

BIBLIOGRAFIA

CALVÓ PASCUAL, JUAN L.: *Armamento reglamentario y auxiliar del Ejército español*. Libro núm. 3: «Modelos portátiles de retrocarga, 1855-1922. Editado por el autor, Barcelona, 1977. Tres cuadernos: primero, 17 págs. y 15 láms.; segundo, 12 págs. y 12 láms.; tercero, 10 págs. y 10 láms. Además tiene un preámbulo de 9 páginas y 1 lám.

Los comienzos del año 77 han visto el nacimiento del libro que cierra esta trilogía.

Jean Boudriot hace la presentación esta vez. Nadie mejor que M. Boudriot, ya que sus estudios del armamento francés corren paralelos a los de nuestro autor sobre armamento español.

Este libro, siguiendo el modelo de los dos anteriores, está dividido en tres cuadernos:

I) «Armamento de carga simple, 1885-1889». Tiene un preámbulo dedicado a «Cartuchería», en el que el señor Calvo hace un breve estudio de los diferentes modelos utilizados entre 1717 y 1921, basándose en la relación de reglamentarios del Ejército español. Para ello hace dos grupos generales:

a) Los que utilizan cebado independiente.

b) Los que incorporan cebo en el propio cartucho.

El retraso de nuestro Ejército en adoptar modelos de retrocarga es explicado por el autor: «... es consecuencia de que los cartuchos combustibles con cebo incorporado no sean utilizados por ninguno de nuestros modelos reglamentarios, ya que éstos corresponden a un período en el que los cartuchos de vaina incombustible se encontraban ya generalizados.

La diversidad de cartuchos de este último tipo obliga a utilizar comúnmente para su exposición la clasificación de tres grupos constituidos por los "cartuchos de espiga", "los cartuchos de ignición periférica" y "los cartuchos de ignición central", haciéndose con ello referencia a la posición que ocupa en la vaina el cebo fulminante.»

Del sistema que ha seguido para el enfoque de su obra, el autor

nos dice: «Al iniciar la exposición del armamento de retrocarga he considerado más adecuado distinguir entre los modelos de carga simple y los de repetición; la evolución de los primeros no tarda en verse interrumpida por la generalización de los segundos y he optado por tratar separadamente en éstos las armas cortas y las armas largas.

En orden a su evolución, el armamento reglamentario de retrocarga español tiene una primera época que finaliza con la adopción del cartucho calibre 7 mm. (7 × 57) para las armas largas, y la del cartucho calibre 9 mm. "Bergmann" para las armas cortas, iniciándose una tercera época con la adopción del cartucho calibre 7,62 milímetros (7,62 × 51) en las armas largas y el 9 mm. "Parabellum" en las cortas.

No me he ajustado a esta evolución ideal por considerar la primera época insuficiente en cantidad de modelos para justificar una edición independiente, y así finaliza este tercer tomo en fecha inmediatamente anterior a la de la adopción del primer fusil ametrallador reglamentario de nuestro Ejército.»

Este preámbulo se completa con una lámina en la que están dibujados los diferentes modelos de cartuchos.

A continuación, tras una breve historia de los modelos objeto de estudio, hace una detallada descripción de las armas, que completa con láminas correspondientes a cada modelo.

II) «Armamento de repetición, armas cortas, 1855-1922.»

En este segundo cuaderno, el autor comienza por exponer cómo se adoptaron las armas cortas en el Ejército:

«La Orden que en mayo de 1855 emitía la Capitanía General de la Isla de Cuba disponiendo fueran armados con revólver Colt los oficiales de los batallones de Cazadores, así como los de las demás compañías de preferencia destinadas en la Isla, hizo del Ejército de Ultramar el primero español dotado de un arma corta de repetición.

Esta disposición no tardó en hacerse extensiva para todos los oficiales con mando en Cuba, que se vieron así armados con el revólver Colt al tiempo que en la Península los oficiales de Cazadores eran también dotados con revólver, según Real Orden de octubre del mismo año, en la que se fijaba tal disposición sin determinar a lo largo de su texto el modelo adoptado, referenciándose únicamente un revólver de cinco tiros del que deberían adquirirse cuarenta unidades en "las fábricas más acreditadas del extranjero", para proveer con ellas a la oficialidad del Batallón de Cazadores de Madrid; indicándose que en lo sucesivo estas armas deberían construirse en España para ir dotando con ellas a los oficiales de los restantes cuerpos...»

