

## **FOUNDATIONAL PLAYS OF THE IBERIAN MONTANTE**

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*With additions by Antonie Dvorakova; any confusion is hers.*

### **General Terminology<sup>1</sup>**

*Reglas* (Spanish, Portuguese *Regras*) = rule

*Tajo* (Spanish, Portuguese *Talho*) = cuts from the right hand side

*Reves* (Spanish, Portuguese *Revez*) = cuts from the left hand side

*From Behind* = a tail guard = **Guardia Coda Lunga e Distesa**

*Montante Preto* (Portuguese, Spanish *Negro*) = practice montante

*Note 1: All the historical information is in end notes.<sup>2,3</sup>*

*Note 2: Doing the drill going backward after doing it forward, is called undoing the drill. These are done in all the drills of the practice montante, we will now merely allude to it, and note when the drills are no longer considered these.*

*Note 3: Per Figueiredo, all revez deflections are done with the false edge. This generally means that descending revezes are true edge and rising revezes are false edge. Most descending talhos are true edge, but the rising ones vary. For example, in the Fifth Drill, Eric does the first talho as false edge, but Steve probably does it with true edge. There are valid reasons for both, but we cannot be certain what the author intended based on the text. Also, while the Fifth Drill is good, it is not really Figueiredo's third simple rule: The second cuts should be forward, not descending and cutting all the way to behind.*

### **Drills of the Practice Montante**

#### ***First Drill<sup>4</sup> – Preliminary Flourish***

1. Stand upright, feet together, with your left foot slightly forward,
2. Sword is vertical, point on the ground, held in the right hand with the thumb down,
3. Give the sword tip a light kick with your right instep, the sword swings up and forward, and then back and behind into a tail guard, as you step back with your right foot, grasping the sword hilt also with your left hand at the end of the movement

#### ***Variations of the First Drill***

1. Sword rises only to beside or above your head, grasp the hilt with your left hand as it nears your head,
2. Sword rises only into a long position, grasp the hilt with your left hand as it rises.

#### ***Second Drill – Ending Flourish***

1. From the end of your last blow or in your last posture, standing still, make a cut to where the opponent's left shoulder would be,
2. Release your left hand, and turn the sword tip toward the ground, bring the feet together, left foot slightly forward, feet together, standing upright, sword tip on the ground.

## Spadone language “TRANSLATION”

### **Third Drill<sup>5</sup> – Simple alternative cutting with rising blows and stepping, and then back<sup>6</sup>**

1. Start: Left foot forward, sword with point on the ground, tap the sword with the right foot, turn and bring the sword back (Preliminary Flourish)
2. Talho, from behind, low to high, stop in front of face; pass with the right foot.
3. Revez (false edge), from behind, low to high, stop in front of face; pass with left foot.
4. Talho, from behind, low to high, stop in front of face; remove the left foot.
5. Revez (false edge), from behind, low to high, stop in front of face; remove the left foot.
6. Talho to their left shoulder, and a return of the sword to the original position; standing still. (Ending Flourish)

### **Fourth Drill<sup>7</sup> – Flowing through and cutting with descending blows and stepping**

1. Start: Left foot forward. (Preliminary Flourish), ending with your sword at the shoulder)
2. Talho, forward, ending with point eye height; pass with right foot.
3. Revez, forward, pass with left foot, flow through to the next cut.
4. Talho, forward, ending with point eye height; remove left foot.
5. Revez, forward, remove right foot flow through to the next cut.
6. Talho to left shoulder, and return; standing still. (Ending Flourish)

### **Fifth Drill<sup>8</sup> – Cutting Twice to the Same Side**

1. Start: Preliminary Flourish to behind
2. Talho, low to high, standing still, looping up and over before your face into the next cut
3. Talho, high to low, pass with your right foot, cutting through to behind
4. Reves, low to high, standing still, looping up and over before your face into the next cut
5. Undo the above, ending with the sword on the right shoulder,
6. End: Ending Flourish

### **“Shoulder Guard” Drill—*Figueyredo’s Is rule* –Alternative Ascending Cuts Done + Undone**

- 1.) Preliminary Flourish to Coda Lunga e Distesa
- 2.) From Coda Lunga e Distesa, Mandritto Ridoppio with a (right foot) Pass
- 3.) With preparation #5, Falso Manco with a (left foot) Pass
- 4.) With #5,<sup>a</sup> Mandritto Ridoppio with a (right) Pass<sup>b</sup> Back
- 5.) With #5, Falso Manco with a (left) Pass Back
- 6.) Ending Flourish

