

Recreate Historical Swordsmanship from Historical Sources

Getting Started: Approach the Source

Create a table of contents

1. Choose a novel you like, ideally one that doesn't have chapter headings, and write a brief descriptive chapter heading and a one-paragraph summary of what happens in each chapter.
2. Choose a movie you like, break it up into chapters, and write a brief descriptive chapter heading and a one-paragraph summary of what happens in each chapter.
3. Start this process with your chosen source. Either go through it page by page from the beginning, or try breaking it up into chunks and tackling one chunk at a time. You may need to create a usable version of the text first. This can also be done chunk by chunk. Depending on the size and complexity of your source, this may take a while. That's ok, there is no rush. If your chosen source is huge, you might want to pick a short, approachable, text to practice on first. See the pdf "Capoferro Workbook" in the extras section of the course for an example of creating a table of contents.
4. Create a record of every part of the book where there is not enough information to know what you're supposed to do.
5. Post a question online regarding one of these problem areas, and record the help you get.

Describe the book

Imagine you were describing the book to someone. Write down all the things you would like them to know about it. This probably include:

- Author's name and biography
- Place and time it was written
- The language it's written in
- The main weapons it covers
- Any recurring techniques it seems to have
- Your first impressions of what it might be like to fight in that style
- What you think of the illustrations (if any), the style of writing, anything else that springs to mind.
- Why you chose this book, out of all the possible candidates.

What we are trying to do here is give you a sense of the overall style and structure of the book, which will help you avoid interpretation mistakes later on.