

Strokez off ij hand swerde:
a brief instruction in the use of personal arms¹

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Despite ample evidence for the appeal of martial prowess in late medieval Europe, few texts of instruction in arms survive, particularly from before 1500.² Manuscript instructions in arms, frequently referred to by the German term *Fechtbücher*, are rare attempts at the transmission of a physical and mechanical action into text.³ There are only three examples of this kind of instruction in Middle English, and because of their obscurity and challenging vocabulary they are rarely discussed as part of Europe's martial and intellectual history.⁴ This paper presents an edition of one of those fight-texts, found in the British Library's MS Cotton Titus A xxv.

¹ The author would like to acknowledge financial and academic support for this research from the University

² On the social value of martial prowess in the late medieval and early modern period, see Richard W. Kaeuper, *Chivalry and Violence in Medieval Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 129-60; Steven Muhlberger, *Deeds of Arms: Formal Combats in the Late Fourteenth Century* (Highland Village, TX: Chivalry Bookshelf, 2005); Roger B. Manning, *Swordsmen: The Martial Ethos in the Three Kingdoms* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). The most well known discussion of the value of martial skill, as it was understood in the late medieval and early modern period, is in Baldissare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, ed. George Bull (New York: Penguin, 1967), 57.

³ *Fechtbuch* is often translated from the German as "fencing manual," but should be more accurately read as "fight-book," a less restrictive definition. The term "fencing," in its modern context, refers to one specific form of combat or sport using a specific weapon. "Fight-text" is a preferable term to use here considering the variety of combat techniques employing swords, as well as other weapons, in many of the extant manuscript manuals.

⁴ These are London, British Library MS Harley 3542, ff. 82-85, MS Cotton Titus A xxv f. 105, and MS Additional 39564. The publication history of these manuscripts is described below.

Features of the *Fechtbuch* Genre

The roots of text instruction in personal arms are still obscure. The earliest extant manual, Leeds, Royal Armouries MS I 33, displays a level of complexity in instruction and a careful pedagogical approach to its subject that seem to have sprung “fully armed from the head of its creators.”⁵ Most manuscript fight-books contain instruction on a variety of weapon combinations and combative scenarios: sword and buckler, the two-hand sword, dagger, and fighting in armour, from horseback, in judicial lists, or against multiple opponents.⁶ Such variety is common to the illustrated manuals, as is the habit of composers to dedicate them to elite readers.⁷ The bulk of surviving texts are from German sources.

Unillustrated manuals are less common but represent some of the earliest material known, such as the collections of instructional verse attributed to the fourteenth-century master Johannes Liechtenauer.⁸ Liechtenauer’s instructions take the form of short, easily remembered verse, a literary technique called *merckverse* or *zedeln*. These short passages give simple rules of action or describe guiding principles governing technique. Most martial *merckverse* is accompanied by glosses, necessary for the medieval reader as the verses were never intended for use outside an oral system of instruction. The verse instructions were originally mnemonic tools for use in the classroom.⁹ All early fight-texts assume a reader with a good knowledge in arms as there are few definitions of terms, basic instructions on balance and movement, or other elementary principles concerning technique. Although these texts expect a literate reader, they are typically composed entirely in the vernacular; Latin content is rare.¹⁰

⁵ Jeffrey Forgeng and Alex Kiermayer, “The Chivalric Art: German Martial Arts Treatises of the Middle Ages and Renaissance,” in *The Cutting Edge: Archaeological Studies in Combat and Weaponry*, ed. Barry Molloy (Stroud: The History Press, 2007), 153.

⁶ Examples include München, Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek Cgm 1507, and København, Kongelige Bibliotek MS Thott 290 2°.

⁷ *Fechtbücher* dedicated to noble patrons include the early fourteenth-century work of Fiore de Liberi, Hans Talhoffer, and Paulus Kal. See Sydney Anglo, *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 6, 155-59, 177-81; Martin Wierschin, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des Fechtens* (Munich: C. H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1965), 28-29; and Reiner Leng, ed. *Katalogue der Deutschsprachigen Illustrierten Handschriften des Mittelalters: Band 4/2, Lieferung 1/2, 38. Fecht- und Ringbücher* (Munich: Kommission für Deutsche Literatur des Mittelalters der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008), 68-70.

