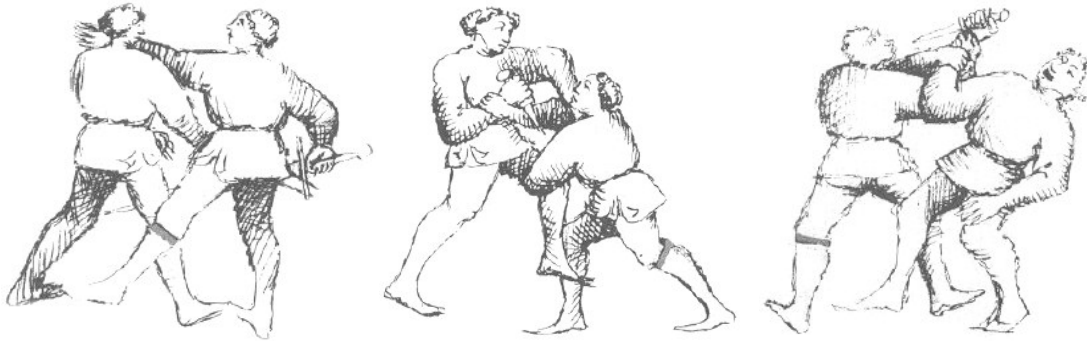


Throws in Fiore dei Liberi's *Fior di Battaglia*
Brian R. Price



In an effort to distill the combat system underlying Fiore's exemplary plates and descriptions, finding the foundational principles that bind his techniques into a single system is a potent challenge. Within Fiore's text, the old master expresses that, once control has been established, the *scolaro* has five kinds of follow-on action available: strikes, disarms, binds, breaks, and throws (takedowns).

In this chapter we'll look at different throws presented in Fiore's text and attempt to categorize these throws into a few basic types, then fitting these types of throw into the system as we understand it.

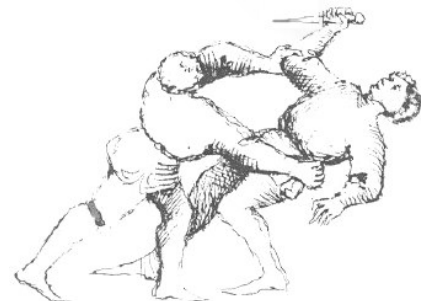
Mettere in Terra: The Essence of Taking the Opponent to the Ground

All throws or takedowns work by attacking the opponent's **balance**. Fiore in particular likes not only to take his opponent down to the ground, but drives him to the ground preferably head-first. He does not fight from the ground, there is a strong preference for not going to the ground with the opponent (one can assume multiple opponents). The forward momentum of the attack is also maintained, with the *scolaro* driving through the *compagno* and in the process driving him to the ground with substantial force. This aggressive driving through the opponent is the essence of Fiore's approach: forward momentum is maintained throughout and the tactics chosen (strike, disarm, breaks, takedowns) are also chosen "in the moment" rather than being preplanned. Further, they are used in rapid combination in order to achieve overwhelming, maximum effects.



Setting up the Throw/Takedown

It is difficult to simply throw an opponent without first reducing his ability to resist. Of course this can be done with a bind—a *ligadure*—but even so, a larger opponent may prove difficult to move without a distraction. This distraction often takes the form of a strike, although it can also involve the use of a pressure point, such as the eyes or hinge of the jaw. Fiore does not talk of this directly within the text, but we have found through experimentation and experience with other martial arts that is a nearly universal concept based on human physiology.



Returning to Tutta Porta di Ferro – Finishing the takedown

In order to fully train these techniques, the movement must ultimately be completed. For the most part this is done by stepping through the motions without a *compagni* present. Nearly all throws finish in **tutta porta di ferro**—the starting position for the *abrazare* work—with an exceptionally solid *ellefante*. The back should be straight, the weight low but not too low, the head seeking new potential opponents. In all throwing, the *ellefante* is both critical to success for the *scolaro* and it is the opponent's *ellefante* he will attack.

Most of the throws occur in *mezzo tempo* (see *Masters of the Crossed Swords*, pp. **xx-yy**), and they generally involve driving presses that continue the *scolaro*'s forward momentum. This momentum and use of *mezzo tempo* time attempts to keep him ahead of the *compagno*'s combat time—inside his “decision loop”—and gets him moving backwards.

