
PRESENTATION

THANKS TO JC ALTAMIRANO, WE LINK THE ORIGIN OF THE SPANISH HORSE TO THE KING PHILIP II

Rodrigo Nieto



I am convinced that this book would not have been possible if Juan Carlos Altamirano had not left us the important work he left us. Or at least, it would not have been the same as it is now presented within its pages. Thanks to this author, a great friend of mine and to whom this book pays homage, we learned to separate the legends that revolved around the Cartuja de Jerez from the real documents existing in the archives of history. And so, one proof over another, irrefutably, helped us to understand that the Spanish Horse (PRE) had been a creation of King Philip II during his reign.

Altamirano, R.I.P., was one of those people who do not leave people indifferent. One of two, either they are loved or rejected. And that is what happened with him and with his work. He was recognized, loved and praised by many people, but also rejected and criticized by many who saw their interests at stake with these new theories, and also by many other illiterates who never understood the importance of his discoveries. But I must remind that my friend Altamirano was a born polemicist, and I think that, deep down, he liked the discussion and the controversy. Especially since he knew that, armed with his archival documents, he was generally right, since no one had previously taken the job and trouble to carry out his investigations.

As we remember, from 1998, the date on which his most important work was published: "*History and Origin of the Spanish Horse*", followed by other books, including the controversial "*History of the Cartujano Horses*", passionate discussions arose and criticisms of the thesis defended by the author about the true origin of the Spanish Horse, many of which appeared in articles and letters addressed to the author through the Pura Raza Magazine and other publications.

But the development of his thesis ended up being brilliant and very convincing, given the good argument and presentation of the documents that showed that the Spanish Horse Breed had been a project launched by Philip II, developed in Cordoba in the second half of the sixteenth century and executed by the governor of the breed Diego López de Haro.

The breeders and all those who, in one way or another, are related to the Breed, must thank this historian for having opened a new path in the world of the Spanish Horse. A road that was closed until then, since he knew how to combine what we already knew about the great virtues of our horse (beauty, nobility and functionality mainly) with some origins that elevated him to the top of the government of a king in whose domains, As we said so many times in school, the sun never set. Thanks to him, nowadays we know much more (and much more interesting things) about the PRE horse, since he was concerned to investigate his origin and documented a lot on the subject.

Altamirano left us with more than a dozen of very interesting books, among which the 1998 book "*History and Origin of the Spanish Horse*" was key. And very important were also "*History of the Cartujano Horses*" (2005) or "*The Lusitano Horse. Origin and History*" (2009); without forgetting "*The Spanish Horse with the Bourbon Kings*" (2004) or "*The Military Stud Farm*" (2008). The last of his books was a posthumous work, since it appeared a few days after his death, which occurred on October 6, 2012. It was the book "*Letters in Defense of the Spanish Horse*", a book to some extent announced, since as a contributor to several publications, he had accumulated extensive epistolary work over the years.

As it was written after the moment of his death, «the "*Letters in Defense of the Spanish Horse*" have ended up forming a beautifully edited and illustrated book, like all the previous ones, that compiles the replies to certain criticisms made about his articles and research different people and commentators, and that were published in different countries; although, many of them, as we say, within the pages of the Pura Raza Magazine». □

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PROLOGUE

THE PRE HORSE IS A «HORSE OF KINGS», BUT WE MUST NOT FORGET STRENGTH, RUSTICITY AND FUNCTIONALITY

I have to thank my friend Eliseo Ferrer for inviting me to present this seventh book of 2019 (Spanish Horse / Imperial Horse) from the collection «Spanish Horse Culture». I have been linked to this publisher since 1997, and it is an honor for me that I have been asked to write the prologue of a book of such importance and international transcendency. I say «linked since 1997» and I am not mistaking because there are things in this life that cannot be forgotten. That year my horse Macetero was Champion of the Breed in Talavera de la Reina and had a brilliant performance in other first level contests. Times that we remember today with a certain nostalgia, because we must tell the youngest that between 1995 and 2012 the Spanish Horse lived in Spain the most glorious moments of his modern history. The crisis, although a little later than in America, finally arrived in Europe and in Spain; and since 2012, with the intervention of the EU of Greece, Ireland and Portugal, and the intervention of the EU of some Spanish banks, the general economic situation in Spain, and the PRE market in particular, acquired lower levels as never seen before.

So it was, as I understand, how the idea of this interesting collection of books arose, that already marks in 2019 the seventh annual publication and it seems, as I have been told, that there are means to prolong it for few more years. «Spanish Horse / Imperial Horse» is born as another of the necessary pieces to complete what is now becoming into a «great thematic encyclopedia» of the Spanish Horse. In the first place, it is a book of history affordable for all everyone, since it places the PRE Horse Creation in the Empire of Charles V (Charles I of Spain) and the Spanish Monarchy of Philip II. But it is also a book about Equestrian Art and dressage of the Spanish Riding High School, that were the cultural elements in which the Spanish Horse emerged. And also very important! ... Almost half of this work of more than 500 pages is oriented towards the content of a book never written as of today and that tells us about all the European and American breeds created on the genetics of the (imperial) horse of PRE or the Andalusian and Extremaduran horses from which he was born, that were taken to America.

I detail, in alphabetical order, as specified in the index: Azteca Horse (Mexico), Cartujano Horse (Spain), Argentine Creole Horse (Argentina), Colombian Creole Horse (Colombia and Venezuela), Friesian Horse (Holland), Hispano-Arab Horse (Spain - Europe), Lippizaner Horse (Austria - Slovenia), Mustang Horse (USA), Neapolitan Horse (Italy), Peruvian Paso Horse (Peru - Ecuador) and Lusitano Purebred (Portugal).

Finally, the book devotes two chapters to clarify concepts such as «Andalusian Horse» and «Iberian Horse». And it concludes with an appendix where two old articles of JC Altamirano R.I.P of 2000 and 2001 are collected: «The Horse of the Conquerors» and «The first exports of Spanish Horses».

I am going to let you enjoy a book which knowledge is neither found on the Internet nor in other similar books. From me, only to convey to readers that our horse emerged from the top of an empire «on which the sun did not set» and that dominated the world through its seas and oceans. A past that fills me with pride, when the horses and mares of La Ciervina (my stud farm) appear before me, unique specimens, like the entire PRE breed, descendants of that lineage or Breed of the King of Spain that was the envy of the tamers, noblemen and horsemen of the Spanish Golden Age (XVII century) and all the Europe of the moment. Unique horses, yesterday and today, that led Colonel Juan Llamas to define the Spanish Horse as the «Horse of Kings».

That is the emotion that I experience when I study and observe the evolution of my horses. The beauty and nobility are two of the components of the Purebred Spanish Horse: an enjoyment for the senses ... Another is the functionality and aptitude for movements and dressage. But, as I have said so many times and written in publications of the sector, the breed beauty, the nobility of character and the harmony of movements do not run out the demands that we include in the selective criteria of La Ciervina Stud Farm. For me, beauty, nobility and good movements should be in the genetics of the house, as I think it happens in La Ciervina Stud Farm.

But all these elements must be complemented by rusticity, with all its consequences. Of course, are several the causes that motivate us to include the concept of rusticity in our selection parameters, but in general terms we understand that a breeding based on this criterion will offer the animals much more strength and impulsion, while allowing them to move forward more easily in unfavorable or adverse conditions. The rusticity is something that is being lost with the policy of stabling practiced by many farms. However, we understand that rusticity is the basis of functionality and aptitude for the saddle and dressage of our horses, which is the goal of the breeding within the parameters of the PRE breed. □



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Ramón Jiménez
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