

The Halberd of Paulus Hector Mair

Paulus Hector Mair was an avid collector of Fechtbucher/Fencing Manuals. He eventually undertook the task of producing a large Fechtbuch of his own that brought together material from various sources in his collection. Several variations of this work were made. This was an expensive undertaking, since each one was hand-made and heavily illustrated by talented artists of the day. Mair was employed as a government official by the city of Augsburg and was driven to embezzle municipal funds in order to bankroll his projects and his lavish lifestyle. He was hung for this in 1579.

The material you see here are my translations from the edition of Mair's Fechtbuch that is in the collection of the Sächsische Landesbibliothek in Dresden Germany. It is dated to 1540 and is in two volumes, labeled as C93 and C94. It is one of the most artistically illustrated Fechtbucher known. The SLUB has put a scan of C93 on-line here:

<http://digital.slub-dresden.de/sammlungen/titeldaten/275428508/>

Mair's Halberd has a little shorter haft than is often seen in other sources. This makes his Halberd comparable to his Shortstaff. So it is no accident that his Halberd material is directly related to his Shortstaff material as well as his half-swording method with the Longsword. Additional ideas for techniques with the Halberd can be derived from studying these other sections.

The page numbers reflect the numbering of the plates in the PDF scan of the Halberd section of the Dresden version of Mair's Fechtbuch.

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It happens at the closing that you stand in this technique with your left foot forward and hold your Halberd above your head. Then immediately follow outward with your right foot and strike to his head.

If he strikes like this to your head and you also stand opposite him in the Oberhau with your left foot forward, then set your left leg back and strike him similarly from above so that his strike is in vain. Then immediately lift up and thrust your foremost point into his face. If he displaces this, change through from his left to his right side and set your blade on his right arm.

If he has set upon you like this, then step back with your right leg so that you strike away from him. Then immediately stroke upwards with your Halberd before his face and in the stroking wind on his halberd at his left side. At the same time wind your Halberd and snatch it towards you. If he is strong and will not give way, step in with your right leg once more and thrust to his chest.

If he thrusts like this to your chest, then step back with your left leg again and set the thrust aside with your rearmost point so that you are free from harm.



It happens at this closing with the Underhau that you stand with your left foot forward and hold the point downward opposite of the opponent. Then immediately move your right hand to your right hip and thrust to his face or chest. If he sets this thrust aside, change through from his left to his right side.

If the thrusts double like this to your face and you stand with your left foot forward also in the Underhau, then drive with your right hand to your right hip with your Halberd and set this aside at your right side with your blade. Then immediately follow outward with your right leg and set your foremost point at this chest.

If he sets the point at your chest like this, step back with your left leg, then immediately quickly yank the right back as well so that you can again match him equally and strike an Oberhau to his head.

If he strikes you from above like this, drive up with your Halberd from below so that you fan his strike with your blade. Then immediately yank back and thrust to his groin. With that yank yourself to the rear.



It happens that you stand in the Crossed Wechsel (changer) with your left foot forward and your left hand beneath your right shoulder. Then immediately step in with your right leg, wind double in the Underhau and thrust to his left leg.

Should you perceive this thrust and stand opposed to him in the Abnemen with your left foot set forward, then drive with your right hand to your right side so that you take his thrust away. Then immediately follow outward with your right leg and thrust your foremost point to his face.

If he thrusts like this to your face, then set this aside from your left to your right side with the strong. Then immediately stroke upward from one side to the other before his face and in the stroking wind at his Halberd. Then immediately change through double and thrust to his face.

If he thrusts like this towards you, then set this aside with your blade so that you move the thrust outward above your head. Then immediately follow outward with your left leg and strike his Halberd away with your rearmost point so that you are free from him.



It happens that you stand in the Gesicht Stoss with your left foot forward and hold your Halberd at the chest such that the edge is turned upwards. Then immediately follow outward with your right leg and thrust to his face.

If he thrusts like this to your face and you stand with the left foot forward, go forward with your Prusthau and set his thrust aside with that. At the same time step in with your right leg and thrust to his chest. If he displaces this, change through at his Halberd from his right to his left side. Then immediately step with your left foot in front of his right and thrust double to his face.

If he thrusts double like this towards you, set the thrust aside from both sides, step in with your left leg, change through from his right to his left side and thrust to his left arm. If he displaces the thrust, wind your rearmost point from below upward into his chest.

