

Simón Ruiz

Archive

A documented
record of the history
of European commerce

World Heritage
UNESCO



1592

SECRETUM

Señan quantos esta carta de Codecillo e Vltima voluntad
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 y borges et
 con el pape
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 mas quita y es mi vltima de nrae que el dno testamento
 de nra y sea firme e lo ratifico de nrae con los y apuñe
 de nra al pape en la parte del de testamento

"Sepan quantos esta carta de Codecillo e Vltima voluntad
 bienen como yo Simón Ruiz Embito, Vezino e Rregidor de
 esta Villa de Medina del Campo, hauiendo ordenado e
 otorgado mi testamento [...] Primeramente digo y declaro
 que es mi vltima voluntad que Cosme Ruiz Embito, mi
 sobrino, tenga todos los libros y escrituras pertenecien-
 tes a todos mis bienes y hacienda y se le entreguen
 luego, así los que estuvieren en mi casa y en mi poder o
 de qualquiera de mis criados y agentes como los que
 estubieren en qualquiera otro poder, así de escribanos
 como de otra qualquier persona..."

Simón Ruiz's first codicil (1592).
 ASR, CC, C 219-118

Primeramente digo y de claro que quiero y es mi vltima volun-
 tad que cosme Ruiz embito mi sobino tenga todos los libros
 y escrituras pertenecientes a todos mis bienes y hacienda
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 quiera causa y razon me perteneguan para mi y
 herederos que cobre y administre todos mis bienes como
 yo fuesse las pudiese cobrar y administrar y tener y usar
 a qual quier persona que me los debien dar y todas las
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 de quenta y Razon de todos ellos al dno padre fray An-
 tonio de la Cruz presente andas de dha villa para que el
 dno fray antonio de la Cruz juntamente con mi vna y vna a
 mi y a mi herederos e con el dno padre fray An-
 tonio de la Cruz

Edition

Fundación Museo de las Ferias – Archivo Simón Ruiz

This edition is part of the "Education and Promotion Project of the Simón Ruiz Archive" of the "Recovery, Transformation and Resilience Plan" of the Spanish Ministry of Culture and Sport, financed by the European Union.

Director

Antonio Sánchez del Barrio

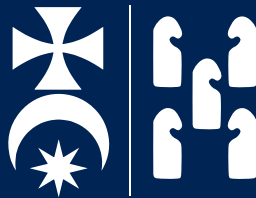
Photographs

Fundación Simón Ruiz y Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte (Proyecto de digitalización del ASR): pp. 1, 13, 16, 17, 22, 33, 36 y 39.

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Translation to English

Eurotext



“What gives the Ruiz Archive such exceptional value? The fact is that this is a unique set of documents of its kind, at least as regards the 16th century in Spain”.

Lapeyre, H. y Ruiz Martín, F., *Simón Ruiz en Medina del Campo*. 1971, (Foreword by Henri Lapeyre, pp. XXIV).



The Simón Ruiz Archive

The archive of the merchant banker Simón Ruiz Envito (Belorado, 1525 – Medina del Campo, 1597) unquestionably represents a unique set of documents of its kind in Spain, since no other such record of a major businessman of the 16th century has been preserved. Given its wealth and content, it has been compared with the archive of Francesco di Marco Datini in Italy, preserved in Prato, with documentation from the second half of the 14th century and early decades of the 15th, and the records of the great Fugger banking dynasty of Augsburg.

Simón Ruiz set up in business in Medina del Campo around 1550 as a cloth merchant, dealing in the wholesale trade of goods imported from Nantes and above all Brittany, amassing a considerable fortune which allowed him to embark on a second professional career in which, while continuing his trade in goods, he was also involved in major financial dealings, with interests throughout Europe and the Americas, including even lending money to the Crown. From 1591 onwards, he focused almost exclusively on the construction of a major hospital, known as the 'Inmaculada Concepción y San Diego de Alcalá', his final work of patronage. Classified as a General Hospital, it was built between 1592 and 1619 to a design by Friar Juan de Tolosa, its layout revealing the clear influence of the classicist models of the Italian trattatista tradition, the connection with the architectural archetypes of the Counter-reformation (above all the so-called "Jesuit style"), and the imposing nearby presence of El Escorial.

The personal and trading house documents of Simón Ruiz were preserved at the aforementioned General Hospital, and added to considerably by the transfer ordered by Friar Cosme Ruiz of the archive of his father, Cosme, the nephew and first heir of the founder, whose business interests had led him to base himself in Madrid. As a result, and thanks also to the existence of both a huge building where the papers could be stored without problems of space, and of a permanent institution to take care of administration, between 1630 to 1947 this whole mass of documents was preserved at the hospital without difficulty. It was in said latter year that, at the behest of the then Ministry of National Education, the boxes and bundles of papers were transferred to the Historical Provincial and University Archive of Valladolid, where they were inventoried over the course of the following decades, down to the present day, through outstanding efforts by recognised archivists to register and identify the documents.

On 27 September 2013, the Board of Trustees of the Simón Ruiz Foundation agreed to deposit the still scattered historical, artistic and document heritage owned by the institution at the headquarters of the Trade Fair Museum Foundation, so as to gather the whole legacy of the founder together in Medina del Campo at one single site that would offer full guarantees of custodianship and specialist management. Between 2015 and 2018 the archive holdings were digitised in their entirety thanks to an agreement signed with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, and transferred to the Trade Fair Museum Foundation where, together with the rest of Simón Ruiz's material legacy, they are available to researchers and those with an interest in the history of trade

in general. This administrative procedure is governed by the terms of the agreement signed by the two Foundations based in Medina de Campo, on 12 June 2015.

Earl J. Hamilton, in his book *American Treasure and the Price Revolution in Spain* (1934), was the first to draw attention to this important legacy, which was subsequently studied by such other leading economic historians as Henri Lapeyre, Ramón Carande, José Gentil da Silva, Valentín Vázquez de Prada, Felipe Ruiz Martín, Manuel Basas Fernández and Bartolomé Bennassar. All of whom, along with many others in more recent years, produced general studies or monographs, offering dazzling conclusions for the history of trade and European finance.

