

Eight years ago (in 2017), HARRY R. posted something remarkable: a free, [complete translation](#) of [Hans Liechtenauer](#)'s famous poem called the *Zettel* (or "*Record*")—but one which rhymed like the original.

When a 15th century reader looked at a gloss of the *Zettel*, what they saw was a poem (crude in some places, elegant in others) accompanied by explanations of its meaning, all written in their own language using fairly simple, straightforward words and grammar.

Sadly, this is a reading experience that we often fail to capture in our English translations for a number of reasons (attachments to certain German words is one of them, but a reluctance to try to write poetry is definitely another). Indeed, I've heard more than one HEMAist express surprise upon learning that the *Zettel* rhymed in German and was a real poem, not just some funny little sentence fragments.

HARRY's translation was groundbreaking to me, and I've used versions of it (with permission) in most of my Liechtenauer-centric projects since then, including my Medieval Gloss and a book I published with DIERK HAGEDORN titled [The Long Sword Gloss of GMN Manuscript 3227^a](#). HARRY likewise published it in 2019 in a book called [Peter von Danzig](#).

However, as I've done more Liechtenauer translations of my own, my ideas of what the *Zettel* is and what it means have diverged more and more from HARRY's and his poem was less and less a good fit for my work (even with all the changes in wording I'd made to it by that point). When DIERK's and my newest book, [Pieces of Ringeck](#), was coming together in 2024, I initially approached HARRY about using his work again, but in the end I used a non-rhyming translation that lined up with the rest of the text.

A month ago, I decided it was time to try to create my own rhyming translation from scratch, to better reflect my ideas of what it means and also play with the text in ways that aren't really available when striving for a 'literal' translation. This document is the result.

Liechtenauer's poem is written in free *Knittelvers*, a poetic form popular in the German Middle Ages. Rather than try to replicate that, I chose a loose iambic tetrameter (a common English form) for my version. This means four vocal stresses per line with one unstressed syllable in between—i.e., *da DUM da DUM da DUM da DUM*, where the first *da* can be left out and/or a final *da* added if need be. Among other things, this gave me extra space to unpack ideas that are a single word in German but not English.

Within this structure, I tried to stick close to the German text, preserving as much of the explicit meaning as possible while also exploring the subtext and underlying themes in ways that a literal translation doesn't always allow. I also tried to make sure that verses phrased similarly in the German were likewise phrased similarly in English so that the parallels remained obvious.

Over this project, I looked at every English translation I could find with no obvious dependence on others to look for unusual readings that could make the poem better—I'm thus deeply indebted both to DIERK for all the transcription and translation work he has done over the years and to STEPHEN P. CHENEY, FALKO FRITZ, REBECCA L. R. GARBER, PER MAGNUS HAALAND, JEFFREY HULL, JENS-PETER KLEINAU, DAVID LINDHOLM, THOMAS STOEPLER, CHRISTIAN HENRY TOBLER, CHRISTIAN TROSCLAIR, CORY WINSLOW, and GRZEGORZ ŻABIŃSKI for their translation efforts.

My initial pass was focused on the versions of the *Zettel* included in nine Ainring manuscripts that were the topic of *Pieces of Ringeck*, though I consulted other versions to look for interesting variations. After I finished with Ainring, I then attacked the variations and "extra" verses in ms. 3227^a. The nature of the translation meant that minor differences in wording rarely had an impact, but all significant differences in meaning resulted in changes to the translation. In this document, you'll find both translations side-by-side for easier comparison. The couplets of the *Zettel* are numbered in the usual way, with extra verses having Roman numerals, and the other poems are lettered A-E to distinguish them. No German text is offered here because the Ainring text is a combination of several.

These translations will eventually make their way into my books as new editions are released, but since it was a free translation that got me started on this path, it seems fitting that I give back and put this out into the wild to hopefully start others on new paths as well.

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Enjoy! If you have suggestions for how these poems could be better, please let me know!

Michael Chidester

Wiktenauer, HEMA Bookshelf

Fencing:

Sigmund Ainringck

- 1 Young knight, learn first: have love for god,
And honor women—that I laud.
- 2 So that your glory great may grow,
Practice chivalry and know
- 3 Arts that adorn you well in play
And bring you fame in war some day.
- 4 Gain wrestling's artful holds with might;
With lance, spear, sword, and knife do fight,
- 5 And wield them all with gallant hand,
So that against you none may stand.
- 6 Cut here, guard there, and close with this;
Charge through and you will hit or miss.
- 7 The wise ones hate and will disdain
All those who praise themselves in vain;
- 8 So grasp when all is said and done:
All art needs measure, moderation.

