

34  
 Questo magro ai queste spad' signfica gli Setti colpi de la spada. Elli quatro animali signfica qtro uertu: 3oe d'ausamento, presteza, forteza, e ardimento. Echi uole ess' bono in questa arte de queste uertu conuen de lor auer parte.

**A**quello d' un louo ceruiero no uede creata. Eaquello mette semp a pesto e a misura.

Ausamento.

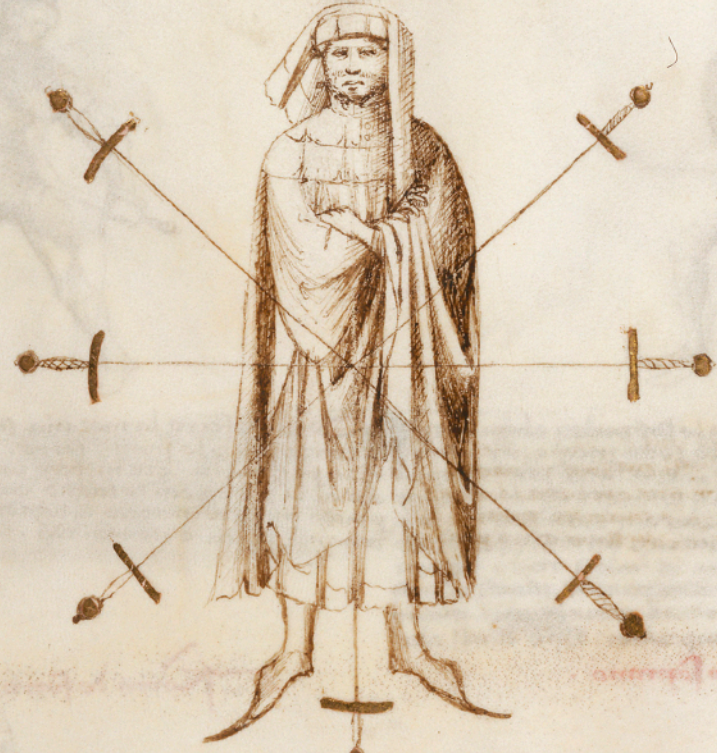
**N**o tigre tanto son psto a correr euoltant' che la fagitta del cielo no mi poria auanzare.

Presteza.

**P**u de mi leone no pora bone ardito, po di battaglia fazo azastuho molto.



Ardimento.



**E**llefante son e no mi izmocho vn castello porto p' chargo ne po uargo.



Forteza.

# A Glossary of 15th Century Italian Fencing Terms

For use with the online courses *The Medieval Dagger* and *The Medieval Longsword*

**Guy Windsor**

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The table below includes words that are either unique to fencing manuscripts (Fiore or Vadi's), or have a specific technical meaning in a fencing context. There are still some areas of debate amongst scholars of these arts; where I am aware of such, I have mentioned so in the comments. The translations are not necessarily applicable to modern Italian or other historical sources. Students should also note that the terms are often spelled several different ways in the original sources. Those interested in the translation process should read my article "Half Full? Translating Mezza and Tutta in Il Fior di Battaglia" available free online from [www.guywindsor.net/blog/resources](http://www.guywindsor.net/blog/resources)

Italian grammar is quite simple, but has some aspects that English speakers may find odd—not least that a single word may have different forms, and to make a word plural, we can't just throw an 's' on the end. In general, nouns are either masculine or feminine, and adjectives will have both masculine and feminine forms that agree with the noun they describe. For example: *punta falsa*, false thrust. *Filo falso*, false edge.

In general:

- Nouns ending in -e when singular will end in -i when plural: *fendente*, *fendenti*.
- Nouns ending in -o when singular will end in -i when plural: *colpo*, *colpi*.
- Nouns ending in -a when singular will end in -e when plural: *ligadura*, *ligadure*.

While it is standard practice to place all adjectives in their masculine form first, in the list below I have placed each word in the form that is most commonly used in Fiore (e.g. *Longa*), and I have used the spellings that you will find in Fiore and/or Vadi's manuscripts, such as *zogho*, which would be *gioco* in modern Italian.

These terms are frequently combined: for example, *mandritto fendente* is a forehand descending blow.

| Italian                        | English                  | Comments  |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <b>Abrazare</b>                | To wrestle               |   |
| <b>Accrescere</b>              | To step forwards         | without passing.                                      |
| <b>Bicorno</b>                 | Two-horned.              | a guard.  |
| <b>Breve, posta breve</b>      | Short; short guard.      | Refers to a specific guard position.                  |
| <b>Cinghiare / cinghiaro</b>   | Wild boar.               | The name of a specific guard position.                |
| <b>Colpo/i</b>                 | a blow or strike.        |   |
| <b>Corona</b>                  | Crown.                   | The name of a specific guard position.                |
| <b>Coverta</b>                 | Cover, parry.            |   |
| <b>Destro/a</b>                | On the right.            |   |
| <b>Discrecere</b>              | To step back             | without passing.                                      |
| <b>Donna</b>                   | Woman.                   | The name of a specific guard position.                |
| <b>Dritto, diritto, derito</b> | Right, forehand or true. | <i>Filo</i> or <i>taglio dritto</i> is the true edge. |
| <b>Elzo</b>                    | Hilt; crossguard.        |   |
| <b>Falcon</b>                  | Falcon.                  | The name of a specific guard position.                |

