

Catalogo de animales y plantas Mexicanas

1794

Mss.591.972.Se7

American Philosophical Society

2003

105 South Fifth Street

Philadelphia, PA, 19106

215-440-3400

manuscripts@amphilsoc.org

Table of Contents

Summary Information	3
Background note	5
Scope & content	6
Administrative Information	7
Related Materials	7
Indexing Terms	7
Other Descriptive Information	8
Bibliography	8

Summary Information

Repository	American Philosophical Society
Creator	Sessé y Lacasta, Martin de, 1751-1808
Title	Catalogo de animales y plantas Mexicanas
Date	1794
Call number	Mss.591.972.Se7
Extent	1.0 Volume(s) 223 p.
Extent	1 vol., 223p.
Location	LH-MV-E-16
Language	Spanish
Container	1
Abstract	<p>One of the great scientists of colonial Mexico, Martin de Sessé y Lacasta arrived in Mexico City from his native Aragon in 1780. A founder of the Botanical Garden in Mexico City, Sessé was also co-leader of the sixteen year long Royal Botanical Expedition, which surveyed the flora and fauna of the Spanish colonies from California to Costa Rica. Sessé returned to Spain in 1803 to write up the results of his expedition, but died before completing the project. The results were finally published in 1887, when they appeared as <i>Plantae Novae Hispaniae</i> and <i>Flora Mexicana</i>. The Catalogo de animales y plantas Mexicanas by Martin de Sessé y Lacasta represents a catalog of plant and animal specimens collected by the Royal Botanical Expedition in Mexico as of 1794. The manuscript is arranged in three parts: a brief letter of introduction to the Conde</p>

Revillagigedo (11p.), an inventory of animal specimens (52p.), and an inventory of the plants (163p.). The plant and animal sections are organized by Linnaean class, with a code indicating whether they were drawn from life, whether a specimen was collected, and whether the species was new to science.

Preferred Citation

Cite as: Martin de Sessé y Lacasta, Catalogo de animales y plantas Mexicanas, American Philosophical Society.

Background note

Born in Aragon, Spain, in 1751, Martin de Sessé y Lacasta studied medicine at the Hospital de Nuestra Sra. de Gracia at Zaragoza before taking an assignment in Mexico in 1780. Serving as a military physician in the capitol, he rapidly became an important member of the colonial learned elite, helping to inaugurate a course in botany at the Pontifical University and to found the Royal Botanical Garden in Mexico City in 1788.

In August 1788, Sessé approached the Viceroy, the Conde Revillagigedo, with an ambitious plan to conduct a natural historical survey of New Spain. Led by Sessé and the botanist Mariano Moçino, the expedition included a number of prominent figures in Mexican science, including the anatomist and surgeon José Longinos Martínez, José Maldonado, and the artist Atanasio Echeverría. The Royal Botanical Expedition (also called the Sessé and Moçino, Expedition) became one of the great scientific achievements of eighteenth century Mexico, covering the terrain from California almost to Costa Rica, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, and resulting in an herbarium of over 8,000 specimens along with over 500 birds and 300 fish, as well as 2,000 paintings by Echeverría. Less systematically, the Expedition recorded information about geography, geology, and ethnology, and collected rock and mineral specimens and other scientific curiosities.

After sixteen years of work, Sessé and Moçino returned to Spain in 1803 by order of the King, taking the collections with them in order to prepare them for publication. However, Sessé's death in 1808 followed by political turmoil in Europe delayed plans for decades. The results of the expedition did not finally appear in print until 1887, when they were published in Mexico City as *Plantae Novae Hispaniae* and *Flora Mexicana*.

Scope & content

The Catalogo de animales y plantas Mexicanas by Martin de Sessé y Lacasta represents a catalog of plant and animal specimens collected by the Royal Botanical Expedition in Mexico as of 1794. The manuscript is arranged in three parts: a brief letter of introduction to the Conde Revillagigedo (11p.), an inventory of animal specimens (52p.), and an inventory of the plants (163p.). The plant and animal sections are organized by Linnaean class, with a code indicating whether they were drawn from life, whether a specimen was collected, and whether the species was new to science.

Administrative Information

Publication Information

American Philosophical Society 2003

Provenance

Acquisition Information

Gift of J. G. Williamson, 1835.

Processing Information

Recatalogued by rsc, 2004.

Related Materials

Related Material

Material relating to the Botanical Garden in Mexico City can be found in the collections of the William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan.

Indexing Terms

Genre(s)

- Scientific Data

Personal Name(s)

- Revillagigedo, Juan Vicente Guemez Pacheco de Padilla Horcasitas Y Aguayo, Conde de, 1740-1799

Subject(s)

- Beyond Early America
- Botany--Mexico
- Natural History
- Scientific expeditions--Mexico
- Zoology--Mexico

Other Descriptive Information

This volume contains a list of plant and animal specimens collected by the Royal Botanical Expedition in Mexico in 1794.

Bibliography
