



Single Sword of Henry de Sainct Didier

Henry de Sainct-Didier

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Written in 1573 by fencing master Henry de Sainct-Didier, this is believed to be the first French sword manual ever written. Noting that he "lived his whole life learning to fight with the single sword," de Sainct-Didier says that his reason for writing this book was to "further serve his king." During his 25-year career in the French army, de Sainct-Didier participated in the "Italian Wars," and the influence of Italian swordplay is evident in this manual.

In addition to being the earliest surviving French sword-fighting manual, **The Single Sword of Henry de Sainct-Didier** is important in a couple of other ways. Its author was the first to institute geometrical ground plans and numbered footprints to indicate the correct sequence of movements. Also unique is the way de Sainct-Didier used his woodcut illustrations in a "coherent plan designed to elucidate, and not merely to illustrate, the text." Both life-long sword enthusiasts, Robert Hyatt and Devin Wilson took on the onerous task of translating and interpreting this French classic so that modern swordsmen could adapt Renaissance singlesword fighting techniques to their current fighting systems. To make it easier for today's fighting students and Renaissance scholars, they include an opening chapter explaining the general fighting principles espoused by Didier and others of that period.



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