

SOME BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES ABOUT  
ADELARDO SANZ FROM SPANISH  
NEWSPAPERS

BY

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MONOGRAPH 1

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Published by the Classical Academy of Arms  
P. O. Box 799

Glen Allen, Virginia, United States 23060-0799  
<http://classicalacademyofarms.org>

# Some Biographical Notes about Adelardo Sanz from Spanish Newspapers

## Part I: Sanz in the 19th Century



Fig. 1. Portrait of Adelardo Sanz, in Francisco Moreno Chicharro, *Esgrima española: Apuntes para su historia*, Madrid 1904

Adelardo Sanz studied under Maitre Jean Nicolas de Pau, nicknamed El Zuavo (The Zouave). Nicolas was active until 1891, when his son, who was also a fencer and a teacher at his father's salle, died. Saddened by this loss, Nicolas decided to retire from the profession. Shortly after the funeral of the son and the announcement made by the father, the Marquis of Heredia, fencing aficionado and close friend of El Zuavo's, wrote a brief biography where he stated that Jean Nicolas fought in the Crimean war and participated in the attack to the Malakoff Tower, where he was wounded and later decorated for his courage. In Spain, he was a Knight of the Order of Charles III. Although this is a military order, the Order is the most distinguished award that can be granted to a civilian by the King of Spain.

El Zuavo's background suggests that he trained in the French school, and, having been in the military, it is possible that his main weapon might have been the sabre. These details could explain both Adelardo Sanz's French approach to fencing in his early years, and his later dedication to a sabre treatise.

As early as 1883, Sanz is mentioned as the favorite disciple of El Zuavo, and during the same year, he is already called Master by the press. Frequently, his name appears mentioned along with Pedro Carbonell (or Carbonel, the Castilian version of the name) and Achille (Aquiles) Broutin. He was especially close to Carbonell. On 5 September 1883, the press informs that Sanz has opened a *salle d'armes*, which was going to be active at least until 1887. Within these years, Sanz holds monthly public bouts at his *salle*. Carbonell and Broutin are frequent guests. In 1884, Sanz is named Master of the Royal House. He also teaches at the Athenaeum in Madrid. The same year, he publishes an article dedicated to sabre technique, which seems to show the first ideas for his future book on sabre fencing.

In 1885, the press announces that Sanz has a female student, whose name is not disclosed. News of a female student at his *salle* appear again in 1892, but, given that the press does not mention a name, it is difficult to tell if this is the same person who was studying under Sanz since 1885. Besides this student, Sanz is reportedly teaching women for a charity event around the New Year's Eve of 1887. In this occasion, he is teaching both foil and *épée* to a group of actresses of the Princesa Theater Company, who will also be the recipients of the funds.

In September 1886, Sanz publishes his book *Esgrima de sable y consideraciones sobre el duelo*. The newspaper *La Época*, which often covers fencing news and especially Sanz's activities, reproduces excerpts from the book in which Sanz defends dueling. This defense creates some controversy. The Catholic newspaper *El Siglo Futuro* dedicates part of the first and second pages of its edition of 17 November to attack both *La Época* and Sanz for promoting this custom.

At some point between 1887 and 1889, Sanz goes to Paris to fence with French masters. Upon his return, he spends two years teaching along with Carbonell. On 11 November 1891, he announces that he has separated from Carbonell. He seems to continue owning the same space as before. Also in 1891, a press note describes Sanz as an ambidextrous fencer.

The public bouts and exhibitions continue, frequently with the presence of Carbonell and Broutin. A relevant event, covered by many newspapers, is the visit of the Italian fencer Pini in June 1892. Pini offers a series of public exhibitions, in which Sanz participates.

In January 1894, an article in *El Imparcial* offers a summary of the most active *salles* in Madrid. Broutin is not mentioned. He has either retired or is going to retire soon, due to his marriage with the Portuguese lady Maria de Torres y Kruz. The couple will move to San Sebastian, where Broutin will continue to build his vast arms collection until his death in 1918. Besides the *salles* owned by Adelardo Sanz and Pedro Carbonell, other spaces are the *Círculo Militar* (where Sanz and Carbonell fence frequently), José Carbonell's *salle* (he is the brother of Pedro Carbonell, and is now working alone), and the *salle* owned by Felix Lyon. The latter is especially significant.

