



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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Defining Jesuit Colegios in New Spain: An Overview of Their Founding Deeds (1572–1767)

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ABSTRACT

The article provides an overview of the founding deeds of the Jesuit colegios in the Province of Mexico from 1572 to 1767. This study is part of a project that analyzes how these colegios—self-sustaining houses with their own income, primarily devoted to teaching—were established. The research focuses on clarifying the meaning of these sources, which reveal the foundational process of the colegios at different historical moments of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, from an initial stage in which there was doubt whether to prioritize misiones or colegios, to their later consolidation, and finally to their period of splendor in the eighteenth century. This research allows us to understand how many of the colegios were constituted and how they differed from one another, paying special attention to the type of patronage they enjoyed.

Keywords:

founding deeds; Jesuit colegios; missions; Society of Jesus; patrons and founders

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Introduction

The aim of this article is to provide an overview of the founding deeds of the Jesuit colegios—that is, self-sustaining houses largely devoted to teaching—in the Province of Mexico during the period in which the Society of Jesus was active in the Viceroyalty of New Spain (1572–1767). By “founding deeds,” I refer to the administrative and legal documents that formalized the consolidation of a house as a colegio. I contend that without a systematic study of the institutional foundation provided by these deeds, the colegios of the Society remain in a convenient, generic ambiguity, despite their complexity and diversity.

These documents might be seen as simple bureaucratic and administrative records, mostly compiled by the *comisionados* of temporalidades following the expulsion of 1767, as they were used to determine the new fate of the order’s former properties. Yet, they contain valuable information about the organization of each colegio. In this study, I examine the founding deeds as a specific documentary genre, exploring their role within the institutional structure of the Society in New Spain. The goal is to carry out a systematic analysis of the colegios that brings to light their complexity and diversity. In this article, I analyze the founding deeds, royal decrees, and founding extracts of twenty-four colegios and seminarios, out of the forty colegios, residencias, seminarios, and misiones maintained by the Society of Jesus in 1767 in the Province of Mexico. I investigate how the internal dynamics of the province influenced the ways in which its colegios were founded, as reflected in the content of the founding deeds. I pay particular attention to the relationship among patrons and founders and the Society, as the former were the most prominent figures in the founding deeds, providing the endowment and securing a political alliance with the religious order. Moreover, for a colegio to be consolidated, in addition to the generosity of the patron, it required the approval of the kingdom’s authorities—the viceroy, the provincial superior, and, above all, the king of Spain. Indeed, the king’s licenses, as the highest authority of the realm, were essential for the consolidation of these foundations.¹

Over the past three decades, a substantial body of literature has emerged on the Society of Jesus worldwide, examining its various facets: missionary, scientific, cultural, artistic, and educational.² In the field of education, histo-

1 Niccoló Guasti, “Founding a Jesuit College in the Kingdom of Naples (Sixteenth–Seventeenth Centuries): Local Strategies, Global Conflicts,” in *The Jesuits and the Church in History*, ed. Barton Geger, Robert Gerlich, and Claude Paur (International Symposia Jesuit Studies, 2022), <https://doi.org/10.51238/ISJS.2022.05>.

2 Some representative books are the following: John W. O’Malley, S.J., Gauvin Alexander Bailey, Steven J. Harris, Frank Kennedy S.J., eds., *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences and the Arts, 1540–1773* (University of Toronto Press, 1999); Ines G.

rians have been particularly interested in analyzing colegios' role in society, where they were established, and the activities they carried out across different parts of the world,³ primarily in Europe,⁴ though more recently also in the Americas.⁵ While some historians have analyzed their foundation,⁶ this is the first study, to my knowledge, to examine founding deeds as a distinct documentary genre. I argue that a precise and rigorous analysis of the founding deeds of each colegio is essential for investigating the diversity and uniqueness of each institution. In this way, rather than grouping these institutions under the ambiguous term "Jesuit colegios," this study highlights the particularities of each colegio, focusing on the founders, their relationship with the Society, their form of governance, and their revenues.

