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The Art Of The Two-Handed Sword



Synopsis

The Art of the Two-Handed Sword translates one of the last surviving works on the use of the two-handed sword, also called the great sword, a Renaissance descendant of the medieval knightly weapon that was equally at home on the battlefield, at tournaments, in the fencing academy, or on the street. The second half of the book provides a clear, practical, detailed guide to its use, as well as to the theory and practice of historical fencing. Francesco Alfieri's 1653 *Lo Spadone* (The Two-Handed Sword), translated here, provides a link between medieval and modern martial arts. It displays clear continuity with both medieval swordsmanship and the still living traditions of sabre and great stick. Beginning in the 14th Century, swords became more sharply pointed in order to pierce the heavy plate armor of the day, and the grip became longer to allow two-handed use for greater power. By the end of the 15th Century, the two-hander, as long as a man is tall, had become a fearsome infantry weapon used to break up pike formations and in honor guards defending the standard or banner. It was also used in tournaments, on the field of honor, and for civilian self-defense. This long two-hander was known in Italy as the spadone. Its basic methods have continued to the present day in great stick technique. The Art of the Two-Handed Sword is the first complete English translation of Alfieri's book, supplemented by related materials: the MS Riccardiano (c. 1550) and works by Camillo Agrippa (1553), Giacomo di Grassi (1570), and finally Guiseppe Colombani (1711), who provides our last textual reference to the weapon. Alfieri's work is supplemented by Ken Mondschein's painstaking reconstruction and adaptation of longsword practice for the present day. He draws on primary sources, martial arts traditions, classical and modern fencing theory, and extensive practical experience to create a practical and enjoyable method for learning and practicing the spadone under modern conditions. Numerous photographs illustrate the techniques that he describes.

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Customer Reviews

Ken Mondschein, a lifelong student of history and the martial arts, received his Ph.D. in medieval history from Fordham University. He is certified as a PrÃ©vÃ´t d'Ã©sÃ©rime by the International Academy of Arms and holds a second-degree black belt in traditional Japanese karate. He is a historical fencing instructor and Research Fellow at the Higgins Armory Museum, a Visiting Fellow at University of Massachusetts' Amherst Center for Interdisciplinary Renaissance Studies, and a fencing coach at Pioneer Valley Fencing Center. He was a Fulbright grantee to France in 2007-2008 and a visiting fellow at Harvard in 2009-2010. Ken is the translator of Camillo Agrippa's seminal 1553 rapier treatise (Italica Press, 2009), and *The Knightly Art of Battle*, a study of Fiore dei Liberi's medieval martial arts (Getty Publications, 2011), among other works. In all, Ken has almost two decades of martial arts experience, with fourteen years of experience in traditional Western swordsmanship and stick fighting. He is also an experienced equestrian.

I have dedicated a life time studying mixed martial arts long before it was popularized by the U.F.C. I also started studying the lost arts of sword fighting as soon as the old fight manuals were made available to the public. Real sword fighting & Olympic fencing are roughly 500 years removed from one another. At first I was amazed to see many Asian moves, throws & joint locks coming out of European fight manuals but as a after thought it made perfect sense because the Human Body has the same limitations & capabilities no matter what continent your on!!! I would not recommend this particular book for beginners but for those that have been practicing from the old fight manuals & with a variety of weapons, this manual is a must have bridging the gaps between The Long Sword & The Great Sword!!! There are a lot of little gems to be found in this Fight manual & those who have already been studying will recognize the subtle differences & catch on quickly to the extreme & subtle differences necessary for properly using a Two Handed Sword. You will see the parallels to the use of Pole Arms. Where the moves involved in the much lighter long sword are very compact, quick & precise we see with the heavier longer Two Handed swords where centrifugal momentum comes into play making the huge figure eight with your blade more practical & much less Hollywood where you see this done unnecessarily with lighter blades. While I wouldn't recommend this book to beginners, those that are already familiar with the use of the Sword this is a must have book for your

study material!! After some deeper thought I would like to say that this would be a good book for beginners especially if they pick up some other treatises. I would recommend "Sigmund Ringeck's Knightly Art of the Long Sword" as well as its companion book "Knightly Arts of Combat", both of these books have very easy to follow drawn instructions so detailed they show foot placement & divide the body so you can follow the correct hand grip's right & left hand placement on the sword. There are other great reference books but with these three Books & a helpful study partner a beginner can get a great start.

Necessary book for the student. Original text translated with drawings.

Great book! Very informative. Well written and with very good illustrations. I found the information on using the two-handed sword as a martial weapon both practical and useful.

Excellent book! Good translation of the original Alfieri's work, but most importantly, very good modern interpretations, theory and exercises.

Imagine "The Science of Fencing" by William Gaugler, but written for two-handed sword. The classical influence is clearly present in this book, which can be a danger, but the author channels it perfectly: using extensive outside knowledge to more deeply understand, but not second-guess, the source material (which is also included in the original for those who wish to experiment with other interpretations). The book flows naturally from principles, to solo drills, to partner drills of increasing sophistication, including step-by-step instructions and lots of photographs. Be warned, though, this may take a long time to read, not because it is exceptionally long or at all difficult to follow, but because with every page you will want to pick up a sword and go practice!

Good book packed with info.

Exactly what I wanted.

First hand information concerning the two-handed sword. Good technique, history and data concerning this weapon. As a Landsknecht period and sword collector, looking forward to this as a research tool.

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