

Compiling a fencing legacy rooted in the teachings of Salvator Fabris

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Abstract – While numerous fencing masters and other enthusiasts wrote down their ideas on how to fence, and how to teach fencing, most of these works now exist without strong martial context, as the authors rarely inform us who taught them how to fence. With Historical European Martial Arts, the legacy of the sixteenth to seventeenth century fencing master Salvator Fabris may be one rare exception to this. After Fabris published his major work, *De lo Schermo*, in Copenhagen in 1606, and then returned to Padua (where he died in 1618), numerous works on fencing were written and published by authors who either claimed to have been students of Fabris himself or of one of his students, or to have some other connection to ‘*Signor Salvatore*’. As subsequent works by other authors may be linked to those works and authors in turn, we are able to sketch out instructional and textual lineages that are rooted in the well-known teachings of Fabris.

In this paper, we aim to identify potential students of Salvator Fabris, as well as their students in turn. Doing so, we will focus specifically on those students who became fencing masters themselves and those who wrote their own treatises on fencing (both fencing masters and other enthusiasts) — i.e., on those who left behind a documentable legacy through which the subsequent evolution of Fabris’s style of fencing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be studied.

Keywords – fencing; rapier; German; Italian; HEMA; legacy; lineage; treatises; Fabris

INTRODUCTION

If we consider the corpus of historical fencing treatises available to us today, it is clear that the content of these works depended on the identity of the individual who wrote the treatise, as well as on their cultural background, i.e., their location and time. As the cultural environment in which fencing was practiced changed, so did the fencing itself. Accordingly, a good fencing master would take what they were taught by their master(s), together with their personal experience on the fencing floor, and from that construct their own teachings, adapting them as needed when their environment changed, and likely also tailoring them to the individual students they taught. While by studying the full corpus of

fencing treatises we can now observe the larger shifts in fencing in a more general way, doing so provides only a limited insight into how these shifts took place. To gain a more detailed view of how fencing, and other martial arts, evolve with time from one master to the next, we would need to construct lineages of fencing masters and other authors on fencing, establishing who was taught by whom, and (if at all possible) when.

While numerous fencing masters and other enthusiasts wrote down their ideas on how to fence, and how to teach fencing, most of these works now exist without strong martial context, as the authors rarely inform us who taught them how to fence. One rare exception to this may be the legacy of the sixteenth- to seventeenth-century fencing master, Salvator Fabris, who was probably the most famous fencing master of his time, and who published his major work *De lo Schermo* in Copenhagen in 1606.¹ In the decades following this publication (and Fabris's return to Padua and eventual death there in 1618), various authors published works on fencing in which they either claimed to have been students of Salvator Fabris himself, or of one of his students or to have some other connection to 'Signor Salvatore'.² Furthermore, subsequent works by other authors may be linked to those works and authors in turn, thus enabling us to sketch out instructional and textual lineages that are rooted in the well-known teachings of Fabris. Once drawn, such lineages can then be used to form a sharper picture on how fencing developed over time within a single lineage or closely connected set of lineages. However, taking into account Fabris's reputation in northern Europe in the 1600s, claiming association to his teachings may have been a way for a fencing master to legitimize their qualifications. Thus, we should not accept an author's claimed connections to Fabris uncritically.

In this paper, we will compile historical sources that provide information through which we can identify potential students of Salvator Fabris, as well as their students in turn. Doing so, we will focus specifically on those students who became fencing masters themselves and those who wrote their own treatises on fencing (both fencing masters and other enthusiasts) — i.e., on those who left behind a documentable legacy through which the subsequent evolution of Fabris's style of fencing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be studied. In doing so, we will not only consider whether a fencing master or author had a verifiable connection to Fabris, but we will also try to establish when this connection could have taken place. To assist us in this activity, first we will need to establish Fabris's movements across Europe, identifying where he would have been active at which time.

¹ Fabris, *De lo Schermo*.

² Leoni, *Art of Duelling*, p. xxxv. Note that earlier works hold that Fabris died in 1617. Cf. Migliorato, 'Den Italienske fægtemester', p. 45, as well as references therein.

Fabris was born in 1544, likely in Padua. Unfortunately, we do not know from whom or where he learned how to fence.³ The earliest reference to a fencing master named 'Fabrice' is actually from France, from the treatise of Henry de Saint Didier.⁴ In the foreword to this work, published in Paris in 1573, Saint Didier tells us that while he was writing his treatise, he was visited by 'un nommé Fabrice & Iule [...] avec quelque suns de leur païs' ('one named Fabrice, and Jule [...] with some of their countrymen'), who had come to see and discuss the work he was writing.⁵ While not showing them the book, Saint Didier did end up interrogating 'Seigneur Fabrice' on fencing, asking about the number of blows one can strike, and then correcting his answer.⁶ While it is not certain that this 'Fabrice' is indeed Salvator Fabris, it is certainly possible, and an intriguing thought. With more certainty, we can place Salvator Fabris working as a fencing master in Padua by 1588.⁷ He remained in Padua until 1598, when he was convinced by Johann Friedrich of Schleswig-Holstein-Gottorp, administrator of the Prince-Archbishopric of Bremen, to join him in his court, possibly in either Bremervörde or Stade.⁸ On 30 September 1601, Fabris finished a three-volume manuscript on fencing there that he dedicated and gifted to his employer.⁹ This was likely a farewell gift, as from 12 October 1601 Fabris was registered as the fencing master at the royal court of Christian IV in Copenhagen. It was here that Fabris wrote and published his famous treatise, *De lo Schermo*, which was published on 25 September 1606, and dedicated to King Christian IV.¹⁰ Soon after that, Fabris left Copenhagen to travel home to Padua, presumably with the intention to return to Copenhagen again by May the next year. We can somewhat track Fabris's journey through letters that he wrote to various contacts at the Danish court.¹¹ By 5 December 1606, Fabris was on the road, and already near Hamburg. During 1607, Fabris was active as a fencing master traveling around Germany. Apparently, he had planned to cross the Alps to Italy, but the passes were closed due to snow, and thus by early 1608 Fabris passed through France, traveling from Strasbourg to Marseille to embark on a boat from there. At some point during this part of his journey, he decided to take a detour via Paris, where

³ Cf. Hergsell, *Die Fechtkunst*, p. 308. However, according to Eggerton Castle, Fabris was born in Bologna in 1544. Neither author gives any source for this information. Jacopo Gelli further suggests that Fabris was a student of Giacomo Di Grassi, based on his perceived similarity in methods and their geographical proximity (within the Venetian sphere of influence). Castle, *Schools and Masters of Fence*, p. 139; Gelli, *L'Arte dell'Armi in Italia*, p. 18.

⁴ de Saint Didier, *Les secrets du premier livre*, fols 5^v-7^r.

⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 5^v.

⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 6^r.

⁷ We know this from a letter Fabris wrote to Christian Barnekow; see Migliorato, 'Den Italienske fægtemester', p. 46.

⁸ See Migliorato, 'Den Italienske fægtemester', also for more information about Fabris's time in Padua.

⁹ Copenhagen, GKS 1868 kvart.

¹⁰ The dedication is dated 20 April 1606.

¹¹ For a more extensive overview of these letters, see Migliorato, 'Den Italienske fægtemester'.

he ended up staying until at least 20 August 1609, before finally making his way home to Padua.¹² By then, he had no intention of returning to Copenhagen (if he had ever had any such intention), and instead started a new fencing school in Padua where he remained active until his death.

JOHANN JOACHIM HYNITZSCH AND HEINRICH VON UND ZUM VELDE

A key source of information for identifying fencing masters who were direct students of Salvator Fabris, or students of his students, is the Foreword to the Reader that Johann Joachim Hynitzsch wrote to preface his German translation of Fabris's work, first published in Leipzig in 1677.¹³ In this foreword, Hynitzsch names a number of different fencing masters and comments upon their connection to Fabris. However, to properly contextualize Hynitzsch's words, we should briefly consider what we know about the man himself, mostly from the sermon given at his funeral and published afterwards.¹⁴ Based on this sermon, Johann Joachim Hynitzsch was born in Nordhausen, on 12 July 1638, about 20 years after Fabris's death; and died in Leipzig, on 7 November 1707. It appears that Hynitzsch was not a fencing master, however, as throughout the sermon he is consistently referred to as a '*Krieges Exercitien-meister*' ('Master of War Exercises').¹⁵ He was well-traveled, as it is noted that he exercised this role in Poland, Prussia, Moscow, and other places, before settling in Leipzig to teach his exercises there.

The first fencing master that Hynitzsch names in the foreword to his German translation of Fabris's work is *Herr* Heinrich von und zum Velde, whom he called 'jenes nicht weniger berühmten Nachfolgers' ('his no less famous successor') and named as his own teacher, adding that it was this von und zum Velde who should be thanked by all Germans for the

¹² In addition, Joachim Köppe wrote that he met Salvator Fabris in Paris in 1609. That Fabris was still present in Paris by 20 August 1609 is indicated by his inscription in the *Stammbuch* of Conrad Ernst von Berlepsch made on that date. This inscription was first noted and made public by Nau and Schäfer. Köppe, *Newer Discurs*; Dresden, Mscr.Dresd.App.2547, p. 279; Nau and Schäfer, 'Salvator Fabris und Conrad Ernst von Berlepsch'.

