

Castello, Julio Martinez; *The Theory and Practice of Fencing*; [book]; Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, New York, United States of America; 1937.

Extracts from Castello's *The Theory and Practice of Fencing*  
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Julio Martinez Castello earned his diploma as Maestro de Armas at Sala de Armas Carbonel on 9 January 1906. In 1937 his second fencing text, *The Theory and Practice of Fencing*, was published, apparently originally written in English. This volume's title is interesting; it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that it was chosen as a tribute to Don Pedro Carbonel's fencing text, *Teoria y Practica de la Esgrima*, published in Madrid in 1900.

*Teoria y Practica de la Esgrima* is important because in its introduction Carbonel speaks of both the French and Italian Schools, emphasizing that both had strong features. However, he emphasizes the need for unification and simplification of the schools, taking what he considers, based not only on the authors of the respective texts, but also his experience and observations, to be the best features of each. A statement of this sort by a prominent Maestro (Carbonel served as Maestro de Armas to King Alfonso XIII) at this date may well have been a factor in the initiation of the development and the growth of a Spanish School of fencing.

Thirty-seven years later, Castello's *The Theory and Practice of Fencing* provides a brief description of where the Spanish School stood as Spain was convulsed by its Civil War:

It was not until 1900 that Spain, the mother of scientific fencing, came to have a distinct school of her own, under the Spanish master, Don Adelardo Sanz. The Spanish weapon is a modified form of the Italian cross-bar; so shaped as to facilitate the action of the thumb and index finger in securing the dexterity of the French weapon while preserving the strength of the Italian sword. In some parts of Europe it is called the Portugese foil. (pages 4-5)

These three schools of fencing which today differ little except insofar as the peculiarities of each type of weapon demand, dominate fencing all over the world. ...

The Spanish school predominates in Spain and Portugal. (page 5)

Each has had its share of great fencing masters: men like ...; Sanz and Carbonel in Spain. (page 5)

The modern Spanish school is a compromise between the French and Italian. The modification of the cross-bar principle allows much greater finger control than is possible with the Italian foil, and yet gives stronger parries than the French foil. The Spanish school believes in extending the arm more than the French, but not quite as much as the Italians. The stronger grip allows a greater use of the attack on the blade, the counter attacks, and the false attacks than was customary with the French. In other respects the Spanish school now follows the modern tendency of the French school with the left knee bent forward, the increasing use of the attacks

advancing, and the regular eight guards or parries of the French are supplemented by the use of the high semicircle parry, which is called the ninth parry. (page 7)

Maestro Castello was trained in Sala de Armas Carbonel within nine years of the publication of *Teoria y Practica de la Esgrima*, presumably with Maestro Carbonel's theory of fencing and desire for simplicity and the unification of the French and Italian Schools as a feature of that training. By 1937 Castello writes in the introduction in the Author's Preface to *The Theory and Practice of Fencing* that his practice was based on the French School for Foil, the Italian School for Sabre, and an eclectic approach based on his experience for Epee. His synopsis of the features of the Spanish School is the last contemporaneous description of the Spanish School I have located in an English language fencing text.