

Kingdom of Lochac
Royal Guild of Defence

Punta Dritta - July 2005

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From the Lord Guildmaster of Defence

Welcome to a new edition of Punta Dritta, the newsletter of the Royal Guild of Defence. This is the first newsletter to come from the Guild's new editorial team - Provost Owen Cantor ap Hughe and Free Scholar Iseabail inghean Dhomhnall mhic Donnchaidh. I'd like to thank them for volunteering to take on the editorial and web stuff associated with the Guild and encourage you to support them by providing articles for future issues.

On business matters, Provost Angus Galbraith writes in this newsletter about the new Lochac Rapier Championship. Your local tournaments can now contribute to the selection of the Kingdom's Rapier Champion, but remember that they need to be properly advertised and reported to count towards the championship points. The Rapier Championship is a new venture by the Dons to promote recognition of fencing throughout the Kingdom, so start planning your tournaments so that we can make this a success.

During the past three years it's been my pleasure and duty to serve as the Lord Guildmaster for this Guild. The time has come for me to step down from the reins and to hand them onto another, fresher Lord Guildmaster. You'll be seeing the new Lord Guildmaster take over shortly. Ancient Guildmaster Dameon Greybeard will be taking over the office, just as soon as we can get the both of us to the same event. So this will be my last Punta Dritta before I step down from the office.

Have fun and enjoy your fencing.

Guildmaster ibn Jelal

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Some Words from the Ancient Masters

...And I tell you again that you must never attack without defending, nor defend without attacking, and if you do this you shall not fail...

...I want you to know that it is a beautiful mystery to know how to teach people well, more than to just play; for a man, if he knows how to play well and does not know how to teach, is not good (he is single): but one that knows how to teach well, is good for many people; and know that when he knows the one and the other, he is of double virtue and is a double master...

Marozzo, Achille, *Opera Nova dell'Arte delle Armi* (Modena, 1536)

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Recent prizes

Rowany Festival

Be It Known To All That Profess Skill At Arms That:

On the 25th day of March, at Rowany Festival, Scholar Iseabail inghean Dhomhnall mhic Donnchaidh, sponsored by Guildmaster Silfren the Singer, did play her Free Scholar's Prize in single rapier. The body of examiners did agree that the candidate had successfully played the Prize, and did acknowledge and advance her to the rank of Free Scholar.

On the 25th day of March, at Rowany Festival, Scholar Colum MacFheradaigh, sponsored by Guildmaster Henry Fox, did play his Free Scholar's Prize in single rapier. The body of examiners did agree that the candidate had successfully played the Prize, and did acknowledge and advance him to the rank of Free Scholar.

On the 25th day of March, at Rowany Festival, Scholar Rhys Forrester, sponsored by Guildmaster Tariq ibn Jelal, did play his Free Scholar's Prize. The body of examiners did agree after deliberation that the candidate had successfully played the Prize, and did acknowledge and advance him to the rank of Free Scholar.

On the 25th day of March, at Rowany Festival, Free Scholar Giles Leabrook, sponsored by Guildmaster Henry Fox, did play his Journeyman's Prize in rapier and parrying gauntlet, rapier and buckler, and rapier and baton. After deliberation, the body of examiners did conclude that the candidate had not successfully played the Prize.

On the 25th day of March, at Rowany Festival, Free Scholar Sommerled of Redcliffe, sponsored by Guildmaster Henry Fox, did play his Journeyman's Prize in case of rapier, rapier and buckler, and single rapier. The body of examiners did agree that the candidate had successfully played the Prize, and did acknowledge and advance him to the rank of Journeyman.

On the 25th Day of March, at Rowany Festival, Journeyman Owen Cantor ap Hughe, sponsored by Guildmaster Francois Henri Guyon and Provost Diccon Shorthand, did play his Provost's Prize in single rapier, rapier and dagger, rapier and baton, rapier and cloak, and case of rapier. The candidate was examined by Provosts Aylwin Greymane, Alessandro di Firenze, Angus the Barbarian, Caleb Adolphous and Piers of Malmesbury, Guildmasters Henry Fox and Tariq ibn Jelal, and Courtier to the Kingdom of the West, Michael of Castle Keep. After deliberation, the body of examiners did agree that the candidate had successfully played the Prize, and did acknowledge and advance him to the rank of Provost.