Continúa con una breve historia de los cambios habidos en las armas cortas, en los distintos cuerpos, hasta llegar al año 1922.

Tras esto, pasa a la detallada descripción de las armas citadas, que van acompañadas de sus correspondientes láminas.

III) «Armamento de repetición, armas largas, 1880-1916.»

El autor comienza diciendo:

«En la década de 1880 se tenía ya la certeza de que en plazo breve había de hacerse necesaria la renovación total del armamento portátil con la adopción de un sistema de repetición, y así en Oviedo la fabricación de armamento Remington sufrió un notable descenso y se incrementaron las experiencias con los sistemas de repetición de que se fue teniendo noticia.» A continuación nos habla de los distintos modelos que se fueron sucediendo, y hace un apartado dedicado a «Cargadores rápidos», a los que dedica una lámina que encabeza la serie de láminas descriptivas de las armas correspondientes a esta parte.

Al acierto de elección del formato, del que ya hablé en la recensión del libro número 2, hay que añadir otro acierto: la diferencia de color para cada libro, que facilita en gran manera su búsqueda en los estantes de una biblioteca.

Mi felicitación al autor, esperando que no paren aquí sus fructíferos esfuerzos investigadores.

M.^a R. MARCO

La guerre au Moyen Âge. Pons, Imp. Hemmerlé Petit, 1976, 115 p., illustr.

Dans le cadre de l'Année Romane, l'Institut de recherche et d'histoire textes (C. N. R. S.) a organisé aux mois de juillet-août 1976, à Pons (Charente-Maritime) une exposition sur la guerre médiévale; la publication recensée en est le catalogue destiné à guider ceux qui, de plus en plus nombreux, s'intéressent à la civilisation militaire. Par la qualité de son contenant (choix du papier, de la typographie et des illustrations), par la valeur de ses textes et par le sujet traité, ce catalogue se place bien au-dessus du niveau un peu bas où, depuis quelque temps, se tiennent la plupart des catalogues d'exposition.

Le texte en a été rédigé par J.-P. Babelon, J. Baud, Ph. Contamine, R. Faille, Fr. Garnier, O. Grandmottet, C. Jeudy, L. Lassarade, L. Maurin, J.-P. Reverseau, J.-B. de Vaivre, et Fr. Viellard; le simple

énoncé de ces noms importe déjà une garantie. Le catalogue se structure de la façon suivante: D'abord les pages liminaires consacrées à la liste des personnes formant le Comité d'Honneur, le Comité d'Organisation, la Liste des prêteurs, etc., ainsi qu'à une courte mais remarquable préface rédigée par M. Jean Glenisson, Directeur de l'Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes. Viennent ensuite les centres d'intérêt selon lesquels le matériel exposé se trouve réparti: 1, La littérature militaire. 2, Guerre et christianisme médiéval. 3, Les villes-fortes et les châteaux. 4, L'armement, témoignages archéologiques. 5, L'armement, sources écrites et documents figurés. 6, Le décor héraldique de la guerre. 7, Les préparatifs de la guerre. 8, Recrutement et levée des armées. 9, Composition des armées. 10, La solde, les vivres. 11, Risques et profits. 12, Les figures de la guerre. 13, La fin de la guerre. 14, La guerre et les populations civiles. Une dernière section, la 15^{ème}, réunit les documents se rapportant au château de Pons et à la villes du même nom. Chaque section s'ouvre par une notice introductive à laquelle suivent les fiches concernant les pièces ainsi groupées. Chaque fiche est accompagnée, comme il se doit, de l'indication du lieu et du nom du dépôt où est conservé l'objet, de sa côte, de sa bibliographie succincte, etc. La plupart des notices sont dues à M. Philippe Contamine, un des meilleurs spécialistes de la question existant actuellement en France et dont le nom a été cité à maints endroit de *Gladius* (notamment au t. X, 1972, p. 92-94, au t. XIII, 1977, p. 6-23). Ici, M. Contamine s'est surpassé. Non seulement il a rédigée ces notices mais il a «présidé au choix des pièces exposées, conçu le plan, veillé à la rédaction du catalogue» (p. 8) et le succès obtenu par l'Exposition lui est dû en grande partie. Dans d'autres cas, les notices ont été rédigées par distincts auteurs parmi lesquels deux attirent particulièrement notre attention.