The figures speak for themselves in terms of the quantity and quality of this set of documents, which unquestionably provides an insight into many of the key aspects of trade, banking and the changes that occurred during the era. To give some indication, as regards commercial and financial documentation, we set out below the following figures drawn from the inventory, which is currently in a process of continuous review:

- **184 accounting books** (1551-1617) including in particular the general or trade fair ledgers, with their corresponding alphabetical lists; the daybooks (or "manuals") of both kinds, the trade fair notebooks, the drafts... all of them, with just a few exceptions, embellished with parchment portfolio binding.
- The **correspondence** with cities in Spain, France, Portugal, Italy, Flanders... including the New World, and covering both letters received (the vast majority) and copies of those sent, amount to nearly 58,000 documents exchanged between the years 1554 and 1624, of which 23,366 bear pre-philatelic postmarks. In terms of their volume (in approximate figures), the most notable correspondence was exchanged with the Spanish cities of Valladolid (15,000), Madrid (10,000), Burgos (4,000), Seville and the Americas (3,400), Bilbao (3,200), Toledo (2,000), Salamanca (1,000), etc., and in Europe: Lisbon (6,000), Antwerp (4,000), Lyon (3,000), Florence (1,300), Rome and Nantes (1,200), Elvas (1,000), Genoa (650), Rouen (600), Paris and Porto (500), Piacenza (450), Cologne, Milan, Venice and Malta (100), etc.
- The number of **bills of exchange** preserved is likewise outstanding: some 23,000 original bills issued between 1553 and 1606 in 45 European financial centres. Of particular note in terms of volume (alongside Medina del Campo), are those from Antwerp, Lyon, Lisbon, Piacenza, Florence, Rome and Rouen.
- Meanwhile, around **20,000 commercial documents** are also preserved: letters of payment, powers of attorney, debentures, maritime insurance policies, bills of lading, customs notes, records of shipwrecks; balance sheets, promissory notes, invoices, confirmations, receipts, currency exchange "listini", etc.



As for Simón Ruiz's personal documentation, and that of the hospital he founded, more than 200 boxes of information and around twenty parchments are preserved, recording the details of this healthcare institution from its creation down to the present day: registers of resolutions passed by the Board of Trustees, inventories of goods, annuities and other properties of the hospital in different periods; patient admission and discharge registers, the accounts of the hospital and of the trust founded by Simón Ruiz, deeds of donation and assignment... and a whole host of notebooks and papers covering the broadest possible subject matter. In more personal terms, the wills of the members of the founding family and their descendants are also held in the collection, along with handwritten letters, household accounts, inventories of their belongings... and even the genealogical tree of the family lineage.

This collection of documents likewise comprises the archive from the Bishop Lope de Barrientos Hospital, combined with the General Hospital in the last third of the 19th century and containing important documents from the period between 1454 and 1862, the years when it was founded and officially ceased to exist, respectively. These include in particular pontifical bulls, reports, inventories of assets, books recording entries, accounts, sales and purchases, donations, etc.

Lastly, in recent years the documentation generated at the Simón Ruiz Hospital after the year 1938 (and which was not transferred to Valladolid in 1947) has also been added to the archive, which now extends to the 1970s. Documentation from the last forty years and the contemporary documents of the Simón Ruiz Foundation are preserved at the institution's own headquarters.

This documentation is currently grouped as follows:

ASR

1. Simón Ruiz

1.1. Trading House CC

1.1.1. Accounting books (184 books) L

1.1.2. Bills of exchange (around 23,000 bills) LC

1.1.3. Correspondence (around 58,000 letters) C

1.1.4. Boxes (commercial documents, numbering around 20,000) C

1.2. Ruiz Family

2. General Hospital (204 boxes) H

2.1. Barrientos Hospital

3. Parchments (31 parchments) P

4. Simón Ruiz Foundation



Panoramic view of the Simón Ruiz General Hospital, Medina del Campo

"The Simón Ruiz Archive is one of the fundamental sources for the history of major commerce and the changes in the second half of the 16th century".

Henri Lapeyre, "El Archivo Ruiz: veinte años después", *Revista de Occidente* 107, 1972, p.177

"The letters, bills of exchange, contracts and trading books of the merchant of Medina are supremely rare sources of the utmost quality in the economic history of the second half of the 16th century".

Ramón Carande, "Un banquero de Felipe II en Medina del Campo", *Moneda y Crédito* 49, 1954, p.13



Simonius
Lucas

1582

Simonius
1584

ARCHIVO
38

ARCHIVO
39

ARCHIVO
39

ARCHIVO
30

ARCHIVO
40

Simonius

1592 Asia
1598

44

Simonius

1578
1600

ARCHIVO
43

ARCHIVO
44

Accounting books

Since the first quarter of the 16th century, it has been a mandatory requirement in Spain that banks, public moneychangers and merchants record their dealings through double-entry bookkeeping, with separate columns for debit and credit, written in Spanish, on sequential, numbered pages, declaring the money that they receive and pay out by entering the name of the parties involved, the transaction performed and the type of currency used. As a result, the accounting records of Simón and Cosme Ruiz (covering the period between 1551 and 1617) are held in three main books: the draft, daybook or 'manual', and the general ledger or 'cashbox book', in accordance with the double-entry accounting system that originated in Italy, which allows transactions, profits and losses to be very precisely tracked.

The **draft book**, with a long, narrow format like a double page folded and stitched vertically in half, was used for urgent, speedy notes recording the basic and necessary details of the transactions performed, which would subsequently be entered in the daybook. As the entries were transferred to the corresponding book, the transactions transcribed were struck through with a line, or on occasion a wavy line was entered in the left-hand margin of the corresponding page.

The **daybook**, also known as the "manual", recorded the transactions entered in the draft book in chronological order. At the head of each page is the date of the transaction, followed by a description of its content. The left-hand margin of each entry contains a note in the form of a fraction, referring to the number of the pages in the general ledger to which the entries from the daybook are transferred: the numerator indicates the page of the charge account, and the denominator that of the credit account. The text of the accounting entry begins with the title of the debit account, followed by the words "debit for". The amount of the operation is then indicated in Arabic numerals, giving specific details to ensure it can properly be identified. The entry ends by indicating date and the means of payment. The right-hand margin of the page leaves a large space set aside to record the amount of the operation again, this time in Roman numerals.