On the 27th day of March, at Rowany Festival, Provost Caleb Adolphous, with the permission of the Body of Guildmasters, did play his Guildmaster's Prize in longsword, shortsword, rapier and parrying gauntlet, rapier and cloak, rapier and dagger, rapier and buckler, and case of rapier. After deliberation, the body of examiners did conclude that the candidate had not successfully played the Prize.

Cold war

Be It Known To All That Profess Skill At Arms That:

On the 12th Day of June, at Cold War, Scholar Mael Muire ingen Alpin, sponsored by Guildmaster ibn Jelal, did play her Free Scholar's Prize in single rapier. The candidate was examined by Free Scholar Iseabail inghean Mhartainn mhic Dhonnchurdh, Provost Caleb Adolphous, Journeyman Luan an Fael and Provost Angus Galbraith. The body of examiners did agree that the candidate had successfully played the Prize, and did acknowledge and advance her to the rank of Free Scholar.

On the 12th Day of June, at Cold War, Scholar John Longshanks, sponsored by Provost Angus Gailbraith, did play his Free Scholar's Prize in single rapier. The candidate was examined by Free Scholar Iseabail inghean Mhartainn mhic Dhonnchurdh, Provost Caleb Adolphous, Journeyman Luan an Fael and Guildmaster ibn Jelal. The body of examiners did agree that the candidate had successfully played the Prize, and did acknowledge and advance him to the rank of Free Scholar.

On the 12th Day of June, at Cold War, Scholar Marcus Valerius, sponsored by Guildmaster ibn Jelal, did play his Journeyman's Prize in single rapier; rapier and dagger; and case of rapier. The candidate was examined by Provost Caleb Adolphous, Journeyman Luan an Fael and Provost Angus Galbraith. The body of examiners did agree that the candidate had successfully played the Prize, and did acknowledge and advance him to the rank of Journeyman.

Long live the Crown of Lochac!

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Playing by the rules

Protocols for prizes in the Royal Guild of Defence

By Provost Secretary Owen Cantor ap Hughe

Playing a Prize is the most important event to take place under the auspices of the Royal Guild of Defence. Certainly, it is a significant moment for the candidates that offer themselves for examination, whether they are seeking to carry away a Free Scholar's Prize or to join the body of Guildmasters. For the Guild, each Prize is an affirmation of its purpose, an opportunity to recognise and reward those who have worked to develop period skills. Playing a Prize is also an opportunity for the Guild to promote the practice of combat as a period art and to achieve wider recognition of its work within the SCA.

Prizes need to be played properly and are subject to rules in the Guild Ordinances, to ensure that candidates are examined and receive rightful recognition within a rigorous and credible system.

Sponsoring the Prize

Once a candidate has decided to play a Prize, they need the approval of a sponsor. Any Guildmaster or Provost is able to sponsor candidates for the rank of Free Scholar or Journeyman. A Provost's Prize requires the approval of two Provosts or a Guildmaster, while a Guildmaster's Prize is only played at the invitation of the body of Guildmasters.

The sponsor's first responsibility is to satisfy themselves that the candidate is ready to attempt the Prize and to advise them on the selection of weapons forms. The sponsor is then responsible for announcing, conducting and reporting the results of the Prize.

Announcing the Prize

According to the Guild Ordinances, "no Prize may be fought unless the Guild receives one full month's notice of intention to Play the Prize". The Lord Guildmaster has been notable for his flexibility in allowing Prizes to proceed on less than a month's notice, particularly when Prizes are being planned for Crown events or Rowany Festival (the most popular time to play a Prize). But the intention is to give ranking members of the Guild the opportunity to take part and, in a Kingdom as large as Lochac, advance notice is a boon for members who may wish to examine a particular candidate, but have to travel some distance to do so.

So, with at least five weeks to go, the sponsor should prepare a Prize announcement and send it to the Lord Guildmaster. The form of announcement is generally well-known, but it should include the names and ranks of the sponsor and the candidate, the rank sought, the weapons forms to be played and the date and location of the Prize. To assist the Lord Guildmaster, contact details should also be included for the sponsor and candidate.