On trouve d'abord M. J.-P. Reverseau, conservateur au Musée de l'Armée (Paris) à la plume duquel est due la notice précédant la section 4. Cette notice, très intéressante, est suivie d'une centaine de pièces (du n° 20 au n° 122 exactement). Fort précieuses sont les reproductions des objets déposés au Musée de l'Armée ainsi que les vues des manequins de la série des costumes de guerre appartenant au même Musée, surtout depuis que les cartes postales de ces objets ne sont plus en vente dans les kiosques et que les manequins, fort instructifs d'ailleurs, sont entreposés Dieu sait où... Ainsi par exemple, l'on trouve la photo du bassinet à bec de passereau (p. 37) dont, outre l'original heureusement échappé aux méfaits des «muséologues nouvelle manière», nous ne connaissions qu'un dessin fait jadis par Viollet-le-Duc (*Dic. du Mobilier*, vol. 5, p. 164) et qui a été maintes fois reproduit...

Pour les sections 5 et 6, les notices ont été rédigées par M. J.-B. de

Vaivre, secrétaire général du Centre pour l'étude de la sigillographie et de l'héraldique médiévale, et un des moteurs de l'exposition. Bien des choses, ignorées ou peu connues même des spécialistes, sont à glaner dans ces présentations et les fiches mènent des *Traités* de Konrad Kyesser et de Taccola aux gisants de grands personnages ou de la salle des êcus du château de Ravel (Auvergne) aux sceaux conservés dans le dépôts d'archives ainsi qu'à l'étendart de Charles le Téméraire actuellement déposé à Dijon, au Musée des Beaux-Arts. Une bonne étude des armes, des armures et de leurs pièces figurant dans les sceaux fait actuellement défaut. Nul n'est plus qualifié pour la faire que M. de Vaivres. Il peut être persuadé que l'ouvrage de G. Demay, dont une réédition fort augmentée a paru récemment, ne ferait pas double emploi avec cette étude. En outre, elle serait bien accueillie par nombre de revues parmi lesquelles, nous le croyons, se compterait *Gladius*. Qu'attend-il donc pour l'entreprendre?

Sans doute quelques réserves dans le choix du matériel exposé pourraient être soulevées. Ainsi, dans la section 1, un exemplaire de Végèce aurait été le bienvenu, surtout que les *Décades* de Tite-Live y apparaissent exposée sous le n° 1 et qu'il est expressément question de Végèce à la p. 13 du Catalogue. Mais on ne saurait contenter tout le monde. La Fontaine le savait déjà...

A part ces vétilles et d'autres du même genre qui pourraient être faites, la publication sera extrêmement utile à bien des lecteurs de *Gladius*.

† J. F. FINÓ

IBN HUDAYL: *Gala de Caballeros, Blasón de Paladines*. Edición preparada por María Jesús Viguera. Biblioteca de la Literatura y el Pensamiento Hispánicos, núm. 24, Editora Nacional, Madrid, 1977. 242 páginas.

One must hail with pleasure the publication by Dra. María Jesús Viguera, professor in Arabic and Islamic philology at the Universidad Complutense of Madrid, and a competent specialist in Islamic civilization: IBN HUDAYL: *Gala de Caballeros, Blasón de Paladines*. This little book gives an excellent introduction to a very particular civilization, the Moorish civilization of Al-Andaluz, and —more concrete— to the civilization and court life which ruled at the Nazrid kingdom of Granada during the last centuries before the conquest by the Catholic Kings.

Ibn Hudayl, from the second half of the 14th century, a courtier, author, poet, knight and warrior, lived at the court of the Granadine sultans Muhammad V (1354-1359 and 1362-1391) and his grandson Muhammad VII (1392-1408) writing various treatises about horsemanship, education of horses, military equipment for the mounted warrior, the jinete, and the education of the knightly youth. The book here treated was composed in order to celebrate the accession to the throne of the Nazrid sultan Muhammad VII in 1392. It represents the second part of a greater treatise written in two books by the same author 30 years earlier to Muhammad V and dealing with Holy War, horsemanship, armament for a mounted knight and the like, in an augmented and revised edition. The author was an excellent connoisseur of horses and horsemanship, horse-breeding, veterinary sciences and all kinds of equestrian matters as well as about art of war and armament for cavalry. He had a great knowledge about the abundant Arabic literature concerning these topics. For that reason his manuscript is of the greatest interest to students of medieval art of war, horsemanship and cavalry armament in the Islamic world, but particularly important in regard to understand Moslem Andalucia —not least Granada— and its influence upon Christian Spain. At the same time it shows how difficult it is to penetrate into Arab and Moorish civilization without sufficient knowledge about Arabic language and literature, prose as well as poetry.

