

Autoridades 2: the stage of 1700

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The most valuable work published by the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE) is its first dictionary, usually called the *Diccionario de autoridades* (DA¹ 1726-1739). The institution was created, first of all, for this highly important lexicographical feat. The *Diccionario Vulgar*, until recently known as *de la Real Academia Española (DRAE)*, and currently as *de la lengua española (DLE)*, is a reduction of the 6 volumes of the *Diccionario de Autoridades*¹ into one single volume, following suppression of the authorities, that is, the texts that authorize use of a specific word.

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While the academics were finalizing the edition of the fifth volume, which was published in 1737, they were already thinking about revising the complete lexicographical work. Hence, they agreed:

volver a leer todas las voces, para ir corrigiendo qualquier defecto, que se hallasse en sus definiciones, etymologías, autoridades, acepciones, y correspondencias Latinas, y formar una planta para encontrar las que faltaban, y era preciso hallar en la particular colección de las voces peculiares de cada Provincia, de los términos de Ciencias, Artes, y Oficios mecánicos, y en la prolixa lección de libros Castellanos antiguos, y modernos, repartiendo este trabajo entre los Académicos (DA¹ 17261739 [1739], p. [xii]).

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The purpose was to finish the dictionary, so the frantic pace of work did not slow down, although the work was almost at its end. Starting from 1737, it was decided **to work simultaneously on the last volume of the DA¹ (1726-1739) and on an in-depth revision of the work, which initially should have been a six-volume supplement, but in the end turned into a second edition.** This came about thanks to the corrections and the increase in new entries, using the traditional method of distributing the different combinations of letters (p. [xiv]) among the members of the Docta Casa.

We can imagine that the work was rather like polishing a rough diamond in order to increase its value. But, of course, this could be achieved only if the work were completed.

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¹ As the prologue of the first volume states, the only edited volume of the DA2 (1770-1829 [1770]): «Desde que la Academia concluyó el Diccionario trató de corregir los defectos que había notado en él, y de aumentarle por medio de un Suplemento, de forma que quando en el año de 1739 publicó el sexto y último tomo ya estaba trabajando en uno y otro» (1). Enlarging works with supplements was common practice, «á imitación de lo que han hecho otras Academias» (*ibidem*). The prologue alludes to «giunte e correzioni» that appear in the fifth volume of the fourth edition of the *Vocabolario degli Accademici della Crusca* (1729-38). We are not aware of the existence of any supplement for the different editions of the *Dictionnaire de l'Académie française* (1694) until the date of publication of the «Prólogo» of the DA2 (1770-1829 [1770]).

1.2 Unfortunately, the Academy only published the first volume of this second, corrected and expanded edition of the DA¹ (1726-1739) in 1770!

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A question immediately arises: why did it take so long for the Academy to publish it?

The answer can be gathered by reading the "Prologue": there were other goals to be achieved,

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such as the preparation of *Ortographía* (1741) and a **grammar** project in which the Academy worked until 1747². It was from this date onwards that the institution decided to resume the project of its first dictionary.

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The second question we asked ourselves was why the Academy decided to elaborate a new edition instead of a supplement. The academics provide an answer in the "Prologue" to the germinal volume of 1770.

The first reason is that there were only a few remaining complete sets of the first edition of the DA¹ (1726-1739), and for this reason it was necessary to re-edit the work, not just supplement it³.

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The second is that in 1751 "pasaban ya de trece mil las voces y significaciones aumentadas", so that "había suficiente materia para un tomo de crecido volumen", in addition to all the material that could be collected for the following volumes. This is why, therefore, in 1753 it was decided to publish the new edition, with the corrections and the increase in lexical flow.