<Drill: Driving Through>

The Role of the Ellefante <image of the ellefante>

Two of the takedown groups Fiore uses attack either the connection between the *ellefante*'s tower and his body or the tower itself, while the third attacks the *ellefante* himself. In both cases throws attack an opponent's *stabilità*, his connection to the earth, directly destabilizing his fighting platform and in many cases using the ground to strike him with. In many respects throws and takedowns might be considered the pinnacle of Fiore's aggressive art, since they command the opponent with maximum control.

When throwing, the *scolaro* must have the most solid platform possible. His or her weight must be low, but not too low, or too much mobility is sacrificed. The back must be straight, and the combatant should not lean over his opponent, or he disconnects the tower from the *ellefante* and loses his own balance.

On the other side of the coin, the *scolaro* tries to break the opponent's connection to the earth, his fighting platform, either by attacking the tower, the connection between the tower and the *ellefante*, or the *ellefante* itself. The latter technique, as we shall see, requires considerably more strength than do the first two categories.

I categorize Fiore's throws into three main groups:

1. Takedowns originating with *ligadure* (binds against the arm)
(attacks the “tusks of the ellefante”)
2. Leverage throws using a variant of **posta longa**
(attacks against the tower itself)
3. Lifting throws
(attacks against the *ellefante* itself)

These throws can be made forward or back, depending upon the relative positions of the combatants. There are also a few variants, such as “over the shoulder” hip throws and headlocks, but for the most part the techniques neatly fit these three broad categories.

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Safety in Throws and Takedowns

In order for a throwing or takedown technique to be maximally effective, it must be completed. This presents problems to modern students of the Art, since these techniques are potentially lethal if practiced carelessly or with inexperience. First, all techniques should be very slowly and carefully approached, ideally under the auspices of an experienced instructor. Work should begin low to the ground using a soft surface, such as martial arts or gymnastics mats. Techniques of falling should be regularly exercised—as emphasized in the previous chapter—first from a kneeling, and later from a standing position.

When finishing a throw, the scolaro must maintain control over this opponent. If the opponent panics—which is possible with anyone—the scolaro must be able to either prevent the fall or to soften it with a sinking letdown. <photo illustrate>

Inexperienced compagni can be taken to the point just before the fall and the techniques should be halted at that point until both zugadore are sufficiently experienced and controlled to prevent serious injury.

<end sidebar>

Ligature-based Throws

As we have seen previously, the three *ligadure* work by binding a joint. This bind is a potent form of control that Fiore eagerly embraces; from it the opponent can be held, or any of the other follow-on techniques may be available. He may be struck, disarmed, or, if the joint is pressed further, it can be “ruined” or “broken.” This ruining of the joint is the result of abrupt and forceful movements. But the body will attempt to protect the joint and its surrounding connective tissue by moving with the pressure in order to relieve it. Thus, if the pressure continues, the opponent’s body will fall.

I think of the *ligadure* as breaking the connection between the opponent’s lower and upper body, between the *ellefante* (lower body) and the tower (upper body). By leveraging the arm, he is forced to move and generally ends up bent over forward or backward in an unbalanced position. Hence, the breaking of the connection between the tower and the *ellefante*’s body.

Before working with any of the *Ligadure*-based throws, both combatants need a solid knowledge of the three *ligadure* themselves (the *soprane*, *sottane*, and *mezane*) and the falling skills which will enable them work in *concordia* and safety with their *compagni*. SSG instructor Colin Hatcher has provided a very good set of rolling techniques that work extremely well for falls that proceed from the *ligadure*, grouping these techniques into what he calls the **Art of the Zugadore**. SSG students who wish to maximize their understanding and kinesthetic ability in the *ligadure* takedowns are strongly encouraged to spend a lot of time working through the gliding, rolling and flying versions of Mr. Hatcher’s rolls as a preliminary to working through the *ligadure* takedowns.

For students who do not wish to apply the *ligadure* takedowns as closely into their Art, the action can be practiced but must be halted before the takedown actually occurs, generally to the point where the opponent’s balance has been broken, but no further. Working on a soft surface, such as soft grass or martial arts mats, is strongly recommended. For these students, the takedowns can be practiced with *concordia* by sinking into the takedown with the *compagno* rather than maintaining the standing position.

Once students are very familiar with the *ligadure* and can execute them safely at speed at least in a drill environment (this should take a thousand or more repetitions—some say ten thousand—so each of the three should be extensively drilled at speed). At this point they will be able to do two of the three aspects of the *ligadura*, the bind (holding), and the break (obviously, this isn’t practiced). The takedown uses, as we mentioned above, the body’s natural response at avoiding catastrophic damage to the joint or bones/tissue around the joint in order to achieve a much more definitive result—forcing the opponent to

the ground with a powerful and compelling movement. It can even be considered brutal—particularly when blended with the other effects. One gets the idea that Fiore would be happy achieving the bind, breaking or ruining the joint, and then completing the destruction by forcing the opponent to the ground.

