

# Destreza Translation and Research Project

The following document is a translation of a portion of Francisco Antonio de Ettenhard's *Compendio de los fundamentos de la verdadera destreza y filosofía de las armas* (Madrid, 1675). The original text in Spanish is from Spain's Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid.

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## Special Thanks

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## Translator's Note

The page numbers of the original Spanish text are bolded and marked in brackets within the translation.

## Illustration Note

The illustrations have been redrawn by Puck Curtis.

## Contact Information

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# COMPENDIUM OF THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE TRUE ART AND PHILOSOPHY OF ARMS.

TRUTH

BREVITY

Dedicated  
to the Catholic, Sacred,  
and Royal Majesty of the  
King, Our Lord  
Don Carlos II.  
Monarch of Spain  
and the Indies.

SCIENCE

ART

By Don Francisco Antonio de Ettenhard,  
Knight of the Order of Calatrava.

With Privilege.  
In Madrid: By Antonio de Zafra.  
Year of 1675

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Illustrations by Puck Curtis

## Chapter II. Concerning the Definition of Movement and Its Types.

Movement is a precise action to reduce into an Act what is in potential, without which nothing can move from one place to another. It is a class that includes all possible motion. There are six simple Movements, called Violent, Natural, Offline Lateral, Aligning Lateral, Backward, and Forward. The Violent Movement rises; the Natural lowers; the Offline Lateral moves away to either side; the Aligning Lateral returns from the sides to the Right Angle; the Backward moves toward the rear; and the Forward (or Accidental) moves toward the front. Similarly, there are six General Lines and their places: High Line, Low Line, Right Line, Left Line, Rear Line, and Forward Line. Each **[page 21]** Movement travels to its corresponding Line.

The way to execute it can be seen in the following Illustration in the figure (X). Note that the center of the Lines and Movements is the Right Angle that is marked by the letter (A). Thus, if he raises the Sword to the Line (B), he makes a Violent Movement and is in the High Line. If he lowers the Sword to Line (C), he makes a Natural Movement and is found in the Low Line. If he places the Sword in Line (D), he makes an Offline Lateral and is found in the Line of the right side, and the same is understood if he occupies Line (E) because he makes the same Offline Lateral Movement and is found in the Line of the left side. If from either of these two Lines he returns the Sword to the Center, it is called an Aligning Lateral. **[page 22]** If he pulls his arm back so that the tip of the Sword ends at number 3, he will make a Backward Movement. And if the Sword returns to the Center (which is the Right Angle) from point 3, the Movement will be Forward, and it will be in the Forward Line. If he places the Sword so that the guard is over the shoulder, occupying Line (J), it will be in the Rear Line. Note that Point (H) is the extreme of the High Lines, (Y) that of the Low Lines, (G) and (F) those of the sides, (J) that of the Rear Line and (P) that of the Forward Line which is the Right Angle.



Movement combining Natural and Lateral and it will move into a Mixed Line combining the Low Line and a Lateral Line. If from this position he returns the Sword to the Right Angle, it will be a Mixed Movement of Violent and Aligning Lateral, and if from the Mixed position of the High and Lateral Lines he returns the Sword to the Right Angle, it will be a Mixed Movement of Natural and Aligning Lateral. It is the same for those that can be made to the left side because all the types of Movement that are different (as long as they are not opposites) can be combined into Mixed Movements, and it is the same for the Lines. But if they are extreme opposites, it will be impossible to combine them unless another type is inserted to bridge them and unless the action is Circular, like the rear line with the forward one, the line from one side with the other, and the high line with the low. This is also true for the **[page 27]** Movements. One cannot go to two contrary places with only one action because it is not possible to do Movements that simultaneously go both Backward and Forward, Offline Lateral and Aligning Lateral, nor Violent and Natural, since the first Movement must end for the other to begin.

I have found four other Mixed Movements introduced in different Ancient and Modern Authors that they call the Union of Weapons. This is when the Swords are together and united with equal engagement and contact. One sword follows the other, so that if they lower to participate in the Acute Angle with a Natural Movement, it is called a Mixed Movement. The same occurs if it rises to the Obtuse Angle with a Violent Movement or if it moves away to either of the sides with a Lateral Movement. And honestly confessing my loathing for these Mixed Movements of the Union of Weapons, I should be permitted to present the **[page 28]** reasons why they trouble me. My first argument is that calling something "Mixed" by definition means that it is composed of things that are different, simple and contrary in their types and qualities. However, these Movements of the Union of Weapons are composed of only one simple type, according to the place to which they are directed, without evidence of any mixture nor union of different Movements in their formation. Thus, if they lower the Swords, only a simple Natural Movement is recognized. If they lift them, it is a simple Violent Movement, and if they move to either of the sides, it is a simple Offline Lateral Movement. Considering this, if they want to describe only one simple type of Movement as "Mixed," I do not know what the difference is between the simple and the Mixed in their terminology. It will certainly be impossible to clearly see a difference. As an example, I want you to consider a straight line. I can add another, **[page 29]** different straight line to it. Even though two lines are involved, they combine to create one single straight line. However, if I add a curved line to a straight line, I can reasonably and properly define the combination as a Mixed Line because I have united two different types. Therefore, it is clear that using the term "Mixed" for the four Movements with the Union of Weapons is inappropriate because according to reason and by definition a Mixed Movement must be composed of more than one type of Movement. We can describe Movements for the Union of Weapons without misusing the term by simply referring to them as the Natural Movement with the Union of Weapons, the Violent Movement with the Union of Weapons, and the Offline Lateral Movement with the Union of Weapons. In these examples, the Movements are simple and not actually mixed. Although others disagree and argue that there is an opposition and difference of Movements between the combatants, I find this unconvincing because the opposition does

not **[page 30]** change or corrupt the nature of these simple Movements. The only Mixed Movement of the Union of Weapons that can occur when two blades are engaged equally is when one combatant moves his blade backward and the other follows by moving his blade forward in the same motion. In this case, with only one action, we can reasonable define this as a Mixed Movement of backward and forward performed by distinct agents with engagement and the Union of Weapons, but nothing else is possible.

On this topic of Movements and Lines, we do not have anything else to say until later because although there are other lines and motions in the Art which are given different names, they are not different from the types already mentioned here. When it is necessary to discuss them, we will provide the information necessary to understand them. **[page 31]** Considering what has already been defined and demonstrated and knowing that the Movements are the building blocks required for the construction of Techniques, next we should try to define what a Technique is, how many there are, and how best to execute them.