Ms. 3227^a

- | | |
|--|------|
| Young knight, learn first: have love for god, And honor women—that I laud. | 1 |
| So that your glory great may grow, Practice chivalry and know | 2 |
| Arts that adorn you well in play And serve you well in war some day. | 3 |
| Gain wrestling's artful holds with might; With lance, spear, sword, and knife do fight, | 4 |
| And wield them all with gallant hand, So that against you none may stand. | 5 |
| Cut here, guard there, and close with this; Charge through and you will hit or miss. | 6 |
| The wise ones hate and will disdain All those who praise themselves in vain; | 7 |
| So grasp when all is said and done: All things need measure, moderation. | 8 |
| Whatever you would like to try, Let reason always stand nearby. | i |
| And whether earnest or at play, Be joyful, calm, and undismayed, | ii |
| So you may thoughtfully then see, And act with courage steadfastly | iii |
| In every piece you will conduct, And let none harry or obstruct, | iv |
| For courage joined with skill and might Can drive your foe away in fright. | v |
| Let all of this your goal remain— Yield not one inch for fear or gain. | vi |
| Avoid the trap of foolish pride, Confront not four or six in stride | vii |
| Keep pride in check, let calmness lead— True strength is shown in modest deed. | viii |
| It takes true spirit, bold and bright, To dare engage in equal fight, | ix |
| But there's no shame nor coward's brand To flee from four or six at hand. | x |

Sigmund Ainringck

- 9 If you would bring the art to light,
See left advance and strike with right,
10 For you will find that left with right
Is how you may most strongly fight.
11 Who chases after blow and bind,
Will little joy in this art find.
12 Cut close to them; your will revealed,
No changer comes to breach your shield;
- 13 Toward head and body, forth you race,
The skirmish you should then embrace.
14 And always fight with all your strength,
Your body tight at any length.
15 A simple rule you should not slight:
Fence not from left when you are right.
16 If on your left is how you fight,
You'll be quite clumsy on the right.
- 17 Before and After, these two things:
The font from which all true art springs.
18 With Strong and Weak, you'll rule the bind;
The word "Within" bear well in mind.
19 Learn onward in this art until
You can defend and work with skill.
20 But if you easily get spooked,
Then fencing is a poor pursuit.
- 21 The five strikes you must learn to heed,
Perform them with your right hand's speed;
22 Those fencers skilled whose art we vow
To reward well will show us how:
23 The wrathful one hates crook and cross;
So cock your eye and parting cause.
24 A fool will parry all strikes, so
Pursue, run down, and set the blow.
25 Change it through, pull your point back,
Run through, slice off, or hands attack.
26 Then hang and wind, expose them more,
Strike, catch, sweep, and push your point fore.

Ms. 3227^a

- If you would bring the art to light, 9
See left advance and strike with right,
For you will find that left with right 10
Is how you may most strongly fight.
Who chases after blow and bind, 11
Will little joy in this art find.
Cut close to them; your will revealed, 12
No changer comes to breach your shield.
Cut not the swords held by your foes, xi
But seek and find what they expose:
Toward head and body, forth you race, 13
The skirmish you should then embrace.
And always fight with all your strength, 14
Your body tight at any length.
A simple rule you should not slight: 15
Fence not from left when you are right.
If on your left is how you fight, 16
You'll be quite clumsy on the right
And you'll fight better—and feel bolder— xii
Down from above your strong left shoulder.
Before and After, these two things: 17
The font from which all true art springs.
With Strong and Weak, you'll rule the bind; 18
The word "Within" bear well in mind.
Learn onward in this art until 19
You can defend with work and skill.
But if you easily get spooked, 20
Then fencing is a poor pursuit.
Have boldness, yes; be swift, that's true, xiii
But prudent, cunning, clever, too.
Fence measured and deliberately, xiv
With reason, stealth, and skill—that's key.
And those who'd learn to fight with art xv
Must bring with them a joyful heart.
- Five strikes you must learn to heed, 21
Perform them with your right hand's speed:
The wrathful one hates crook and cross; 23
So cock your eye and parting cause.
A fool will parry all strikes, so 24
Pursue, run down, and hinder blow.
Change it through, pull your point back, 25
Run through, slice off, or hands attack.
Then hang and turn, expose them more, 26
Strike, catch, sweep, and push your point fore.

Sigmund Ainringck

- 27 When from above they cut in near,
The point of wrath makes danger clear.
28 If they should sense the threat and shove,
Care not, just take it off above.
29 Or if they're strong, then more strength show
And thrust—if seen, take it below.
30 Bear this in mind once in the fray:
Cut, thrust, then Hard or Soft you lay,
31 “Within”, and then drive after more,
But calmly—do not rush to war;
32 If at the war above they aim,
Go down below and bring them shame.
33 Down every path that you may wind,
Cut, thrust, and slice you'll learn to find;
34 You also must learn to assess
Which one of them would serve you best,
35 So then, whenever steel meets steel,
You will confound the masters' zeal.
- 36 Know there are but four exposures;
Clear your path and aim for closure.
37 In every threat, in each attack,
Without regard for how they act.
38 If they attack, revenge is sweet;
Break through and four exposures beat:
39 To strike above you should redouble;
Transmute below to cause them trouble.
40 Now let me make this plain and clear:
No one defends without some fear,
41 And if this truth one learns and knows,
Then scarcely can they come to blows.

