

Chicago Tribune Article

Here is the full text of the Chicago Tribune 1874 article concerning the quenching of a wootz blade in the body of a slave. This article started the myth about quenching in blood. The module dealing with this is [here](#) (scroll down).

Illustration

TEMPERING DAMASCUS BLADES.

An Old Record Says That Each Operation Cost a Human Life.

Berlin *Tageblatt*: Advice received from Prof. von Eulenspiegel and partly state that in delving among the ruins of ancient Tyre there has been unearthed what seems to have been the workshop of an ancient armorer, or "waffenschmidt," with a quantity of sword blades in different stages of manufacture, though badly corroded. A copper cylinder with a close-fitting tap was found among a pile of dry rotted wood, evidently the remains of an arm chest, the brass nails and copper bands of which had retained their original form. This cylinder contained a parchment inscribed in ancient Syriac characters and in a fair state of preservation. The professor, after months of close study, has pronounced it an extraordinary discovery—one calculated to cast much light upon the heretofore mysteries of the ancient craft of weapon-making, giving in detail the methods followed in making the perfect Damascus blades.

The manner of tempering these blades when intended for a ruler or an officer of high rank was as follows: "Let the high dignitary furnish an Ethiop of fair fame and let him be bound down, shoulders upward, upon the block of the god Bal-hal, his arms fastened underneath with thongs; a strap of goatskin over his back and wound twice around the block; his feet close together, lashed to a dowel of wood, and his head and neck projecting over and beyond the end of the block. . . . Then let the master workman, having cold hammered the blade to a smooth and thin edge, thrust it into the fire of cedar wood coals, in and out, the while reciting the prayer to the god Bal-hal, until the steel be of the color of the red of the rising sun, when he comes up over the desert toward the East; and then with a quick motion pass the same, from the heel thereof to the point, six times through the most fleshy portion of the slave's back and thighs,

when it shall have become the color of the purple of the King. Then, if with one swing and one stroke of the right arm of the master workman it sever the head of the slave from his body and display not nick nor crack along the edge, and the blade may be bent round about the body of a man and break not, it shall be accepted as a perfect weapon, sacred to the service of the god Bal-hal, and the owner thereof may thrust it into a scabbard of asses' skin, brazen with brass and hung to a girdle of camels' wool, dyed in the royal purple."

His Inquiry Was Premature.

The Husband—"Are you going out to vote to-day, dear?"

The Wife—"Yes, darling."

The H.—"For whom are you going to vote?"

The W.—"How can I tell just now? I haven't seen the candidates yet and don't know how they look."—*New York Press*.

Hoist with His Own Petard.

"Why is he so mad?"

"Somebody played a joke upon him."

"Well, I shouldn't think he would get so mad over a thing like that."

"But this is not an ordinary case. You see, he is a practical joker himself."—*New York Press*.

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