The Lord Guildmaster examines the announcement to ensure it meets the Guild's requirements, before giving approval for the Prize to be announced.

Conducting the Prize

It is the sponsor's responsibility to arrange and conduct the playing of the Prize on the day. This may include setting up the list field or, at major events, liaising with the designated Rapier Marshal in Charge for time and space.

At the designated hour, the sponsor takes the field to declare the candidate ready to Play the Prize and generally serves as Marshal for the following bouts. This enables the sponsor to consult the examiners and to observe the conduct and skill of the candidate at close quarters.

When all examiners are satisfied, the sponsor should gather the examiners and facilitate their discussion as to the candidate's suitability to the rank sought. Depending on the outcome, the sponsor then reports the findings of the examiners to the candidate and, if they have been successful, announces the result and presents them with the insignia of their new rank (the sponsor should also ensure they have a sash prepared for the presentation).

Reporting the Prize

Last, but far from least, the sponsor must report the results of the Prize to the Lord Guildmaster and the Provost Secretary. The report should include the date and location of the Prize, the names and ranks of the sponsor(s) and candidate, the rank sought and the weapons forms selected, as outlined in the announcement. The sponsor should then report the names and ranks of all examiners, any relevant comments by the examiners and the result of the Prize.

This is not simply a formality. The Guild Ordinances state that "this notification must be delivered within 30 days of the Prize being played; otherwise the Playing of the Prize shall be declared unsuccessful by the Lord Guildmaster". From a practical point of view, the report also provides a form of words to announce the results of the Prize on the Fencers List, for the benefit of those who were unable to attend and want to know how things went.

Any enquiries about the protocols for Playing a Prize can be directed to the Lord Guildmaster or the Provost Secretary.

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Background to the new method for choosing a Lochac Rapier Champion

By Provost Don Angus Galbraith

Occasionally the question is raised: "How should you select a rapier champion for the realm?" You usually get a standard response of: "Hold a tournament and choose the winner".

Should this be the only way to select a champion? This question was raised at an event and discussed through the day and eventually through the feast afterwards. It could not be resolved in that short a time, and so I was tasked to look at it and see if there were reasonable alternatives.

My intention was to see if a different method for selecting a rapier champion would be feasible and that this method would aid in the growth of rapier combat within the kingdom.

To this end, I considered that, rather than using a single tournament, the champion could be chosen based on tournaments throughout the year. To do this, points for attending and competing in any Lochac tournament would be awarded. These points would accumulate throughout the year and the person who had the highest total at the end of the year would be deemed to be the Rapier Champion.

This of course raised more questions. From where do you start the year? How many points do you award to winners and place getters? Who tallies the points? Who keeps the progressive totals? And so on.

Since the Rapier Champion is a Kingdom position, its announcement should coincide with a kingdom event. Therefore it seemed only appropriate to have the selection period finish just prior to a Coronation event. After much discussion, it was decided that the final rapier tournaments for the 'year' would be at the Rowany Festival. There is usually a small period between Festival and the next Coronation event (May Crown). This could be used to ensure that the positions are finalised and the appropriate person contacted.

The points awarded to contenders are based on a sliding scale (smaller tournaments have fewer points awarded than larger events). Points would also be awarded for travelling to tournaments that are not in the local area. The intention behind these decisions was:

- if more points are awarded for larger tournaments, then more contenders might attend tournaments; and
- if additional points are awarded for travelling then contenders might attend tournaments that are out of their local area (thereby also making them larger).

This has advantages for areas where there are few fencers. If they are proactive and organise regular tournaments, then others from outside that area are more likely to attend their tournaments. Thus, fencers are more likely to compete against different people, and learn new skills.

Also, the more tournaments that can be organised, the more points can be won.

To be fair and to allow the opportunity for everyone to consider participating, all tournaments must be

announced and published (in Pegasus as well as any other relevant journals) well in advance - at least six weeks. It is possible that on a single day, at a single event, there may be multiple tournaments (eg. at Festival). These tournaments need to be clearly listed as separate tournaments - not just "some tournaments will happen".