In 35 pages Dra. Viguera gives an excellent introduction to and an analysis of the manuscript, its precedents and parallels and the milieu in which this particular kind of Arabic literature flourished. The introduction with its many erudite notes and quotations gives a rich bibliography both of the old literature and of the most recent books and articles about Islamic civilization, art of war, arms etc., all of them necessary in order to understand the work by Ibn Hudayl. We are introduced to a world rather different to the contemporary medieval world of the occident: the particular civilization which ruled at the royal court of Granada in the 14th century, which in Spanish history was a very eventful and warlike period. With the arrival from North Africa of the Berber tribes of Benimerines, who crossed the Straits of Gibraltar shortly after the middle of the 13th century as the allied of the Nazrid sultans new cavalry tactics were introduced on the Peninsula, the tactics and armament of the «Jinetes», the special kind of light and swift Berber cavalry, which came to influence very much upon later Spanish calvary. (Granadine jinetes taught the knights of the Castilian king Pedro I el Cruel their tactics and how to fight from horseback, when the sultan Muhammad V needed military help from

the Castilian king in order to re-establish his lost throne in Granada in 1362).

We do not know much about Ibn Hūdāyl himself. The French orientalist Louis Mercier in his two books about this granadine author tried in his introduction and commentaries to the treatises to establish a biography. According to the investigations and calculation by Mercier the author probably was born about 1329, wrote his first three books in an age of about 30 years, and he may have been 70 years old when he composed his *Gala de Caballeros*. He lived and worked in Granada at the royal court, and his main occupation was to write treatises and poetry. Beside his books about Holy War, horsemanship, education of a knight, armament etc. he is known to have written several other treatises or books. Among his literary activities we find even poetry. Dra. Viguera gives a list of the metric systems used by the author in *Gala de Caballeros*. It is difficult to get a true impression of the originality of the work by Ibn Hūdāyl and to distinguish between his individual work and his sources. Books of related kind are known to have been written in Granada in the 13th and 14th centuries and he seems to have known them. Further he was familiar with the Arabic literature about horsemanship and warfare already existing. Parallels and precedents existed in the Arabic literature, where they had a long tradition behind them. His work belongs to the educational literature, it is a kind of mirror and admonition to the knightly youth, a propaganda to encourage and stimulate the youth of the nobility, particularly from Granada itself to take up a military career in a period, when the kingdom was menaced and hardly pressed by the Christian armies and the civil wars then ruling on the Peninsula. Military propaganda, however, was a difficult matter among the courtiers, and among the peaceful Granadine population, People here preferred their fields, trade and art for military matters and war. His first books —to Muhammad V— did not succeed, but with the new menace he found the time proper for a renewal of his propaganda, and a good opportunity with the accession to the throne of sultan Muhammad VII.

Passing through the index of chapters in this treatise one would be inclined to think of a manual in veterinary matters and art of war. But it is no systematical manual in veterinary science, nor a current manual in art of war or a detailed description of arms like a museum catalogue, though it treats almost all kinds of weapon used by a Moslem mounted knight. Gun-powder and cannon must have been known by the author, but he doesn't mention it. It had been in use several times in Andalucía in the 14th century (1324 at Huéscar, 1343 at Algeciras). The author opens his book with a prologue, praising

God, the Prophet and the family of the Prophet, the sultan and the royal family and gives a list of the twenty chapters with a short summary of each chapter. In fourteen chapters the horse is treated from its creation by God over education, domestication, the first persons who used the horse, how David and Salomo appreciated the horse, qualities of a horse, terminology among the Arab bedouins of every detail and part of a horse etc. Of interest for an arms student is the mention of saddles, bridles, stirrups etc. and how to mount it. The names of the Prophet's horses are given and the last chapter is dedicated to a poetical praise among the Arabs of their horses. No wonder that Andalucian horsemanship came to play such an important part even in later time Spain. Most literature about hippology was created in Andalucía.