⁸ Forgeng and Kiermayer, 155-58. See Anglo, *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 60, 191-194, and Hans-Peter Hils, *Meister Johann Liechtenauers Kunst des Langen Schwertes* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1985).

⁹ Forgeng and Kiermayer are careful to point out that the glosses are necessary only because of the cryptic nature of the text, not because of any intentional secrecy on Liechtenauer’s part. On *merckverse* see Forgeng and Kiermayer, 155. For a discussion of *zedeln* see Heidemarie Bodemer, “Das Fechtbuch: Untersuchungen zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der bildkünstlerischen Darstellung der Fechtkunst in den Fechtbüchern des mediterranen und westeuropäischen Raumes vom Mittelalter bis Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts” (PhD dissertation, Stuttgart: Universität Stuttgart, 2008), 74.

¹⁰ Latinate fight-texts produced before 1500 are Leeds, Royal Armouries MS I.33, one edition of Fiore de Liberi’s fight-text (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale Latin 11269), and introductory material in Filippo Vadi’s manual (Rome, Biblioteca Nazionale, cod. 1324). For a facsimile edition of MS I.33 see Jeffrey L. Forgeng, *The Medieval Art of Swordsmanship: A Facsimile & Translation of Europe’s Oldest Personal Combat Treatise, Royal Armouries MS. I.33* (Union City, CA: Chivalry Bookshelf and The Royal Armouries, 2003). For Vadi’s text see Luca Porzio and Gregory Mele, eds., *Arte Gladitoria Dimicandi: 15th Century Swordsmanship of Master Filippo Vadi* (Union City, CA: Chivalry Bookshelf, 2002).

The Middle English Fight-Texts and Cotton Titus A XXV.

British Library, MS Cotton Titus A xxv, like many of the volumes in the Cottonian collection, is a composite of different works of different dates and sources that were bound together by Robert Cotton's librarians in the seventeenth century.¹¹ The codex contains six discrete items dating from the thirteenth to the late fifteenth centuries, copied on vellum and paper.¹² Cotton's early cataloguers were unable to make out the contents of the paper gathering from ff. 94-105, which contains the brief passage of fight instruction, and described it as "certainly Latin verse, worn and fading characters, on paper."¹³ The pages in the gathering are unlined and contain 30 to 32 lines of text each leaf. There is a watermark of a bull that has a strong similarity to Piccard 85965 and other marks typically of German and French paper makers from the 1440s to 1460s.¹⁴

Because of the composite nature of the codex, the paper gathering of ff. 94-105 cannot be compared with its neighbors for dating or provenance; we have only the internal details of the gathering as clues. There is significant wear and soiling throughout, and large holes affect ff. 94-98 and ff. 104-105, suggesting these leaves spent time acting as covers for the gathering before it was bound into the present codex. None of this damage can be blamed on the 1731 fire at Ashburnham House. The codex was bound prior to that fire and the 1756 report to parliament mentions no damage to the Titus book-press.¹⁵

The contents of the gathering of ff. 94-105 are an odd mix, beginning with selections from a verse prophesy attributed to John of Bridlington (c. 1320-1379). The selection is copied in a single fifteenth-century secretary hand. The Bridlington verses end at f. 104v.¹⁶ Two more verses in Latin appear at the head of f. 105r, one being an *Agnus Dei*.¹⁷ The fight-text follows this and is divided into three sections of seven, six, and nine lines respectively, the first and third sections

¹¹ Cotton Titus A xxv was rebound sometime in the nineteenth century. The gatherings are not mounted on tabs, making accurate collation difficult.

¹² Contents are: ff. 1-35, the *Annales Monisterii de Buellio in Hibernia*, a thirteenth-century chronicle of the Irish monastery of Boyle; ff. 36-93, a Middle English version of the *Three Holy Kings of Coleyn*; ff. 72-53, a Latin copy of Ludolph of Suchem's description of the Holy Land; ff. 94-105 is described below, followed by an excerpt from the *Historia Regum Britanniae* on ff. 106-117, and a collection of unidentified Latin and French excerpts concerning household management, finishing out the volume of 138 leaves. Much of the material in Cotton Titus A xxv has been published in transcription or noted in indexes, with the exception of our text. For published works from this codex, see A. Martin Freeman, "The Annals in Cotton Titus A. xxv," *Revue Celtique* (published in issues, 41 (1924): 301-30; 42 (1925): 283-305; 43 (1926): 358-84; 44 (1927): 336-61C. Horstmann, *The Three Kings of Cologne*, EETS vol. 84 (London: N. Trübner, 1886); H. L. D. Ward, *Catalogue of Romances in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum*, vol. 1 (London: Longmans, 1883), 244.