It will not be sufficient to announce that there will be a tournament every Sunday in John's back yard, and every Tuesday practice. Each must be announced separately and with at least six weeks notice (from publication date)

Publication means that other fencers are aware of the event, and of the points on offer. Thus they can make arrangements to attend the tournaments. This is to prevent impromptu tournaments being organised and run, and having the awarded points skewing the results for the Kingdom.

Any tournament must be open to all that wish to compete

Some tournaments may have a patron. Tournaments with a patron also have some discretionary points. These points are to be awarded by the patron for Courtesy, Entertainment and for the patron's own personal reasons.

A patron for a tournament is someone that is sponsoring the tournament (ie. the Baroness of Rowany's mid-winter tournament, or the Guild of Defence tournament etc). The Patrons for these would be the Baroness of Rowany and the Guild Master of the Guild of Defence. A tournament does not have to have a patron.

For tournaments with a patron, the discretionary points may be awarded to whomever the patron deems deserves them. As they are discretionary, they do not have to be awarded.

The results of the event need to then be reported to a single person to allow the progressive totals to be kept. These need to be reported in a timely fashion (within four weeks of the event). The progress scores will be published so that the relative positions of the competitors can be easily determined.

For the fencing year ending 2006, results should be sent to Don Angus Galbraith.

To summarise:

- This does not replace any tournaments, it is intended to be a method for selecting the champion from results over an extended period.
- The fencing year is from May Crown until the next Festival.
- The period between Festival and May Crown, is usually a fairly short time. This is a time of practice and recuperation. Any events scheduled in this period do not count towards the Rapier Champion points. The FIRST rapier events that contribute points are those scheduled to happen at May Crown.

- Any Lochac organised tournament that is properly advertised will have points that can be won. Tournaments not organised by Lochac do not count towards the Championship.
- Tournaments that are not advertised (or are only advertised by word of mouth) do not contribute to the championship totals.
- Melee tournaments also do not count towards the Rapier Champion.

For a tournament to have point for the championship it needs to:

- be open to all;
- be well advertised;
- have its results published; and
- have a copy furnished to the person tallying the points for that year.

Thus, someone who is active throughout the year and attends many tournaments, but is unable to attend Festival for some reason, could still win the position of Rapier Champion. Keep in mind that there are numerous rapier tournaments at Festival, and given that they are usually well attended, there will be quite a lot of points on offer.

It is hoped that this structure will inspire every area to run more tournaments and publish the results of these for all to see, thus raising the profile of the art of fencing.

For this year the person to report tournament results to is Don Angus Galbraith. My email address is angusl@ozemail.com.au

If possible I would prefer it if the subject line was along the lines of 'Results of tournament on DD/MM/YYYY'.

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North of the Border Fencing Fest II

13th and 14th of August 2005 - Brisbane

Yes, it's happening again! A total weekend devoted to the Arte of Rapier Combat. Spread over two days will be training sessions, a tournament or two, melee sessions and a rapier game, a relaxed weekend of fencing and feasting.

Lunch is served on both days, with a feast of simple foods on the Saturday night. Billets, booking and information can be arranged by contact with the Steward.

This weekend is open to all ladies and gentlemen who have an interest in rapier combat. Current and future combatants, those who wish to watch and those who wish to learn. There should not be a time during the weekend where an enthusiastic lady or gentleman cannot find something interesting to learn or do.

Need to brush-up on a weapon form? Need to authorise in another weapon form? Interested in rapier but don't know where to start? This is your best chance to get all of these things done. More to the point it is the chance to fence, and be amongst others with the same interest.

When: Saturday 13th and Sunday 14th August 2005

Where: Artesanos Hall, Wesley St, Lutwyche, Brisbane

Time: 10am start both days, Saturday until 10pm, Sunday until the evening

Cost: \$25 for the weekend, \$15 day rate

Bookings: Mistress Baroness Eleanor of Caithenes

Phone: (07) 3288 5160

E-mail: terranu@ozemail.com.au

Steward: Don Henry Fox (Henry Walker)

Phone: (07) 3344 1818

E-mail: henry_the_fox@hotmail.com

Last year's was a great time, and we would really like to see you all there. It is generally a relaxed weekend with as much fencing as you can handle.

