defend against what the other does, and how to do one out of the other if one (technique) is defended against, then the other technique will hit and have success. Secondly know and note that not one thing on the sword is without its use or reason. Therefore you should use the point [Ort], both edges [Sneiden], cross guard [Gehilcze] and pommel [Klos] and all that is on the sword. As they
are meant to be used in the art of fencing as is done in the exercises as you will find hereby. Also know and note when he says that you should show art, then he intends that the artful fencer should place his left foot forward and strike with it from the right side straight at the man with true strikes as soon as you see how you can take him and reach him with your own steps. Also when you want to fence strongly, then fence from the left side with the whole body and with full force to the head and to the body wherever you can hit – and never to his sword, but as if he (the opponent) does not have a sword or as if you cannot see. And you shall not disdain any following or contacts made, but always work and remain in motion so the he cannot come to blows. He (Liechtenauer) also means that you should not step straight in with the blows, but from the side at an angle so that you come in from the side where you can reach him easier than from the front. When you strike or thrust at him, he will not be able to defend with other techniques and neither lead it away by changing through [Durchwechsel] as long as the strikes or thrusts are to the man, to the openings [Blossen] to the head and the body with steps and leaps in from the side.
Also note and know what he says here, before [Vor], after [Nach], the two things do, he names the five words; Before [Vor], After [Nach], Weak [Weich], Strong [Hart], in that instant/just as [Indes]. On these words hinge the whole art of Liechtenauer, and they are the foundation and cornerstone of all fencing on foot or on horseback, in armour [Harnusche] or without [Blos]. Regardless if you hit or miss, as Liechtenauer says, strike and rush in and then follow no matter if you hit or miss. The word before [Vor] means that a good fencer will always win the first strike [Vorschlag]. When you step or leap in to close with the opponent as soon as you see that you can reach him with step or leap, then you shall close with strikes to the openings [Blossen] and fence at the head or the body without any fear at all as you will surely win against him. Therefore when you win the first strike [Vorschlag] if you hit then follow up the hit quickly,
but if the other defends against the first strike [Vorschlag] whether it was a strike or a thrust and turns it away and leads with his sword, then you shall remain on the sword if you were deflected from the opening and feel if the opponent is hard [Hart] or soft [Weich] and strong [Stark] or weak [Swach] on the sword. And when you notice this, then be hard or soft against the opponent as he defends himself. And then in an instant [Indes] should you do the after strike [Nachschlag] before the opponent has a chance to come to blows, that is as soon as the opponent defends against the first strike [Vorschlag] as you do that, attack other openings [Blossen] with other techniques speedily. And always be in motion, this will force the opponent to be on the defence and not be able to come to blows himself. For he who defends against strikes is always in greater danger than the one who strikes, since he must either defend or allow himself to be hit if he is to have a chance to strike a blow himself. That is why Liechtenauer says; “I say truthfully, no man can defend without danger”. If you have understood this he will not come to blows, and you already know the five words that this art consists of. Therefore in all sword-play someone who strikes will often defeat a Master if he is bold and gain the first strike [Vorschlag] according to this teaching.

ab iener in syme abeleiten und schu[e]tzten
der hewe ader stiche / an syme swerte weich
der herte / swach ader stark sey / Ist denne
das her nu[e] wol fu[e]let / wy iener in syme
geferte ist / is das iener stark und herte ist/
Indes das hers nu[e] genczlich merkt und
fu[e]let zo sal her Indes ader under dez das
sich iener zo schu[e]tz / weich und swach
dirweder syn / und in den selben e den /
das iener czu keyme slage kome / so sal her
denne den nochslag tuen / das ist / das her
czu haut / dy weile sich iener schu[e]tzten
und sich des vorslags weret / is sy haw ader
stich zo sal her ander gefechte und sto[e]cke
hervo[e]rsu[e]chen / mit den her aber czu
syen blo[e]ßen hurt und rawschet / alzo
das her umbermer in bewegunge und in
beru[e]runge sy / das her ienen als irre /
und berawbet mache / das iener mit syme
schu[e]tzten und weren / alzo vil czu schaffent
habe / das her / der schu[e]tzer / czu syner
slege / keyne komen mag / wen eyner der
sich sal schu[e]tzten / und der slege warnen-
men der ist allemal in gro[e]ßer var denne
der der da slet of in / denne her mus ia dy
slege weren / ader mus sich lasen treffen /
daz her selber mu[e]lich / czu slage mag ko-
men / dorum spricht lichtnawer / Ich sage
vor ware sich schutzt keyn man ane vare /
Hastu vornomen czu slage mag her kleyne
kommen / Bustu anders noch den fu[e]nff
wo[e]rtern / of dy dese rede gar get / Und
alles fechten darum slet oftey hawer eyn
meister wen her ku[e]ne ist und den vorschlag
gewinet / noch deser lere /
With the word before [Vor] as has been told before, he [Liechtenauer] means that you with a good first strike [Vorschlag] shall close in without fear or hesitation and strike at the openings [Blossen], to the head and to the body, regardless whether you hit or miss you will confuse the opponent and put fear into him, so that the he does not know what to do against you. Then before the opponent can gather himself and come back, you shall do the after strike [Nachschlag] so that he will have to defend yet again and not be able to strike himself. Thus when you strike the first strike [Vorschlag] and the opponent defends against this, in the defence you will always be first to reach the after strike [Nachschlag] before the opponent. As soon as you can you should go with the pommel to the head or come in with the cross strike [Zwerchhaw] that is always good to do, or you can throw the sword forward crosswise in and by that enter into other techniques. You can also initiate other good moves since the opponent will not be able to strike. You shall hear how you do one thing from another so that the opponent cannot come at you without being struck, if you act according to this teaching. You shall do with one mind and one strike the first strike [Vorschlag] and the after strike [Nachschlag] quickly one after the other, and when it happens that the opponent defends against the strike, then he will do this with his sword and you will be on his sword. And when the opponent is slow and late then you can remain on his sword and right away turn [Wind] and note and feel [Fulen] if the other gathers himself in order to move away or not. If he moves off when you have come on the sword in front of one another and extend the points at one another to the openings [Blossen], then you shall –before the opponent has time to gather himself in order to strike or thrust-