The review and analysis of the founding deeds revealed that their content and essence have not been adequately addressed by the historiography. I have not yet encountered a comprehensive study of the founding deeds as a documentary genre nor an analysis of their role in the institutional configuration of the Society in New Spain. This raises several questions: What are the founding deeds of the Jesuit colegios? What do they reveal about the process through which the colegios were established? Why are they a valuable tool for scholars studying the colegios that belonged to the Society of Jesus? Who were the key actors involved in their creation? Addressing these questions allows us to understand that the founding deeds are a fundamental instrument for analyzing the type of institution and development of each colegio, according to its structure and administration.

To explore these questions, I have organized the article as follows. First, I examine what the founding deeds are, their advantages for studying Jesuit colegios in New Spain, and their limitations. Next, I analyze the

Županov, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits* (Oxford University Press, 2019); Markus Friedrich, *The Jesuits: A History* (Princeton University Press, 2022).

- 3 Luce Giard, "The Jesuit College: A Center for Knowledge, Art and Faith, 1548–1773," *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 40, no. 1 (2008): 1–31; Paolo Bianchini, Perla Chinchilla, and Antonella Romano, eds., *De los colegios a las universidades: Los jesuitas en el ámbito de la educación superior* (Universidad Iberoamericana, 2013), 27–54.
- 4 Paul F. Grendler, "Jesuit Schools in Europe: A Historiographical Essay," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 1, no. 1 (2014): 7–26.
- 5 Pablo Abascal Sherwell Raull, "Los colegios jesuitas y su destino después de la expulsión de la Nueva España (1572–1814): Un ensayo historiográfico," *Signos históricos* 25, no. 50 (2023): 204–56.
- 6 Guasti, "Founding a Jesuit College"; Liam Matthew Brockey, "The Early Years of the Colégio de Santo Antão in Lisbon," in *Santo Antão: The Jesuit College in Lisbon and its History*, ed. David Salomoni, Luana Giurgevich, and Henrique Leitão (Brill, 2025); Pablo Abascal Sherwell Raull, *El complejo jesuita de Tepotzotlán, 1580–1618* (Universidad Iberoamericana/Ediciones Navarra, 2025).

founding deeds as a documentary genre and highlight the results of my research. Finally, I provide an overview of the history of the Province of Mexico based on a textual analysis of its founding deeds, which allows for an examination of the relationship between the Society and its founders across three stages: the founding stage (1572–1620), the consolidation stage (1620–76), and the period of splendor (1676–1767). I also include an appendix, featuring a map of the Jesuit colegios in the province, indicating their year of establishment, year of foundation, and patronage.

I would like to note that the literal translations from Spanish into English are mine, and that I retain the original names of the establishments in Spanish to avoid confusion between the terms and their English translations.

The Founding Deeds of Jesuit Colegios in New Spain: A Methodological Approach

I have not yet found a general definition of the meaning and importance of a founding deed before the expulsion of the religious order in 1767 from the territories of the Hispanic Monarchy. Nevertheless, some dictionaries from the period offer clues that can help us understand its meaning. Sebastián de Covarrubias's *Tesoro de la lengua española o castellana* (1611) defines “to found” as “to establish” or “to lay the foundations of a building, deeply and firmly, because the deeper they are beneath the ground, the more secure what is built above will be.”⁷ This definition can be understood as the consolidation of a structure, and in this case, the consolidation of a colegio. The foundation constitutes the basis of the colegios, since the founding deeds record their organizational, governmental, political, and educational bases, whose formalization was carried out by the Spanish Crown.

Similarly, the *Diccionario de autoridades* (1726–39) does not provide a definition of the term “founding deed,” but it does define the word “foundation” in three different ways: “the act of founding,” “the beginning of the erection, establishment, and origin of something: such as the foundation of a city, of a monastery, etc.,” and “the endowment or income with which a pious work is founded.”⁸ The latter definition is essential to understand that the foundation of the colegios generally entailed their definitive establishment.