On 16 February 1894, Lyon launches a challenge against Sanz, because apparently Sanz has made some negative comments about his technique. Lyon's challenge states:

Because I do not possess a fortune or important sums of money, I regretfully cannot place a bet, but as a courteous and gentle man, I invite you to:

A twenty-minute bout without rests, with the following conditions:

White jacket.

Blackened foil tips.

Only touches within the fencing circumference, in other words, on the chest, will be counted.

The jury will be conformed by four people, two on each fencer's side.

The profits will be dedicated to benefit the poor.

I set a deadline of eight days, starting today, and after that deadline, I shall consider this matter finished, upon public consideration. (*El Liberal*, 19 February 1894, page 3)

Sanz responds with a long note in which he enumerates the many Spanish, French, and Italian masters with whom he has fenced. He dedicates a full paragraph to comment on Lyon's challenge and technique:

Although he calls himself a professor of the French school, I believe that the way he fences cannot be admitted within this school. I am willing to go to Paris and hold a bout with the French fencing champions Merignac, Rue, and Prevost. These eminent professors, whose merits have not been questioned by anyone, will decide which of us is right. Their decision will be undisputable, and I will accept it, as it will come from Mr. Lyon's compatriots. If he wants to fence in Madrid, and given that his defective guard protects what he calls the "fencing circumference," in other words, the center of the chest, the touches should be counted anywhere above the hips, and we should use weapons from the Baudry system, with a slightly sharpened point, because the blackened buttons he suggests also leave marks when the foil slips. Therefore, we should fence shirtless. I would be pleased to have as judges Mr. Leon Broutin, Mr. Pedro and Mr. José Carbonell, the most reputed around here. I propose two bouts of ten minutes, and I demand at least a bet of 500 duros, because, not having money to bet, he has nothing to lose in fencing matters, and although Mr. Lyon says he does not possess a fortune, the amount I propose is acceptable enough so that those who believe in his aptitude, if there are any, can provide it to him. This is not a novelty in the world of fencing, as the Italian school champions Pini and Greco have recently earned money prizes in the United States. (*La Época*, 19 February 1894, page 4)

The article ends with Sanz dismissing the whole matter. There is then a response from Lyon that *El Imparcial* decides not to publish because "it contains phrases that may lead to unpleasant matters that do not belong to the public," but that also attempts to bring the dispute to a close. This does not happen, however, as both parts consider themselves offended. Four marquises (Heredia among them) and two generals gather as a tribunal of honor to discuss the affair. They

agree upon the fact that a tribunal of honor is the adequate path to follow, but they cannot go on because they represent only one of the two parts, that of Sanz. A proper tribunal is finally organized, and it determines that Lyon should not feel offended upon Sanz's opinions, and that Sanz should not be offended by Lyon's last letter, because, being its author French, did not have enough vocabulary to express what he later clarified verbally before the tribunal. The adversaries mutually acknowledge their condition of correct gentlemen and finally sign the act, which is published in full on 3 March 1894 on the first page of *El Liberal*.

During the following years Sanz continues his activity at his salle and he frequently participates in public exhibits, including fencing bouts in the park of El Retiro that are followed by picnics. He continues to receive illustrious visitors from France and Italy, among them Athos, the son of the Baron of San Malato. In 1894 the press also reports that Sanz's brother, Alfredo, has opened his own salle d'armes.

In this period, news of bouts at Sanz's salle include the participation of children, especially the sons of the Carbonell brothers. The press reserves for the young fencers a tone of paternalism that is also extended to another couple of recently arrived students:

Two women, two cute, gracious and distinguished ladies, two sister champions, Fulvia and Angela Miró, scored a brilliant victory in the noble and difficult art of fencing.

After the sound of steel, skillfully handled by delicate hands, there was the sound applause, dedicated to their merit and born out of admiration and surprise.

Surprise, yes, and why not? If we admit the ideas of sweetness, of meekness, of weakness as characteristics of the feminine type, any contrary quality found among the qualities that adorn the charming daughters of Eve is occasion of strangeness. We do not understand women but in a state of perpetual cooing. We have imagined her always secluded at home, next to the stove, the sewing machine or the cradle, and when, like now, we see her in a different field, in one that is proper of man, scoring victories with the flashing foil, we cannot help but increase our enthusiasm towards the "beautiful half of the human species." (*Nuevo Mundo*, 13 February 1896, page 7)

These "two flowers," these two "doves disguised as lions," are the daughters of the Spanish painter Rafael Miró, and they have been raised in Paris. If it is possible to overlook the condescending general tone of this and other articles in which their bouts are narrated, what is left is a description of two young skillful foilists, both under 20, who have been professionally trained in Paris and are continuing to practice under Maitre Sanz. Once again, consequent with his practice of previous years, the master has admitted female students in his salle.