The last six chapters are dedicated to armament. First of all comes the sword, the swords of the Prophet, bad and good qualities of a sword, names of swords, legends of famous swords, how to manage a sword, poetry about the sword. It appears from this chapter how important a part the sword played in the Moslem world, a part just as important as among the Christian knights of the Middle Ages. To a Moslem warrior the lance was an important weapon too. This appears clearly from the chapter about lances. The lance played the same part as the sword to the Arab horseman.

Particularly interesting is the chapter dealing with archery, with bows and arrows and the crossbow, here called the Christian bow. Archery played an important part in the Moslem world. The Prophet himself highly praised archery and says that every young Moslem ought to have bows and arrows, and he invites all educated people to teach the youth to appreciate it to acquire bows and to qualify themselves in the art of archery, —for war and for sporting. According to the author there are two main types (with their variations): the Arab bow, fit for mounted warriors the Jinetes and the Christian bow more fit for infantry, sieges, or warships. The Christian bow, or the «foot-bow», is identical with the occidental crossbow. Later time scholars often have called it the Andalucian bow after the description not only by Ibn Hudayl, but even by other Arab authors (e.g. an Egyptian author from almost the same period). He gives a rather detailed description of the Christian bow, its construction and its different parts, an important description, though such scholars as Louis Mercier and the late Finnish investigator Kalervo Huuri (in his book about medieval artillery after oriental literary sources, 1946) found part of his description rather difficult to understand. Even the arrows and their material and construction as well as the manner of

shooting are carefully described. The chapter about archery is the most extensive of all his chapters. It is followed by a chapter dealing with the coat of mail and the protection for the head, particularly in battle, and a chapter about the various types and shapes of shields and how to manage them. The last chapter is dedicated to military equipment in general. The reader finds in these chapters a multitude of Arab names and denominations, a very rich vocabulary indeed, of weapon as well as of the various categories of warriors, anecdotes about the use of weapon and legends and verses about the arms of the Prophet. His treatise terminates with an epilogue and praise to God and the Prophet.

The work by Ibn Hudayl is filled with poetry about horses and arms and great persons who have used famous swords, lances etc.

The book is an important publication to all who are interested in Moslem civilization of Andalucia, its contacts with the East and its influence upon not only Christian Spain but even upon occidental Europe in the Middle Ages and later time. The learned commentaries with the bibliographical notes open a wide horizon into the Islamic world and point out quite a lot of problems for future investigations of Moorish Spain. Medieval Arab manuscripts about military matters are still waiting for translation and commentaries. It is to be hoped that the present book will be followed by more publications of this kind.

A. Br. H.

Ch.-L. SALCH: *Dictionnaire des châteaux de l'Alsace médiévale*. Strasbourg, Éditions Publitotal, 1976, 394 p., illust.

L'A. est Directeur du Centre d'archéologie médiévale de Strasbourg et ce n'est pas la première fois que les lecteurs de *Gladius* entendent parler de ce Centre. Rappelons brièvement qu'il s'agit d'un institut de recherches privé, créé il y a une douzaine d'années par l'Association Chantiers d'Études médiévales et que ses caractéristiques lui ont permis d'occuper, rapidement, une place de choix parmi les organisations consacrées aux recherches et aux fouilles. Mais, étant donné que ces diverses questions ont été analysées dans un précédent numéro (vol. XIII, 1977, p. 104 ff) il est inutile de s'appesantir davantage.

L'entreprise de compiler un *Dictionnaire* des châteaux alsaciens n'était pas facile, loin de là. Obstacles de vocabulaire d'abord. «Les noms des châteaux se sont transformés, parfois même entièrement modifiés.