wenn mit dem worte vor als e gesprochen ist / meynt her das eyner mit eyme guten vorslage ader mit dem ersten slage / sal eyner kunlich an alle vorchte dar hurten und rawschen / keyn den blo[e]ssen czu koppe ader czu leibe / her treffe ader vele / das her ienen czu haut als betewbet / mache und in irschrecke das her nicht weis was her keyn desem solle weder tuen / Und auch e dene sich iener weder keyns irhole / ader weder czu im selber kome / das her denne czu hant den nochslag tue / Und im io zo vil schaffe / czu weren und czu schu[e]tzten / das her nicht mo[e]ge czu slage komen / denne wen deser der ersten slag / ader den vorslag tuet / und in iener denne weret / in dem selben weren und schutzen / zo kumpt deser denne alle mal e czu dem nochslage den iener czu den ersten den her mag czu haut czu varn mit dem klosse / ader mag in dy twerhewe komen / dy czu male gut syn / ader mag sost das swert dy twer vor werfen / do mite her in ander gefechte kumpt / ader sost mancherleye mag her wol beginen / e denne iener czu slage kumpt / als du wirst horen wy sich eyns aus den andern macht / das iener nicht mag von im komen ungeslagen / tut her anders noch deser lere / (wenne her sal mit eyme gedanken / und zam mit eyme slage / ab is mo[e]glich were / den vorslag und nochschlag tuen / risch und snelle nocheynander) / Auch mo[e]chte is wol dar czu komen ab iener den vorslag weret so mu[e]ste her in weren mit dem swerte / und alzo mu[e]ste her desen io an syn swert komen / Und wen denne iener etzwas trege und las were zo mo[e]chte deser denne an dem swerte bleyben und sal denne zu hant winden / und sol gar eben merken und fulen / ab sich iener wil abeczihen von dem swerte / ader nicht / Czewt sich iener ab / als sy nu[e] vor mit eynander an dy swert sint komen / und dy orter keyn eynander rechen / czu der blossen / E denne sich / denne iener keyns haws ader stichs of eyn news weder
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follow him with the point and do a good thrust to the chest or something like that as quickly and directly as you can. That is you should not let him escape unharmed from the sword. Since you know at once that you have a shorter way to the opponent since you already have your point on the [his] sword, as close and as short as possible. Then if you move away to do another strike or thrust and you do a wide movement, then the opponent will always be able to beat you to the [Nachschlag] with a strike or thrust, then he can hit you with the first strike [Vorschlag]. And this is what Liechtenauer means with the word [Nach]. When you have done the first strike [Vorschlag] then you shall without any delay do the [Nachschlag] and you should also stay in motion and do one thing after another. If the first [attack] does not work then the second, the third or the fourth will hit, and you shall not let the opponent come to blows. Since no one has greater advantage than he who fights according to the teaching of the five words. But if it is so that the opponent remains on the sword after his defence and is on the sword, and it has occurred that you remain with him on the sword and he has not done the [Nachschlag] then you shall turn [Wind] and remain with him on the sword. And you shall notice straight away if the opponent is weak [Swach] or strong [Stark]. If it is so that you feel and notice that the opponent is strong [Stark] and hard [Herte] and firm [Veste] on the sword and intends to push your sword away, then you shall be weak [Swach] and yielding [Weich] and give way to his strength and let the opponent push his sword to the side and go with this. You shall then leave his sword quickly and speedily and

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move away and go at his openings [Blossen] to the head and the body with strikes and thrusts or with cuts, in the simplest and shortest way that you can. Since the harder and surer someone presses and pushes with his sword, while the other is weak against and let his sword yield, the wider his sword is pushed to the side the more open he will become and the other can then hit him as he pleases before the other can gather himself again and attack with a new strike or thrust. But if the opponent is weak and soft at the sword and you notice this well and feel, then you should be strong and hard against the sword and should let your point go straight and hard on his sword, at his openings as directly as possible. Just as if there was a thread tied to your point leading you in the shortest way to the opponent’s openings. And this thrust you should do when you are notice that the opponent is weak and allow his sword to be pushed back and allows himself to get hit, or if he is strong and defends and displace the thrust (pushes you aside). If the opponent remains strong at the sword and deflects the sword and defends against the thrust, that is that he pushes the sword swiftly away, you should be soft and yielding and let your sword yield before you and then speedily go at his openings with strikes, thrusts or cuts in any way you can. This is what Liechtenauer means by the words soft [Weich] and strong [Hart]. And this comes from the authorities
as Aristotle said in the book Peri Hermianias; opposita iuxta se posita magis elucescunt / vel exposita oppositorum cui autem [opposed near him set wise men shine forth or abandon opposition]. Weak against strong, hard against soft and vice versa. Because when it is strong against strong, the stronger one will always win. That is why Liechtenauer’s swordsmanship is a true art that the weaker wins more easily by use of his art than the stronger by using his strength. Otherwise what use would the art be? Therefore learn well to feel [Fuhlen] in the swordplay. As Liechtenauer says [Das Fuhlen] learn how to feel. In an instant/just as [Indes] is a sharp word. Thus when you find yourself on another’s sword and feel [Fuhlen] well if he is weak or strong at the sword, then at once [Indes] follow and know what is appropriate for you to do according to the aforesaid teaching and art. Then he will not be able to leave your sword without getting hurt. Thus Liechtenauer says “Strike so that he moves, if he withdraws from you”. After this teaching you understand how you will win the first strike [Vorschlag] and as soon as you have done this, then quickly and without any delay do the after strike [Nachschlag] that is the second, third or fourth strike, cut or thrust so that he cannot come to blows himself. If you then find yourself on his sword, then be sure that you feel [Fuhlen] and do as before has been described, since this is the basic tenet of swordsmanship: that a man is always in motion and never at rest, and it is also based on feeling [Fuhlen], so do as it is stated above. No matter what you do or attempt to do, always have measure [Limpf] and length [Masse]. If you have won the first strike [Vorschlag] then do not perform it too slowly, but move fast so that you can gather yourself for the after strike [Nachschlag] as well. That is why Liechtenauer says “Always know this, that all things have length and measure”. And understand this in relation to stepping and all other pieces of swordsmanship.
This is the text where the five strikes and other pieces are mentioned. Five strikes learn to do from the right side against the defence. Rage strike [Zornhaw], crooked [Krump], cross [Twere], squinting [Schil-er], with the scalp strike [Scheitlere]. The Fool [Alber] counters [Vorsatzt], attack after [Nochreist], and run over [Ueberlawft ] hurt the strokes last. Change through [Durchwechselt], withdraw [Zuckt], running through [Durchlawft], cutting away [Abesneit], pressing the hands [Hende drukt]. Hanging [Henge], turning [Wind] with the openings [Blossen], strike, grasp thrust with thrusts

This is regarding the Rage strike [Zornhaw]

When someone strikes at you from above, strike a rage strike [Zornhaw] and draw (or slide?) the point at him, and you shall also step towards the right side. If he notices this, take away from above without fear, be stronger, turn [Wind] against it, and take it down. If he notices this, then go down. Note this; strike [Hewe], thrust [Stiche], guards [Leger], soft [Weich] or hard [Herte]. At once [Indes] and the before [Vor] the after [Nach]– do not haste into war, what the war strikes from above, is ashamed from below. In all turnings [Winden], strikes, thrusts and cuts learn to find. You shall also try strikes, thrusts or cuts in all meetings with the masters if you wish to fool them. Do not strike at the sword, but always to the openings, to the head, the body if you wish to remain unharmed. If you hit or miss, always search for the openings, in all teachings turn the point to the openings. He who strikes widely around, he will often become seriously shamed. Always strike and thrust at the closest openings.