A major event is affecting Spain, Madrid, and Adelardo Sanz's social circle. Cuba, the last possession of Spain in America, has started its third attempt at independence by means of arms, with the support of the United States. Sanz supports the troops through fundraising events and charitable events that include fencing exhibits. In the meantime, he continues to invite reputed fencers to Madrid. Pini returns in April 1897; in November Sanz receives Rue, and in January

1898 he holds public bouts with Kirchoffer and Miniaque. Salle Sanz also offers classes in French boxing, and publishes another article in favor of dueling.



(Véase el artículo.) LAS SEÑORITAS MIRÓ EN LA SALA DE ARMAS (Fots. OTERO.)

Fig. 2. Fulvia and Angela Miró. *Nuevo Mundo*, 13 February 1896, page 8

On 17 July 1898, the newspapers *El Imparcial* and *La Correspondencia de España* include an advertisement that reads: "A young man, of about fifteen years of age, robust, is needed. Puerta del Sol, 9. Salle d'Armes." This is the address of Sanz's establishment, and the person who knocks on the Maitre's door responding to the advertisement, the one who is approved both by Adelardo and by Alfredo Sanz and hired, is a young man who comes from the Castilian town of Quintanar del Rey. His name is Angel Lancho, and very soon he will start doing more than washing the towels and cleaning up the salle. He will start training with Sanz, along with another apprentice named Ciriaco González. Lancho and González will be the first two students to experiment with an invention of Sanz, a new type of grip, and the first to be educated in a series of new techniques made possible by this invention. The 20th century is about to begin, and the Modern Spanish School of Fencing is about to be officially born.

## Part II: The Modern Spanish School of Fencing

The first news of the creation of the Modern Spanish School of Fencing is published on 17 October 1902. On that date, the magazine *Alrededor del mundo* offers a note titled "The New Spanish Sword," in which Adelardo Sanz declares he has created the school. He states that the main reason for developing this new trend in fencing is his own invention of a new type of sword (as will be seen later, the patent for the invention was registered in 1895). The article serves several purposes: it introduces the school to the public, it provides one of the few descriptions available of the actual transformations introduced by Sanz in terms of technique, it gives the names of the two disciples of Sanz who are training in the new form, and it presents a public challenge to all fencers in Spain.

In terms of technique, Sanz starts by noting that his school is not radically different from the Italian or French ones, but later he explains the details that make it distinct:

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. (*Alrededor del Mundo*, 17 October 1902, page 258)

In other articles and press notes Sanz and his disciples will further explain that the goal of the master in inventing the new grip and developing a particular technique for it was to combine the speed provided by the French grip with the power granted by the Italian grip.

Regarding his disciples, several aspects are worth of comment. The readers learn that in 1902 Angel Lancho, that young man who in 1898, at the age of 15, had entered Sanz's school as an assistant, has become already a Prévôt, along with Ciriaco González. Both will soon obtain their Master's titles from Sanz. Lancho will continue to fence in Spain for several years, becoming the most visible face of the school, while Ciriaco González will leave for Argentina in 1906, becoming one of the most recognized masters in that country. In 1902, however, they are both still apprentices, and Sanz, giving a sample in writing of his singular character, describes them as "two young men of quite average physical condition" when launching the challenge. Years later,



the master will state that he included this remark to demonstrate that the technique, and not particular individuals, was superior.

The challenge includes the possibility of wagers, and is extended to any fencer who wants to test his skills against Sanz's disciples. The challenge does not seem to have any responses for several months. As time passes by, a wager of 5,000 pesetas is established, but there is still no response until almost a year later. In September 1903, the newspaper *El Liberal* publishes a response from Afrodísio Aparicio, one of the disciples of Pedro Carbonell, in which the young fencer accepts the challenge. There are not, however, chronicles of this bout effectively taking place, and the response is somewhat confusing, because Aparicio wants to fence with sabres, when Sanz's invention is a grip more adequate for foil and épée fencing.