Ms. 3227^a

- When from above they cut in near, 27
The point of wrath makes danger clear.
If they should sense the threat and shove, 28
Care not, just take it off above.
Or if they're strong, then more strength show: 29
Wind, thrust—if seen, take it below.
Bear this in mind once in the fray: 30
Cut, thrust, then Hard or Soft you lay,
“Within” the After and Before, 31
Go calmly—do not rush to war;
If at the war above they aim, 32
Go down below and bring them shame.
Down every path that you may wind, 33
Cut, thrust, and slice you'll learn to find;
You also must learn to assess 34
Which one of them would serve you best,
So then, whenever steel meets steel, 35
You will confound the masters' zeal.
Cut not the swords held by your foes, xvi
But seek and find where they're exposed:
Toward head and body strike them plain, xvii
If free from harm you would remain.
At their exposures aim like this, xviii
No matter if you hit or miss;
In every lesson that you learn, xix
Your point toward the exposure turn.
Whoever widely cuts around, xx
Will often come to shame profound.
Thus always to the nearest place xxi
Bring cuts and thrusts with certain grace.
And step you always to the right, xxii
To gain advantage in the fight.
Then with your art you may begin xxiii
To fence or wrestle—and to win.
- Know there are but four exposures; 36
Clear your path and aim for closure.
In every threat, in each attack, 37
Without regard for how they act.
If they attack, revenge is sweet; 38
Break through and four exposures beat:
To strike above you should redouble; 39
Transmute below to cause them trouble.
Now let me make this plain and clear: 40
No one defends without some fear,
And if this truth one learns and knows, 41
Then scarcely can they come to blows.

Sigmund Ainringck

42 Throw a curve with crooked grace,
 Your point over their hands will race.
 43 Curve in to set aside down low,
 And step to hinder any blow.
 44 Cut crookedly up toward the flat,
 Subvert the masters' strength with that.
 45 When steel on steel above will spark,
 Stand fast and I will praise your art.
 46 Curve not: cut short, your plan concealed,
 Then with it, changing through reveal.
 47 Who crookedly leads you astray,
 The noble war will leave adaze;
 48 They'll truly have no way to know
 Where they'd be safe from any blow.

49 The cross takes what from sky comes down,
 Rewarding all with glory's crown.
 50 The cross in Strength performed its deed,
 Your work remains, take careful heed.
 51 When to the plow you drive across,
 Yoke it hard then to the ox.
 52 Cross yourself and take a leap,
 And threaten heads while yours you keep.
 53 Mislead by missing skillfully;
 Go low and harry willfully.
 54 Inversion forces and constrains;
 Run through and wrestling holds you'll gain:
 55 Their elbow take; be sure, then leap;
 Done right, their balance you will reap.
 56 Now then, miss twice, and when you hit,
 Just make a classic slice with it.
 57 The second time you miss, I say
 To step in left, and don't delay.

58 When buffalo will cut or thrust,
 The cockeye breaks and enters thus.
 59 If, with the changer, threat they lay,
 The cockeye robs them anyway.
 60 If you see that they're shorting you,
 Take your revenge by changing through.
 61 Down to their point you cock your eye,
 But, fearless, take their neck up high.
 62 Or cock your eye up to their part,
 If you would spoil their hands with art.

Ms. 3227^a

Throw a curve with crooked grace, 42
 Your point over their hands will race.
 Curve in to set aside down low, 43
 And step to hinder many blows.
 Cut crookedly up toward the flat, 44
 Subvert the masters' strength with that.
 When steel on steel above will spark, 45
 Stand fast and I will praise your art.
 Do not cut short when curve you throw, 46
 But if you do, changing through show.
 Who crookedly leads you astray, 47
 The noble war will leave adaze;
 They'll truly have no way to know 48
 Where they'd be safe from any blow.

The cross takes what from sky comes down, 49
 Rewarding all with glory's crown.
 The cross in Strength performed its deed, 50
 Your work remains, take careful heed.
 When to the plow you drive across, 51
 Yoke it hard then to the ox.
 Cross yourself and take a leap, 52
 And threaten heads while yours you keep.
 And lead by missing skillfully; 53
 Go low and harry willfully.
 Inversion forces and constrains; 54
 Run through and wrestling holds you'll gain:
 Their elbow take; be sure, then leap; 55
 Done right, their balance you will reap.
 Now then, miss twice, and when you hit, 56
 Just make a classic slice with it.
 The second time you miss, I say 57
 To step in left, and don't delay.
 For every form of fencing needs xxiv
 A mind that's swift and hand that speeds,
 And also heart that's bold and true, xxv
 And prudent, cunning, clever, too.

When buffalo will cut or thrust, 58
 The cockeye breaks and enters thus.
 If, with the changer, threat they lay, 59
 The cockeye robs them anyway.
 If you see that they're shorting you, 60
 Take your revenge by changing through.
 Down to their point you cock your eye, 61
 But, fearless, take their neck up high.
 Or cock your eye up to their part, 62
 If you would spoil their hands with art.

Sigmund Ainringck

Ms. 3227^a

63 Cut from your part to seek your prize
And threaten them under the eyes.
64 Then turn and take it down below,
And threats against their heart bestow.
65 Whatever from your part descends,
Their lofty crown can well defend.
66 Slice through their crown, refuse to keel,
Its glory broken by your steel.
67 With sweeping cuts press your attack;
Slice through and then pull yourself back.