¹³ Hynitzsch, *Scienza e pratica d'arme*. Note that this translation only includes the parts dealing with the single sword, used both in firm-footed fencing and in fencing by proceeding, as well as sections dealing with grapples and disarms with the sword, throws of the cloak, and defence against an attacker with a dagger, while leaving out Fabris's sections on the sword and dagger, as well as most of the lessons with sword and cloak.

¹⁴ See Breul, *Bey der Wohlansehnlichen*, as well as the summary of this by Schäfer, 'Nordhausen, Leipzig, Himmel'.

¹⁵ Breul, *Bey der Wohlansehnlichen*, fol. 4r.

fact that Fabris's art was maintained 'rein und unverfälschet' ('pure and unadulterated') in Germany.¹⁶

According to Hynitzsch, von und zum Velde learned fencing directly from Fabris, as his student, and in addition studied under *Signor* Herman, to whom Fabris bequeathed his *salle* upon his death. Furthermore, Hynitzsch informs us that von und zum Velde wrote down his fencing teachings in a work that praised and quoted both Fabris and Herman. As argued by Van Noort and Schäfer, a copy of these writings was most likely preserved in manuscript Add MS 17533 in the British Library, which includes a fencing treatise ascribed to 'H.A.V.', that contains frequent references to 'Sig. Herman' (or 'S.H.') and 'Sig. Salvatore'. In addition, Mscr.Dresd.C.13 presents an edited version of this text, with edits made by the well-known author on fencing and other martial arts, Johann Georg Pascha.¹⁷

Heinrich von und zum Velde was born in 1585 on the island of Rügen off the coast of Pomerania as the second son in a minor noble family from nearby Stralsund. While we do not know much about his youth, by 1621 he started working at the *Stift* of St. Petri et Pauli in Magdeburg.¹⁸ Thus, von und zum Velde most likely learned fencing in the early 1600s, perhaps before 1615, but certainly before 1621. This would imply that he could have learned fencing from Fabris when Fabris was at the court of Johann Friedrich or at the royal court in Copenhagen, but it is perhaps more likely that he did so in Padua, after Fabris founded his new school there in 1609. This latter option would also conform with Hynitzsch's claim that von und zum Velde also studied under Fabris's successor in Padua,

¹⁶ Heinrich von und zum Velde was born in Rügen in 1585, worked as a Canon at the *Stift* of St. Petri et Pauli in Magdeburg for most of his life, and died in Leipzig on 16 April 1662. Presumably, he taught fencing at the *Stift*, or else privately. Van Noort and Schäfer, 'An analysis and comparison'; Van Noort and Schäfer, *Proper Description of Thrust-Fencing*; Hynitzsch, *Scienza e pratica d'arme*, p. 2 & 6 of the *Vorrede*.

¹⁷ Pascha was *Hofmeister* for the pages of Duke August in Halle (an der Saale). In the dedication that he penned in Mscr.Dresd.C.13, he notes that he received the lessons of von und zum Velde ('Zu dem Felde') from a friend who studied under von und zum Velde — most likely referring to Hynitzsch — but that he added some specific lessons of his own, to make it a complete fencing book. Van Noort and Schäfer, 'An analysis and comparison'; Van Noort and Schäfer, *Proper Description of Thrust-Fencing*.

Both Add MS 17533 and Mscr.Dresd.C.13, on the title pages to their *Caminiren* sections, ascribe that manner of fencing to 'Sig. Salvator' and a certain 'Sig. Moman'. This could be another fencing master with hitherto unknown relation to Fabris's lineage, or it could be a copyist error, where Sig. Herman was meant. Van Noort and Schäfer, 'An analysis and comparison of'; Van Noort and Schäfer, *Proper Description of Thrust-Fencing*; London, Add MS 17533; Dresden, Mscr.Dresd.C.13.

¹⁸ Van Noort and Schäfer, 'An analysis and comparison'; Van Noort and Schäfer, *Proper Description of Thrust-Fencing*.

Signor Herman.¹⁹ However, we do not know when this Herman joined Fabris, or when he became his *Vorfechter*.

If we accept these claims by Hynitzsch (and Pascha), this thus establishes von und zum Velde as a fencing master (though perhaps not professionally) and author on fencing who was a direct student of Fabris and of *Signor Herman*, who in turn was another direct student of Fabris. As Hynitzsch himself was a student of von und zum Velde, this would then also place him in this lineage. Through these claims, Hynitzsch therefore tried to present Heinrich von und zum Velde, and, by extension, himself, as the true and most pure continuation of Fabris's lineage. His disparaging remarks about other fencing masters who claimed to be part of that lineage, as well as his comments about fencing masters he did respect, should be regarded keeping in mind that Hynitzsch may not have been entirely objective when assessing other fencing masters and their lineages that could be considered as competition to his own.

While *Signor Herman*, a German, was Fabris's appointed successor in Padua, according to Hynitzsch he only held this position for a few months before he was murdered by his own *Vorfechter*, another student of Fabris named Heinrich. Hynitzsch further reports that while Heinrich disappeared after this deed, he himself did speak to several old cavaliers who reported having been taught a style of fencing very similar to that of Fabris by a *Signor Heinrich*, suggesting that Heinrich may have continued teaching. The succession of Fabris by *Signor Herman* is corroborated by Henrik Holck, a Danish nobleman, who wrote that in 1619 he received fencing lessons from a Herman who was Fabris's successor in his school.²⁰

HANS WILHELM SCHÖFFER AND SEBASTIAN HEUSLER

The next fencing masters and authors connected to Salvator Fabris that Hynitzsch names are Hans Wilhelm Schöffner von Dietz and Sebastian Heusler who, Hynitzsch writes, was Schöffner's former student and *Vorfechter*.²¹ Of the work authored by Schöffner, Hynitzsch writes that he did quite well in making the Salvatorian art of fencing better known. However, Hynitzsch continues, Schöffner was not taught directly by Fabris himself but had to learn the art as a *Vorfechter* in Fabris's salle by fencing against Fabris's students. As a result, while Schöffner may have intended to teach the true art, he did not follow a proper

¹⁹ Note that as the von und zum Velde family came to Stralsund from Hamburg in the mid-sixteenth century, they may still have had ties to the Hamburg area, which could potentially be how von und zum Velde came to study with Fabris.

²⁰ Migliorato, 'Den Italienske fægtemester', p. 54. Henrik Holck was indeed registered as a student in Padua on 16 July 1619. Glarbo, 'Danske og norske', p. 40.

²¹ Note that Hynitzsch wrote his name as 'Hans Wilhelm Schäffer'. Hynitzsch, *Scienza e pratica d'arme*, p. 3 of the *Vorrede*.

order for teaching fencing in his book. Instead, he simply compiled ‘ein hauffen *Lectiones*’ (‘a heap of lessons’), occasionally even presenting them backwards.²²

Hans Wilhelm Schöffner von Dietz was a fencing master of some fame. As his full name indicates, he likely came from Diez, a town north-west of Frankfurt in Germany. By 1620, when his treatise on fencing was printed, he described himself as a fencing master and *Freyfechter* in Marburg, a university town not far from Diez that at that time was part of the Landgraviate of Hesse-Kassel.²³ Interestingly, Schöffner did not dedicate his work to Maurice, Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, but rather to John the Elder, Count of Nassau, Katzenelnbogen, Vianden, and Diez, and Christian, Count of Waldeck-Wildungen.²⁴

By 1624, Schöffner was employed by King Christian IV of Denmark as the fencing master at his noble academy in Sorø.²⁵ There, he was active until at least 1636, when he started receiving a pension, though he may have continued teaching after that, until his death sometime between 1642 and 1646.²⁶ Based on these dates, we can estimate a year of birth around 1570 (between 1565 and 1575). Indeed, his fencing treatise, published in 1620 (though the dedication is dated 1619), includes a poem dedicated to Schöffner in his 52nd year, implying he was most likely born in 1567 or 1568.²⁷

At least seven manuscripts are currently known that present (partial) versions of what would become Schöffner’s rather extensive printed treatise. The oldest of these is, likely, 4° MS math. 38, titled *Lectiones auf das Einfache rappier*, which is dated to between 1590 and 1610 by the holding library.²⁸ The title page of this earliest known work refers to Schöffner as a *Freyfechter*, and indicates that he received the presented lessons in Italy, ‘vom Salvatore, und / andern berühmten fechtern’ (‘from Salvatore and other famous fencers’).²⁹

²² Hynitzsch, *Scienza e pratica d’arme*, p. 3 of the *Vorrede*.

²³ Schöffner von Dietz, *Gründtliche und eigentliche Beschreibung*. As noted in Klein, by 1615 Schöffner had already been active as a fencing master in Marburg for many years. Klein, *Fecht- Lektionen*, p. 11.

²⁴ Note that this would be John VII, now known as John the Middle. The John now known as John the Elder, John VI, died in 1606. John VII had a son and heir, John VIII, born in 1583 (and now known as John the Younger), meaning that of the Johns alive when Schöffner wrote his work in 1620, John VII was the Elder. As noted by Klein, Schöffner’s father Emmerich Scheffer had held a position at John VI’s court, which could explain Schöffner’s dedication. In addition, John VII was an important military theorist of his time. This link to the house of Nassau is also interesting, as the Royal Library of the Netherlands holds an illustrated manuscript edition of Fabris’s work of unknown origin, the contents of which are subtly different from both Fabris’s 1601 manuscript and his 1606 *De lo Schermo*. Klein, *Fecht- Lektionen*; Copenhagen, GKS 1868 kvart; Fabris, *De lo Schermo*.