Nevertheless, it is difficult to determine which sources can be classified specifically as founding deeds, since the typology I have found in archives from the period refers to a wide range of documents under the umbrella of foundation. The typology present in the sources of the time includes references such as “Testimony of the Deed of Foundation and Patronage,” “Will or Deed

7 *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (1674 [1611]), “fundar.”

8 *Diccionario de Autoridades* (1726–39), “Fundación,” accessed November 1, 2024, <https://apps2.rae.es/DA.html>. The translations from Spanish to English are mine.

of Foundation,” “Foundation of This Colegio,” “Deed and Papers Concerning the Foundation,” or “Royal Decrees” relating to foundations. Since all of them address the concept of foundation, I group them under the modern term “founding deed”—documents that attest to the creation of Jesuit colegios.

Most of the founding deeds I have located in my research come from temporalidades sources—that is, the body of documentation compiled by royal commissioners, men appointed by the Crown to gather information on former Jesuit possessions in order to determine the future use of the Company’s former houses after 1767. I found most of them in Latin American archives, such as the National Archive of Chile and several in Mexico, particularly the Archivo General de la Nación of Mexico and the Archivo Histórico Casa de Morelos in the city of Morelia, Michoacán. To a lesser extent, I found some of them in the Archivo Histórico Nacional in Madrid. I also drew on documentation from various published sources originating from these archives.⁹

Based on a detailed analysis of the founding deeds, I propose a typology divided into four groups, determined by the type of patronage or the influence exerted by various actors in the colegios or seminarios. I developed this classification by considering patronage—mostly exercised by wealthy lay patrons, although in some cases also by the Spanish Crown, other governing bodies, bishops, or the secular clergy—and I relied on the examination of twenty-four founding deeds, as well as other sources relating to the foundation of colegios and seminarios.

By “colegios,” I refer to buildings where schools operated, in which instruction was provided, and that had financial support.¹⁰ By “seminario,” I refer to convictorios—boarding institutions that offered students lodging, meals, and instruction. However, in the documentation, both terms are sometimes used interchangeably for the same establishment, which makes their distinction more difficult. Thus, in this article I follow the category indicated in the cited primary sources.¹¹

I do not address houses with the status of misión, residencia, or casa profesa, as these operated under different administrative logics—espe-

9 Pablo Abascal Sherwell Raull, “Estudiar las fuentes de temporalidades: El fondo jesuita del Archivo Nacional de Chile en la secularización de la Nueva España,” in *Secularización eclesiástica novohispana: Del predominio de las órdenes religiosas al ascenso episcopal (siglos XVI–XVIII)*, ed. Pablo Abascal Sherwell Raull and Enrique González González (Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Universidad y la Educación-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2025), 183–206.

10 John W. Padberg, John L. McCarthy, and Martin D. O’Keefe, *For Matters of Greater Moment: The First Thirty Jesuit General Congregations; A Brief History and a Translation of the Decrees* (Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1994), 86–87.

11 Jerónimo Aixalá, I. Echarte, E. Olivares, M. Ruiz Jurado, “Casas,” *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús* (Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 2001), 1:678–87.

cially with respect to the management of their revenues—and carried out distinct activities in terms of pastoral and spiritual work. Including them would broaden the scope of this study, which focuses on the foundation and shaping of the educational dimension of the Society in New Spain.

The four groups I identify are:

- Lay founders: colegio Máximo de México, colegio del Espíritu Santo de Puebla, colegio y noviciado de Tepotzotlán, colegio de Zacatecas, colegio de Querétaro, colegio de Celaya, colegio de San Luis Potosí, colegio de Guanajuato, colegio de Oaxaca, seminario de San Pedro de Mérida
- Patronage of the Spanish Crown or other viceregal governing bodies: seminario de San Ildefonso de México, seminario de Santa Catarina de Pátzcuaro, seminario de San Luis Gonzaga
- Bishops and secular clergy: seminario de San Jerónimo en Puebla, colegio de Valladolid, colegio de León, colegio de Mérida, colegio de San Pedro de Durango, colegio de León
- Colegios and seminarios for the Indigenous: colegio de San Gregorio, seminario de San Martín Tepotzotlán, colegio de San Francisco Xavier de Puebla

I believe it is important to highlight that I have not found the founding deeds of all the colegios in the province, due to their dispersion across the vast number of archives where they are located. In addition, some Jesuit establishments never managed to consolidate as colegios and therefore did not have founding deeds.