68 First, four lairs only should you hold;
 Disdain the vulgar guards of old.
 69 The ox that plows, the foolish one,
 And from the day you should not shun.

70 Then know there are four ways to parry
Which also hinder lairs unwary.
71 Be mindful of the parry's game,
It guards you well or brings you shame.
72 Should you be parried hard and fast,
However this has come to pass,
73 Then listen now to what I say:
Wrench off, cut in, and don't delay.
74 Set on to four extremities,
Learn to remain and end with ease.

75 Learn to pursue, then learn it twice;
Or into their defenses slice.

76 When they're outside, there take them on
In two forms; start what work you want.

77 Then gauge each threat with hand and blade:
If pushing Hard or Softly laid;

78 For this you must learn how to feel;
The word "Within" cuts deep as steel.

79 Pursue again, and if you hit,
Then make the same old slice with it.

| | |
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| Cock well your eye against the right | xxvi |
| If you wish furtively to fight. | |
| The cockeyed cut I gladly praise, | xxvii |
| But strike in well without delays. | |

Cut from your part to seek your prize 63
And threaten them under the eyes.
Then turn and take it down below, 64
And threats against their heart bestow.
Whatever from your part descends, 65
Their lofty crown can well defend.
Slice through their crown, refuse to keel, 66
Its glory broken by your steel.
With sweeping cuts press your attack; 67
Slice through and then pull yourself back.
The parting cut I gladly praise, xxviii
But strike in well without delays.

First, four lairs only should you hold; 68
 Disdain the vulgar guards of old.
 The ox that plows, the foolish one, 69
 And from the day you should not shun.

| | |
|---|------|
| Then know there are four ways to parry | 70 |
| Which also hinder lairs unwary. | |
| Be mindful of the parry's game, | 71 |
| It guards you well or brings you shame. | |
| Should you be parried hard and fast, | 72 |
| However this has come to pass, | |
| Then listen now to what I say: | 73 |
| Sweep off, cut in, and don't delay. | |
| Set on to four extremities, | 74 |
| Turn to remain and end with ease. | |
| If you will parry them just so, | xxix |
| Your fencing hinders many blows, | |
| For when good parries you will drive, | xxx |
| Into the hangers you'll arrive. | |

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|---|----|
| Learn to pursue, then learn it twice; | 75 |
| Or into their defenses slice. | |
| When they're outside, there take them on | 76 |
| In two forms; start what work you want. | |
| Then gauge each threat with hand and blade: | 77 |
| If pushing Hard or Softly laid; | |
| For this you must learn how to feel; | 78 |
| The word "Within" cuts deep as steel. | |
| Pursue again, and if you hit, | 79 |
| Then make the same old slice with it. | |

Sigmund Ainringck**Ms. 3227^a**

| | | |
|----|--|---------|
| | Pursue whenever steel meets steel | xxx |
| | And you'll confound the strong ones' zeal. | |
| | In every lesson that you learn, | xxxii |
| | Your point against their face you turn; | |
| | Pursue with all your body's might, | xxxiii |
| | Your point remains thus poised to fight. | |
| | Learn to pursue with nimble speed, | xxxiv |
| | So you can reach the end you need. | |
| 80 | If down below your sword they aim, | 80 |
| | Then overrun and bring them shame. | |
| 81 | When steel on steel above will spark, | 81 |
| | Stay strong and I will praise your art. | |
| 82 | Work onward then with skill and ardor, | 82 |
| | Or press them hard and press them harder. | |
| | If they will press you down alike | xxxv |
| | Then overrun and counterstrike. | |
| | From either side, both left and right, | xxxvi |
| | You'll overrun and slices sight. | |
| 83 | Learn how to set aside, and thus, | 83 |
| | With art you'll hinder cut and thrust. | |
| 84 | Whoever tries to stab at you, | 84 |
| | Your point meets theirs and breaks on through. | |
| 85 | From either side, both left and right, | 85 |
| | Your swords will meet if forth you stride. | |
| | In every lesson that you learn, | xxxvii |
| | Your point against their face you turn. | |
| 86 | Learn to change through, your sword untied, | 86 |
| | Then thrust sharply from either side. | |
| 87 | Whoever tries to bind on you | 87 |
| | You'll swiftly find by changing through. | |
| | And when you've changed it through, always | xxxviii |
| | Strike, thrust, or wind without delays. | |
| | Cut not the swords held in your view, | xxxix |
| | But seek and find the changing through. | |
| 88 | Now step in close, engage the bind, | 88 |
| | Then pull, and what you seek you'll find. | |
| 89 | Pull back; if sword you meet, pull more; | 89 |
| | Devise a work that hurts them sore. | |
| 90 | Pull back whenever steel meets steel | 90 |
| | And you'll confound the masters' zeal. | |
| | Pull back from off their sword; once fled, | xl |
| | Consider well the path you tread. | |

