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Methods and Practice of Elizabethan Swordplay

Craig Turner, Tony Soper

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Featuring period drawings and prints of swordplay, this book examines and compares three Elizabethan fencing manuals written in English before 1600: Giacomo Di Grassi's *His True Arte of Defense* (1594), Vincentio Saviolo's *His Practice in Two Bookes* (1595), and George Silver's *Paradoxes of Defence and Bref Instructions upon My Paradoxes of Defence* (1599).

More than a technical manual on swordplay, this book explores the influence of a new form of violence introduced into Elizabethan culture by the invention of the rapier. The authors examine the rapier's influence on the various social classes, the clash between the traditional English fencing masters and those embracing the new style, the growing concern with unregulated dueling, and the frequent references to rapier play in the works of Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

As producer Joseph Papp notes in his foreword, this is a book that "makes a difference in performance."

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