

AN ANALYSIS OF RECORDS DATING FROM THE SPANISH COLONIAL
PERIOD FOUND IN THE RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVES
OFFICE

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ABSTRACT

The Records Management and Archives Office (RMAO) safeguards an extensive collection of Spanish records on the Spanish colonial period in the Philippines, rivaled only by the collections in Sevilla, Spain and Mexico. However the number of users of the collection has not been that significant. Efforts must be taken to ensure the use of the collection. Therefore, this study sought to find out if there is a way to approach the RMAO archival collection by breaking down the records into identifiable parts, and establishing a pattern which could eventually help facilitate a novice researcher in starting research work using the RMAO's collection. Furthermore, this study sought answers to different questions regarding the characteristics and properties of Spanish records in the RMAO. The *Escuelas, Cavite* record series had been chosen to represent the whole collection for this study. Meanwhile, the records were analyzed based on the UBC Project *The Preservation of the Integrity of Electronic Records* regarding the elements of a traditional and generic record.

The findings revealed that the RMAO has a system of arrangement in place for its collection. However, there are instances when parts of the same file are misplaced within the bundle or in other bundles, or worse, some files do not belong to the record series. There are 17 distinct types of Spanish records found and these have different usages and their elements are located in different locations within the record. Philippine records do not have the richness and variety of styles found in the

Spanish records. The profile of diversity of records in each bundle is also not the same for the Spanish and Philippine records. There are other embedded protocols and styles that need to be considered and these may have an effect on the contextual understanding of the Spanish records by the users. The layout of RMAO Spanish records can be systematically described.

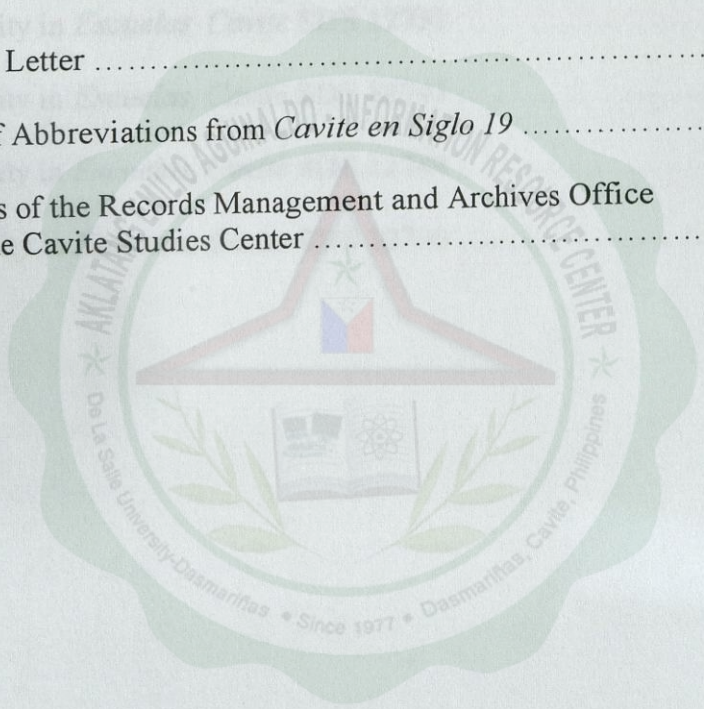
Based on the findings, the integrity of the bundles is a top priority. However, a system can be devised where the physical arrangement and location of the bundles will remain in its original state through encoding of the abstracts into an electronic database. The database can then be searched and sorted in different ways. Researchers can use the layouts presented here to look for names of persons and places, dates, and other related information. This can possibly boost their archival intelligence and artifactual literacy. The layouts presented in the study can provide a way for novice researchers in the RMAO to approach the collection, thereby helping novice researchers start their research work.

The researcher hoped that the system presented here could help increase the number of users and that researchers may be encouraged to use not just the RMAO collection, but also other collections in the country that have Spanish records.

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