Les dénominations populaires ou cartographiques récentes ne sont pas toujours celles de l'histoire médiévale» (p. 3). Et que dire des abondants homonymes?, des dénominations précaires ou des variantes orthographiques?; les traductions —la plupart des textes étant rédigés en latin ou en ancien allemand— compliquent singulièrement le panorama. «Nous avons ne pas avoir solutioné le problème. Nous avons choisis la dénomination qui nous a paru la plus courante ou historiquement la mieux fondée» (p. 3). Question des limites géographiques ensuite. Les frontières de l'Alsace médiévale s'avèrent fort mouvantes, la province ayant été, de tous temps, un carrefour de civilisations. Les frontières modernes, oeuvres, de la révolution de 1789 et modifiées en 1871 (Départements du Haut-Rhin et du Bas-Rhin, Territoire de Belfort) ne correspondent point à la réalité médiévale. Toutefois, elles ont l'avantage d'être précises et faciles à repérer; finalement, se son les frontières modernes qui ont été retenues. Les limites chronologiques, elles, n'offrent pas de difficultés comparables à celles présentées par la géographie et ce malgré que des nuées de pseudo-historiens aient multipliés leurs efforts en vue de brouiller les cartes; on s'en tient, simplement, aux dates acceptées par tout le monde.

Le château lui-même s'avère difficile à définir. Sans doute on peut, d'une façon relativement aisée, reconnaître un véritable château-fort en s'aidant de Fr. RAPP, *Le château dans la vie médiévale et dans la politique territoriale* (Strasbourg, Centre d'archéologie médiévale, 1968, 113 p. ronéotypées) ou d'autres oeuvres analogues. Mais il existe bien davantage de châteaux et la gamme s'étend «grosso modo» de la *pfaltz* ou palais jusqu'au petit ouvrage fortifié... Que penser des *maisons-fortes* qui constituent la résidence des simples chevaliers-vassaux? Ces *maisons-fortes*, dont l'importance a été fort grossie ces dernières années, sont des centres d'exploitation agricole situées au milieu des terres concédées par le suzerain et sommairement fortifiées afin de pouvoir résister à un coup de main de quelques maraudeurs, non à un siège en règle. Et que dire des repaires apparentés aux forts modernes et destinés à servir de demeure à une poignée de guerriers? De plus, les définitions de ces différents types ne sont valables que pendant une époque plus ou moins déterminée; el les changent au gré des circonstances, des modifications de la *poliorcétique* ou art d'assiéger les places, etc., etc.

Mais, malgré de pareilles difficultés et d'autres qui ont surgit inopinément à tout propos, le *Dictionnaire* existe. Il constitue une preuve de plus que le mouvement se démontre en marchant et qu'il est vain d'attendre d'avoir atteint une chimérique perfection pour imprimer... Tel qu'il est et même circonscrit dans ses étroites limites, il

rendra bien des services et son A. doit être fortement loué de l'avoir entrepris; surtout d'avoir su mener sa tâche jusqu'à l'achèvement final, jusqu'à l'impression.

L'ouvrage se structure de la façon suivante. Il y a, d'abord, un certain nombre de pages préliminaires; Remerciements, *Préface* (par M. J.-A. Pesez, directeur d'études à l'École des Hautes-Études en Sciences sociales), *Introduction* (où l'A. rend compte de son propos et des difficultés théoriques qu'il a rencontré dans son travail), *Liste de abréviations*, bibliographie générale, etc. Le *Dictionnaire* proprement dit commence ensuite. Chaque nom retenu (les cas douteux ou trop imprécis ainsi que les maisons seigneuriales urbaines étant éliminés) est traité d'identique manière: localisation (commune, canton, département); brève notice archéologique et historique d'où sont exclues les simples anecdotes, choix de références bibliographiques permettant de poursuivre la recherche sur ce cas particulier. Enfin, viennent les *Conclusions*. Celles-ci, fort étendues (p. 257-291) et entrecoupées de cartes ou de graphiques divers, traitent de l'architecture de ces châteaux, de leurs constructeurs et possesseurs, du rôle politique et militaire joués par ces édifices, etc.

Le volume, parfaitement imprimé, est illustré de belles photographies de D. Martinez, de dessins et de plans ainsi que de la reproduction de documents d'époque. Il intéressera certainement les lecteurs de *Gladius* et nous faisons les vœux les plus sincères pour que l'exemple donné par l'A. soit largement suivi.

† J.-F. FINÓ

CZESLAW JARNUSZKIEWICZ: *Szabla Wschodnia i jej typy Narodowe* (The Oriental Sabre and its National Derivatives). Antiquariat R. Wernika, London, 1973. 103 págs. of text, 139 figs. on planches. Bibliography and References. Text in Polish.