The **general ledger** records "*the account and reason for the money entering and leaving the cashbox...*", providing an indication at all times of the existing debits and credits, and the details of the transactions performed with each individual. This is the definitive book in which each account is entered in "matching" or corresponding sections: the left-hand page records the "debit" and the right-hand page the "necessary credit", indicating the number of the counterpart corresponding to the page of the entity in the general ledger.

Both books (daybook and general ledger) follow a similar format, with large folio pages, written with exquisite precision in a fine hand, and using numerous standard commercial and financial abbreviations. The account numbering system known as the "Castilian account" is used, comprising a combination of "financial figures" or italic Roman numerals, followed by two special signs denoting millions and thousands: the quento (*q*^o) and the *calderón* (*U*), respectively.

As well as the three types of book referred to above, there were also another three. Two of them were auxiliary or reference books which were even used to help locate information. First, the "**alphabetical lists**", which provide swift access to the accounting entries recorded in the general ledgers; they are kept between the cover and the first page, recording the accounts in alphabetical order in accordance with the first letter of their title: the forename rather than the surname (in the case of personal accounts) for the word or code (in the case of non-personal accounts). The other auxiliary books, which do contain direct accounting information, are the trade fair notebooks, to facilitate payment through offsetting or "matching" of the bills due at a particular trade fair.

The **trade fair general ledgers**, however, should be seen as genuine accounting books, rather than sources of reference, recording trade operations taken from the manual book for the five trade fairs attended by the representatives of Ruiz's commercial companies, namely: the Lent fair in Villalón, those held on the first Sunday after Easter and in August in Medina de Rioseco, and in May and October in Medina del Campo.

To these six types of book one should add **other "particular" books** which are not numerous enough to form series per se. These would include the "bill of exchange drafts" of both Simón and Cosme Ruiz; the "entry interest distribution notebooks", the "Milan gold sale auxiliary books", a "brokerage draft book", a "*notebook summarising the bills not collected for the payments of June this year*", a "*notebook of records and accounts of my expenditure and other matters*"..., and even a "*book for the sale of licences sold in Lisbon from the entry of slaves transported for the Spanish Indies*".

"The most important collection of commercial documents and accounting books of the 16th century known to date in Spain is unquestionably that of the Ruiz family of merchant bankers from Medina del Campo".

José M.^a González Ferrando, "Los 'libros de cuentas' de la familia Ruiz, mercaderes-banqueros de Medina del Campo (1551-1606)", *Actas del Primer Congreso sobre Archivos Económicos de Entidades Privadas*, 1982, p.23

^aGeneral ledger after the death of Simón Ruiz", 1597-1604 (ASR, CC, L 70)





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Parchment binding with a folio from a 16th-century choir hymnal (ASR, CC, L 106)

Books bound with musical parchments

Practically all the accounting books of the Simón Ruiz Archive have parchment portfolio bindings, some of which, above all the general ledgers, are decorated with stars. Others are bound with parchment taken from choral hymnals and old liturgical books, dating back to the 11th to 16th centuries. These record musical works of great interest, most of them unpublished, and corresponding to breviaries, graduals, missals, choral hymnals... from the old liturgical repertoire predating the books of the "New Liturgy" resulting from the Council of Trent. The description, analysis and interpretation of this rich musical repertoire is being performed within the context of a cataloguing project which began in 2015.

Link to the "Music in the Simón Ruiz Archive" project and the recordings of the musical fragments:

www.museoferias.net/pergaminos-musicales/

Bifolio belonging to the *Missale secundum consuetudinem ecclesie Abulensis*. Salamanca, printing house of Juan de Porras, 1510 (ASR, CC, L 94)

Parchment binding with a bifolio belonging to the 12th-century *Missale Plenarium* del siglo XII (ASR, CC, L 1)

finitimile.

colat rati pti. Quod sumo dicit

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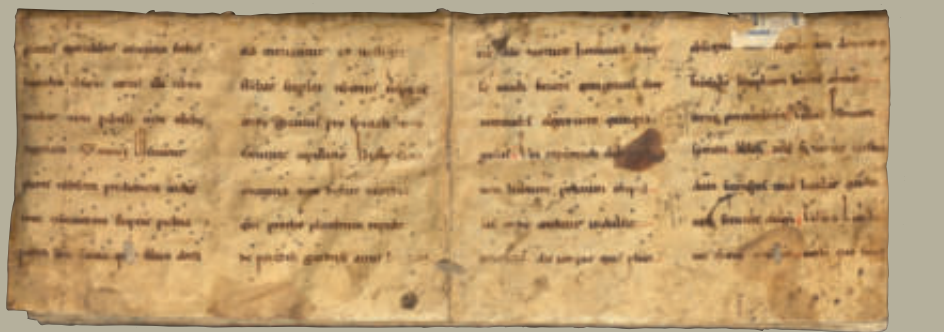
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94



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 i. n. t. e. r. h. e. c. n. o. s. b. e. r. t. u. r. i. t. u. m. *clxxx*
 d. e. d. u. l. t. e. s. d. i. c. a. n. t. u. s. *clxxx*

per la prima pagara ...
prof. della prossima ...
di settembre 1579 ...

Al di 19 di settembre 1579 ...
Al di 19 di settembre 1579 ...
Al di 19 di settembre 1579 ...

Al di 24 di ...
Al di 24 di ...

Al di 24 di ...
Al di 24 di ...

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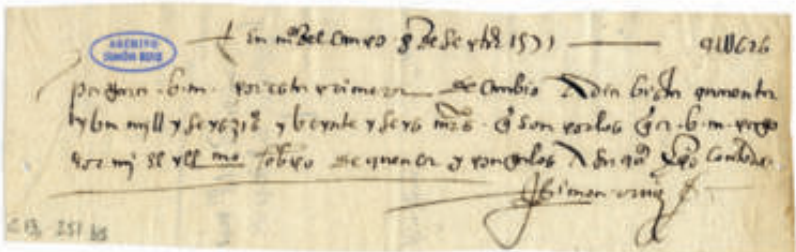
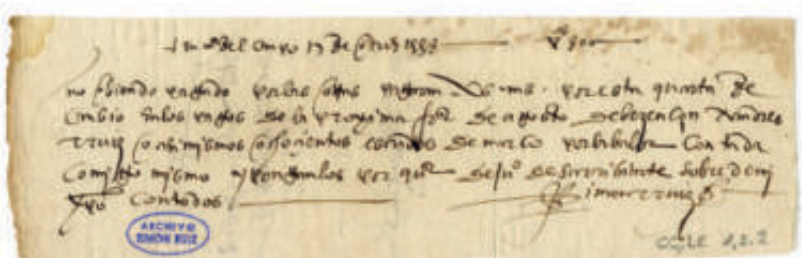
ARCHIVO
SIMON RUIZ

Bills of exchange

The bill of exchange is a commercial instrument dating back to the 12th and 13th centuries, when the Italian city states used documents allowing transactions to be performed for the sale and purchase of goods without the dangers inherent in carrying money as cash. We are aware of their existence from commercial correspondence, accounting books and the copies that were preserved for inclusion in a number of lawsuits, although the original ancient documents are very rarely to be found.