Glossa. Here note that Liechtenauer strikes an upper strike [Oberhaw] from the shoulder, it is called the rage strike [Czornhaw].
When you are angry and raging, then no strike is as ready as this upper strike [Oberhaw] struck from the shoulder at the opponent. That is why Liechtenauer means that when someone strikes an upper strike [Oberhaw] against you, then you shall strike a rage strike [Czornhaw] at him; that is you move quickly in towards him with your point leading. If he defends against your point, then go quickly up and over to the other side of his sword. If he defends against that as well, then be hard and strong in your sword and turn [Wind] quickly and skilfully. If he defends against your thrust then throw and strike quickly below and you will hit him in the legs. That is you should always try one after the other so that he never has a chance to come to blows himself. And the aforesaid words – Before [Vor] after [Noch] at once [Indes] weak [Swach], Strong [Stark], strike [Hewe], thrust [Stiche] and Cut [Snete], these you should think on well and never forget in your swordplay. And you should not rush into war, since if you fail above were you aim, then you will hit below as you will hear how to do one out of the other according to the true art, regardless if it is a strike, thrust or cut. And you shall not strike at the sword, but at the man himself, to the head or the body anywhere you can. One can also understand the first passage so that when you strike from above with the rage strike [Czornhaw], then you are also using the point of the rage strike. Just act according to this teaching, and always be in motion, whether you hit him or not, so that he cannot come to blows. And always step well out to the side with the strikes. And also know that from two strikes alone come all other strikes that are possible to name:
these are the upper strike [Oberhaw] and the lower strike [Unterhaw] from both sides. These are the main strikes and form the foundation for all other strikes. They are in themselves basic and come from the point of the sword, which is the centre and core of all other pieces that is well described to you. And from these strikes come the four displacements from each side with which all strikes or thrusts are broken and also all guards, and from them you come into the four hangings and from these one can do fine art as you will hear later. No matter how you fence always aim the point at the opponent’s face or breast, then he will always have to worry that you will be faster since you will have a shorter way to go in to him than he has to you.

And if it happens that the opponent wins the first strike [Vorschlag] then you must be sure, precise and quick in the turning [Wenden] and as soon as you have turned in to him you shall move at once with speed and your point should always desire his breast and turn [Winden] and seek its way there as you shall hear later on. And as soon as the opponent binds your sword then your point should not be more than half an ell [30-40cm] from the opponent’s breast or face. You shall be careful and note if you can get in behind [his sword] and always go the nearest way and never too wide, so that the opponent does not come before you in case you hesitated and again find yourself to be left hanging or that you defended too weakly or defended too wide and with too much force.
This is on the four openings
If you know how to seek the four openings [Blossen], then you should strike true and without any danger, without concern for what he intends to do. Note here that Liechtenauer divides a man into four parts. That is as if a line was drawn from his forehead to his groin down the body and the other line along his belt. Thus you will have four openings in quarters. A left and right opening above the belt and the same openings below the belt. These are the four openings and each has its own fencing. Always seek these and never the sword. How to break the four openings; If you wish to take revenge, then artfully break the four openings. Above double [Duplier] and below rightfully change [Mutier]. I say truly that no man can defend himself without danger and if you have understood this then he cannot come to blows.

Das ist von den vier blo[e]ssen
Vier blo[e]ßen wisse remen zo sletugewisse / an alle var / an zweifel wy her gebar
Glosa / hie merke / daz lichtnawer der teilt eyn menschen yn vier teil / recht zam das her eym von der scheitel / eyn strich vorne gleich neder machte an sym leybe / bis her neder czwischen syne beyne / und den andern strich by der go[e]rtel dy cz-were o[e]ber den / leib / zo werden vier vierteil eyn rechtes und eyn links o[e]ber der go[e]rtel / und alzo auch under der gortel / das sint dy vier bloßen der hat itzlichs syne sonder gefechte / der reme und nummer keyns swertes / zonder der bloßen
Von den vier blo[e]ssen wy man dye bricht
Wiltu dich rechen / vier blo[e]ssen kunstlichen brechen / oben duplire do neden rechten mutire
Ich sage vor ware / sich scho[e]tz keyn man ane vare / hastu vornomen / czu slage mag her kleyne komen
This is on the Crooked strike [Krumphawe]

Go crooked [Krum] with skill and throw the point at the hands, strike crooked [Krum] at he who sets well, with steps you will hurt many strokes. Strike crooked [Krum] to the flat of the master when you wish to weaken him.

When it flashes above step away that I will applaud. Do not crooked [Krum] short strikes, changing through [Durchwechsel] and then do a crooked strike [Krum], whoever wishes to deceive you the noble war will confuse him, so that he does not know if he is out of danger.

Glossa. Here note that the crooked strike [Krumphaw] is an upper strike [Oberhaw] that goes out well to the side with a step, and then goes in a crooked manner to one [the other] side. Therefore Liechtenauer means that if you wish to do this strike well, you shall step well out to the right side as you strike. And you shall throw or shoot your point in over the cross guard at the (opponent’s) hands. And you shall strike with your flat, and when you hit the flat (of the opponent’s sword?) you shall remain on it with strength and push firmly and see were you can easiest and straightest hit him with strikes or thrusts or cuts and you shall not strike too short and not forget the changing through [Durchwechsel], were it is suitable to do it.

