# La idea de América en el Club Palósfilo<sup>1</sup>

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### Image: Pilar Cagiao-Vila<sup>2</sup> y Pilar Cagiao-Vila<sup>2</sup> y Pilar Cagiao-Vila<sup>2</sup> y

#### Resumen

El Club Palósfilo, que surgió a comienzos del siglo XX en la localidad onubense de Palos de la Frontera, ejemplifica el rumbo que durante las primeras décadas del siglo XX irían tomando algunas asociaciones españolas nacidas al calor del regeneracionismo hispanoamericanista. Mediante la exaltación de valores locales y a través de la forja de diferentes tipos de redes, pretendió realizar su particular contribución a la idea simbólica de América. Para ello, concibió proyectos que, a pesar de su escaso grado de éxito, fueron interpretados por sus integrantes como el precedente de otros que, reformulados, llegarían a ver la luz en el tránsito a las tesis de la hispanidad más conservadora de la década de los veinte.

Palabras clave: Club Palósfilo, hispanoamericanismo; redes; memoria; discurso

#### Abstract

Founded in the early 20th century in Palos de la Frontera (Huelva), the *Club Palósfilo* exemplifies the path taken by many Spanish associations during the first decades of the 20th century, created in the heat of Hispano– American regenerationism. By exalting local values and forging diverse networks, it attempted to make its contribution to the symbolic idea of America. With this aim, it began projects that, despite their relative lack of success, were interpreted by its members as a precedent for others which, after being reformulated, would come to fruition in the 1920s in the context of a transition towards more conservative theories of Hispanism.

Keywords: Club Palósfilo; Hispano-Americanism; networks; memory; discourse

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#### Introduction

The Club Palósfilo, as its name indicates, arose from a local initiative in Palos de la Frontera in Huelva. Practically ignored by the academic community that from different perspectives has investigated the Americanist associationism that emerged in Spain between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries<sup>4</sup>, despite its modesty with respect to other entities, it represents a type of initiative from civil society that is a useful example of the course that some of the variants of peninsular Americanism would take. Taking into account its human and ideological components bifurcated initially between Andalusia and America, and later extended in other directions, the Club Palósfilo attempted to make its contribution to the strengthening of relations with the other side of the Atlantic. For this, it conceived projects that, beyond their degree of success, constituted opportunities to generate dynamics of action that exceeded the geographical framework of their place of origin through the forging of different types of networks that, nevertheless, tended towards the same objectives. On the one hand: those of a local character that, apart from aspiring towards the development and modernization of their own areas, also intended, through the exaltation of the "homeland", to contribute their values to the Fatherland with a capital 'F'. On the other: those woven by descendants of Spaniards who in their day had emigrated to America and who with a return to their roots sought the reinforcement of their identity split between Spain and the countries of that continent.

Our research, in the framework of a wider piece, is based on primary sources, mostly unpublished, from different Spanish repositories. Besides, the press, especially that of local origin, which here acquires a unique value for translating the environments and the feelings of the elites in which *Club Palósfilo* was conceived, constitutes another of the documentary pillars on which this paper is sustained.

## The precedents

In another previous contribution (Márquez and Cagiao, 2015) we already had the opportunity to point out that precisely because of its geographical location, the origins of the Club Palósfilo have their roots in the festivities of the IV Centennial celebrated in Huelva in which the town of Palos reached an unusual level of centrality. The idea promoted by the historian Cesáreo Fernández Duro is that Martin Alonso Pinzón, a native of Palos, was honored in the same terms as Columbus and that some of the events that took place in its local territory allowed the Villa to experience in 1892 a brief but intense stellar moment. However, despite the conviction that those commemorative acts would set a promising precedent for future economic development, only nostalgic memories and a commemorative plaque on the wall of the parish church remained. In fact, only two years after the celebrations, his situation had reached such a point that, ironically, the press commented that soon the descendants of the Pinzones, Yáñez and Bermúdez Quintero would be seen with the same clothes and the same personal effects as their ancestors found in the rooms of Guanahaní "(Gelí, 18/20 August 1894). A little later, at the beginning of the century, the Baedecker guide described the Villa as "aujord'hui insignificant", which undoubtedly revealed a bleak panorama. Far away were the days of the IV Centenary in which it had been believed that the historical value on which Palos counted due to its relationship with the discovery of America would last over time and serve as an incentive for its progress. Moreover, it would still be several

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Although D. Marcilhacy (2010) mentions it in some way in his excellent research on Race, he does not give it much attention when dealing with the different formulations that were elaborated around that concept at the time. On the other hand, we believe that when M. Rodríguez (2004) takes on one of the ramifications of the Club, he does not know the context in which its appearance

occurred, as well as the circumstances of its evolution. Something similar happens in certain contributions from Andalusian Palósfilo historiography, which has provided only occasional and somewhat inaccurate allusions (Gómez and Gozálvez, 1983, p. 210).

years before, through the creation of the *Club Palósfilo*, the descendants of the modest mayor of 1892 claimed to be the heirs of his aspirations to definitively "make history".

However, the impulse for his actions originated abroad and came by the hand of the Argentine, a son of Spaniards, Enrique Martínez Ituño, who must be considered the real mentor of this peculiar Americanist association. As a consul of the southern country accredited in Málaga, Martínez Ituño had received from the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Argentina, the lawyer and intellectual Estanislao Zeballos, the order to move to Palos in the summer of 1907 to oversee a series of paintings that evoked the Columbian places to be sent to Buenos Aires (El Heraldo Militar, March 25, 1913). The request of Zeballos, in line with his always ambiguous ideological evolution that at that led him to favor the return to Spanish roots, was executed by the Argentine consul who, accompanied by the landscape painter José Gartner, was able to observe the Villa's state of decline. There, he also learned about the activities carried out by the Sociedad Colombina (Márquez, 1988, 2011 and 2014, Núñez, 2014, Segovia, 1992) since it was founded in 1880, limited to a pilgrimage to La Rábida on 3 August and which, after the impasse suffered by this entity after the events of the war in Cuba, had recently been recovered.