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Let us now outline the complete chronological sequence, so as not to get lost in this multitude of dates:

1732 Proposal to prepare a supplement of DA1 (1726-39)⁴.

² Manuel Seco comments on the Academy's need to prepare an orthographic essay, since «la experiencia de la confección del *Diccionario* [el DA1 (1726-39)] había hecho evidentes las deficiencias de la normativa ortográfica acordada por la propia Corporación en 1726 e impresa al frente del primer volumen de la obra» (1991: [III]). The preparation of a grammar responded to a strict statutory compliance and was assigned in 1747 to «en un académico solo», in order to «dedicar el esfuerzo corporativo a la continuación del Suplemento que tenía empezado» (*ibidem*).

³ The justification for reissuing the dictionary because copies had run out becomes recurrent, if we check both the prologue of the second edition (DA2 1770-1829 [1770]: I) and the first edition of the DRAE (1770: [I]) until at least the eighth (1837: [I]).

⁴ The information is contained in the *Acta* of the Academic Board of May 16, 1732. The supplement was to contain the entries that were missing in the volumes already printed - that is, the first three - and, in the words of Fernando Lázaro Carreter, would become «receptáculo donde todos los desacuerdos con lo que tiene que hacerse, hallan compensación. Se cede en lo que parece imperfecto, porque se piensa en la perfección que

1737 Decision to prepare a supplement of DA¹ (1726-1739).

1739 Proposal to prepare a second edition of the dictionary, rejected in favor of the supplement⁵.

1739 Start of the drafting of the DA¹ (1726-1739) supplement.

... *Ortografía* (1741) and grammar preparation.

1747 Drafting of the DA¹ (1726-1739) supplement resumed.

1751 Increase of thirteen thousand entries and meanings (the supplement in the format of "un tomo de crecido volumen").

1753 Decision to prepare a second edition, with corrections to the first edition and new additions.

1770 Publication of the first volume of the dictionary's second edition: the DA² (1770).

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It is worth noting that there was an increase of thirteen thousand entries and meanings of what was the hypothetical supplement to the first edition. Of these thirteen thousand additions, two thousand two hundred correspond to this first volume, as can be read in the "Prologue" of the DA² (1770, p. X). Based on this information, the third question to be asked is **why did the Docta Casa not continue the work?** There were at least ten thousand eight hundred new items to publish in the remaining letters, in addition to new information that was collected while working on the new edition. An answer can be given to this third question based on the information provided by the prologues of the works concerned and other complementary sources.

A new chronological sequence needs to be provided for this.

In 1780, the *Diccionario de la lengua castellana* was published *reducido a un tomo para su más fácil uso*⁶. In its "Prologue", the Academy notes that, after the publication of the first volume of the DA² (1770), "continuó haciendo el mismo trabajo en la letra C y demás restantes" (p. [I])

The preparation of the second edition of the dictionary continued. Again, insistence was placed on the same inconveniences that had delayed its publication: "los repetidos y prolixos exámenes, que es preciso hacer de cada uno de sus artículos" and having to work at "otros trabajos, propios también de su instituto" (ibid.).

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These obstacles caused the interruption "á temporadas"

alcanzará el nuevo libro» 1972: 79).

⁵ Vid. the *Acta* of the Academic Board corresponding to April 28, 1739. As stated by Lázaro Carreter, «[n]o todos comparten la idea del suplemento; alguien propone que se publique una segunda edición con todos los aumentos y correcciones del caso, pero es solución que se rechaza» (1972: 99).

⁶ Although published in that year, the immense dictionary had been reduced since 1777, by the hand of the Director of the Academy, José J. Bazán y Silva, as it is possible to guess from the proposal registered in the *Acta* of Academic Board of April 10, 1777.

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and the consequent delay in its preparation, “más de lo que la ACADEMIA quisiera” (ibid.). Added to this was again the usual depletion of copies of both the first edition and the first volume of the second edition.

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Faced with these obstacles, the *Docta Casa* was confronted with a dilemma that was solved without choosing between one or the other option. That is: would the preparation of the second edition of the DA¹ (1726-1739) be continued? Or, on the other hand, would a new work be immediately started?