The year of 1903 is marked by Sanz taking a rather aggressive position with regard to his status as a master, his school, and his invention. Early in the year, in a letter to *El Liberal*, Sanz and other fencing masters (Pedro Ducouso, Eugene Bogue, and Santiago Huete) present a complaint because two institutions, Sociedad de Fomento de la Esgrima and Unión Escolar de Madrid, have organized a tournament in which they want to grant a prize and title of "Champion of Spain." The masters who sign the letter explain that the contest lacks several elements to effectively consider it a national event, and for this reason they question the choice of name for the title, and they express their decision not to attend, suggesting that, without their presence, the championship will be reduced to a contest among fencers from a single organization.

Soon Sanz's opinions become more personal. On 26 March 1903, he writes to *El Imparcial* complaining because the weekly newspaper *El Nuevo Mundo* has called his former associate Pedro Carbonell "the first and the best of the fencing masters teaching in Madrid." Maitre Sanz questions this statement both in terms of Carbonell's knowledge and of the quality of his disciples. Two days later, Carbonell responds through *La Época* in a letter that is not quoted directly but summarized in a brief note: "Mr. Carbonell tells us that he has no time to be involved in controversy, and that he has already presented his doctrine in his published book *Teoría de la esgrima*, which has had the honor of being approved by the Ministry of War" (*La Época*, 28 March 1903, page 2). It is worth noting that in this period, Carbonell is designated fencing master for the young Prince of Asturias and future king Alfonso XIII.

Despite this disagreement between Sanz and *El Nuevo Mundo* in 1903, the newspaper is responsible for an October article that provides a written and graphic "family portrait" of *Salle Sanz*, which includes the master, the two previously mentioned disciples, and a third one, an army sergeant named Pedro Pacheco, member of the light cavalry regiment Lusitania, who seems to specialize in sabre. Gradually, the names of these three disciples, Lancho, González, and Pacheco will acquire prominence in the press reports related to Sanz's activities. A sample of the appreciation of Sanz for his disciples can be seen in March 1904, when both Lancho and González are drafted for military service, and Sanz organizes a fencing event to raise funds and pay for their exemption so they can continue to teach and practice at his *salle d'armes*. The event seems to have been successful, given that there is no news of the disciples abandoning or returning to the *salle*.



ADELARDO SANZ

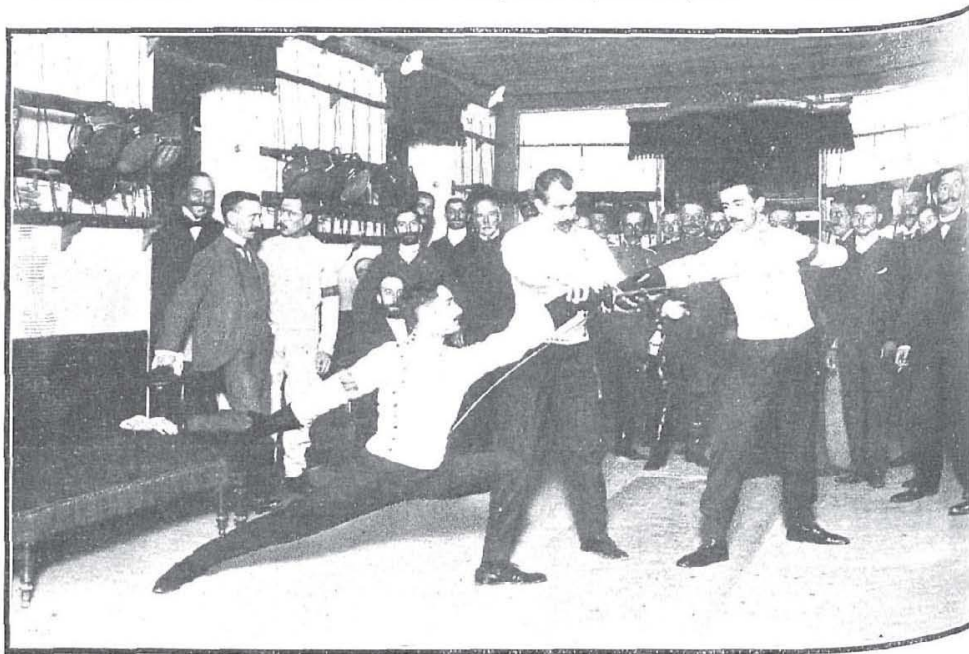
## De esgrima LA ESCUELA ESPAÑOLA

El último jueves reunió en su casa á buen número de inteligentes aficionados al noble arte de la esgrima, el afamado maestro de armas D. Adelardo Sanz. Era el objeto del conocido profesor dejar probada la superioridad de la escuela española, inventada por él, sobre la italiana y la francesa.