### **“Cutting Forward” Drill—*Figueyredo’s IIs rule* –Alternative Descending Cuts Done + Undone**

- 1.) Preliminary Flourish to Right Shoulder Guard
- 2.) Mandritto<sup>c</sup> to Guardia di Faccia with a (right foot) Pass
- 3.) With preparation #5, Riverso with a (left foot) Pass
- 4.) With #5, Mandritto to Guardia di Faccia with a (left) Pass Back
- 5.) With #5, Riverso with a (right) Pass Back
- 6.) Ending Flourish

### **“Double #3” Drill (D + U)—*Figueyredo’s IIIs rule***

- 1.) Preliminary Flourish to Coda Lunga e Distesa
- 2.) From Coda Lunga e Distesa, Falso Dritto<sup>d</sup>
- 3.) With preparation #3, Mandritto Squalembato to Guardia di Faccia with a (right) Pass
- 4.) With #1 to Coda Lunga e Distesa, Falso Manco
- 5.) With #3, Riverso Squalembato to Coda Lunga e Distesa with a (left) Pass
- 6.) Undo the above to Right Shoulder Guard
- 7.) Ending Flourish

### ***Sixth Drill – Skill Development Drills -- Arming the Thrust Variations***

1. Start: point forward, right foot forward
2. Withdraw the sword, turning the body slightly to the left, and bring the hilt beside your **face (above the height of your shoulder)**, point still forward,
3. Extend the sword to point forward into a thrust, turning your body in place,
4. Withdraw the sword, turning the body slight to the left, bring the sword hilt to beside your **chest**, cradling the hilt, sword over your right arm,
5. Extend the sword to point forward into a thrust, turning your body in place,
6. Bring your sword, leading with the tip **over your left shoulder**, and turn to **face the rear**, and then stand left foot forward point extended in that direction. If necessary correct your back foot.
7. Withdraw the sword, turning the body slightly to the right, and bring the hilt beside your **face**, point still forward,
8. Extend the sword to point forward into a thrust, turning your body in place,
9. Withdraw the sword, turning the body slight to the right, bring the sword hilt to beside your **chest**, cradling the hilt, sword over your left arm,
10. Extend the sword to point forward into a thrust, turning your body in place,
11. Bring your sword, leading with the tip **over your right shoulder**, and turn to face the rear, and then stand right foot forward point extended in that direction. If necessary correct your back foot.
12. Continue repeats, end point forward.

### ***Seventh Drill – Driving Your Enemy Before You<sup>9</sup>***

1. Start: Left foot forward, from behind
2. Talho, from behind, low to high; standing still.
3. Talho, forwards; pass with right foot.
4. Thrust (**over right arm, or alternatively above shoulder level<sup>10</sup>**); standing still.
5. Revez; pass with left foot.
6. Talho, to the right side; move left foot (fencing step).
7. Talho, to the right side; pass with right foot.
8. Thrust (over right arm); standing still.

### ***Ninth Drill – Alternative Interpretation<sup>11</sup>***

1. Start: Left foot forward, from behind
2. Talho, from behind, low to high; standing still.
3. Talho, forwards; but withdraw it before it arrives turning the cut into a preparation for the thrust Thrust (over right arm); standing still. **\*\*This is a single move\*\***
4. Revez; pass with left foot.
5. Talho, to the right side; move left foot (fencing step).
6. Talho, to the right side; pass with right foot.
7. Thrust (over right arm); standing still.

