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New Contributions on Enrique Zofío, Sculptor of the Olavide Museum

Nuevas aportaciones sobre Enrique Zofío, escultor del museo Olavide

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The artistic figure of Mr. Enrique Zofío Dávila (1835–1915) and his relationship with the Olavide Museum have been very well studied by Drs. Luis Conde Salazar and Felipe Heras Mendaza.[1,2] In a review of the literature and the press of the period, we found answers to some questions about the person, professional activity, and commercial activity of the main author of the figures of the Olavide Museum of the Fundación Piel Sana of *Academia Española de Dermatología y Venereología* (AEDV).

Zofío was born in Madrid on April 13, 1835,[3] and died in Madrid in 1915. He received his artistic training at the *Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando* between 1852 and 1857, where he was awarded an extraordinary prize.[4]

On July 6, 1864, he joined the Military Health Corps as sculptor of its Anatomical Museum, with a monthly salary of 30 escudos. A few years later, he married Felisa Urosa, with whom he had 3 children. One of them, Antonio Zofío Urosa (1868–1923), was a founder of the AEDV in 1909.[1]

He lived in Carabanchel Alto, where, according to the liberal newspaper *La Iberia* of January 5, 1866, he founded the "*Comité Progresista de Carabanchel Alto*," whose president was Mr. Gregorio Urosa and vice president Mr. Eulogio Zofío,[5] the former belonging to his wife's family. He later moved to Calle de las Huertas, near the Hospital de San Juan de Dios.[1]

His professional life was linked to the *Hospital Militar de Madrid*. According to his service record in Military Health, he was "anatomical sculptor of the Military Health Museum" from July 6, 1864, to May 11, 1880. On that date, he was appointed "third personal assistant of the Health Brigade," a position he held until January 20, 1884, when he was promoted to "second personal assistant of the Health Brigade." He remained in that position until October 27, 1897, when he entered "retired status." A few months later, he rejoined the service in the same post on January 12, 1898, where he remained until his retirement in 1911.[3]

But was Enrique Zofío a military man? At least that is how he was dressed in the only portrait we have of him (Fig. 1),[1] but no military rank appears in his service record. We therefore believe, in agreement with Conde, that he was a civilian contractor serving Military Health, although he was acknowledged to have "war merits." Of the 3 decorations he wears on his military uniform, the central one corresponds to the First-Class Cross of Military Merit with white distinction, awarded

Fig. 1. Enrique Zofío Dávila (1835–1915).

in 1877, according to the Royal Order of December 21, "in reward for those he provided in the exercise of his profession during the last civil war." The next is the Knight's Cross of the Order of Isabella the Catholic, awarded in 1887 by Royal Order of January 18, "for the merits acquired in the Anatomical Museum of the *Hospital Militar de Madrid*." The third is the First-Class Cross of Military Merit with white distinction, awarded in 1896, according to the Royal Order of July 3, pensioned with 10% of his salary, "in reward for the extraordinary services rendered in his post." His service record[3] includes a fourth decoration awarded in 1902, "the silver commemorative medal of the oath of H.M. King Alfonso XIII (q.D.g.) by Royal Order of June 19, 1902," which he does not wear on the uniform, possibly because the portrait predates that date. Contrary to Conde and Heras,[1] we can state that he did not take part in military actions in Cuba or the Philippines, since no military action appears in his service record,[3] and that he wore military uniform because he was linked to Military Health, where he was decorated with these medals.

We know that Zofío made 2 trips to Paris. The first was in 1878, to attend the Universal Exhibition, accompanying, as an "advisor," Cesáreo Fernández Losada (1831–1911) and Nicasio Rosendo Landa Álvarez del Carvallo (1830–1891),[2] both military physicians. For this journey, he was commissioned by the Ministry of War[6] and by the Provincial Council of Madrid.[7] The Development Commission of the Provincial Council awarded him a grant of 1500 pesetas, 1000 before the journey and 500 on presentation of a report on what had been done there.[8] As we read in an article by the physician and journalist Ángel Pulido Fernández (1852–1932) in *El Siglo Médico*[9] and later published by the same author in a volume with a prolog by Letamendi in 1883,[10] during this trip he visited Jules Baretta (1833–1923), the anatomical sculptor of the Hôpital Saint-Louis. On his return from Paris, in an interview published in *El*

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Siglo Médico, Zofío acknowledged to Pulido: "I have been transformed; between the sculptor of 2 months ago and the one I am now, there lies a world of teachings and another world of desire for improvement; within my head stirs the yearning for a new artistic life; we shall work, but following another path."[9,10]

The second trip to Paris was in 1882, on official commission (Royal Order of July 17), "so that he might attend the main anatomical work studios to further perfect himself in the art that he currently practices with such benefit, setting out for that place on August 1 and returning on September 10, rejoining his previous post."[3] During these 2 stays in Paris, Zofío completed his artistic training.