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We already know the answer. We are facing the first of the subsequent editions of the well-known *Common* or *Vulgar dictionary*, featuring a historical evolution that continues to the present day, although no longer on paper, but on digital support. The new edition came to light as a result, on the one hand, of the reduction of the six volumes of the dictionary for which the RAE was initially created into one single volume and, on the other, of the planned continuation of this work.

Therefore, to be more precise, the inventory of the DRAE¹ (1780) is not identical to that of the DA¹ (1726-1739): as the Academy states in the “Prologue” of that work, the entries of letters A and B, corresponding to the first volume of the second edition (1770) and those of letter C were incorporated. The volume was finished, although still unpublished.

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However, as already mentioned, the options were not exclusive⁷

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Although the Academy knew that it would take a long time to finish, it did not cease its efforts to continue the work undertaken in the DA² (1770). As just stated: letter C, the object of the second projected volume, was ready for printing. But, would the ten thousand eight hundred new lemas that were yet to be published, all belong to letter C? Obviously not, there would probably be more material relating to the rest of the letters. If we continue reviewing the prologues of the dictionaries, we come across an expository structure very similar to that of the first edition of the DRAE¹ (1780), in which the inventory revisions relating to the letters already finished, are gradually incorporated according to the following chronology:

Dictionary	Revised letters
DRAE ¹ (1780)	A-C
DRAE ² (1783)	A-C
DRAE ³ (1791)	A-F
DRAE ⁴ (1803)	A-I.

⁷ In fact, the answer to the question of whether to continue with the preparation of the second edition of the dictionary is practically unknown even by the research community, which sometimes confuses the date of the preparation of the DRAE with that of the DA2 (1770-1829).

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The corporation did not stop working on this dictionary; at least, from what the "Prologue" of the DRAE⁵ (1817, p. [i]) says, up to letter P. This "Prologue" already sounds as a tribute to the first edition of the DA¹ (1726-1739) and almost as a funeral eulogy to the second one that was never published⁸.

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But the most important aspect to understand about this chronicle of an announced death is what is stated in the title of the reduced editions. **CLIC**

The title of the first to the fourth editions was *Diccionario de la lengua castellana... reducido a un tomo para su más fácil uso* (1780, 1783, 1791 y 1803).

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However, in the fifth, dated 1817, there is finally no reference to any reduction. What does this allow us to assume? That, if the project to prepare the second edition of the DA¹ (1726-1739) had disappeared, there was no need to mention its reduction. **You cannot reduce what does not exist.** After this mention, there are no others in subsequent editions of the DRAE.

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The ensuing question that arises is why the Academy made this fateful decision. It should be remembered that the DA1 (1726-1739) is the greatest lexical treasure of our language, Spanish, and is the best work that the *Docta Casa* has prepared to date. The answer, once again, seems to be deduced from the same prologues that we are quoting: the continuous revision of the material, not only of what had yet to be published, but of what had already been published⁹.

⁸ Indeed, it can be read there: «A los veinte y seis años de su fundación acabó la Academia de publicar el Diccionario de la lengua castellana en seis tomos. [...] La corrección y aumento de esta grande obra ha sido desde entonces el objeto primario de sus continuados afanes, en que lleva trabajando hasta fines de la letra P; sin que por esto deba entenderse que está agotada la materia, ni concluido el trabajo de la Academia en las letras anteriores. De esta ocupación, á que la Academia se ha entrado con un teson infatigable, ha nacido el inmenso caudal de cédulas que posee de voces castellanas, autorizadas por el uso de nuestros buenos escritores: mina tan abundante como preciosa, que cuanto más se profundiza más riquezas ofrece» (DRAE5 1817: [1]).

