



REAL ACADEMIA
DE LA HISTORIA

DICCIONARIO BIOGRÁFICO *electrónico*

General information

The electronic edition of the *Diccionario Biográfico (DB~e)* allows the spread, through the web, of biographical information corresponding to **more than 45,000 relevant figures** of Hispanic history – many of them biographed for the first time-, **from the seventh century BC until nowadays**, belonging to **all occupations, areas and fields of study**, as well as **all the territories** that, along with the Iberian Peninsula, were part of the **Spanish Administration**: either overseas (the American viceroyalty, North America, Cuba, Puerto Rico, Philippines...) or trans-Pyrenean (the Netherlands, the Franche-Comté, the Duchy of Milan...)

For the first time, both electronically and available across countries, it is disposed an amount of historical information about the Hispanic world, which has never been achieved before.

The whole of contents, integrated by more than 60,000 pages of text, are entirely accessible for free on the Internet.

A foundational project

The *Diccionario Biográfico electrónico (DB~e)* is meant as the culmination of a foundational project.

The Real Academia de la Historia (www.rah.es) started as a literary meeting among friends, back in the year 1735. The participants asked for the royal support of Philip V and thus, the King gave them his protection. As a consequence, the gathering, already-specialised into the past's research, was translated into the Real Academia de la Historia. Dated the 18th of April, 1738, the King Philip V passed a decree directed to his Council, in which he stated the condition and title of “Academy” to the Board that was having regular meetings in the rooms of his Royal Library for the study of History and by creating a *Diccionario Histórico-Crítico Universal de España*., The final aim of this institution was to clarify “the important truth of the events, grabbing the fables introduced by ignorance or evil, leading the knowledge of many into a darkening of the former times or which carelessness has buried.”

The old aspiration of the Academy regarding what was known in the eighteenth century as “varones ilustres” (the important figures of the intellectual class) was retaken at the end of the twentieth century through the *Diccionario Biográfico Español*, promoted by the director during that time, Gonzalo Anes. For this reason, the 21st of July,

1999, an agreement with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports was signed, that materialized ten years later with the printed edition, consisting of fifty volumes which, including more than 40,000 figures, was initiated in 2009 and ended in September, 2013. Until that moment, Spain did not count with a collective biographical repertoire.

The Real Academia de la Historia finally promoted and boosted the electronic edition of the *Diccionario Biográfico* (DB~e), a pioneer, virtual environment concerning the syndication of both historical and biographical contents, offered to multiple research purposes and also to the general audience, which was presented at the Royal Palace of El Pardo (Madrid), under the presidency of Their Royal Highnesses the King and the Queen of Spain, on the 3rd of May, 2018.

Resources

Among other resources, there is a network of more than 500 national and international scientific institutions which have collaborated with the Real Academia de la Historia and the ensemble of more than 4,500 historians and researchers, who have contributed to the elaboration of the *Diccionario Biográfico*, and made of it a reference work for the knowledge and study of the Spanish History.

Elaborated by specialists and supported by the Real Academia de la Historia, these texts are given the authority criterion and the scientific quality guarantee, which cannot usually be found in the majority of the contents available on the Internet, often characterized by both anonymity and lack of reference.

Digital development

The *Diccionario Biográfico electrónico* (DB~e) channels one the largest networks of historical knowledge, providing not only the wealth of its data, but the diversity of its numerous browsing criteria and its modulation to different search levels, from a general audience to the most specialized investigators. The original development and the contents structure allows the project to be useful for a wide range of segments of society: from a Primary, Secondary or Highers student to a specialized researcher, as well as the whole university community.

The screenshot displays the website's header with the Real Academia de la Historia logo and navigation links like 'Mi cuenta' and 'Cerrar sesión'. Below is a search bar with 'Buscador sencillo' and 'Buscador avanzado' options, and a 'Búsqueda de personaje' section with a text input field. A list of features is shown, including the number of profiles and authors. A featured article highlights the death of Eliseo Berenguer Úbeda, with a portrait and biographical details. A quote by Manuel José Quintana is also featured, along with logos for 'la Caixa' and 'Telefónica' at the bottom.

A digital platform has been developed, having into account criteria of accessibility, usability and simplicity in data recovery and getting the most of every capacity, so the complexity of the provided data are offered to the user in a simple and intuitive manner. The greatest learning throughout the complete process has been that **both design and development of these innovations must be defined by the aspiration of simplicity for their later use.**

The design has considered the diversity of devices from where the platform can be accessed, being in this sense *responsible* to reach the maximum spread and establishment of its contents.

Each and every one of the figures has been catalogued according to more than twenty different criteria that allow the search of information both in terms of descriptors and free text, in a wide variety of combinations. **The browsers** of the *Diccionario Biográfico* allow alphabetical location, browse by normalized descriptors, hipertextual navigation, textual searches into the biographies, chronological, geographical and disciplinary annotations, by religious and cultural range and by genre.

