

# Recreate Historical Swordsmanship from Historical Sources

## 03 Getting Started Approach the Source transcription

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RECORDING COMMENCES:

### **Guy Windsor:**

Hello and welcome back to *Recreate Historical Swordsmanship from Historical Sources*. Now you've chosen your source. Excellent. Well done. I hope you've chosen well. The first thing you have to have is a readable version of the text. Now if you happen to have chosen something that was printed in English in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for instance then you can basically skip this bit because you can just open the thing up and read it like a book. If however there are any difficulties--if it's written in a different language, you may need to find a translation. If it's written in manuscript form, you may have difficulty reading the handwriting. You need to find a transcription or create a transcription of your own.

However, whatever format it's in, I would strongly recommend that you get started on creating a machine-readable version of the text. It will make searching for things later much, much easier. Now you could do OCR, Optical Character recognition or what have you and get machines do that work for you but there is really no substitute to writing the book out yourself. This sounds horrible. It sounds like vastly more work than you'll ever need to do. Again as with everything, it's best to break it down into chunks. It is well worth your time to write out the book section by section. Maybe spend 20 minutes on it every day for a while until the book is done so that you have not only a machine-readable version of the text but you've actually gone through the whole thing in a format that is much less passive than simply reading it.

What we're trying to do is get this book that exists in physical form outside of your body into a matrix of information that exists in your brain so that you can easily refer to all parts of it and when you have an opinion about the book, you have an opinion about the whole book all at once. Now if you've ever had the experience of having an opinion about a book or some piece of text--I don't know, a contract for instance which you have read all the way through and yet you realize that you are wrong about something because you have simply forgotten a particular paragraph or a particular sentence that completely contradicts you. This is what it's about. If you don't have the whole book in your head, you will end up having opinions about its content or about its structure that don't take into account all the information, so they're more likely to be in error. We have to start this process gently so you start by breaking the book up into a table of contents. Go through the book. I tend to do this on paper first and write out what's happening in each section on each page.

Now you can see here these are my notes for Leckuchner's treatise and I'm working from a translation. Obviously I don't read German but I started out with a piece of paper that's like yay big. It's A2 I think because it's such a big book and I started out by whenever I found things like guards, I made a note in the guards section. When I found specific techniques, I would make a note about them and general axioms, I would make a note about them somewhere else but the whole thing is there on one big piece of paper so I can see it all at once. That's one way to do it. As you make your notes, there are some important things to include. You've got to have the details of the source that you're covering, the date that you're making these notes--this will be very helpful in five years' time when you have lots of these and then it's a good idea to identify blows and where you can find them, guards and where you can find them, specific techniques that are mentioned, *geferhau* for instance in this book.

Any kind of general axioms that you might want to apply outside of the play in which they're actually mentioned. So if he says "and when I'm attacked, I always step to the left", that may apply to this one particular play but it may also apply to every single play. General axioms are a good idea to separate out and have a clear note of where they appear in the text. For all of these, you need to have pages, references and if you come across any particular bits of terminology, add those to your notes. Page numbers really important for finding these things again and a big block of two columns or three columns, kind of messy blocks on the bottom right hand corner of this page. That is basically every section that I could find in the whole book and this is an enormous piece of paper. It's in a very big book.

Another way is how I went through Giganti. You can see my notes here where I just simply wrote down a summary of what's happening on each page. Once you've done that, you have the book in another form. What you have basically is edited highlights and its overall structure there in a much more approachable form and then you can get stuck in to studying any one of those sections in more depth. So the basic tool we're going to be using here is breaking it up into sections and taking them one at a time and then using your knowledge of the number of sections and what they contain to create an overall structure in your head as to what the book contains. That should be enough getting on with. I will also create another video in which we'll go over Fiore and have a look at it. That's a big complicated book. We'll have a look at how those sections are broken down and how you can start thinking about breaking them further down if needs be and approaching it that way. That's just an example. That would be just an example for you to take into account.

The homework, particularly if your book is very big and very complicated I think it's a very good idea to get used to the idea of breaking stuff up into chapters and summarizing those chapters by taking a book you already know in life, a novel for instance, *Fellowship of the Rings* for example. Ideally a book that you already know quite well because again we're looking at a specific skill. I'm not trying to get you to read 2,000 books. The skill is to break up a text into sensible chapters and summarize what those chapters are. So pick a novel that you like and apply this. Ideally the novel doesn't already have chapter headings. If that's already the case, you can rename them and be a bit more descriptive. Or take a movie that you like, any movie. It doesn't matter. *Deadpool*. That's great. Because the movie doesn't usually appear in chapters--there are exceptions Tarantino for one but movies like 90 minutes or two hours whatever of content that just goes all the way through from

beginning to end. If you know the movie well, you can split it out ideally not just into scenes or cuts because that's a bit too intrinsic to the film itself but divide it up into chapters and describe what happens in each chapter and when that's a comfortable process for you, apply that skill to the book that you working on. That should keep you busy for a little while and I'll see you on the next lecture. Cheerio.

END OF RECORDING