

THE PERRILLO MARK OF THE SPANISH SWORDSMITH JULIÁN DEL REY

Summary

THE swordsmith mark in the form of a «little dog» or «wolf», punched or stamped on the blade of the weapon, is comparatively common in Spanish rapiers of the XVIth Century, and even more common in swords of the same and later periods attributed to the German sword-makers of Passau and Solingen.

The existence of these two different sources of weapons bearing a similar mark, and the lack of proper documentation on the Spanish swordsmiths of the period, creates a problem for the proper attribution of the swords bearing the above mark.

Don Enrique de Leguina in his work *Los maestros espaderos* (1897) mentions the fact that the mark was used by Julián del Rey, a moorish armourer that flourished in the XVth Century and became a Christian under the patronage of king Ferdinand of Spain, who was his godfather in the new faith. The same author in his *Glosario de voces de armería* (Madrid, 1912, page 397) quotes several Spanish writers of the XVIth Century, amongst them Cervantes, mentioning the little dog swords in their works.

The attribution of the original mark to the Spanish swordsmith Julián del Rey seems to be supported by the existence of Spanish moresque swords (*espadas ginetas*) with the mark of the little dog. Two of these swords are still preserved, one at the Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris (Fig. 1, and GLADIUS, I, page 49, Fig. 7), and the other probably at the Royal Armoury of Torino, as it was mentioned in the Catalogue of the year 1840. It is to be noted however that the mark appearing on the blade of the Spanish moresque sword in Paris (Fig. 1 and 5, 1) differs from the marks which can be seen on the blades of Spanish rapiers of the XVIth Century, and in this difference the author believes that most of the intricacy and possibly the basis for the solution of the problem really lies (Fig. 5).

The Spanish authors Florit and Sánchez Cantón in their *Catálogo de las armas del Instituto de Valencia de Don Juan* have already noted that the little dog mark appears usually together with other marks on the blades of Spanish rapiers, whilst it is more commonly seen alone on German blades. The same authors on page 63 of the above publication, when discussing the mark of the Spanish swordsmith Sebastián Hernández, suggested the theory that the so-called swordsmith marks might have been merely symbols of contrast indicating some quality of the blade and not necessarily the name of the maker.

The above theory may explain satisfactorily the existence of additional marks on the blades of Spanish rapiers having also the mark of the little dog, and in this connection it is worth noting the mark of the «sun», which appears on the ricasso of the Spanish XVIth Century rapier in the author's collection, and which undoubtedly belongs to a swordsmith of the Mediterranean coast of Spain by the name of Soler, Solís or any other name related to the sun, a very common feature in Spanish heraldry (Figs. 3-4, and 5, 2-3).

A possible confirmation of the theory is found in Lhermite, who states that Sebastián Hernández, the famous Toledo swordsmith of the XVIIth Century, in addition to his well known mark of the crowned «Z», punched on the oldest blades made by him the mark of a little dog, an action which cannot be accounted for unless it was meant to be related to the quality or type of the blade. It is worth mentioning that all the blades with the little dog mark have a rather sharp cutting edge, which coincides with one of the remarks made by Cervantes when he describes the little dog swords as *espadas cortadoras*.

In conclusion it appears that the original «little dog» or «wolf» mark used by Julián del Rey was copied by the best Spanish sword-makers of later periods in order to prestige their own blades, and this fashion was also followed by the German swordsmiths, who as it is notorious, copied also the names of most of the famous XVIIth Century Toledo swordsmiths.

The mark under consideration can thus be divided into three different types, namely: The gothic type of the Spanish moresque swords, the more modern pattern of the XVIth Century Spanish rapiers, and finally the rather imprecise and clumsy type which is found on German blades and on modern imitation blades.