Takedowns are available from all three *ligadure*. From the *ligadura soprana*, takedowns are done to the rear. From the *ligadura sottana*, they are done to the front, while in the *ligadura mezana*, they are generally made to the front on the arm-bar variant and either way on the elbow-wrapping version.



Ligadura Soprana – Rearward Takedowns

From the *ligadura soprana* and its variants (arming pointing up), the takedowns are made to the rear and forward momentum is preserved. Fiore suggests this variant on Fol. 11r (40) and 14v (69), where he has the arm under control using two hands and the arm in the *ligadura soprana* position. From here, simply continuing the motion backward will complete the takedown. [<photo series>](#)

It is not necessary to provide a fulcrum for this kind of throw. Neither the leg nor the hip need be behind the opponent because the body's own effort to protect the joint will provide sufficient leverage. The *ellefante*—his balance—is sacrificed by the opponent's body to protect his joint. This is the main method of training to counter the *ligadura soprana*, but it must be done with extreme care and without significant competition between the students, or injury can easily occur. [<photo series>](#)

I have found it most effective to accompany the throw with continued forward momentum, driving through the opponent and carrying him to the ground en route. [<photo series—on a big mat>](#) [<video?>](#)

Countering the Ligadure Soprana

Fiore presents his technique for countering this throw on Getty Fol. 11r(41). In almost every case, Fiore seeks to break the *ligadura* by increasing the leverage. He “brings a friend”—his other hand and steps to increase his leverage. This can result in a *ligadure*-based throw for the other combatant, especially if the foot is well-placed during the counter. [<photo series>](#)



Fiore presents several interesting counters to the remedy, which he shows in Getty Fol. 11r (42), 12r (51), 12v (55). The first—11r(42) involves the *scolaro* disengaging the second hand and instead moving to a wrap around the head, essentially a variant on the **posta longa** throws to be discussed in the next section. The second—12r(51)—has either player gripping the lower arm and turning with a *volta*¹ with an over the shoulder version of the lifting throw, to be discussed in the last section of this chapter. Another possibility—shown in Fol. 12v(55)—is to drop down and work instead on a lifting throw, since the opponent's leg is forward. As with any counter-remedy, speed and momentum are critically important, but martial innovation is the most important quality. These same counter-remedies may be used with any of the *ligadure*.

¹ Any of the three might be used in this case.



The second method of countering involves Colin Hatcher's **Art of the Zugadore**, where he "flies" or rolls out of the lock, staying ahead of it in harmony rather than meeting it force-on-force. Since this is a difficult rearward flying roll, only the most advanced students, well practiced in Colin's falling techniques, should attempt it. <photo series>

Extending the Principle

While this shown with the *daga*, it is like most Fiorean principles applicable in many different circumstances. Anytime the arm may be controlled using a *ligadure soprana* variant, the throw is available. In every case, the objective is the same: Secure control over the arm and continue—preferably in mezzo tempo—to rotate it backwards until the opponent's balance is broken. <photo series: *abbrazzare*> <photo series: sword in two hands> <photo series: *spada en arme*>

The Ligadure Sottana – Forward Takedowns

From the *ligadure sottana*, the body is thrown forward, rather than back. Fiore shows this nicely on Fol.



16r (83), and in the *spada en arme*, Fol. 33v (213). Recalling that the lock itself is found using Fiore's *serpentina* movement (see pp. xx – xx), the circular movement of the arm continues and thus develops increased inertia and the opponent is driven briskly forward. He can break his fall with his hand, as Fiore's *zugadore* appear to do, or he can roll out of the lock, as taught in Colin Hatcher's **Art of the Zugadore**.

<photo series: Sinking takedown>

<photo series: Rolling takedown – Art of the Zugadore>

Countering the Ligadure Sottana

As with all three *ligadure*, countering requires the combatant to get and stay ahead of the lock. If he succeeds in detecting the lock just before it has been established, he may bring his second hand into play, either attacking the opponent in order to disrupt the lock (the head, eyes, throat or legs are good targets) or he can use it to add leverage to his own arm. Once the lock has been established, however, a voluntary roll ahead of the lock using the **Art of the Zugadore** is one of the few ways to protect the joint and escape.