Das ist von deme krumphawe /
Krum auf / behende / wirf deynen ort auf dy hende / krump wer wol setczet mit schreten vil hewe letczet / haw krump czu flechen / den meistern wiltu sie swechen / Wen is klitzt oben / stant abe das wil ich loben / krump nicht kurcz haye / durchwechsel do mete schawe / krump wer dich irret / der edele krig den vor virret / Das her nicht vorwar / weis wo her sye ane var

Glossa / Hie merke und wisse das der krumphaw ist eyn oberhaw der domit eyme guten ausschrete / krumpes dar get / zam noch eyner seiten / Doru[e]m meynt lichtnawer der den selben haw wol wil furen / der sal wol beseitz aus schreiten czu der rechten hant / danne her den haw brengt / Und sal wol krumphawen und behendlchen und sol synen ort / werfen / ader schißen / ieme aber syn gehilcze of dy hende / und sal mit synen flechen havoen / wen her denne trift / zo sal her stark dor of bleiben und vaste drucken / und sal sehen / was her denne am endlichsten und geradsten / dar bren gen mag / mit hewen stichen ader sneten / und sal mit nichte czu korcz havoen / und sal des durchwechsels nicht vorgessen / ab sichs gepu[e]rt

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A strike is called the feint/error [Veller] and it comes from the crooked strike [Krumphaw] and it is described after the cross strike [Zwerchhaw] which is described firstly and it shall be before the cross strike. And it goes crooked [Krumt] from below and is shot in over the cross guard at him by shooting the point just as the [Krumphaw] from above and down.
This is on the cross strike [Twerehaw]
The cross strike [Twere] takes away what comes from the roof, do the cross strike [Twere] with the strong and note your work.
Cross strike [Twere] to the plough [Pfluge] and follow hard to the ox [Ochsen] he who do the cross strike [Tweret] well with a leap will hit the head. He who lead the feint/error [Veller] , hits from below as he wish, [Vorkerer] forces, runs through [Durchlawfer] and wrestles [Ringet] take the elbow with skill, jump him in the scale. Feint twofold and if you hit do the cut as well. Twofold further on step to the left and do not be slow. Since all fencing desires quickness from the right, and also courage, caution and understanding
Glossa. Note and know that from the whole sword no strike is as good, ready and strong as the cross strike [Twerhaw]. And it goes across to both sides using both edges the foremost and the rearmost at all openings below and above. And all that comes from the roof [Dem tage], that is the upper strike [Oberhaw] or what comes from above and goes down, that the cross strike [Twerhaw] will break and defends against for you if you do the cross strike [Twerhaw] well, or if you cast the sword aslant in front of the head on whichever side you wish, just as you do when you want to get into the hangings [Hengen] or the turning [Winden]. In the cross strike [Twerhaw] you turn the flat sides of the sword, one up and one down with the point horizontal, one [edge] to the right and one to the left side. And it is good to bind the opponent’s sword with this cross strike [Twerhaw]. When this has happened then the other can come away with difficulty and he will then be struck on both sides with the cross strike [Twerhaw]. So when you make a cross strike [Twerhaw], regardless of the side or if it is high or low, you will go up with the sword with your hand turned and the cross guard in front of your head so that you are well guarded and covered. You shall do the cross strike [Twerhaw] with a certain amount of power. And when you must fight for your neck [i.e. for your life], then you shall use the earlier described
teachings and seek and win the first strike [Vorschlag] with a good cross strike [Twere-haw]. When you go against another, then as soon as you think that you can reach him, with a step or leap, explode with a cross strike [Twerehaw] from high on the right side using the back edge straight at the head. And you shall let the point shoot out and move across well so that you drive the point well and turn [Winde] or tightens it around the opponent’s head like a belt. So that when you do a cross strike [Twerehaw] with a good step or leap out to the side, it is impossible for the opponent to protect himself or turn away. And when you thus win the first strike [Vorschlag] with the cross strike [Twerehaw] at one side, then regardless if you hit or miss, you shall at once and without delay win the after strike [Nachschlag] with the cross strike [Twerhaw] to the other side using the forward edge before the other can collect himself and come to blows or other techniques according to the afore described teachings. And you shall cross strike [Twern] to both sides, to the ox [Ochs] and to the plough [Pflug] that is to the upper and the lower opening, from one side to the other, above and below continuously and without any interruptions so that you are in constant motion and the opponent can not come to blows. And each time that you do a cross strike [Twerhaw] above or below, then you do it well and throw the sword across above, well in front of your head so that you are well covered.
This is regarding the Squinting strike [Shilhawe]

The squinting strike [Schiler] breaks what the “buffalo” or a fool strikes or thrusts, he who tries to change [Wechsel]; the squinting strike [Schiler] robs him of it. Do a squinting strike [Schil] if he comes to short the changing through [Durchwechsel] defeats him. Do a squinting strike [Schil] to the point and take the neck without fear. Do a squinting strike [Schil] to the upper head if you wish to endanger the hands. Strike a squinting strike [Schil] to the right (probably the opponent’s right side, but it could be your own as well), this is how you wish to fence. The squinting strike [Schil] I do praise, if it does not come too slowly.

Glossa. Here note and understand that the squinting strike [Schiler] is an upper strike [Oberhaw] from the right side using the back edge on the sword, which is called the left side, and it goes in a squinting way and is sent to one side with a step to the right with the sword and hand turned. And this strike breaks what the buffalo [a peasant that is] can strike from above to below, as they are wont to do. Just as the cross strike [Twerhaw] breaks the same, as is described before. And he who tries with a changing through [Durchwechsel] will be shamed by the squinting strike [Schiler]. And you shall squint well and long enough and shoot the point well, or else the changing through [Durchwechsel] will stop you. And one shall squint well with the point to the neck, courageously and without fear. And
When you see that you both pull the swords from the sheaths [Czucken], then you shall be forceful and note well the steps. Before [Vor] and after [Nach] these two things try and learn with leaping of, follow all hits if you want to humble the strong. If he defends then follow and withdraw [Czucken] thrust, if he defends then pull to him. The turning [Wind] and hanging [Hengen] learn to artfully do and try the [opponent’s] intentions whether they are soft [Weich] or hard [Herte]. And if he fights with strength, then you are artfully prepared, if he grabs widely and far around, then the shooting defeats him. With his strike, he will hardly defend himself, hit without fear, strike and quickly rush in, regardless if you hit or miss. Do not strike to the sword, but always to the openings. Whether you hit or miss, always seek the openings with both your hands learn to bring the point to the eyes. Fence with good mind and always win the first strike [Vorschlag] if you hit or miss, at once seek the after strike [Nachschlag] to both sides, to the right hand side step in to the opponent. Thus you can win fencing or wrestling.