In the 16th century the nature of the bill of exchange began to shift from being a means of payment in commercial operations to serving as a financial instrument, with trade fairs being the main hub giving rise to credit and offsetting transactions. It is here that the General Trade Fairs of Medina del Campo became pre-eminent, as the first in Europe where modern bills were traded on a regular basis and their use became widespread, with close coordination being maintained with the trade fairs held at Epiphany, Easter, August and All Saints in Lyon and Besançon, and the Easter Fair in Antwerp.

Payment by bill of exchange involves two payments, as explained by Raymond de Roover: "*an advance of funds where the bill is issued, and a reimbursement where it is payable*", which in general terms requires the involvement of four people (although not all four would necessarily be involved), two at the place of issue: the "drawer" performs the "exchange", in other words hands money over to the "issuer", who issues the bill of exchange to the destination venue, made out to the "drawee", who is responsible for making the payment to the "payee".

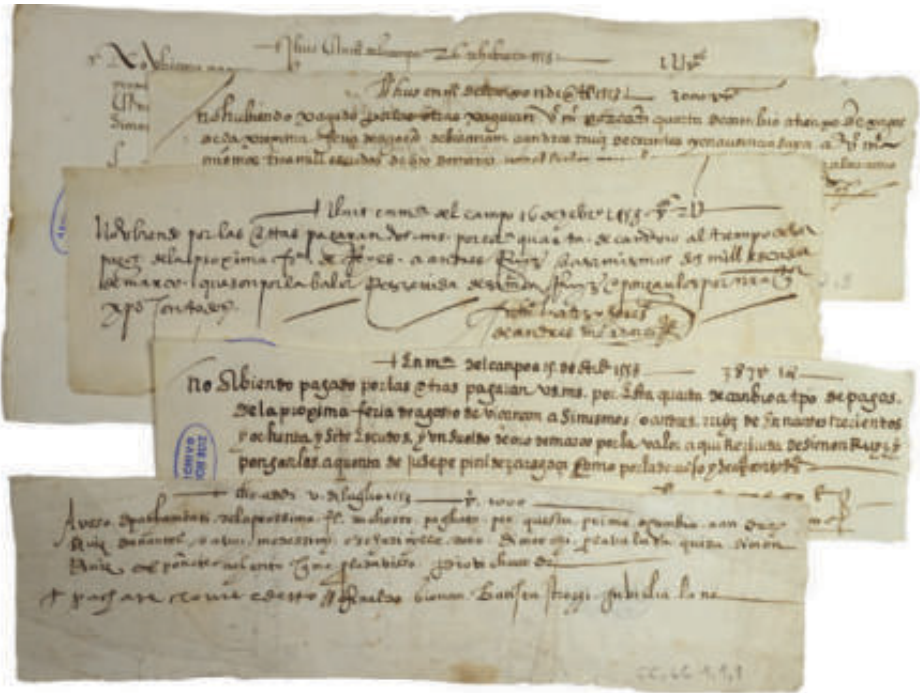


Bills of exchange handwritten by Simón Ruiz and issued in Medina del Campo (ASR, CC, LC, 1, 2, 2 y ASR, C, 13, 251bis)

Hecho en Madrid, y de Julio 1839

Pagará por estipendiado de cambio. A la pte que su. mag.
 de Rey don philipe. n. s. ordena, acent mil. 800
 de oro en oro. de las estampas de España o de
 Italia que tengan el mismo valor el cual
 se su. mag. que los mismos escudos de plata. En
 esta manera los. Cincuenta mil. 800 de ellos
 a quince de. letra vista y los otros cincuenta mil
 800. Destante a los veinte y cinco. dias
 andados se qu. jimo mes de agosto. Las segun-
 das partes de fijos los diez. ses. cien mil. 800.
 en bicanun. y la otra quarta parte en
 Lion. y Tomán quitmey. en forma por ante
 Notario. y son por el valor de su. mag. nos.
 pagará conforme a una cedula firmada de
 su. mag. mano que de lo. nos. A. dado de
 contados —

Simonyy. P. M. S. en S. B.



Set of bills of exchange issued in Villalón and Medina del Campo, 1553 and 1558 (ASR, CC, LC, 1, 1, 1 and ASR, CC, LC, 1, 2, 1-4)

Some idea of the importance acquired by credit transactions conducted with bills of exchange is given by the Simón Ruiz Archive, which contains some 23,000 original instruments issued between 1553 and 1606, reflecting thousands of transactions with forty-five European cities, including in particular, in terms of volume (aside from Medina de Campo), Antwerp, Lyon, Lisbon, Piacenza, Florence, Rome, Rouen... The period 1583 to 1600 accounts for the greatest number of bills of exchange.

"So much in so few words! The bill of exchange is truly a wonder of concision. It is the most brilliant demonstration of the businessman's superiority over the lawyer".

Henri Lapeyre, *Una familia de mercaderes: los Ruiz*, 1955 (re-pub. 2008), p. 241

1818
delos señores de 20 de mayo
de 13 de mayo -
recibido en 26 de setiembre
de 1819



1818
delos señores de 20 de mayo
de 16 de julio. No se
recibido en 13 de setiembre



1818
delos señores de 13
de 30 de mayo -
recibido en 26 de setiembre



1818
delos señores de 13
de 30 de mayo -
recibido en 26 de setiembre



Simon Ruiz
del campo.