Extending the Principle

While this may be used with any weapon's form or unarmed, one case where its use is particularly useful is in the *spada en arme*—armoured combat—because the forced close proximity of the combatants ensures a good chance of getting control of one of the opponents arms. The *ligadura sottana* is then fairly easily made, and an armoured opponent may be drive forward fairly easily, as the weight of the harness will assist in his momentum. <photograph *en arme*, and unarmoured against *daga*>





Ligadura Mezana: Attacks against the Elbow

Finally, there are two variants available from what Fiore shows as *ligadura mezana*. First, there is the common arm bar, and attack against the elbow that threatens hyper-extends the elbow joint and forces the opponent to the ground, as Fiore shows in Fol. 13v(63)² and repeatedly in the PD, notably on carte 9b-2 and 12b-1. Modern martial artists often combine this with a lock to the wrist, and this is certainly possible, although Fiore does not do it.³ The opponent is powerfully forward, and although Fiore does not show it, I have found it helpful to add a foot in front of the opponents' to keep them from simply stepping forward. But if the drive is made quickly and forcefully enough—Fiore's likely preference—this is not necessary.

The second attack against the elbow is made using a *serpentina* motion to achieve an elbow-elbow lock, which seems to be Fiore's preference. He shows this kind of lock on Getty Fol. 14r(66), 20v(118),⁴ with the *spada en arme*, Fol. 33v(213-4), and with the *azza* or poleaxe in Fol. 37r(237).⁵ For the most part, these takedowns are also made forward and may be practiced by sinking with the *compagno* has the movements are completed.



² Also in PD carta 8b-5 and carta 9b-2, 12b-1.

³ It is perhaps curious that none of the medieval or Renaissance masters use wrist- or finger locks, although extensive shoulder and elbow locks are employed. I have long thought that perhaps this was due to their potential lack of effectiveness in armour, but I have been able to make credible wrist-locks using an hourglass gauntlet.

⁴ Also in PD carte 9a-4 and 14-4 respectively.

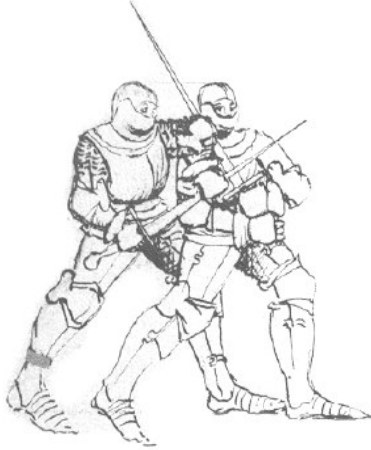
⁵ In the PD carte 27b-4.

Countering the Ligadura Mezana

The same principles are applied to counter the *mezane* as are employed on the other two *ligadure*. First the other arm may be brought to bear and steps or turns taken in order to increase the combatant's leverage before the lock really begins. Stepping forward on a forward throw will often lessen the stress on the joint and may enable sufficient momentary relief of stress on the joint as to allow action with the other hand. Once the lock has engaged, however, the **Art of the Zugadore** may be employed by experienced combatants to stay ahead of the lock and roll away from it.

Extending the Principle of the Ligadura Mezana

Fiore shows the rotating version of the *ligadura mezana* both in armour and with a poleaxe. Any time the combatants are in *zogho stretto* or close quarters range, a *serpentina* of the arm may be used to snake around the opponents' and, if the elbow is positioned correctly, a lock achieved. Continuing the motion will enable a hold, although because the hold is high, it maybe perhaps considered *instabile* and should be resolved with a takedown, strike, break or disarm as soon as possible.



Upending (Posta Longa) based Throws: *Attacking the Tower*

Based on numbers, the **posta longa** throws are the most common form presented in the *Flos Duellatorum* and the *Fior di Battaglia*.⁶ But also based on experience, I have found that this category of throws is used more often than any other, is generally the most likely to be able to be employed in sparring by advanced and careful combatants, and which presents itself more often for use. While the *ligadure*-based throws are used most often against the small, quick *daga*, Fiore seems to favor the **posta longa** throw with the longer weapons, probably because the arm is harder to capture when fighting a greater range and because the weapon itself can function as an extension of the arm, increasing the distance at which a **posta longa**-style throw may be attempted.

Like the *ligadure*, this throw is made both forward or back, but there is a marked preference for backwards throws (which makes rolling out much harder), probably because this maintains forward momentum in the *scolaro*'s attack.

