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# Guide to the Archicofradía del Santísimo Sacramento y Caridad Records 1555-1858



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## Descriptive Summary

<b>Identifier</b>	ICU.SPCL.ARCHICOFRADIA
<b>Title</b>	Archicofradía del Santísimo Sacramento y Caridad. Records
<b>Date</b>	1555-1858
<b>Size</b>	3.75 linear feet (3 boxes)
<b>Repository</b>	Special Collections Research Center University of Chicago Library 1100 East 57th Street Chicago, Illinois 60637 U.S.A.
<b>Abstract</b>	Mexico (City). Archicofradía del Santísimo Sacramento y Caridad. Records of the Archconfraternity of the Blessed Sacrament of the metropolitan cathedral of Mexico City, from 1555 to 1858. Contains legal, financial, and other documents relating to the activities of the confraternity.

## Information on Use

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Digital Images

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## Citation

When quoting material from this collection, the preferred citation is: Archicofradía del Santísimo Sacramento. Records, [Box #, Folder #], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library

## Historical Note

Confraternities are associations formed for the purpose of promoting and enriching public worship in the Catholic Church. For laymen they provide an organized structure for the expression of individual piety, devotion, and service. The Confraternity of the Most Blessed Sacrament arose in the sixteenth century for the special purpose of emphasizing and enhancing the Eucharist, particularly as a reaction to and a refutation of Protestant sacramental doctrine and practice. The confraternity movement quickly spread to all parts of the Catholic world, even to the remote parishes in America.

Archconfraternities differ from confraternities only in that they possess higher dignity, and may be empowered to affiliate other confraternities---that is, they may communicate their own privileges to affiliated confraternities. But this affiliation confers no powers of direction or jurisdiction on the archconfraternity, for each confraternity, created almost always by local initiative and not from the outside, remains an autonomous entity under the jurisdiction of the local bishop. It is claimed by José Maria Marroqui, *La Ciudad de Mexico*, 2d ed. (Mexico City, 1969 reprint), III, 432, that the Mexican society, authorized by the papal bull of 30 November 1539, was an archconfraternity from the very beginning. This would have been unusual; but the claim is not sustained by the authors of the documents in this collection, who never used the term "archcofradia" until after 1670---before that date it was always "cofradia."

By the terms of canon law the confraternity created in Mexico City in 1539, from its very foundation, was affiliated with the Archconfraternity of the Most Blessed Sacrament in the church of Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome, and entitled to hold and enjoy all privileges and indulgences conferred by papal favor on the Roman archconfraternity. The canonical characteristics of affiliation (discussed in Edwin Quinn, *Archconfraternities, Archsoldalities, and Primary Unions* [Washington, D.C., 1952]) may be abstruse but are important, nonetheless, for understanding some of these papers. The Mexican confraternity not only claimed affiliation with Minerva, but also with the Lateran basilica of St. John the Baptist, the pope's own church as bishop of Rome, with all the powers of indulgence communicated thereby.

This was because the Mexican confraternity supported and supervised the female orphanage and school, known formally as the Colegio de Santa Maria de la Caridad (informally as the Colegio de las Doncellas, or de las Ninas), which orphanage was affiliated with the Lateran. The confraternity even changed its name to "Cofradia del Santisimo Sacramento y de Santa Maria de la Caridad" in order to emphasize its assumption of the prerogatives conferred on the Colegio by the Lateran affiliation.

Marroqui states that the papacy recognized the change of name, confirmed the affiliation with the Lateran, and even limited the Jurisdiction over the confraternity wielded by the local ordinary (the archbishop of Mexico). These papers prove that the confraternity's claims were opposed in Mexico, in Madrid, and perhaps even in Rome. Box 1, folder 14 contains documents dealing with a representative sent to Rome by the confraternity, in 1682, to secure explicit papal support. The confraternity had to defend its claims and privileges repeatedly, and had frequent resort to Madrid and Rome for papal bulls and briefs, and royal decrees and letters, reconfirming old legal instruments of privilege.

In the disputes over privilege, two issues concerned the officials of the crown. First they wanted to know whether privileges of the confraternity deriving from affiliation with Roman bodies violated the royal patronato (the crown's control over all ecclesiastical patronage in the Americas, which was loosely construed as a right to control most Church activities in the New World). Secondly the officials were concerned that the confraternity's money-gathering activities, through the sale of indulgences, detracted from and diminished the revenue from the government's own sales of indulgences, which took place under the direction of the Council of Cruzada. The confraternity seems usually to have won the support of the Cruzada and of the Council of the Indies in Madrid, and to have obtained strong backing in Rome---so that the impression left by the papers is that the confraternity, until the nineteenth century, successfully maintained its high privileges.