Lastly, despite their historical richness, the founding deeds also present significant informational gaps. Unfortunately, since they are the result of a process spanning several years, they do not reflect the developmental stages undergone by the colegios nor the actors who opposed their foundation. Historiography has shown that many elite groups, university professors, and members of other religious orders were hostile to their opening.¹²

Thus, in order to better understand how the colegios and seminarios were consolidated, and how this consolidation is reflected in the founding deeds, it is necessary to examine other types of documentation and cross-reference them with provincial congregations, triennial catalogs, and,

12 John Patrick Donnelly, "The Jesuit College at Padua: Growth, Suppression, Attempts and Restoration: 1552–1606," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* 51 (1982): 45–79; Paul F. Grendler, *The University of Mantua, the Gonzaga and the Jesuits, 1584–1630* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009).

above all, correspondence with Rome.¹³ In these sources, we can observe the debate over whether the former misiones should be transformed into colegios and the type of colegio that should be founded. Such a transformation implied that the Jesuit establishments would become self-sufficient and have a more consolidated infrastructure.

Likewise, by contextualizing the founding deeds with other sources, we see that some are embedded within the conflict between the regular and secular clergy, or in the debate over whether to prioritize misiones or colegios. From these analyses, we also gain a deeper understanding that some colegios had mixed purposes, such as the complejo jesuita de Tepotzotlán (1580), which not only served as a noviciado but also administered the Seminario de San Martín for the education of the local Indigenous nobility (1584). For its part, the Colegio de San Gregorio in Mexico City (1586) functioned as an independent institution dedicated exclusively to the Indigenous population, maintaining this character throughout much of the viceregal period.¹⁴

The Founding Deeds as a Documentary Genre: Insights from the Origins of Jesuit Colegios in New Spain

My findings regarding the relevance of analyzing the founding deeds of Jesuit colegios and seminarios as a documentary genre are the following: First, I explore how this documentation represents the legal authorization for the consolidation of the founding process of colegios or seminarios before the viceregal, Roman, and especially metropolitan authorities in order to be constituted as colegios or seminarios. This allows us to understand the final outcomes that shaped Jesuit institutions, from the opening of the first establishments to the point at which the authorities approved the foundations.

Second, most founding deeds show that wealthy lay patrons were the main founders and benefactors of the Jesuit colegios; motivated by a desire to gain social prestige and ensure the salvation of their souls, they established a relationship with the religious order. According to Antonio Astrain, founders were those who provided the house and sufficient revenues to keep the colegios sustainable, and those to whom the Society offered masses, prayers, and spiritual benefits. Benefactors, by contrast, were those who supported a colegio and received spiritual favors but did not hold the status

13 Edmond Lamalle, "L'archivio Generale di un Grande Ordine Religioso: Quello della Compagnia di Gesù," *Archivum Ecclesiae* 24–25 (1981): 89–120; Luce Giard and Antonella Romano, "L'usage jésuite de la correspondance: Sa mise en pratique par le mathématicien Christoph Clavius," in *Rome et la science moderne: Entre Renaissance et Lumières*, coord. Antonella Romano (École Française de Rome, 2008), 65–119.

14 Abascal, *El complejo jesuita de Tepotzotlán*.

of founders. It was thanks to the donations of founders and benefactors that Jesuit establishments were able to consolidate as colegios.¹⁵

Additionally, in some cases, clerical founders or strong involvement of bishops were involved in the foundation of the colegios. In sum, the founding deeds demonstrate how, after the foundations, the Society consolidated its authority in the location and strengthened its ties with the patrons.

