

BERNARDO DE GÁLVEZ

From oblivion to fame.

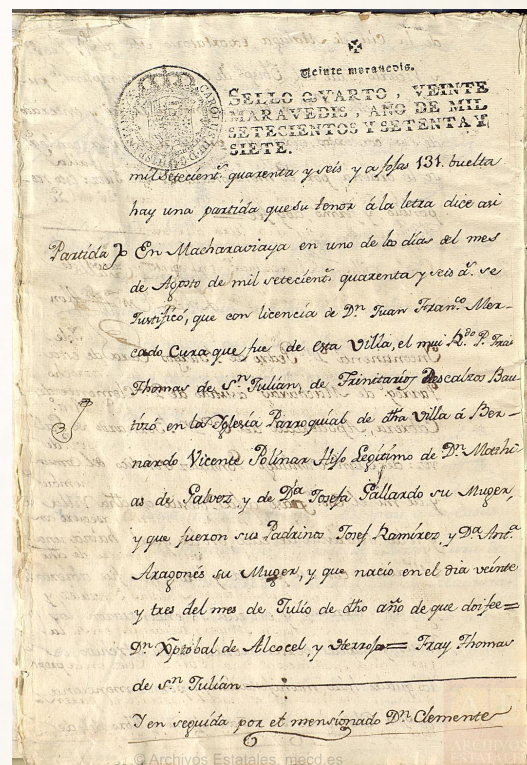
One might think that everything had already been said about Bernardo de Gálvez, the Macharaviaya-born military leader who fought against the British during the American War of Independence, but luckily that is not so. It seems as if new details or aspects of his character and his life come to light nearly every day, including little-known information which until 20 years ago had never been properly researched.

Apart from the copious documentation we receive from Mexico, thanks to an efficient collaborator with the Bernardo de Gálvez Association, we are continuing to delve into archives in Spain and abroad with the help of Francisco Cabrera Pablos. The latest discovery is a panegyric in Latin, written in Mexico on 1 July 1785, which we found in an American library.

This exciting discovery has enabled us to correct a few errors and inaccuracies, including some regarding De Gálvez's second surname.

Bernardo de Gálvez was born on 23 July, and the Calendar of Saints tells us that that is the saints day of the martyrs Bernardo, Vicente and Apolinar. These were the three names with which he was christened. The relevant document also shows his parents' names: Matías de Gálvez and Josefa Gallardo. This makes it very clear that the 'Madrid' which some people have said was De Gálvez's second surname was not correct. Of course, Matías was also born in July, on 24th of that month in the year 1717.

Bernardo de Gálvez died on 30 November 1786 in Tacubaya, which at that time was a small village close to Mexico city, of a painful illness which he had been suffering for nine years. Anyone who might like to consult the SUR archive can find an article published 13 years ago, on 13 June 2006, titled 'Honor, valor y...bochorno', in which we expressed our indignation that Bernardo de Gálvez's tomb in the San Fernando church in Mexico city bears no tribute to him from Spain, despite him having been an extraordinary person, a military hero and a great governor.





For that reason, on 29 August 2008, a group of people from Malaga travelled to his tomb and, in an emotional ceremony, placed a gravestone there which they had brought all the way from Spain expressly to pay tribute to him.

In the years that followed, the work of the Asociación Bernardo de Gálvez and the tenacity and intelligence of Teresa Valcarce Graciani, our ambassador in America, bore fruit: at the end of 2014 something extremely important and decisive took place: a portrait of Bernardo de Gálvez was hung in the Capitol building in Washington, and he was designated an Honorary Citizen of the United States of America.



In Spain, thanks to the excellent work of Eva García, our ambassador for Europe, there have been several important successes, including the major exhibition organised by the Army in Madrid in 2015 and the opening of the Army Museum in Toledo on 12 July this year.

Nearly 30 publications (in one case, six editions were printed), with more than 30,000 copies, all distributed free, have helped to raise awareness of the incredible career of Bernardo de Gálvez, and numerous activities such as conferences and concerts have also taken place.

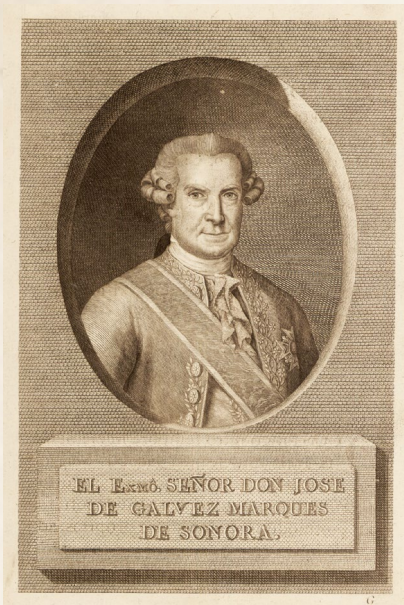
The support from the Malaga provincial government and the council has been decisive in this, as well as that of other institutions and companies, especially the Colegio de Ingenieros Técnicos Industriales, the Fundación Unicaja and of course the unconditional support of the nearly 100 people who for more than ten years have been maintaining the spirit for which the Asociación Bernardo de Gálvez was created.