From the perspective of these contents' search, two browsers have been outlined: a simple browser and an advanced browser.

■ **The simple browser** allows free and completed access to the whole of contents into the *Diccionario Biográfico*. It allows the alphabetical location of a figure through any part of his or her name, nickname or title of nobility. Both single terms and collocations might be introduced in order to narrow the search down.

■ On the other hand, **the advanced browser**—accessible through a previous register/subscription— allows the multiple combinations of all the fields that the tool has been structured into, for more specific searches that maximize the available resources and facilitate the access to more accurate historical data. Moreover, the advanced

The screenshot shows the website interface for the Diccionario Biográfico. At the top, there is a search bar with options for 'Buscador sencillo' and 'Buscador avanzado'. Below the search bar is a 'Búsqueda de personaje' section with a text input field. The main content area features a profile for 'Fernando de los Ríos y Urruti', including a portrait and a detailed biographical text in Spanish. The text describes his birth in Buda (Hungary) in 1875, his education in Madrid, his work as a lawyer and politician, and his role as a minister of Education during the Second Republic. The page also includes a sidebar with navigation options like 'Biografías guardadas', 'Búsquedas guardadas', and 'Preguntas frecuentes'.

This screenshot displays the 'Relación con otros personajes del DBE' section. It is divided into two main columns: 'Biografías que citan a este personaje' and 'Personajes citados en esta biografía'. The first column lists biographies that cite the subject, such as 'Luis Anicetán Quesada' and 'Daniel Anquero Murgado'. The second column lists characters mentioned in the subject's biography, including 'Nikolai Aleksei Zamoia y Tonia' and 'Julio Álvarez del Vayo y Oroqui'. Below these columns is a 'Personajes similares' section with a dropdown menu for 'Mismo ámbito disciplinar / Misma época' and a search input field. The similar figures section lists names like 'Gerardo Abad Conde' and 'Ángel Abda Ramer'. The page also features a 'Síguenos' button at the bottom right.

browser can also search for a specific term or terms into the textual body of the biographies to find a word or a collocation throughout all the contents of the *Diccionario Biográfico*. At the same time, each field admits various possibilities and might be combined together with including, excluding or disjunctive criteria.

Goals, maintenance and updating

The digital development of the *Diccionario Biográfico electrónico* (DB~e) means a step forward into the aspiration of **service to society and culture** that has defined the Real Academia de la Historia, convinced of the fact that the disposition of its services and contents in an electronic format will help to the achievement of its goals.

Given the fact that the Hispanic world did not own a historical contents database, this project comes to fulfil a need.

Due to its electronic format, the *Diccionario Biográfico electrónico* (DB~e) is an endless project. Apart from the almost 50,000 figures whose biographies form the actual platform, the Real Academia de la Historia has kept working –many times collaborating with the users themselves– to improve the number of biographies and to update the already-existing data. Therefore, there is already available **an ensemble of 20,000 additional figures** to be incorporated in the forthcoming months.

The initial development and the promotion of the electronic edition of the *Diccionario Biográfico* has allowed the **maintenance and the continuous updating of its contents**, boosting and facilitating an extensive cultural and social network which connects the interests related to history and biography, with a special regard to the Ibero-American community. Users and contents are related for contributing to the project's improvement, always open, through different channels and participation modes, to generate a merge of contents.



Presentation and awards

The 3rd of May, 2018, the *DB~e* of the Real Academia de la Historia was presented at the Royal Palace of El Pardo (Madrid), under the presidency of Their Royal Highnesses the King and the Queen of Spain.

The presentation counted with the presence of some members of the government and some relevant figures of the Administration, as well as representatives of Spanish business and culture. The ceremony was broadcast live on the Spanish National Television.



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Itemisation of contents in order of intervention:

■ Speech of the Director of the Real Academia de la Historia, Carmen Iglesias: 3 min 25 s – 15 min

■ Demonstration of the capacities of the advanced browser by Jaime Olmedo, Technical Director of the DB~e: 22 min 28 s – 31 min 02 s

■ Speech of His Royal Highness, King Philip VI: 36 min 28 s – 52 min

Link to the complete video of the presentation:
<https://youtu.be/aVYEJxd4tsg>

The *DB~e* was awarded with the Quality Innovation Award (QIA) 2018 under the category of “Education Sector Innovations”. *DB~e* candidacy was evaluated by the **Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación (ANECA)**, reaching the highest rating, and was unanimously elected in the national competition phase.

The Quality Innovation Award is an annual, international competition created in 2007 by **Excellence Finland** to increase the amount and level of innovations. Hundreds of innovators from various countries have applied to this international competition for neutral evaluation and recognition. Certificates for the winners are signed by the President of the Republic of Finland.

On the 18th of November, 2018, Carmen Iglesias, Director of the Real Academia de la Historia, collected the QIA Award from the Asociación Nacional de **Centros Promotores de la Excelencia-CEX** at the headquarters of the **Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC)**, located in Madrid.