### ***“4 Thrusts” Drill***

- 1.) From Porta di Ferro Stretta
- 2.) To high withdrawn Guardia di Faccia
- 3.) Imbroccata Riversa
- 4.) Back to Right Cradling Guard
- 5.) Imbroccata Riversa
- 6.) Pointing over left shoulder, turn to face the rear
- 7.) From high withdrawn Guardia di Croce
- 8.) Imbroccata Riversa
- 9.) Back to Left Cradling Guard
- 10.) Imbroccata Riversa
- 11.) Pointing over right shoulder, turn to face the rear
- 12.) Repeat (end back in Porta di Ferro Stretta)

### ***“Driving Your Enemy Before You” Drill —Figueyredo’s IIIc rule variation***

- 1.) From Coda Lunga e Distesa
- 2.) Falso Dritto
- 3.) With #3, Mandritto to Guardia di Faccia with a Pass
- 4.) Imbroccata Riversa
- 5.) With #3, Verso with a Pass to Coda Lunga e Distesa
- 6.) Falso Dritto with Accrescimento (of left foot)
- 7.) Repeat--With #3, Mandritto to Guardia di Faccia with a Pass, Imbroccata Riversa...

### ***“Feinting :- ) Your Enemy Before You” Drill—F IIIc***

- 1.) From Coda Lunga e Distesa
- 2.) Falso Dritto
- 3.) With #3, Mandritto feint with a (right) Pass (= withdraw the cut into thrust preparation in a single move)
- 4.) Imbroccata Riversa
- 5.) With #3, Verso with a Pass to Coda Lunga e Distesa
- 6.) Falso Dritto with Accrescimento (of left foot)
- 7.) Repeat--With #3, Mandritto feint with a (right) Pass...

### ***Tenth Drill – Fighting in A Narrow Corridor<sup>12</sup>***

1. Place the shoulder against one wall
2. Turn the montante over the elbow of the left arm (remember your skill building drill!)
3. Step out with the right foot to the left, thrust with the fingernails up at the same time
4. Step the left foot to behind the right, turn to face the other direction,
5. repeat steps 2-4

### ***Eleventh Drill – Alternative***

*Do this starting over the right arm, and thrust fingernails down.*

### ***Twelfth Drill – Fighting with People Ahead and Behind<sup>13</sup>***

1. Start: Left foot forward, from behind
2. Talho, from behind; fencing step
3. Talho forwards; pass with right foot
4. Thrust (**over right arm, or alternatively over the right shoulder<sup>14</sup>**) to the rear; remove right foot to the rear
5. Revez; pass with left foot (finish turning the body)
6. Talho, forwards; fencing step
7. Talho; pass with right foot
8. Thrust (over right arm) to the rear; remove right foot to the rear
9. Revez; pass with left foot (finish turning the body)
10. Talho, forwards; fencing step
11. Talho; pass with right foot

### ***Fourteenth Drill – Another Turnaround Drill<sup>15</sup>***

1. Preliminary Flourish with variation – stand upright with the montante in the right hand, point on the floor, feet together, facing north.
2. Lift the point up and forward, as if making a thrust forward (throat height), but keeping some bend in the elbow.
3. Without stopping, cock your wrist backward as you lift the right hand over your head, so that the **point makes an arc and stabs backward** over your right shoulder. At this point, grasp the hilt with your left hand.
4. As you do this, look over your right shoulder and pivot<sup>16</sup>, stepping south with your right foot; as you do this, catch the pommel with your left hand. (**You will momentarily be in a position like left Ochs**), arms uncrossed.
5. You don't hold this, but let the point dip down past your right shoulder\*, cutting around into a right diagonal blow downward (tajo).<sup>17</sup>
6. Let this pass through by your left side, and continue the circle around on your left to cut another right diagonal blow that also passes through to your left side.
7. Without stopping, cock your wrist backward as you lift the right hand over your head, so that the point makes an arc and stabs backward over your right shoulder.
8. Continue

### ***“Very Narrow Corridor (Left)” Drill***

- 1.) Place your shoulders against a wall
- 2.) From Left Cradling Guard
- 3.) Punta Riversa to the left with (right) Pass
- 4.) Adjust your left foot to face to the rear
- 5.) Repeat

### ***“Very Narrow Corridor (Right)” Drill***

Do the above beginning from Right Cradling Guard

### ***“Fighting Ahead and Behind” Drill***

#### ***—Figueyredo’s IVc rule***

- 1.) From Coda Lunga e Distesa
- 2.) Falso Dritto with Accrescimento
- 3.) With #3, Mandritto to Guardia di Faccia with a Pass
- 4.) Over right shoulder, Imbroccata Riversa to the rear with a right foot Pass
- 5.) With #4, Rivero with a Pass
- 6.) With #5, Mandritto with Accrescimento
- 7.) With #6, Mandritto to Guardia di Faccia with a Pass
- 8.) Repeat

### ***“Backward Thrust #5, 6” Drill***

- 1.) Preliminary flourish to thrusting Imbroccata Riversa to the rear over right shoulder while looking backward
- 2.) Pivot stepping backward with right foot
- 3.) With # 5, Mandritto
- 4.) With #6, another Mandritto to Guardia di Faccia
- 5.) Repeat--Flip sword point over right shoulder to thrust Imbroccata Riversa while looking to the rear; pivot stepping backwards...