⁹ In reference to this permanent revision, even to what had already been published, the first edition of the DRAE states: « This idea is repeated in the second (DRAE2 1783: [II]) and in the third (DRAE3 1791: [II]). The prologues of these first editions are very similar, only the quantitative data changes. In the fourth «llega la Academia con el trabajo de su revision hasta la L inclusive; pero queriendo satisfacer á las insinuaciones de muchas personas, que deseaban se pusiesen las voces que faltaban en las otras letras, ha intercalado en todas ellas quantas poseia, y quantas han recogido los actuales individuos de la Academia, corrigiendo asimismo algunos artículos de estas combinaciones, añadiendo ademas varias voces á las letras anteriores, y mejorando las definiciones de otras» (DRAE4 1803: [I]-[II]). It is interesting what the Academy says here: wanting to satisfy «las insinuaciones de muchas personas», understood as proposals for incorporation into the dictionary. The reason was the start of a more open and collective method, no longer limited exclusively to the Academy. For this reason, ads were published on the *Gaceta de Madrid*, so that the general public could participate in the work of the Academy, thus anticipating what James A.H. Murray would do with his *Oxford English Dictionary* (1888-1928;

Combining the revised work with the work already published and arranged for printing was a very complex task. A partial solution to the problem was the preparation of supplements. The following table shows the sequence of these additions to the body of the inventory, all of which, except those of the DRAE³ (1791), are listed as annexes included in the lexicographical work:

<i>Dictionary</i>	<i>Letters incorporated into the inventory</i>	<i>Supplements</i>
DRAE1 (1780)	A-C	A-B
DRAE2 (1783)	A-C	A-C
DRAE3 (1791)	A-F	D-F ¹⁰
DRAE4 (1803)	A-L	A-Z
DRAE5 (1817)	A-P	A-Z

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On the one hand, if the authors decided not to publish the volumes as they were being finished, it was because, at first, they considered it more practical to introduce the new features of the *maior* dictionary into the *minor*, rather than publish a second edition. Yet, on the other hand, if they decided to continue with it, it was because they thought that the dynamics of incorporating and combining data from one work into another would work.

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All this complex management, however, got out of hand. The new entries and information that would first be included in the large dictionary and then in the reduced one, merged with the additions of the already revised letters introduced by supplements that, later, needed to be reviewed. In short, a very complicated solution to handle, combining both versions of the

vid. Carriscondo Esquivel 2019: 301-302 for a specific sample of this kind of collaboration). Otherwise, the *totum revolotum* of revisions, post-revisions, modifications is observed... And finally, in the fifth edition, it can be read: «[S]in que por esto [es decir, sin que con esta tarea] deba entenderse que está agotada la materia, ni concluido para siempre el trabajo de la Academia en las letras anteriores [es decir, la alusión a estos trabajos de revisión es constante]. De esta ocupacion, á que la Academia se ha entrado con un teson infatigable, ha nacido el inmenso caudal de cédulas que posee de voces castellanas, autorizadas por el uso de nuestros buenos escritores: mina tan abundante como preciosa, que cuanto más se profundiza más riquezas ofrece» (DRAE5 1817: [I]).

¹⁰ The subtitle of this edition should be noted, «en la qual se han colocado en los lugares correspondientes todas las voces de los suplementos, que se pusieron al fin de las ediciones de los años de 1780 y 1783, y se han intercalado en las letras D. E. y F. nuevos artículos, de los cuales se dará un suplemento separado». It refers to the *Suplemento al Diccionario de la lengua castellana: compuesto por la Real Academia Española, para utilidad de los que tengan las ediciones de dicho diccionario hechas en los años de 1780 y 1783* (1791). We consulted this rare work in the library of the RAE.

lexicographical work.

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Finally, it was concluded that it was impossible to create a work depending on another. Therefore, at some point between the fifth (DRAE5 1817) and the sixth edition (DRAE6 1822), the institution definitively abandoned the drafting of the second edition of the DA1 (1726-1739). **CLIC**

The dream fell apart. Now we come to our last question.

