

HISTORIA FUNDAMENTAL IS BORN LOOKING IN THE EDUCATIONAL MIRROR OF THE KINGS AND QUEENS OF THE SPANISH EMPIRE OVER THREE CENTURIES

- **Fundación Banco Santander** presents the first volume of the **Historia Fundamental Collection**, which will gather episodes, facts and forgotten, unclarified or ignored characters of the Spanish and Latin American reality between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries.
- *Espejos de príncipes y princesas*, written by historian Alfredo Alvar, is the first volume of the collection, which reviews the educational foundations of the Spanish Empire and its ruling elite during the reigns of the House of Austria.
- Alvar offers the first chronological study of the instructions or mirrors of princes and of the preceptors of infants and daughters, in addition to dealing with Erasmus, grammar, calligraphy, reading primers or the state of the schools, and discovering the importance and influence of the queens in the education of their children.
- Seven informative podcasts on the formation of the Habsburgs and their anecdotes can be listened to and downloaded from the QR of the book, the [Foundation's website](#) and various platforms such as Spotify, Google, etc.

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Fundación Banco Santander.

The **Historia Fundamental Collection** was launched today at the headquarters of Fundación Banco Santander with the presentation to the media of its first volume, "*Espejos de príncipes y avisos a princesas. La educación palaciega en la Casa de Austria*", with the participation of the Mexican historian, essayist and businessman, Enrique Krauze, and the author of the first book of the project, the historian and researcher of the CSIC, Alfredo Alvar Ezquerro. The event was presented by the head of the Historia Fundamental Collection, Francisco Javier Expósito, and was attended by the President of Fundación Banco Santander, Rodrigo Echenique.

What is *Historia Fundamental*?

The new collection, which represents another step forward in Fundación Banco Santander's commitment to humanism and the expansion of historical knowledge to better understand our present, will bring together events, characters, themes, and writings of the Spanish and Latin American reality from the 16th to the 18th centuries, which due to circumstances were forgotten, unclear or continue to be ignored by the general public. In the words of the person in charge of the Collection, **Francisco Javier Expósito** "there is a growing interest in history, and this initiative arises from the need to study it in depth in order to know ourselves a little better, just as understanding our past helps to better understand our present. Expósito affirmed that *Historia Fundamental* "will try to focus on new perspectives, away from labels and deep-rooted legends, which will shed light on dark angles of Spanish and Latin American history, which was the same during those centuries".

A carefully selected and elegant collection; as described by **Enrique Krauze**, the Mexican historian, publisher, and businessman, "it is a commendable commitment to better know and understand the edges and complexity of the history of Spain and Latin America," he said about this new humanist commitment that is being launched. *Historia Fundamental* is a collection aimed at all types of readers, with a singular design and graphic line that does not forget contemporaneity and its dissemination in new formats; therefore, a series of **podcasts** are available which can be listened to and downloaded from the QR code included in the book itself or from the [Fundación Banco Santander website](#) and several platforms such as Spotify, Google podcast, Audible, etc.

"Espejos de príncipes y avisos a princesas" is the first volume of the Historia Fundamental Collection

The Spanish Empire, global and multicultural, was ruled by the kings of the House of Austria together with a select number of advisors, masters and royal tutors. **Alfredo Alvar**, author of this first volume, comments "that the educational foundations of that ruling elite were a key factor for the stability of that cosmopolitan monarchy", and he wondered why a long-term study had never been made to answer this question: how were the princes and princesses educated as children in the House of Austria, what were their instructions, mirrors, and warnings, who were their preceptors or masters? For Alvar, "it was a matter of exploiting a neglected vein of our history", the mirrors of princes, a medieval tradition of instruction manuals or teachings with moralizing function and advice for the appropriate public behavior of kings, princes, or nobles.

For **Enrique Krauze**, *Espejos de príncipes y avisos a princesas* is a "documented, useful and entertaining tour that allows us to learn about the education received by princes and princesses, and it is also full of clues about education and how it was changing". In the historian's opinion, "it builds a kind of description of the intellectual climate of the time, of the knowledge that was considered to be imparted and the roles that corresponded to each one".

From Isabel I to Carlos II, Alvar reveals the careful education that princes and princesses received. The **greatest discovery of all**, in the historian's opinion, is **the influence of women in the education of the House of Austria**, "The importance of the queens in the spiritual formation of the kings and in the choice of their teachers, had a role of first magnitude". Alvar delves into Isabella I, a paragon of intellectual virtues, who personally took care of the education of all her children, and who founded "a palace school governed by loyal humanists", besides being the first queen to read and write; of the empress Isabel, mother of Felipe II, who instructed her son until his death and influenced his father, the emperor Charles; Queen Mother Isabella of Bourbon or Sister Maria de Agreda, the visionary nun who advised King Philip IV on "how to guide the hope of Spain, Prince Balthasar Charles", without forgetting Mariana of Austria, who led the regency of Charles II and the mandates of the Planet King, Philip IV, with intelligence and gift of government.