Fiore does not discuss the throw at any length within the text, but this concept with all the **posta longa** throws is first offered in Fiore's discussion of the unarmed version of the guard:

Io son posta longa e achosì te aspetto. E in la presa che to mi voray fare, lo mio brazo dritto che sa in erto, sotto lo tuo stanch lo letterò in lo primo zogho de abbrazzare, e cum tal presa in terra to faro andare. E si aquella presa mi venisse a machare, in le alter prese che seguen virgrinò intrare. [Getty fol. 6R-1]

“I am the **Posta Longa** and I await you like this. And in the presa that you wish to make against me, I will position my right arm, remaining upwards, with certainty under your left, and enter into the first play of the *abbrazzare*. With this *presa* I will force you to the ground. And if to this presa you should bring to me from the left, I will enter into the others that follow.”

In *Sword in Two Hands*, we looked at how this core position can be used to make a punch, to make cover, and to execute basic throws (see pp. 94-95). There are a variety of attacks made against the upper body—the tower—from this position and its variants.

Per la volta che ti fici penzandoti per lo cubito, a questo partito so'vegnuto ben di' subito, per cason de butarte in terra, perché tu non fazi, nè a me nè altruy guerra. [Getty Fol. 21v(123)]

“With a turn I enter with a bent elbow, to this part I am coming quickly, with **[cason – “intention?”]** of taking you to the ground, because you do nothing against me or any other combatant.”



⁶ My current count shows a combined 17 instances of *ligadura*-based throws, and 19 for the **posta longa** based ones. Contrast this with the lifting throws, which have 14 instances. All in all reasonably balance, but with a slight preference for **posta-longa** based throws, assuming that the numbers of included instances are reflective of their approximate usefulness in combat.

Questo zogo esse del primo nostro magistro de posta di vera crose e dela bastarda: zoè quando uno gli trà una punta, ello scolaro l'aspetta in la guardia sua e subito passa ala coverta for a de strada e tragli una punta in lo volto; e cum lo pè stanco acresse de fora del suo pè ch'è denanzi per questo modo ch'è depento, per butarlo in terra ché la punta de la spada gl'avança oltra lo collo.

[Getty fol.34r (215)]



“This play is from the first master of the **Vera Croce** (true cross) and of the **Bastarda**; that is to say, when one gives a thrust, the scolaro waits in his guard, quickly passing to cover out of the way, giving [also] a thrust to the face. And with the left foot he advances his left foot in the path in such a way as is depicted, to cast him to the ground so that the point of the sword advances past his neck.”

Because this are leveraging kinds of attacks, it helps a great deal to have a fulcrum over which the throw can be made. Generally this is the same foot as the extended arm, in order to avoid the balance difficulty inherent in crossing the back foot forward.

There are two main variants on this principle presented in Fiore’s works. The first is the “classic” **posta longa** throw, best seen perhaps in the sword in one hand section, Getty fol. 21v(123) or in the armoured sword section, Getty fol. 34r(215). A particularly clear version appears in the PD carta 26a-1 shown above. All three are shown above.

The second type is one that attacks the head itself, often but not always wrapping around the neck to



secure even more solid control before completing the throw. This “headlock” approach, while included, is not as common (there are only six) as the simpler leveraged throws (there are fourteen of these). These may be seen in the Getty fol. 28v(176) and in armour with Getty fol. 29r(182). These are far less common, but they are used primarily to achieving a forward version of the throw (see Getty fol. 6v(8) and 7v(13)). In Getty 7v(13), shown

in the unarmed grapple below, the scolaro prepares to throw the compagno (facing the viewer) forward in what a classic hip throw. But because the throw attacks the “tower,” I place it in the **posta longa** family.

There is debate concerning whether Fiore always presses to the face, chin or neck during a **posta longa** throw, but I have found that while useful, this does seem to be determinant. What is important is that the presa is made above the nipple-line, and that the *scolaro* gets a foot behind his opponents’ to act as a lever. Then, a *volta* is made (several are possible, depending upon the foot position and distance between the combatants) and the opponent generally loses their balance and is unable to step back to retrieve it owing to the *scolaro*’s foot which blocks the way. As the compagno is thrown, the scolaro may either leave him or follow him to finish him off—but if he does so he should sink down with him rather than bending over.