The Mexican archconfraternity had seven officers, chosen every 2 July for a term of one year: a rector, four diputados, and two mayordomos. The seven officers meeting together constituted the mesa (board) or capitulo (chapter) of the confraternity, who were assisted by a salaried permanent secretary. Relations between the confraternity and the canons attached to the Mexican cathedral were so close that (according to Marroqui) canons were often elected diputados. A partial list of names of officers could be drawn up from these papers, but unfortunately there is no list of members, and very little information about the internal organization, procedures, and actual work of the confraternity.

The chief importance of these materials, particularly those from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (which constitute the greater proportion), lies in the information they convey about the fiscal operations of the confraternity. As a corporate body the confraternity had the right to acquire, possess, and dispose of property, and the right to sue and be sued in the courts. More significantly, the confraternity, like other Mexican and Spanish religious societies, functioned as a money-lending agency, as a kind of colonial bank. As the recipient of many cash bequests and gifts, the confraternity accumulated liquid reserves that could be best employed if loaned out at interest.

Loans issued by the confraternity were usually secured by real property and were therefore mortgages. These mortgages were either permanent, with no right to repay the capital (meaning that interest had to be paid indefinitely), or redeemable, in which case the capital could be repaid

and interest terminated. The papers seem to indicate that few borrowers could afford to repay the principal. Annual interest was always set at 5 percent.

In the typical transaction, a hacienda in the country or a house in the capital was mortgaged. Interest was paid to the confraternity for decades and for generations. The confraternity collected legal papers that established the ownership of real estate, set forth the terms of mortgages, and papers that recorded all the vicissitudes that befell real property by reason of death, disputed inheritance, transfer by sale, bankruptcy, suits for the recovery of debt, and so forth. The liability to the confraternity, carried as a permanent encumbrance on property, devolved upon all the successive owners of the estate, and the confraternity was usually a party to all litigation involving the estate.

The confraternity was dissolved and its properties confiscated by the anti-clerical reform laws of 1861.

### **Scope Note**

The papers contain detailed information about the legal and fiscal affairs of the haciendas of Tlapanaloya (Tequixquiac?), Jalapaxco (Chalchicomula), Tepechichilco (Zempoala), and the ingenio of Tuxpango (Orizaba); many other haciendas and properties are mentioned cursorily. The confraternity papers are related to similar papers, also concerning haciendas and mortgages, in the Puebla, Mexico, Hospicia Records. The precise nature of the connection between the Puebla Papers and the confraternity records is not clear, but the documents in Box 1, folder 31 record a formal request by the confraternity for the transfer from Puebla to Mexico of papers relating to litigation involving the estate of the Torija family. Possibly other papers from Puebla eventually came into the hands of the confraternity. Religious organizations in Puebla were involved in the same fiscal activities as the confraternity, and it is possible that Puebla institutions and the Mexican confraternity occasionally held different mortgages on the same properties. The latest item in the confraternity collection is dated 1858.

### **Related Resources**

The following related resources are located in the Department of Special Collections:

<http://www.lib.uchicago.edu/e/spcl/select.html>

Puebla, Mexico, Hospicio Records

### **Subject Headings**

- Archicofradía del Santísimo Sacramento y Caridad (Mexico City, Mexico)
- Catholic Church -- Societies, etc
- Confraternities

### **INVENTORY**

**Box 1****Folder 1**

Order from the Audiencia directing that 9,223 pesos rescued from three ships wrecked on the coast of Florida be applied to the expenses of the orphanage of Mexico City, 1555

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-001>

**Box 1****Folder 2**

Rules for the chaplains of the confraternity, duly approved by Friar García, archbishop of Mexico. 16 Dec 1608 (1609 postscript)

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-002>

**Box 1****Folder 3**

Officers of the confraternity wish to regulate all public displays of their insignia. 1 Jul 1612

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-003>

**Box 1****Folder 4**

Copy of a Madrid certification of papal letters conferring privileges on the confraternity. 16 Jun 1634.

