

ANDRÉ'S DESTREZA GLOSSARY

A General Approach to Concepts and Nomenclature Used in the Iberian Rapier-Swordsmanship

by

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INTRODUCTION

This is a *Destreza* Glossary, a compendium of words and concepts from the old Spanish Martial Art of Fencing, not necessary to be just *Verdadera Destreza*, but also *Vulgar or Common Destreza*. This glossary has been done using the treatises of many Destreza authors. Sometimes, there is no consistency among them so I selected which I personally believe is more accurate or even simpler at any situation (which can be contradictory). It is subjected to my bias, and therefore there will be people trying to burn me alive for it (I do not expect less from some despicable individuals), nevertheless the warning is done and my conscience is clear. Notwithstanding this bias, I believe this to be a very good approach to new *diestros* (Destreza users), without the need of suffering endless research for a particular word or concept, something that in this art happens very often.

This nomenclature is the one that matches my teachings and can be found in the page of my personal project that I called *Destreza Nova*.

HOW is it written?

Alphabetically, inside each word there are subtypes that are ordered arbitrarily.

In Italic we can find reference to other concepts as well as personal ideas, which can match more or less to the original ones of the Masters. Also in Italic there is a Legend that would help you revise from which writer I pulled of the information or inspired me.

Words in “quotations marks” are **literal translations** of such word/s. That being said, I am totally against of using direct translated words for specific concepts, but I understand it can benefit the users, sometimes it helps them in order to see how ridiculous is to just translate something into a different language. I learnt the Art in Spanish and Catalan and currently I teach my classes in French and English. I came to realize that people might need assistance to make things less cognitive-challenging and sometimes a direct translation can help. Some “translations” are **bolded** inside the quotations. That means that I use the translation during my courses because I find them acceptable and understandable enough.

Except specifically mentioned, all fighters are by default right-handed and female. Furthermore, when referring to the right foot, we understand it as the front foot and the rear as the left one, except specifically mentioned.

Having a Master degree in Healthcare Research would urge me to follow a specific academic writing style. However I did not follow consistently any of the existent ones since I dislike all of them.

Unfinished?

This is like the Never-ending-story. Every week I dedicate 2 or 3 hours to read on fencing, mostly the *good old* treatises. Then, I go back to the glossary and change something that I dislike the way I explained. So, from time to time I add a new version at the website aforementioned, be aware of any changes. New words might be added.

Questions?

If you have doubts about it, requests or just want to insult me, you can contact me easily using the website aforementioned in the cover of the doc.

Uses

Sometimes people try to encourage me to start selling my many writing of fencing, but I do not think I would make much money out of it, and the benefits of putting publicly are greater than anything else. Therefore, feel free to use it or print it to assist you in learning/teachings, as well, share it with other students if they want it. There is no need to be egoist in knowledge, especially if you got this for free. If possible, credit me (as if I can do something about it). If you ever want to sell it, just contact me, I need money to pay bills and swords.

Thank you!

This would not have been possible without the available translations by Tim Rivera, Aleix Basullas and many others who dedicate their time to give out knowledge without asking anything in return, some heroes do not wear capes. They were my inspiration. I must mention also the passion for the sword I got from Sendo Espinalt and the love towards the art from many of my compatriots. It is worth mentioning as well all those users in social media who give their constructive opinions and support, many nice people that tied the community together and try to avoid the damage of other members that only wish to lower other's work and become social warriors out of jealousy or malice. Quoting Master de Brea, "Many people would gladly fight using words more than actions, and usually those who despise my work they end up stealing it in secret". Be vigilant always for the alt-right diestros.

As well thanks to all my students, they are my main reason to keep perfecting myself. Other Acknowledgments: Eric Myers, Ernesto Maldonado. Thank you to Martine Longpre-Girard for the correction (almost full rewriting) of the French document. Special thanks to my wife. She has to share me with this passion and only she has the patience to stay at my side.

Finally... I put many hours of my life in fencing, teaching and making clubs and events bigger with little or no reward on the way. If you think that my spent time has been helpful to you, in any way, feel humble to get me a coffee in the following link:

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/destrezanova>

Much Appreciated!!



LEGEND:

<i>C</i>	= Jerónimo Schz. de Carranza	<i>CP</i>	= Cruzado y Peralta
<i>dB</i>	= Manuel Antonio De Brea	<i>dR</i>	= Fco. Lorenz de Rada
<i>dV</i>	= Luís Díaz de Viedma	<i>E</i>	= Fco. de Ettenhart
<i>Jp</i>	= Jaume Pons	<i>M</i>	= Miguel Pz. De Mendoza y Quixada
<i>n</i>	= word used as noun	<i>P</i>	= Luis Pacheco de Narváez
<i>Ta</i>	= Nicolás Tamariz	<i>Th</i>	= Girard Thibault d'Anvers
<i>dF</i>	= Simón de Frías	<i>MyC</i>	= Merelo y Casademunt
<i>u</i>	= unknown reference	<i>v</i>	= Word used as verb
<i>Ay</i>	= Antonio Yuste Iver (his voice is published in Ettenhard's Compendio)		

GLOSSARY

Accidental, E: Name for the movement of the sword when it goes forward. *I use the Z axis to describe such movement. See movimientos de la espada.*

Acometer, v: See *Acometimiento*.