### ***Fifteenth Drill – Cutting to Different Directions<sup>18</sup>***

1. Starting position face north, do a Preliminary Flourish to right shoulder,
2. Step forward with your right foot into a right diagonal blow (*tajo*).
3. Let this pass through by your left side, and continue the circle around on your left to cut another right diagonal blow that also passes through to your left side.
4. Stepping backward with your right foot to feet together cut a left diagonal blow (*reves*) that passes through by your right side.
5. Bring your sword to your right shoulder
6. Pivot to the east
7. Step forward with your right foot into a right diagonal blow (*tajo*).
8. Let this pass through by your left side, and continue the circle around on your left to cut another right diagonal blow that also passes through to your left side.
9. Stepping backward with your right foot to feet together cut a left diagonal blow (*reves*) that passes through by your right side.
10. Bring your sword to your right shoulder.
11. Pivot to the south, etc.
12. Pivot to the west, etc
13. Finish by pivoting again, so that you face north. As you do this, release the pommel with your left hand, and end with your feet together in the original position.
14. Make an ending flourish.

### ***Sixteenth Drill – Variation***

*Perform the preceding drill stepping with the left foot, cutting *reves* for *tajo*, and *tajo* for *reves*.*

### ***Seventeen Drill – Turning and Cutting<sup>19</sup> Putting It All Together***

1. Stand upright with the *montante* in the right hand, point on the floor, feet together, facing north.
2. Lift the point up and forward, as if making a thrust forward (throat height), but keeping some bend in the elbow.
3. Without stopping, cock your wrist backward as you lift the right hand over your head, so that the point makes an arc and stabs backward over your right shoulder.
4. As you do this, look over your right shoulder and pivot, stepping south with your right foot; as you do this, catch the pommel with your left hand. You will momentarily be in a position like left *Ochs*, arms uncrossed.
5. You don't hold this, but let the point dip down past your right shoulder\*, cutting around into a right diagonal blow (*tajo*).
6. Let this pass through by your left side, and continue the circle around on your left to cut another right diagonal blow that also passes through to your left side.
7. Stepping backward with your right foot, cut a left diagonal blow (*reves*) that passes through by your right side.
8. Repeat this one more time (no footwork).
9. Finish by pivoting again, so that you face north. As you do this, release the pommel with your left hand, and end with your feet together in the original position, sword tip on the ground

### ***“Cutting to Cardinal Directions” Drill***

- 1.) Facing north, Preliminary Flourish to Right Shoulder Guard
- 2.) Mandritto with step forward with right foot
- 3.) With #6, Mandritto
- 4.) With #5, *Riverso* with step backward to feet together
- 5.) With #5, Shoulder Guard while pivoting to the east
- 6.) Repeat--Mandritto with step forward with right foot; with #6, Mandritto; with #5, *Riverso* with step backward to feet together
- 7.) With #5, Shoulder Guard while pivoting to the south
- 8.) ... pivoting to the west
- 9.) ... pivoting to the north
- 10.) Ending Flourish
- 11.) Original Preliminary Flourish position

### ***“Reversed Cutting to Cardinal Directions” Drill***

The above stepping with left foot and making opposite cuts

### ***“Backward Thrusting 2 Mandritti 1 *Riverso*” Drill***

- 1.) Preliminary flourish to thrusting *Imbroccata Riversa* to the rear over right shoulder while looking backwards
- 2.) Pivot stepping backward with right foot
- 3.) With # 5, Mandritto
- 4.) With #6, another Mandritto
- 5.) With #5, *Riverso* with step backward to feet together
- 6.) Repeat the above once more with no footwork
- 7.) End by pivoting to original direction and original Preliminary Flourish position