²⁵ As noted by Hynitzsch, *Scienza e pratica d’arme*. See also Sørensen, ‘A Look Behind the Scenes’.

²⁶ Sørensen, ‘A Look Behind the Scenes’.

²⁷ Klein, *Fecht- Lektionen*.

²⁸ Kassel, 4° Ms. math. 38. For a transcription and critical edition of this work, see Klein, *Fecht- Lektionen*.

²⁹ Kassel, 4° Ms math. 38, fol. 1r.

A manuscript with great similarity to 4° Ms math. 38 is found in Ms. 62, a volume that presents a compilation of four different (partial), German texts on fencing.³⁰ The third text contained in this volume, on folio 11r to 28v, is titled *Eigentliche beschreibung des fechtens in einfachen Rappir del Signor Salvatore e signor Giouanno Maria Maganini*, and presents 110 lessons on fencing that, as also noted by scholar Olivier Dupuis, show considerable similarity to the lessons 4° Ms math. 38, both in the content of individual lessons, and the order in which they are given. There are, however, also differences between the two works, both in what lessons are presented, and in technical details included in corresponding individual lessons. Though this particular text in Ms. 62 is not dated, a production date between 1600 and 1610 could perhaps be expected based on the similarities between this text and 4° Ms math. 38. A later production date, around 1620, was suggested by Dupuis, based on the datings of the first (an anonymous manuscript simply titled *Fechtbuch*) and fourth (a large-format printed page titled ‘*Discurs, Vom einfachen Rappierfechten*’ by Martin Krüger) texts in the volume, which are dated to 1623 and 1618, respectively.³¹ While this third text in Ms. 62 thus appears to present a second (shorter) version of the treatise by Schöffler found in 4° Ms math. 38, with the information currently available it is not possible to determine how these two works might be related. Likewise, the identity of the *Signor Giovanni Maria Maganini* mentioned in the title, and whether he has any (fencing) relation to Salvator Fabris or was just another master the author of this text trained with, remains unknown.

The following three manuscripts — Ms. germ. qu. 1190/1191, MS Var.7, and Nat. Lib. MS E.ö. V.36 — are all dated to the period 1611–19.³² In contrast to 4° Ms math. 38, on both title pages of Ms. germ. qu. 1190 and 1191 Schöffler is referred to as ‘Hans Wilhelm gewester Forfechter deß Signor Salvator’ (‘Hans Wilhelm, former Vorfechter of Signor Salvator in Padua’), with Ms. germ. qu. 1190 adding ‘zu Padua’.³³ The other two manuscripts do not include a title page, and actually also do not bear Schöffler’s name.

³⁰ Montbeliard, Ms. 62. For a transcription and analysis of this manuscript, see Dupuis, ‘Edition et Transcription’.

³¹ As noted by Dupuis, the fourth text consists of a (near-)verbatim copy of the first part of Sebastian Heusler’s treatise of 1615. Dupuis, ‘Edition et Transcription’; Heusler, *Neu Kunstlich Fechtbuch*.

³² The two-volume Ms. germ. qu. 1190/1191 is dated 1611 on the title page of each volume. The MS Var.7 is dated to 1611–19 by the holding library, likely based on the dating of these other two manuscripts. Berlin, Ms. germ. qu. 1190; Berlin, Ms. germ. qu. 1191; Bamberg, MS Var.7.

The Nat. Lib. MS E.ö. V.36 is dated 1619 on its cover (which also bears the initials R. V. G.). Helsinki, Nat. Lib. MS E.ö. V.36.

³³ Berlin, Ms. germ. qu. 1190 fol. 1r; Berlin, Ms. germ. qu. 1191 fol. 1r. Another interesting note here is that the cover pages of both these manuscripts bear the name of Erasmus Younger of Starhemberg. Erasmus Younger was born in 1595 as the third son of Count Reichart of Starhemberg (and the nephew of Erasmus II, who was 20 years his elder). As Erasmus’s name is in the same handwriting as the rest of the title page, this could indicate that it was Erasmus who penned this particular exemplar of Schöffler’s *Fechtbuch*, copying another.

Instead, on their respective first written pages, they each carry the title ‘*Eigentliche Beschreibung des Fechtens ihm Einfachen Rappir.*’ (‘Proper description of fencing with the single rapier.’), followed by a listing of the four main thrusts and guards, and then the division of the blade into four degrees of strength which are also shown on a drawing of a sword.³⁴ The same content is found on Ms. germ. qu. 1190 page 2r, suggesting a proper title page might have been planned to be added to the other two manuscripts.

Ms. germ. qu 1190/1191 thus clearly indicates that Schöffler was a *Vorfechter* of Salvator Fabris at some time before 1611, when he was a former *Vorfechter*. That Schöffler is not referred to as such in the earlier 4° Ms math. 38 suggests that he may have become a *Vorfechter* of Fabris after that manuscript was penned. As Fabris returned from Copenhagen to Padua and opened a school there at some point after 20 August 1609, where he taught until his death in 1618, it is possible that Schöffler was in Padua, as a *Vorfechter* at Fabris’s new school, between 1609 and 1611. However, it is more probable that he studied at Fabris’s school before Fabris left Padua in 1598, and that these manuscripts were penned at some time after Schöffler returned to Germany.³⁵ He may likewise have penned the earlier 4° Ms math. 38 in Germany after returning from Italy. However, Schöffler’s change in title to ‘former *Vorfechter* of *Signor* Salvator’ on the title pages of the Ms. germ. qu 1190/1191 could indicate that he penned the 4° Ms math. 38 while still in Italy and before receiving that distinction.³⁶

The sixth manuscript presenting a version of Schöffler’s treatise is the 4° Ms math. 2, dated to after 1620.³⁷ As noted by scholar Michael Chidester, it may have been intended as a presentation copy of Schöffler’s printed and published work, but was never finished.³⁸ Finally, in addition to these six works, the copy of Schöffler’s printed book held by the university library in Göttingen contains significant extensions, with hand-written pages adding lessons to especially the single rapier section, but also the rapier and dagger section of the work.³⁹ These pages are bound within the volume, and may well have been written by Schöffler himself, perhaps in preparation for the publication of a future extended edition.

If we consider Hynitzsch’s criticisms of Schöffler that, while Schöffler did do well in making the Salvatorian art of fencing better known, Schöffler was only ever a *Vorfechter* at Fabris’s school and did not receive lessons from Fabris directly, and that, as a result, Schöffler did not follow a proper order in presenting his fencing lessons, we see that Hynitzsch was very likely familiar with Schöffler’s printed work, and appears to address

³⁴ Bamberg, MS Var.7; Helsinki, Nat. Lib. MS E.ö. V.36.

³⁵ Migliorato, ‘Den Italienske fægtemester’ p. 48.

³⁶ Berlin, Ms. germ. qu. 1190 fol. 1r; Berlin, Ms. germ. qu. 1191 fol. 1r.

³⁷ Kassel, 4° Ms. math. 2.

³⁸ Chidester, ‘Anweisung zur Fechtkunst’.

³⁹ Göttingen, 8 ARS MIL. 1090/61.

Schöffers writings directly. In his dedication and preface, Schöffers singles out Fabris as the main fencing master under whom he had studied, and he writes how the intention of his own work is to increase rather than diminish Fabris's fame.⁴⁰ Furthermore, Schöffers titled the first section of his book, dealing with fencing with the single sword, 'Vom Einfachen Rappir und in was Ordnung solches Fechten beschrieben wirdt' ('Of the single rapier, and in what order this fencing is described'), thus placing particular focus on the proper order in which fencing should be described.⁴¹ Finally, considering Schöffers various works, in each he indeed presents a very great number of lessons with very little explanation of the fencing principles behind these lessons. In doing so, Schöffers expanded Fabris's art with lessons that may have been of his own devising, as well as lessons he ascribed to other masters, such as 'Signor Nicoletto da Venetia', 'Signor Antonio da Padua', and 'Valentin Coburger'.⁴²

Notably, Hynitzsch does not refute Schöffers claims of having studied with Salvator Fabris. However, Hynitzsch does imply that Schöffers did not have a full understanding of Fabris's method of fencing (or at least how to teach it), and that he was therefore not able to present this well. Furthermore, another link between Schöffers and Fabris is found

⁴⁰ 'Als hab ich nicht unterlassen sollen / nach vielfaltiger langer ubung und belehrung / so ich von andern und insonders vom Herzen *Salvator* nechst Gott dem Allmächtigen erreicht / uber und neben seiner in truck gegebenen *Instruction*, von dieser Ritterlichen Fechtkunst / beyder seitz Seittenwehren an tag zugeben / darzu mich viel Hohes und Adeliches standts / deren ich unzehlich gelehret / nit wenig verursacht und bewogen / seines des herzen *Salvatoris Armorum magistri* lob nit zu vermindern / sondern zu vermehren / und thätlich zu beweissen mit dem werck / was entzwischen dem geminen Fechten und diesem in Rappir (so die Alten *gladium Hispaniensem* genennet) vor ein unterschaid sey dem gemeinen Vatterland und unser Uhrhalten Hochlöblichen Teutschen Nation nit allein zum behüff und vorthail / sondern auch zu ehrlichem ruhm und lob. Das werck (sagt man wohl und recht) lobet den Meister / darauff ich mich hiermit auch beruffen will haben / und fernes meinen kram nicht zum marckt setzen.' ('And I should not refrain, after many years of practice and instruction that I have attained from others, in particular *Herr Salvator* alongside God the almighty, over and in addition to his printed Instructions, to publish something about this knightly art of fencing with both side-arms. I was persuaded and moved to do so a little by the High and Mighty, of whom I have taught countless, not to diminish the fame of *Herr Salvator*, Master of Arms, but to increase it, and to prove through deeds with this work, what the difference is between the common way of fencing, and this with the rapier (which the ancients called the *gladius Hispaniensis*); not only for the sake and benefit of our common Fatherland, our Ancient highly praised German Nation, but also for honest fame and praise. This work (as said well and truly) praises the Master, whom I hereby want to have invoked. Furthermore, with this, I do not wish to push my stuff onto the market.') Schöffers von Dietz, *Gründtliche und eigentliche Beschreibung*, in the *Vorrede*. Translation by author.