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If, as we have read in the “Prologue” of the DRAE5 (1817), the Academy had been working on the second edition of the DA1 (1726-1739) “hasta fines de la letra P” (p. [I]), **where was all the material from A to P?** There had been a good deal of perfectly detailed information: had it gone completely missing or had its traces been lost? If it had not been destroyed, it had to be somewhere. We had a challenge ahead of us: we needed to keep track of this material to know its whereabouts.

Our first clue was based on the fact that we guessed that the material was covered, at least in part, in the first five editions of the DRAE that we have been dealing with throughout our presentation. In this regard, it would be convenient to carry out an investigation of lexicographic archaeology (Robert Ilson 1986) to observe the novelties introduced in each edition according to the letters that had already been dealt with, as indicated by the sequence of the previous table.

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Yet there is another clue, more exciting if possible: the discovery of the physical documentation of this material, deposited in the Archives of the Royal Spanish Academy. These are thirty-seven documentary units distributed as follows: nine files plus twenty-eight notebooks with sheets containing a total of 13,943 pages in folio.

FILES				
	START	END	CONCLUSION	DISTRIBUTION
1	<i>c</i>	<i>cebada</i>	1780	

2	<i>cebada</i>	<i>confundirse</i>	1780	
3	<i>confusamente</i>	<i>czarina</i>	1780	
4	<i>d</i>	<i>disyunto</i>	1789	
5	<i>disyunto</i>	<i>ezquierda</i>	1789	
6	<i>f</i>	<i>horror</i>	1789-1791	
7	<i>horror</i>	<i>lynce</i>	1789-1791	
8	<i>m</i>	<i>nefandísimo</i>	1803-1817	
9	<i>paredaño</i>	<i>prosperidad</i>	1803-1817	Francisco de S. Andrés Juan B. de Arriaza Cándido Beltrán de Caicedo José Bucareli Ramón Chimioni Diego Clemencín Martín Fernández de Navarrete Casimiro Flórez Canseco Agustín García Arrieta Casimiro Gómez Ortega Francisco A. González Oña Agustín J. Mestre José Munárriz

NOTEBOOKS

1	<i>pinar</i>	<i>quedito</i>	1818	Agustín de Silva Fernández de Híjar
2	<i>puño</i>	<i>quedito</i>	1818	
3	<i>quedo</i>	<i>quizá o quizás</i>	1818	José G. de Silva Bazán
4	<i>r</i>	<i>rapaz</i>	1818-1828	Diego Clemencín
5	<i>rapaz</i>	<i>re</i>	1818-1828	José M. de Carvajal
6	<i>re</i>	<i>receta</i>	1818-1828	Javier de Burgos
7	<i>receta</i>	<i>rechoncho</i>	1818-1828	Martín Fernández de Navarrete
8	<i>rechoncho</i>	<i>reforma</i>	1828	José M. Musso y Valiente
9	<i>reforma</i>	<i>registro</i>	1828-1829	Juan B. de Arriaza
10	<i>registro</i>	<i>rejo</i>	1829	Cándido Beltrán de Caicedo
11	<i>rejo</i>	<i>remate</i>	1829	José M. Musso y Valiente
12	<i>remate</i>	<i>renovador</i>	1829	José Bucareli
13	<i>renovador</i>	<i>repicar</i>	1829	Juan B. de Arriaza
14	<i>repicar</i>	<i>rescatar</i>	1829	Jerónimo del Campo y Roselló
15	<i>rescatar</i>	<i>restitución</i>	1829	Manuel Bretón de los Herreros