Simon Ruiz
Regidor de medicina
En medicina

Correspondence

The more than 58,000 letters sent from Europe's main economic centres make this archive the most important set of documents in Spain for the study of European commerce in the second half of the 16th century. Simón Ruiz exchanged correspondence with countless people: from kings and princes to servants, from apostolic nuncios and prelates to friars and nuns, from rich bankers with international influence, to humble rural tradesmen. But businessmen are central to the bulk of his correspondence: traders, financial agents, commercial correspondents and the partners in his company.

His letters speak not only of the course of his dealings, but also provide a vast quantity of information about the people, political circumstances and geo-strategic situations of the day. Although most of them are connected with commercial matters, on occasion there are references to strictly personal news. Hence the interest in preserving and properly ordering them, a task that began in the 1950s and was not completed until 1995: boxes ordered chronologically, by nation, and within each by town and by correspondent in alphabetical order, and date of sending. The task of classification was to a great extent facilitated by the way in which Simón Ruiz himself had recorded his correspondence, since on the back of each letter he noted down the place of origin, sender, date of sending, date of receipt and date of reply, if any. On occasion this is immediately followed by a brief summary of the main matter addressed.

What most of the letters have in common is that they begin with a cross and a greeting, before then referring to the last letter received and a summary of the content of the letter sent previously, in case it had not reached its destination. He then embarks on the core substance of the missive, which typically contains plenty of news and incidents. At the end, some favour is requested, along with instructions to be given by Simón Ruiz as to how to proceed with regard to the details of the matters addressed, followed by the signature and mark of the sender. Some of them are encrypted, and their contents have not yet been deciphered.

One of the most interesting aspects of this collection of correspondence, beyond its commercial or financial content, concerns the history of the postal system. In this regard, a project was begun more than a decade ago under the leadership of Fernando Alonso García, drawing as its source of documents on more than 24,000 letters enclosed with postal addresses, belonging to the correspondence preserved in the archive. They cover a chronological period running from 1553 to 1630, and come from fourteen different countries. The initial results of this project were published in the book *El Correo en el Renacimiento Europeo. Estudio postal del Archivo Simón Ruiz (1553-1630)*, describing the content of the holding of documents in this specialist field, along with a comprehensive study of those letters with postal addresses. The significance of the project's results has been recognised in the form of the highest global accolades in the field of philately.

Est bin de f... na l... 2155151 - 25143 d... p...
 fu el g... i... de... imp... de un... que m...
 2... - ... - ... - ... - ... - ...
 No lo dex... ni... y... de lo en...
 i... 3... de... 3... de...
 m... de...

Brugas 11 Enero 1577

143. 1. 14

mas may 1577

ARCHIVO
DE
BRUGES

1577-1578

En cinco nobres que m^o s^o sacre de domingo de cubidan y
 Juan de Arzinega y martín de arzeze y martin de ramu y m^o
 de aruz menai y nbro cinco f^o de la marca de sicca quacs del
 antonio de quintana dueñas por mi quanta en el n^o 1 ban quante
 p^osas de sargas de brujas l^os 12 de altes selles ytes dea 2 selles
 y en el n^o 2, 3, 4 tambien aguinte p^os de sargas de brujas lasta de de
 altes selles y des de altes selles las quales sargas son m^opor quacs
 de anascota seis sucl^os de quacs por p^oca y de anascota sucl^on
 coas de los seis sucl^os mas y al presente comen. m. enterrada las
 de anascota en un mas de a 62 y asi sup^o @. v. m. que d^oes
 4 f^os son de sargas de brujas m^o de v. m. se d^oen en anascota
 de n^ota de 62 mas p^os quacs de anascota lleba ena f^os p^oca
 p^oca de carpetas y ena vna de quacs y media q^o cada cuen
 caesta a 192 de quacs ena quinto f^os quacs n^o ban siex p^oca
 cap^oria de quatro años de cada l^os. dea historia de juda y
 y de f^os m^o de 12. 12. 16. 20. 24. y no dea historia de juda y
 tamar tienon 12. 16. son un^os 7. p^os. 12. años ena p^oca m^o
 co l^ota q^o m^o de a 4 2 q^o m^o de a 26 y 12 y ramosen
 de f^os l^os p^oca de sargas de brujas de altes selles - coa sup^o
 A. v. m. se d^oen de la ventaja que de v. m. se d^oen cono no sin
 de p^oca y sin de mas coa de q^o que p^oca posible y h^our.

[Faded handwritten text on a small fragment at the top left, mostly illegible due to fading and angle.]

[Handwritten text on a larger fragment to the right of the top fragment, partially obscured by the one below.]

[A fragment on the left side of the main sheet, containing several lines of text.]

[The main body of handwritten text on a large sheet, written in a cursive script from the late 16th century. The text is densely packed and covers most of the page area.]

Letters connected with the "oil affair" which occurred in Écija, with the supplies commissioner Miguel de Cervantes. Medina del Campo, 30 January and 13 February 1589 (ASR, CC, C 198, 638-649).

Link to the project "The postal mail in the Simón Ruiz Archive":
<https://www.museoferias.net/correo-postal-en-el-asr/>

"This archive, which is of remarkable interest, contains some 50,000 documents, most of them commercial letters from various parts of Europe, mainly Portugal, France, the Netherlands, Italy and Germany, as well as some from the Americas and many from throughout Spain".

Valentín Vázquez de Prada, "La economía española de la época de Felipe II...", in *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, LXII, 3, 1956, p.740

Meanwhile, many of the thousands of letters that make up the holding still bear the corresponding marks or seals identifying their senders: merchants, businessmen, commercial correspondence and company factors whose mark or seal of identity was at all times a guarantee of security and credibility. These merchants' signs, which could be seen as a precursor of modern corporate trademarks, were designed in accordance with different iconographic formulae to create the inherent codes of visual communication of heraldic crests and emblems, giving rise to: alphabetic seals with one or two letters, with monograms, with simple or double crosses, with a "figure of four", noble crests, symbolised place names, mythological or fantastical devices, or others drawn from Christian iconography. This wealth of documented information is analysed within a specific project to describe and study the thousands of commercial marks and dry and wax seals, etc.