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-004>

**Box 1****Folder 5**

Royal decree signed by Philip IV granting ten pesos per annum to the Collegio de las Doncellas. 20 May 1637

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-005>

**Box 1****Folder 6**

Two copies of the brief aggregating the Mexican confraternity to the Lateran church in Rome. 26 Feb 1639

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-006>

**Box 1****Folder 7**

Desire of the officers to regulate the public display of the insignia of the confraternity (a special crucifix), with an appeal to the pope on the point at issue. 26 Jul 1645

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-007>

**Box 1****Folder 8**

Fragment. About carrying the Host through the streets. [mid-17th c. ?]

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-008>

**Box 1**

**Folder 9**

Opinions on a possible conflict of jurisdiction between the royal patronato and the papacy. 1652

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-009>

**Box 1**

**Folder 10**

Two copies of the oath taken by the officers of the confraternity. 1653.

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-010>

**Box 1**

**Folder 11**

Copy of various documents dealing with the privileges and exemptions of the confraternity, which some officials stated were in conflict with the royal patronato. 8 Oct 1654.

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-011>

**Box 1**

**Folder 12**

Spanish translation of a letter from the Lateran church of Rome, confirming the privileges of the confraternity. 24 May 1680

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-012>

**Box 1**

**Folder 13**

Seven papers dealing with the concern of the Mexican Inquisition about a papal bull to the confraternity summarizing rights of indulgences. Aug 1682

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-013>

**Box 1**

**Folder 14**

Papers on the confraternity's agent to Rome to secure confirmation of indulgence privileges. Includes a complete statement of the finances of the confraternity. Crown officials oppose new privileges for the confraternity. 1682-1683

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-014>

**Box 1**

**Folder 15**

Latin text and Spanish translation of two papal briefs conferring indulgence privileges. 7 Nov 1717

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-015>

**Box 1**

**Folder 16**



Document regarding the confraternity's affiliation with the Lateran basilica, reviewed in June 1732, undated

- See also Box 3, Folder 5

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-016>

**Box 1**

**Folder 17**

Papal grant of indulgences, with appended materials, 21 July 1732

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-017>

**Box 1**

**Folder 18**

Two sets of papers on scattered properties of the hacienda de San Jose (also called N.S. de Guadalupe), near Hapanoloya (Atifalagona), on which the confraternity held a mortgage of 1,400 pesos. 1736

View digitized documents, part 1. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-018a>

View digitized documents, part 2. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-018b>

**Box 1**

**Folder 19**

Four papers on sums spent by guild of silk weavers on the Espiritu Santo chapel, church of the Colegio de las Doncellas, 1742-1748

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-019>

**Box 1**

**Folder 20**

Documents on a six-year mortgage for 2,000 pesos, at 5 percent interest, held by the confraternity on some houses in San Juan Teotihuacán, 28 May 1751

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-020>

**Box 1**

**Folder 21**

Two papers on expenses for celebrating the feast of St. Anne, July 1751

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-021>

**Box 1**

**Folder 22**

Documents on confraternity's 4,800-peso mortgage on houses in the Calle del Hospicio, 1-5 Jun 1756

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-022>

**Box 1**

**Folder 23**

Seven official printed forms, signed and sealed, issued in Madrid; authorize confraternity to issue indulgences and publicize the fact. 28 Nov 1758

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-023>

**Box 1**

**Folder 24**

Two Madrid affidavits certifying the authenticity of papal letters conferring privileges on the confraternity, 10 January 1759

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-024>

**Box 1**

**Folder 25**

Mexican Audiencia document authenticating papal bulls granting indulgence privileges, 15 December 1763

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-025>

**Box 1**

**Folder 26**

Sumario de las Indulgencias [etc.] printed notice of the confraternity's indulgence privileges, 1764

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-026>

**Box 1**

**Folder 27**

Complex series of papers concerning encumbrances, held by the confraternity, on properties inherited by the widow Anna Carvajal, executrix of the estate of her late husband, Nicolás Sánchez Riscos. 10 January 1767

View digitized documents, part 1. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-027a>

View digitized documents, part 2. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-027b>

View digitized documents, part 3. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-027c>

View digitized documents, part 4. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-027d>

**Box 1**

**Folder 28**

Latin transcript and Spanish translation of papal brief of 6 September 1756, authenticated in Mexico City. 14 June 1770