¹³ The first description of the contents of Titus A xxv appears in a 1639 hand-list of the Cotton collection, now London, British Library, MS Additional 36682 (b), f.201r where only "Annales monastery de Buellio in Hibernia" is listed. The next listing of Cotton's manuscripts is Thomas Smith, *Catalogus Librorum Manuscriptorum Bibliothecae Cottoniae* (Oxford, 1696), 125. Here, item 4 in Titus A xxv is described as "Versus quidam Latini, exesis et evanescentibus characteribus in Charta."

¹⁴ See www.piccard-online.de/?nr=85965

¹⁵ Sam Hooper, *A Catalogue of the Manuscripts in the Cottonian Library to which are Added Many Emendations and Additions with an Appendix* (London: S. Hooper, 1777), xii-xiv.

¹⁶ For similar hands, see C. E. Wright, *English Vernacular Hands From the Twelfth to the Fifteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 24-5; M. B. Parkes, *English Cursive Hands 1250-1500* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), plate 3. For Bridlington's verses see Thomas Wright, ed. *Political Poems and Songs Relating to English History* (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1859), 123-215.

¹⁷ An identical *Agnus Dei* appears in C. Given-Wilson, ed. and trans., *The Chronicle of Adam Usk 1377-1421* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 202-3.

having short titles provided by the same scribe. There is marginal bracing, similar to that seen in contemporary poetry and verse, around each of the three sections, but the text itself exhibits no verse structure.¹⁸ More verses follow the final instructions on 105v. The first verse is heavily damaged by a hole in the leaf and is illegible. The final piece of verse is another prophetic Latin composition which is transcribed in R. H. Robbins.¹⁹

A single hand is used throughout ff. 94-104, and may be the same hand responsible for the various verses and the fight-text on f. 105. Differences in letter sizes, line spacing, pen size, and the colour and weight of the ink make comparison of the hands difficult. There is consistency among the three groups of text on f. 105, and it is likely they are all the product of a single scribe, produced over an indeterminate period of time. The date for composition is in the third or fourth quarter of the fifteenth century, on the balance of evidence from the watermark and the scribal hand.

For such a short passage, there is considerable variation in spelling in the fight-text. This could suggest that it was an original composition, copied down quickly with little concern for consistency. These elements may also suggest the passage was copied from dictation. The nature of the content and its placement at the end of a gathering of miscellaneous secular writing is evocative of a text that was temporary and ephemeral, supplementing oral instruction in personal arms.

The Techniques of Martial Instruction

Comparison of this text with the other Middle English fight-texts is fairly easy, but does little to improve understanding of the meaning of the martial instruction as presented. There are strong similarities between all three texts in style, content, and vocabulary. The British Library's MS Harley 3542 contains, among its alchemical and medical recipes, passages on the two-hand sword, likely compiled around 1420.²⁰ These 184 lines of instruction are divided into two prose sections, following a format similar to the Cotton text, and a verse section that uses simple rhyme and rhythm. British Library MS Additional 39564 collects sword lessons using a similar prose format to the Titus text. MS Add. 39564 has forty-one lessons copied onto a small scroll,

¹⁸ The passage on fight instruction in Titus A xxv is first mentioned within the description of British Museum (now British Library), Additional 39564 in *Catalogue of Additions to the Manuscripts in the British Museum in the Years 1916-1920* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1933), 46. It is mentioned, but not quoted, by Rossell Hope Robbins and John L. Cutler, *Supplement to the Index of Middle English Verse* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1965), no. 3423, where it appears in reference to Harley 3542. The Titus A xxv passage is mentioned next by Anglo, *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 3, 337-8, 359. A transcription of f. 105, prepared by Dr. Elenora Litta while a graduate student at King's College London, has circulated online since 2003. The first three lines of f. 105r are transcribed in Willy L. Braekman, "Het oudste vechtbok uit de Nederlanden: La Noble Science des ioueurs despee (1538)," in *E Codicibus Impressisque: Opstellen over het boek in de Lage Landen voor Elly Cockx-Indestege, II* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2004), 52. Braekman's transcription differs significantly from the present edition.