16	<i>restitución</i>	<i>retrocesión</i>	1827	Diego Clemencín
17	<i>retrocesión</i>	<i>reyerta</i>	1829	Eusebio M. del Valle
18	<i>reyerta</i>	<i>robo</i>	1829	Marcial Antonio López
19	<i>robo</i>	<i>rompedera</i>	1829	José G. de Silva Bazán
20	<i>rompedera</i>	<i>rotar</i>	1829	Diego Clemencín
21	<i>saciedad</i>	<i>salaz</i>	1829	José de la Revilla Gironza
22	<i>salaz</i>	<i>saludable</i>	1829	Benito Ortega Romanillos
23	<i>saludable</i>	<i>sanidad</i>	1829	Juan B. de Arriaza
24	<i>sanidad</i>	<i>secuencia</i>	1829	Juan P. Pérez Caballero
25	<i>secuencia</i>	<i>semidoble</i>	1829	Ramón Feliú
26	<i>semidoble</i>	<i>serpiente</i>	1829	José M. Musso y Valiente
27	<i>serpiente</i>	<i>silvestre</i>	1829	José G. de Silva Bazán
28	<i>solfa</i>	<i>sordamente</i>	1829	Vicente González Arnao

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The material begins with the letter C - which is logical, since A and B had been published in the first volume of the DA2 (1770) –

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and end with *sordamente*, in a notebook dated 1829. Therefore, this work would not have finished with letter P, as stated in the “Prologue” of the DRAE5 (1817). The end of the project was 1829, that is, a little beyond 1822, the date of publication of the sixth edition of the DRAE¹¹.

The transition between the preparation of the last file and the notebooks responds to the Academy’s custom to distribute material that needed to be revised among its members. To make this work effective, the material had to be delivered quickly. In this regard, it should also be recalled that some combinations are missing, especially at the end of letter Q and R and beginning and end of letter S¹².

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The «Prologue» (1770: I-V) that appears at the start the first volume –the only one published–

¹¹ It is possible to speak of a second phase in the abandonment of the project or, rather, the attempt to resume it, between 1859 and 1887, as recorded in the documentation drawn up by the Commission of the *Diccionario de autoridades* that is kept in the Archive of the Academy.

¹² In reality, the documentary collection comprised ten files, but unfortunately we have detected the loss of what would have been the ninth in the sequence, which comprised the articles from *nefandísimo* to *paredaño*.

provides information about the main novelties and the aspects on which the academics have insisted more in this lexicographical project. The features that characterize this philological revolution reinforce the nature of the first edition.

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It is worth emphasizing the importance of this work because, among other things, many of the novelties that we thought were introduced in the first edition of the DRAE (1780) were actually introduced in this ill-fated publication project. It would be worth reviewing the history of our lexicography, therefore, in light of the relevance of this project, whose most outstanding feature is its three-fold nature: thesaurizing, panchronic and palimpsestic.

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In the first place, it is important to emphasize its **thesaurizing nature**, due to the fact that it is a dictionary whose inventory arises from a huge amount of data that includes archaisms, dialectalisms, technical entries, the slang of thieves and ruffians, anthroponyms, patronymics, demonym, derivatives (even those easily inferable, as diminutives not as lexicalized or superlatives), etc. For example, we are talking approximately of about a total of 18,769 new lemas (not counting the sublemas), that is, an increase of one third compared to the first edition of the work (according to our calculations there are 42,350 lemas, quite close to those estimated by Manuel Alvar Ezquerro 1987: VI). To tell the truth, a significant part of these novelties are actually formal modifications of existing lemas, resulting from the spelling changes of the language in its passage from the XVIII century to the XIX. Among the additions, we find **six thousand archaisms**, a **thousand regionalisms** marked within a range that includes fifty different geographical locations, **two thousand five hundred** specialized entries distributed among a hundred brands, a hundred slang voices and a thousand among anthroponyms, patronymics and demonyms. Please note that we are always talking about additions to the first edition of the dictionary. Each one of these lexical parcels deserves a separate analysis, work that we have already undertaken.¹³

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Moreover, the panchronic nature of this edition should be emphasized, featuring the incorporation of archaisms that coexist with entries of Spanish of the time or recently introduced (such as Gallicisms), apart from those that are considered to belong to the state of the language concerned and that do not carry any chronological mark. All these peculiarities contribute to giving a feature of timelessness to the work.