Acometimiento, "Attack attempt", dB, dR: In the treatises *acometimiento* is an attack action, but unfinished. Which means the result is yet to be seen. Usually *Acometimiento* is mentioned in the treatises because the opponent managed to deflect or block the attack, giving us an opportunity to a new movement, or sometimes the result is not even mentioned because it matters less than the previous explanation. Once the attack manages to injure the enemy, some treatises do not talk about *acometimiento* but *herida* (injure). De Rada says that *acometimiento* is: 'an unresolved attack movement'.

- ‡ **Acometimiento Perfecto, "Perfect attempt", dB, M, dR, E, P:** Unfinished attack in which the diestro has clear possibilities of injuring the opponent, and also has the control of the blade of the opponent. There is a general trend in the treatises, indicating that the *acometimiento perfecto* is aiming the head, but that is unclear. Ettenhart puts Pacheco's definition in contradiction, since Pacheco says that there is no *Acometimiento* but *Injury* when the Diestro has Medio Proporcionado, but the very definition he gives of *Acometimiento Perfecto* is similar if not identical of Medio Proporcionado.
- ‡ **Acometimiento Imperfecto "Imperfect attempt", dB:** It also is an attack attempt, but, it does not need to be at distance and/or disposition to injure, unlike *acometimiento perfecto*. For de Brea this is just a *feint* in order to make the opponent react to it. There is also a general trend to assume that *acometimiento imperfecto* aims the extremities and not the head as it is presumed for *acometimiento perfecto*.
- ‡ **Acometimiento Circular/de Revés dB, dR:** The attempt is done by a *cuchillada* (edge attack) either cut or reverse. De Rada mentions that it is an *acometimiento circular* when the diestro tries a *tajo* (cut) and switches to *revés* (reverse) and viceversa.
- ‡ **Acometimiento recto dR, M:** It refers to attempting the attack with a thrust. Usually is linked to *Perfecto*. Mendoza mentions this attack aimed to the head.

Afirmarse “Steady on oneself”, *v, P, M*: it would be more understood as “how to stance, or how to confront”, since it refers to handle a situation. Pacheco and Mendoza mention for instance “Como afirmarse contra el turco...” meaning: “How to place yourself against Turks”.

Agregación *n*, **Agregar** (*v*), “Aggregate”, *dB, dR, M*: It refers to the union of two swords. A diestro would seek *agregación* (aggregation) when facing an opponent, because we want to have control on the movements of the other blade. Note that, aggregation does not necessarily mean that one has control over the other but strictly contact.

Ala de perdiz “Quail wing”, *Jp*: Vulgar wrestling technique. We do it by passing our leg behind one of the other legs of the opponent and pushing her to the floor, sometimes it can be helped with the use of the hand pulling one of the knees, like the careless techniques by Fiore dei Liberi.

Ángulo “Angle”, *dB*: It refers to the position of the blade in the space taking as a reference the torso of the fencer. The angles we find are:

- ‡ **Ángulo agudo** “Acute angle”, *dB*: the blade points towards the ground.
- ‡ **Ángulo obtuso** “Obtuse angle”, *dB*: the blade points towards the sky.
- ‡ **Ángulo recto** “Right angle”, *dB*: The blade points towards the front. The most defensive and offensive position for obvious reasons, that does not mean that the sword must be held constantly in this position.

Apartar la línea del punto “moving the line out of the point”: It refers when someone deviates the opponent’s sword when this one is pointing at her.

Atajo *dB, dR*: Specific movement of controlling opponent’s weapon by binding it with ours. Early treatises describe it as: putting the sword on the opponent’s with some pressure. But later on, Masters such de Rada use atajos in which the diestro’s sword is under the opponent’s. A perfect atajo, obeys three rules or seeks them as a final goal: Disposición, Privación and Sujeción:

- ‡ **Disposición**: “Disposition”. The action creates an opening in which the diestro can aim an offensive action.
- ‡ **Privación**: “Privation”. Our movement creates a wall in between the sword of the enemy and our body, so we cannot be injured by her sword.
- ‡ **Sujeción**: “Subjection”. It could be understand with a total blockage of the opponent’s sword and it comes when at the end of the atajo the diestro holds the grip of the opponent using her free hand.

Note: The definition of Atajo is the most discussed and argued among diestros. Antonio Yuste Iver, wrote at the corrections notes of Ettenhard’s *Compendio* that Atajo is any *movement* that prevents an injury when the enemy attacks or wants to attack from a dangerous distance. Yuste, includes the action of “moving backguards” as an atajo, and he says it to do an Atajo de Privación Común, which means that none of the fighters has possibility to injure the other.

Atajo virtual, “Virtual atajo”, *dR*: See *virtual*.

Aumento (movimiento de aumento) “Increase, augmentation”, *M*: When a blade in contact with another blade moves towards the pointy extreme of that same blade. The user who does

aumento will gain more strength over the opponent's blade. It is the contrary concept of *disminución*. See *Grados de fuerza*.

Causa "Cause", *dB*: May refer to *Sword Causes* or *Aristotelian Causes*. Early authors like Carranza talk about the *Aristotelian causes*, which have little relation with the technique. Here we focus only in the *causa* related to the actions between two swords.

- ‡ **Causa libre** "Free cause", *dB*, *E*: There is no contact among swords, one or both fighters are avoiding the contact among blades. Viedma and de Brea, for example, describe many attacks in which they "ignore" the opponent's blade and walk away to the side while injuring by *causa libre*.
- ‡ **Causa sujeta** "Subjected cause", *E*: It means that the diestro and opponent have their swords in contact. For example, a thrust in *causa sujeta* would mean that the diestro stabbed the opponent while both swords were keeping the contact. Preferably, Verdadera Destreza seeks always to play by *causa sujeta*.