Link to the project "Commercial marks and seals in the Simón Ruiz Archive":
<https://www.museoferias.net/sellos-marcas-comerciales/>

Wax seals: Pandolfo Zenami. Rouen, 1584 (ASR, CC, C 95, 47); Tomás Balbani. Mons, 1580 (ASR, CC, C 61,143); Giovanni, Francesco, Bartolomeo and Geronimo Balbi. Antwerp, 1592 (ASR, CC, C 155, 23); Hernando de Morales. Lisbon, 1587 (ASR, CC, C 123,143)

Dry seals: Agustín de Ayala. Rouen, 1582 (ASR, CC, C 78, 38); Juan de Jugo. Bilbao, 1579 (ASR, CC, C 47, 131); Enriques Lião. Seville, 1577 (ASR, CC, C 37, 65); Juan de la Haya. Bilbao, 1576 (ASR, CC, C 28, 207)



Other commercial documents

Alongside the types of document referred to above, there are many more that, although they do not comprise specific series, form an essential part of this set of commercial documentation. Such documents bear direct witness to both private and public commercial transactions. These include, for example, countless letters of payment, of notice, collection, obligation... receipts, confirmation, records, promissory notes, slips, excerpts, balance sheets, reports and inventories..., and many other documents essentially confined to the private context of commercial companies. And then there are the public documents requiring the involvement of a scribe, notary or public officer to confirm the veracity of the documents, as in the case of wills, contracts, judgments, lawsuits, notarial copies and evidence, enforcement orders, etc.

A great many other types of commercial document can be traced in the archive through the inherent nature of the business, covering numerous different aspects of small- and large-scale exchanges: there are countless powers of attorney, securities, discharges, quittances, sureties, settlements, customs notes, money withdrawal licences..., lists of ships, bills of lading, damages expenses, shipments of goods, letters of indemnity, maritime insurance policies, claims for damages, records of shipwrecks, etc.

Link to the project "Identification of types of document in the Simón Ruiz Archive":

<https://www.museoferias.net/tipologias-documentales/>

Lastly, mention should be made of other documents directly connected with currency exchange at the different trade fairs and financial centres in Europe: known as "*listini*", they provided essential information about the different currency exchange rates for financial dealings, based on the difference between the outgoing and incoming prices of the bills of exchange. The series of *listini* from the trade fairs in Lyon and Piacenza represent a notable feature of the Simón Ruiz Archive.

Link to the project "Description and record of the currency exchange rates or *listini* of the Simón Ruiz Archive":

<https://www.museoferias.net/descripcion-de-los-listini-del-asr/>

En la Ciudad de Orduña, a veintidós dias del mes de Mayo de mil quinientos y
 ochenta e siete años, en nombre de su Magestad, yo el Rey, por
 el qual yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey,
 Cienas mercederías, y mozo el diezmo de ellas
 de la Alzala de camera, de que por
 de su Magestad, y mozo de los del comercio de la dicha Ciudad, y teni-
 niente de su Magestad, yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey,
 mozo la razon, y lo firme de mi nombre.

En la ciudad de Orduña, a diez dias del mes de Mayo de mil quinientos
 y ochenta e siete años, en nombre de su Magestad, yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey,
 Cienas mercederías, y mozo el diezmo de ellas
 de la Alzala de camera, de que por
 de su Magestad, y mozo de los del comercio de la dicha Ciudad, y teni-
 niente de su Magestad, yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey,
 mozo la razon, y lo firme de mi nombre.

su Magestad, de los
 nombres.

En la ciudad de Orduña, a diez dias del mes de Mayo de mil quinientos
 y ochenta e siete años, en nombre de su Magestad, yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey,
 Cienas mercederías, y mozo el diezmo de ellas
 de la Alzala de camera, de que por
 de su Magestad, y mozo de los del comercio de la dicha Ciudad, y teni-
 niente de su Magestad, yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey,
 mozo la razon, y lo firme de mi nombre.

En la ciudad de
 y vicinas.

Cienas mercederías, y mozo el diezmo de ellas
 de la Alzala de camera, de que por
 de su Magestad, y mozo de los del comercio de la dicha Ciudad, y teni-
 niente de su Magestad, yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey, por el qual yo el Rey,
 mozo la razon, y lo firme de mi nombre.

equienos y
 de que por
 de ella
 de que por
 de ella
 de que por
 de ella

FR

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a financial entry or account book page. The paper shows signs of age and damage, including a large hole on the left side.

miomi ne Domini Amen

Handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly a religious or administrative document. It features a large, decorative initial 'M' at the top left.

Handwritten text in a cursive script, appearing to be a detailed record or ledger page. The text is dense and organized into columns, with some headings or section markers.

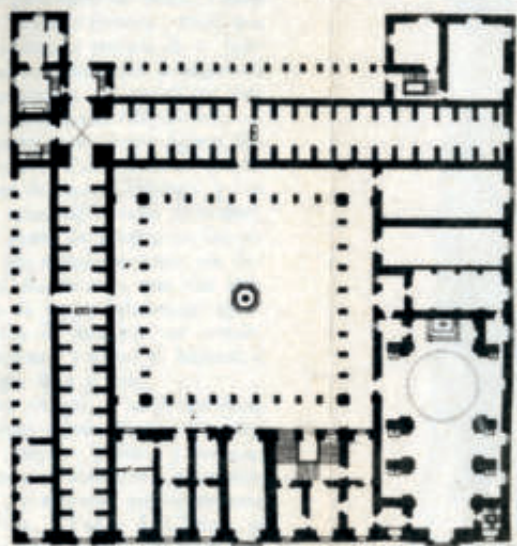
Handwritten text in a cursive script, possibly a record or ledger page. It includes a vertical list of entries on the left side, which may represent a collection of maritime insurance records.

Financing entries of Simón Ruiz with Philip II (ASR, CC, C 203, 50 y ASR, CC, C 203, 15)

Maritime insurance (ASR, CC, C 203, 95) and record for the collection of maritime insurance (ASR, CC, C 203, 15)

T. XII

159.



10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 140 150 160 170 180 190 200

Punta y fachada del Hospital de Medina del Campo.

T. XII



Corte



Plan, main façade and longitudinal cross-section drawings of the church of the General Hospital, by Julián de Ayllón, c. 1780, in A. Ponz, *Viage de España...*, 1781 (probably based on the original plans, now lost)

Simón Ruiz General Hospital

The Simón Ruiz Archive Hospital holdings contain the specific documentation of his eponymous hospital and healthcare foundation, established as a joint agreement with the Council of Medina del Campo and the Abbey, and which, given its General Hospital status, held in the past the original documents of the smaller hospitals that were re-established under its aegis when it was founded.