We have raised awareness of many writings by this hero who has now been retrieved from oblivion, and have collated and widely distributed works about him in Spain and America and, of course, published information on our website: www.yosolo.org.

This dedicated work has been the reason that, in the past five years, after a copy by Carlos Monserrate of the portrait which in all probability was painted by Mariano Salvador Maella was hung in the Capitol building, a great deal has been written in recognition of the illustrious figure of Lieutenant General Conde de Gálvez. And it is logical that this should be the case, because the Asociación Bernardo de Gálvez y Gallardo has successfully rescued this great hero from oblivion and given him the glory

he deserves, with the help of many other people, the aforementioned institutions. And, of course, the people of Macharaviaya.

The decisive help of all types given by Spain to American patriots is also becoming increasingly recognised. It was organised under great secrecy from Madrid by the government of King Carlos III and specifically by José and Miguel de Gálvez.



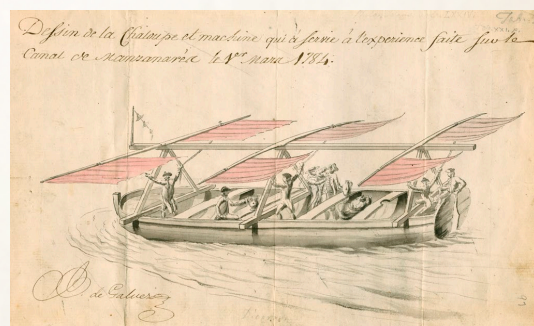
The victories achieved by Bernardo de Gálvez in Louisiana and western Florida, culminating in the taking of Panzacola, the triumphs achieved by his father Matías in the theatre of operations in Central America and the action of the Spanish Armada on all fronts, together with the personal action of the illustrious Francisco de Saavedra, who was from Seville, and not forgetting his great friend and admirer, the American patriot Oliver Pollock: these were key to the United States achieving its independence on 4 July, 243 years ago.

It was Pollock who gave Gálvez a 30metre ship which the Americans had captured from the English, and he called it 'Galveztown', which together with the motto 'YO SOLO' features on the coat of arms of the Conde de Gálvez.

But there are other outstanding aspects in the biography of Don Bernardo. Firstly: he was an illustrate man.

Evidence of this is his initiative to learn how to steer a hot air balloon, barely a year after the first flight made by the Montgolfier brothers in Paris in June 1783.

This experiment took place in the spring of 1784 in the bed of the Manzanares river, and among others who helped in this remarkable event was a young man from Tenerife, Agustín de Betancourt, who years later would found the school of highway engineers.



Two prestigious institutions in America have also become involved in the task of perpetuating the memory of Bernardo de Gálvez: the Orden de Granaderos y Damas de Gálvez, which was created in Houston in 1975 by Erik Martel, the Spanish Consul at the time, and the Sociedad Nacional de Hijas de la Revolución Americana, DAR, which dates back to 1890 and whose 180,000 female members are descendants of Americans who fought in the War of Independence. In recognition of their work and support, it has been decided to award them the Bernardo de Gálvez Prize, and this will be presented to them in Malaga in November.

The decisive and unconditional support for the Bernardo de Gálvez cause from the Diputación de Malaga means that he will soon be declared 'Hijo Predilecto' of Malaga province and also of Andalucía, and we must also not forget the wonderful initiative by Elías Bendodo, the current Minister of the Presidency of the Junta de Andalucía: the creation of the Centro de Estudios Americanos Bernardo de Gálvez.

Today, after nearly 20 years of dedicated effort, the portrait of Bernardo de Gálvez hangs in the Capitol building in America, and he is one of the eight people who have received the title of Honorary Citizen of the United States.

The personality of this great Spanish hero, his extraordinary qualities as a soldier and a governor, demonstrated in Louisiana as well as in Mexico, and his human values, meant that as early as 1777, when he was only just 31 years old, two poems were deservedly dedicated to him by Julien Poydrás, the great poet from New Orleans, and his friend Oliver Pollock would write about him: " 'Gálvez deserves the glory of becoming immortal" .

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