



every few words there's a foreign word stuck in. And even though you know what that word means, it still stops you cold. It's the mental equivalent of going for a run and having to stop every 20 feet to tie your shoes. The solution? Use different shoes. So I wonder, what is the point of translating something if you are going to leave every 7th word in the original language? On the positive side, the pictures are very very clear, and big. Mind you, you can't do the techniques without the pictures. There are a few of them which in the S\W translation can't be made out as to whether someone is striking above or below the sword, or in 2nd or 4th. But the Kirby pictures can clear that right up. So to sum up: Translation bad, unless you like memorizing new words that you don't know how to pronounce. Pictures good, very clear (this is important). I recommend having one Kirby book for every rapier GROUP so that you have good clear illustrations. And then use the Swanger/Wilson translation for learning the techniques. I am sure that a bunch of the other historical fencers are going to lambaste me for daring to criticize a translation of a fencing master. But I found this book so difficult to use, I sold it after only two weeks.

This beautifully-illustrated and detailed book presents one of the world's most influential fencing treatises. Ridolfo Capo Ferro was a legend in his own lifetime and his intricate and exact instructions were copied and emulated throughout a Europe bewitched by this Italian's grace and style. The manual, illustrated with 43 striking illustrations, gives a very real flavour of the panache of this expert in swordsmanship and mastery of that most lethal of weapons - the rapier. Ferro examines different kinds of swords, their component parts and their suitability, before going on to discuss their actual use. There he expounds his theory as to the timing and direction of thrusts, the essential distances and the need for complete control. He also looks at defensive measures, guards, parries, the need for quick footwork. Capo Ferro's text is a practical guide to fighting and one which builds on the theory to show exactly how a superior form of swordsmanship could be learned by Europe's elite. His illustrations clearly show the best methods and also show how a rapier could be lethally effective when used with a dagger or with a cloak. Translated into English for the first time, and presented by fencing expert Jared Kirby, this handsome volume is not only attractive to look at its also a vital historical record. It is essential reading for any historical swordfighter, student of martial arts and student of military history as it allows the reader to access the knowledge of one of the masters of the art. The book is also sure to give the modern fencer new insights in technique and a greater appreciation of the history of this exciting sport.

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