If he winds his rearmost point to your chest like this, step back with your left leg so that his winding is in vain. Then immediately thrust to his face, and with that yank yourself back with complete and half Halberd.



It happens that you stand in the bind with your left foot forward, your Halberd's rearmost point at your right hip and the point opposite his face. Bind him from your right to his left side and then immediately wind your Halberd quickly over his and snatch it towards you.

If you then stand like this opposed to him in the bind with your left foot forward and he snatches towards himself like this, then follow outward with your right leg and thrust into his chest above his left arm. Should he perceive this thrust and displace it, change through from his left to his right side and thrust to his face.

If he seeks your opening like this from one side to the other, then step back with your left foot and set this aside with your rearmost point at both sides. Then immediately step in again with your left foot, wind your blade out in front and take his Halberd away, and then thrust to his face. If he sets this aside, seek his opening from one side to the other in the change through and with that yank (step) back twice.



It happens at this closing that you stand with your left foot forward and he stands opposite to you in the bind with his left foot set forward. Wind forward at his Halberd in the bind and turn your blade to set it over his hook.

If he intends to wind upon you like this, turn your Halberd and shove upward with it. Then immediately jerk your Halberd over quickly and thrust to his face or chest. If he sets the thrust aside, stroke outward with your Halberd in front of his face and seek the nearest opening.

If he seeks your openings like this, set it aside with the foremost point of your Halberd, follow outward with your right foot, strike his Halberd away with your rearmost point and with that wind double from underneath to his face or chest. Should he perceive this winding and step back, travel after him double with strikes and windings.

If he travels after you like this with these techniques, set them aside with the rearmost and foremost points of your Halberd and with that step back into a good stance while covering your face.



It happens that you stand in the Upper Strike with your left foot forward and hold your Halberd in the Oberhau. He then stands likewise opposite to you with his left foot set forward and his Halberd opposite of your face. Take this aside with the Oberhau and at the same time snatch towards you from your left to your right side (shown in illustration). Then move up with your Halberd into his face.

If he intends to go at your face like this, wind your Halberd with the blade behind his leg and yank with it so that his thrust is in vain and you can likewise cause him to fall. Then immediately travel after him with a thrust to his face.

If he thrusts like this to your face, take it aside with your half Halberd, change through from one side to the other and seek the nearest opening. If he sets this aside, likewise bind with him at his Halberd and turn his foremost point away with your rearmost point. Step inside with your right foot in front of his left and immediately drive your rearmost point around his neck to his right side. With that yank him towards you so you can throw him.

If he intends to throw you like this, change up both hands on your Halberd and set your Halberd on his right arm. Shove him away from you with it so that you are free from harm.



It happens that you stand in this technique with your left foot forward and your Halberd at your right chest with the point opposite his face. Immediately step in with your right foot and hit him with an inverted strike to his head.

If he strikes you from above and you stand with your left foot forward, displace this with your blade and immediately bind him. Then change through from his left to his right side, wind over his Halberd with that and press strongly downward (as seen on right side of illustration).

If he has obstructed you like this, follow outward with your left foot and wind your Halberd once again strongly to him with the point in his face. If he sets this aside, step with your right foot in front of his left and wind your rearmost point inward between his arms over his right arm. Press downward with that at your right side so you can strike to his head with your blade.

If he has wound hard upon you like this, change through your left hand quickly once again on your Halberd, immediately step back with your left foot and strike with your rearmost point to his head.



When you come together at the closing and he thrusts to your face, step in with your left foot and thrust inside of his left arm. At the same time set the blade upon him and with it shove him away from you to his right side so that his thrust is in vain. Then quickly yank your Halberd towards you and thrust your foremost point to his chest.

If he thrusts like this to your chest, set your left leg back and set it aside with your blade. Then immediately move your Halberd up for his face, step in once again with your left foot and wind your point to his face or chest.

If he winds like this to your face, take this aside from one side to the other and then immediately step in with your right foot and strike with your rearmost point to his head. If he displaces your strike, step with your left foot to his right side and strike with your blade to his right arm.

If he strikes towards you like this, take it aside with your rearmost point and wind your foremost point from below to his chest. Then immediately step in with your right leg and strike with your rearmost point to his head.



It happens that you stand in this technique with your left foot forward and hold your Halberd above your right chest. Then immediately thrust with the foremost point of your Halberd to his chest.