This is regarding the Scalp strike [Scheitelhawe]
The scalp strike [Scheitelere] is a danger to your face. With its turn it takes the breast fast and what comes from him the crown [Crone] will take. Cut through the crown [Krone], that is how it is strongly broken. Press the strike in there, with cuts pull it away. The scalp strike [Scheitelhaw] I praise, if it does not come too slowly.

Das ist von deme scheitelhawe
Der scheitelere deyn antlitz ist ym gefere / mit seinem karen / der broste vaste gewaren / Was von ym ku[e]met / dy crone das abe nymmet / Sneyt durch dy krone zo brichstu sie harte schone
Dy striche dru[e]cke / mit sneten sie abe ru[e]cke / Den scheitelhaw ich preize / ku[e]mpt her dar / nicht czu leize /
Liechtenauer hold only these four guards that come from the upper and lower hangings, and from these one can fence safely.

This is regarding the four guards [Vier Leger]
Four guards only, and leave the common ones alone. The ox [Ochse], plough [Pflug], fool [Alber], from above/the roof [Vom Tage], these should not be unknown to you.
Glossa. Here he mentions four guards [Leger or Huten] that are valuable. But before all things, remember that you should not remain too long in one guard. Liechtenauer has a saying “He who is still, is dead, he who moves will live”. And from these guards comes the understanding that you should move in swordplay, and not wait in a guard and thus waste your chance.
The first guard, the plough [Pflug], is when you hold the point [of the sword] in front of you aimed at the ground or to the side. After a displacement [Abesetzen] it is called the barrier guard [Schanckhute] or simply the gate [Pforte].
The second guard is the ox [Ochse], or the upper hanging from the shoulder.
The fool [Alber] breaks what [your opponent] strikes or thrusts. From the hanging [Hengen] strike and at once and follow by attacking after [Nochreizen].
The third guard the fool [Alber] is the lower hanging [Undenhengen], and with it you break all strikes and thrusts when it is done correctly.
The fourth guard is from the roof [Vom Tage], is also the long point [Lange ort]. He, who does it well with outstretched arms, is not easy to hit with strikes or thrusts. It can also be called the hanging above the head.
Also know that you break all guards and positions with the strikes. You should strike bravely at the opponent so that he must move away and defend him. Therefore Liechtenauer does not hold the guards in such a high esteem; he is more interested in that you try to win the first strike [Vorschlag]
This is regarding the four displacements [Vorsetczen]
There are four displacements [Vorsetczen] that also hurt the guards seriously. Displacing will protect you but avoid doing parries, if they occur [that is when the opponent parries] it helps you a lot. If you are displaced [Vorsatzt], then no matter how it happened, this is what I advice you to do; strike off quickly and with attention. Set on at four ends; remain there if you want to finish the teaching. He, who displaces well, will hurt many strikes in the swordplay for you come handily into the hangings [Hengen] from the displacements

Glossa. Note here that there are four displacements [Vorsetczen] to both sides, to each side one above and one below. They break all guards, and no matter how you set aside [Abeleitest oder Abweisest] a strike or thrust from above or from below, this can well be called a displacement [Vorsetczen]. If he displaces you, then no matter how he does it, leave [his sword] and strike quickly at him. If it happens that you displace the opponent’s strike or thrust, then you should at once step in and follow [Nochvolgen] at the sword so that he cannot move away from you. And if the other does the same when you are hanging again and gather yourself, then you will get hurt. You should also turn [Wenden] well and always aim your point at his breast so that he must consider this. A good swordsman should also learn how to get at the opponent’s sword. And this you will do well from the displacements [Vorsetczen] that comes from the four strikes, from each side an upper strike [Ober] and an [Unterhaw] and into the four hangings [Hengen]. Since as soon as you can displace [Vorsetzt] from above or below, then you shall come into the hangings [Hengen] at once. And as you turn aside [Abewendet] all strikes and thrusts with the foremost edge, that is also displacing [Vorsetczen].
This is regarding attacking after [Nochreisen]
Learn to attack after [Nochreisen] twofold or cut in the defence. Two outer takings [Ewsere nymme] let the work begin. And try the contact, if it is weak [Weich], or hard [Herte] learn how to feel [Fuelen], at once [Indes] - that word cuts severely. Attack twofold, and also do the old cut well, follow all hits if you whish to emulate the strong one. In all teachings, turn the point into the face and attack after [Nochreize] with all your body then your point will do well. Learn to attack with skill and you will make a good ending.

Das ist von nochreisen
Nochreisen lere / czwefach ader sneit in dy were / Czwey ewsero nymme / der erbeite dornoch begynne / Und pru[e]ff dy ferte / ab sye sint weich ader herte / Das fu[ellen] lere / Indes / das wort sneidet sere / Reisen czwefache / den alden snet mete mache / Volge allen treffen / den starken wiltu sy effen / In aller lere / den ort keyn eyns geseichte kere / mit ganczem leibe / nochreize / deyn ort io da pleibe / lere auch behende / reizen / zo magstu wol enden
33V
This is regarding the running over [Oberlawfen] Swordsman, take notice.
He who seeks below, run over him [Oberlawf] above and he will be ashamed. When it flashes above, be strong, that I will praise. Do your work, or press strongly twofold. He who presses you down, run him over [Oeberlawf] and strike hard against him. From both sides run over [Oeberlawf] and notice the edges.

33V
Das ist von o[e]berlawfen / ffechter sich czu /
Wer unden remet / o[e]berlawf den / der wirt beschemet / Wen is klitzt oben / so sterke das ger ich loben / deyn erbeit mache / ader herte dru[e]cke czwefache / wer dich dru[e]kt neder / o[e]berlawf in / slach sere weder / Von beiden seiten / o[e]berlawf und merke dy sneiden
This is regarding the setting aside, learn it well [Abesetczen]
Learn to set aside, to hurt strikes and thrusts with skill. When he thrust at you, your point will hit and break his. From both sides, always step if you wish to hit. In all teachings turn your point into his face.
This is regarding changing through [Durchwechsel]
Learn how to change through [Durchwechsel] from both sides and thrust with intent. He who binds you [your sword] is found to be open by the changing through [Durchwechsel]. When you have “changed through”, strike, thrust or turn [Wind]. Do not strike at the sword but change through [Durchwechsel] and do not wait for (or with doing the changing through, do it at once) it.