Circle: See *Círculo*.

Círculo "Circle", *dR*: We find several circles in Verdadera Destreza that map the floor of the contenders. We walk through the circles by using *Curvo* Steps (see *Compases*). The principal circles to know are:

- ‡ **Círculo Común** "Common circle", *dR*: The perimeter of the circle unites both fencers and they share the diameter.
- ‡ **Círculo Máximo** "Maximum circle", *dR*: In this one, the diestro is in the perimeter of the circle and the opponent is in the center or viceversa (depending on the point of view). The radius is a spatial situation called *Medio de Proporción* (see *Medios*).
- ‡ **Círculo Propio** "Individual circle", *dR*: Circle around each fencer. Strictly speaking the center is in the forward foot and the perimeter in the back one. With pivoting *curvo* steps a fencer can walk "around herself".

Circular motions: See *Estocada*.

Codazo "Attack to the elbow", *P*, *CP*: From Common Destreza. It's a technique consisting in finding an opening to the opponent's elbow and cut it, most commonly with a *revés*.

Compás / Compases "Compass, (Measure), movement, **stepping**", *dB*: It refers to the movements done with the feet in order to transport oneself to one place to another. We can find different ones. There is some trouble between step and compass. *By default I use the names as a whole body movement ("do a recto" would mean to move two feet to move forward), whereas I talk about "single step" when I want to refer to the movement of only one of the feet.* See also *Marchas*, *Retiradas* and *Salto* by Simón de Frías.

- ‡ **Recto** "Straight, forward", *E*: These are Steps that allow the fencer to move forward. The front foot moves first and follows the rear one.
 - **Doble Recto**: In this occasion, the rear one starts the movement, bypassing the right one, then the right one bypasses the left one moving also forward. Pacheco just mentions that is twice the length of a Recto. *This way described here is how I learnt in the Asociación Española de Esgrima Antigua (AEAA), and it totally suits to me.* It can be found in the treatise of Simón de Frías as *Marcha Italiana*.

- ‡ **Extraño** "Strange", *M*: Moving backwards. The rear foot starts the movements and is followed by the front or right foot.
 - **Doble Extraño**: Doble backwards. In this occasion, the front one starts the movement, bypassing the right one moving backwards, then the left one bypasses the left one moving also backward. Pacheco just mentions that is twice the length of an extraño. *This way described here is how I learnt in the Asociación Española de Esgrima Antigua (AEEA), and it totally suits to me.* As the doble recto, the doble extraño is described as *Retirada Italiana* by Simón de Frías.
- ‡ **Trepidante** *M*: Moving horizontally. The first foot moving is the one of the side we are moving, then the other one moves. Right-Left when doing trepidante right, and left-right when moving left.
- ‡ **Transversal** *M*: Moving diagonally forward, it can be towards the left or right.
- ‡ **Curvo (Curbo)** "Curved steps", *M*: The steps move following any of the *Círculos*, adjusting the position of the body at each step.
- ‡ **Mixtos** "Mixtures", *dR*: Mixtures of different compass.

Concavidad, del cuerpo "Concavity of the body", *dB*: It refers to pull back your belly, while straightening the shoulders and advancing the armed arm towards the opponent. Viewed from the side, the body does some sort of "C". De Brea uses it when deflecting thrusts that would after move close to the lower part of the torso. It can be done by stepping backwards with the front foot and keeping this one with raised heel.

Conclusión "Conclusion", *M*: It refers to disarm, specifically is the action of a total block of the sword of the opponent using the free hand, holding the sword by the base of the blade, hilt, cup, ring knuckle-bow or pommel (less usual and effective).

Continuado: See *Cuchilladas*.

Contrafile: Voir *Filo*.

Cornada, "thorn attack", *P, CP, dR*. A thrust with the arm, with the sword coming from down and back to forward and up. Very dangerous to do it nowadays, since it can go under the mask of the opponent. Rada called this one also *The Italian thrust*.

Cuchilladas, "Edge attacks", *dR, P*: Generally divided in two depending on the side that are executed, see *Revés* and *Tajo*, but there are other subtypes to consider.

- ‡ **Revés, "Reverse"**, *E*: Edge attack that the diestro makes creating a circle, making the blade move towards her right, passing through the outside part of the body, over her head, coming from the internal/left side and executes in front of her, striking at the right side of the enemy.
 - **Medio Revés, "Half reverse"**, *M, E*: Instead of a full circle the blade is pulled from the internal side (if needed) and executes the attack in the same side.
- ‡ **Tajo, "Cut"**, *E*: Edge attack that the diestro makes creating a circle, making the blade move towards her left, passing through the inside part of the body, over her head, coming from the external/right side and executes in front of her, striking the left side of the enemy

- **Medio Tajo, "Half cut", M:** Instead of a full circle the blade is pulled from the external side (if needed) and executes the attack in the same side.
- ‡ **Subtypes or detailed situations for *cuchilladas*:**
 - **Continuado "Continuous cut or reverse":** *dR, dB.* Edge attack that the diestro starts executing but, when the enemy is going to block it, the diestro pulls the sword towards herself and executes a thrust under the defense.
 - **Convertido:** *dB.* "transformed or converted". There is no explanation from this one and I could assume (with absolutely no certainty) that is a cut coming from a thrust.
 - **Reducido:** *dB.* There is no explanation for this one. In the cases that the Destreza authors use the word "reducido" is when talking about a flexed arm.