If you then likewise stand against him with your right foot forward and he thrusts towards you, set the thrust aside in front with your Halberd, then immediately fall over his blade with your Halberd and pivot yourself to your left side so that you obstruct his Halberd (as seen in illustration). From the obstruction grip with your left hand to your right, set your right foot back and strike from above to his head.

If he strikes from above towards you like this, step back with your left leg and set this aside with the foremost point of your Halberd. Then immediately shove strongly upward with your Halberd, step in with your right foot and wind your rearmost point to his throat. If he sets this aside, follow outward with your left foot and strike with your blade to his head.

If he strikes you like this from above, displace it to your right side with the portion of your Halberd between your hands. With that strike double while moving back.



It happens that you stand at the closing with your right foot forward and go forth with the Prusthau (chest strike) from below to his left arm and change up your hand on your Halberd. Then immediately pivot from your right to your left side and snatch to yourself (seen in illustration).

If he snatches you towards himself like this with the strong and you stand with your left foot forward, change through your left hand quickly on your Halberd and strike to his head from above. If he displaces this with his foremost point, then wind from below to his chest at his right side.

Should you perceive this thrust, set your right foot back and take it aside with your rearmost point. Then immediately work with this same point from one side to the other, follow outward with your right leg and wind your Halberd in between his arms to his chest over his left arm. If he does not release his hand from his Halberd you will lock his arm.

If he intends to lock your arm like this, change up your hand on your Halberd, step in immediately with your right foot and thrust your rearmost point to his groin. With that you are free of him.



When you both come together at the closing and the opponent has initiated the bind, step with your right foot in front of your left and wind your blade forward around his neck.

If he intends to snatch you like this with his blade and you stand with your left foot forward, likewise wind your Halberd around his neck and snatch strongly towards yourself (seen in illustration).

If he then snatches strongly towards himself like this, step in with your left leg and take his Halberd away with your rearmost point at your left side. Then immediately drive your rearmost point forward around his neck, set your right leg behind his left and snatch to your right side. Thus you can throw him.

If he intends to throw you like this, release your left hand from your Halberd, grip with it well behind his right elbow and shove away from you so that you are free. Then immediately quickly grip again with your left hand to your Halberd and strike to his head. With that change yourself from him to the rear.



It happens that you stand with your left foot forward and hold your Halberd near your left leg with the blade directed at the opponent. He then stands opposite to you in the Gewalt Stoss (Power Thrust) with his left foot set forward and intends to thrust towards you. So go forward with your Halberd around his leg and pivot from your left to your right side (as in illustration). Thus you snatch him towards you, his thrust can bring you little harm and you can also throw him.

If he has prepared like this and intends to throw you, quickly release your Halberd from his throat, set the blade on his Halberd and press strongly downward so that you are free of his throw. Then immediately drive quickly from his Halberd up towards his face. If he displaces this, change through from his left to his right side and thrust to his throat. If he displaces this as well, step in with your right foot and wind your rearmost point to his face.

If he works towards you like this, set your left foot back and take away his foremost point with your rearmost point. Then immediately step in with your left foot and wind your foremost point to his face. With that yank yourself back into the Wechsel.



When you both come together at the closing and have equally bound upon each other, change through at his Halberd from his right to his left side and thrust to his left arm. Should he perceive this thrust and displace it, change through double and seek his nearest opening.

If he seeks your opening like this, stroke with your Halberd from below to in front of his face and strike his foremost arm. Then immediately bind strongly on his Halberd and quickly change through to thrust him double to his face.

If he thrusts double like this towards you, take this aside with the foremost point of your Halberd such that your left foot stands forward. You then likewise stand opposite to him with your left foot forward. Then take away his Halberd with your rearmost point, step with your right foot behind his left and set your rearmost point in front of and around his neck (as in illustration). With that yank strongly from above to yourself so that you throw him over your right leg.



It happens that you stand at this closing with your left foot forward and hold your Halberd at your right side with the point directed against the opponent. He then stands also like this against you at the closing. Bind with him equally and then wind your blade behind his hook and shove upwards with it.

If he has prepared your Halberd like this and shoves upward, step with your right foot behind his left, yank your Halberd over and thrust from below with your rearmost point to his left side (as in illustration). Then immediately set your right foot to the rear again and strike with your blade to his head.