⁴¹ Schöffers von Dietz, *Gründtliche und eigentliche Beschreibung*, p. 1.

⁴² Nicoletto and Antonio are named in the rapier and dagger section of the printed work, where there is also a set of lessons that are explicitly ascribed to 'Signor Salvator Fabris da Padoa', and Valentin Coburger is named in 4° Ms math. 38. Schöffers von Dietz, *Gründtliche und eigentliche Beschreibung*, Kassel, 4° Ms math. 38.

As noted by Klein, from 1627 Valentin Coburger was the first fencing master registered at the university of Marburg. Klein, *Fecht- Lektionen*.

in Schöffers's inclusion in his works of lessons on the *Caminiren*, or 'proceeding with resolution', which is a manner of fencing the development of which is commonly ascribed to Fabris, and which is first found in writing in his works.⁴³ Based on the above discussion, it is thus likely that Schöffers did indeed train at Fabris's school in Padua, at least as a *Vorfechter*, for some time. Considering his estimated year of birth, he most likely did so before Fabris left Padua in 1598, rather than between 1609 (when Fabris returned to Padua) and 1611 (when Schöffers was referred to as a former *Vorfechter* of *Signor Salvator*). This is further supported by Schöffers being described in 1615 as a fencing master in Marburg 'for many years'.⁴⁴ One interesting thought, then, is that what Schöffers presents of Fabris's art of fencing may reflect an older version of Fabris's fencing, as this art likely continued to develop further in the following years, before Fabris wrote his own works (as well as after that, when Fabris returned to Padua).

Hynitzsch is (even) less positive about Sebastian Heusler, whom he calls Schöffers's former student and *Vorfechter*. Of Heusler's *Neu Kunstlich Fechtbuch*, first published in Nürnberg in 1615, Hynitzsch states that it was even less able to extend the fame of *Signor Salvator*, as it mainly collected a number of lessons, but also included those from other masters and did not properly show either the *tempo* or the right measure in which these lessons should be carried out.⁴⁵

Born in Nürnberg in 1581 as the son of a book printer, Sebastian Heusler in turn was registered as a book printer in Nürnberg from 1601 to 1603 and from 1606 to 1607.⁴⁶ However, probably already in 1608 (and possibly also between 1603 and 1606), he left his home, workshop, and young family behind to study fencing and pursue a military career.⁴⁷

⁴³ As it is translated in the English translation of Fabris's *De lo Schermo* in Leoni, *Art of duelling*.

⁴⁴ Klein, *Fecht- Lektionen*, p. 11.

⁴⁵ Hynitzsch, *Scienza e pratica d'arme*, p. 3 of the *Vorrede*.

In addition to 'Signor Salvator Fabri da Padua', 'Signor Rudol. Capo di Ferr' is named by Heusler explicitly on the title page of the second part of his book, on fencing with the rapier and dagger, at least as early as 1616. Furthermore, a number of plates included by Heusler in the rapier and dagger section (as well as the plate showing a fencer performing a lunge in the single rapier part of his book) appear to have been copied directly from Capo Ferro's *Gran Simulacro dell'Arte e dell'Uso della Scherma*. Heusler, *Deß Sig. Salvator Fabri; Capo Ferro, Gran Simulacro dell'Arte*.

⁴⁶ For an extensive biography of Sebastian Heusler, see Maurer, *Sebastian Heussler's New Artful Fencing Book*. Additional information can be found in Klatte, *Transliteration des Neu Künstlich Fechtbuch*.

⁴⁷ Cf. the dedication to the 1615 edition of his fencing book (as presented by Peter Klatte), where Heusler stated that he learned fencing in Italy, France, England, and the Netherlands, in addition to the Italian and French masters referred to in the title of the work. See also the dedication of the flag waving book Heusler co-authored with Johann Renner, published in Nürnberg in 1616, and dedicated to Heinrich Wilhelm von Starhemberg, where they state: 'Also haben wir dißfalls / das jenig / so wir mit unkosten gelernet / dann auch im Feld geübt und erfahren / uff das Papier bringen / und in Druck verfertigen wollen.' ('Thus, here, we wanted to put down on paper and print that, which we have learned at our own expenses, and have then practiced and experienced in

When his fencing book was first published in Nürnberg in 1615, on its title page, Heusler called himself a ‘Kriegsman und Freyfechter von Nürnberg’ (‘warrior and free fencer of Nürnberg’).⁴⁸ On the title page to the second edition, as published in 1617, he instead called himself a ‘in Nürnberg unterhaltenen Soldaten zu Roß und Freyfechter’ (‘maintained soldier on horse and free fencer in Nürnberg’).⁴⁹ Heusler appears to have left Nürnberg once again that same year, as a deed listing the forced sale of a tavern in Nürnberg by his wife notes that he himself was not present for the signing of the documents.⁵⁰ By 1626, Heusler was active as a cavalryman in the army of King Christian IV of Denmark. While his company was sold to Sweden in 1629, by 1637 Heusler had returned to Copenhagen, and was once more on the payroll of Christian IV, in whose employment he then rose to very high rank, until his retirement in 1643. By 1647, Heusler had died.⁵¹

Heusler himself, in the dedication found in some copies of his first 1615 edition, claimed to have learned fencing from ‘Salvatore Fabri de Padu’.⁵² Based on what we know about Heusler’s life as discussed above, if he did indeed learn fencing from Fabris, it is most likely that he did so between 1607 and 1615, i.e., after Fabris had left Copenhagen, either as Fabris was passing through Germany and France or after he had settled in Padua and founded his new school there. However, it is possible that Heusler found Fabris between 1603 and 1606, when Heusler was not registered as a book printer in Nürnberg, and may thus be assumed to have been absent. Heusler further claims that he also learned from other masters that in turn had studied with Fabris for many years.⁵³ While it is possible that Schöffner was one of these other masters, no direct evidence has been found so far connecting Schöffner and Heusler with certainty, except for Hynitzsch’s claim. That said, both Schöffner and Heusler have a connection to the Starhemberg family. The name of Erasmus the Younger of Starhemberg appears on the title pages of the two-volume copy

the field.’). Klatte, *Transliteration des Neu Künstlich Fechtbuch*; Renner and Heusler, *Neu Künstlich Fahnenbüchlein*.

⁴⁸ Heusler, *Neu Kunstlich Fechtbuch*, 1615.

⁴⁹ Heussler, *Neu Kunstlich Fechtbuch*, 1617. Note that this edition was advertised as being expanded and improved with 50 extra pieces that had just come from Italy. Before this, a second printing run of the first edition, printed in 1616, was also advertised as being ‘improved with beautiful pieces’, but still referred to Heusler as a ‘warrior and free fencer of Nürnberg’. Heussler, *Neu Kunstlich Fechtbuch*, 1616.

⁵⁰ Maurer, *Sebastian Heussler’s New Artful Fencing Book*, p. 31.

⁵¹ Maurer, *Sebastian Heussler’s New Artful Fencing Book*, p. 66.

⁵² Klatte, *Transliteration des Neu Künstlich Fechtbuch*, p. xx.

⁵³ This all based on the partial dedication as reproduced by Klatte: ‘Demnach ich aber vor andern den Sig. Salvatorem Fabri de Padu, so viel auch mehr dergleichen Lehrmeister, die vor der Zeit viel Jahr bey jetzgemeltem Salvatori Fabri gelernet, rühmen hören.’ (‘Accordingly, before others, however, I must vaunt Signor Salvatorem Fabri de Padu, as much as other similar masters who before previously studied for many years with the said Salvatori Fabri.’). Klatte, *Transliteration des Neu Künstlich Fechtbuch*, p. xx.

of Schöffers's manuscript held in Berlin (1190/1191), while in 1616 Heusler dedicated his flag-waving book to Count Heinrich Wilhelm of Starhemberg, Erasmus's oldest brother. Here, we thus find a potential connection between Schöffers and Heusler. Additionally, both Schöffers and Heusler were employed by King Christian IV, though only after they published their respective works.

