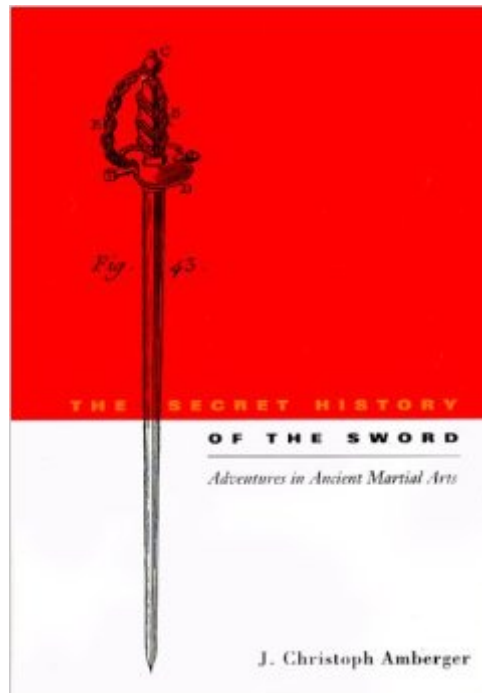


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The Secret History Of The Sword: Adventures In Ancient Martial Arts



Synopsis

The Secret History of the Sword: Adventures in Ancient Martial Arts

Book Information

Paperback: 281 pages

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Language: English

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Customer Reviews

This book appears to have been targeted by at least one "assassination review" which almost stopped me from buying it. I am not a fencer and couldn't care less about fencing politics but the criticisms about The Secret History of the Sword are so misplaced and egregious that they must not go unanswered. The assassins claim this book is: 1) dull, 2) not about the sword or European martial arts, 3) over intellectual and condescending, 4) so one-sided it "brooks no dissent", 5) for people who believe sword fighting began with the foil and rapier. Dullness is mostly a matter of personal taste, but since this book arrived at my doorstep I have barely been able to put it down. It is full of thought provoking facts and analysis fascinating to students of the combat arts. Is it about the sword or European combat arts? Well, I think the ambush-reviewer would be hard-put to find a page that doesn't mention the word "sword" at least once, and most of the essays refer to European (as opposed to, say, Asian) history. However, it is mostly about the use of the sword; if you want a 200 page book on metallurgy, this is not it. Is The Secret History of the Sword over intellectual and condescending? Well, it does make readers work. The arguments and the humor are often subtle and ironic, so the essays may at first appear disjointed. It is a book that speaks on many levels, and is as much about the mental attitudes that make great martial artists as about the use of the sword per se. As such, it also makes a self-referential argument about how we might think about history

and swordsmanship. Is this over intellectual? For some people, sure. But given how few martial arts books are written this way, Amberger's work is a breath of fresh air.

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