If he works at you like this, take it aside with your rearmost point and immediately follow outward with your right foot and strike his left arm. If he displaces this, wind in with your rearmost point between his arms to his chest and immediately step back with your right leg and strike to his head. Thus you strike as you get away from him.



It happens that you stand at the closing against the opponent with your left foot forward and hold your Halberd at your right side. He then stands likewise opposite to you in the Underhau with his right foot set forward and the Halberd on his left side. Stroke upwards towards his face with your Halberd.

If he goes towards your face like this, strike from below to his left arm (as in illustration, though there is an artistic error).

If he strikes to your left arm like this, set it aside with your half-Halberd at your right side and then immediately set your blade over his left arm and press downward with it.

If he presses downward with strength like this, step with your left foot behind his right and strike with your rearmost point to his head. Then quickly yank your right foot back and wind your foremost point to his chest.

If he winds like this towards you, set it aside with your half-Halberd and wind your rearmost point over his left arm from below. With that snatch to your right side and then yank yourself back from him with an Oberhau.



Hold yourself as follows at the closing out of a Schnit (cut) from above. Stand with your right foot forward and hold your Halberd above your head with the blade turned upwards.

You then stand against him like this with your right leg set forward, so hold your Halberd at your right side directed towards his face. Then immediately step in with your left leg and set your blade in front of his throat.

If he has set upon you like this, set your rearmost point under his left shoulder and shove to your right side. Then immediately step back with your right foot and cut to his head from above with your blade.

If he cuts to your head like this, drive up with your Halberd well in front of your head and displace his cut with your blade. Then immediately step with your right foot behind his left and take his Halberd away from above with your rearmost point.

If he takes your Halberd away like this, step back with your left foot and wind your rearmost point to his left arm.

If he winds towards you like this, step with your left foot behind his right, set your blade in front of his throat and place the Hacken (leg hook) around his right foot from the outside (as in illustration). Then immediately shove strongly away from you from above and jerk towards you from below so that he must fall.



It happens in the Verkerer (inverter) that you pivot around on your right foot to your left side in an Oberhau such that your left foot is turned against the opponent. Then immediately strike to his head with an Oberhau.

If he strikes from above like this towards you and you stand with your left foot forward with your rearmost point directed at the ground out front opposite the opponent (as in illustration), then drive up with this same point and take his strike away. Then immediately step in with your right leg and strike from below with an Underhau to his left arm. If he displaces this, go with your rearmost point to your right side and at the same time step back with your right leg and change your foremost point from his left to his right side towards his face.

If he changes likes this towards your face, displace this in front with your Halberd and immediately wind through on his Halberd from one side to the other to seek his nearest opening. If he sets this aside, step in with your right leg and take his Halberd away with your rearmost point. With that thrust to his face or chest. Then step back into the Wechsel.



When you come together at the closing and have bound equally with each other, change through from his right to his left side with a thrust. If he takes this aside, step in with your right leg and take his blade away with your rearmost point at your right side.

If he intends to take your Halberd away like this, step back with your left foot and thrust your rearmost point to his chest. If he displaces this, step in towards him once again double and hit him with your rearmost point to his head.

If he hits towards your head like this, displace this at the mid-point of your Halberd, then immediately grab with your left hand to his rearmost point and with your right hand to his foremost such that you have both Halberds in your hands. Then immediately step with your left foot onto his right knee so you can break his leg in two.

If he has prepared both Halberds together like this and intends to step upon you, release your right hand from your Halberd and drive it around the back of his knee from the outside (as in illustration). Then immediately shove strongly away from you with your left hand and yank hard upwards from below so that he must fall and can work no further harm towards you.



When you come together at the closing and have bound each other equally, hold your Halberd opposite his face and then immediately change aside on his Halberd and thrust to his face. Should he perceive this thrust and displace it, step in with your right foot and wind your rearmost point from below to his left arm.

If he winds towards you from below like this, change up your left hand quickly on your Halberd and thrust with your foremost point to his chest. If he displaces this, strike with your rearmost point to his head.

If he strikes you like this from above, step back with your right foot and take his strike away with your foremost point. Then immediately wind strongly beneath his Halberd and shove it upward. Then step in double towards him and let your Halberd fall, grab with your right hand below to his left foot and with your left shove powerfully at his left knee so that you can lock his leg or throw him.

If he has prepared you like this, set your Halberd at the nape of his neck and press strongly downward (as in illustration). Thus you counter his efforts.