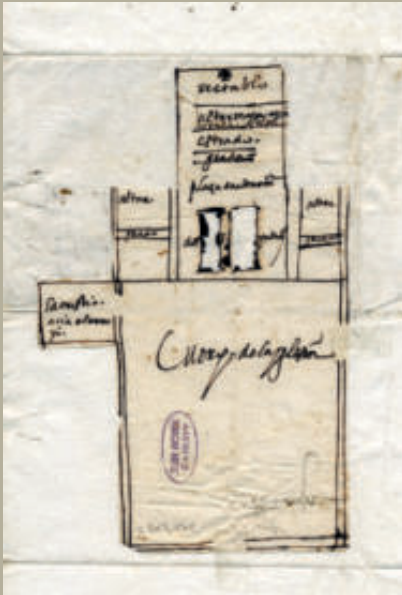
This collection of 204 boxes contains books of accounts, resolutions of the Board of Trustees, appointments, deeds of agreement, wills of the Ruiz Envito family, annuities and donations, rulings, lawsuits, boundary declarations, leases, agreements, letters of obligation, etc.

Very few studies have to date been conducted as to the monumental building occupied by the Simón Ruiz General Hospital, with access to this original documentation as a basic source of information, and as a result, from early 2016 onwards, the Trade Fair Museum Foundation launched a documentation project addressing the process of construction of the hospital, with the aim of examining the eyewitness records of the key figures involved in the building project, many of them previously unpublished, going so far as to track the "day-to-day operations" in the design and development of the construction work undertaken between 1592 and 1619. To this end, all the documents held both in the Simón Ruiz Archive and the Medina del Campo Municipal Archive are being gathered together and transcribed.

Link to the project "Documentation of the construction of the General Hospital":
<https://www.museoferias.net/construccion-del-hospital/>

"What was needed for the Ruiz Archive to be saved was that Simón should have dreamed of founding a hospital, and that years later, his second nephew Friar Cosme Ruiz should have ordered the transfer to Medina of the company papers held at that time in Madrid, where the first Cosme, his uncle's partner and heir, had set up business. Between 1632 and 1947, then, it was the hospital that ensured their preservation".

Lapeyre, H. y Ruiz Martín, F., *Simón Ruiz en Medina del Campo*. 1971, (Foreword by Henri Lapeyre, pp. XXIV-XXV)



"Sketch" of the plan view of the church of the General Hospital (9 November 1591) (ASR, CC, C 203-171) and "sketch" in a letter from Friar Antonio de Sosa to Simón Ruiz. Valladolid, 12 June 1593 (ASR, CC, C 161-232).



Confirmation of the deed of agreement by Philip II Madrid, 3 April 1592 (ASR, H 21, 19)



Bull issued by Nicholas V regarding the powers of confessors and indulgences at the Bishop Barrientos Hospital (ASR, P 17)

Mention should also be made of the documentation corresponding to the Piedad & San Antonio Abad Hospital, founded by Bishop Lope de Barrientos in the mid-15th century, and combined with the General Hospital in the last third of the 19th century (together with its document archive). This collection contains important documents covering the period from 1454 to 1862, the years when it was first founded and then officially ceased to exist, respectively. These include in particular numerous records and inventories, books of entries, accounts, purchases, sales... leases, donations, annuities, testaments and codicils..., and even the recently identified plans of the former building, providing a record of the architectural characteristics of the hospital foundation established in the 15th century.



Bull issued by Julius II regarding the granting of indulgences at the Bishop Barrientos Hospital (ASR, P 12)

[Faint handwritten text, possibly a list or record, on the left page of an open book.]

[Faint handwritten notes at the bottom of the left page.]

[Handwritten notes on the right page of the open book, appearing as a list.]

[Large handwritten text block on the right page, starting with a prominent initial 'S' and containing several lines of text.]

[Additional handwritten text at the bottom of the right page.]

The Simón Ruiz Archive today

As previously mentioned elsewhere, since 2015 the Simón Ruiz Archive has been managed by the Trade Fair Museum Foundation, in accordance with the Collaboration Agreement signed with its own institution, the Simón Ruiz Foundation, on 12 June that year. 2015 likewise marked the start of the project to digitise the archive, as a result of another agreement signed between the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport and the Simón Ruiz Foundation, the overriding aim of which was to create a backup copy of the entire set of documents. The tasks of conducting a preliminary review of the document holdings and image capture were performed at the Valladolid Royal Chancery Archive by the professional staff of the archive itself and a number of technicians from the Trade Fair Museum Foundation, with occasional contributions by bursary holders from the University of Valladolid in a number of documentation projects. The process is expected to be concluded in late 2018.

Link to the project "Digitisation of the Simón Ruiz Archive":

<https://www.museoferias.net/proyecto-de-digitalizacion/>

The preliminary review of the documentation involved the identification of each and every one of the documents comprising each set of holdings, the updating of numerous signatures, detection of errors in page numbering, location and chronology, the examination of lost or misplaced documents, the stamping of those that had not been registered and, of particular importance, their placement in new, standardised, acid-free boxes and folders, in many cases made-to-measure in accordance with the different sizes of the original books and documents, an aspect that will have a decisive impact on their future preservation. While these identification tasks were being performed, the updated information was included in the new General Inventory of the Simón Ruiz Archive, a renewal of the previous inventories dating from the last century, and begun in the 1950s on the basis of the work performed by Prof Henri Lapeyre. The digitisation tasks were performed using the technical resources available to the Valladolid Royal Chancery Archive: a Copy-Book digitisation unit and external storage hard drives. Throughout the process, technical support was offered by the SRD, the Document Reproduction Service which is the flagship institution for all aspects of digital imaging, belonging to the Sub-Directorate-General for State Archives. The digitisation is performed in accordance at all times with the standard basic guidelines for State Archives.