|                                 |  |   |
|---------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Falso</b>                    | False edge, back edge.   |   |
| <b>Fendente</b>                 | Descending blow.   | Usually qualified by <i>mandritto</i> / <i>dritto</i> (forehand) or <i>roverso</i> (backhand).  |
| <b>Finestra</b>                 | Window.  | The name of a specific guard position.  |
| <b>Fora / for di strada</b>     | Out of the way.  | Usually used in connection with a footwork action: thus <i>passo fora di strada</i> ; “pass out of the way.”  |
| <b>Frontale</b>                 | Frontal, a guard.  |   |
| <b>Giocco / giocho stretto</b>  | Close, narrow or constrained play.   |   |
| <b>Giocho largo</b>             | Wide play.   |   |
| <b>Gioco, giocho</b>            | Play.  | This is used to describe a single sequence (such as the first play of the sword) and, when qualified as <i>largo</i> or <i>stretto</i> , the tactical situation. See the commentary on chapter III for an analysis. |
| <b>Incrossare / incroce</b>     | Crossing. Also parry.  |   |
| <b>Largo</b>                    | Wide.  | Used in contrast to <i>stretto</i> . A state of play, or tactical situation, in which you are free to strike.   |
| <b>Lunga/Longa</b>              | Long.  | Part of the name of a specific guard position, <i>posta lunga con la spada curta</i> .  |
| <b>Mandritto</b>                | Forehand.  | See <i>dritto/diritto</i> .   |
| <b>Mantener</b>                 | Handle of the sword.   |   |
| <b>Meza spada / mezza spada</b> | Half sword.  | A crossing made near the middle of both blades.   |
| <b>Mezana porta di ferro</b>    | Middle iron door.  | A guard position.   |
| <b>Mezano/i</b>                 | Middle blows, horizontal blows.  |   |
| <b>Passare</b>                  | To pass, as in stepping.   |   |
| <b>Passo</b>                    | A pass, also the length of a passing step, also the space between your feet when standing. |   |
| <b>Porta di ferro</b>           | Iron door.   | Can also be “middle” ( <i>mezana</i> ) or “flat ground” ( <i>piana terena</i> ).  |
| <b>Posta / poste</b>            | Position or guard.   | Used more commonly than <i>guardia</i> .  |
| <b>Quattro dita</b>             | “Four fingers.”  | A unit of measurement.  |
| <b>Rebattere</b>                | To beat aside- to parry.   |   |
| <b>Remedio</b>                  | Remedy; the defence against an attack.   |   |
| <b>Rendopiare / reddopiare</b>  | Redouble.  | To strike again. Note: in 16th century Bolognese sources, <i>ridoppio</i> is a rising blow with the true edge, from the left. This is not the case here.  |
| <b>Riverso / roverso</b>        | Backhand.  |   |

|                                    |   |  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Rompere</b>                     | To break, as in the breaking of the thrust. |  |
| <b>Rota</b>                        | “Turn” from <i>rotare</i> . A rising blow.  | Used by Vadi only. This blow gets its own chapter, chapter XV. It is also used on 15r in <i>rota da molin</i> , “millwheel.”   |
| <b>Sagitaria</b>                   | Archer                                      | Refers to specific guard positions, used differently by Fiore and Vadi.  |
| <b>Scambiare</b>                   | To exchange, as in to exchange the thrust.  |  |
| <b>Sinestro</b>                    | On the left.                                |  |
| <b>Somesso</b>                     | The width of a fist.                        | A unit of measurement.   |
| <b>Sottano</b>                     | A rising blow.                              |  |
| <b>Stanco</b>                      | Left (side or foot, usually).               | In modern Italian, “tired.”  |
| <b>Strada</b>                      | Way.  | This is used in the sense of the direct line between the two combatants. Hence to step <i>fora di strada</i> , “out of the way,” is to step off the line.  |
| <b>Stramazzone</b>                 | A whirling blow from the wrist.             |  |
| <b>Stretto / stretta / strette</b> | Close, constrained, narrow.                 | See the commentary on chapter III for an analysis.   |
| <b>Taglio/e</b>                    | Cut, but also cutting edge.                 |  |
| <b>Traverso; ala traversa</b>      | Across, or diagonal.                        | Usually used in connection with a footwork action: <i>va for de strada per traverso passo</i> ; “go out of the way with a pass across.”  |
| <b>Tondo</b>                       | “Round”: A horizontal blow                  |  |
| <b>Tornare</b>                     | “To return”; to pass back.                  |  |
| <b>Vera croce</b>                  | True cross.                                 | A guard position (sword in armour).  |
| <b>Volta</b>                       | Turn.                                       | Specifically volta stabile (stable turn: when with both feet fixed you can play on the same side in front and behind), meza volta (half turn: when with a pass forwards or backwards you can play on the other side), tutta volta (whole turn: when one foot remains fixed and the other turns around it). |
| <b>Vista, visteggiare</b>          | Feint, to feint.                            | This use of the word is absolutely clear from its context.   |
| <b>Volante / volanti</b>           | “Flying,” a horizontal blow.                | This term is unique to Vadi.   |
| <b>Zenghiaro</b>                   | Wild boar.                                  | A guard.   |
| <b>Zogho largo</b>                 | Wide play.                                  | See <i>giocco largo</i> .  |
| <b>Zogho stretto</b>               | Close play.                                 | See <i>giocco stretto</i> .  |