To begin practice, it may be helpful to begin making the throw with the *compagni* in a kneeling position so that they can work on falling and the *scolari* can work on an efficient *volta*. The knee should not, in this case, be behind the compagno, because all that will happen is he will fall on it, potentially injuring either or both parties. <photo series>

To execute the **posta longa** throw, it is first necessary to advance into the throw and this is usually done with a *mezza volta*. In the example shown below, the scolaro attacks the incoming *fendente* using a *redoppiando*, pushing it to the side and accompanying the movement with a step. Next, he steps in using a

mezza volta, or with an *acresco*, depending upon which foot is already forward. The left foot must end up behind the opponent's right, as shown. If the opponent's other foot had been forward, the *scolaro* would have needed to make the throw with the right arm instead. Once properly in contact, he makes a *volta* that quickly unbalances the *compagno*. The *compagno*, for his part, will often attempt to break the fall with a rearward step of the forward foot, but this movement is checked by the left foot as shown and as Fiore discusses in the armoured play above. The *scolaro* should end up well balanced, with the back straight and not leaning over the *compagno*'s prostrate form. <photo series>

This throw can be made from either side, to the front or to the back. If the opponent had come forward and made an attack with the left leg forward instead of the right, then the *scolaro* could have made cover with his left hand and simultaneously stepped forward with his right arm and foot, making a left-sided version of the throw. <photo series>

It is important to be able to innovate and apply the principles of these plays dynamically in the context of a fight. No opponent will easily allow a simple throw, so the *scolaro* must be flexible in his selections, choosing just ahead of the opponent, innovating within the technical framework to overcome his opponent's ability to predict.

While this throw works well with a punch or any kind of strike, it is applicable to any close-quarter weapon and is effective even against a larger opponent, because strength is not as important as leverage. The throw from **posta longa** may be made using a sword in one hand, in two, using a poleaxe, or even non-Fiore weapons, such as sword and buckler. <photo series for each>

<sidebar>

Stepping Behind

Planning for Armoured Combat

*Fiore shows deep stepping behind the opponent's leg when making a **posta longa** throw, but there is a potential difficulty with the technique. When both combatants are armoured, the "wing" or protective plate that extends behind the knees on both leg-harnesses may become strongly entangled, hampering mobility at the least or wrenching knees at worst.*

To avoid this, I recommend stepping shallower, calf-to-calf or even foot-to-foot. This way, there is less risk of tangling. It is true that it makes it easier for the opponent to creatively step away from the blocking leg, but it seems worth the risk to avoid potentially serious knee injuries.

Note that Fiore does not follow the Ju-Jitsu practice of wrapping the lower leg around that of his opponent; rather, he simply impedes his ability to step back.

<photos, foot-to-foot and knee-to-knee>

<end sidebar>

Head-Wraps

Fiore has a preference for using the head or neck as the leveraging point in a **posta longa**-type throw. To make the throw stronger and more solid, one can pass with the right leg behind the opponents' and aggressively wrap the arm around his throat, effectively "close-lining" him to the ground.

Sword-lever and Shoulder-point variants

One interesting variant is the shoulder-point *presa*, which can be made with the longer weapons. It uses the same principle as the other impending throws, but has an interesting variant in that it presses strongly

on the left shoulder itself to drive the opponent to the ground. Fiore uses the whole blade to drive the opponent to the ground in Getty Fol. 29v(184), PD Carta 22b-2 We see this variant also in the sword in armour section, where Fiore simply presses against the opponent's body in Fol. 34r(215) and in PD Carta 26A-1, although in these cases he has stepped behind the opponent.

I prefer to execute this with a “shoulder point” variant, which means that the sword is grasped mezzamente—at the middle—and the press is made at the point of the shoulder.

Posta Longa throws to the Front
(TBD)

Lifting Throws

In terra del tutto ti convien andare e defesa over contrario non
poray fare e la daga ti faro andar luntana piustoso che ti la
piglirò in mano peroch'io so quest'arte cum ogni ingano.
[Getty fol. 12v(55)]

“Wholly to the earth will I make you go and you cannot do
anything [about it]. And [your] dagger I will make go so very
far away that you will lose it because I know this art with
every [ignano].”



The third type of throw involves attacking the combatant's *ellefante* directly. I call these “lifting” attacks, because in general they involve *lifting* the opponent and separating him from the secure stability of the ground. This is done for the most part lifting the forward leg, sometimes in conjunction with a backward press of the upper body (the tower). Because lifting attacks attempt to dislodge the opponent's *ellefante*, his connection to the ground, they require more strength than do the other types.



While most of Fiore's lifting throws are made focusing on the forward leg, he does occasionally use the opponent's arm leveraged over the shoulder to make a different kind of lifting attack (Getty fol. 7r(11); 12r(51) and 15r(72). 12r(51) is shown left. This is akin to a modern shoulder throw; the attack breaks the opponent's connection from the ground.

