

## George Silver, His Sword Fight

**Instructor:** Nathan Barnett

**Required Equipment:** A basket-hilted 'broad' sword (as opposed to rapier) or single stick with basket. Stout leather gloves, vambraces (leather or steel forearm protection), and a fencing mask or helmet are helpful but not required.

**Description:** The fencing treatises of George Silver present a refined system of defense with broad sword or backsword. His two works codify the fight as it was practiced and taught in 16<sup>th</sup> Century England. By focusing on Silver's core principles, the participant will develop an appreciation of the surprising subtlety of swordplay as it was practiced on the battlefield and in the street. The class will explore Silver's times, principles and governors in light of his *Paradoxes of Defense* and *Brief Instructions*. These same principles may reasonably be applied to any martial art and provide a valuable foundation for other fighting styles.

**Nathan Barnett (ALC Swordmaster)-** Nathan's interest in martial arts began in 1982 with the study a number of Asian styles. In 1999 he joined Cecil Longino at Academia della Spada where he focused upon a variety of cut and thrust sword treatises, eventually focusing upon the backsword fight of George Silver. Since then he has worked with scholars around the world to develop a practical interpretation true to Silver's text which can be pursued by serious scholars of fencing. Nathan is one of the principle instructors of Academia della Spada.

## An Introduction to the Two-Handed Sword

**Instructors:** Eric Myers and Puck Curtis

**Required Equipment:** A metal or wooden two-handed sword (montante, spadone a due-mani, etc ) simulator or a 5' staff (a very limited number of trainers/wasters will be available), as well as basic protective equipment (gloves, mask, jacket).

**Description:** In the 16th and 17th centuries, the two-handed sword was a weapon of specialists, bodyguards, and certain types of troops. According to DiGrassi, "...because one may with it resist many Swordes, or other weapons: Therefore in the warres, it is used to be placed neere unto the Ensigne or Auncient, for the defense thereof, because, being of itself able to contend with manie, it may the better saveward the same. And it is accustomed to be carried in the Citie, as well by night as by day, when it so chaunceth that a few are constraigned to withstand a great manie." Two Iberian manuals (Godinho, 1599 and Figueredo, 1651) present methods for fighting in specific contexts, such as against multiple opponents, in a narrow street, on a slave galley, various forms of mob control, breaking up a fight, etc. Drawing material from both these manuals, this class will teach the basic cuts and then explore several of the plays given for specific contexts.

**Eric Myers** has been involved in fencing and martial arts since 1984, and is a certified Provost at Arms in classical Italian fencing through the San Jose Fencing Masters program. Over the past several years he has worked on translating and interpreting several Portuguese fencing texts, and has focused on the two-handed sword. He currently teaches classical and historical fencing, and runs the local Tattershall practice.

**Puck Curtis** began studying historical fencing in 1992 and began researching Spanish fencing in 1994. He is the cofounder of the Destreza Translation and Research Project and maintains the Theory and Practice section for the website. Currently living in Davis, California, he is the primary historical fencing instructor for the Davis Fencing Academy. Puck is certified to teach classical Italian fencing as a Provost at Arms through the San Jose Fencing Masters program. He is also a member of the SCA's Order of the White Scarf, and is a member of the Tattershall School of Defense.