Finally, it is worth noting here that the first part of Heusler's treatise was plagiarized in 1618, by Martin Krüger in a printed page included in the aforementioned Ms. 62. While this is only a plagiarism, it can be argued that this adds Martin Krüger as another master within Fabris's textual lineage.⁵⁴

THE KREUSSLERS OF JENA

The next fencing master Hynitzsch referred to was Hans Wulff von Mulßheim in Strasbourg, along with his students who, according to Hynitzsch, had spread over almost all of Europe, and laudably upheld his fame as well as the profession of fencing. A fencing master by this name does appear in the archives of Strasbourg in 1657 and 1659, but unfortunately neither he nor any of his students left behind any writings (on fencing) that we know of.⁵⁵ It is thus not possible to ascertain any connection between von Mulßheim and Salvator Fabris. However, we should note that Fabris did pass through Strasbourg on his way home from Copenhagen, thus giving a potential connection at that time (around 1607–1608).⁵⁶

Hynitzsch then addressed the Kreusslers of Jena, who were the progenitors of an important and long-lasting lineage of fencing masters in Germany. Here, Hynitzsch first points out that one reason he wished to republish Fabris's art of fencing in German is that the art they (and von Mulßheim and his students) teach has changed from that of Fabris himself. He then hastens to add that these changes are minor, and that he is convinced that they do fully understand the foundations of fencing, and must therefore have had good reasons to make such changes. Hynitzsch also comments that he hopes to receive a commendation on his work from them. Clearly, thus, Hynitzsch was seeking the approval of the Kreusslers (as well as von Mulßheim), perhaps acknowledging their skill,

⁵⁴ As first noted by Olivier Dupuis, the fourth text in Ms. 62, a large-format printed page titled '*Discurs, Vom einfachen Rappierfechten*', is no more than a plagiarism of Heusler's work. Martin Krüger presents himself there as 'ein approbierter Meister des langen Schwerds, von der Feder' ('an authorised master of the longsword and the feder'). Dupuis, 'Edition et Transcription du Ms 62'; Montbeliard, Ms. 62.

⁵⁵ A fencing master by the name of 'Johann Wolfgang de Molsheim' is found in the Archives de la ville et de l'Eurométropole de Strasbourg (AVES VI 394 document 1, 1657), while AVES 1R142 22v, 32v, 38r-83v documents an argument von Mulßheim had with another fencing master, named Niclaus Bruch, in 1659. Olivier Dupuis, personal communication with author, 26 October 2022.

⁵⁶ Migliorato, 'Den Italienske fægtemester', p. 51.

or at least their influence. In this regard, we should also note that Jena is not far from Leipzig, where Hynitzsch was active and published his work.

While the Kreussler lineage is well-documented, none of the Kreusslers themselves left behind any writings on their art of fencing.⁵⁷ The lineage is considered to have been founded in Jena by Wilhelm Kreussler, when he started teaching there in 1619. Interestingly, it appears that Wilhelm Kreussler came from Niederhadamar, a small town only a few kilometres away from Diez.⁵⁸ A portrait of Wilhelm Kreussler, painted around 1670, has been preserved in the Jena University library. This portrait, which originally hung in the university fencing *salle*, further notes that Wilhelm Kreussler (born 21 November 1597, died Jena, 17 January 1673) was a privileged university fencing master in Jena.

By obtaining this ducal privilege, Kreussler gained a great boon for himself and his sons, as it gave them a monopoly as fencing masters in Jena.⁵⁹ Accordingly, two of his sons continued as fencing masters there: Gottfried Kreussler (1624–1682) opened a second *salle* in Jena, while Friedrich Kreussler (1632–1707) took over the *salle* of their father.⁶⁰ It appears that the older *salle* was abandoned when Friedrich died.⁶¹ At the other *salle*, Gottfried was succeeded by his son, Johann Wilhelm Kreussler (1664–1722), who in turn was succeeded by his son Heinrich Wilhelm (1690–1752). As Heinrich Wilhelm Kreussler had no biological successor willing to take over the family business, he adopted one of his students, Johann Wolfgang Bieglein, who succeeded him as Johann Wolfgang Bieglein-Kreussler (d. 1780). Bieglein-Kreussler was the final Kreussler fencing master in Jena, and was succeeded by his *Vorfechter*, Heinrich Friedrich Roux. In addition, Heinrich Wilhelm's brother, Friedrich Wilhelm (1692–1762) found employment as fencing master in Gießen, thus helping spread the Kreusslerian style of fencing across Germany.

The earliest treatise on fencing written by a fencer from the Kreussler lineage is a manuscript that was written in 1731 by Carl Friedrich Weischner.⁶² Born in Merseburg in 1703, Weischner learned fencing in Jena under Heinrich Wilhelm Kreussler, before being

⁵⁷ Seemann-Kahne, *Die Kreussler in Jena*.

⁵⁸ Odrowaz-Sypniewska, 'The Germanic Roots of the Kruessler Family'.

⁵⁹ The letter in which Wilhelm, Gottfried, and Friedrich request this privilege, dated 6 October 1669, is preserved on Polizeisachen B 4919, fols. 208^r–209^v. While in this letter Wilhelm states that he has been teaching fencing in Jena for 50 years, unfortunately he does not mention whom he learned his fencing from, or where he learned this. Weimar, Polizeisachen B 4919, fols. 208^r–209^v.

⁶⁰ Gottfried spent some time in Leipzig and may have been a fencing master there. By 1669 he was working as a fencing master in Jena, where he had returned by 1666. Seemann-Kahne, *Die Kreussler in Jena*, pp. 17–18.

⁶¹ Two sons of Friedrich also became fencing masters. Wilhelm (1666–1701) died as a fencing master in Jena; most likely he assisted his father at their *salle*. Friedrich (1683–?) was a fencing master in Wittenberg. Seemann-Kahne, *Die Kreussler in Jena*, pp. 28, 31.

⁶² Weimar, Sig. Fol 351c.

appointed as the fencing master in Weimar by Duke Ernst August I of Saxe-Weimar.⁶³ Eventually, Weischner published two editions of his work, in 1764 and 1765.⁶⁴ In these editions, he hints at potential differences between his teachings and those of the Kreusslers, when he states that he hopes that the students of Kreussler do not find his lessons disagreeable. A further hint regarding those changes may be the title of the 1765 edition, which emphasises Weischner's focus on fencing from 'ungezwungene Stellungen' ('unforced positions').⁶⁵ Furthermore, note that Weischner was familiar with Fabris, as in the earlier editions of his book he mentions *Signor* Fabris of Padua and refers the reader to Fabris's work.⁶⁶ While Weischner ambioned taking over the *salle* in Jena from Heinrich Wilhelm Kreussler, writing a letter requesting this in 1745 when Heinrich Wilhelm became sick, this was not granted as Heinrich Wilhelm was succeeded by his adopted son.

Another relatively early treatise connected to the Kreussler lineage is the *Anfangsgründe der Fechtkunst*, written by Anton Friedrich Kahn (1713–1797) and first published in Göttingen in 1739.⁶⁷ In the introduction to this work, Kahn mentions having learned fencing at the university in Jena. In the expanded second edition of his book, Kahn refers to: '*Don Fabro*, ein italiänischer Fechtmeister, ist den Grundsätzen und der Anweisung des Kreuslers am nächsten gekommen; sonderlich findet man in der Vorrede und Einleitung zu seinem Fechtbuche vieles, was auf Gründen der Wahrheit und der Kunst beruhet:' ('*Don Fabro*, an Italian fencing master who came closest to the Kreussler's principles and instructions; In particular, you can find much in the foreword and introduction to his fencing book that is based on foundations of truth and art.')⁶⁸ However, while both Weischner and Kahn mention Salvator Fabris, and Kahn even mentions how similar Fabris's fencing principles were to those of the Kreusslers, neither of them makes any connection between

⁶³ It is interesting to note here that Wilhelm Kreussler was married to Catharina Weischner, indicating a possible family connection between Carl Friedrich Weischner and Heinrich Wilhelm Kreussler. Seemann-Kahne, *Die Kreussler in Jena*.

⁶⁴ Weischner, *Uebungen auf dem Fürstl*; Weischner, *Die Ritterliche Geschicklichkeit*.

⁶⁵ Weischner, *Die Ritterliche Geschicklichkeit*, title.

⁶⁶ Note that in the 1764 edition, Weischner only repeats the first reference to Fabris, while leaving out the second. In manuscript Sig. Fol 351c, fol. 31^r, Weischner also refers the reader to the book of the fencing master Schmidt, most likely indicating Johann Andreas Schmidt. Weimar, Sig. Fol 351c, fol. 31^r, 37^r, 47^r; Weischner, *Uebungen auf dem Fürstl*, p. 44.

⁶⁷ Kahn, *Anfangsgründe der Fechtkunst*. An expanded second edition was published in 1761, by Christian Friedrich Weygand.

⁶⁸ Kahn, *Anfangsgründe der Fechtkunst*, 1761, p. 30 of the *Anhang*. In this expanded edition, Kahn also tells that when he was put forward as a candidate for the position of fencing master in Göttingen, Kreussler in Jena was contacted to ask about his qualifications. Kreussler answered that Kahn was a good fencer, and could be a great candidate, but only if he returned to Jena for further instruction in how to properly teach fencing. Kahn, *Anfangsgründe der Fechtkunst*, 1761, pp. 15–16 of the *Anhang*.

Salvator Fabris and the Kreusslers from whom they learned to fence (and to teach fencing).

While Hynitzsch thus includes the Kreusslers as representatives of Fabris's lineage, no supporting information is available about whether Wilhelm Kreussler had learned fencing from Fabris or one of his students. Considering that Wilhelm Kreussler was born in 1597, if he did study fencing under Fabris, this would have been in the 1610s, probably after 1615, and therefore in Padua. Though further research is needed into the connection between the Wilhelm Kreussler and Salvator Fabris, the subsequent lineage of fencing masters (and authors) in the tradition of Wilhelm Kreussler is well documented.