In 1973 appeared on the London market a book written by the Polish general and specialist in edged weapons C. Jarnuszkiewicz about the Oriental sabre and its national derivatives. This book is not the only one of this type published since the end of the last world war, but it comprises quite a large field of great importance to all who are interested in the history and development of the curved weapon. Though written in Polish the book may be very useful to museums, collectors and all who are interested in the history of side arms, because it has so many excellent reproductions and good comprehensive bibliographical lists.

The author describes in full the *Persian* sabre but beside this he describes the sabres of *Caucasus*, *Hungary*, *Turkey*, *Russia* and other parts of this world and not least, very detailed, the *Polish* sabres. Beside fixing the rather mixed and confuse terminology he at last shows in a clear and definite manner the difference between the Polish sabre and the so-called «Carabella» stating that the last one is a dress sword only.

The *Persian* sabre and its origin is described as nowhere in literature known to me. As the top class of all sabres, nearly the prototype of all European sabres, it deserves a full recognition.

Pig iron of which was produced the so-called Damascus steel, bulat —or in English manner called «wootz»—, is described according to the latest opinions and investigations and it changes our opinion about Damascus itself. Please notice two facts of the so-called Damascus steel: one, so far not enough known, is that this type of steel was made not only from raw material imported from India, but Persia had its own sources of pig iron of highest quality. Second, that Damascus was not only —as generally accepted— a trade centre of sabres but it had a very high class of sword-makers of its own.

The classification of damascus steel pattern is given as generally accepted. In spite of this I have met opinions placing on the top *Kara-Harassan* of Damascus origin, giving the pattern of very strong colour contrasts and giving impression of something like «swarm of snakes» or —as others describe it— as a «whirlpool of water». These are, however, detached opinions. Beside it may always happen in any sphere that any successful and beautiful piece of lower class may be much higher valued than a poorly made specimen of a higher class. However summary I am inclined to accept the author's classification as basic and generally accepted.

Rawson's theory on mechanical and crystallized damascus, mentioned by the author, seems to me to be a bit muddled. In any case, when reading Rawson's «The Indian Sword» I did not succeed to find any definitely dividing line between the two, neither any base for this theory.

Eventually, all the so-called watered steels, etched to obtain certain patterns from Damascus through Malaya to Japan are based on hammering and rehammering of steel, from the nature of it, or deliberately, of mixed quality. As a result it changed the local carbonization of the steel. This followed by proper hardening and annealing gives a perlite structure of the steel, which after etching gives the required pattern. (Carlo Panseri, in *Gladius*, tomo IV, 1965.) Following, as I believe, the author's way of thinking, one may call a mechanical damasc

experiments made in Solingen (according to the oldest theories) from a plaited wire. These were, however, only imitations of damascus steel and to my knowledge ended with a failure.

As concern hilt-fittings (p. 22) I am not too sure about the order of fitting-up. As the metal straps, on front and rear, are always soldered to the tang, I therefore am not so sure whether first were riveted to the tang the bone, horn or wooden plates and then added the metal straps, or it has been done in a reverse order. In spite I always met a soft solder and in poor quality it seems to me that it would be easier to fit bone, horn or wood to a metal frame than bend the metal to the plate.

I came across an opinion (somewhere in literature) that the best class of Persian sabres does not need an opening on the top of the scabbard or on the lock because the radius of the blades is all along constant. Some, as the majority of the Turkish sabres, must have the opening on the top of the scabbard, as the blade in the forte part of it is either straight or the radius of the curvature is much longer than at the other end, nearer to the tip. I agree in full with the author on Rawson's theory on Persian blades (p. 23). My purely personal hypothesis is that as result of wearing turbans and the particular type of dress in the Middle East the Persian sabre becomes more and more curved to work as shearlike and not like chop, as the straight swords work.

The art of fencing did not exist in the Middle East, primarily because this type of very curved sabre is unsuitable for fencing (lack of thrust), secondly because of the extremely flexible horses (an Arabian horse is much more flexible than the heavy horses of the European knights), an Oriental warrior simply swerved his horse, bent his body and turned round to look for another chance for himself.

Concerning the author's remark (p. 33) that the shape of hilt of the Indian sabre had no influence on the shapes of any other country I may add: except the only one, the so-called «kora» (Nepal), which has a hilt very similar if not identical to the tulwar.