¹³ However, despite what has been said so far, the creation of an entire – or ‘universal’, as was said at the time – dictionary was not in the spirit of the academics, as may be deduced from the words of the "Prologue", when referring to suppressing invented entries, as well as any dishonest and indecent entries (DA1 1770-1829 [1770]: IV-IV), and to distinguishing, in the technical lexicon, between entries of science, arts and crafts «recibidas en el uso común de la lengua» (v), which were included, and those that «no han salido del uso peculiar de sus profesores» (*ibidem*), were excluded from the macrostructure.

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Thus, entries marked as outdated are followed by others such as Gallicisms *barulé*, *biricú*, *chamarré*, *chambre* o *chambra*, *corsé*, *desabillé* o *fricandó*, with the label of «modernas» and «nuevamente introducidas en el castellano». It is thanks to this feature and to the previous one that we can say that the second edition of the *Diccionario de autoridades* (1770-1829) is the lexicographical project that has come closest to the exhaustive collection of the idiomatic integrity of the Spanish language, as defended in the concept of a "total" or "thesaurus" dictionary proposed by Ramón Menéndez Pidal (1970 [1941]).

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Lastly, we would like to point out its palimpsestic character. The basic text was prepared by several copiers, meaning that corrections, modifications, observations, deletions, additions, etc. would build up on the copy.¹⁴ Countless participants cooperated on the dictionary - some declared and others not: academics who prepared the assigned distribution and reviewers - who wrote, commented, crossed out, deleted, added information, etc. Furthermore, all these modifications took place over a long period of time, so that the material left by the eighteenth century academics was modified throughout the nineteenth century (as may be clearly seen from the additions and changes to the text). It is exactly for this reason that editing the texts becomes extremely complicated, making their digital reproduction necessary.

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There have been several questions which we have tried to answer and we are sure that more will arise in the future. In the end, there will perhaps be more questions than answers, but this does not mean that we will not address them all.

We have tried to provide a brief biography of this disheartened and slowly dying project, perhaps caused by the overwhelming force – due to their greater diffusion – of the subsequent editions of the dictionary *común*, *vulgar*, which were gathered into one single volume: the DRAE, since 2014 known as the DLE. The fact that the DA2 (1770-1829) was not published is the most important proof of how the Academy allowed itself to be imbued with the lexicography of the bourgeois citizen, prevailing in the XX century, compared to the humanistic lexicography, which reached its peak in the DA1 (1726 -39).

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The economic, the immediate, the informative ... versus the philological. As Manuel Seco himself says, «[l]a Academia dejó de sentir la necesidad de publicar su gran diccionario, perdió la convicción de su importancia fundamental, y prefirió la utilidad práctica de una obra a la calidad científica de la otra» (1991: XII).

¹⁴ Manuel Seco (1991: IV) thus describes the working method used by the academics in the first volume of DA2 (1770-1829) –corresponding, as is known, to letters A and B– until its publication in 1770: (1) distribution of the assigned combinations; (2) correction of the first volume of DA1 (1726-39 [1726]); (3) corporate review of corrections. The Corporation Archive contains a document that reproduces the agreement, dated May 11, 1769, of payment by the copier, Juan de Undajáuregui, of the the corresponding certificates to these letters. Presumably, the institution proceeded in the same way when creating subsequent volumes.

Abandoning the project was painful, as we have seen: work continued during the XIX century with the recording of the last documents in 1887. Fortunately, the material has survived until present day together with acknowledgment of the fact that this planned edition increased the subsequent editions of the reduced version. At least in part, therefore, the philological purpose was achieved. The largest dictionary of the Academy - or better: the largest dictionary of the Spanish language - has not been published yet. And it would be great to do so. We do not see a better way to honor the academics who embarked on this major work. This has been a lifetime project although we are already working on the second part of it. In spite of everything though, we are not lacking in strength, because we are of the same opinion as Don Quixote: the knight from whom the charmers could perhaps take away his fortune, but not his effort and courage.

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