

JUAN-EDUARDO CIRLOT

(1916-1973)

WITH deep and sincere grief this Instituto and its publication *GLADIUS* in the month of may received the sad tidings that our highly appreciated collaborator and friend had deceased, in an age of only 57 years.

Juan-Eduardo Cirlot Laporta was born in Barcelona in 1916, where he studied music and later on art, art criticism and symbology. During



his short lifetime he was a busy investigator and author whose achievements made him well known not only in Spain and in Hispano-America but even in many European countries. He left behind a multitud of works: scientific, art, prose and poetry, several of them issued in foreign languages. He had the luck to be a highly gifted person with many facets of his intellect. His special subjects were art and art criticism together with symbology, a field in which he received much recog-

nition among leading personalities in Europe. He was considered one of the most supreme art criticals in Spain. Though he was a connoisseur in regard to art and its symbolisms from Prehistoric time through the ages up to modern time, he had specialized in the art of 20th century. Numerous are his books dealing with contemporary art, architecture as well as sculpture and painting. He was a fine connoisseur of surrealist art. More than anyone else he contributed to spread knowledge about the different tendencies in modern art, from cubism to op-art, and his books about «isms» were issued in several editions. His last work before he died was a book about Picasso: *El arte del siglo XX. Picasso, el nacimiento de un genio*. But his knowledge covered a wide field. His book: *El espíritu abstracto desde la Prehistoria a la Edad Media* (Barcelona 1965 and 1969), and the other book: *La pintura gótica europea* (Barcelona 1969), achieved a wide distribution and acknowledgment and they are of interest even to arms students. His works about symbolism, and not least his great: *Diccionario de símbolos*, issued in several editions in Barcelona and London, are important. Among his many interests he comprised that about ancient weapons with great affection. In this field his knowledge was considerable. He was a collector and connoisseur of ancient weapons and he knew the important European museums and collections well. He considered the archaeology of weapons of importance, and he had an eye for the great outlines in their development not only through the ages but even in the various civilizations and their mutual influences. His own collections were based on special principles and created from his particular point of view. He contemplated the weapons, their origin, development, decoration and use as well as their placing in the history of civilization from new and often remarkable sides, which opened wider horizons and new aspects, frequently differing from current points of view. His immense knowledge and particular sense of perception in regard to history of civilization and art caused that he frequently contemplated them in special perspectives, not least with reference to their symbolic significances.

Several articles about medieval swords and renaissance rapiers were published by him already many years ago in various reviews, such as e.g. the beautiful Spanish art review «Goya». His interests in ancient weapons led to a close friendship with the Instituto and its publication. He became a highly appreciated collaborator in GLADIUS since 1964, when this review for the first time published an article of his about the historical sword for ceremonies in the Cathedral of Barcelona. Most of the volumes of GLADIUS contain articles by him, and we are proud to be able to publish the last article he wrote about arms, in the present volume X. He will be highly missed in the future.

Above all Juan-Eduardo Cirlot was an outstanding poet, particular in regard to modern poetry. His poems, in their characteristic style, and in the shape of poetry and prose as well as his aphorisms made him famous in many countries, and a complete edition of his works through the years is about to be issued. In spite of his serious and painful sickbed he almost to his last days was occupied with his works. But already a year ago he felt that he had only short time of life left. In September 1972 he wrote his own «epitafio», dated September 28, 1972, and signed by him:

*Yace lleno de sombra
quien fue luz
pasada la ribera del horror.
Acaso está en el reino del amor
donde otra claridad no es otra cruz.*