Regarding his employment relationship with Olavide and the *Hospital de San Juan de Dios*, Conde Salazar and Heras Mendaza stated in 2012:2 "It is curious that we have not found any data or document linking Zofío professionally to San Juan de Dios." Indeed, his main employment link was with Military Health, but he also carried out his professional activity at *Hospital de San Juan de Dios*, where he made more than 400 figures,[11] something that would be difficult to explain without some contractual relationship. At the session of the Provincial Council of Madrid on August 8, 1879, the Charity Commission agreed to "appoint Mr. Enrique Zofío honorary anatomical sculptor of the provincial hospitals, accepting his proposal that he be paid only for the materials he uses in the relief reproduction of the anatomical cases assigned to him."[12] This appointment authorized him to work in the "provincial hospitals," although without a salary. It is interesting that a few days earlier, at the session of the Provincial Council on August 1, in the Development Commission, a dissenting vote was submitted by the deputy Mr. Ramón Sánchez y Merino, proposing that the report presented by Mr. Zofío on his visit to Paris in 1878 be approved and paid for, and "that he be assigned the amount of 2000 pesetas per year to reproduce some pathological cases in wax." The proposal was not approved.[13] However, in the *Diario Oficial de Avisos* of December 29, 1882,[14] we also find that, at the previous day's session, "it was agreed to award a gratuity of 1000 pesetas to the sculptors of the Anatomical Museum of San Juan de Dios, Messrs Zofío and Mendaza." In another session of the Provincial Council of Madrid held on December 28, 1882,[15] some doubts are clarified regarding the remuneration received by Mr. Zofío. The Charity Commission presented a report stating the following: "Taking into account the meager remuneration obtained for their work by Messrs Zofío and Mendoza, anatomical sculptor and histological preparer, respectively, at the Museum of the *Hospital de San Juan de Dios*, the commission proposes that the Provincial Council grant each of these gentlemen the annual and permanent gratuity of 1000 pesetas…." After discussion, the proposal was approved after deleting the terms "annual and permanent." At the session of July 7, 1883, the matter was again insisted upon: "To order, in compliance with the agreement of the Provincial Council dated June 21 last, by which the officials serving in the Anatomical Museum and Laboratory of the *Hospital de San Juan de Dios* were confirmed in their posts, that the corresponding appointments be issued to these officials, and that the Accounting Office credit monthly the corresponding portion of the gratuities assigned to the anatomical sculptor…."[16] All this leads us to think that Mr. Zofío did not receive a fixed salary from the Provincial Council and that he only received gratuities from it for his work.

Regarding the place where Zofío made the figures, it is clear that he had a workshop at the Military Hospital, whereas at San Juan de Dios there was no workshop until its move to the new site on Dr Esquerdo Street in 1879.[2] From the dates of the figures of the Olavide Museum, we know that his greatest production occurred between 1880 and 1897, that is, before the 1897 move. In the newspaper *El Liberal* of September 27, 1879,[17] in an article by Pulido on "The Hospitals of San Juan de Dios. The old one," where he describes Dr. Mendoza's laboratory, he states literally: "and likewise deserving of praiseworthy mention is the workshop of plastic reproductions, for the enrichment of the Museum, at whose head there is a suitable and highly skilled person, Mr. Enrique Zofío…." This article leads us to think that there was a workshop at the Hospital of Antón Martín where the ceroplasties were made. In another article by the same journalist, in *El Siglo Médico*, he tells us of an invitation made to him by Zofío "to visit the collection he keeps at his home,"[9] which leads us to think that he may have worked at his own home or simply displayed the figures there for sale.

We believe that, with this small contribution, we help improve knowledge of the figure of Mr. Enrique Zofío Dávila, the main sculptor of the figures of the Olavide Museum.

Conflict of interest

The author declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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