Third, I found that the founding deeds of Jesuit colegios in New Spain were regularly the result of an agreement between the Society of Jesus, the founders, and the benefactors—generally lay patrons, city councils, bishops, and the Spanish Crown. They represent the culmination of a process in the development of the establishments, from the moment the Jesuits created them until they were consolidated as colegios. Following the argument of the historian Pierre-Antoine Fabre, naming an establishment a “colegio” was a relevant and effective act, as it marked the moment when the foundation was made public: “It is the moment when this foundation is revealed, so to speak, in the same way that, when inaugurating a monument, something that was already there is unveiled.”¹⁶

The time it took for a Jesuit establishment to consolidate as a colegio varied for each one. Some achieved it within a few years, while others took decades due to delays in reaching agreements among all the actors involved: members of the religious order, Catholic elites, local government bodies, the general of the Society, and, above all, the Crown.

Finally, I consider that the founding deeds offer a solid starting point for understanding the internal and financial governance of colegios and seminarios, as the deeds allow us to observe the different forms of organization they had. Thus, the founding deeds demonstrate the diversity and specificity of each one, their type of governance, and their economic and political strategies.¹⁷

I must emphasize that many of the dates presented below are approximate, given that Jesuit documentation—both the founding deeds and other sources, such as triennial catalogs—shows a notable degree of ambiguity. In some cases, the sources refer to Jesuit establishments as “colegios” with-

15 Antonio Astrain, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Asistencia de España*, vol. 2 (Administración de Razón y fe, 1914), 595.

16 Pierre-Antoine Fabre, “La correspondance de Jeronimo Nadal,” in *La république des Lettres*, ed. Ilda Mendes and Adma Muhana (Universidade de São Paulo/Centre de Recherches sur les pays lusophones, 2024).

17 Víctor Gutiérrez Rodríguez, “Hacia una tipología de los colegios coloniales,” in *De maestros y discípulos, México: Siglos XVI–XIX*, ed. Leticia Pérez Puente (Centro de Estudios sobre la Universidad-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1998), 81–90.

out specifying the moment of their formalization or their founding deed, while in other cases they are assigned a different name.

The Foundation of Jesuit Colegios and Seminarios in the Province of Mexico as Reflected in Their Founding Deeds (1572–1767)

The Foundational Stage: 1572–1620

When the Society of Jesus was founded and received papal approval in 1540, Ignatius of Loyola sought for the new religious order to have a missionary character. The Formula of the Institute of 1539 established that the Jesuits' purpose should be the defense and propagation of the faith. Likewise, the historian John W. O'Malley emphasizes the following: "The basic impulse behind the new order was missionary. They formulated for themselves a special 'fourth vow' that obliged them to travel anywhere in the world where there was hope of God's greater service and the good of souls—a vow often misunderstood as a kind of loyalty oath to the pope, whereas it is really a vow to be a missionary."¹⁸

However, societal changes, such as the discovery of the Americas and the religious wars in Europe, led the Jesuits to increasingly engage in education as a means of serving society. Hence, they founded the first colegio for lay students in Messina, Italy.¹⁹

The religious order soon faced a dilemma in the colegios that focused on teaching the *Studia humanitatis* (grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history, and philosophy based on classical authors).²⁰ This dilemma continued in Spanish America when the Jesuits arrived and established both misiones and colegios.²¹ However, the dilemma did not exist in the same way in the Anglo-Saxon and French colonies of the Americas, where the number of

18 John W. O'Malley, "How the First Jesuits Became Involved in Education," in *The Jesuit Ratio studiorum: 400th Anniversary Perspectives* (Fordham University Press, 2000), 202–3; Paul F. Grendler, *Schooling in Renaissance Italy* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989), 366–68.

19 John W. O'Malley, *The First Jesuits* (Harvard University Press, 1993); Antonella Romano, "Los jesuitas en la formación educativa e intelectual del mundo moderno: Génesis y estructura de los colegios (1540–1650)," in *De los colegios a las universidades*, 27–54.

20 Paul F. Grendler, "The Humanities in Jesuit Schools 1548–1773," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 11, no. 4 (2024): 544–68.