Sigmund Ainringck

- 91 Hold pommel up, let blade hang down,
Run through and wrestling abounds.
- 92 When strength would press and oppress you,
Remember this: just run on through.
- 93 Whenever hardness blocks your plays,
Slice off from underneath both ways.
- 94 There are four slices you must know:
Two falling high, two rising low.
- 95 Turn every slice to serve your end,
Their hands to press and arms to bend.
- 96 Two hangers rise upon command,
Up from the earth, out of your hand.
- 97 In every threat, in each foray,
Cut, thrust, then Hard or Soft you lay.
- 98 Spread windows wide that speech may flow;
Stand cheerful and hear their case so;
- 99 But snap the windows shut upon
Whoever tries to cut and run.
- 100 Now let me make this plain and clear:
No one defends without some fear,
- 101 And if this truth one learns and knows,
Then scarcely can they come to blows.

Ms. 3227^a

- Hold pommel up, let blade hang down, 91
Run through and wrestling abounds.
- When strength would press and oppress you, 92
Remember this: just run on through.
- Run through and push to make them trip; xli
Invert if pommel they would grip.
- Whenever hardness blocks your plays, 93
Slice off from underneath both ways.
- There are four slices you must know: 94
Two falling high, two rising low.
- Slice off whoever crosses you, xlii
If pain you'd happily eschew.
- Slice not in haste or anxious dread, xliii
Consider wrenching first instead;
- If swords are crossed and you avoid xliv
The wrench, then slices well employ.
- If free from harm you would remain. xlv
Then don't rush in and slice in vain.
- Turn every slice to serve your end, 95
Their hands to press and arms to bend.
- (The winds are one thing, turns another, xlv
And third are hangers, you'll discover.)
- If you would make the fencers grieve, xlvii
Then press and push with no reprieve
- In over hands with nimble slice; xlviii
When they cut in, they pay the price.
- Then pull your edge up and away, xlix
And slice their head along the way.
- Whoever presses hands with calm l
Withdraws their fingers without harm.
- Two hangers rise upon command, 96
Up from the earth, out of your hand.
- In every threat, in each foray, 97
Cut, thrust, then Hard or Soft you lay.
- Spread windows wide that speech may flow; 98
Stand cheerful and hear their case so;
- But snap the windows shut upon 99
Whoever tries to cut and run.
- Now let me make this plain and clear: 100
No one defends without some fear,
- And if this truth one learns and knows, 101
Then scarcely can they come to blows.
- If on the sword you want to stay, li
Let mindful hand direct the play,

Sigmund Ainringck

Ms. 3227^a

| | | |
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| | With cuts and thrusts and slicing steel, | lii |
| | Then feel and note what they reveal. | |
| | Your preference then should always be | liii |
| | That from the sword you do not flee, | |
| | For fencing's masterful reward | liv |
| | Is rightly found upon the sword. | |
| | When someone on your blade binds sore, | lv |
| | Then wrestle hard or bring the war: | |
| | The noble winding, sly and deft, | lvi |
| | Will find a path where none seem left; | |
| | With cuts and thrusts and slices, too, | lviii |
| | You'll find a path that's sure and true. | |
| | Down every path that you may wind, | lix |
| | Cut, thrust, and slice you'll learn to find; | |
| | The noble hanging cannot be | lx |
| | Without the winding—that's the key— | |
| | So from the hangers, bring to bear | lxi |
| | The art that winds, both firm and fair. | |
| 102 | If you lead well and break through right, | |
| | To this end you may guide the fight, | |
| 103 | And breaking in with flashing steel, | |
| | Three wonders of the sword reveal. | |
| 104 | Hang your point in straight and true, | |
| | And wind your sword to follow through. | |
| 105 | Now eight winds note with thoughtful mind, | From either side, both left and right, 108 |
| | And weigh the paths that each may find: | Learn these eight winds when forth you'd stride. |
| 106 | In each and every wind of sword, | In each and every wind of sword, 106 |
| | Three wonders wait to be explored. | Three pieces wait to be explored. |
| 107 | They thus expand to twenty-four | They thus expand to twenty-four 107 |
| | Count one by one, you won't need more. | Count one by one, you won't need more. |
| 108 | From either side, both right and left, | Now fencer, note with thoughtful mind 105 |
| | Learn these eight winds when forth you'd stride. | And weigh the paths that each may find; |
| 109 | Then gauge each threat with hand and blade: | |
| | But pushing Hard or Softly laid. | |
| | For if you learn to lead and carry, | lxii |
| | Then four exposures you can harry, | |
| | Since each exposure as it lays | lxiii |
| | May thus be harried in six ways. | |

Dueling:**Sigmund Ainringck**

- 1 Direct your lance with honor plain;
Against you all will ride in vain.
- 2 If from the path you'd fall away,
The end will see great disarray.
- 3 Cut here and there as you close in;
Draw not your blade from scabbard then,
- 4 But pull them left and seize them right—
You need not fence to win the fight.
- 5 Learn this to joust or fence with lance:
Break calmly through in your advance.
- 6 If sudden shift the fight then shows
And swords begin to trade their blows,
- 7 With yours in right hand strongly held,
Cut toward the pouch behind their belt.
- 8 Now learn to cover, strength displayed,
And then whenever blade meets blade,
- 9 Be fearless, set upon your foe,
Hang in at them from head to toe.
- 10 Or if you'd harry and distress,
Then hunt them long and grant no rest.
- 11 Whoever to defense will rise,
Your wind of sword will hurt their eyes.