¹⁹ This verse appears in Rossell Hope Robbins, "Poems Dealing with Contemporary Conditions," in vol. 5 of *A Manual of the Writings in Middle English 1050-1500*, ed. Albert E. Hartung (New Haven, CT: Connecticut Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1975), 1533.

²⁰ The passage on the sword appears in MS Harley 3542 at ff.82r-85r. The verse section was published in Thomas Wright and James Orchard Halliwell, *Reliquiae Antiquae* (London: John Russell Smith, 1845), 308-9. The complete text appeared as an imperfect transcription in Alfred Hutton, *The Sword and the Centuries or Old Sword Ways and Old Sword Days* (London: Grant Richards, 1901), 36-40. The Harley codex and its provenance with other medical texts in the Harley collection is summarized by Laura Nuvoloni, "The Harleian Medical Manuscripts," *electronic British Library Journal*, 2008.

likewise intended as direction for a single student at practice.²¹ All of these texts lack any explanations or theoretical discussion of the movements or technique.

As far as the weapons mentioned in the titles for the Titus passages are concerned, the sword is likely the long, double-edged weapon that became popular among elites and fighting men in the fifteenth century. There was great variety in the sizes and proportions of these swords, and shorter versions could be comfortably used with one or two hands. It is not clear what kind of two-hand sword is in mind for these exercises.²² The staff mentioned in the third section is not necessarily the quarter-staff of popular history, but could refer to any of a variety of two-hand weapons that were not swords or axes.²³

A helpful analogy has been offered as a way to explain how these texts could instruct swordsmen. The comparison is to practice forms, or *kata*, used in modern Eastern martial arts schools. A *kata* is a solo drill used as repetitive practice for students. It works by imprinting set movements in the student's mental and physical memory in a way that ultimately makes such actions habitual.²⁴ Such drills appear to be unique to the Middle English fight-texts and are not found in any continental manuals. This approach to martial instruction is not explicitly described in medieval contexts, although similar training techniques are mentioned in the hugely popular *De Re Militari* and imitators, where the use of a stationary target for training with the sword is mentioned.²⁵ Solo drills are also described in the sixteenth century by Richard Mulcaster. His 1581 work on training a new swordsman advises the use of a "counterfit adversarie" or "shadow" when practicing alone.²⁶

Even with this insight into the function of these texts, there is the problem of vocabulary. The Cotton composer does not borrow from the continental lexicon of combat instruction, a lexicon largely understood by later fencing historians and one that English manuals adopted consistently in the seventeenth century.²⁷ Any attempt at translating these passages into modern English will run into various problems with the idiosyncratic use of existing fifteenth-century vocabulary. There are few, if any, borrowed terms from German and Italian texts, as they currently survive, and the English composers have made interpretation much more difficult by

²¹ MS Additional 39564 has not appeared in publication, having had its first mention, outside the 1933 catalogue entry noted above, in Anglo, *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 122, where Anglo transcribes a few lines to illustrate a point about its opaque vocabulary.

²² For a concise description of this type of weapon see Graeme Rimer, "Weapons," in *Blood Red Roses: The Archaeology of a Mass Grave from the Battle of Towton AD 1461*, eds. Veronica Fiorato, Anthea Boylston, and Christopher Knüsel (Oxford: Oxbow, 2000), 119-29.

²³ As a family, staff weapons include some of the most common battlefield tools of the late medieval period and constitute the second most common weapon found in records of assault and homicide: James Buchanan Given, *Society and Homicide in Thirteenth-Century England* (Stanford: University of California Press, 1977), 189. The term "staff" is often used generically to refer to any long weapon that was not a sword, particularly in Richard R. Sharpe, *Calendar of Coroners' Rolls of the City of London, A.D. 1300-1378* (New York: Borgo, 1996), xxiii, 71, 110. In some cases the only way to tell one kind of staff from another is from their assessed values at an inquest, as is common in Charles Gross, ed. *Select Cases from the Coroners' Rolls, AD. 1265-1413 with a Brief Account of the Office of Coroner* (London: Bernard Quaritch, 1896).

