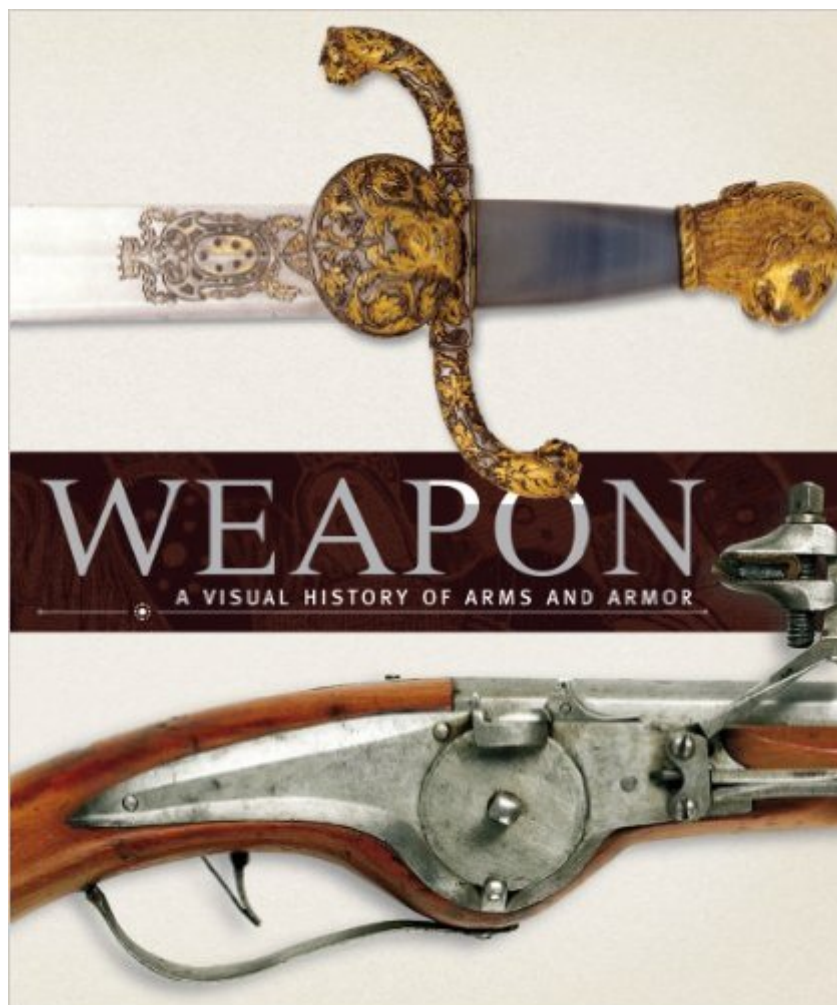


The book was found

Weapon: A Visual History Of Arms And Armor



Synopsis

For 4,000 years weapons, and the warriors who used them, have acted as the cutting edge of history, using ax, spear, bow, sword, gun, and cannon to determine the rise of kingdoms and the fall of empires. From the stone axes of the earliest warfare to the heavy artillery of today's modern armies, this awe-inspiring book portrays for the first time the entire spectrum of weaponry. Illustrations explain key features and working mechanisms of important weapons Beautifully photographed and richly cataloged—often in actual size Details weapons that changed the face of warfare, from the sword to the Gatling gun.

Book Information

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Best Sellers Rank: #102,816 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #75 in Â Books > History > Military > Weapons & Warfare > Conventional

Customer Reviews

The hallmark of the books published by DK is that leafing through one is like looking at a museum. That is certainly true of "Weapon: The Complete Visual History of Arms and Armor," that looks at the 4,000 years history of weaponry. There are hundreds of weapons on display in this 360-page book, and there are dozens of museums and collections thanked for contributing photographs. My son has designs on being a military historian, and this book is going to end up in his collection because I have no doubt he will enjoy the visual treats and historical information contained in this volume. The introduction establishes a series of distinct categories of weaponry: bows, arrows, and spears; axes and clubs; swords and daggers; staff weapons; firearms; and armor and helmets (I am fascinated by the decision to put projectile weapons before clubs, as if there was a reasoned decision that the first weapon was something thrown rather than, as the opening of "2001: A Space Odyssey" so memorably suggests, something used as a club). The development of each category is briefly laid out. For example, Firearms begin with matchlocks and flintlocks before moving to percussion caps,

revolvers, brass cartridges, repeater firearms, self-loading firearms, and machine guns.