Ms. 3227^a

- Young knight, learn first: have love for god, i
And honor women—that I laud.
- So that your glory great may grow, ii
Practice chivalry and know
- Arts that adorn you well in play iii
And in war, etc.
- Direct your lance with honor plain; 1
Against you all will ride in vain.
- Cut here and there as you close in; 3
Draw not your blade from scabbard then,
- But pull them left and seize them right— 4
You need not fence to win the fight.
- Now if you fly too far afield, iv
Be ready when your horse has wheeled
- To set aside with winding skill v
If sorely trouble them you will,
- Or when you turn around, prepare vi
To set aside with crooked flair.
- Above all, your attention turn vii
To noble lessons that you learned
- About the fight with sword exposed, viii
Unarmored, as above composed.
- “Within”, Before and After, these ix
Remember too, they are the keys.
- Have boldness, yes; be swift, that's true, x
But prudent, cunning, clever, too.
- If sudden shift the fight then shows 6
And swords begin to trade their blows,
- With yours in right hand strongly held, 7
Cut toward the pouch behind their belt.
- Now learn to cover, strength displayed, 8
And then whenever blade meets blade,
- Be fearless, set upon your foe, 9
Hang in at them from head to toe.
- Or if you'd harry and distress, 10
Then hunt them long and grant no rest.
- Whoever to defense will rise, 11
Your wind will hurt their selfsame eyes.

Sigmund Ainringck

- 12 If they will yet defend at bay,
Catch well the reins and don't delay.
- 13 Consider where they are exposed;
Your knife, not pommel, finds them most.
- 14 Two sweeps now learn with empty hand,
That you against all arms may stand.
- 15 And when to wrestling they would hasten,
Learn to hold them like a basin.
- 16 When underneath their very nose,
Correctly grab as you fly close.
- 17 Whoever falls on you with might,
When riding 'gainst you: hold them tight,
- 18 And let yourself hang toward the earth
While gripping over—show your worth.
- 19 On either side, both left and right,
Against them learn to ride and fight.
- 20 If you should choose to charge and ride
Your horse onto the other side,
- 21 First cover strongly and suppress,
Then set upon and cause distress.
- 22 When you defend, their sword catch wide
And carry near, their handle tied.
- 23 Or wheel about to hunt again,
Prepared to harry and restrain;
- 24 With every skill that hunters learn,
Seek your advantage as you turn.
- 25 Should you ride forth without relent
But end up left without intent,
- 26 Then worry not, but their sword find,
And wrestle well: push hard and bind.
- 27 If someone hunts you on the right,
Turn halfway 'round, prepare to fight.

Ms. 3227^a

- If they will yet defend at bay, 12
Catch well the reins and don't delay.
- Consider where they are exposed; 13
Your knife, not pommel, finds them most.
- With every weapon that you learn, xi
Your point toward the exposure turn.
- Two sweeps now learn with empty hand, 14
That you against all arms may stand.
- When first you wind inside the bind, xii
Then set upon whate'er you find.
- Now of the left take careful heed, xiii
You work will need great strength indeed.
- And practice well in jest and play, xiv
If you'd, in earnest, art display.
- And when to wrestling they would hasten, 15
Guard and hold them like a basin.
- When underneath their very nose, 16
Learn to grab as you fly close.
- Whoever falls on you with might, 17
When riding 'gainst you: hold them tight,
- And let yourself hang toward the earth 18
While gripping over—show your worth.
- On either side, both left and right, 19
Against them learn to ride and fight.
- If you should choose to charge and ride 20
Your horse onto the other side,
- First cover strongly and suppress, 21
Then set upon and cause distress.
- When you defend, their sword catch wide 22
And carry near, their handle tied.
- Or wheel about to hunt again, 23
Prepared to harry and restrain;
- With every skill that hunters learn, 24
Seek your advantage as you turn.
- Should you ride forth without relent 25
But end up left without intent,
- Then worry not, but their sword find, 26
And wrestle well: push hard and bind.
- If someone hunts in on the right, 27
Turn halfway left, prepare to fight.