The sabre of *Caucasus* is described very well. It gives much more (except for the Russian military sabre) than for example E. Mollo in his book: «Russian Military Swords» where one could expect a bit more about the origin of the shashka.

In regard to the so-called *Armenian* sabre I would be more inclined to call it a Tartar's sabre than to call it Tcherkes, Kirgis, Armenian or Tchechuga. It comes to me that its shape and style is rather of Tartar origin. All the other names suggest more decorations. Here the suitability dominates. The type of blade differs distinctly from Persian,

Turkish, Georgian or Caucasian shashkas'shape. On fig. 50 it reminds me more about the «flyssa» of the Moroccan Kabyles in spite of the last one being fully straight.

From the description of the *Hungarian* sabre it is clear that to distinguish a Polish sabre from a Hungarian this is nearly impossible if there are no marks showing its origin. In doubtful cases it would be advisable to accept it as rather of Hungarian origin.

According to the author's opinion the typical Polish sabre, and without any doubt, of purely Polish origin is the Hussar sabre from the first half of XVIIth century. This sabre (fig. 1) with an open angle between the cross-piece and the knuckleguard is generally accepted as a Polish sabre.

Everything before and after is a mixture of Persian, Turkish, Hungarian and Western European sabres and to distinguish them as Polish is only possible by markings as for instance eagles, coats of arms, inscriptions, monograms or the types of ornamentation. That is how I have understood the author, and I have to agree completely with this opinion.

The author distinguishes very clearly the so-called «*karabela*» from the Polish battle sabre. By very expertly made descriptions and illustrations he shows that the karabela hilt is basically of Turkish origin. Perhaps it is best described by Dr. Csillag Ferenc in his book «*Kardok Tortenelmunkben*» (Budapest, 1971) as a hilt of bird's head shape (fig. 44 and 48). (By the way this same author names —completely wrong— as a karabela another kind of side-arm, fig. 60 and 68.) There is no doubt that karabela was a dress sabre only. As at the period of time when the name karabela was accepted, Poland was under strong influence of Italian culture, personally I am inclined to accept that this name is of Italian origin: from «cara», something between expensive and beloved, and «bella», beautiful. I would add that there were a kind of karabelas of a different shape of hilt, the shape of the hilt, definitely Turkish, as fig. 112, but with clearly Western decoration. See: W. Hummelberger: «*Die Türkenbeute im Historischen Museum der Stadt Wien*», 1970, p. 6, fig. 8 which shows a Turkish hilt decorated in European pattern.

Other sabres with hilts of karabela shape by the author are connected with the Yanitchar sabres. As the Yanitchars regiments were very few but sabres of this type (usually hilted with wood, dark chestnut or horn) are preserved in rather great number, one may suppose that members of the poorer nobility liked to use these hilts which lay well in hand, on sabres to be used in war as well as in any other fight.

In my opinion the author has used a comparatively great number of manuscript illuminations some of which do not show an exact image

of the arms. Next the author uses in the «Scheme of measurement of the sabre» fig. 3, O-D a method used by R. Zeller in «Jahrbuch des Bernischen Historischen Museums in Bern», 1932. Personally I would prefer to use the method accepted by the formerly mentioned Dr. Csillag Ferenc or by Eduard Wagner in his «Hieb und Stichwaffen», Phaha, 1966. The last two differ from the former therein that when the curvature is measured, the chord is from the tip of the blade and its base at the hilt and the height is from the chord and the back of the blade. In this last case the measurement is independent from the width of the blade.

Amazing is the accuracy of the illustrations considering that many have been reproduced from books, the quality and quantity of the figures with details of the weapons, the history of the sabres and the museums and collections where to find them.

Finally, I am convinced that it is the best book in Polish language about the sabre in general and probably the best one about Oriental sabre published in Europe.

It is admirable not only the wide and deep knowledge of the subject by the author but still more the supply of all kind of sources, dates and detailed information.

At the same time one must not forget the ability, energy and work put into it by Mr. R. Wernik, who succeeded in emigration conditions to publish such a specialized book in such a beautiful shape. How much effort, work and cash it costs him will probably remain a secret for ever of his own. He succeeded in a deed which will stay as a positive score of the Polish emigration in Great Britain.

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