Did you know?

A meal for the change of shift

Vasco assigned hospital care to married couples who changed over every seven days, who were known as semaneros or uritechas. Today in Santa Fe de la Laguna, 400 years on, they still celebrate the change of shift with a meal, which the new semaneros offer those who are leaving.

The funds lasted 334 years

Vasco de Quiroga was so effective in managing his foundations that funds granted by him to the hospital lasted for 334 years at three sites until 1875, when they signed the Act of Extinction.

... Is called the Immaculate Conception

All chapels or iuritzios in the hospitals were named after the Immaculate Conception, Nana Huari, representing a legal management unit. This was done in honour of a twelfth-century hospital, which you can still visit on the other side of the ocean, in Madrigal de las Altas Torres, the birthplace of Vasco de Quiroga.

For the construction of hospitals ...

In the building of hospital churches and houses any existing Indian and Hispanic resources were used, indigenous volcanic stone or Spanish masonry, adobe or mud finishes, white lime or red facings, using the earth or charanda from the area, together with Tuscan pillars or columns.

Against Hernán Cortes

As a member of the Royal Audience and a judge, Quiroga initiated proceedings against Hernán Cortes himself, in his desire to do justice to indigenous citizens on behalf of the Spanish crown in America.

Quiroga learn Purépecha

When he was ordained as a bishop in Michoacán and ordered the priests and friars to learn the various indigenous languages, since the Cathedral should have an altar to pray at each of them.

The utopian city of Thomas More

The utopian city of Thomas More, which was embodied in ideas from the Renaissance and modern Europe, only became a reality in the New World “peoples hospital” due to the spectacular work carried out by Vasco de Quiroga, together with the Franciscans, Augustinians and the indigenous people of Michoacán.

‘Huatáperas’ or hospital towns

Franciscan hospitals in Michoacán were called ‘huatáperas’ by the Purépecha or meeting place, thus fulfilling the role that Don Vasco assigned villages; offering hospitality to people and providing them with a place which met their requirements and where life could be organized wisely.

At 61 years, when he arrived in the Americas

The magistrate and humanist Vasco de Quiroga was probably 61 when he arrived in the Americas. Or anyway at least 53, as the date of his birth is disputed.
Did you know?

In the coffered ceilings of the vaulted roofs
In the coffered ceilings of the vaulted roofs of the time, starry arab motifs coexisted with indigenous paintings, the decorations of the missals with western and indian astrological symbols, saints and apostles with the purépecha gods of the sun and moon.

The finances of the people’s hospitals
Vasco de Quiroga organized the finances of people’s hospitals by specializing in arts and occupations which involved the talents and knowledge of both the indigenous and Spanish people. They are still the primary source of income for some towns along the Don Vasco route.

In the huatáperas of Uruapan and Zacán
We can see beautiful Hispano-Arabic windows decorated with honeycomb frames reminiscent of the windows of thirteenth century Fez or Marrakesh, among others.

A Mexican showcase
Thanks to the efforts made to strengthen indigenous crafts and occupations Vasco de Quiroga made Michoacán what it is known as today, “a showcase for Mexico”.

The treadle loom
Textiles were woven with the practical backstrap loom, used by women in ancient times, or with the treadle loom introduced by Don Vasco.

Lacquer production
Vasco de Quiroga promoted trade in lacquer or Indian shellac, so delicately made that it was thought to be Chinese, a paste made to go hard, be polished and for waterproofing containers, which was made from limestone, fat from cochineal worms and wild sage seeds.

Three different types of lacquer
In Michoacán three different kinds of lacquer are still made. One is laminated with gold in the communities of Patzcuaro, Quiroga, and then there are the encrusted and stained methods, found in Uruapan.

The first Christian image
In 1540, impressed by the cane art, produced by grinding two parts maize stalk and five parts orchids, Don Vasco de Quiroga commissioned a Franciscan sculptor to produce a statue of Nuestra Señora de la Salud; the sculptor learnt the technique from an indian priest who used it to make idols.

Villa Escalante
Santa Clara del Cobre, today recovered and thriving, lost its name and occupation as many times as the Indians recovered them. After a fire in the foundry built by Don Vasco in the nineteenth century, Independence and the Revolution, it disappeared from the map when it was converted into the impoverished Villa Escalante.
Did you know?

The ‘Don Vasco casserole’

The ‘Don Vasco casserole’, a symbol of Michoacán people residence. He ordered the casserole to be large enough to feed the hungry. It is still used by the Purépecha to cook cracklings, carnitas and sweets.

In 1986, the flame of the Olympic Games

In 1986, the flame of the Olympic Games in Mexico burnt in a censer produced in Santa Clara del Cobre by cosmopolitan sculptor Metcalf. On its centenary, the Statue of Liberty in New York wore copper jewelry from Santa Clara designed by Metcalf’s wife, Ana Pellicer.