Curvo "Curved", P: A step that moves the diestro over the circular lines, see *Compás*.

Cuts: See *Cuchilladas*.

Defensa, medios únicos. "Unique means of defense", See *Medios Únicos de la defensa*.

Destreza: "Dexterity". The content of this entry is an extrapolation of my knowledge over some of the 90+ existing Destreza treatises. *Destreza* makes reference to the Historical Spanish Martial Art of using the Sword or just fighting with weapons. There are several schools of knowledge under the name of Destreza such *Destreza Gitana*, "Romani Destreza" but the most common ones or the ones we want to refer are the following:

- ‡ **(La) Verdadera Destreza:** Badly translated in many contexts as "True Skill or True Art". Martial art based principally in geometry, ideal movements and postures, seeking perfection and good / honourable practice among the users. The authors Carranza and Pacheco are the ones "to blame" for this Art.
- ‡ **Destreza Vulgar or Destreza Común:** It is better known as "**Common Destreza**" but called "Vulgar Destreza" for those authors who practice the *Verdadera Destreza*. The adjective Vulgar became pejorative after time, whereas the original meaning is "belonging to the masses". Truly, Vulgar Destreza is a less "refined" style. More intuitive and less attached to the geometrical principles. *For some Diestros, any system outside of Verdadera Destreza is just Vulgar, which is an ignorant statement, but good enough to joke around.*

Desvío (n) / Desviar (v) dB: Deflect the sword of the opponent. It is usually against a thrust. See *diversion*.

Diámetro Común or "Common Diameter", dR: Line between the two fencers. It goes from the heel of the back foot (usually left) of a fencer to the other heel of the left foot of the other fencer.

Diámetro Particular "Particular diameter", dR: or individual diameter. Strictly speaking it is when one of the fighters moves away from the common diameter in search of an opening and it is not followed by the opponent. *If the opponent just closes the line, the Particular Diameter becomes Common Diameter instead.*

Diámetro Superior, "Upper diameter", dR: A line between the armed shoulders of the fencers, when these ones stand with right angle.

Diestro "Skilled or right-handed": Diestro is the name that receives the practitioner of *Verdadera Destreza*. See *Vulgar*.

Dignidad, grados “Dignity, degrees of Dignity”, *Ta*: It refers to techniques, moves or concepts that have different degrees of *importance* inside the Destreza. The top ones are the *medios Universales* (see *Universales*), followed by *Tretas Generales* & *Tretas particulares*.

Disminución (Movimiento de disminución), “Decreasing movement”, *dR*: When a blade in contact with another moves along the other decreasing its degrees of strength. See *Grados de fuerza*.

Disposición “Disposition” *E*: Maestro Ettenhart uses such Word making reference to *movimientos dispositivos*. Thus, talks with *Disposición* as movements or techniques. See also *Atajo*.

Disposiciones Generales “General dispositions”, *E*: These are the names that Maestro Ettenhart likes to use for the *Tretas Generales* (*flaquezas*, *línea en cruz* and *estrechar*). He refuses to use the name *treta*, because for him a *treta* includes an injury, and that is not necessary for the aforementioned techniques.

- ‡ **Disposición General para la defensa y ofensa “general disposition for offense and defense”** *E*: Ettenhart mentions this title when the Diestro uses the Right Angle to defend and attack using *Accidental*.

Distancia común, “Common distance” *dR*: Distance in which both fighters can hit each other.

Diversión “Diversion”, *dB*: A sort of defensive deflection done with your sword under the pressure of the opponent’s sword. The dynamic of a diversion is done by having the hilt of the sword higher than the blade (in order to close any opening). This movement is done by allowing the opponent push the blade down and outside of the diameter while closing upper gap with the hilt.

Duplicación, Duplicar (v), “Duplicate”, *M*: When we repeat a same type of attack (usually an edge attack or *cuchillada*) in order to execute an injure after breaking a defense. It can be a cut after a cut or a reverse after a reverse or even a cut after a reverse.

Embebida, “absorbed, attached”, *CP*, *P*: Common Destreza. Flexion of the arm, backing the sword off from the opponent. The way it is described it implies sometimes that the user holds the blade from the middle of it in order to do a thrust (such as the Halbschwert technique from German tradition). However in some occasions (Pacheco) the verb *embeber* is used to only put away the arm and the sword. It is done in order to free it from the control of the opponent’s blade. In my experience an *embebida* can precede an *Estocada de Puño* or a Punching thrust or *Cornada*.

Empanada “Pie”, *P*: Common Destreza. It is a technique generally used with sword and dagger. The two blades will make a “sandwich” (pie) trapping in the middle the opponent’s blade blocking it while we can change the angulation of our sword and thrust. It is also possible to use the hand/cape in substitution of the dagger.

Enarcada “arched”, *M*: Movement of the arm changing from nails-up to nails-down when the opponent pushes the sword of the diestro from the inside. The pronation of the wrist will make the point of our blade to change the direction is pointing to. So if the sword was previously aiming away from the enemy, the *enarcada* places it towards her. *Personally I use also the enarcada from the outside, switching from nails-down to nails-up.*

Encadenada, “Chained”, *P*: Using one of the quillons and the blade of the sword as fulcrums in order to block the blade of the opponent. Also it is a combination of blocking the blade of the enemy using a dagger and a rapier.

