



The discourse of this exhibition is presented in ten thematic sections determined by the characteristics of the collection:

1. The collection and its owners.
2. The palace of Castilleja de la Cuesta.
3. The figure of Hernán Cortés.
4. The first Mexican Emperor. Agustín de Iturbide (1822-1823).
5. The French in Mexico.
6. The second Mexican Emperor. Maximiliano of Habsburgo (1864 - 1867).
7. The Horse.
8. The porcelain of the Company of the Indies.
9. The Mexican handmade wax figures.
10. The Mexican lacquer.

4 Wax sculpture of an Indian

THE DREAM OF AN EMPIRE EXHIBIT

THE MEXICAN COLLECTION
OF THE DUKE OF MONTPENSIER

Commissioners of the exhibit,
selection of documents, pieces, and text
M^a Isabel Simó Rodríguez,
Pilar Lázaro de la Escosura y
Falia González Díaz.

Archivo General de Indias.
Avenida de la Constitución s/n
41004 SEVILLA
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July to December of 2007

Schedule: Monday to Saturday:
from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm.
Sunday and Holidays:
from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Entrance is Free

Information about visits:
General Archive of the Indies
Department of References
Tfno: (34) 954 500 530
E-mail: agi2@mcu.es
Fax: 954 219 485

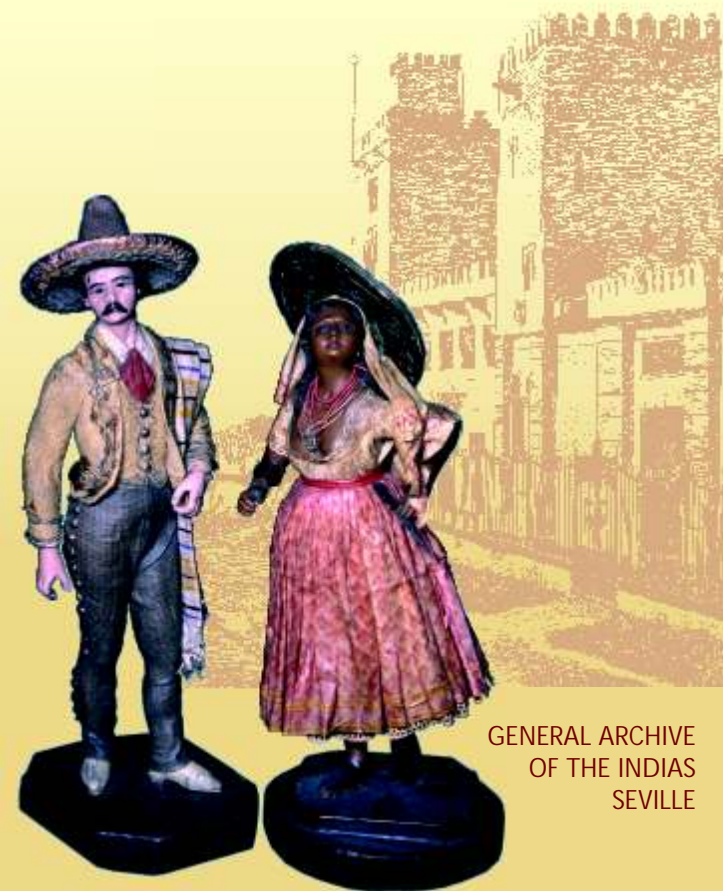
Group visits must be previously arranged

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S.G. de Publicaciones, Información y Documentación.
NIPO: 551-07-045-2
Depósito Legal: SE-3756/07



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GENERAL ARCHIVE
OF THE INDIES
SEVILLE



The present exhibit reveals to the public for the first time a collection of artifacts from Mexico that Antonio de Orleans, Duke of Montpensier, son of the King Louis Philippe of France, collected and conserved in his palace home in Castilleja de la Cuesta (Sevilla). The Duke bought the palace and reconstructed it in 1854. Hernán Cortés died in that house in 1547. The Duke's admiration for this historic figure caused him to create in one of the rooms of his home, a small museum which he named, "Sala Hernán Cortés", in honor of the conquistador. Here he collected portraits and objects related to Hernán Cortés as well as had copies made of original documents from the Archive of the Indias which told of the accomplishments of the Conquistador.

The collection has remained intact for the most part and even the furniture that was in the room is also on display with this collection. Montpensier was infatuated with the idea initiated by Napoleón Bonaparte to create a French Empire in Mexico, (Montpensier himself aspired to become Emperor). He also was interested in other aspects of the country: its history, customs, its social organization and its people. He organized a small specialized library and began to collect a variety of objects which were always related to México.



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The collection has been in the hands of different owners until it finally reached its actual destiny in the General Archive of the Indias.

It was turned over by the Dukes in life, along with the palace that it was held in, as dowry for his daughter Mercedes in 1878 given the motive of her wedding to king Alfonso XII. At the death of Mercedes, the king kept the house with its collection while he lived.

M^a de las Mercedes, princess of Asturias, daughter of the king Alfonso XII and his second wife M^a Cristina of Habsburgo, inherited the property and sold it in 1903 to the congregation of the Institute of Bienaventurada Virgen María (IBVM, Irish nuns). The ecclesiastical presence in the house was established in 1889, where a

school was founded and is still actually present. For this reason, the Mexican artifacts were deposited in the Royal Palace (Real Alcazár) of Sevilla and kept there until 1928.

In this year, the inheritors of the princess of Asturias, the children Alfonso and Isabel Alfonsa of Borbón, decided to return the pieces and the furniture to Castilleja de la Cuesta, where they stayed until 1933. This is when the donation of the collection to the General Archive of the Indias was formalized.

For lack of exhibit space in the Archive in those days, it was decided to lend the collection temporarily to the Museum of America in Madrid. However, its library about Mexican themes stayed in the Archive. Last year in 2006, the pieces of the collection were taken from the Museum of America and returned to their original donator, The General Archive of the Indias.

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