Direct management of the Simón Ruiz Archive by the Trade Fair Museum Foundation led to the launch of a great many projects, many of them already referred to over the course of this text, with the fundamental aim of the continued preservation and improvement of the holding's descriptive elements, public access and general dissemination. Some are more general and others more specific in nature, but all are intended to increase public awareness of the archive, and are coordinated by the Trade Fair Museum Foundation. The research projects connected with the different aspects of the History of Commerce and Economics in general

are coordinated by the Simón Ruiz Chair at the University of Valladolid, the body which publishes scientific studies connected with this academic discipline.

Link to the Simón Ruiz Chair at the University of Valladolid:

<https://catedrasimonruiz.es/>

The standardised description of the archive is performed on the basis of a computer application which, among other actions, allows the archive records to be browsed in accordance with international descriptive standards: ISAD(G), ISAAR CPF, ISDF and ISDIAH. It also supports the use of thesauruses as standardised points of access, the inclusion of digital images in the document datasheets, and makes it far easier to perform searches and retrieve information. This standardised description project will culminate with inclusion in the Spanish Archives Portal (PARES).

Link to the project "Standardised description of the Simón Ruiz Archive":

<https://www.museoferias.net/descripcion-normalizada/>

Lastly, an educational innovation project is being prepared to showcase this body of heritage among all sectors of society: children and youngsters of school age, members of cultural groups and associations, elderly people and the general public. This project includes the most innovative teaching techniques for an improved understanding of the content of the archive, which is at times complex.

Link to the project "Educational innovation of the Simón Ruiz Archive":

<https://www.museoferias.net/innovacion-educativa/>





Process of digitisation and current installation of the Simón Ruiz Archive at the Trade Fair Museum Foundation archive building.



"Simón Ruiz, the only merchant banker we truly know thanks to the preservation of his archive at the hospital he founded in Medina de Campo".

Antonio Domínguez Ortiz, "El antiguo régimen: los Reyes Católicos y los Austrias", in *Historia de España* (Dir. Miguel Artola), 1988, p.176

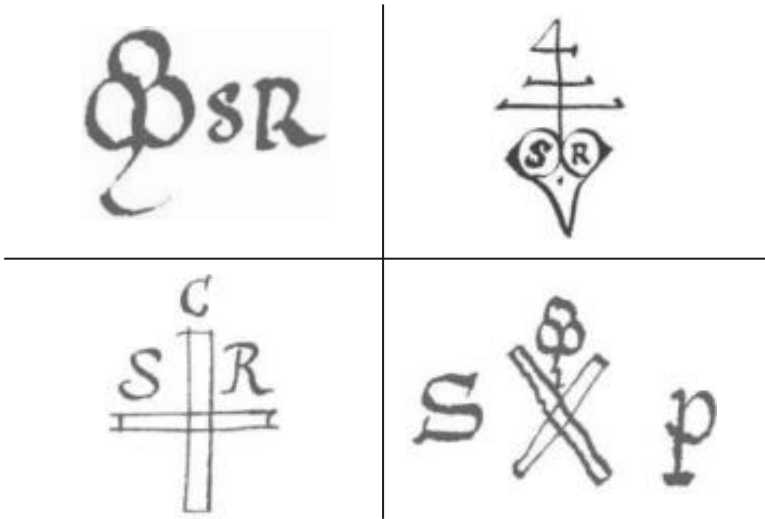
"Without Simón Ruiz we would be ignorant of much that we today know... about the dynamics of trade and Western Europe in the second half of the sixteenth century".

Felipe Ruiz Martín, *Pequeño capitalismo, gran capitalismo. Simón Ruiz y sus negocios en Florencia*, 1990, p.71

Alabaster statue of Simón Ruiz at prayer (detail), by Pedro de la Cuadra, 1598-1600

Since 2017, the Simón Ruiz Archive has been included in the **Census Guide of Archives of Spain and Latin America**; it can be accessed via the following link:
<http://censoarchivos.mcu.es/CensoGuia/archivodetail.htm?id=1722827>

Since 2018, the Simón Ruiz Archive has been included in the **Archives Portal Europe**; it can be accessed via the following link:
[https://www.archivesportaleurope.net/advanced-search/search-in-institutions/results-\(institutions\)?repositoryCode=ES-00001722827](https://www.archivesportaleurope.net/advanced-search/search-in-institutions/results-(institutions)?repositoryCode=ES-00001722827)



Commercial marks of Simón Ruiz and of the companies of Simón, Cosme and Pero Ruiz

The Simón Ruiz Archive was declared an **Asset of Cultural Interest** by resolution of the Regional Government Council of Castile-León on 28 December 2017 (published in the official regional gazette of 29/12/2017), in the "collection of movable assets" category. This declaration, the first corresponding to an archive in the Region of Castile-León, affords this remarkable legacy of documents the highest level of official protection.

On the 24th of May 2023, the Simón Ruiz Archive was **included by UNESCO in the "Memory of the World Register"**; in other words, it is recognised as World Heritage "for its exceptional values for the history of humanity".

Consulta de los fondos

Anyone can consult the Simón Ruiz Archive by submitting their ID card number and completing the corresponding identification record (prior contact by email or telephone is recommended).

ARCHIVO SIMÓN RUIZ

Calle San Martín, 26

47400 - Medina del Campo (Valladolid)

Tel.: +(34) 983 837527

fundacion@museoferias.net

www.museoferias.net/archivo-simon-ruiz/

Consultation hours

From Tuesday to Friday, from 10 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

(excluding public holidays)

Guided tours

Groups of from 10 to 20 people, during regular consultation hours. Tours must be arranged in advance.

FREE INTERNET CONSULTATION of the Simón Ruiz Archive in the "Portal de Archivos de la Fundación Museo de las Ferias":

<https://archivos.museoferias.net/index.php/archivo-simon-ruiz-2>

AUDIOVISUAL MATERIALS about the Simón Ruiz Archive:

<https://www.museoferias.net/audiovisual-ASR/>

BIBLIOGRAPHY about Simón Ruiz (under constant revision):

<https://www.museoferias.net/bibliografia-sobre-simon-ruiz/>



“...y las dichas mis armas que assi han de traer y poner, son las de los Embitos, una media luna, un Tao, y una estrella, y las de mi madre, cinco corbos, como están pintadas en la puerta principal de la dicha yglesia y hospital que, de presente, fabrico...”.

Simón Ruiz's printed will. ASR, H 21-7, f.25v



Archivo *ASR*
Simón Ruiz



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