CHRISTIAN IV, AND HIS NOBLE ACADEMY AT SORØ

As noted above, while Hynitzsch named the fencing master Hans Wulff von Mulßheim, in Strasbourg, who left no writings that could help connect him to Salvator Fabris, a potential connection may exist via Salvator Fabris's best-known and most influential student and patron, Christian IV, King of Denmark. While Christian IV of course never taught fencing, nor authored any works on it, through his position he had considerable influence on the teaching of fencing in Denmark. One way in which he exercised this influence was through the founding of his noble academy at Sorø in 1623. As Christian IV exerted direct control on who was employed to teach at the academy, and by making enrolment at the academy a requirement for employment as officials of the Danish state, he thus strongly influenced from whom the Danish nobility learned to fence (as well as other subjects).⁶⁹

As noted by Sørensen, Christian IV initially sent Iver Krabbe as his negotiator to attract Vincentius Vanocelli to become the fencing master in Sorø. However, whether Vincentius accepted is unclear. By 1624, Hans Wilhelm Schöffner, once *Vorfechter* at the school of Salvator Fabris, was the school fencing master in Sorø. Schöffner was replaced in 1636 by a French fencing master named Beaufort. In turn, in 1642 the king instructed the superintendent of the academy to contact a new fencing master in Strasbourg, inconveniently also named Hans Wilhelm. This Hans Wilhelm Eller (d. 1671) taught fencing at Sorø until the academy closed in 1664 or 1665, supported by his son Hans Casimir (1645–1703). After the academy closed, father and son worked together as fencing masters in Copenhagen.⁷⁰ Considering that, according to Hynitzsch, von Mulßheim was a fencing master in Fabris's tradition, who was active in Strasbourg and who taught various fencing masters in turn, it is interesting to consider whether there may have been a connection between von Mulßheim and Hans Wilhelm Eller, where Eller was

⁶⁹ Sørensen, 'A Look Behind the Scenes'.

⁷⁰ Sørensen further notes that, in 1661, Hans Casimir had been informed in writing that he would succeed his father as fencing master in Sorø. Sørensen, 'A Look Behind the Scenes'.

either the student or the master of von Mulßheim, and was selected by Christian IV to bring another Fabrisian fencing master to Sorø. However, without any documentation regarding such connections, this can only be speculation, and further research is thus required into the potential connections between Hans Wulff von Mulßheim, Hans Wilhelm Eller, and Salvator Fabris.⁷¹

In addition to the treatise published by Schöffler (before he became fencing master in Sorø), several more works on fencing can be connected to the academy at Sorø, of which two are printed books. The oldest of these is the *Pallas Armata*, which was actually written in English and published in London in 1639, with the author only given as ‘G. A.’.⁷² However, a Danish translation of this book was published in Copenhagen in 1646, under the title *Den Ridderlige oc Adelige Fecht-Konstis grundelige oc Methodiske Beskriffvelse* (‘A thorough and methodical description of the Knightly and Noble Art of Fencing’), with the author again given only as ‘G. A.’.⁷³ In the foreword to this Danish edition, the author clarified that his work is based on that of world-famous and foremost fencing master Hans Wilhelm Schöffler, former fencing master at the royal noble academy in Sorø, which he had summarized and rearranged into a better method, and to which he had added some of his own thoughts from his time at the academy, as well as some thoughts of his countrymen.⁷⁴

In addition, three manuscripts dealing with fencing were produced by (former) students of the academy. The first of these appears to be a notebook of a student, which starts with 43 pages of notes on mathematics, followed by 93 pages on fencing.⁷⁵ Focusing on the fencing section, this can be divided into four parts. First, we find notes on fencing from fols. 25^r–30^v.⁷⁶ In this part of the text, ‘Salvator’ is mentioned on fol. 26^r, and again on fol. 29^v, while fol. 30^r mentions ‘Hans Wilhelm Schöffler’.⁷⁷ Then, on fol. 30^v, a single

⁷¹ Olivier Dupuis has not found any documentation regarding a fencing master named Hans Wilhelm Eller in the archives of Strasbourg. Dupuis, personal communication, 26 October 2022.

⁷² G. A., *Pallas Armata*.

⁷³ G. A., *Den Ridderlige oc Adelige Fecht-Konstis*. Sørensen argues that this G. A. may have been Gabriel Knudsen Akeleye (1612–54), who went to study in Sorø in 1627, and studied or otherwise spent time in Oxford, England from 1636 to 1641. Sørensen, ‘A Look Behind the Scenes’.

⁷⁴ He also clarified that by the time of writing, Hans Wilhelm Schöffler had died. G. A. *Den Ridderlige oc Adelige Fecht-Konstis*.

⁷⁵ Wrocław, Mil. IV 30.

⁷⁶ ‘Etliche General Regeln undt Observationes, so bey den einfachen Fechten in acht zunehmen undt zu wissen vonnöthen sein’ (‘Various general rules and observations that must be taken heed of and need to be known when fencing [with the] single [rapier]’). Wrocław, Mil. IV 30, fol. 25^r; Wrocław, Mil. IV 30, fol. 30^r.

⁷⁷ ‘3. sagt Salvator das beßer seij, das man entweder gahr lose an des feindes Kl. seij, oder aber dieselbe gahr nich rühre, so du nur mit der stärke über s. shwäche gehe, damit wan der feindt cavierett man das tempo desto beßer nehmen kan, welches nicht geschehen kan, wan man starck gegenheldt, dan wan der feindt caviret wirdt man die Klinge etwas sinken laßen, u. also das tempo verlieren, u. dan auch damit der feindt nicht so baldt mercket, daß ehr stringierett ist.’

lesson on rapier and dagger fencing is presented, with the following dedication: ‘Dieses habe ich meinem gueten freündt Heinrich von Raden, meinen gewesenen fast in die 2 jahr discipulo, zustets werend freündtschafft geshrieben zu Cora den 6 Maij A° 1632. Hanß Wilhelm Scheffer Fechtmeister auff d könichl: Adelichl: Ritter schul Sora’ (‘This I have written for my good friend, Heinrich von Raden, my former student of almost two years, always in friendship, in Sorø on the 6th of May 1632. Hanß Wilhelm Scheffer, Fencing master at the Royal Noble Knight’s School Sorø’).⁷⁸

From fol. 31^r onwards, lessons on fencing are presented that are mostly (if not exclusively) copies of the hand-written fencing lessons found in the Göttingen copy of Schöffers printed work.⁷⁹ This thus indicates that whoever wrote these pages must have had access to that specific copy (or that multiple copies existed which included those extensive additions).⁸⁰ Finally, within this third section, a single lesson is found on fol. 42^v, that is signed by Claus Seehefeldt.

The lesson with dedication written by Hans Wilhelm Schöffers suggest that Heinrich von Raden may have owned the book, and may have authored the fencing notes on the preceding pages. However, one of the cover pages of the manuscript has the name Friederich Henning written on it several times. Both Friedrich and Heinrich may have owned and used the book at different times, or Friederich may have owned the notebook and copied the lesson dedicated to Heinrich by Schöffers. A thorough analysis of the hands found within the manuscript would be needed to ascertain whether multiple hands were involved. That said, we can identify Heinrich von Raden, and potentially Friederich

(‘3. Salvator says that it is better that you are either very loosely on your opponent’s blade, or else do not touch it at all, but only go with your strong over their weak, so that, when your enemy disengages, you can better take the *tempo*. This cannot be done if you are holding [your blade] strongly against [theirs], as then when your enemy disengages, you will let your blade go down somewhat, and thus lose the *tempo*. And also, doing so, your enemy does not notice as quickly that they have been engaged.’) Wrocław, Mil. IV 30, fols 26^{r-v}.

‘Des Salvatoris Regulen vom Caminiren’ (‘Salvator’s rules for proceeding [with resolution]’). Wrocław, Mil. IV 30, fol. 29^v & 30^r.

⁷⁸ This Heinrich von Raden is most likely a member of the Von Raden (also spelled Von Rhade/Roden) family with holdings around Stralsund and Rügen, in which case this Heinrich could well be a connection between Schöffers and Heinrich von und zum Velde. In that regard, it is also interesting that this volume first refers to Schöffers as ‘Hans Wilhelm Schöffers’ and then refers to him as the fencing master at the knightly academy in ‘Sora’ (rather than Sorø) — much like Hynitzsch does in his foreword. Wrocław, Mil. IV 30, fol. 30^r; Hynitzsch, *Scienza e pratica d’arme, Vorrede*.

⁷⁹ Note that from fol. 31^r onwards, the paper used also has a somewhat different colour from the preceding part of the volume. Göttingen, 8 ARS MIL 1090/61.

⁸⁰ That these lessons in Mil. IV 30, were copied off of Schöffers’s book is noted explicitly for the section starting on fol. 59^r: ‘Folgen nun etliche stücke auss Hans Wilhelm Schöffers buch vom Caminiren im einfachen Rappir fechten gehörich’ (‘Now follow some pieces stemming from Hans Wilhelm Schöffers’s book on proceeding with the single rapier’). Wrocław, Mil. IV 30, fol. 59^r.

Henning, as students of Schöffner. Unfortunately, with the information available, it is not possible to identify whether or how Claus Seehefeldt was related to Schöffner or Fabris.