Martínez Ituño designed a project that, if successful, in addition to contributing to the promotion of Palos, also pursued the goal of intensifying relations with America, an objective to which, because of his position, he had something to contribute. He moved first in his own sphere by using his chain of contacts made up of his colleagues from the consular corps accredited in Málaga, with whom he also coincided in his nautical interests. That is how the idea of holding a regatta organized by the Real Club Mediterráneo of this city arose, which, emulating the first trip of Columbus, on August 3, 1908, would leave from the port of Palos to the Canary Islands. Palos' town councilor transferred the initiative to the American governments and nautical clubs and, from different entities, began to receive adhesions from several countries.

The city council of Havana immediately picked up the proposal and agreed to appoint three councilors to take care of the matter, and although there were some dissensions with the government of the nation, Cuba seemed willing to participate (El Progreso, March 12, 1908). On the other hand, the nautical clubs of Rio de Janeiro also communicated their intention to attend. The same was reported from Caracas by the journalist Emilio Franklin on behalf of the nautical club he had just founded in the port of La Guaira (La Provincia, May 22, 1908). A couple of months previously, and as a correspondent for several Venezuelan newspapers, Franklin had visited Palos and met with its mayor to discuss the meeting on August 3. Quite possibly the interview was facilitated by the friendship of his father-in-law, Francisco Antonio Rísquez Alfonso - eminent Venezuelan doctor who arrived in Spain in 1901 to occupy the consulate of his country in Madrid – with the Argentine consul in Málaga, Enrique Martínez Ituño, who he would have known during the time in which the former was dedicated to the foundation of the Anti-tuberculosis League of this city.

For different reasons and despite the enthusiasm raised, the race was not held. However, that August 3, 1908, at a meeting convened by the mayor of Palos, a memorandum was drawn up of the 416th anniversary of the departure of the discovering fleet to America, in which special mention was made to the Pinzones, which was signed by the authorities of Palos, who were mostly related to he who had been the mayor of the town in 1892, Juan Manuel Prieto. Also among the signatories was the priest Manuel García Viejo, whose performance in the IV Centenary as a member of the Huelva local executive had given much to talk about. In fact, he was behind one of the many ideas that

ultimately did not come to fruition. It was the coronation of the Virgin of La Rábida that, taken in procession in the stern of the replica of the Santa Maria, would be followed by the bishops of Spain and America and a whole paraphernalia of royal marches, religious hymns, and 'God saves'. "This kind of aquatic pilgrimage", as he called it (Recuerdo del IV Centenario, October 12, 1892, p.22), was one of the many occurrences of Manuel García Viejo that would only be the prolegomenon of even more outlandish ones which would be raised later when he retired in Palos and integrated the future Club Palósfilo, whose origin was precisely in this meeting of August 3, 1908. Some of the American consuls who had a more significant relationship with Enrique Martínez Ituño also attended the meeting. Among others, Ricardo Gómez Carrillo who, although he had been consul general of Guatemala in Barcelona since 1907, spent long periods in that Andalusian city, and Isaac Arias Argáez, who had served there as consul of Colombia since 1894. The "Chato Arias", as he was nicknamed Rubén Darío, who met him when they both embarked together in the Panamanian port of Colón to travel to Spain as delegates of their respective countries at the events of the IV Centenary, was already, since his collaboration in the Colombian Guide (Jorreto-Paniagua y Martínez-Sanz, 1892) a fervent enthusiast of the promotion of relations between Spain and America. This "delightful, witty Bogotano, good teller of anecdotes and pasillo singer", as defined by the Nicaraguan poet in his autobiographical work (Darío, 2007, p.102), a doctor by profession, had a great friendship with his Argentine counterpart in Málaga, with whom he would collaborate for many years. The signature of Martínez Ituño, of course, also appeared in the Act of August 3, whose writing no doubt was inspired, based, for its conclusion, on an adaptation of the last verse of the refrain of the Argentine anthem: "to the people of Palos, Salud!"<sup>5</sup>.

This meeting and Acta, which evoked places and characters of historical significance in a local key while appealing directly to the assembled countries, would be the seed of the Club Palósfilo ideology. On the other hand, in that August of 1908, another event occurred that contributed to increasing the existing Americanist environment. Addressed in another previous work (Cagiao and Márquez, 2012, pp. 379–382), the visit made to Palos by Argentine journalist Ernesto Mario Barreda, among other consequences, resulted in a broad article about his trip that would appear in the Porteño weekly Caras y Caretas where he alluded to Palos as "the Jerusalem of the Americans". This qualification also began with this call: "I beg you to keep quiet for a moment because I am going to talk about the port of Palos...!", inspired, without doubt, by the poem by Campoamor dedicated to Columbus and published several times on the occasion of the IV Centenary. Barreda's composition would be recited years later by children in the schools of Palos every August 3. He also mentioned the Argentinean to his countryman, the Consul Martinez Ituño, who he would never meet (Barreda, 1908), with whom years later he would maintain an assiduous epistolary relationship that would make Barreda a very active palósfilo militant in Buenos Aires.

# The places of memory

The initiatives mentioned above served as a precedent for what would be the main project of the *Club Palósfilo* emerging even before its formal constitution that would not take place until March 15, 1909 coinciding, at the express wish of Enrique Martínez Ituño, with the inauguration of the house – *Villa Argentina* – which he built in Palos. It was now a question of tracing an avenue from the Villa to *La Rábida* that would be called *Calle de las Naciones y Colonias Americanas* and would be flanked by pavilions built by the different countries where their products and industries would be exhibited.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> The original printed form of the said act is in the Archivo Narciso Díaz de Escovar de Málaga.

Its mayor officially presented it on October 12, 1908, but the idea sprang, once again, from the Argentine Consul in Málaga Enrique Martínez Ituño<sup>6</sup>.