Consequently, the introduction provides both the basic definitions and the basic histories of the various types of weaponry. The rest of the book is divided into five chronological sections: The Ancient World, The Middle Ages, The Early Modern World, The Revolutionary World, and the Modern World. Within each of those sections the chronology there is also due consideration to the different geographical locations, and as the Foreword points out we see interesting similarities between weapons from entirely different cultures and periods. Attention is also paid to how the development of particular weapons escalated the nature of warfare, the ingenuity and creativity of weaponry, and the symbolic significance of some weapons as well. There are descriptions of each weapon along with basic information regarding date, origin, weight, and length, as well as highlighted key features. If you want to know all of the pieces that make up European plate armor or the MP5 Submachine-gun that is the weapon of choice for most of the Western world's police and special forces units, then this is the book for you. There are also special sections scattered throughout the book devoted to Great Warriors from the Greek Hoplite and Roman Legionary to Red Army Infantryman and US Navy SEAL, and Weapon Showcases focusing on key weapons from the Crossbow and Wakazashi Sword to Enfield Rifle-Musket and AK47. Ancient artwork, paintings, and photographs of weapons and soldiers in action are also included as well (e.g., a Norman Attack from the Bayeux Tapestry, a painting of Custer's Last Stand, a photograph of UN Soldiers in Mogadishu, Somalia). So there is ample opportunity here to get a lot closer look at weapons like a Chinese mace, a European hunting gun, or Colt Python magnum pistol than most of us will have a chance to do in the real world, even if this is still a case of look but do not touch. If you are interested in weapons, then you will thoroughly enjoy what this book has to offer.

I bought this book as a source book for my D&D games, not only did it meet that goal to perfection but it was actually very interesting and a pleasure to read. The pictures are great and really give you an idea of size and weight. And speaking of weight, most weapons have weights listed. Great book, highly recommended!

I read this book at my public library, and now every time I go there, I just HAVE to read it. It tells the history of weapons like no other book before. The pictures are detailed and the descriptions are very informative yet easy for the smallest child to read. This is NOT one of those books that bores you out after a while. I even stick to the Handgun section, and I read it every time I see it. I'll bet there is no guide to weapons better than this book. Don't just consider it. Make it necessary for long trips.

The strength of this book is to be found in the amazing photos found throughout. This alone makes the book worth every penny. It is quite inspiring to look through and I've gotten a lot of reproduction ideas from it. Here are the problems I have with this book:

- 1) With a few exceptions, the artefacts shown in the book do not have any direct references as to where they come from, making it difficult or impossible to double check anything. There are indirect references on the last page, where photo credits are given, but that is not always specific enough to help. Why is this important? Well...
- 2) I question the accuracy of some of the measurements that are given. For example, on pg. 65 the "Double-Edged Sword" is given as having a weight of 4 lbs, which is awfully heavy for a real sword of the period. The length also seems short at 32" (unless that refers to just the blade, but I don't believe such is specified anywhere). It'd be nice to know where the original is kept or elsewhere published to double check things.
- 3) While most of the info seems good, some of it is very wrong. I'm thinking mostly of pp. 48-49 regarding the Bronze and Iron Age warriors. For example, they assign the bronze sword on the bottom to the Celts, but this pre-dates the La Tene period by at least five centuries. No actual La Tene swords are even shown! The battle axe on pg 49 (upper left) is actually a Viking broad axe from the 10th - 11th Cent A.D., and certainly not Iron, let alone Bronze Age. The only Celtic artefacts are the helmet, the two daggers, and the Battersea shield (and even these are, technically, Insular rather than truly Celtic). Really, this should be two separate sections, one on Bronze Age and one on Iron Age Celts.
- 4) Though they're generally pretty good about stating whether or not a particular artefact is original or a modern reproduction, they do slip up in a couple places. Specifically, on pp. 52 and 53 the "Mail Shirt with Dagged Points" and the "Gjermundbu-Style Helmet" are definitely not original artefacts, and are most certainly modern repros, but are not labeled as such. As an aside, the "Swedish Helmet" actually dates from around 600-700 AD, and I think they misunderstand the method of construction, as well.

So, in sum, this is a good book but do not take it as a primary source. Be sure to double check details with more detailed sources.

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