Guildmaster Don Henry Fox

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Rapier Accessories

By Ancient Guildmaster Don Francois Henri Guyon

Sword

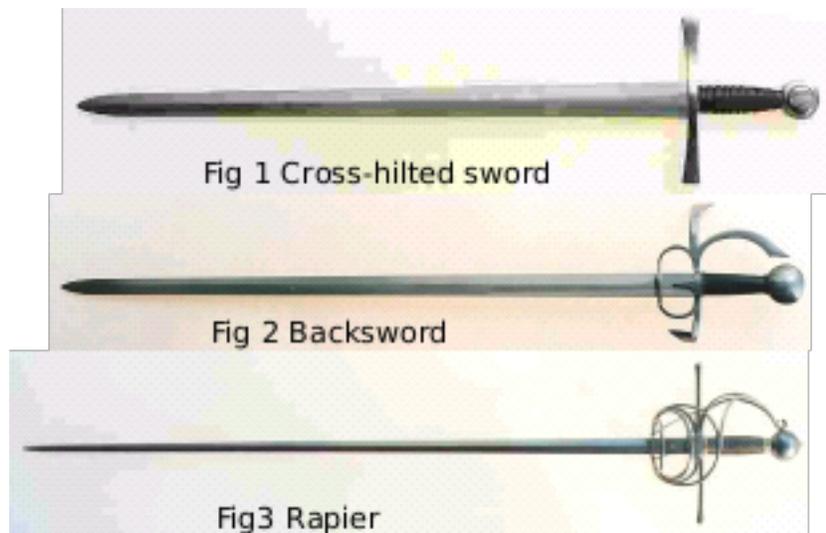
For much of the middle ages it was uncommon for people to wear swords as part of everyday dress. A knight would wear his sword on ceremonial occasions, and travellers would wear swords on journeys, but most people in England and France would carry only their belt knife.

In the early part of the Renaissance period, it became common for a gentleman to wear his sword at all times and in all places. Generally, this coincided with the decline of the land-owning class and the dramatic impact of plague on the population.

Initially, the sword was the same as used on the battlefield: broad bladed and cross hilted (Fig 1). Such a sword could hang from a person's belt with little problem.

As time progressed, however, the hilt of the sword became more complex to protect the hand and the blade became longer in an attempt to outreach the opponent. Some rapier blades reached between 48 and 60 inches in the length, making the simple act of drawing the sword difficult and dangerous.

George Silver, a conservative anti-rapier voice of the late 16th Century, writes that the normal length of a blade should be between a yard and one inch for the shortest man, to a yard and four or five inches for the tallest. We can assume, therefore, that rapiers commonly being used in London at the end of the century were longer than this.



In order to wear such a long rapier, it becomes necessary to angle the blade hanging from the belt, to prevent it dragging along the ground. There were three common devices used to accomplish this: Slings, Hanger and Baldric.

The Belt and Slings (Figure 4) is a simple affair. Two or three slides grip the scabbard of the sword. A strap (called a sidepiece) connects from the slings to the belt on the opposite side of the body, and is adjustable to control the angle of the sword.

Whilst this will keep the sword from the ground, the narrow range of the attachments will allow the sword to flap around a bit. It is not unknown for the slings to have a second strap around the leg to give more stability.



An adaptation of the Belt



Fig 5 Hanger

and Slings is the Hanger (Figure 5). This increases the number of slides and supports them with a broad panel of leather. This tends to be much more controllable and stable.



Fig 4 Belt and slings

Both the Hanger and the Belt and Slings can be attached to a girdle or normal belt through the use of frogs, or friction loops, on the belt.

The final way of carrying a sword is the baldric (Figure 6). This



Fig 6 Baldric

is a simple belt, worn over the shoulder and sloping down to the opposite hip. The sword is attached by use of slides. There is, however, no easy way to wear a dagger on the baldric and so it is often seen as a military fashion or a very late period fashion.

Bowing

All these ways of carrying a sword require the rapier to trail a long way behind the body. When bowing from the waist, this causes the end of the sword to tip up (usually into somebody else). This could be a cause of a duel, so great care was taken to control their sword when moving around. However, it is quite threatening to grip the rapier constantly by the handle, and this could also get the wearer into trouble.