Lifting throws are made less often in Fiore's text than are the upending (**posta longa**) throws, but they are extremely direct and brutal. Most of them drive through the opponent and following the lift, drive the *compagno* into the earth directly on his head. For this reason, they are difficult to train without advanced falling skills. Two options are available. First, with extraordinary control, one can move to the point where the opponent's balance is about to be unseated, and stop. But we have found that more complete training is still too powerful to be done on regular mats—or, heaven forbid, on soft grass. We use instead the large 12” soft mats used in gymnastics. One can envision Fiore using piles of hay for this same purpose.

vs daga

With the *daga*, his most common approach is to maintain his grip (*presa*) on the wrist, using that point to push as he grips the lower leg and lifts upward. We see this in Fol. 12v(55)—the classic demonstration of the technique—but also in Fol. 14v(71), where he uses the elbow as the main leverage point and in Fol. 38v(250).

vs unarmed (abrazare)

In Fol. 6v(7), we find Fiore making his throw using the head/neck for the upper point—as would be done in an upending throw from **posta longa**—but the effectiveness of the throw is enhanced by lifting the leg as well. In this sense the throw looks more like an enhanced and more effective version of the upending throw. In Fol. 8r(18), he uses the elbow push (in this case a lift) to break the opponent's push to his own

face (shown in Fol. 18r(17)).⁷ Fiore's solution is often to control the body through the elbow, and if available, he likes to lift the forward leg in order to complete the throw.

Making the Throw

Almost all of Fiore's lifting throws involve breaking the *ellefante* by lifting the forward knee. In a few cases, such as in 8v(22), 15r(73) and in the *azza* versions of a lifting throw, the thigh is used. But in all cases, the object is to break the forward foot's connection with the ground and use it to lift the opponent. Which hand is used may depend upon which leg is forward. The other hand, the one not grasping the knee, finds a leverage point on the upper body to achieve a counter-leverage point. The hand gaining *presa* against the leg pulls and lifts while the one working the upper body (head, neck, chest, arms or hands) pushes. The result is a counter-balancing leveraged throw that creates an obvious "tipping point." Use extreme care when exploring this with a partner, as the tipping point comes very fast.

Fiore would doubtless continue the motion, driving the head into the ground with continued forward momentum as the leg is raised.

Progressing through the lifting throws requires the combatant to drive through the opponent more than the other takedowns. Even setting these throws up requires a great deal of *lione*, an aggressive, bold approach to and through the opponent. This is a deadly combat technique, designed to quickly drive the opponent into the ground; it is hard to execute without injury to the opponent and so must be practiced with caution.

<drill-seizing ground>

</end seizing ground drill>

In all cases, Fiore illustrates a contact or a *presa* against the upper body, and when we execute this technique this is an important prerequisite. The upper hand may achieve a cover against an incoming weapon—as with a *daga*—or just the arms. The elbow can be used, as in the case of a *remedio* or counter to a grip, or the face will also work. The arm is preferable, however; once *presa* has been achieved, the opponent has one less weapon with which to respond.

The other hand shoots down to establish a quick grip on the forward leg as the combatant simultaneously lowers his center of gravity, seeking to get under his opponent's center of balance. This is a crucial element to making this kind of throw work, especially against larger opponents. Get low!

When *presa* has been established at the knee or thigh (although the knee is preferable), pressure is applied equally in lifting the leg and in pressing the upper body backward through the lever of the opponent's arm, chest or face. I have found in practice that pressing against the upper body first and then attempting the lifting action seems to deliver better results than does a lift against the opponent's full weight.⁸

This strike can be practiced—like the other two—with different weapons. Working against *prese*, the opponent's elbow makes a convenient gripping point, and one leg is almost always forward. Against the *daga*, following Fiore's examples as drawn makes the most sense. Against the sword, once the *incrosa* has been established (akin to *coverta* in the *daga*), a *presa* can be extended by pushing forward and up. Once the sword has risen under pressure, the combatant's left hand drives down to grip the leg and complete the throw. In armour, this is a hard throw, but it can be worked.

⁷ Much as the elbow push is used against the 4th master of the *daga* in Fol. 13r(58), which counters the master of the crossed hands shown in the previous plate, Fol. 13r(57).

⁸ I have had luck, however, by establishing a quick cover against an incoming strike by a much larger opponent, then dropping down once the strike was expended and gripping the forward leg very quickly with both hands while sinking my weight very low.