Soon there were some reactions against the project of the Calle de las Naciones, both from the formal Americanism existing in Huelva – the Sociedad Colombina Onubense - which felt its traditional role in these struggles, as well as from Madrid - the Unión Ibero-Americana - that for some time had nurtured a similar idea (Aguilera, 1904). However, Manuel de Burgos y Mazo, Conservative deputy for Huelva who greatly influenced Palos' administration and who had also signed the Act of August 3, moved to the Courts where he delivered an enthusiastic plea for the initiative. Using a grandiloquent oratory aimed at awakening patriotic feelings and affirming that "the doors of glory have not been closed for the Hispanic race, nor ended its influence in the course of the destinies of humanity", he requested that the Minister of State transmit exhort American governments to attend "with that affection we all owe to our mother country and to those who were once our children and who today must be beloved brothers [...] to march together in the course of destinies that in History, Providence must still reserve for the Hispanic race "(Diario de Huelva, 1908).

Among the first adhesions that during the following months were received in Palos from the American countries were those of Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, and Uruguay. The role of the accredited consuls in Spain, particularly those who operated in Málaga or had direct contact with Martínez Ituño, was decisive so that in some cases it was the presidents of the republics themselves who directly took up the issue at hand. Porfirio Diaz, Manuel Estrada Cabrera and Rafael Reyes, for example, established a direct

correspondence with the mayor of the town. In Argentina, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Estanislao Zeballos, who had urged Enrique Martínez Ituño to visit the Columbian places and provoked his enthusiasm for Palos, publicized the project of the Calle de las Naciones, daring even to compare it with the ostentatious Siegesallee in Berlin that had finished being built in 1901 (Zeballos, 1909). In this way the urban planning of the municipality of Palos was associated with the initiative and to enhanced it. Later, this sketch, along with a sketch of one of the paintings that Gartner would paint on commission from Zeballos - not coincidentally titled Las Carabelas Santa María, *Pinta* y  $Ni\tilde{n}a$  – would become the images that would permanently illustrate, as symbols of identity and of the alleged union of the "Old and New" worlds, the Club Palosfilo documents.

It would not take long for the Calle de las Naciones project to see some competitors emerge. This subject, the object of a detailed analysis on our part in another article mentioned previously (Cagiao and Márquez, 2012). concerned the sending of a representative of the Sociedad Colombina Onubense to Buenos Aires with the mission of spreading the importance of the historical places of Huelva in the celebrations of the Argentine centennial of 1910. There it alluded to the project of the American pavilions presenting it as an original idea of this association. The most substantial variation of the original palósfila idea of the Calle de las Naciones that intended to raise pavilions "along" the highway that united the town of Palos with the monastery, resided in the fact that the Huelva organization located the American constructions "around La Rábida". The issue of the location, which was not at all a minor issue, would regain some prominence in the Assembly of Americanist Societies and Corporations that was held in Huelva in 1912. And so again controversy

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> In an article on the subject published at that time, he highlighted the suggestion of El Diario Español de Buenos Aires, brought before the Congress of his country by the controversial Argentine deputy Manuel Carlés. Such suggestion was that on October 12 it

would be declared a public holiday with the purpose of "commemorating the most immaculate glorious memory of the triumph of the Spanish race in the centuries of human existence". In El Popular. Diario Republicano, Málaga, October 25, 1908.

would break out. Club Palósfilo defended the original project of the pavilions "along" the road from Palos to La Rábida, as had been designed in 1908, while the Colombina would insist, as exhibited in Buenos Aires, that they should be erected "around" the convent. As if that were not enough, a businessman from the Villa, also a member of the Sociedad Colombina Onubense, who would go much further by proposing that the pavilions be situated "making a square, allowing the Monastery to preside over the ensemble of American Nations" (La Rábida, 1912, p.27). This proposal, which underlined the role of Spain in an American framework, contributed to increasing confusion in the face of such variations on the same subject. However, despite the heated debate that arose around the issue, nothing concrete was reached.

The fundamental question that underlay the discrepancies between one and the other about the potential location of the American pavilions must be interpreted in a double sense. On the one hand, in the key of local struggle, and on the other, even more critical, of the vindication of the historical importance of the places indicated. So if for some the emblematic convent, symbolizing Spain, constituted the fundamental element of the origin of America, for others the important thing was to highlight not only the role of Palos but also that of the American nations. Furthermore, the question of location was combined with that of the cult of historical figures, forming a kind of civic religion. And if an association made August 3, date of the departure of Columbus, the great day of the Columbian festivities with a pilgrimage to La Rábida included, the other opted for March 15, date of the return of La Pinta and La Niña, as the main commemorative event with a "Pinzonian" note, worthy of being celebrated in the Villa. In short, different choices of places of memory, but in both cases decidedly focused in the same direction: the establishment of myths about the place, the event, and the heroes through an interested re-reading of history that in all cases emphasized an interpretation of America with a purely Spanish matrix.

# The ritual of Club Palósfilo

The speech of colombinos and palósfilos, coincident in several aspects with that of the Americanism of the state assembly of that moment, was sometimes quite similar. In 1910, for example, during the festivities of August 3, the references to the Argentine centenary were continuous and the oratory very similar. In the case of the acts of the Sociedad Colombina, the intervention of its president in La Rábida was dedicated to the "alma inmortal de la Raza" with allusions to Rodó, Altamira and Blasco Ibáñez, considered at that time to be true paradigms of the Hispano–American twinning<sup>7</sup>. He also pointed to the historic convent as "the Jerusalem of the American peoples" glossing the expression used in his day by Ernesto Mario Barreda, although, in that case, referring to the town of Palos. On his part, the deputy secretary of the Union Iberoamericana de Madrid, who attended the event as a special guest, said in his dissertation that it had been in La Rábida where "the discovery and unity of the homeland by the Catholic Monarchs arose and determined the expansion of our Race. " This assertion was equivalent, as D. Marcilhacy (2010, p.476) correctly points out, to linking the founding myths to the American epic as an essential and revealing historical continuity of the most exalted nationalism.

