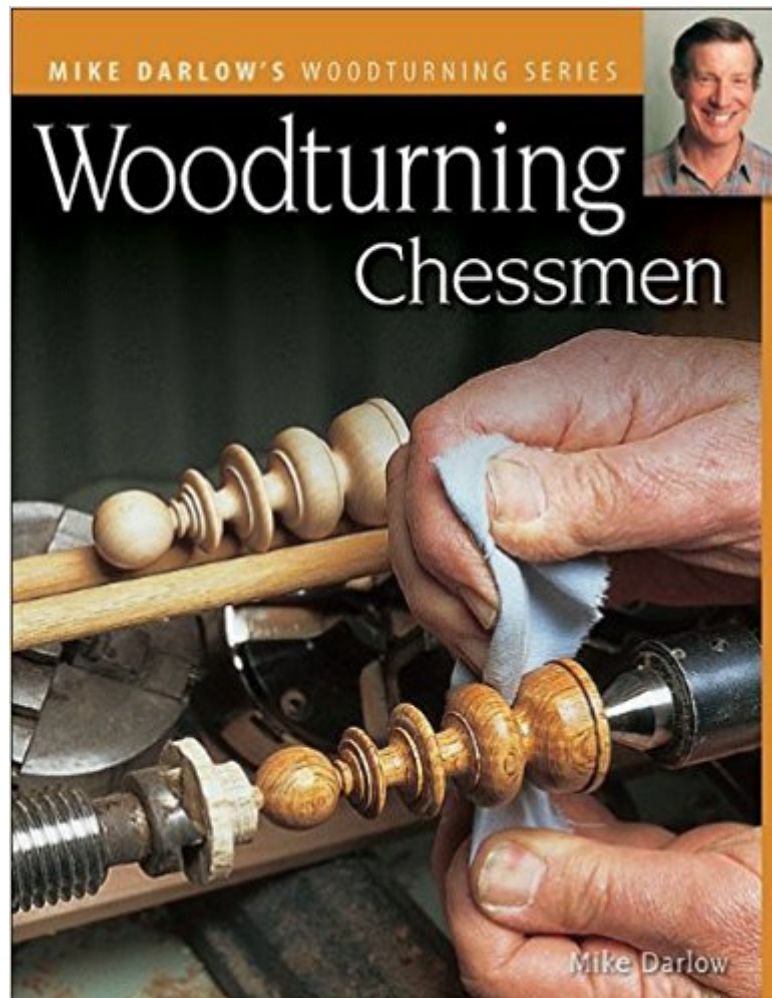




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# Woodturning Chessmen (Darlow's Woodturning Series)



## Synopsis

An invaluable resource for craftsmen, collectors and chess enthusiasts! Includes a history of chess pieces, the importance of the symbols used by chessmen, how to design and add carved details to chess pieces.

## Book Information

Series: Darlow's Woodturning series

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## Customer Reviews

The fifth book in the acclaimed Woodturning Series from professional woodturner and instructor Mike Darlow, *Woodturning Chessmen* is the ultimate guide to crafting beautiful chessmen on a lathe. And, with its comprehensive background on the history, symbolism, and design of chessmen, this book is not only invaluable to woodworkers, but to collectors of chess sets and to chess players seeking to know more about the celebrated traditions of the game. Exceptionally illustrated with over 275 photographs and dozens of drawings, diagrams, and historic engravings, *Woodturning Chessmen* includes:

- The history of chess and chessmen from A.D. 550 to the present
- Insight into the design and symbolism of each piece
- Expert tips for designing a chess set from start to finish
- Accurate drawings of 10 antique chess sets
- Step-by-step instructions on turning, carving, and finishing your own chessmen
- An inspiring gallery of six chess sets from today's masters

Mike Darlow ran a major woodturning business for sixteen years. He's had more than a hundred woodturning articles published, and this is his fifth woodturning book. His earlier books were *The*

Practice of Woodturning, The Fundamentals of Woodturning, Woodturning Methods, and Woodturning Techniques. Mike continues to exhibit and teach internationally, and turn commercially.

This is a very interesting work on turning chessmen. I imagine the intended reading demographic is small, but for those who are interested in the concepts of woodturning and making chess pieces, I think this book is the top of the heap. It has very good mock-ups and full photographs. If you are competent with a wood lathe, I think this is the book for you. The book also does a very good history of chess pieces, which is actually a majority of the book. It is a very good read, particularly if you want to think about designing your own set from scratch. It gives you a good guidance on looking at historical sets that could be replicated and expanded on if you were creative. I would warn you, however. I would say that the intended audience is for intermediate woodworkers and above. While there are some rudimentary step-by-step procedures described and pictured, if you are a complete novice and need a comic book-like step-by-step hand holding on how to do every single aspect of turning, this book may be a few steps above you. The author does seem to assume you have basic woodworking skills, know basic terminology and wood lathe operation. It is not overly complex, but I would think a complete novice might be put off. However, even a novice would appreciate the historical overview of the pieces. I gave the book 4 stars for reasons stated in the above paragraph. The historical overview is excellent, but the actual parts of wood lathe operation as it pertains to making chessmen could have been expanded just a bit. I also thought that, given the historical context of the first half, plans could have been included for a few more of historical period pieces. Overall, however, I think it is an excellent text that will certainly spur creativity on the part of the wood lathe operator making chessmen.

I am very happy with this book. It is exactly what I was looking for. In contrast to some of the other reviewers I found the history of chess sets very helpful. I really think that to understand the aspects of chess piece design we need to look at what has proceeded us. Besides all that it is just fun to see the evolution of design with a lot of photos of historic chess sets. For myself there was plenty of practical information on the actual construction process. There are also a number of templates for making specific sets. All and all a thoroughly enjoyable read even if I wasn't interested in the actual construction process.

I've had my copy of this book about a week and I'll be spending a long time absorbing all the

material in the text. My initial impressions are that the author has written very thorough treatise incorporating a short history of chess, the evolution of the design of chessmen, fundamentals of the design process, scaled drawings of several historical reproductions of chessmen, and tips on turning your own sets. This is not a beginners book in the sense that the author doesn't lay out one specific design and takes you through each step in copying that design. Rather, he gives you the tools to create your own designs, examples to copy if you choose, and an appreciation of the history of the game pieces. Plus there are little snippets of info scattered through the text that add to the background information but are clearly not directly needed to make a chess set. The book is a fun read even if you never actually make a chessman.

Very informative book. As a history geek I especially enjoyed the information and pictures on the early chess pieces. Now to get my turning skills up to make some of these!

An extraordinary book. Not only is the history of chessmen very well researched and described but the practical knowledge of a modern craftsman takes us back into the 19th century workshops of Europe where the art of chess turning reached its zenith. Compulsory reading for all chess collectors. I can't wait to get my hands on Mikes other books: he is a consummate teacher!

some good pointers for advancing turning

Mike goes into a lot of background detail, which is interesting, but a little overkill. I have made a Staunton design set but could not find the plans and had to draw them myself. I would like to see a little more info on appropriate weights for various sizes. I used tungsten instead of lead, more expensive but twice the density. Mike did not cover this alternative to lead. Overall an ok book for our club library

Excellent book with many great ideas which was what I was looking to find. If you want a step by step how to turn a chess set this may not be what you want. But if you want examples of many ideas for creating your own set. This is the book to get.

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