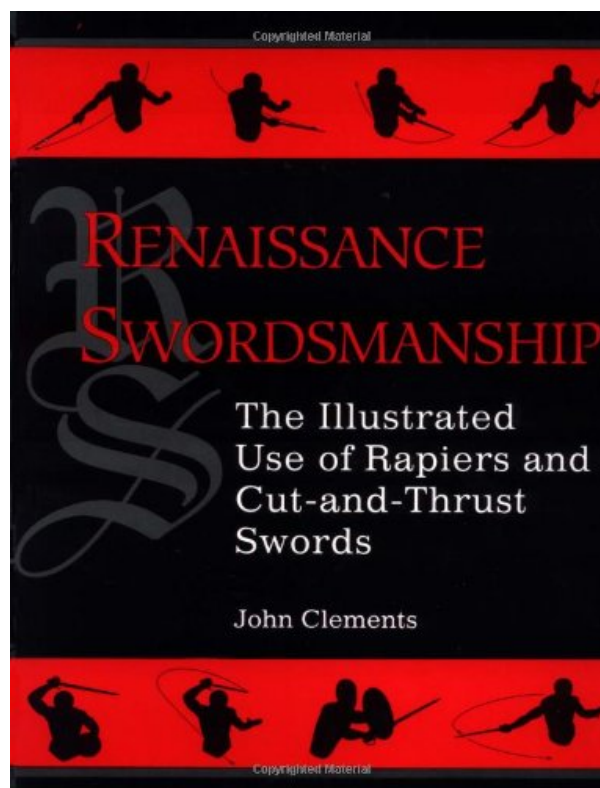
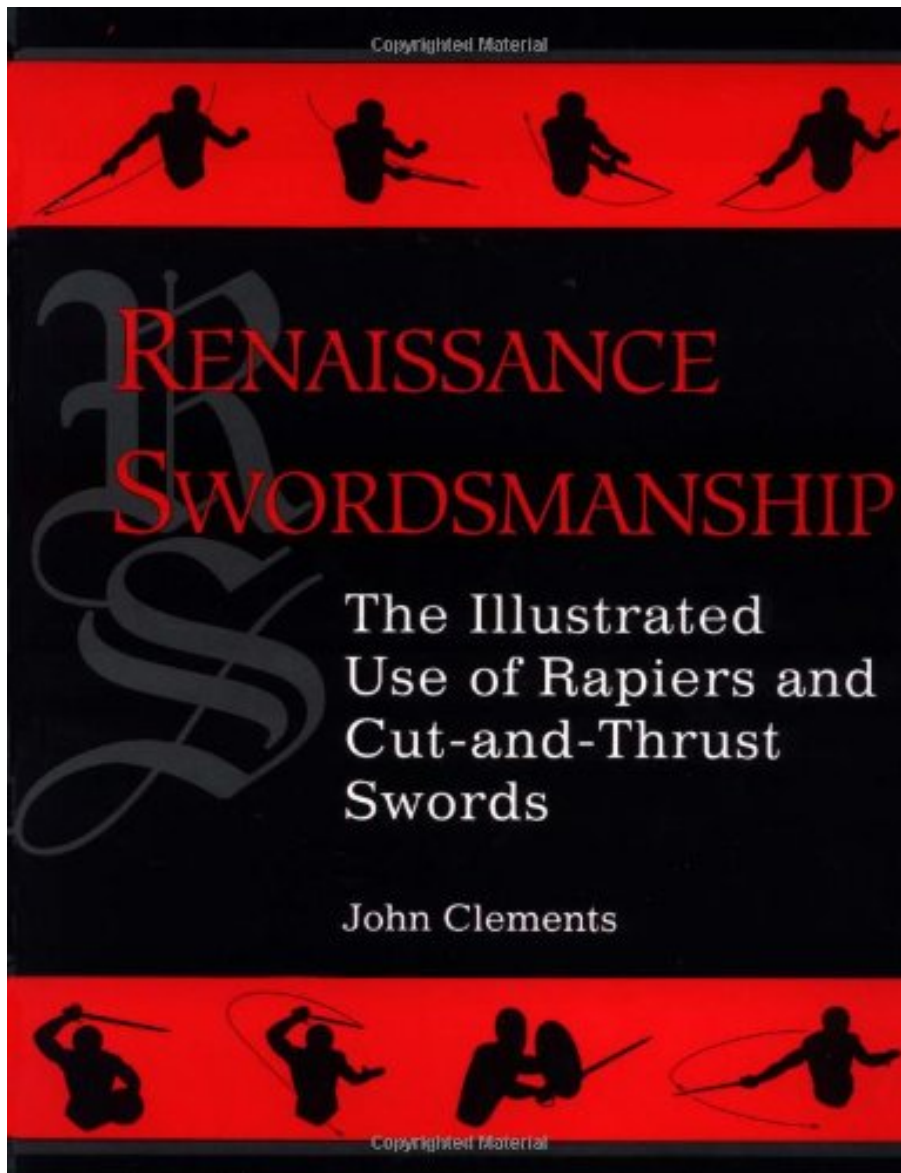


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## About the Author

John Clements has practiced cut-and-thrust swordsmanship for almost 20 years and trains regularly in long-sword, sword and shield, sword and buckler, sword and dagger, Medieval spear, and rapier and dagger methods. He lectures on historical weaponry and is an ardent promoter of contact-weapon sparring with historical replica swords.