A la explicación teórica que dió á todos los presentes el Sr. Sanz, siguió la práctica, haciendo ejecutar á dos de sus discípulos predilectos un interesante y movido asalto, presenciando el cual los competentes espectadores pudie-



ANGEL LANCHO



ASALTO A ESPADA ESPAÑOLA ENTRE DOS DISCIPULOS DEL SR. SANZ

Fot. de Campaña



SARGENTO PACHECO

ron confirmar las excelencias de la nueva é ingeniosa arma, que se debe al distinguido esgrimidor.

Teniendo en cuenta lo que de bueno tienen los floretes franceses é italianos, sin quitarles ninguna de sus ventajas, cree el Sr. Sanz haber orillado con su invención las dificultades que para ser armas perfectas de combate tienen las de las escuelas extranjeras.

Don Ciriaco González, el Sr. Lancho y el sargento de Lusitania Sr. Pacheco, fueron los notables tiradores elegidos por el maestro para que pudieran apreciarse los méritos indiscutibles de la nueva escuela.

La fiesta se daba en honor de la prensa y á ella asistió numerosa y distinguida concurrencia, que fué obsequiada con un buen servido lunch.

Los Sres. Marqués de Heredia, O'Donnell, Martos, Cembrano, Muguero y otros notables maestros, aplaudieron calurosamente á los que probaron las ventajas que sobre las escuelas extranjeras tiene la inventada por el Sr. Sanz.



CIRIACO GONZALEZ

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Fig. 1: The master and the disciples in Salle Sanz. *Nuevo Mundo*, 15 October 1903, page 10.

The years 1904 and 1905 are also the years of a long controversy that leads to a duel between Sanz and a fencer named Guido Paleri, disciple of Maitre Ducouso. The conflict begins in May 1904, when Paleri publishes a note in which he describes two fencers, not from Salle Sanz, but from Salle Bonafont, using a sword whose description is quite similar to the one of the weapon Sanz has invented. In this article, Paleri states that, even though Mr. Bonafont seems to have invented a weapon, he has not brought too much attention towards himself, dedicating himself humbly to the exercise of teaching. Even though there is not a direct reference to Sanz, the latter feels that Paleri has made an innuendo regarding his work and his invention, and on 30 May he publishes a note in the newspaper *La Correspondencia de España* responding to Paleri and clarifying that he has a patent for his sword dated 1895. Immediately below Sanz's note, the newspaper publishes Paleri's response, which denies any intention of offense but is quite dismissive in tone.

Even though several months go by, it seems clear that a peaceful arrangement between the parts could not be reached, because almost a year later, on 13 March 1905, *El Imparcial* publishes an act of duel between Sanz and Paleri, which has taken place the day before (12 March) in the outskirts of Madrid. The act transmits the tension between the parts, as Paleri's seconds consider that the conditions of the encounter are too dangerous, while Sanz's witnesses insist that they are adequate, taking into account that Paleri refuses to withdraw his offense. After several bouts in which Sanz takes the offensive and advances while Paleri retreats, Sanz produces a cut in Paleri's shirt, at the height of the stomach, and three of the four witnesses and both of the physicians in attendance decide to conclude the duel, considering also the threat of one of the seconds to abandon the terrain if the confrontation continues. The subscribers of the act try to provide a balanced outcome of the encounter stating that both parts behaved gallantly and gentlemanly. Paleri and Sanz will not exchange words in public or cross swords again.



Don Guido Paleri, distinguido tirador de armas, que ha tenido un duelo con



El maestro Don Adelardo Sanz, en los alrededores de la Porqueriza

Fig. 2. News of the duel between Sanz and Paleri. *Por esos mundos*, March 1905, page 268

This is not, however, the last duel that will be seen in 1905 in relation to Sanz's school. Another encounter, which will later acquire tones of legend, takes place between a disciple of Sanz and a disciple of Carbonell: Angel Lancho and Afrodisio Aparicio, the same fencer that a few years before had publicly accepted Sanz's challenge.