For a right-handed fencer, the key is to use the inside and outside of the left hand to guide the rapier in the movement. Bowing is altered to the form of Reverenza used in Renaissance dance. The drawing back of the left foot allows the wearer to push the hilt wide of the body at the same time as extending the arms in the bow. This movement pushes the tip of the sword close behind the left ankle and thus out of the way.

Cape

The fashionable style for a cape was to wear it over the left shoulder. This leaves the sword arm free, whilst still affording some warmth and allowing the embroidery to be displayed.

If the cape was fastened with ties or buttons, they would run to the right armpit, tying diagonally across the chest. This leaves the left arm free to grasp the knife, affixed to the back of the belt, whilst the right arm is able to reach overhand. An Alta guard is almost impossible to achieve if the cape is tied over the

right shoulder.

Hat

Surprisingly enough, most people in medieval and Renaissance Europe wore hats. I say surprisingly, because it is uncommon to see people in the SCA wearing them.

A fashionable Renaissance gentleman would feel just as undressed going out without a hat, as without his sword. Given the cold snap that covered Europe during the 16th century (which froze over the River Thames at times), it was very rare to see somebody without a hat.

During the bow, the hat is tipped or removed entirely, depending on the rank of the person you are being presented to: a touch of the brim or tug on the flat cap for a common acquaintance; complete removal for a lady or ranked person.

This is difficult to coordinate with sword and cape, especially on the dance floor, without disembowelling somebody behind you. A soft cap is gripped by the brim and replaced from the back of the head forward. This allows the drape of a soft cap to catch the back of the head. A solid hat is opposite, where the hat is gripped by the front of the brim and replaced on the temple and slid back into place.

Images taken from www.armor.com and www.imperialweapons.com

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Diccon's Dastardly Drills

An ongoing feature on drills developed by members of the Guild, as inspired by the work of Provost Baron Diccon Shorthand.

More Footwork Drills

By Provost Diccon Shorthand

Have fencers face off within distance of each other: call one "Fencer A"; and one "Fencer B".

Call paces, steps, compass steps, slope paces to one of the fencers; their partner responds to the movements to stay in line and range. For example: "Fencer A - three compass steps right". Fencer B then

matches movements to stay on line and in range.

This is an interesting exercise for movements and footwork. It can be made even more interesting (and useful) by making Fencer B wear earplugs, so that they cannot hear the commands and must respond only to the movements of their partner.

Reaction Drills

By Guildmaster ibn Jelal

One of the most important skills we can teach our students is the ability to respond instantly to those minute openings that present themselves during a bout. The trick is to train them so that they react to an action made by the opponent using varied reaction drills. (Which, if you examine Diccon's drills closely, all revolve around reacting to the movement of the opponent.)

1) Have the students form two lines, with each person in a line. Bring them on guard without weapons, and leading hands nearly touching palm upwards. Drape a glove over the hands. One row get designated as the leader, the other as the follower. Start with simple advances and retreats. The follower must try to keep the glove from falling by matching the steps taken by the leader. The instructor calls "CHANGE" at random intervals and the positions reverse, ie the leader is now the follower and vice versa. Keep a close eye on the paces taken, ensuring everyone steps cleanly and crisply. Slow pairs down if they get sloppy. As students progress you can add in crossover steps to the allowed range of steps.

2) Working in pairs, have one person hold the glove, while their partner holds their hand open in a C shape just below the glove, ready to catch it when dropped. Drop the glove at random intervals without warning - the catcher must catch the glove. Repeat five times with both hands catching, then swap roles and repeat. Repeat the exercise, but this time with the catcher on guard, such that they have to extend their arm to catch the glove.

You can also repeat again with the catcher set to lunge to make the catch and lastly to step-lunge to make the catch.

3) As above, except the glove is held to the side and the catcher is this time trying to hit the falling glove with a sword thrust. Start at close range where an arm extension is required, then repeat at lunge and step-lunge ranges.

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Subscription Information

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Punta Dritta may be downloaded for free from www.sca.org.au/rapier/PD_index.htm.

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