Sigmund Ainringck

- 28 With arms to catch and drive away,
No harm can reach you in the fray.
- 29 Take sword away like it's a knife
And learn the holds that cause them strife:
- 30 Apply the hold that has no name
To turn the strong and bring them shame.
- 31 Spoil strikes and thrusts with this defense;
Have your revenge—no need to fence.
- 32 If you would grab them as they ride,
Don't fail to ride up alongside.
- 33 To show the sun and make them bow:
Take first their left arm firmly now,
- 34 Then grab their head in front with skill,
And press it upward hard until
- 35 They sink down low and show respect
(And then might never stand erect).
- 36 If taking you down low's their aim,
Then grab them high and bring them shame;
- 37 Press arm to head, their grip defeat—
This often robs them of their seat.
- 38 But should you seek a measured course
To catch and hold them on their horse,
- 39 Then with this wrestling they'll be found,
And without ropes they will be bound.
- 40 Remember well the grip that leads,
To break through strength and work great deeds.
- 41 When you dismount or are unhorsed,
The duel on foot must take its course.
- 42 Take up your spear in steady hands
And face your foe in proper stance;
- 43 Its sharpened point will serve your needs,
So boldly throw the thrust that leads,
- 44 Then leap and wind and set upon—
If they defend, pull and you've won.
- 45 If you would pull and thrust with skill,
Then learn to break through guards at will.
- 46 Now if your foe fears injury
And backs away and wants to flee,
- 47 Then close with them and seek your chance
To catch and hold as you advance.

Ms. 3227^a

- With arms to catch and drive away, 28
No harm can reach you in the fray.
Then wheel your horse with steady hand xv
Let now the leaping go as planned.
- Take sword away like it's a knife 29
And learn the holds that cause them strife:
- Apply the hold that has no name 30
To turn the strong and bring them shame.
- Spoil strikes and thrusts with this defense; 31
Have your revenge—no need to fence.
- If you would grab them as they ride, 32
Don't fail to ride up alongside.
- To show the sun and make them bow: 33
Take first their left sleeve firmly now,
- Then grab their head in front with skill, 34
And press it upward hard until
- They sink down low and show respect 35
(And then might never stand erect).
- If taking you down low's their aim, 36
Then grab them high and bring them shame;
- Press arm on head, their grip defeat— 37
This often robs them of their seat.
- But should you seek a measured course 38
To catch and hold them on their horse,
- Then with this wrestling they'll be found, 39
And without ropes they will be bound.
- Remember well the grip that leads, 40
To break through strength and work great deeds.
- When you dismount or are unhorsed, 41
The duel on foot must take its course.
- Take up your spear in steady hands 42
And face your foe in proper stance;
- Its sharpened point will serve your needs, 43
So boldly throw the thrust that leads,
- Then leap in close and set upon— 44
If they defend, pull and you've won.
- If you would make the leading thrust, 45
Then pull and break through guards you must.
- Now if your foe fears injury 46
And backs away and wants to flee,
- Then close with them and seek your chance 47
To catch and hold as you advance.

Sigmund Ainringck

48 And should you wrestle, learn to leap,
 Your foot behind their front leg sweep,
 49 Or deftly lock the leg you catch
 Just like the closing of a latch.
 50 From either hand, both left and right,
 Perform your art and end the fight.

 51 Should it come to pass that here
 The sword is drawn against the spear,
 52 Observe the way they thrust, then leap
 And catch and wrestle as you sweep.
 53 What they extend, your left hand beats;
 Leap surely in, catch what you meet.
 54 Should they again fear harm and pull
 Back from your catch and your control,
 55 Then you will find them all exposed,
 Your point harassing unopposed.
 56 And leather, gauntlets, and the eyes:
 Toward these exposures you should rise.

 57 Forbidden arts of wrestling learn
 And bring them forth in battle's churn;
 58 Find ways to lock and take control,
 Surmount the strong to reach your goal.
 59 In every lesson that you learn,
 Your point toward the exposure turn.

 60 If both from scabbard draw their swords
 And then face off with one accord,
 61 Then you should strengthen in the fight
 And bear in mind to cover right.
 62 Before and After: these two things
 Learn well to gauge with backward spring.
 63 Pursue whenever steel meets steel
 And you'll confound the strong ones' zeal.
 64 If they defend, pull back and thrust;
 If they defend, rush in you must.
 65 If they should fence you long and wide,
 Then artfully their fate decide.

 66 If they will pin you fierce and strong,
 Defeat them when you shoot in long.
 67 The other point can guard and smite,
 So meet their sword and don't take fright.
 68 With either hand, both left and right,
 Turn then your point to piece their sight.
 69 With strikes, your forward foot defend,
 That you may fight on to the end.

Ms. 3227^a

And should you wrestle, learn to leap, 48
 Your foot behind their front leg sweep,
 Or deftly lock the leg you catch 49
 Just like the closing of a latch.
 From either hand, both left and right, 50
 Perform your art and end the fight.

 Should it come to pass that here 51
 The sword is drawn against the spear,
 Observe the way they thrust, then leap 52
 And catch and wrestle as you sweep.
 What they extend, your left hand beats; 53
 Leap surely in, catch what you meet.
 Should they again fear harm and pull 54
 Back from your catch and your control,
 Then you will find them all exposed, 55
 Your point harassing unopposed.
 And leather, gauntlets, and the eyes: 56
 Toward these exposures you should rise.

 Forbidden arts of wrestling learn 57
 And bring them forth in battle's churn;
 Find ways to lock and take control, 58
 And find the strong to reach your goal.
 In every lesson that you learn, 59
 Your point toward the exposure turn.