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This is the most thorough work ever about historical swordsmanship. It is both a general reference and an instructional guide for advanced and beginning sword enthusiasts, students of military history and martial artists. Includes rare historical info and 100 original drawings.

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## Most helpful customer reviews

16 of 17 people found the following review helpful.

Digest this information with a large bag of salt

By Stephen Shellenbean

First, let me say I appreciate the efforts of all who do the research and record their findings on the Western Martial Arts. I know that few of us have the resources or time to do this, so every little bit helps.

That said, I feel John Clements does almost as much damage as he does good. While his techniques can be of value and his explanations are fairly thorough, the prevailing attitude within this book is one of superiority. It is as if Mr. Clements believes his assertions are the only ones worth following. Having had the pleasure of attending workshops by various other Western Martial artists and scholars, I am always impressed with their openness that this is a continually expanding and growing rediscovery of the "lost" arts. Some of them freely admit that what they write today may be reinterpreted by them tomorrow, and that others may have different views. I finished off Mr. Clements book feeling that you were either with him or against him. Unfortunately, because I also partake in stage combat and reenactments, I felt that I was automatically in the "against him" camp. He seemed to feel his was the best or only take on these techniques.

Those interested in pursuing the Western Martial Arts can certainly take some useful information from here, but read it carefully. Note what some of the other reviewers have said about inaccuracies. Read works by other authors. And best of all, attend some of the WMA symposiums and conferences which take place through the country

13 of 15 people found the following review helpful.

Shooting for the gold-medal; terminating below the bronze.

By Edgar De La Vega

Mr. Clements means well in generally promoting the tenuous existence of European Historical Swordsmanship. Kudos to his efforts indeed. His publication has basically introduced the eyes of many, to the particular workings of this regal art and science. Thus, a maximum benefit for the historical fencing community at large.

On the dark side, most unfortunately - and I do mean so again and again, Clements' work is imbued with spectacular errors (i.e. Carranza's nationality; use of the term 'sparring' etc.) to name a couple. Such deficiencies resulting in historical inaccuracy and incorrect nomenclature, leaves me to ponder about the author's legitimacy. Mr. Clements seems to severely lack the fundamental understanding of the Christian European Zeitgeist of Renaissance Swordsmanship. In other words, the proper historical-mindset and spirituality for the accurate presentation of this work.

Without such assets in possession, any pedagogical text on the Occidental sword, be it a complex treatise or even, a user-friendly basic manual, can be and should be devalued. Hence, such applies to this book in its attempt to claim scholarly status. Clements, I am somewhat sure, realizes that by nature, all martial-arts embody a spiritual aspect that is absolutely essential.

However, given the porous quality of his presentation, he fails to comprehend in essence that the Western-European sword (and technique) are 'transcendent' beyond its martial capabilities. It (the sword), seriously seeks its Glory through the spiritual contribution of its manipulator thereby, 'it' being the personification of the swordsman. All of the great fencing masters adhered to this formula in practice and certainly, on paper.

No such aesthetic-spirit emanates at all from Clements. The tone of writing is 'jockish' and 'sportive' - contrary to the attributes of effective, academic-style communication. I suggest that he seriously refer to Mr. Aldo Nadi's work, specifically regarding such tone of spirit. Any further attempt at research by the author into the more complex insights of European rapier swordplay would indeed be a frightening aspect. Especially, after having laid a defective-base of knowledge.

Mr. Clements simply does not possess the 'swordsman's militant Roman Christian mentality' nor, the capacity to properly interpret (i.e. multi-language translation skills; contextual understanding) and instruct correctly from the masters. Representing the pristine scholarship of 'The Renaissance' carries with it enormous responsibility. Only the masters can lift and uphold such a globe.

I, the reviewer, am 'not' one of them. As a senior student of classical fencing and historical swordsmanship, I can however state cogently, that this author falters profoundly in the tact and spirit of that realm; all 'stop lights' apply here.

30 of 32 people found the following review helpful.

Surprisingly light, given the high flown title

By A Customer

Mr. Clements' work is an interesting read. It is also a great gift to those interested in Western European historical martial arts, as the library of modern materials dealing with this time period is extremely limited. That is, at root, part of the problem with Clements' work. While he makes an pseudo-scholarly attempt to bolster his work with period sources he is extremely short on citations. Why? Largely, I suppose, because Clements' work is more about the style his group, the HACA, has developed rather than what the period masters have to say.

Ironically, in this sense Clements is guilty of exactly what he accuses the SCA of; making up the techniques to fit his game rather than working to recreate purely historical techniques. (The only difference being that the SCA holds itself out as a spectator sport and makes no pretense of being a pure re-creation of medieval and renaissance combat while Clements and his group do.)

Clements is given to strong opinions, some of which appear to be unfounded, hyperbole, high falootin pretensions, vitrol and some level of personal promotion.

Further, because the field of re-creating medieval martial arts is so new, much of Clements misinformation is accepted by many as valid simply due to the fact that they have few modern works to compare it to. The fact is any serious student of renaissance or medieval martial arts should go "straight to the horse's mouth" and read the period masters.

That being said, Clements work is a boon to modern martial artists simply because it "gets the ball rolling" and adds another work to the scant library available today.

Recommended with reservations.

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