

## **Foreword for the Book**

### **“The Palace of Time” – The Clock Museum of Jerez**

In 2002, when I began my professional career in the field of historical horology, a catalogue dedicated to the clock collection of the Andrés de Ribera Foundation came into my hands. Today, it gives me great satisfaction to write the foreword to this book, which contributes to a deeper understanding of one of the most important collections in our country.

Since the Renaissance, humankind has felt the need to control time, regulating daily activities both inside and outside the home. The earliest clocks were an exclusive privilege of emperors, kings, popes, and nobles. Later, they became accessible to merchants and bankers. With time, by the 19th century, they found their way into the homes of the bourgeoisie.

The clock thus became a symbolic object, representative of an era that celebrated human achievement, wealth, professional activity, and personal taste. The first collections appeared, joining paintings, furniture, and other artistic objects that adorned the interiors of noble and bourgeois homes.

The collection before us, born from the passion of a family originally motivated by a desire to display both their economic power and artistic taste, has over time become a cultural landmark. The dissemination of the collection through an initial catalogue and its outreach to all ages—enhanced today by its presence on social media—is a model to follow.

In Spain, there are only two museums devoted exclusively to historical clocks: the Grassy Museum in Madrid and the one we are presenting here. In addition, we are fortunate to have other collections dedicated to the history of clockmaking, such as the collection of popular clocks by Andrés Santiago Zarzuela—donated to the University of Salamanca—the Basilio Sobrecueva Museum of Ceramics and Clocks, the clock collection of the Quiñones de León Municipal Museum in Vigo, and the noteworthy collection of clocks displayed at the City Hall of A Coruña.

Andalusia can rightfully take pride in having two exceptional museums devoted to clocks and scientific instruments: the Royal Institute and Observatory of the Navy in San Fernando—the Spanish Museum of Science and Technology—and the one we are presenting today, the Museo de la Atalaya – The Palace of Time Clock Museum. When I had the opportunity to visit this museum with my family, we were struck by the quality of the pieces on display and the educational vision demonstrated by those who conceived the exhibition project.

All the great horological schools and artistic styles are represented here: the English, French, German, Swiss, Austrian, Italian, and Spanish schools. The latter is represented by a fascinating street-lamp clock signed by José Rodríguez de Losada, who, though he worked and established his business in London, was born in Iruela (León) and sold many of his fine clocks to Spanish collectors.

The arrangement of the collection throughout the palace's galleries allows visitors to appreciate a wide variety of timepieces produced between the 17th and 20th centuries: robust and sober longcase and bracket clocks from England; elegant and sophisticated French clocks depicting historical or mythological figures, symbolizing allegories, imitating architectural

structures, or showcasing skeleton and mystery mechanisms; as well as pocket watches, alarm clocks, and more—many crafted by renowned clockmakers such as Le Roy, Berthoud, Lepaute, Lepine, Thuret, Guydamour, Raingo Frères, Etienne Le Noir, and Blanc Fils, among others.

Particularly moving is the gallery dedicated to the memory of Don Arturo Paz Argudo, the first clockmaker and conservator of this collection. Such tributes deserve to be emulated by other museums, for without the dedication of these lovers of horology, we would not be able to enjoy these exquisite objects today.

This book serves as an excellent guide to understanding the collection in depth. The pages dedicated to the history of the building and its gardens masterfully lead us into the museum's galleries. The list of artists, the glossary accompanying the text, and the study of the materials and techniques used in crafting these objects all reveal the author's commitment to producing a comprehensive work.

Initiatives such as the publication of this book-catalogue and the promotion of this museum deserve the support of both public and private institutions. This museum and its magnificent collection should rightfully be part of the Spanish museum network.

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