²⁴ This analogy is suggested by James Hester, "Real Men Read Poetry: Instructional Verse in 14th-century Fight Manuals," *Arms & Armour* 6, no. 2 (2009): 175-83.

²⁵ Christopher Allmand, "The *De re militari* of Vegetius in the Middle Ages and Renaissance," in *Writing War: Medieval Literary Responses to Warfare*, ed. Corinne Saunders, Françoise Le Saux and Neil Thomas (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), 15-28.

²⁶ Quoted in Anglo, *The Martial Arts of Renaissance Europe*, 29.

²⁷ The earliest printed manuals in English are Vincentio Saviolo, *His Practise, in two books* (London: John Wolf, 1595); and George Silver, *Paradoxes of Defense* (London: Edward Blount, 1599). These works do not use the vocabulary of the earlier English manuscript texts.

using native English terms in a very context-specific way. A similar problem is posed by early-English dance choreography from the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and they also survive in only three instances.²⁸ In certain features, particularly their context-specific terminology, they show the most similarities to the fight-texts. Dance choreography also uses a simple, un-glossed, system of instruction listing movements using a specialised vocabulary drawn from existing English words with some borrowed French and Italian terminology. Although there are no borrowed terms in the English fight-texts from German or Italian sources, there are several between English and French dance choreography.²⁹

Some terms, such as *fune* for thrust, are safely understood regardless of the context, but many terms that appear to refer to quantity, or words that normally act as adjectives, when used in a fight-text, adopt entirely new grammatical functions and meanings that we cannot gloss accurately.³⁰ An attempt to gloss some of these context-specific terms, based on current interpretations of other English fight-texts and relevant period material, is included in the notes to the apparatus. The modern reader who hopes to identify martial techniques will find this text frustrating, but this demonstrates how dependent late medieval martial instruction was on oral transmission. These texts exist only to assist and support the student, or instructor, engaged in a still predominantly oral practice.

Editorial Conventions

The scribe frequently shortens words ending in -er, such as “quarter” and these are expanded in the apparatus and indicated with italics. The scribe is also very inconsistent with spelling, something surprising for such a short passage. Because this is suggestive of the circumstances under which the text was composed, and may represent important scribal intentions, the original spelling has been preserved. Where the original MS is difficult to read, as lines 16-26 on f. 105v, speculative readings are indicated in angle brackets. Unreadable characters, where no suggestion can be offered, are indicated by ellipsis in angled brackets. Line numbering does not include the section titles.

²⁸ Among the small extant collection of Middle English dance choreography are the late fifteenth-century manuscripts in Derbyshire, Derbyshire Record Office D77 Box 38 (Gresley), pp. 51-79. For a transcription and discussion see David Fallows, “The Gresley Dance Collection, c. 1500,” *Royal Music Association Research Chronicle*, no. 29 (1996): 1-20.

²⁹ For a discussion of the earliest English dance notation see Jennifer Nevile, “Dance Steps and Music in the Gresley Manuscript,” *Historical Dance* 3, no. 6 (1999), 2-19, and her “Dance in Early Tudor England: An Italian Connection?” *Early Music* 26, no. 2 (1998), 230-44.

³⁰ This is a particular problem with words such as *sengyll*, *dowbyll*, *quarter*, *vydyng* (voiding) and *rake*. All these terms have well-established meanings outside these texts, but in their context as fight-instruction they take on entirely new meanings specific to this context.

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The Manuscript

Shelfmark:	London, British Library, MS Cotton Titus A xxv.
Material:	Ff. 94-105 paper in a gathering of 12 leaves. Watermark is possibly Piccard 85965. Gathering forms part of composite codex of 138 vellum and paper leaves from the twelfth to sixteenth century.
Size:	11 x 20 cm.
Language:	Codex contains Middle English, Latin, Irish, French. F. 105 in Middle English and Latin.
Script:	Likely a single scribe, using secretary of the late fifteenth century.

The Text

105r Strokez off ij hand swerde
a³¹ ffyrste a rownde for the waste sengyll *with a fune*³²
Also a quarter³³ *with a fune* A rake³⁴ sengyll³⁵ *with a fune*
A dowbull³⁶ rownde³⁷ a dowbyll rake with a nawke³⁸
A quarter & a rake & a wype with a spryng vdyng³⁹
with the lyfte hand *with a quarter with a fune skyping*⁴⁰ 5
with a wype Than a quarter & byeke⁴¹ a fune atte þe ryght
shulder *with a robecke*⁴²

³¹ There is a tiny marginal “a” here, where a bracket begins, extending down to line 7.