Glossa. Note here that changing through [Durchwechsel] goes straight forward on both sides, from above to below and from below upwards when done quickly. If you wish to change through from above to below on the right side, then strike an upper strike [Oberhaw] straight at him so that you shoot your point towards the left side in over his cross guard [Gehilcze], so that you hit in that small opening between the edge and the cross guard. If you hit then you have won.

If he defends against that and presses your point with his sword, then let the point sink down on the side that you are on, below his sword and around to the other side, do not make a wide movement around, but under his sword and the next thing that you do is to rush in with a good strong thrust over his cross guard. And when you feel that you hit, then follow well and as you do on one side over or under, do also on the other side. And if he binds with you, go in along his sword to the openings with your point and change through [Durchwechsel] as before.

Or turn [Wind] and feel [Fule] what he is up to, if he is weak [Weich] or strong [Herte], and then try strikes, thrusts or cuts to his openings. When you have changed through [Durchwechsel], then strike, thrust or cut, and do not strike at the sword, and do not wait with it.
This is regarding withdrawing [Czucken],
take note swordsman.
Step in close in the bind and then the with-
drawing [Czuecken] gives good findings.
Withdraw, if it hits (or perhaps strike at you), withdraw more and work him, wind that is trouble for him. Withdraw [Czuek] in all encounters with the masters if you wish to fool them. Withdraw [Czuk] the sword and consider your path.

Das ist vom czucken / ffechter merke
Trit nu[e] in bu[e]nde / das czu[e]cken gibt
gute fu[e]nde / Czu[e]k / trift her / czucke
mer / erbeit her / wind das tut im we /
Czu[e]k alle treffen den meistern wiltu sye
effen / czuk / ab vom swerte / und gedenke
io deyner ferte /

40
This is regarding the running through [Durchlawfen], now look
Run through [Durchlawff ] and let the pommel hang, take hold if you wish to wrestle [Rangen]. If one presses at you, run trough and note. Run through, thrust and turn (in this case inverting is also possible) [Vorkere] if he grabs the pommel.
This is regarding the cutting off [Abesneiden].
Cut off the attacks from below in both directions. Four are the cuts – two below and also two above. If you cut well crosswise, you will eagerly avoid injury. Do not cut in haste, first consider the attack. You can well cut against all crosses; only leave the pulling (back/around) (alone?). If you wish to be without hurt, then do not go as you cut off (a possible meaning is do not waste time stepping when you cut, but do it as a stationary movement).
36V
This is regarding pressing the hands [Hende drucken]

Turn your edge; push the hands to the flats. One thing is turning, another is winding [Winden], the third the hanging [Hengen]. If you want to press the swordsman, then press with a thrust. From above the hands you strike the cuts well. Pull around with the cuts as well, above him, over the head. If you press the hands, you will withdraw your fingers without injury.

Also know that as soon as you turn a strike or thrust aside [Abe wendest] then you shall at once step in and go quickly at him. Do not hold back again, because if you do, then you will cause yourself to be hurt. And you should also know that it is the foremost edge from the middle and up to the cross guard that you use to set aside [Abewenden] all strikes or thrusts. The closer to the cross guard [Gehilcze] a strike or thrust comes, the easier it will be to set these strikes and thrusts aside strongly. Since the closer to the cross guard [you catch the attack] the stronger you are, and the closer to the point the weaker you are. That is why if you wish to be a good swordsman before all things learn how to set aside [Abewenden] well, since if you set aside well you will come at once into the turning in [Winden] and from these you can perform artfully and courteously in the fencing. The foremost edge on the sword is called the right/true edge and all striking or thrusts are wasted by the turning [Wenden].
This is regarding the Hanging [Hengen] swordsman learn this. These are the two hangings from one hand towards the ground. In all situations you should strike, thrust, [hold] guards, [be] soft or hard. Do the talking window [Sprechfenster], stand joyfully and study the opponent’s intentions. Strike so that he tries to step away from you, I say honestly that no one defends without danger. If you have understood this, then he will not come to blows. If it happens that you are on the sword, then you should also do strikes, thrusts or cuts, and remember to feel [Fuelen] and not move away from the sword without reason. A masterful technique is done rightfully/correctly on the sword. He who binds with you, the war will wrestle him seriously. The noble turning in [Winden] finds him for sure. With strikes, with thrusts and with cuts you will find him. In all turning in [Winden], strikes, thrusts and cuts should you find well. The noble hanging [Hengen] would not exist without the hanging you shall make the turning in [Winden].

Glossa. Note and understand that there are two hangings on each side. One upper [Oberhengen] and one lower [Underhengen] hanging and with these you can come well on the sword of the opponent, they originate from the upper [Ober] and lower strikes [Unterhaw]. When it happens that you bind with the opponent, or when you find yourself on his sword then you should remain on his sword. And you shall turn [Winden] and
thus joyfully and without fear remain on his sword. You shall see, await and understand what it is that he intends to do against you. And to remain thus on the sword Liechtenauer calls this the talking window [Sprechvanster]. When you stand thus with him on your sword, then you should feel [Fulen] and follow his movement if it is soft [Weich] or strong [Herte]. Then you should adapt in such a way as has been explained earlier. In the case that prior to everything else, even before you can do anything, he moves off the sword, then you should follow at once and strike or thrust as well as you can before he has the chance to do anything. You have a shorter way if you remain on the sword and aim your point in at him than he has if he tries to move away [from your sword]. Before he can gather himself and close in with a strike, go at once at him using your point. But if he remains with you on the sword, then try and feel if he is soft [Weich] or hard [Herte] on the sword. If he is soft [Weich] and weak [Swach], then you should quickly and courageously go forward with the strong part of your sword and push back and press his sword and seek all openings to the head or the body wherever you have a chance. If the other is strong [Herte] and hard [Stark] on the sword and intends to push you away and thrust at you, then you should be weak [Weich] and soft [Swach] against his strength and yield to move away with your sword from the strong pressure he is applying.
and in this weakness, while he is pressing [you] and shoots his sword away from him [away from his body since he is pushing yours], as has been described, then at once [Indes] that it happens but before he can gather himself again, so that he can’t strike or thrust, you should attack his openings with strikes, thrusts and cuts. Do this in the easiest way as has been described in this teaching, quickly and boldly and briskly so that he can’t come to blows. That is why Liechtenauer says “I say in all honesty that no man can defend himself without danger, if you have understood this he will not be able to come to blows”. With that he means that it is not possible to defend without being in danger or without getting hurt if you act according to this teaching. If you win and do the first strike [Vorschlag] then he can either defend himself or let himself get struck. When you do the first strike [Vorschlag], regardless if you hit or miss then you should quickly and briskly do the after strike [Nachschlag] before he can come to blows. So when you wish to do the first strike [Vorschlag] then you should also do the [Nachschlag] quickly and speedily so that he cannot come
to blows himself. And you should also make
sure that in all things concerning swordsmanship that you act before your opponent
does. And as soon as you move before him
and win the first strike [Vorschlag], at once
do the after strike [Nachschlag]. You should
never do the first strike [Vorschlag] if you
do not have the [Nachschlag] in mind at
the same time, meaning that you are always
in motion [In motu seist] and do not rest
or hold yourself back but does one thing
after another quickly and decisively so that
your opponent can’t do anything at all. If
you do this, then he must indeed be a good
one if he can manage to get away without
being struck by you. So with this art or ad-
vantage it often happens that a peasant will
beat up a good master if the peasant does
the [Vorschlag] and boldly pushes forward.
Thus when you understand the word at
once/in an instant [Indes] hits, shames and
defeats your opponent. One who hesitates
and wants to wait in order to defend him-
self against the strike is in greater danger
than the one who strikes at him and thus
wins the first strike [Vorschlag]. Therefore
in all things concerning swordsmanship
make sure that you are the first and come
at the opponent on your right hand side.
Then you will be safer than him no matter
what comes.
From both sides learn eight turning in [Windem] with steps. And one turning in [Windem] with three pieces I mean thus it is twenty-four if you count them one by one. Swordsmen notice it and note the turning in [Windem] correctly. And learn to do them well and you will be able to hit the four openings since each opening surely has six ways to be hit.

