

*This is a 1902 interview of Maestro Adelardo Sanz. Translation by Leonardo Bacarreza, Ph.D.*

### **The New Spanish Sword**

*Alrededor del Mundo*, October 17, 1902, p. 257-258

*Photo caption 1: Way of holding a sword. (On the left, a French grip, in the middle, the New Spanish, on the right, an Italian.) The Spanish sword shown has the quillons and archetti oriented vertically, with the tumb on top through the larger arch, and the index and middle fingers apparently positioned with the index finger on the ricasso and the second finger through the arch. This is a different grip from the Spanish grip sold in the 1960s and 1970s.*

The reputable fencing master from Madrid, Mr. Adelardo Sanz, has invented a Spanish épée and foil. Satisfied with the results, he has launched the following challenge a few days ago:

"As a consequence of my invention of the Spanish épée and foil, I believe I have founded the modern Spanish fencing school, which does not differ in anything essential from the French and Italian schools, but is distinctive in the same sense these schools are distinguishable from each other, because it employs different procedures, originated in the difference of the arms employed, to execute similar attacks and parries.

"As an inventor and as a Spaniard, I am satisfied with my School, because even though I introduced into this practice two young men of quite average physical condition, I can see, given the results, that they will be able to compete against foreign celebrities once they have worked out what is necessary abroad to become a celebrity. To demonstrate that my hopes are not unfounded, I hereby launch a courteous challenge, on behalf of my disciples Angel Lancho and Ciriaco Gonzalez, to all fencers, masters or aficionados who reside in Madrid and are not my disciples, with money wagers or without them, according to the will of anyone who accepts the challenge."

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Our first illustration represents the three types of swords: French, New Spanish, and Italian.

The remaining pictures illustrate the following lines, in which Mr. Sanz explains, upon our request, the modifications established by his school with regard to the French and Italian schools.

*Photo caption 2: Parry 5th. It does not exist in the Italian school and is rarely used in the French school, because in executing it the point is out of line and does not allow a riposte, according to the French opinion. Although the quality of the available picture is low, it appears that this 5<sup>th</sup> is a much flatter parry pushing down the attacking blade.*

To be read by aficionados, and by them only, because profane readers will not have a clue:

"Instead of the French guards of 6th, 4th, etc., I prefer the position that Italian fencers call *spada in linea*, but not in supination, but with the hand in medial position. I admit nine parries instead of the eight of the French and of the four of most Italians, although I give little importance to 1st, 8th, and 6th, generally substituting the latter with a 3rd when the parry is simple--which I call natural--and with a 9th when it is a counter, which I call contrary [*contraria*]. I use the 5th parry, which does not exist in the Italian school and is rarely used in the French school because it does not allow a response of opposition, according to French opinion. Nevertheless, I use the *glide* of 5th, and I consider it quite useful when one fencer is right-handed and the other is left-handed. I perform the internal and external *flanconnades* in medial position and in one *tempo*, dispensing of the Italian *transporte tempo*. The final movements of attacks, ripostes and counter-ripostes are executed almost always with the hand in medial position, instead of the French supination or the Italian supination and pronation. In general, I employ *tempo* more frequently than the French, but less than the Italians, and I say the same of marching attacks, in which I give great importance to the *counter time* hit as a complement. Finally, I modify *la salida de línea* and increase the cases of its application.

*Photo caption 3: Salida de línea on the advance. This salida de línea is used on the adversary's feints, instead of on his attacks. The illustration appears to show the salida de línea employed with an inquartata as a counterattack.*

*Photo caption 4: Glide of 5<sup>th</sup>. This blow is very useful when the contenders are one left handed and the other right. Again picture quality is an issue, but it appears that the fencer on the left (who is left handed) took the fencer (who is right handed) on the right's blade with the relatively flat 5<sup>th</sup> and forced the blade down vertically as the glide is delivered with a lunge.*