Encuentro, “Encounter”, *dB*: Encounter is when both fencers injure each other in the same action, a double hit.

Engavilánada “Quillion-hit”, *P*: Use the lower quillon (front one) to move aside the blade of the opponent and thrust from a new diameter. *In some circumstances a lucky fencer can use the back quillon as well for the same purpose.*

Estocada: “Thrust”. The circular motions of the thrust can be also considered by themselves alone, without the need of a thrust. However I consider putting their explanations here because many thrusts are described with a preceding motion.

- ‡ **Estocada de círculo completo**, “Full circle thrust”, *dB*: The blade describes a full revolution movement on a vertical plane before or while thrusting the target.
- ‡ **Estocada de cuarto de círculo**, “ $\frac{1}{4}$ Circle thrust”, *M*: The blade describes a quarter of a revolution movement while or before thrusting.
- ‡ **Estocada de medio círculo** “ $\frac{1}{2}$ Circle thrust”, *dB*: The blade describes half a revolution movement while or before thrusting.
- ‡ **Estocada de puño**, “Punching thrust”, *dB*: A thrusting attack made by the extension of the arm.
- ‡ **Porción Mayor de círculo**, “Big part of a circle”, *M*: It refers to a thrust that does more than half a circle revolution but less than a whole revolution.
- ‡ **Porción Menor de círculo**, “Small part of a circle”, *M*: It refers to a thrust that does less than half a circle revolution, but more than $\frac{1}{4}$ revolution.

Sagita, “Arrow”, *dB, dV*: A direct thrust extending the arm, similar to a punching thrust, the extension of the arm should push away the sword of the enemy. Viedma says that it must be done with the full profiled body and it is very useful for countering the *Línea en Cruz*. **Estrechar** *V*: It consists in doing an evolving circle counter-clockwise of your sword against opponent's sword contacting that one for the inside. It is made with the intention of gaining control of the opponent's sword. Sometimes it is not necessary to finish the full circle, especially if the enemy disengages with *libramiento* or *formacion*.

Expulsión “Expel”, *P, M*: Push strongly the sword of the opponent, with a sharp and fast movement. Angelo¹ calls it *cross the blade*. Such actions are very stereotypical of Italian school such Marozzo and, in fact, it was considered as Common Destreza by Pacheco (1629) and Mendoza (1675). There are 3 movements considered as *Expulsión*. Those are: *Golpe a la Espada*, *Remesón* and *Garatusa*.

Exterior del cuerpo, also **por la parte de afuera or postura de la espada**, “Exterior part of the body, external side, or side of the sword”, *dB*: Spatial reference of the body accounting from the operating arm towards the back of the fighter, considering all the back of the person as well. Contrary to *Interior*.

¹ Angelo – The School of Fencing. Pg. 53

Extremo (or extremo), “Extreme”, *M*: it makes reference to a body position and relates to the distances to interact directly with the opponent. The two extremes we can find are the *maximum distance* (to injure your enemy) or the *minimum distance* (to disarm).

- ‡ **Extremo Remoto** “Remote extreme”, *dR*: It refers to adequate distance and body position for injuring our opponent with the blade of our sword. Lorenz de Rada (1705) describes the position in straight angle and right leg advanced, so only the point of the sword is touching the enemy, other authors describe edge attacks as well. Mind that the definition includes distance and feet position..
- ‡ **Extremo Propincuo** “Close extreme”, *M*: The position is described with left foot in front and right one in the back. *Extremo propincuo* will be used for techniques such *conclusion* or disarm. Mind that the definition includes distance and feet position.

Falso, “false edge”: The rear side of a blade. See *filo Obtuso*.

Filo: Edges of the sword.

- ‡ **Filo Agudo** “(Acute) front edge”, *dR*: The one which is in the “front” of the sword. In some other disciplines is called true edge.
- ‡ **Filo Obtuso** “(Obtuse) false edge”, *dR*: The one which is in the “back” of the sword. Sometimes called *falso*, *contrafilo* or false edge.

Final, *P*: Common Destreza. It consists in an attack starting from the inside of the fencer while swords in contact. The attacker raises her sword by the hilt and going in Obtuse angle. Then, the blade will do a full circle over the other sword and fencer. It goes up and right again, pushing the other blade while thrusting into the chest.

Flaqueza, “weakness, weak”, *Ta*: It refers to the last portion of the blade, the pointy extreme (the weak side).

- ‡ **Flaqueza bajo la fuerza**, “Weak under strong”, *dB*: When the point of the blade is right under the hilt of our enemy or under the strongest part of the opponent’s blade. This position allows the Diestro to be quick in doing actions of *Libramiento*.
- ‡ **Flaqueza sobre la fuerza**, “Weak over strong”, *dB*: Same as “under strong”, but in this case our point of the blade is over the hilt of our enemy or strongest part of the blade.

Formación, “Formation”, *dB*, *dF*: A circular motion of a blade. It can be used as a disengaging action, pulling the sword with a circular move towards us. This sort of *movimiento dispositivo* opens the opportunity for the diestro to cause injury with *cuchilladas*. Linked to *Diversión*.

De Frías calls formación to any movement of the blade from a guard towards an attack. Other authors refer to it just as a short term of *formación de treta* (creation of an attack).

Fuerte, “Strong”, *dB*: It refers to the strong part of the blade, the one closest to the hilt.

Fuerza: “Force”, power, energy.

