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A SHORT
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE NOTICE
OF THE
NATIONAL MUSEUM.

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A SHORT
HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE NOTICE

OF THE
NATIONAL MUSEUM,

OF THE CITY OF MEXICO

BY

Jesús Galindo y Villa

WRITTEN BY ORDER OF THE MANAGER OF SAID MUSEUM,
AND TRANSLATED FROM SPANISH BY

Eduardo S. Herrera

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CITY OF MEXICO
—
THE NATIONAL MUSEUM PRINTING OFFICE
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FONDO
PEREZ MALDONADO

Personnel of the National Museum, in 1901.

PROFESSORS AND EMPLOYERS.

DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUM, PROFESSOR FRANCISCO DEL PASO Y TRONCOSO, in charge of the Departments of History and Archaeology.—(Actually in Europe.)

DR. MANUEL URBINA, Professor in charge of the Departments of Zoölogy and Botany.

DR. MANUEL M. VILLADA, Professor in charge of the Departments of Mineralogy, Geology, and Palaeontology.

ENG. JESÚS GALINDO Y VILLA, Assistant in History and Archaeology, and in charge of the Departments of History and Archaeology.

DR. NICOLÁS LEÓN, Assistant of the Departments of Natural History, in charge of the Department of Anthropology.

MR. ANDRÉS DÍAZ MILIÁN, Secretary and Treasurer.

MR. JOSÉ MARÍA DE ÁGRED A Y SÁNCHEZ, Librarian.

MR. JOSÉ MARÍA VELASCO, Draughtsman and Photographer.

MR. NICOLÁS ROJANO, Taxidermist.

MR. LUIS G. CORONA, Warden and Moulder, in charge of the Printing-office.



THE National Museum, of the City of Mexico, is situated in Calle de la Moneda (Mint Street), East of the Cathedral, in a building which is a part of the National Palace.

Don Antonio María de Bucareli y Ursúa, who was Viceroy of New Spain from 1771 to 1779, ordered «that all the documents about Mexican Antiquities—which were kept in the Archives of the Colonial Government—should be removed to the Royal University, as a most proper and fit place where to consult them,» as is to be read in the *Constitutions* (Charter) of that illustrious Academy (year 1775).

The second Count of Revilla Gigedo, who ruled New Spain, as Viceroy, from 1780 to 1794, ordered that the archaeological stones which had been discovered, about that time, in the Plaza Mayor, of this City, should be removed to the University, and that they should be submitted to a special study. The great monolith known as *Aztec Calendar* was the only one which was not removed to that establishment. It was entrusted to the care of the Commissioners of the work of the Cathedral, and was placed, by them, in the wall, at the base of the Western tower, and from thence it was removed, in 1885, to the place, in the Museum, where it can be seen at present.

The nucleus of the Museum thus begun, the National

Government established, in 1822, in the same University, a Conservatory of Antiquities and a Cabinet of Natural History.

At the close of 1831, Don Lucas Alamán, who was, at the time, Minister of Foreign Affairs, proposed, and succeeded in having his proposition accepted that both the Conservatory and the Cabinet should be reformed and improved, under the new denomination of National Museum.

In 1865, Maximilian ordered that the Museum should occupy the building where it is at present. This building was erected, for a Mint, under the reign of Philip V, the Marquis of Casafuerte being, at the time, Viceroy of New Spain.

But the building, after having been used for a Mint, was not exclusively converted into a Museum. A part of it was occupied, until a few years ago, by the General Direction of Taxes and Imposts, of the Federal District; and it was only in the year 1895 that the City Fire Brigade, which occupied another part of it, evacuated the premises.

It is owing to the constant endeavour of all the Directors who have been at the head of this establishment, that the Museum has become, after a lapse of many years, one of the most interesting establishments in the city, by its material and scientific merits.

In 1887, the publication of the *Anales del Museo Nacional*, was begun.

In 1882, Professor Gumersindo Mendoza, and Dr. Jesús Sánchez, published their interesting Catalogue of the Historical and Archaeological collections of the Museum, the first of all the Museum's catalogues; although, in 1827, Fathers Don Isidro Icaza and Don Isidro Rafael Gondra, had caused to be printed their *Collection of the Mexican Antiquities existing in the National Museum*. This collection was illustrated with lithographic pictures, by Waldeck.

In 1887, President Díaz presided over the inauguration of the Grand Hall of Monoliths, Dr. Sánchez being, at the time, the Director of the Museum.

Dr. Sánchez, while he was at the head of the Museum, gave a great impulse to the establishment.

Before Dr. Sánchez became a Director, the following gentlemen had fulfilled the same office, at the Museum: Icaza, Gondra, Licenciado Fernando Ramírez, Licenciado Telesforo Barroso, Dr. Bilimeck, Ramón I. Alcaráz, and Prof. Gumersindo Mendoza.

Dr. Sánchez having resigned, in 1889, Prof. Francisco Del Paso y Troncoso was appointed to succeed him.

Prof. Del Paso is a distinguished antiquarian. On the occasion of the fourth centenary of the Discovery of America, Prof. Del Paso sailed for Spain, leaving the management of the Museum in charge of Prof. Manuel Urbina, who is, at present, at the head of the establishment, and will continue to fill that position until Prof. Del Paso's return.

The Museum has a small printing-office, in charge of Mr. Luis G. Corona. It is at this printing-office that the Museum's Catalogues and other publications of the establishment are printed.

The Government has appropriated a sum of \$10,000 a year, for the improvement and maintenance of the Museum.

In 1864, President Diaz presided over the inauguration of the Grand Hall of Monoliths. Dr. Sanchez being, at that time, the Director of the Museum.

Dr. Sanchez, while he was at the head of the Museum, gave a great impulse to the establishment.

Before Dr. Sanchez became a Director, the following gentlemen had fulfilled the same office at the Museum: Don Juan de Alarcon, Don Juan de la Cruz, Don Teodoro Barrios, Dr. Billimeck, Ramon I. Alvarez, and Don Guzman Mendez.

Dr. Sanchez having resigned in 1867, Don Francisco Del Paso y Troncoso was appointed to succeed him.

Don Francisco Del Paso is a distinguished antiquarian. On the occasion of the fourth centenary of the Discoverer of America, Don Francisco Del Paso edited for Spain, bearing the name of the Museum, a change of the Manual of the Museum, which is at present, at the head of the establishment, and will continue to fill that position until Don Francisco Del Paso's return.

The Museum has a small printing-office in charge of Mr. Luis G. Gomez. It is at this printing-office that the Museum's Catalogues and other publications of the establishment are printed.

The Government has appropriated a sum of \$10,000 a year for the improvement and maintenance of the Museum.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION.

The Museum is divided into three large Departments, viz:

- I. **Archæology.**
- II. **History of Mexico.**
- III. **Natural History**, comprising a small Section of **Anthropology and Ethnology.**

I. ARCHÆOLOGY.

This Department is situated in the groundfloor of the building. It is divided into two independent parts: **A. The Gallery of Monoliths; B. Section of Ceramics, Reproductions, and Sundry archæological specimens.**

Immediately upon entering the Museum building, at the farther end of the court, is to be seen the gate leading to the

A. Gallery of Monoliths.

On the attic crowning the gate is the bronze bust of King Philip V, of Spain, who was the founder of this building. This bust was formerly placed on the attic of the principal façade of the Museum, just where the coat with the National Arms now is. King Philip V.'s bust was caused to be moved