Von beiden seiten / ler acht winden mit sch-reiten / und io ir eyne / der winden mit drey sto[e]cken meyne / so synt ir czwenczik und vier / czele sy enczik / ffechter das achte / und dy winden rechte betrachte / und lere sy wol furen / zo magst du dy vier blo[e]ssen ru[e]ren / wen itzliche blo[e]sse / hat sechs ruren gewisse
Glossa. Note here that the turning in [Winden] is the rightful art and foundation of all fencing with the sword. From these stem all other fencing and techniques and it is impossible to be a good swordsman [without knowing] the turning in [Winden]. There are many play masters [Leichmeystern] who despise it and say that what comes out of the turning [Winden] is very weak and calls it “of the shortened sword” since it is so easy and uncomplicated. And look at those who use the long sword and who goes about it with outstretched arms and outstretched sword in order to look dangerous and to look good, using all the strength of the body. It is terribly embarrassing to see someone thus stretched out as if he wanted to run after a hare. And this has nothing to do with turning in [Winden] or Liechtenauer’s art, since this art does not require strength. If it was not an art, then the strong would always win.
Here begins the other Master swordsmen; Hanko the priest Doebringer, Andres Juden, Josts von der Nyssen and Niclas Prwessen

If you are a fighter
and wish to learn
and understand the sword,
if you seek it
since it is a courteous thing,
and is the joy and happiness
of knights and soldiers,
if you fight rightfully
then I wish to offer you three pieces of advice
so that you will fight in the right way, hold on to this advice.
The first advice is also good;
if you fight with ease,
without anger and according to these teachings,
then all will be well.
The second advice is that
Which I want to say now,
no man should be so stupid
that his own fencing brings him injury.
If you want to beat five or six men,
then you will get badly hurt
since you can’t defend against every strike directed against you,
and you will then be subjected to ridicule and scorn.
You little fool who wanted to be the best, see what happened.
This is not great courage, but great stupidity to try for four or six opponents; this will become clear to you that you will get the very opposite just as if you had bought it. It is better to hide away in a bed than to display such great clumsiness. But it happens that you may defend against four or six, if you are careful, and if you behave chivalrously and you part well from them then you will defend well against all. This is right for a brave man, But let all listen clearly, and without danger say, that he is called a brave man who can stand equally against his injury, him I want to praise at all times. Chivalrous and without any misdeeds and without complaints and courageously free, he is a true fighter. The third advice that I want to give you is that you should not learn fencing if you plan to subject your fellow men unjustly by use of this art. Therefore you should not
fight with a pious man
unless it is necessary. In vain no one should be pressed.
If you want things to go well for you, then in all fencing I advice you
not to rely too much on your art. Practice your art by necessity, honestly
and never in foolish vanity. Then you will always remain
a good and true man, a true swordsman.
For thus is the art of the sword thought out,
that you should practice truly in a spirit of chivalry.
That brings smoothness, cunning and knowledge.
Secondly it often happens
that if you meet another man over God, honour and life
you will then gain victory in a chivalrous way
by your art by God and right, this I praise.

Here take note that I have decided to leave out several of the master techniques since they are well described [earlier] in the art of Lichtnawer, and that is a true art. But for practice and school fencing I want to describe a few easy techniques by some short and simple rules.
This is regarding the iron gate [Eyserynen pforten]
Here rightly begins
the very best fencing
by the aforesaid master know,
this I tell you that
it is called the iron gate [Eyseryne pforte],
which you will understand soon.
If you are set upon
by four or six peasants,
then place either foot forward
and with the gate you will create a shield
by placing the point towards the ground.
Hear how you should do this,
place yourself so that they are right in front of you
and that no one can get in behind you.
Now hear what you should do,
when they strike or thrust at you,
set them aside [Abesetzen]
with strength going up from the ground
and then you will shame them well.
Then do the peacock’s tail [Pfobenczagel]
against them,
and then no one can remain in front of you.
Strike below while defending and deflecting well.
Strike briskly with the changing strike [Wechselhewen]
and use the Weed Hoe [Krawthacken] as well,
and then you will truly press them.
But I do advice everybody not to
remain standing right in front of him (the opponent)
unless you want to be a looser, but someone who hits.
Against someone who comes at you from the left side,
step towards him quickly
and strike at him
so that he cannot deflect [Abelecken]
and if they keep on coming as before,
then do as before and you will not fail.
Strike one after the other,
just make sure that they can’t get at you
all at once,
and then you will be without danger.
As you have understood from the foreword
it is possible for a man to stand against four
or six that wants to win.
That is why I advice you to follow my teachings,
meaning that you quickly attack the ones
on the outer ends
before the other turns against you,
then they will have to turn after you since
you are leading.
Then you can well notice
when it is or is not safe to move away from
the opponent
and then leap away from him as I say.
There is no hurt or disgrace to run away from four or six. And when you turn and start to run away from him, then throw your sword across and run as fast as you can. Then as one who thinks that he has caught up with you and has closed with you (catching up from behind, my addition), then leap to the side of the road and if he is running quickly after you, then he will be moving too fast to control himself and you can strike him down as you wish.