- ‡ **Fuerza operante** “operant force”, *dR*: When two swords are contacting, it refers to the force of the sword on top, using the gravity to help.
- ‡ **Fuerza resistente** “resisting force”, *dR*: The force of the sword that resists the *Fuerza operante*.

Garatusa *P*, *M*: Subtype of *Expulsión*. Pushing away the sword of the opponent with a strong Remiso, see *movimientos de la espada*.

Girata (from Italian tutta volta): *dB*. Step from Italian tradition in which the backward foot moves describing a *curvo* towards the right side, passing behind the right foot (which becomes the pivoting area). Fiore called it *Tutta Volta*, but eventually became to be called *Tutta Girata* in a more modern Italian.

Grados de fuerza, "Degrees of Strength", *dB, dR, Th*: measure. The blade can be divided in numbers as an indicator of the difference degree of strength it applies by the lever law. There are many scales depending on the author. *My favourite one is applying number 1 at the point of the blade and 10 at the hilt, which is used by Francisco de Ettenhart among others.*

Grados de perfil, "Profile degrees", *dR*: Spatial lines that fill the Internal (*Interior del cuerpo*) side of a person. Moving or going through the *grados de perfil* would be moving to the internal side of the enemy.

Hand postures: See *posiciones de la mano*.

Herida: "Injury". The word is used in case of a *successful attack* (see *Acometimiento*). It needs to be placed as a concept, since there are many types described inside the books and each one refers to a determined way of doing it so. *For me the important ones to highlight are:*

- ‡ **Herida antes/durante/ después de tiempo, "Injury before, during, or after tempo",** *dB*: It relates to the moment in which the *Diestro* injures her opponent in relation to the movements the latter was doing.
- ‡ **Herida permanente, "Permanent injury",** *dR*: That type of injury in which the opponent cannot counter attack or escape once injured. We understand it as a Fatality.

Hipotenusa "Hypotenuse" *dR*: In the situation in which the opponent in *Porta di ferro*, that is sword low into the inside. Hypotenuse is when the diestro will apply the strong of her sword onto the opponent's, creating a line and thrusting into the chest (causing a triangle with the swords).

Igualdad de aspectos iguales, "Same equal aspects", *Ta*: It is a situation in which one fencer is at the side of the other, right shoulder with left shoulder, both facing the same way. *It can be done after executing an injury, especially a tajo/cut (see cuchilladas), seeking to get away of the sword of the enemy, since the left side of her body should be the least dangerous one. Also when it is said to seek igualdad de aspectos iguales does not literally mean to achieve it, but the search for it causes troubles in the opponent's defense.*

Imbia, movimiento, "Imbia movement", *M*: Placing the sword with the point aiming to the opponent in the most direct way, can be considered a synonym of thrusting, see *estocada*.

Intención, "Intention", *dB*: It is mentioned many times as *primera intencion* "**first intention**" or *segunda intención* "**second intention**". The first, does not need reaction from the opponent, whereas the second one is a reaction to an action from the opponent.

Interior del cuerpo, also por la parte de adentro, "Interior part of your body, internal", *dB*: Side of the body going from the operating arm towards the chest and until the other arm (the front part of a body). Walking towards profile degrees would mean you walk towards the left of your opponent or her inside. See *Grados de perfil*.

Libramiento (n) / Librar (v) "Disengage", *dB*: the sword passing the point under the opponent's hilt / blade, with minimal movement of the hand and fingers.

Línea en cruz, “Line in cross”, V: Pushing the sword of the enemy by the external side, doing an evolving clockwise movement with the blade. It can be the an antonym of *Estrechar*.

Línea Receta (Rasceta), “Rascette line”, dB: Anatomical line at the wrist. A good sword for Destreza should not have the pommel passing such line.

Llamar “calling”, P: action aimed to provoke the attack of the opponent. It can be an open guard, low or remise, displaying targets that the user wants to be attacked at.

Manotada (also **Manotazo**) “The Hand-slap”, P, CP. Technique in which the user displaces the opponent’s blade with her own hand, it is usually done with a quick tap. Common Destreza Technique.

Matar el Movimiento “killing the move”, E: When a sword movement interrupts the other sword in the middle of an attack, blocking the attacker sword and holding it subjected to the other sword. Mentioned for example when a thrust is blocked and held captive with a *Natural* made by the opponent’s sword.

Medio: “Medium”. It refers to relative situations/distance/positions with very particular characteristics. Thinking of them of just DISTANCES is a misconception. *The principal ones are the first 3. Many of these concepts can overlap and co-exist at the same time, whereas others are “opposite” and cannot work with the presence of the other.*

- ‡ **Medio de Proporción**, “Mean of Proportion”, dR: Swords get measured with both fencers using right angle position. The point of each sword reaches until the hilt of the other. Many times the course exercises, if not specified, start at this mean.
- ‡ **Medio Proporcionado**, “Proportioned mean”, dR: Distance to reach and injure the enemy while gaining the control of the opponent’s sword.
- ‡ **Medio Proporcional**, “Proportional mean”, dR: A point-distance inside the *Círculo Común* that can be reached with a curvo steep. The distance is closer than the *medio de proporción* but there is not yet enough reach to injure the enemy. According to the findings of this author, it seems that the term was created and called by Juan de la Rocha around 1700.
- ‡ **Medio Común**, “Common Mean”, dR: Same as *Distancia Común*.
- ‡ **Medio Particular**, “Particular Mean”, dR: Distance chosen by the Diestro when executing an injury achieved by any of the *Tretas Particulares*.
- ‡ **Medio Privativo**, “blocking Mean”, dR: When the Diestro manages to block movements of the opponent, usually using *atajo*.
- ‡ **Medio transferido transferido**, “Transferred Mean”, dR: When the opponent controls your sword in the *medio proporcionado* or *proportional* and the Diestro manages to change the situation in her favour, controlling the sword of the opponent by gaining *grados de fuerza* and pushing it to the contrary side.