On its part, in the much more modest *palósfila* celebration that took place in the Villa, the unveiling of a tombstone was carried out, which, in vindication of local prominence, read: "To the Pinzones, co–discoverers with Columbus of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> *Ariel* by Rodó represented one of the discursive props of the currents that invoked the spiritual reconciliation of Spain with America in full coincidence with Spanish regenerationism on its Spanish–American side, one of whose main exponents would be Rafael Altamira, who had recently made a long journey across the

American continent to extend this preaching. For his part, Blasco Ibáñez had been invited to Argentina to attend a series of conferences organized in Buenos Aires on the eve of the Centennial, receiving multiple tributes, but also criticism from other Spanish intellectuals (Cagiao, 2015).

New World" (*Vida Marítima*, October 10, 1910). There were also speeches by the parish priest García Viejo and the Argentine consul Martínez Ituño who, in his speech, raising his own status to that of a "representative of the grandchildren of Spain", alluded to his countryman Belisario Roldán who a short time before had delivered a successful conference in Madrid in favor of the consolidation of relations between Spain and Argentina (Cagiao, 2011, pp. 27–29). The memory of Roldán's fiery words served Martínez Ituño to close his speech, which he ended by proclaiming: "Let's say as did Pinzón: *Avante*, *avante, avante*" (*La Justicia*, 15 august 1910).

Under this motto, turned into a real symbol for the *palósfilos*, the Club was devoted to the task of securing old projects and lighting new ones with authentic fanaticism. In all its documents, preceded by the section EXHIBITION OF PALOS (sic.), as a sign that every palósfilo action gravitated in the same direction, were the verses of J. Fernández Bremón so popular during the IV Centenary ("Génova si te envaneces/con la gloria de Colón/ considera sin pasión, lo poco que lo mereces/ Su patria no puede ser/la que en la vida le abandona/Colón, no nació en Saona/ nació en Palos de Moguer") that, after having accompanied the propaganda of the frustrated regattas, had become part of the rhetorical battery that would characterize the Club in the key of "local nationalism". The same applied every time in a *palósfilo* act the Anthem to the Pinzones, composed by the priest Manuel García Viejo, was sung as happened in the celebrated meeting on October 12, 1911, the date on which, furthermore, the children of the Villa schools recited for the first time the poem "In the port of Palos, facing the sea", the work of the Argentine Ernesto Mario Barreda. On that same occasion a speech was read extolling the figure of Rodrigo de Triana to which, without a solution of continuity, exaltation was added to the Indians of Guanahaní. The address ended in a rather more practical sense, demanding for the Villa "Means of communication of modern life and the dredging of the blind port of Palos" (Vida

*Marítima*, November 10, 1911), another claim on which *Club Palósfilo* would repeatedly insist.

All this would constitute its ninth *Memorandum*. which also included the latest accessions received from Eleodoro Lobos, Argentine agriculture minister in the cabinet of Roque who conveyed Sáenz Peña. also his congratulations: from Villanueva. Benito president of the Jockey Club of Buenos Aires; from Enrique Deschamps, consul general of the Dominican Republic in Barcelona; from journalist and academic Daniel Arias Argáez of Bogotá, brother of the Colombian consul in Málaga, for which reason the document, like other later documents, would be reproduced in the Boletín de Historia y antigüedades de Bogotá (1911, p.716–717). All these were added to those previously sent by other personalities such as the Argentine writer of Spanish descent, Rafael Padilla Arias, whose commitment to the initiatives promoted by his compatriot Martínez Ituño could not be higher after having criticized a short time before the Americans that, living on the peninsula, did nothing "to strengthen the bonds of the land that saw their birth with the blessed and generous Spain" (Padilla, 1908, p.8). Also, the directors of several American and Spanish newspapers, to which the Guatemalan consul in Barcelona Ricardo Gómez Carrillo had been linked, who had transmitted the club's ideas to the president of his country, Manuel Estrada Cabrera, had expressed support for the initiatives of the Club.

This complex ritual used by the *Club Palósfilo* in which literary compositions, historical figures and communications of adhesion from Spain and America were mixed would be repeated systematically throughout the following years, without a doubt with the intention of emphasizing the variety of ties that its members were capable of multiplying. In the same sense, Enrique Martínez Ituño acted when, unselfishly, he gave his residence in Palos, *Villa Argentina*, for the final installation of the Club. Barely a year after its inauguration, the mansion of the Argentine consul began to become a must see for all those who shared their ideas.

One of its most frequent visitors would be the winemaker from Palos de Moguer Eustaquio Jiménez, whose presence we emphasize not only because he was the brother of the later Nobel Prize winner, but also because he was the nephew of Francisco Jiménez, founding partner of the Sociedad Colombina Onubense. We cannot say whether Eustaquio Jiménez received the influence of his uncle in his passion for Columbian affairs or if, only, like so many people from the area, as the poet of Moguer himself pointed out, he became imbued with that spirit throughout his life (Jiménez, 2009, p 355-356). Perhaps his enthusiasm in these conflicts, already manifested when signing the Act of August 3, had mainly to do with questions of his business. The latter had led him to convince his brother Juan Ramón to use all his influences in order to obtain in America representation for his commercial firm or, better still, a consular charge of some country of that continent. With the first idea, and on the recommendation of the poet, Eustaquio Jiménez had addressed in June 1908 the writer from Cadiz, Eduardo de Ory, recently appointed consul of Colombia in Zaragoza (Archivo Histórico Nacional de España, Sección de Exteriores. Ministerio Asuntos PP. 1245/19886), to "requesting your attention, indicate to me people or houses of all respectability in Colombia and Cuba that can dedicate themselves to the sale of my wines and liquors" (Jiménez, 2006, p.194).