wen is ist nicht schade / ader uner
czuflien / vier seche ader mer
wenne du denne begynnest
czu lawfen und von in springest /
so wirf deyn swert dy twere
hinden ober dyn hawpt sere
und lawf was du gelawfen magst
weler dir denne / am suresten noch iagt
das dich denket her sey dir nu na
so sprink beseitz aus dem wege da
so lawft her dir zo swinde noch
wen of dich / zo ist im goch
das her sich nicht mag halden weder
so slestu in noch winsche derneder
One technique is called the serpent’s tongue [Noterczunge], or from the point, and it comes from the changing through [Durchwechsel]. This is when you stand with your point forward as if you wish to do a changing through [Durchwechseln]. Then go with the point in over his hilt with thrusts. So that you constantly try and hit with the point and thus confuse the opponent so much that he does not know what to do against you. And when you see an opening, you charge in with a full thrust, and this you must do quickly so that the opponent does not have a chance to defend.

One technique is called the weed hoe [Krawthacke], and it comes from the iron gate [Eiserynen pforten], with your point thrusting straight up from the ground at the opponent, and then down again. This is a strong technique when it is done correctly with a step straight forward, each time you thrust up you should step forward.
One technique is called the baking master [Weckemeister]. And it comes from the lower hanging [Underhengen] on the left side, seeking with the point after the deflection [Abesetzen]. It could also be called the gate [Pforte] since it places itself with the point at the opponent.

One technique is called the Peacock’s tail [Pfobenczagel] and it comes from the point and it goes with the point around the opponent’s sword or in front of the eyes in a circle or like a wheel [rat / ader czirkel], straight in front until you see where you can attack and defeat the opponent.

Eyn gefechte heisset der weckemeister / und kumpt aus dem underhengen / czu der linken seiten / mit ort drewen noch dem abesetczen / Und is mag auch wol aus der pforte genant werden / also es sich mit deme orte keyn eyme stellet

Eyn gefechte heisset der pfobenczagel / und kumpt aus dem orte / und get mit dem orte um eyns swert / aber su[e]st eyme vor dem ogen zam eyn rat / ader czirkel / gleich um / so lange bis das her siet wo hern ge-haben mag
One technique is called [no name indicated in the original document] and this comes from the changing through [Durchwechsel]. That is when you try a strike from above [Oebernhawe] from the right side and it changes through [Durchwechselt] to the left with a good step out to the side. Then you do another strike from above [Oeberhau] that goes straight at the opponent and hits him in the forehead or across the face. Or you move as if you wished to do a strike from above from the right side and the do a plunging strike (or pouncing strike, suggested by Jeffery Hull) [Stoerczhaw] to the same side and comes around to the other side under the opponent’s sword with a step out to the side.

One technique is called the three strikes [Dy drey hewe]. And it is one strike from below [Uenderhaw] from the right side, and then a strike from below [Underhaw] from the left side that strikes the opponents sword strongly to displace [Abesetzen] it and the third is a strike that goes directly at the opponent and hits him in the forehead.

Eyn gefechte heisset und kumpt auch aus dene durchwechsel / das eyner drewt mit eyme o[e]bernhawe von der rechten seiten / und durch wechselt czu der linken seiten / mit eym guten ausschrete und brengt do mete eyn andern o[e]berhau der do gleich czum manne czu get / und vorne treffe/ czu der scheitel / ader dy twer vor daz ge- sichte / Ader tu zam het eyn oberhaw wol teu von der rechten seiten / Und tu eyn sto[e]rczhaw czu der selben seiten / und kom czu der linken seiten under seyme swert heru[e]m / mit eyme ausschrete czu der selben seiten

Eyn gefechte heisset / dy drey hewe / Und daz ist eyn u[e]nderhaw von der rechten seiten / und denne eyn underhaw von der rechten seiten / und denne eyn underhaw von der linken seiten stark of an iens swert/ mit abesetzen / den dritten haw denne glei- ch czu der scheitel neder / der do treffe
One technique is called the fence guard (or barrier guard perhaps) [Schrankhute] and it comes from the point. You should place your point towards the ground on either side and then you are ready to displace. It can also be called from the gate [Pforten], when you place the point to the ground in front of you. When the opponent strikes or thrusts at you, then you push his point to the side as you raise the sword up and in towards you, and then strike him in the legs or above, whatever happens to be closest to hit. This resembles the peacock’s tail [Pfobenzangel] when you continuously go up and strike down, above or below wherever you can get at him.

Eyn gefechte heisset dy schrankhute / das kumpt / aus dem ort / alzo das du den ort legst of dy erde / czu weler seiten du wilt und stellest dich do mete czum abesetzen / Ader is mag auch genant werden aus der pforten / wen eyner den ort gleich von sich neder stellet of dy erden / und von wanne denne eyner of in hewt oder sticht / zo vasse her ieme synen ort des swertes / mit dem als her keyn im of vert / mit dem absetczen / und sla / im unden czum fu[e]ssen ader aben gleich czu wo her in am nehesten der-reichen mag / und das ist auch etwas dem pfobenzangel gleich wen eyner umbermer alzo of vert und weder neder slet unden ader oben / wo her nur mag
If you wish to fight someone in school fencing [Schulfechten] or for play [Schimpf] and wish to be courteous, and then place your sword a bit in front of you. Then move into the barrier guard [Schrankhute] on both sides and try to find openings on both sides with good footwork. Then come into the lower hanging [Uenderhengen], do this also on both sides with proper footwork. Then you should do the upper hanging [Oeberhengen] on both sides with good footwork. Then do the cross strike [Thwer hewe] on both sides, and again with good footwork. You should always step at the same time when you move the play of the sword to one side. If you move to the left side, then set the right foot forward, and the opposite on the other side. And if you do this as you approach him, then you are doing in play what is good in earnest. And always seek the upper opening [Oberr / blossom] rather than the lower and go in over the cross guard. Consider the earlier teachings concerning all things so that you win the first strike [Vorschlag], and as soon as you have done so, then do the after strike [Nachschlag] without stopping or any hesitation or holding anything back. Almost as if you were trying to do them both at the same time. And always do one thing after another quickly and boldly, just so that if one misses then the other will hit home and is successful. Then the opponent will never be able to come to strikes himself.