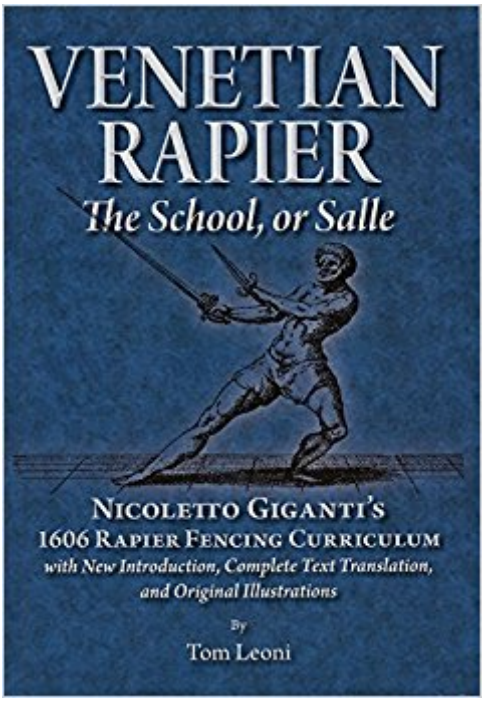
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Venetian Rapier: Nicoletto Giganti's 1606 Rapier Fencing Curriculum



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Synopsis

Perhaps no other weapon represents Renaissance Italian fencing like the rapier. But do we know how it was used and how it was taught? This book takes you to the fencing School, or Salle, of celebrated renaissance rapier Master Nicoletto Giganti of Venice, one among the period teachers leaving instructions on the use of this weapon. More uniquely, his 1606 text The School, or Salle is a veritable training curriculum, with its stepwise lessons and easy-to-follow explanations on the use of the rapier alone and rapier and dagger. This faithful translation of Giganti's The School by internationally-known rapier teacher Tom Leoni includes the complete text, original illustrations, and an introduction on rapier fencing that will make Giganti's text easy to follow. If you are a martial artist, a fencer or have an interest in European martial culture, this book belongs on your shelf.

Book Information

Paperback: 57 pages

Publisher: FreeLance Academy Press; lll edition (January 31, 2010)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0982591128

ISBN-13: 978-0982591123

Product Dimensions: 0.2 x 7 x 9.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 7 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 11 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #621,301 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #54 inÃ Â Books > Sports & Outdoors > Individual Sports > Fencing #692 inÃ Â Books > History > Europe > Italy #1405 inÃ Â Books > Sports & Outdoors > Individual Sports > Martial Arts

Customer Reviews

Tom Leoni was born in Switzerland and grew up in Northern Italy. Since an early age, he developed a passion for antique arms and armour and Renaissance-Baroque culture. His meticulous research of Italian swordsmanship treatises helped him become an internationally-known teacher specialising in the Italian styles of the 1500s and 1600s. In 2005, Tom published an English translation of Master Salvator Fabris' 1606 rapier treatise Scienza d'Armi, one the of the most important fencing works of the late Renaissance. In 2009, he published a translation of Italy's earliest extant martial-arts treatise, Fiore de' Liberi's Fio di Battaglia (circa 1409).

Mr. Leoni has taken a manual from the Italian Renaissance and brought it fully into the 21st century.

Since the 1970s there has been a growing interest in the personal combat and defensive techniques of bygone eras. Now referred to as Historic European Martial Arts, this movement has grown into a worldwide activity with groups as far from the western world as Japan. Mr. Leoni, a member of the HEMA Alliance, an umbrella service organization for such groups, is a practicioner of these arts. Here he has revived the text of one of the early masters of these arts and made it accessible with a clear, concise translation of the text and new illustrations. An excellent work for the newest or the most experienced historical fencer who would master the rapier and its associated weapons.

My first reaction was noticing that the book was fairly thin and thinking 'this is all there is?' Once I set aside that initial bias and explored the book in depth however, I was amazed how much information was packed into the book. There's an intro by Tom Leoni that gives some nice historical background about Nicoletto Giganti as well as giving some basics about Venician Fencing that Giganti may have assumed was common knowledge when he wrote the book's original edition. After that, there are 55 pages of single blade and rapier and dagger techniques with illustrations.Renn Faire and Cosplay folks might need a few fencing lessons to benefit from the book for staged duels. Fencers may pick up a tip or two, or at least find it an enjoyable read, and military historians will likewise find it an interesting read.

This book (along with Giganti's second book) forms the basis of the rapier curriculum at my HEMA school.The translation is good, and Giganti himself writes in a clear no-nonsense style. Moreover, it's an effective and easy to learn approach to historical rapier fencing.

Fascinating text. If you are even curious about fencing, this is a great text to review. Ballet with a 3 ft ice pick-this nothing short of art. Folks, this was serious business.

Easy-to-read traslation, and the introduction gives useful background information that Gigante doesn't explicitly state.

It is what it is. I don't fence, I do other martial arts, primarily eastern. But i thought it might be interesting to look into the history of european fencing schools from a scholarly viewpoint, and I am glad I did, this book is good for looking at the training. I had gotten another book, which was the agrippa with a really interesting forward in it about the history, which I found really fascinating and

was much better suited for my purpose, but this book is pretty good nonetheless.

Some of the explations were okay. However, considering that in this day and age, we have not been learning the art of rapier since we were children, I thought it could do with more supporting text.

17th Century Rapier can be an esoteric chore to learn. There are multiple masters, lots of diagrams, archaic instructions and unique terminology that can vary among the numerous masters. Giganti's work, translated by Tom Leoni, cuts through the sometimes dense material and provides terse (in a good way!) simple (in a good way!) instruction in the use of the rapier.The layout of the book is perfect for self-study or group instruction. In my own classes we use Giganti as the foundation to rapier before moving on to other masters. Where Fabris is voluminous and thorough, Giganti is sparse and to the point. With clear artwork and clear no-nonsense instruction the book is a must-have for anyone interested in historical swordsmanship.Leoni's translation work once again provides the Western Martial Arts community with gold!

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