Regarding the final consular position, Eustaquio had also written to the Uruguayan writer José Enrique Rodó requesting his support to be appointed the representative of Uruguay in Huelva, whose consulate was then vacant. As an argument, he added that while some projects of a *palósfilo* type were underway, such as "regattas and an Exhibition of those Republics to

very convenient for that important Government to have its consulate" (Fogelquist, 1950, p. 333). Again Juan Ramón repeatedly insisted on this request (Jiménez, 2006, p.203). So he would do the same with Rubén Darío, with whom the poet of Moguer maintained a very close friendship, also requesting his influence for an eventual appointment as consul of Nicaragua in Huelva<sup>8</sup>. It would be in 1913, perhaps because of another of Juan Ramón's recommendations that in that year he had also addressed the Mexican diplomat Francisco A. de Icaza (Jiménez, 2006, p 377) because of his brother; when Eustaquio managed to be named consul of Colombia in Huelva. It seems to us, however, that the intercessions of Juan Ramón in his favor were more linked to the filial affection than to sharing any of "the absurd enlargements of the cult of Columbus, a danger unknown to anyone who has not lived in this

strengthen our relations with them, it would be

region", as the poet of Moguer himself once said in an explicit reference to the *Club Palósfilo* (Jiménez, 2008, p 1193).

# The palósfilo language

Gradually, the association was making decisions that would be decisive in its subsequent ideological evolution, as can be detected in one of its documents before the celebration of October 12, 1911. Something that would surpass purely semantic issues when it opted for baptizing America as a Columbian Continent without abandoning the denominations of the West Indies and the New World that C. Serrano had been using (1999, p.296) has perfectly defined the debates arising around the name of America as a question of linguistic nationalism "that, like the Guadiana, is reborn when least expected". Furthermore, apart from on other occasions, it had already constituted one of the points to be addressed by the Venezuelan Julio Febres Cordero during the IX Congress of Americanists that took place in La Rábida during

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Letter from Rubén Darío to Eustaquio Jiménez dated in Madrid on December 3, 1908. Biblioteca Cervantes Virtual. http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/nd/ark:/59851/bmc3x9p5

the IV Centenary, a mirror into which the palósfilos so often gazed. In vindicating the change of name that "in all fairness corresponds to the misnamed America of today" for other designations which it recognized "will seem strange and archaic, and even platonic", the intention was "to remedy a forgetfulness and historical usurpation" that according to the Club flagrantly violated a key element of Spain's own identity. That conviction would become so obsessive that, in 1912, they addressed the Rio de la Plata delegates at the XVIII International Congress of Americanists in London with the intention of making the name of the *Columbian* Continent effective before the scientific community "by passing a circular to the governments, educational centers. press. navigation companies, etc. ..., begging them to accept such designation [...] in their communications and announcements" (Memorandum 14. Club Palósfilo).

What is certain is that the palósfilos were adopting language that was ever more prone towards the epic and that anticipated its later, more obstinate discursive positions. Already in 1911, when the Club made its debut on the state scene in the Americanist assembly in Barcelona, convened by the brand new House of America, its representative finished his speech saying: "We feel running through our veins the same blood, and we are children of this chivalrous Spain, which, even in exchange for lagging behind in the progress of its century, gave, generously, the blood that still beats on American soil" (El Heraldo Militar, February 14, 1912). Such grandiloquent words permeated by a victim complex paradoxically impregnated with glory, on the other hand, typical of the most classic Spanish nationalism, undoubtedly inspired the following Memorandum published on February 1, 1912, which although it bore the pompous title of La Caballería Andante en el Descubrimiento de Indias, evoking a classic genre of Castilian literature, recounted with more restraint than expected the arrival of Columbus in America.

However, it would be in the subsequent Memorandum, which was also reproduced in the Boletín de Historia y Antigüedades (1913) in Bogota, where, under the title Honoring Spain. The Praiseworthy Work of the Club Palósfilo, which also included some padding by the parish priest García Viejo, the language would acquire almost messianic tones when affirming in relation to its militants that: "History presents us risen from the dead, extraordinary men, beings of immeasurable intellective height, which they have decisively contributed to the impulsive and accelerating movement of universal progress" (Memorandum 13. Club Palósfilo, March 1, 1912). With these words, the Memorandum emphasized the importance of the projects proposed until then, to which would soon be added that which the Club would commit itself to with renewed enthusiasm at the beginning of July 1912, immediately after the Assembly of Huelva and the harsh discussion that took place regarding the Calle de las Naciones. Now it intended to found a Central Nautical School destined for Spanish students or "of the republics that today compose the Colombian Continent", which would be directed by a Spanish vice admiral and frigate captains of the "nations of the Indies", as explained in the entity's Memorandum 17. In addition to the insistence on the nomenclature, it was added that the academic classes would start on October 12 and conclude on August 3 when practice for the Palos-Canarias regattas would begin, an old project that the *Palósfilo* obstinately persisted in recovering.

Nevertheless, in 1912 there were no races. So to commemorate 420 years since the Columbian departure, the Club had to limit itself once again to a mass followed by a civic procession enlivened by the *Himno a los Pinzones*, composed by García Viejo, sung by the children of Palos. That 3rd of August was remembered in a text of the Club preceded by verses of the ineffable parish priest dedicated to the Villa ("Si ingrata la patria/ la llega a olvidar/ de América tu sitio /potente tendrás/ y tu nombre augusto /siempre aclamará /de los altos Andes /en la

inmensidad"). That verse alluded to the abandonment into which "the Pinzon homeland" had fallen, and whose salvation, like that of the Spanish soul, could only come from the other side of the Atlantic. Moreover, after pointing out the proposed dredging of the port, to which the Club was now committed, all the previous palósfilas initiatives were listed, which would be added later to replace the name Palos de la Frontera with that of Palos de Moguer - "As it was called in the times of Columbus" (La Correspondencia de España, March 18. 1913) – in a new allusion to the glorious epochs of the nation. The writing ended with the emphatic Pinzonian motto previously alluded (avante, avante, avante...!) that the Club had coined as an element of identification.