The second manuscript, the *Fægtebog* of Mogens Krabbe, was written in Danish and dated 17 April 1656, when Hans Wilhelm Eller was fencing master there.⁸¹ The third manuscript was written in German by an anonymous student at the academy, and gives ‘Some fencing lessons that I have received in the *salle* in Sorø from the fencing master Hans Wilhelm, in the time that I was there’.⁸² The date given on the title pages, 10 July 1657, suggests that the lessons described would have been given by Hans Wilhelm Eller as well. However, this date may have been added later, as the same date is given on the title page to the flag waving section, and the title to the fencing section suggests that the lessons it contains had been received at some point in the past, when the author was attending the academy in Sorø. Finally, the third part of the manuscript, ‘Follow some lessons with dagger and rapier’ presents 44 lessons from Hans Wilhelm Schöffner’s *Gründtliche und eigentliche Beschreibung* (1620), as well as two lessons (33 and 46) that were not found in that work.⁸³ These observations suggest that the fencing master Hans Wilhelm mentioned in the title may have been Hans Wilhelm Schöffner.

While it is thus not certain which Hans Wilhelm was the fencing master of our anonymous student, more clarity could be gained if the identity of the author of the manuscript could be deducted. It is likely that the manuscript was, at one time, owned by Christian August of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Norburg, who would have been about 18 years old in 1657, and did study in Sorø. However, while the final page was likely written in his hand, the rest of the manuscript is written in a different hand; perhaps he was given the manuscript by a family member or friend who had attended Sorø in the past, in preparation for his studies at the academy.⁸⁴ On the other hand, if the year indicated on the manuscript is indeed the year in which the lessons were received, this would imply that Hans Wilhelm Schöffner maintained some influence over the fencing taught at the academy even 10 years after his death.

⁸¹ Copenhagen, NKS 79 oktav. While there have been several Danish nobles named Mogens or Magnus Krabbe, the most likely Mogens to have written this work was Mogens Krabbe af Østergaard (1639–62), who was born in Vegeholm Castle (then part of Denmark) and was page to the king in 1655–56.

⁸² The section on fencing is preceded by a section presenting 30 lessons in flag waving. Near the end, the manuscript contains a page with a question game, written in a different hand from the lessons, and ascribed to Christian August of Schleswig-Holstein-Sonderburg-Norburg (1639–87). Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 264.23 Extrav.

⁸³ ‘Folgen Eetzliche Lectiones mit Dolch undt Rapier’, Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 264.23 Extrav., pp. 61–83.

⁸⁴ Otte, *Die neueren Handschriften*, p. 379.

FURTHER AUTHORS CONNECTED TO FABRIS

In addition to the fencing masters and authors addressed above, various other authors have also claimed either a connection to Salvator Fabris or to represent his style of fencing. First among them is Joachim Köppe, who was not a fencing master but a doctor in medicine and philosophy attached to the university in Magdeburg. Köppe published his intriguing treatise on fencing, titled *Newer Discurs der Rittermæssigen und Weiterümbten Kunst des Fechtens*, there in 1619.⁸⁵ In this work, Köppe claims to have met Salvator Fabris in Paris, and to have received a copy of Fabris's book from Fabris himself there.⁸⁶ However, while Köppe does state that he has practiced Fabris's (and unnamed others') styles and foundations, and asserts that he has learned things from Fabris and his fencing book that he has included in his own book in turn, he also points out that his book will include things not found in Fabris's teachings. Köppe, thus, does not claim to present the teachings of Salvator Fabris in the same way as other authors did. That said, a strong influence of Salvator Fabris's art and the tactical framework through which he taught it on Köppe's *Newer Discurs* quickly becomes apparent when reading this book. Thus, while Köppe may not have been a student of Fabris who attempted to represent his master's style of fencing in as pure a way as possible (and certainly did not claim to do so), when considering the Salvator Fabris's fencing legacy, and how Salvator Fabris influenced not only his direct students but also other fencers and fencing masters, Köppe's work should be included.

In the foreword of his book, Köppe was quite concerned with assuring his reader that he did not plagiarize the work of Salvator Fabris (or others) when writing his own book. It is somewhat ironic then, that it is a partial plagiarism of Köppe's work that leads us to the following three fencing masters.

In 1671, German fencing master Johannes Georgius Bruchius published the first fencing treatise printed in the Dutch language.⁸⁷ In this book, Bruchius included an abridged Dutch translation of Köppe's chapter on what fencing is.⁸⁸ Similarly, Bruchius's description of *tempo* also appears to be a shortened translation of Köppe's description,

⁸⁵ Köppe, *Newer Discurs*, 1619. Additional editions were published in 1625 and 1639. For an English edition, see Van Noort, *New Discourse on the Art of Fencing*.

⁸⁶ Indeed, in one of the letters Fabris wrote during his stay in Paris, he complained about, amongst other things, having to instruct German students who were drawn to Paris by his reputation to take lessons with him. Migliorato, 'Den Italienske fægtemester'.

However, Köppe never explicitly stated whether he also took lessons with Salvator Fabris.

⁸⁷ Bruchius, *Scher- ofte Wapen-Konste*. For an English edition of this work and a biography of Johannes Georgius Bruchius, see Van Noort, *Of the Single Rapier*.

⁸⁸ 'Was Fechten, unnd wie mancherley dasselbe sey' in Köppe's *Newer Discurs*, vs. 'Wat schermen ofte Vechten, ende hoe meenigerley het selve zy' in Bruchius's *Scher- ofte Wapen-Konste*.

even including the same striking figures of speech.⁸⁹ From these inclusions, it is clear that Bruchius had access to a copy of Köppe's book, but he plagiarized this work without acknowledging Köppe. In the dedication of his book, Bruchius named Salvator Fabris as a fencing master who penned a treatise on fencing, but made no claims to be part of his lineage or that his fencing was influenced by Fabris's teachings.⁹⁰

In turn, Bruchius's work was, if not plagiarized, used heavily as inspiration by fencing master Johann Andreas Schmidt when he wrote his *Leib-beschirmende und Feinden Trotz-bietende Fecht-Kunst*, first published Nürnberg in 1713.⁹¹ Interestingly, in parts 4 and 5 of his book, Schmidt included partial translations of Fabris's work, though he did rearrange and edit these texts. However, he never named Salvator Fabris, and did not claim any connection to his lineage.⁹² Schmidt received a taste of his own medicine, when, in 1756, Jonas Thomsen von Wintzleben published a treatise in Danish, titled *Den adelige Fegte-Kunst*, which not only partly plagiarizes the writings of Schmidt, but also includes a set of engravings, many of which were copied off of those in Schmidt's book.⁹³

⁸⁹ Compare in particular Köppe's 'Des Glücks Sturn / Brust und Bauch ist rauch / Gar glat der Schedl der Rücken auch', which he presents as a German translation of the Latin saying 'Fronte capillata est posthac occasio calua' ('Luck's forehead is bestowed with hair, but from behind her skin is bare'), and Bruchius's 'Hayrigh is't Voor-hoofd van 't Geluck, Maer achter glat is den Ruck' ('Hairy is the forehead of luck, but from behind her back is bald'). Köppe, *Newer Discurs*, Chapter 7, translation from Van Noort, *New Discourse*, p. 108; Bruchius, *Scherm- ofte Wapen-Konste*, p. 12, translation from Van Noort, *Of the Single Rapier*, p. 39.

⁹⁰ Specifically, Bruchius uses the spelling 'Salvatoris Fabri'. A German translation of Fabris's *De lo Schermo* was published by Isack Elzevier in Leiden in 1619, under the title *Des Kunstreichen und weitberühmten Fechtmeisters Salvatoris Fabri Italiänische Fechtkunst*. It is thus possible that Bruchius knew of Fabris's writing through this German translation. This translation of Fabris's *De lo Schermo* was also known to Hynitzsch, who stated that he could tell it was translated by someone with no experience in fencing and that reading it would often cause someone who did know fencing to laugh, or smirk. Bruchius, *Scherm- ofte Wapen-Konste*, p. *3r; Fabris, *Italiänische Fechtkunst*; Hynitzsch, *Scienza e pratica d'arme*, p. 2 of the *Vorrede*.

⁹¹ 'Life-saving and enemies-defying art of fencing', Schmidt, *Leib-beschirmende*; see also Van Noort, *Schmidt's Art of Fencing*.

While there are claims that Schmidt was a student of Bruchius in Amsterdam, I have not been able to trace such claims back further than the 1808 edition of the *Nürnberg Gelehrten Lexicon*, whereas these claims are not found in the 1757 edition. As these claims were added long after Schmidt's lifetime, they may be based simply on similarities between Schmidt's and Bruchius's treatises, Schmidt's mentioning that he had spent time at the fencing school in Amsterdam, and the fact that an edition of Bruchius's work was published in Amsterdam in 1676. Will and Nopitsch, *Nürnberg Gelehrten Lexicon*; Will, *Nürnberg Gelehrten Lexicon*; see also Van Noort, *Schmidt's Art of Fencing*.

⁹² For a discussion of Schmidt's plagiarism of Bruchius, see Van Noort, *Schmidt's Art of Fencing*. Heveran (this volume) presents a more extensive discussion of Schmidt's treatment of Fabris's (and others') work. Heveran, 'The long tail of Salvator Fabris', in press.

