

The gist and significance of wrist work in the old Polish fencing sabre based on selected techniques of cuts and thrusts

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to determine the essence and importance of wrist movements for the old Polish sabre fencing. Analysis of available writings, work with old Polish fencing students in the years 2009 – 2019, empirical interpretation of the described techniques. The analysis of available writings, the work with old Polish fencing students in the years 2009 – 2019, and empirical interpretation of the described techniques were used. Results showed that wrist work was essential for the execution of a number of historical techniques. It allowed to gain control over the opponent's blade and prevail in the clash. Further research on old Polish fencing is necessary.

Keywords: Martial arts; wrist movements; carpal bones; old Polish fencing; hussar sabre; short stick fighting.

1. Introduction

When discussing historical fencing techniques many elements like footwork, hands positions, distance, tactics are being well described and substantiated by hard evidence from various fencing treaties, memoirs, battle orders, pictures etc. Wrist joint, the most flexible and complex element in the equation, is but enumerated as another gear transmitting the movement to the weapon. This study presents development in reconstruction of an old Polish martial art, fencing with hussar sabre. Fencing with a curved weapon with special hilt construction, namely a thumb ring, added many solutions whilst responding after a parry, basically unobtainable to a straight bladed one. As one measures fencing with the use of straight bladed weapons against the curved ones like hussar sabre, a number of different technical solutions becomes for the practitioner ready to hand due to the shape of the weapon entwined with a very flexible wrist work. Analysis of accurate wrist maneuvers give an extended insight into the old Polish fencing in the 17th century.

2. Objectives

We aim to determine the essence and importance of wrist movements for the old Polish sabre fencing. Presentation of selected technical aspects of the old Polish fencing to the international martial art practitioners' community in order to supplement the knowledge on the subject

3. Methodology

Analysis of available writings, work with old Polish fencing students in the years 2009 – 2019, empirical interpretation of the described techniques.

4. Results

Wrist work, described by its practitioners in scarce sources only is deemed essential in execution of a number of historical techniques. It allows to gain control over the opponent's blade and prevail in the clash. In comparison with techniques performed mainly with the elbow or arm

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movement it allows to launch a response from an unexpected direction and at a greater velocity. Wrist movements are proper sabre techniques. They cannot be uncoupled from the weapon's shape. Their replacement in technique performance by elbow or arm movements yields in slower execution, hence possible defeat in the clash.

5. Conclusion

The hussar sabre fencing is distinguishable amongst the other ones. There is a great emphasis put on the wrist movements in the old Polish sabre fencing. Practicing specific wrist movements requires long time and specialized exercises in order not to overstrain it. Due to scarcity of coeval resources on the subject of the old Polish sabre fencing, the bulk of reconstruction work should be done both recursively and with regard to various other weapons used at the time.

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