This was undoubtedly the favorite expression of Martínez Ituño - who recognized himself as "a regular reader of all the works that have fallen into my hands about the intrepid navigators"<sup>9</sup>and which best translated the tenacity which the palósfilos liked to show off. However, these were not the only readings that fed the Club's discourse. In another act held in Málaga on March 15, 1913, which would lead to a new Memorandum entitled Pro Palos, the Argentine consul made use again of the scholarly eclecticism of which he was so fond. Thus, also demonstrating that as an educated person he was up to date with the most recent literature, he first reproduced the lyrical composition "El Tiempo Habla" by the poet Juan J. Llovet, interspersing with it his digressions about the Villa interlarded with the historical references of the texts of Amador de Los Ríos (Semanario Pintoresco *Español*, 18 August 1849) that he had been using since 1908. Also, without interruption, he put the icing on the cake with to words to the *Himno a Los Pinzones* that the *palósfilos* systematically resorted to regardless of the occasion (*Memorandum 20*, 1913)<sup>10</sup>.

In another of his texts that began with a fragment of the poem Marina by Rubén Darío -recognized as a palósfilo in 1914 (La Provincia, June 5, 1920), he later glossed the praver sung when the ships were launched. Eugenio de Salazar had included that prayer in the sixteenth century in one of his works<sup>11</sup>. Afterwards, Martínez Ituño quoted the verses of Campoamor and Ernesto Mario Barreda dedicated to Palos (El Heraldo Militar, August 12, 1913). On the occasion of October 12 of that year, in another contribution by his authorship, introduced by an allusion to the cry of Rodrigo de Triana, it was the turn of his admired Cesáreo Fernández Duro and the distich that he was popularly remembered for ("España halló por Colón / Nuevo Mundo con Pinzón"). It ended with the verses of F. Escudero and Peroso ("Dichoso siglo/Siglo de gigantes/que abrió COLÓN/v cerró  $CERVANTES")^{12}$ that synthesize a more than frequent association in the bases of the most topical Spanish nationalism of that time. With such a literary battery, in which Castilian tradition, Andalusian and American lyricism were combined, and the connotations contained therein, the Argentine re-alluded to the existing ingratitude towards the port of Palos as the cradle of America. Complaints that, in fact, were exposed through a statement that the Club Pálosfilo sent to the Real Academia de la

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> We know that it was not a gratuitous assertion. A copy of the book by Cesáreo Fernández Duro, *Colón y Pinzón. Informe relativo a los pormenores del descubrimiento del nuevo mundo presentado a la Real Academia de la Historia* (Madrid 1883), was part of the library that Martínez Ituño owned in his home in Palos. His signature attests to this on the cover and the different seals scattered throughout its interior, both that of "Villa Argentina. Palos de Moguer" as that of "Consulado Argentino. Málaga". The mention in the text of "Diego Prieto, mayor of this town of Palos" appears underlined and beside it, written, "ancestor of the current Prieto de Palos", as we know, was part of the main staff of Club Palósfilo. Also, the famous phrase "Adelante, adelante", attributed to the sailor from Palos, is underlined.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> Memorandum 20. Club Palósfilo. *Biblioteca América de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela*. We believe that the date printed in this document is erroneous since it contains the year of 1918 instead of 1913.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Cartas De Eugenio de Salazar, vecino y natural de Madrid, escritas a muy particulares amigos suyos, Madrid, Imp. De Rivadeneyra, 1866, pp.36–37. Edited by the Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> Escenas Contemporáneas. Revista política, literaria y de ciencias, artes, comercio, agricultura y teatro, T.I, Madrid, 1863, p. 154.

Historia asking it "to publish information that does justice to that historic town" (Real Academia de la Historia, File 6, "Antigüedades: Huelva. (CAHU / 9/7957, 17 (1 and 3)) Of another tenor, less intellectual but no less rhetorical, would be the public manifestations of other distinguished palósfilos. Thus, when the Venezuelan doctor residing in Málaga, Jesús R. Rísquez, communicated his adhesion to the Club, evoking the expression that his father, Francisco A. Rísquez – consul general of Venezuela in Madrid, Spain – had used for his support of the project of the Calle de las Naciones ("Villa de Palos, Madre y Nodriza de un mundo"), would add vehemently that "Tu hora no ha sonado aún. Ten fe! (La Provincia, May 2, 1914).

# The palósfila expansion

The growth of supporters to the Club, which we have not described in exhaustive detail, would lead to the immediate creation of subsidiaries in different parts of the Spanish geography and even outside its borders. As early as 1913, one of his most fervent militants, addressing the Argentine consul as a "patriot friend", said that "many palósfilos, new apostles [...] must come out to remember the glorious dates of August 3, 12 October and March 15" (La Provincia, April 2, 1913). Certainly, it was not very misguided because on March 15 of that same year, under the leadership of the Catalan jurist Baltasar Puig de Bacardi, who had represented the Club in the Assembly of Barcelona, the *palósfilos* of the City of Counts met in order to create a subsidiary (Vida Marítima, 20 August 1913). Martínez Ituño congratulated him in a letter addressed to Puig de Bacardi, in which he announced that, following the Catalan initiative, the Málaga-born palósfilos had also decided to convene every August 3, October 12 and March 15. And not without sarcasm, and in clear allusion to the Sociedad Colombina Onubense, he added that with this they would imitate "the Rabbi–Philae who, very noble and generously, also work for that Convent of lasting remembrance"<sup>13</sup>.