⁹³ von Wintzleben *Den adelige Fegte-Kunst*. For an English translation of this work, see Van Noort, *Scandinavian Smallsword*.

Another case of plagiarism brings us to Stockholm in 1693, when Diederich Porath (1645–1703), fencing master to the royal court of King Carl XI of Sweden published his *Palastra Svecana*.⁹⁴ Originally from Mecklenburg, in North-Eastern Germany, Diederich and his older brother Christoffer both found appointments as fencing masters in Sweden. Christoffer was appointed as the first fencing master at the university in Lund in 1684, while Diederich received his appointment at the royal court already in 1677.⁹⁵ However, before that, in 1662, Diederich was already registered as traveling with a Swedish embassy to Russia, returning to Stockholm some time before 1674.⁹⁶

At the royal court, Porath's most important responsibility would have been to teach fencing to king Carl XI, and later also to crown prince Carl XII, to whom he dedicated his book. As the first treatise on fencing ever to be published in Swedish, Porath's *Palastra Svecana* likely enhanced his reputation, contributing to Porath being knighted in 1699. Regarding the content of his treatise, Porath wrote in the dedication that he wanted 'at klåda uti en Svensk Klådebonat de Fundamenter og Regler om Fechtare-konsten effter den Wettenskap och Förfarenhet jag mig i så många åhr kunna hafwa förwärfwat' ('to dress in Swedish apparel, the foundations and rules of the art of fencing according to the knowledge and experience that [he had] acquired over so many years').⁹⁷ However, if we compare the work to manuscript Add MS 17533, we find that the *Palastra Svecana* is mostly a (somewhat edited) Swedish translation of the earlier texts contained in this manuscript.⁹⁸ This leaves us with interesting questions regarding how Porath obtained access to a copy of this text, whom he learned fencing from, and whether there is a link between these two. To add to that, while Porath does mention Salvator Fabris in his foreword, he only names him as the world famous and highly skilled fencing master of King Christian IV of Denmark who published a treatise in Italian on fencing that was dedicated to this king. If Porath was aware of the connection between the work that he plagiarized and this famous fencing master, he does not show this. Therefore, until further insight is gained in whom Porath learned fencing from, and how he gained access to the text that he used as a basis for his own book, we cannot make a hard connection between him and the lineage of Salvator Fabris that we are constructing.

Finally, here we should discuss Manuscript HS381, and its anonymous author.⁹⁹ This manuscript, written in Italian and finished in 1614, presents a treatise on fencing based

⁹⁴ Porath, *Palastra Svecana*.

⁹⁵ In 1714 upon his death, he was succeeded there by his son, Christoffer, who later moved to the university in Uppsala. This Christoffer had three sons, who all became fencing masters as well. Tersmeden, 'Fäktmästarna vid Lunds universitet'.

⁹⁶ Jörnlinde, 'Didrik von Porat'.

⁹⁷ Porath, *Palastra Svecana*, Dedication.

⁹⁸ For a more thorough comparison of Porath's *Palastra Svecana* to Add MS 17533, see Heveran, 'The long tail of Salvator Fabris', in press.

⁹⁹ Vienna, HS381.

on the instructions of Salvator Fabris and Capo Ferro, or at least on their books.¹⁰⁰ However, while the author copies whole paragraphs more or less verbatim from Fabris's book, he only attributes them to Fabris via abbreviations such as 'Sal' followed by a page number, and never uses Fabris's last or full name. Likewise, Capo Ferro is only referred to as 'CF'. The author did more than copy, though, and like the author behind the text presented in Add MS 17533 and Mscr.Dresd.C.13, he also expanded upon Fabris's (and Capo Ferro's) instruction, providing additional insights not written down by these masters themselves.

This attributed copying from Fabris's book in itself is not an argument for including the anonymous author of HS381 in Fabris's fencing lineage. However, Julian Schrattenecker and Florian Fortner pose that, based on the writing hand, the anonymous author can be identified with high probability as Prince Gundaker von und zu Liechtenstein (1580–1658).¹⁰¹ This is interesting, as Gundaker was registered as a student in Padua in 1595, when Fabris was already well-known as a fencing master to the body of German students there.¹⁰² It is thus not improbable that Gundaker von und zu Liechtenstein and Fabris met during Gundaker's time in Padua, and quite possible that he did take lessons from Fabris at that time. Such lessons could have formed the basis for the expansions upon Fabris's writings added by the author. In that case, and accepting that HS381 was indeed written by Gundaker von und zu Liechtenstein, this more strongly places manuscript HS381 as part of Fabris's lineage. However, without further evidence supporting these assertions, they remain conjecture, and the exact nature of the connection between the author of HS381 and Salvator Fabris remains uncertain.

¹⁰⁰ Fabris, *De lo Schermo*; Capo Ferro, *Gran Simulacro dell'Arte*.

¹⁰¹ Schrattenecker and Fortner, 'Della Scherma'.

¹⁰² von Luschin-Ebengreuth, 'Oesterreicher an italienischen Universitäten', p. 240.

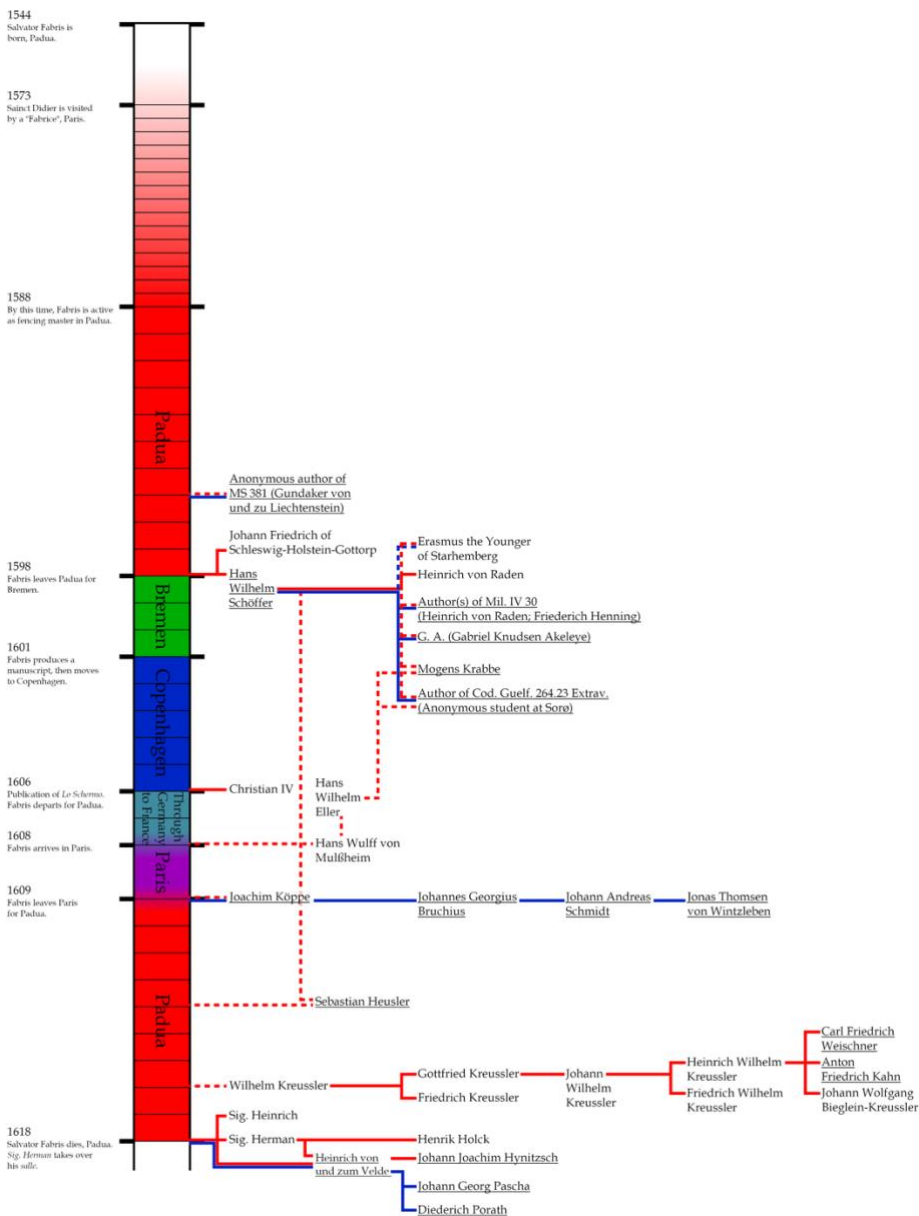


Fig. 1 Timeline of Fabris's life showing the lineages discussed in this article. By author.

DRAWING FABRIS'S LEGACY

Having compiled our data, we can now draw the instructional and textual fencing lineages rooted in the teachings of Salvator Fabris. These lineages are shown in Fig. 1. Here, solid lines indicate connections that are well documented, while connections around which there exists uncertainty are indicated by dashed lines. Red lines represent in-person instruction from a master to a student; blue lines indicate that an author's written work was influenced by the writings of the indicated preceding author. Finally, for persons who (likely) received in-person instruction from Salvator Fabris, the red lines are drawn to the estimated latest dates of contact on the timeline. However, it should be noted that almost none of these estimated dates are supported by strong data at this time. These lineages and estimated timeline now provide a basis for further analysis of how the fencing style of Salvator Fabris may have developed during his lifetime, and how it continued to develop in the different lineages that comprise his legacy.

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