Medios Únicos de la defensa, “Unique means of Defense”, E: The sole three ways the Diestro needs to seek defense, those are *Right Angle*, *Atajo* and *Conclusión*.

Movements of the sword or Sword movements: See *Movimientos de la Espada*.

Movimientos de la Espada “Sword movements”, M: There are many, and they can be easily defined by 2 types of movements in each of the 3 axis of the 3 dimensions, up/down, right/left,

forward/backward. They can be divided in two categories as well: moving away from the target or towards it.

- ‡ **Movimiento Dispositivo, "Dispositive movement", dB:** Movement that goes away from the center, it can be done to create an attacking action (as a bow pulls the arrow before letting it go). It is better understood when practicing the movement while having a sword covering the center. The three *Dispositivos* are:
 - **Remiso dB:** When the sword moves at right or left, out of the center. Axis X in the 3D Cartesian coordinates.
 - **Extraño dB:** When we pull the sword backwards. Axis Z in the 3D Cartesian coordinates.
 - **Violento dB:** Moving up, against gravity. Axis Y in the 3D Cartesian coordinates.
- ‡ **Movimiento Ejecutivo (executivo), "Executive movement", dB:** Towards the center and/or objective. We find the 3 opposite movements of the *dispositivos*, same directions but different ways.
 - **Reducción dB:** When the sword moves towards the center, from the right or left. Axis X in the 3D Cartesian coordinates.
 - **Natural, movimiento dB:** When the sword moves down, following gravity. Axis Y in the 3D Cartesian coordinates.
 - **Accidental dB:** The sword moves forward, towards the enemy. Axis Z in the 3D Cartesian coordinates.

Natural: See *Movimientos de la Espada* "Movement of the sword".

Obligar, "Oblige", u: In Pacheco, mentioned by Viedma, *Obligar* seems to be an action between flaqueza and Line in Cross, but the use I know it for nowadays is the following: A continuous and long push to the sword of the enemy, as if it was an atajo towards our outside or a *linea en cruz* but ends up pushing the sword to the back of the opponent, obliging her to rise the hilt.

Orbes dR: "Orbs". It refers to the different distances inside the circles. They are described by Lorenz de Rada, and you can find different *tretas particulares* depending on the orb you find yourself in.

Paso: "Step". It refers to the movement of a single foot. We can find the same as *Compases*.

Potencia "power", dR: Possibility. It refers to situations found in the fight.

- ‡ **Potencia active, "active power", dR:** The diestro holds the sword of the enemy in *Medio proporcionado* and can injure without being injured.
- ‡ **Potencia pasiva, "passive power", dR:** The point of the view of the enemy when the diestro is in *potencia activa*.
- ‡ **Potencia universal, "universal power", dR:** When the diestro managed to do *Conclusión* and can decide the end of the fight.

Posiciones de la mano, "hand postures", dB: Hand positions described by where the nails are pointint to in the spatial context. They are very similar to the ones described by Camillo Agrippa in the 16th century (*prima, seconda, ...*). The positions are the ones that follow:

- ‡ **Uñas abajo dB: "Nails-down".** The palm of the hand is looking down, the true or front edge of the sword is facing our external side.

- ‡ **Uñas adentro** *dB*: “Nails-inside”. The palm looks inside. Front edge faced towards the floor. It can be considered standard position.
- ‡ **Uñas afuera** *dB*: “Nails-outside”. The palm looks outside. Front edge is facing towards the sky.
- ‡ **Uñas arriba** *dB*: “Nails-up”. The palm looks up. Edge to the inside.
- ‡ **Participio uñas abajo** *dB*: “Participle of nails down” or “mid nails-down”. Position of the palm between *nails down* and *nails inside*.
- ‡ **Participio uñas arriba** *dB*: “Participle of nails up” or “mid nails-up”. Position of the palm between *uñas arriba* and *uñas adentro*.

Privación, “Block”, *dR*: We can find at least 3 important ones. See also *Atajo*.

- ‡ **Privación absoluta**, “absolute block”, *dR*: It refers to *Conclusión*.
- ‡ **Privación común**, “common block”, *dR*: When none of the fighters has any means or enough distance to injure the other.
- ‡ **Privación particular** “particular block”, *dR*: When the diestro blocks attacks from the opponent. It would be the synonym of *reparos*.

Proporción: See *Medios*.

Remiso: See *Movimientos de la espada*.

Remesón *P, M*: Common Destreza. It is a subtype of *Expulsión*. The sword of the diestro, while in contact of the opponent, moves in a motion of *Natural/Remiso* towards the opponent's sword/*Accidental* and out of the diameter line. All those movements must be done at the same time, causing the expulsive motion of the blade of the opponent.

Reducción: See *Movimientos de la espada*.

Reparo/s *M*: Blocking move. Nowadays is used in some groups to describe parries against *cuchilladas*.

- ‡ **Reparo universal**: *Conclusión*.