At this point, both Aparicio and Lancho have obtained their teaching certificates from their masters, and are quickly becoming two of the best-known fencers of the new generation. At some point in 1905, Afrodisio Aparicio seems to have made some dismissive comments about the Spanish school, and Lancho declares himself the offended part, challenging Aparicio to a duel. Aparicio accepts. In his position as the offended part, Lancho has the right to choose the weapon. Being more skilled in épée, it would be expected of him to choose this weapon, but he decides to let Aparicio choose, knowing that he is more skilled in sabre. Aparicio responds to the gesture by insisting in the use of the épée. This is finally the weapon used in the encounter.

Contrary to the tense language used in the records of the duel between Sanz and Paleri, the act of duel between Lancho and Aparicio reads as a technical document that reports several touches from both fencers without the drawing of blood, until Lancho finally hits Aparicio's forearm. Even though the wound is not dangerous, it is Lancho's physician who suggests stopping the encounter, arguing that it would not be fair for Aparicio to continue in such a condition. Aparicio's party initially disagrees, but soon he and his representatives gently accept the suggestion.

Further accounts of this encounter state that a young lady bribed the guard of the property where the duel took place to be allowed to observe the bouts from a window, adding a touch of romanticism to the event. Whether or not this is true, what is out of doubt is that shortly after the encounter between the two young masters they become close friends, and a few years later Afrodisio Aparicio publicly adopts the doctrine of the Modern Spanish School of Fencing. In fact, between the decades of 1910 and 1930, the press registers frequent public exhibits "starring" Lancho and Aparicio (or "Lancho and Afrodisio," the nickname coined by the press for the duo).

The year 1905 also brings the publishing of a booklet titled *La espada española y su escuela* (The Spanish Sword and Its School). This document includes letters from notable intellectuals of the period, such as authors Benito Pérez Galdós and Miguel de Unamuno, providing their opinions on the matter, and a comment by Adelardo Sanz, in which he complains about the rejection he has faced since he started teaching his new doctrine:

Since I invented my weapon and my school I have had to fight against obstructions from many fencers. One of these manifestations has been that of denying to this weapon and this school the significance for Spain that I attribute to it. I would have never reached my goal if it had depended on them, but since this is not a matter of fencing but of rights, I have done without the hostile opinion of these fencers, consulting instead with people of proven talent, and even though I do not have the honor of being friends with most of them, their responses have given me the reason in this matter. (*El Heraldo de Madrid*, 18 April 1905, page 3)

Three years after presenting his school in public, Sanz is showing already some signs of exhaustion and exasperation. Nevertheless, he has the energy to open a larger and more comfortable Salle d'Armes at a new location in Alcalá Street, abandoning the traditional space associated with his name in Puerta del Sol. The new salle offers the amenities of both a fencing school and a social club, and, as in the past, is frequented by members of the capital city's elite. Other traditions are also continued: there are "open house" bouts to interest new members, there are regular tournaments, and Sanz receives visiting masters, such as the Italian Mr. Galante.

Two years later, in 1907, Sanz publishes a couple of articles in which he reflects upon the state of fencing in Spain and in the world. In one of them, responding to a letter from a fellow fencer, he declares "foil is dead," explaining that the épée is becoming the preferred weapon in France. In the other article, titled "The Beautiful Fencing," he continues to explain that épée fencing has surpassed foil fencing because it is more practical, but he observes that it is a frequent mistake in new fencers, precisely because of this practical approach, to forget about form and style and to focus only on results. Sanz suggests that, without going back to the overcomplicated rituals of the foil, the new generation of fencers maintains the focus on fighting gracefully. As a result of these meditations, Sanz also writes public letters to several nobles who are well known fencing aficionados, such as the Marquis of Heredia (a noble who had been friends with El Zuavo, Sanz's master), requesting for prizes and incentives for fencers. The Marquis of Heredia responds immediately creating a cup with his name, while other nobles offer monetary incentives.

This is the last active year for Maitre Sanz. Either due to all the opposition he has encountered or due to personal reasons, he decides to retire in 1908. His retirement is made public on 25 September 1908, through a letter he writes to *El Heraldo de Madrid*. The note expresses Sanz's pessimistic vision, not only of his fellow fencers, but also of his country:

By fencing with the strongest French and Italian fencers, Ciriaco González in America and Angel Lancho in Europe have proved the merit of our school; however, I have not been able to make it welcome with sympathy in Madrid where, no matter what it is said, there is a decided predilection for anything foreign, because unfortunately almost all Spaniards have lost confidence in themselves and resist the idea that a compatriot can do something noticeable. Besides, during my campaign of diffusion, I have had the courage to present the naked truth, and here, where opportunists enjoy all sympathies, the sincere characters are perceived as odious. (*El Heraldo de Madrid*, 25 September 1908, page 1)

The letter also includes an important piece of information: Maitre Sanz is in such a state of depression that he has advised his disciples to leave the country, and he has also decided to burn the manuscript of the book in which he would have explained his school and technique to the public. The readers are left only with the title: *Método de esgrima española moderna* (Method of Modern Spanish Fencing). The master believes that the only way to perpetuate his school is through his disciples, especially Angel Lancho, who, in spite of Sanz's advice, remains in Madrid and inherits the recently opened salle d'armes.

