

# Yatagan, Khanda, and Jamdhar: Swords and Sabers of Persia and India (Knives, Swords, and Bayonets: A World History of Edged Weapon

## Warfare)

Martina Sprague



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The important role that edged weaponry played in early Persia is evidenced by the region's long history of metallurgic science, the sword's mention in poetry, and its use as a sidearm to cavalry employing lance, mace, and bow. Edged weaponry proved no less important to the Ottoman Turks, who depicted the two-edged sword of Othman on the standard carried by the disciplined recruits, the corps of Janissaries, who served the sultan and defended the conquered Christian territories.

India, which bordered the Persian Empire, has a turbulent history as well, that speaks of long periods of foreign influence and threats from Islamic invaders. Although India adopted Persian-style weaponry, the many indigenous sword shapes and the ingenuity displayed in design testify to the important role the sword played as a weapon of war and an article of dress and status. The sword was no doubt a pragmatic battlefield weapon, as evidenced by its use in the extensive wars of the Mughals, Rajputs, and Sikhs.

This book starts with an overview of metallurgic science and the development of edged weapons in prehistoric Persia and India. Its main focus is the Common Era, however. Islamic culture and conflict in the premedieval period and through the Crusades is discussed first, including warfare against the Byzantine Empire. An examination of the use of the sword in the wars of the Ottoman Empire from the fifteenth century CE follows. Next the book explores warfare and the development of edged weapons in India from medieval times into near modern day. It touches on the Sikh Wars and India's conflicts with the British Empire. The concluding remarks emphasize the sword as a lethal and reliable weapon into near modern day, and makes particular note of the philosophical value of the sword.

Knives, Swords, and Bayonets: A World History of Edged Weapon Warfare is a book series that examines the history of edged weapons in Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, and the Middle East and surrounding areas before gunpowder increased the distance between combatants. The book series takes a critical look at the relationship between the soldier, his weapon, and the social and political mores of the times. Each book examines the historical background and metallurgic science of the knife, sword, or bayonet respectively, and explores the handling characteristics and combat applications of each weapon. Save by purchasing the full 10-book series in a single paperback volume (538 pages). Look for Knives, Swords, and Bayonets: A World History of Edged Weapon Warfare (the full series).

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- 6. Yatagan, Khanda, and Jamdhar: Swords and Sabers of Persia and India
- 7. Sickle Sword and Battle Axe: Edged Weapons of Ancient Egypt

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- 9. Longsword and Saber: Swords and Swordsmen of Medieval and Modern Europe
- 10. Pike, Halberd, and Bayonet: Sharp Weapons in Near Modern and Modern Warfare

Note that the books are written for those with an interest in exploring the historical beginnings of edged weaponry, how edged weapons have been used in war in different parts of the world, and the value the soldier attached to his weapon. Military, social, and political history is discussed. Arms collectors or others with detailed interest in the finer points of weaponsmithing may want to look for books that are more heavily illustrated.

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