Ligature:

Soprana: 11r(40-sop)[Carta 6b-3], 13r(59-sop classic)[Carta 7B-5], 14v(68-9-sop classic)[Carta 9b-3],
Sottana: 10v(390 sot)[Carta 6b-2], 11v(44-sot)[Carta 8a-3], 14r(64-sot classic)[Carta 9a-1], 16r(83-
classic sot)[Carta 11b-2], 18r(98-99-sot), 29v(186-sot spada)[Carta 23b],

Mezana: 14r(66)[Carta 9a-4], 20v(118)[Carta 14a-4], 33v(213-4 sot en arme), 37r(237 azza) Carta 27b-
4 azza,

Mezana arm bar: 13v(63)[Carta 8b-5], Carta 9b-2, Carta 12b-1,

6v(6)[Carta 4b-2],

Posta Longa: 6v(7)[Carta 4b-3], 7r(9)[Carta 4b-4], 7v(14)[Carta 5a-3], 11r(42), 13v(61 classic) [Carta
8b-3], 13v(62)[Carta 8b-4], Carta 9b-5 (pressing from the elbow), 21v(123-spada CLASSIC)[Carta 14b-3],
27r(165-pressing)[Carta 21a-4], 29v(184)[Carta 23b-4], 29v(187), 34r(215 en arme)[Carta 26a-1
CLASSIC], 34r(218)[Carta 26b-3], 34r(217 inside the box)[Carta 26b-3].

Headlock version: 28v(176)[Carta 22b-1], 29r(182)[Carta 22b-3 DIFFERENT], 30r(189), 34v(220 en
arme)[Carta 26A-2],

Forward version: 6v(8)[Carta 4b-4], 7v(13)[Carta 5a-4],

Lifting: 6v(7)[Carta 4b-3], 8r(18)[Carta 5b-2], 8v(22)[Carta 5b-6], 12v(55 classic)[Carta 7B-1], 14v(71),
15r(73), 36v(234 azza), 37r(240 and counter), 38v(250 *daga*)[Carta 10b-3], Carta 9B-6 (other hand *presa*),

Over shoulder lifting: 7r(11)[Carta 5a-1], 12r(51, counter-12v(52))[Carta 7a-3/4], 15r(72)[Carta 10b-
4], Carta 12a-6,

Between Legs: 18v(100-101)[Carta 12B-4]

LIGADURE Soprana

11r(40)[Carta 6b-3]

13r(59)[Carta 7B-5]

14v(68-9)[Carta 9b-3]

LIGADURE Sottana

10v(39)[Carta 6b-2]

11v(44)[Carta 8a-3]

14r(64)[Carta 9a-1]

14r(66)[Carta 9a-4]

16r(83)[Carta 11b-2]

18r(98-99-sot)

29v(186-sot spada)[Carta 23b]

LIGADURE Mezana (elbow roll)

10v(38) [Carta 6b-1]

20v(118)[Carta 14a-4]

33v(213-4 en arme)

37r(237 azza)

Carta 27b-4 azza

LIGADURE Mezana (arm bar)

13v(63)[Carta 8b-5]

Carta 9b-2

Carta 12b-1,

POSTA LONGA (attacking the tower)

6v(7)[Carta 4b-3] ?? maybe

7r(9)[Carta 4b-4]

7v(14)[Carta 5a-3]

11r(42)

13v(61 classic)[Carta 8b-3]
 13v(62)[Carta 8b-4]
 Carta 9b-5(pressing from the elbow)
 21v(123-spada CLASSIC)[Carta 14b-3]
 27r(165-pressing)[Carta 21a-4]
 29v(184)[Carta 23b-4]
 29v(187)
 34r(215 en arme)[Carta 26a-1 CLASSIC]
 34r(218)[Carta 26b-3]
 34r(217 inside the box)[Carta 26b-3].
 POSTA LONGA (Headlock version)
 28v(176)[Carta 22b-1]
 29r(182)[Carta 22b-3 DIFFERENT]
 30r(189)
 34v(220 en arme)[Carta 26A-2]
 POSTA LONGA (Forward version)
 6v(8)[Carta 4b-4]
 7v(13)[Carta 5a-4]
 LIFTING THROWS (attacking the Ellefante directly)
 6v(7)[Carta 4b-3]
 8r(18)[Carta 5b-2]
 8v(22)[Carta 5b-6]
 12v(55 classic)[Carta 7B-1]
 14v(71)
 15r(73)
 36v(234 azza)
 37r(240 and counter)
 38v(250 daga)[Carta 10b-3]
 Carta 9B-6 (other hand presa)
 LIFTING THROWS (Over shoulder lifting)
 7r(11)[Carta5a-1]
 12r(51, counter-12v(52))[Carta 7a-3/4]
 15r(72)[Carta 10b-4]
 Carta 12a-6

 Between Legs: 18v(100-101)[Carta 12B-4]