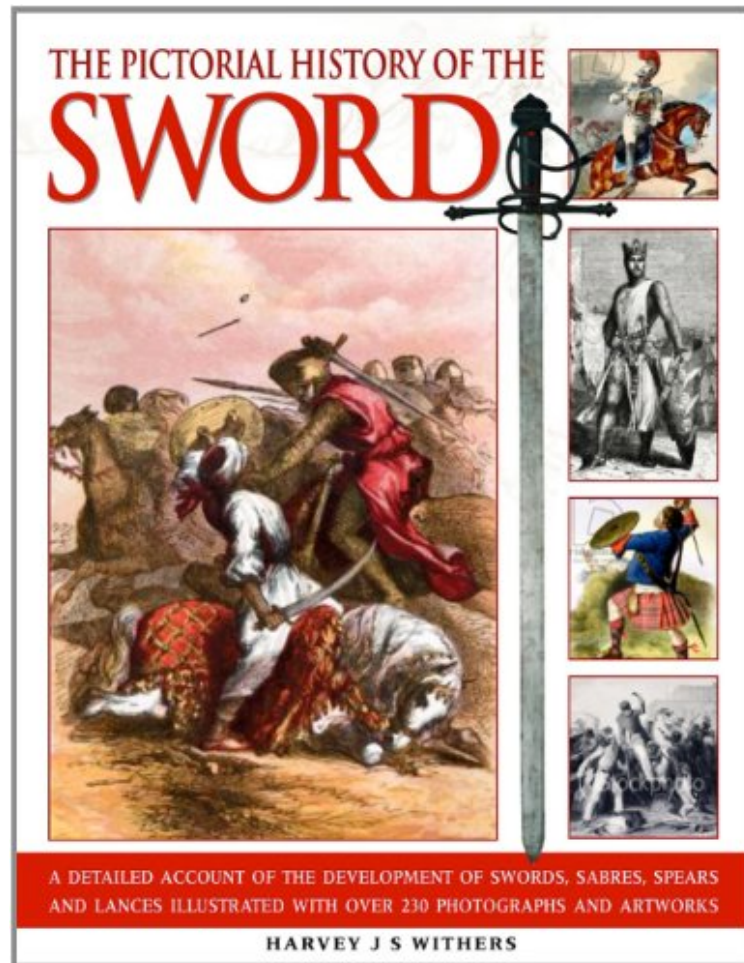


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2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Most poorly researched work on swords By E. M. Van Court...that I have ever read. For a history of swords, it neglected key causes of developments and it focused too much on other weapons. Yes, it has pretty pictures, but the information is so shoddy, I wouldn't buy it for the photos. Hugely

important causes of change in the design of the sword were completely ignored, or were trivialized. For example, the evolution of metallurgy: better metals and smithing technique allowed swords to reduce their cross section area with less need for novel geometries to keep the blade rigid. Bronze swords needed wide blades for rigidity and strength, steel blades less so, and as steel improved, the blades needed smaller cross sections. He neglected the relationship between armor and swords. It takes a heavy sword to open up the armor of the 13th century, but not so much by the Renaissance, when armor was falling from use, hence the rapier. He failed to articulate the innovations in technique, and mis-cited others (the German fechtbuchen that he mentions did not address the management of rapiers as the author alleges). He neglected to mention the critical innovation in technique that caused the rapier to rise to preeminence (Hint: Inigo Montoya mentions the author who first wrote about it in *The Princess Bride*, and any modern sport fencer knows the technique, even if they don't realize it). He got the role of firearms in the decline of the sword right, but neglects to mention the critical firearms innovation that pushed the sword out of relevance. At least half the book was detailed discussion of weapons other than swords, without significant discussion of relationships. There are far better works on pole arms out there, so this is not a reason to buy this book. Save your money. Get a better researched work, like Richard Burton's [\[\[ASIN:1142164373The Book of the Sword\]\]](#) from the 1800s. If you just want pictures, get the Metropolitan Museum of Art's book. E.M. Van Court

This book traces the fascinating history of swords, spears and lances through to the 21st century. From their Palaeolithic origins and the appearance of the first swords in Bronze Age Europe and Mesopotamia, it describes how the weapons carved out some of the greatest civilizations in the world.

About the Author Harvey J S Withers has held a lifelong passion for historical weapons and for many years has been a successful dealer in antique military swords. He is the author of *British Military swords 1786-1912: The Regulation Patterns* (Studio Jupiter Military Publishing), *World Swords 1400-1945* (Studio Jupiter Military Publishing) and *The Scottish Sword 1600-1945* (Paladin Press).