 If both from scabbard draw their swords 60
 And then face off with one accord,
 Then you should strengthen in the fight 61
 And bear in mind to step in right.
 Before and After: these two things 62
 Learn well to gauge with backward spring.
 Pursue whenever steel meets steel 63
 And you'll confound the strong ones' zeal.
 If they defend, pull back and thrust; 64
 If they defend, rush in you must.
 If they should fence you long and wide, 65
 Then artfully their fate decide.

 If they will pin you fierce and strong, 66
 Defeat them when you shoot in long.
 The hardest part can guard and smite, 67
 So meet their sword and don't take fright.
 With either hand, both left and right, 68
 Turn bring your point to piece their sight.
 With strikes, your forward foot defend, 69
 That you may fight on to the end.

Bonus Round:

These five poems, one from RDL and four from 3227^a, are quoted in their glosses but aren't part of the *Zedel*. The first four might represent other mnemonic fencing poems popular at the time, and the final one was apparently created by the author of the manuscript by remixing verses from different sections together.

Sigmund Ainringck**Ms. 3227^a**

- A1 “Within” above redoubles blows,
And transmutes strikes to go below.
“Within” runs through, their space invades,
And changes through from off their blades.
- A5 “Within” takes slices to suppress,
And wrestles equally no less.
“Within” takes swords when it requires,
And grants all that your heart desires.

Oh, all the arts of fighting need B1
The help of God in righteous deed.
Stand straight in form and sound in frame,
A well-made sword must serve your aim.
Before and After, Strong and Weak, B5
“Within”, that sharp word mind and seek
In cuts, thrusts, slices, pressing, lairs;
In covers, push and pull feel there;
Hang in and wind to pierce their guard,
Pull, sweep, leap, grab, and wrestle hard. B10
Have boldness, yes; be swift, that's true,
But prudent, cunning, clever, too.
Fence measured and deliberately,
With reason, stealth, and skill—that's key.
And practice art with grit and cheer; B15
The word “motion” goes far and near.
And in these seven verses here
Lie principles both plain and clear,
Foundational and relevant,
With names so you might understand B20
The noble art that wins the fight.
With thoughtful mind consider right
(And this I tell you truthfully,
and hereafter it proved will be)
What you will read or hear in time, B25
Each part revealed in prose or rhyme.
Take heed, oh fencer, this is true:
The art will be well-known to you;
The sword in full shall now reveal
The many paths within its steel. B30

Sigmund Ainringck**Ms. 3227^a**

| | |
|---|-----|
| Oh “motion”, that beautiful word, | C1 |
| The crowning treasure of the sword | |
| And art of fencing, full and wide, | |
| With all that does therein abide. | |
| Its articles and base are here, | C5 |
| Its movements named both plain and clear; | |
| These terms you will now rightly learn, | |
| And then their use you will discern. | |
| As soon as you begin the fight, | |
| Be sure you know this lesson right: | C10 |
| Remain in motion, not at rest, | |
| Be ever changing in your quest, | |
| Once fighting does at last begin. | |
| Drive forward toward your righteous win, | |
| Flow in and out without a break, | C15 |
| And every move with boldness make. | |
| Like rushing flood that does not cease, | |
| Without a pause, without release, | |
| Act swiftly with no time to wait, | |
| So they can't strike, and dominate | C20 |
| Them till they injured will be made | |
| Since they cannot escape your blade | |
| Without receiving blow severe. | |
| So learn this teaching, hold it dear, | |
| For what is written here should guide | C25 |
| Your every move and blow in stride: | |
| “Now let me make this plain and clear: | |
| No one defends without some fear, | |
| And if this truth one learns and knows, | |
| Then scarcely can they come to blows.” | C30 |

Sigmund Ainringck

Ms. 3227^a

Should each from scabbard draw their sword D1
 And then face off with one accord,
 Then you should strengthen in the fight
 And bear in mind to step forthright.
 Before and After: these two things D5
 Learn well to gauge with backward spring.
 Pursue whenever steel meets steel
 And you'll confound the strong ones' zeal.
 If they defend, pull back and thrust;
 If they defend, rush in you must. D10
 Whenever swords will clash and bind,
 Learn well the arts that hang and wind,
 And gauge each threat with hand and blade:
 If pushing Hard or Softly laid.
 If they should fence you strong and wide, D15
 Then artfully their fate decide.
 If they attack you wide or long,
 Defeat them when you shoot in strong.
 The hardest part can guard and smite,
 So meet their sword and don't take fright. D20
 Cut here and there and close with this;
 Charge through and you will hit or miss.
 Cut not the swords held by your foes,
 But seek and find where they're exposed.
 At their exposures aim like this, D25
 No matter if you hit or miss;
 With either hand, both left and right,
 Bring then your point to piece their sight.
 With cunning mind that fencing needs,
 You'll always win the strike that leads; D30
 No matter if you hit or miss,
 Another strike should follow this.
 On either side, both right and left,
 Be sure that to the right you've stepped.
 Thus with your art you may begin D35
 To fence or wrestle—and to win.

The foolish one may break or bust E1
 Whatever they will cut or thrust,
 By hanging in, or sweeping up,
 Pursuit, or parrying abrupt.