Several newspapers inform of Sanz's decision, and some of them comment on the matter or receive notes from former disciples and friends of the master. An especially emotional piece written by Gonzalo de Quirós echoes Sanz's pessimism, and the author wonders if other masters, such as Pedro Carbonell, will soon follow Sanz. Carbonell, however, will live another ten years, and his retirement from practice will not involve the same amount of bitterness and regrets.

After Sanz's retirement, some articles evoke him and his *salle*. The school is kept alive especially by the constant success and the public diffusion of the Spanish doctrine by Angel Lancho, who has been maintaining and increasing the connections his master had with the elites in Madrid. Although he is not teaching any longer, Maitre Sanz continues to fence with his disciples for the next twenty years.

On 13 November 1928 Adelardo Sanz's name reappears in the news under unfortunate circumstances. The morning of that day, Maitre Sanz, aged 69, is found dead in his room at a boarding house. He is lying on his bed, wearing a fencing mask that has been lined with hydrophilic cotton soaked in chloroform. The master has committed suicide. Most of the press notes coincide in two details: one, that the master had made a previous attempt, prevented by "one of his disciples," who had confiscated two kilograms of chloroform from him, the other, that, according to Sanz's landlady, he often complained from imaginary illnesses and showed signs of depression.

Nevertheless, a few days after the event, on 18 November, a long article published in the newspaper *La Libertad* by a former friend of Sanz's, Antonio Zozaya, provides a different explanation. Zozaya calls Sanz "the lover of shadows" and remembers receiving a visit from him ten years earlier. In that occasion, Sanz looked already distressed, but the ailment was not imaginary but quite real and recent: he had lost his wife, "the partner of his life," and was not being able to recover from this loss. It is worth noting that this is the only occasion in which a newspaper makes any reference to Sanz's family.

The most curious obituary for Adelardo Sanz, however, comes from the pen of one of his favorite students, Angel Lancho. The day after Sanz's death, Lancho writes a note with mixed emotions. Lancho starts by saying that he and his master had distanced due to reasons that he does not consider pertinent to explain in the occasion. He does explain, however, that they had stayed in touch through their common friend, sergeant Pedro Pacheco. Lancho expresses his gratitude, but at the same time evokes the difficult character of the master: "He knew he was rough, unpleasant in his treatment, and he did not want me to imitate him in this behavior. So much so that in several occasions he told me: 'Look how I am, and try to be the opposite'" (*La Libertad*, 14 November 1928, page 3). He also comments on the contradictory nature of Sanz:

...this man, who always had a dominant character, who left me alone in life so I could walk by myself, did not understand that after giving me freedom of movement I would indeed move freely. This was beyond his will. I was his work, and maybe he would have enjoyed undoing it as much as he did when he created it, only to make it again. He loved me in spite of himself.

The young master cannot attend Sanz's funeral, but he dedicates to his memory the tour for which he is preparing. Lancho ends his letter with these words: "Master, you were quite unhappy and you had in yourself your worst enemy. I loved you much, and you did not want or did not know how to understand the loyalty and attachment I had towards you. Rest in peace."

Despite Sanz's harsh character, despite his depressive nature and his particular personality, the Modern Spanish School of Fencing continues to exist for a few more years, with Ciriaco González teaching in Argentina, and Lancho and Aparicio promoting it in Madrid. Even Carbonell's disciples will incorporate the use of the Spanish grip and some of Sanz's techniques, as can be seen in Julio Martínez Castelló's book *The Theory and Practice of Fencing*. The Spanish grip invented by Adelardo Sanz will continue to be considered one of the three basic fencing grips, at least in Spanish books, until the multiple orthopedic grips start to dominate foil fencing after World War II, and will continue to be used in a modified form by fencers for a few decades more, until new regulations by the Fédération Internationale d'Escrime establish that Sanz's grip cannot be used in competition.