### **Seventeenth Drill – Variation**

*Also, you can just pivot, not loose the grip with the left hand, and immediately spin around into a new iteration of the drill. Makes you dizzy after 3-4 times, though!*

### **Eighteenth Drill – Variation**

*You can from the feet together position, start going left (widdershins), rather than right (clockwise)*

### **Extra Credit – The Three Crosses<sup>20</sup>**

1. *Start facing north, with your left foot forward.*
2. *A downward talho as you step north with your right foot; make this a full cut, so the momentum spins you around to face south; the sword swings up over your head ending point high*
3. *A downward talho as you step south, letting the cut spin you around so you face north again, ending with your feet together.*
4. *A downward revez, stepping north with your left foot, spinning to the south.*
5. *A downward revez, stepping south and spinning to the north, ending with your feet together.*
6. *A downward talho, stepping to the east with your right foot; then spin so the momentum carries you to face west.*
7. *A downward talho, stepping west and spinning back to the east; end with your feet close together.*
8. *A downward revez, stepping to the north with your left foot, then spin so the momentum carries you to the south.*
9. *A downward revez, stepping north and spinning so you once again face north (starting point), ending with your feet together.*
10. *As you do this, release the pommel with your left hand, and end with your feet together in the original position, sword tip on the ground*

### **“The Crosses” Drill**

- 1.) In Shoulder Guard, face north with left foot forward
- 2.) Mandritto with (right) Pass north, using momentum to spin around to face south and into Guardia Alta
- 3.) Mandritto with (right) Pass south, spin around to face north and into Guardia Alta with feet together
- 4.) Riverso with (left) step north, spin to face south
- 5.) Riverso with (left) Pass south, spin to face north and into Guardia Alta with feet together
- 6.) Mandritto with (right) step east, spin to face west
- 7.) Mandritto with (right) Pass west, spin to face east and into Guardia Alta with feet together
- 8.) Riverso with (left) step north, spin to face south
- 9.) Riverso with (left) Pass south,<sup>e</sup> spin to again face north
- 10.) End in original Preliminary Flourish position

### **Notes:**

- a) The numbers indicate cuts preparations a la Steve Reich.
- b) Unless specified otherwise, all Passing with Mandritti is performed with right foot while Passing with Riversi is done with left foot.
- c) Unless specified otherwise, all Mandritti are Squalemrato cuts.
- d) If no steps are specified, stand still.
- e) Although the WMAW handout says to step north to once again face north, thus implying a 360° turn here, Eric says this should also be only 180° turn.

<sup>1</sup> Many are the [considerations] that a person has to bear in mind, while carrying a Montante and having to do battle or battles (Domingo Luis Godino, 1599. f.110r)

...with a step that is weighed and measured and not like those who dance.(Godino. f 110v)

...(carry the) the Montante in the left hand...and not at the side as many people do. (Godino, f 111r)

<sup>2</sup> Regarding the Montante, this is a weapon which is seldom carried by men ordinarily. However, it is good to know three or four rules for it.... It is said that with a sword one can parry a montante, but since that play cannot be made without notable danger to the combatants, it is never done. The montante is considered to be a weapon of little courtesy, and a weapon that is the enemy of its own master, because when one begins to fight with it, one is unable to act courteously; and thus it is only used if a man is compelled to defend his life, and to ensure that he is able to secure his person without having respect for anyone else. For this purpose, it is good, or for clearing space [in a crowd]. (Luis Dias de Viedma, 1637 f. 64v)

This is its most important doctrine, that it alone, not the sword alone, nor the other weapons equals... its uses. ...It is not the sword alone that is queen of all the other weapons, for if it were, it would be preferred to the montante; for it does for all, although they be used double, and opposes them two or three at a time, whether they are attacking or defending. (D. Miguel Perez de Mendoza e Quixada, 1675, Assercion XXXI)

This class has several intents, one focus is the continuity of two handed sword play in Iberia from Monte (ca 1490, published in 1509) to Diogo Gomes de Figueiredo (1651), including plays from seven or eight different sources, many only encountered and translated within the last year. And it also focuses on some hallmarks of the Iberian system, contextual or terrain based plays, in specific, plays that involve fighting several opponents in multiple directions, often in constrained conditions e.g. rooms, narrow passageways; and plays that show different means to turning and maintaining control of the weapon and space.