Espejos de príncipes y princesas is an analysis of the central pillar that supported the Spanish Empire, because "educating a prince was not a game, but rather the stability of the kingdom was due, in a positive way, to the exquisite humanistic and political training of the king, heir to a tradition and conveyor of the best of it," he tells us. According to **Alvar**, both in the past and today, educating youth is the basis of what tomorrow's society will be like. And the kings of the House of Austria paid special attention to the education of their children, from Charles V and his instructions of Palamós to the letters of Philip II to his daughters, or the writings of Philip IV to Balthasar Charles, "one of the rules of the House of Austria was that the kings who are fathers left fabulous writings on the education of child princes".

Forgotten teachers and preceptors in the Spanish history of education: from Isabella I to Charles II.

The volume not only deals with the aforementioned aspects, but we also delve into the main Spanish humanists and educational currents in the **reign of Isabella I and Charles V**, such as Nebrija and his new model of knowledge, Erasmus of Rotterdam and anti-erasmism, Fray Antonio de Guevara or Juan Luis Vives, among many other preceptors and writers of instructions, or Adriano de Utrecht, educator of Archduke Charles. Alvar mentions cases such as Isabel de Josa, a pioneer of female education in 1533, or unknown people who played an important role in the education of King Philip II, such as Juan Martínez Silíceo, all forgotten names in our history.

Alfredo Alvar also delves into the falsehood of the black legend about **Philip II** and his son Charles, "who could have wanted to be Don Carlos's servant or steward?", pointing out his magnificent education next to one of the great humanists of his time, Honorato Juan, now buried in our history, and of the magnificent library that Don Carlos left behind at his death. And of course, the letters of Philip II to Isabel Clara Eugenia and Catalina Micaela, bastions of the dismantling of historical propaganda, "the image that comes out of the letters of Philip II to his daughters is that of a good man, as opposed to the Demon of the South of the black legend". The reign of the builder of the monastery of El Escorial had dazzling reforms such as the evaluation projects for teachers in Madrid (1587) or the irruption of linguistic geniuses such as Juan Lopez de Velasco.

The figure of **Philip III** is no stranger to the historian's gaze, "intelligent and indolent, he had the best human and material resources at his disposal to become a great ruler but was unable to remove the figure of his father from his mental and spiritual horizon", although there were notable milestones in his reign, such as the first Castilian orthography in America, printed by Mateo Alemán in 1609.

As for the so-called Planet King, **Philip IV**, Alvar focuses on the so-called hope of the Empire, Prince Baltasar Carlos, who according to his confessor Sotomayor, "God keep him, busy as usual in his studies in which he takes so much advantage that I understand he has to exchange the office with his master and make him a disciple". Baltasar Carlos died prematurely at the age of 17, the king's beloved son, "his education was unheard of until then", with advisors such as Brandão, Isasi or Saavedra Fajardo himself, and his death meant the final horizon of the Empire, "little is reflected on the death of Baltasar Carlos for the historical future of Spain". The self-remembrance of the king to his son is an intellectual writing of great height, "the nature of the princes, as kings, will go through the same miseries as those of the other mortals, because the only difference is the position that God has given them", Philip IV would say to Baltasar. The influence of Sister María Jesús de Agreda on the king after the death of the boy is also treated by Alvar, "how curious that the soul of Baltasar Carlos has political ideas so similar to those of Sister María".

The volume ends with the reign of **Charles II** and the end of the dynasty, "at the end of the seventeenth century, the aristocracy divided the country among themselves, before the powers would do so, secretly or publicly, throughout his reign", although the king tried to oppose it. *The bewitched (El hechizado)*, the King's nickname is another black legend that Alvar calls into question, "the work of some historians shows that at the age of ten the king was still an awakened child". There are some great preceptors, such as Ramos del Manzano or José de Zaragoza, who were still optimistic about the situation and instilled it in the prince, who grew up without his father, Philip IV, and under the regency of his mother, Mariana of Austria. For Alvar, this period gave birth to "the arrival of a didactic revolution through the scientific revolution", symbolized by the Box of Instruments and his book of Accompaniment that Charles II was given.

Seven entertaining podcasts for all listeners that complement and liven up the content of *Espejos de príncipes y avisos a princesas*.

Downloadable through a QR code for the reader who purchases the book, and also available from [the Foundation's website](#) and also available to the general public on platforms such as Spotify, Google Podcast, Audible, etc., offer a complementary and alternative view to the book. They begin with an interview with Alfredo Alvar, author of the volume, who explains what the mirrors of princes are; the following chapters narrate anecdotes and stories of princes, princesses, and kings, in an entertaining and informative style for all types of listeners: 2. Elizabeth I: from a humanist queen to a pioneer educator. 3. Philip II, a prince between two waters: humanism and religion. The infant Charles and his sisters: lifting the veil to the black legend of Philip II. 5. Philip III: a somewhat scattered student with an exceptional teacher. 6. Philip IV and Prince Baltasar Charles: of frustrated illusions and educational revolutions. 7. Charles II: a not so bewitched prince.