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-028>

**Box 1**

**Folder 29**

Seven documents on indulgence privileges of the confraternity. 1771-1772

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-029>

**Box 1**

**Folder 30**

Two detached affidavits; certify that Pedro de la Vega belongs to the king's council, March-April 1772

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-030>

**Box 1**

**Folder 31**

Confraternity joins several Mexican convents in petitioning for transfer from Puebla jurisdiction to Audiencia jurisdiction of papers relating to the estate of Francisco de Torija; concerns haciendas of Xalapasco (Jalapexco? in Chalchicomula) and Tlachichuca (Chalchicomula), 9 January 1773

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-031>

**Box 1**

**Folder 32**

Casa de Moneda, Mexico, acknowledges receipt of 11,822 pesos in taxes from the ingenio of Tuxpango, Orizaba, which was sold in 1759 for 88,000 pesos. January-February 1773

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-032>

**Box 1**

**Folder 33**

Two copies of treasurer's report of Colegio de San Andrés, detailing receipts and expenditures up to end of 1772; sums amount to 292,957 pesos. 30 Aug 1774

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-033>

**Box 1**

**Folder 34**

Documents on a five-year, 25,000-peso mortgage, at 5 percent, held by the confraternity on three properties of José German del Valle, with a total value of 129,189 pesos. Properties include two ranches of hacienda de N.S. de Loreto Tepechichilco (district of Zempoala and Tepeapulco), and one "casa de trato de pulquena" in Mexico City. 19 Aug 1784

View digitized documents, part 1. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-034a>

View digitized documents, part 2. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0001-034b>

**Box 2**

**Folder 1**

Confraternity loan of 6,000 pesos for two years, at 5 percent, to three brothers of Mexico City, while their mother's estate is in probate. 20 Sep 1788

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0002-001>

**Box 2**

**Folder 2**

In the emergency of the Franco-Spanish war the Mexican consulado obtained a forced loan of 14,000 pesos, at 5 percent, from the confraternity, offering future tobacco tax revenues as collateral. Attached are later papers of 1839, 1842, and 1846 record efforts of

confraternity to get the government of Mexico to assume responsibility for the loan. 23 Sep 1795

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0002-002>

**Box 2**

**Folder 3**

List of mortgages, loans, and liens on property still outstanding and held by the confraternity. 18 Jan 1803

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0002-003>

**Box 2**

**Folder 4**

The consulado borrowed money from various persons, at 5 percent, to build or repair the Mexico-Veracruz highway. Attached are later papers of 1820, 1825-26, and 1830 show creditors, or their heirs, demanding satisfaction. Some of their claims devolved on the confraternity. 16 Aug 1809

View digitized documents, part 1. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0002-004a>

View digitized documents, part 2. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0002-004b>

**Box 2**

**Folder 5**

Bill of sale (1826) for two small houses in the Calle de las Titas, Sto. Tomas la Palma, Mexico City, and attached documents; followed by later papers (1840--58) on an action for recovery of debt from one of the owners, to which the confraternity was a party. Includes a plot of the real estate. 1826-58

View digitized documents, part 1. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0002-005a>

View digitized documents, part 2. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0002-005b>

**Box 3**

**Folder 1**

Printed brief of Pius IV, 21 Aug. 1560, authenticated, endorsed in 1570, granting rights of indulgence to the Colegio de las Doncellas which it states is populated mainly with the offspring of Spanish men and Indian women, 1570

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0003-001>

**Box 3**

**Folder 2**

Order permitting the confraternity to publicize its right to grant indulgences, and enjoining the viceroy Antonio de Mendoza from interfering, 11 Oct 1575.

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0003-002>

**Box 3**

**Folder 3**

Eight official licenses from Madrid, signed and sealed, confirming the right of the confraternity to issue indulgences and collect cruzada monies. 24 Apr 1694

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0003-003>

**Box 3**

**Folder 4**

Five Madrid licenses of the same kind. Jan-Mar 1695

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0003-004>

**Box 3**

**Folder 5**

Four Madrid licenses of the same kind. 23 Nov 1697

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0003-005>

**Box 3**

**Folder 6**

Two Madrid licenses of the same kind. 5 Jun 1717

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0003-006>

**Box 3**

**Folder 7**

Undated document dealing with the confraternity's affiliation with the Lateran basilica, reviewed in June 1732. [June 1732]

View digitized documents. <http://pi.lib.uchicago.edu/1001/scrc/md/archicofradia-0003-007>