That the *palósfilos* of Málaga had been taking their initiatives to reinforce the Club's projects was a fact. In their ranks there was for example the wealthy Italo-Chilean resident in Málaga Ricardo Daneri, who had made his fortune in Valparaiso where, through his Chilean friendships in the world of politics, he tried to promote the Andean country's participation in the project of the Calle de las Naciones (La Provincia, April 16, 1913). In 1914, on the occasion of the commemoration of October 12, the *palósfilos* of Málaga, whose *alma mater* was the Valladolid doctor returned from Argentina, Anselmo Ruíz Gutiérrez, held a banquet to proceed also in its formal constitution. After the session, preceded by a band singing the *Buenos* Aires March, they moved to the home of the doctor mentioned above, Villa Colón, which would operate for the Málaga-based palósfilos as Villa Argentina for the Huelva members. The first Memorandum of the new Club Palósfilo of Málaga - born to "promote and enhance the history of Spain concerning the discovery of America" (Reglamento del Club Palósfico Malagueño, 1914) prepared in imitation of those of the pioneer entity, basically reproduced the speeches given on the 12th. The one by Anselmo Ruiz, although it also included references to the Pinzones – he was a palósfilo after all – was mainly about Columbus, who he came to equate with Saint John the Baptist "as a forerunner of Christ in the New World and an outstanding Apostle of Christianity" (La Unión Mercantil, October 13, 1914). On the other hand, Martínez Ituño introduced religious references in a different tone, stating that "just as the Hebrews have the Easter of the "Cabaña" in which they live eight days a year remembering the feats of their ancestors, the *palósfilos* also intend to have

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> Precisely on this place the *colombinos* venerated, a little later the newspaper La Provincia would publish on its cover a lengthy article by the Colombian diplomat Ignacio Gutiérrez Ponce reproducing another from the Hispania magazine, a publication that had been published in London at the hands of his countryman,

the writer and also diplomat, Santiago Pérez de Triana. The text by Gutiérrez Ponce entitled "Una Hora en La Rábida", the result of a trip to Spain in 1887, would be included in 1926 in his work Reminicencias de la vida diplomática, London: The Whitefriars Press, Ltd., London and Tonbridge, pp. 97–102.

our cabañas between Palos and La Rábida, where we want to spend the glorious dates of the discovery [...] to duly honor the History of Spain", as was reproduced in the pages of El Diario Malagueño. To this idea, a little later, in a letter addressed to the president of the special commission of the general meeting of the Iberoamericano de Instituto Derecho Comparado de Madrid, he would add his desire that the longed-for Calle de las Naciones de las Indias Occidentales, would be the "social seat where the "cordial intelligence" between the Motherland and the nations that form today the continent discovered by the Spaniards in 1492 would be constituted" (La Provincia, November 7. 1914).

Another important novelty in 1914 was that represented by another adhesion that, although there was nothing unusual in the surname surname, stood out because it came from a woman, who would be the first but not the last. Well instructed by her father, Gloria Martínez Ituño, who took the two surnames of the consul of Málaga, at only thirteen years old, made public her sympathy towards the ideals of the Club (La Provincia, June 25, 1914). However, even more surprising, due to its origin and what it would later mean in the trajectory of the association, would be that of the Asturian teacher in La Escuela Normal de La Habana, Paulina Ciaño, who from Cuba had moved to the United States in November 1914. A fervent devotee of Columbus, which a year later would lead her to write a booklet about his figure (Columbus and his time), a few days after her arrival she contacted the American society called the Knights of Columbus that at a certain point had made arrangements to buy the convent of La Rábida. Ciaño herself, knowing that such action would be impossible, and knowledgeable about the project of the Calle de las Naciones – whose existence she probably knew through her compatriot and relative Nicolás Rivero, director of the conservative Diario de la Marina de La Habana – would have advised them to build a

typical building in the Columbian places. She would inform *Club Palósfilo* of all this from New York.

So it would be in relation to this communication from Paulina Ciaño that in July 1915 one of the great novelties for the association would take place. The anticipated commemoration of the 423rd anniversary of the departure of the discovering flotilla in Villa Argentina gave rise to Memorandum 36, the novelty of which can be seen in the heading that accompanied it (El Popular, Diario Republicano, July 15, 1915). Under the heading Hijas de Isabel, its content narrated the act in which, undoubtedly, the protagonists were women. Not only because it was an Argentine who recited the eternal poems of her countryman Ernesto Mario Barreda, but also because she had the assistance, on behalf of her recently deceased uncle, Ricardo T. Acres, Palósfilo treasurer in Málaga and member of the Knights of Columbus, of Victoria Bado Acres, who belonged to the genuine Daughters of Isabella that had been founded in the United States in 1897 as a branch of the Knights. The Memorandum mentioned above included a proposal for a similar formation in Spain, presided over honorably by the queen, which, coinciding with the palósfilos postulates, would dedicate itself to supporting the former's aspirations. The ideological tinge of this feminine entity was evident in an editorial comment that appeared a little later that left no doubt about its conservative and ultra-Catholic nature:

The spiritual daughters of Isabella the Catholic choose the name of that queen because they see in her the heroine who in Granada made Christianity triumph, overthrowing the Mohammedan hordes [...] and, for that reason they are now trying to initiate a movement of opinion, contributing to the tremendous Spanish–American alliance (*Vida Marítima*, September 10, 1915).

The signatories included, among others, Victoria Bado for the Daughters of Isabella from the United States, the Argentinean Benita Campos, director of the magazine Güemes de Salta; Gloria Martínez Ituño, and, of course, also Paulina Ciaño who continued to advocate promoting the North American presence on the projected Calle de las Naciones through a pavilion that eventually, according to her own statements, could even be decorated by Sorolla himself, just as he was doing for the Hispanic Society of America in New York. In the extensive interview she gave to the New York Tribune the following month, she became the representative of the Palosfilo in the United States and, in fact, a little later, another member of the Club would affirm that Ciaño and her countrywoman Eva Canel were at that time giving "conferences with cinematographic projections in the main capitals of the Columbian Continent, in favor of the palósfilos ideals". Of course, what was true was that both were followers of the thesis that at that time defended the Spanish origin - and more particularly Galician – of Christopher Columbus, a theory that, developed by the historian Celso García de la Riega, had penetrated particularly among the Spanish collectives of America, especially those of the Rio de la Plata and Cuba<sup>14</sup>.