We do know that the play of the montante precedes Monte's record, as Pacheco does record that it was part of de la Torre's El Manejo de las Armas de Combate of 1474 or 1475. For many of these masters, the montante is the weapon from whose play derives that of the other weapons (Monte, de Figueiredo). Other's hold that the play is no different from that of the espada solo, excepting some methods which are impractical with a montante, e.g., thrusting single at the end of things (Pacheco).

<sup>3</sup> This represents the combined efforts of Eric Myer, Matt Galas and Steve Hick.

<sup>4</sup> One of these introductory moves is used in almost all of the rules of the montante, as you will see

<sup>5</sup> De Figueyredo (Memorial Da Pratica do Montante, 1651) (Rule 1, Simple)

<sup>6</sup> Monte (Collectanea, 1509) On the Play of the Two Handed Sword (Book 1, Chapter XIV) The play of short weapons derives from that of the two handed sword. And the play of two handed sword hinges on what we commonly call levata, i.e. the first strikes with which we begin to our instruction, so that they can be easily identified.

Although the matter of physical exercises is very important, and although we can perform various strikes and turns with our weapon, the main strikes of the two handed sword are two ascending cuts..... Now, when they are performed from the right side, the first must be accompanied by a forward motion of the right foot, as you go forward with your ascending cut ...] Then immediately get back towards the left side, while delivering an ascending ....., and protecting your head with your weapon

<sup>7</sup> De Figueyredo (Memorial Da Pratica do Montante, 1651) (Rule 2, Simple)

<sup>8</sup> De Figueyredo (Memorial Da Pratica do Montante, 1651) (Rule 3, Simple)

<sup>9</sup> De Figueyredo (Memorial Da Pratica do Montante, 1651) (Rule 3, Composed) "This rule serves to take/bear the enemies forward"

<sup>10</sup> De Paredes (as Related to Jehan Lhermite of Antwerp (1599))\_Second Rule "Dos tajos, y una estocada y un revez, entrando y saliendo" Two tajos, and a thrust and a revez, entering and departing.

<sup>11</sup> Variation of the thrust is from Monte (Collectanea, 1509) On the Play of the Two Handed Sword (Book 1, Chapter XIV) "...It is very useful to feint an ascending cut and then strike on the same line with a thrust

<sup>12</sup> Godinho (Do Arte de Esgrima 1599)" ...in a very narrow street surrounded on both sides in which you cannot throw taio or reves, place the shoulders against one of the walls and turning the montante with/from the wrist above the elbow of the left arm which is kept closely gathered to the chest, move the right foot to the left side with much haste and at the same time you will release the arms giving a thrust fingernails up to those on that side, and only the thrust will be given with the moved foot; and the shoulders on the other wall, quickly (through the air?) return the point of the montante breaking the wrist over the left arm in the manner mentioned above, you will move the right foot with a thrust fingernails up to those on the right side stopping the shoulders on the other wall.."

<sup>13</sup> De Figueyredo (Memorial Da Pratica do Montante, 1651) (Rule 4, Composed) "This rule is for fighting with people behind and ahead"

<sup>14</sup> De Paredes (as Related to Jehan Lhermite of Antwerp (1599)) Sixth Rule "Dos tajos y una estocada vuelta por las espaldas, y un revez entrando y saliendo." Two tajos and a thrust turned by the shoulders, and a revez entering and departing.

<sup>15</sup> De Viedma (Metodo de Enseñanza de Maestros, 1639), first play, first part with repetitions added

<sup>16</sup> De Viedma advises "pass it above his head, turning his face, which must always look at the point of the montante"

<sup>17</sup> If you do this fast, this part looks like a back edge diagonal cut from the left. De Viedma recommends "Train him in this for eight days." Eight days of this oughta drive you crazy!

<sup>18</sup> This is the second part of the first drill of Viedma.

<sup>19</sup> This is the entire first play of Viedma

<sup>20</sup> This is actually Italian, from Alfieri's *Lo Spadone* (Padua, Sardi, 1653). However, it is clear that it is taken from the Spanish, and in the Italian tradition there are no situational plays. "These present lessons are all really for use in a situation where there is a quarrel, which has given rise to hot blood; and so I will come to the method of making the three crosses, which are used in a situation when one is assaulted by several people in a plaza, or in a wide street.