Recazo (Recaço), “Ricasso”, *C*: The part of the blade of the rapier inside the cup. That part is usually surrounded by 3 fingers of the diestro or less, depending on the author.

Revés *E*: See *Cuchilladas*.

Sagita: See *Estocadas*.

Salto “Jump” *dF*: Movement of the body using both feet in one single tempo. De Frías describes French, Spanish and Italian jumps.

Sujeción. See *Atajo*.

Tajo *E*: See *Cuchilladas*.

Torneada “Turn-around”, *P*: Common Destreza. Technique in which the user holds her own blade as half-sword and turns herself counter-clockwise while approaching the enemy, pushing the opponent's blade for the inside and stabbing the objective with the blade still held in half-sword.

Treta: “Techniques” *E*. A combination of movements destined to control the sword of the enemy and/or cause injure afterwards. According to Ettenhart, a Treta is any movement that ends in injury, which can be contradictory to other definitions and he talks about at the end of his book, answering the censor that debates his writings.

To this author the best definition comes from Antonio Yuste in Ettenhard's *Compendio* and it's the following: A "treta" is a plan, a simulation inside Diestro's mind with the purpose of defend himself and offend the opponent.

- ‡ **Tretas Universales, "Universal Techniques", T:** So called *universal techniques* because any attack of the opponent can be stopped with one of these three *tretas*. They are also called *Medios Universales (Universal means)*. The 3 universal means are: *Atajo*, *Conclusión* and "*right angle*" (*angulo recto*).
- ‡ **Tretas Generales, "General Techniques", V:** Movements to gain control of opponent's sword. There are different number of *tretas generales* depending on the author (Díaz de Viedma talks about 7), but it is easier to stick to the 4 of Carranza: *Flaqueza bajo la fuerza*, *flaqueza sobre la fuerza*, *estrechar* and *línea en cruz*.
- ‡ **Tretas Particulares, "Particular techniques", E:** Strictly attacking movements with very **particular** target, "specific". In here we can count 3: *Tajo*, *revés* and *estocada* (cut, reverse and thrust), also we can add 2 such (half-cut and half-reverse).

Transferencia, movimiento, "transference", dB: A defensive movement of the diestro to regain the control of the sword after an opponent had gained it by an *atajo* or other biding movement. It is usually done by a collection of movements: usually doing *aumento + reducción and remiso* (see *movements of the sword*). In short, it would be done by changing the angulation of the sword (to gain strength) and place it to the other side where it had been on control of the enemy, that action would allow the diestro to re-gain the diameter line among the fencers.

Universales, medios V, P: Called sometimes *tretas universales*. They are the movements of top dignity or *Dignidad*.

Uñas, "Nails", dB: See *posiciones de la mano*.

Violento: See *movimientos espada*.

Virtual dR: Usually referred to movements or determined concepts that are done without the contact of the sword as opposed to the standard concept explanation. For example *Atajo virtual* would be an *Atajo* done without contacting the sword of the enemy.

Vulgar: Fencer who practices the *Common Destreza*. Sometimes it is referred as mocking to anyone who does not have the knowledge and skills to practice *Verdadera Destreza*. *Vulgar* should be related to "common" rather than just as a disrespectful adjective.

Zambullida CP, dR: *Common Destreza*. An attack consisting in a change of nails/hand position, surpassing the defence in the diameter line by the opponent. *Cruzado y Peralta* (an many others) described it as a with the possibility of stepping with left and using dagger or hand. There is *Zambullida* version of de Rada moving to the inside of the opponent with a *libramiento* and a thrust.

Entries: 180+

Don't forget to check more information about Destreza knowledge/techniques in <https://destrezanova.ca/blog/> & <https://dnlaval.ca/> and don't hesitate to reach out if you have any doubts or if you would like to provide assistance.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

André had always a passion for martial arts. Why am I talking in third person?... I did judo as a kid, and later on Kung-Fu Korean style until green belt. However my life did not come really interesting until I entered in a Historical Fencing club called "Associació Esgrima Antiga de Santpedor" in 2008, linked to the "Asociación Española de Esgrima Antigua", the biggest Historical Fencing Association of the world at that time. There, I learned the Verdadera Destreza Rapier Sword style from Aleix Basullas, a great sage master specialized in the treatise of Lorenz de Rada, probably the most detailed work about Verdadera Destreza. His attention to such detail and obsession in the Art made my passion grow into the community. As well, I had in there a great Master called Sendo Espinalt, he is a free-styler and taught me the will of the warrior that cannot be learnt in any book, he pushed that passion that already was born. In a few years I already started teaching the newcomers. In 2015 I co-founded the club Associació Esgrima Antiga Catalunya Central AEACC with Aleix and Sendo's blessing and my fencing career started having his highlights. I participated in many International tournaments: Swordfish, Halsbschwert, Villeneuve... which put me in the #1 position of HEMA Ratings in my country in Rapier for some time. However I do not consider tournaments to be a good system for measuring someone's knowledge in fencing, **very far from it**. Alongside of my competitions records I started giving workshops in International events. I traveled and shared my knowledge in places like China, USA, Mexico, Canada... In 2016 I moved to Canada where I switched along different clubs as student and instructor. I am the Co-creator of *Montreal Sword Meisters* event and co-managed it until my retirement of the same in 2023. In 2022 I founded *Club d'escrime Historique Destreza Nova Laval* a non-profit project aimed to teach Historical Fencing but also honest, good values to people.

If you find me and want to cross steel I will surely be glad to pick up the glove.



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