³² A thrust, likely from the French *foine*.

³³ This term appears in MS Harley 3542 and Additional 39564. James Hester suggests it refers to one of the four quarters of the body, as it is often depicted in illustrated fight-texts. However, there is no corresponding indication in this text as to which quarter is meant. It may refer, in this case, to a specific movement of the student, either with the body or the feet. See James Hester, “The Vse of the Two Hand Sworde: The English Fight Manual of MS Harley 3542 (A Critical Edition),” (MA dissertation, York: University of York, 2006).

³⁴ This term appears in the Gresley dance choreography and is interpreted by Nevile as a lateral movement of the feet. “Dance Steps and Music in the Gresley Manuscript,” 5. Hester defines it as a type of cut, “The Vse of the Two Hand Sworde,” 19.

³⁵ This is identified, by Nevile, with the French dance term *semibreve* and refers to a specific movement of the feet. *Ibid.*, 5-6.

³⁶ Appears in the Gresely dance choreography, where Nevile equates it with the French *breve*, a movement of the feet. *Ibid.*

³⁷ This may modify the movement of the *dowbull* in line 3, or it could be a separate movement of the weapon in relation to the feet. It has no cognates outside English fight-texts. Hutton glosses *rownis* in MS Harley 3542 as a “circular cut,” Hutton, 36. Hester defines it as a “cut using a wide swing to gather strength,” Hester, “The Vse of the Two Hand Sworde,” 18.

³⁸ This appears in MS Harley 3542 as *hauke* where Hutton and Hester define it as a blow or a cut: Hutton, 36; Hester, “The Vse of the Two Hand Sworde,” 18.

³⁹ “voiding.” Its specific function here is unclear.

⁴⁰ “skipping.”

⁴¹ See also *bakke* in lines 10 and 11. This may be a contraction of “backward.”

⁴² This term appears in MS Harley 3542 as *rabetis* (plural) and in MS Additional 39564 as *rabett*. Hester interprets this as a metaphor for a “vertical cut,” Hester, “The Vse of the Two Hand Sworde,” 22. However, the French *rabatir*, used to describe a parry or block, appears in a description of axe combat by Olivier de la Marche in his sixteenth-century memoirs, and may be a more appropriate reading in this

a⁴³ Than þe chase ffyrst a dowbyll rownde *with* a bakke fune
and a fore⁴⁴ fune rennyng *with* a robekke þa þa⁴⁵ rowndez
viydyng with a reste a⁴⁶ þa a bakke fune to the tome 10
a fore fune to the *tother*⁴⁷ *with* a bakke fune to þe fune *with* a
nawke <sw>yng And on þe fote þe hand the hye⁴⁸ & the herte
to accorde

105v Stroekez atte þe ij hand staffe
The fyrst pointe is a florysh about the
fynger þe nexte floryse is aboute þe hande 15
And thanne iij quarteres And a rownde and
ii rakes in þe rownes iij quarteres closede
staffe⁴⁹A j rounde war hym your armes be hynde⁵⁰
& than ij hawkes⁵¹ for þe wrong syde <bryng>
A fune for hym in þe *tother* syde And þe 20
herte þe fote þe Eye to accorde et
cet

context. See Sydney Anglo, "Le Jeu de la Hache: A Fifteenth-Century Treatise on the Technique of Chivalric Axe Combat," *Archaeologia* 109 (1991), 127, n.28.

⁴³ A second tiny marginal "a" is placed here at the head of a second bracket, extending to the foot of the leaf.

⁴⁴ Likely a contraction of "forward."

⁴⁵ This is a construction in Old English that is read as "then the." My thanks to Dr. Maren Clegg Hyer, Valdosta State University, for pointing out that this is a deliberate word choice and not a scribal mistake.

⁴⁶ The "a" here is clearly legible, although it may be a scribal mistake where a reading of "and" would make more sense.

⁴⁷ "other"

⁴⁸ "eyes"

⁴⁹ This word appears in the margin on this line, outside a bracket that runs down the side of the text from line 14.

⁵⁰ "behind"

⁵¹ Alternate spelling of *awke* from lines 3 and 12.