Since that summer of 1915, *Villa Argentina*, just as "an oasis in the middle of the desert", according to the *palósfilo* saying, would also serve as a base for the new Hijas de Isabel. Also, in that framework the most important act of that year would be carried out on October 12. Under the presidency of the mayor and the staff of the Club, *Memorandum 41* was read, authored by Martínez Ituño, whose singularity was that of "meeting the *palósfilos* and Las Hijas de Isabel" to communicate "to the world that Race Day has been created". Independently of the inaugural date of its commemoration in other countries and even in Spain itself under that denomination, discussed by different authors, the Argentine poet Ernesto Mario Barreda would come to affirm in an article published in *La Nación de Buenos Aires* in 1935, glossed over less than by the most ultramontane champion of Spanishness, Zacarías de Vizcarra, who was precisely the palósfilo antecedent of 1915 who settled in Argentina so that on October 12, 1917, it was declared a national holiday after the official sanction of the Decree of 4 October previous, attending to a request of the Asociación Patriótica Española. So, to all this he would add that, although this denomination was contested at different times and in different places, "the neighbors of Palos preferred to call it *Día de la Raza* ... They would know why" (Barreda, 1947).

Moreover, undoubtedly they knew it because that act, considered by the *palósfilos* to be a real milestone in its history, would end with the intervention of a new actor, Gastón Mittenhoff, who would take some of the *palósfilos* postulates to their logical extreme. This mercantile professor, a native of the Huelva town of Alosno, but resident in Seville, had made his public debut a year before with an article titled "Palos Inmortal" written with a grand style full of religious connotations that would be just the appetizer of his subsequent statements. From the end of 1915, he would greatly encourage the activity of the Club by introducing ideological components in full consonance with those expressed by the ultra-Catholic Hijas de Isabel. This tuning would be demonstrated during a Hispanic-American evening at the Ateneo de Sevilla, when Mittenhoff, before representatives of the palósfilos clubs of Palos, Málaga, and Granada, previewed some chapters of his book *Palos ante el mundo civilizado*, that then was in press, in which he did not disguise increasingly conservative ideals based on the sacrosanct concepts of "race and tradition" as consubstantial elements of the union of Spain and America (Mittenhoff, 1916). This act would become the prelude to the formal constitution of another

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> Paulina Ciaño was able to learn about this thesis through the writings of Canel herself –resident intermittently in Havana, Buenos Aires and the United States– or of the Galician publicist

based in Cuba, Constantino Horta and Pardo, who in 1912 had published a pamphlet entitled The True Birthplace of Christopher Columbus, published in New York.

branch, the *Club Palósfilo Sevillano*, led by the vehement alosnero. On its part, in 1916, the subsidiaries of the Hijas de Isabel, whose members were closely linked by ties of kinship with the most distinguished *palósfilos*, had spread throughout the Andalusian geography and even outside it and Spain.

The truth is that the new female arm of the Club would be even more active, and more rhetorical, if that were possible, than their male colleagues. Never forgetting that the roots of the movement were in the Casa Argentina founded by Martínez Ituño, to which the Hijas de Isabel, whose later career, such as that of the Club Palósfilo, will occupy other pages, defined as a "guardian of the Hispanic traditions and mecca where the fraternity between the American nations and Spain takes place", anticipating the most oldfashioned style of the new Hispanism that would come to the fore in the twenties and in which the use of America as a symbolic ingredient would constitute to an even greater extent a fundamental and even necessary element of Spanish nationalism.

## Conclusions

When asked to what extent and in what way the *Club Palósfilo* contributed to recreate the idea of America, the first thing that must be pointed out is that practically none of its projects came to be translated into reality. Of course, the name of America was not changed, the proposed Nautical School was not created and, still to this day, the port of Palos has not been dredged. Neither the maritime regattas that would emulate a stage of the first Columbian voyage nor the spectacular scenography, in any of its variants, that were planned around the disputed *Calle de las Naciones* managed to see the light during the life of the Club. However, for its members, something remained of all this. Because as its

<sup>15</sup> In 1909 a *palósfila* commission headed by the consul Martínez Ituño had requested that the city council of Seville support the installation of the pavilions that Palos projected. Three months later "the news was received that the rich city council of the

mentor, Enrique Martínez Ituño, said in 1913, between disappointed and optimistic, "in the years that we have been working, we have not achieved great success in our projects [...] but the glory is not in the successes but in the initiatives" (La Provincia, February 17, 1913). And perhaps he was not wrong, because when in 1926 the successful Plus Ultra flight set out from Palos, the palósfilos may well have been reminded of their frustrated regattas. The statement of commander Ramón Franco himself when he said that "hemos querido rendir a Palos este homenaje porque queremos que las energías de Colón nos acompañen [...]. Cuando aterricemos en la Argentina, puesto el pensamiento en Palos, diremos: ¡Ya hemos vencido!" (El Defensor de Córdoba, January 22, 1926), was also accompanied by the scenography in which the members of the Club participated when watching the hydroplane flying the interlaced flags of Spain and Argentina with an old chrome at the bottom that reproduced the arrival of Columbus at the Castilian court after his first trip. So, again the idea of America, with all its symbolic force, was presented according to the *palósfila* liturgy. On the other hand, and in this case with certain signs of reality, as stated in the document of Las "Palos – Nuevo Hijas de Isabel entitled Mundo - Sevilla" and reiterated by the mayor himself in 1923, one could also ask to what extent, in the Ibero-American Exposition of Seville that, after many avatars, took place in 1929, there did not underlie, for the members of the Club, the *palósfila* intellectual authorship that had anticipated the idea as early as 1908 with their proposal of the Calle de las Naciones<sup>15</sup>. Both events took place, besides, during the primorriverista dictatorship, a moment in which the reformist Hispano-Americanism that had characterized the first decades of the century gave way to the theses of Hispanidad dominated by the most conservative right, whose ranks

abovementioned capital of Seville had appropriated the project of our Exhibition by arranging for it to be established in Tablada". (Revista La Rábida, November 31, 1923

would definitively become part of the *Club Palosfilo*.

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