21 Aliocha Maldavsky, *Vocaciones inciertas: Misión y misioneros en la provincia jesuita del Perú en los siglos XVI y XVII* (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas/Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos/Universidad Antonio Ruiz de Montoya, 2012).

Jesuits was much smaller, and the members of the Society of Jesus prioritized their activity with the colonists over the natives.²²

In this context, in March 1571, Philip II wrote to the Jesuit provincial of Castilla, Father Emanuel López, requesting that men be sent to New Spain with the aim of instructing the *naturales* for their conversion and religious doctrine.²³ The new contingent of Jesuits was to adhere to the provisions of Philip II, head of the Church of his realms in the Americas, by the rights granted to him by royal patronage.²⁴ Thus, once the monarch granted the order permission in 1571 to arrive in New Spain, the general Francisco de Borja (g. 1565–72) organized a contingent of fifteen men to depart from the port of Sanlúcar to the viceroyalty with the goal of founding the Province of Mexico.²⁵

The superior general instructed the new provincial, Pedro Sánchez, to found a colegio and withhold the opening of other schools. He wrote the following: “At first, accept only one colegio in Mexico, and while others may be proposed, you may consider them and write to me; but do not finalize anything without consulting me. Do not accept schools in the colegio at the outset, but if you deem it appropriate, inform me.” Likewise, the instructions talked about the misiones thusly: “You will have the authority to carry out misiones with those you bring with you to various places; although it seems they should be done first in the areas already conquered, now it is for the conversion of the Indians, now for the aid of those already converted.”²⁶

As seen above, the instructions emphasized that the priority of the new territory should be missionary work with the Indigenous peoples. While the instructions required consultation with Rome if additional colegios were to be requested, the same was not required for the misiones, which demonstrates the initial missionary character of the new province.

22 Catherine O'Donnell, *Jesuits in the North American Colonies and the United States: Faith, Conflict, Adaptation* (Brill, 2020).

23 “Phillipus II, Rex Patri Emmanuele Lopez, Prov, Matrito 26 martii 1571 Romam,” in *Monumenta Mexicana 1571–1605*, ed. Félix Zubillaga, vol. 1 (MHSL, 1956), 3; “Phillipus II, Rex, Patri Francisco Borgiae, Gen, Matrito 4 maii– Romam,” in *Monumenta Mexicana 1571–1605*, vol. 1, 5–6.

24 Giuseppe Marcocci, “Jesuit Missions between the Papacy and the Iberian Crowns,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits*, ed. Inés G. Županov (Oxford University Press, 2018), 241–66.

25 “Sumptus a Patre Sánchez eiusque comitibus hispali ob victum et hospitium facti,” in *Monumenta Mexicana 1571–1605*, vol. 1, 36.

26 Félix Zubillaga, “Instrucción de S. Francisco de Borja al primer provincial de Nueva España (1571),” *Studia Missionalia* 3 (1947): 157–206.

The contingent arrived in New Spain in 1572, and the Province of Mexico was founded that same year. The Colegio Máximo de México was the colegio most frequently discussed in historiography because it was the largest in the province and it acquired the status of colegio from the beginning. The founding date is placed between 1572—when Alonso de Villaseca, probably the wealthiest man in the kingdom at the time, donated the houses²⁷—and 1573, when Viceroy Martín Enríquez granted the authority to found the colegio on behalf of the king.²⁸ While I could not locate the founding deed, I did find the donation of houses by Villaseca before the notary Gaspar Huerta on November 6, 1572, as well as the viceroy's authority to establish the colegio, dated August 12, 1573. These sources allow me to contextualize the foundation even when the formal founding deed has not been preserved. Regarding the first document, Villaseca made the donation considering that the Jesuits “did not have a particular seat where they could build their colegio and residencia, and for the term of my heirs and present and future successors, I hereby grant now, a pure and irrevocable donation given by my hand to the very reverend priests, which is to be understood as a house for residencia [. . .] built on plots beyond which belong to a whole block that I have in this city, on the street that goes from the church of San Pablo to that of San Sebastián, with one corner facing the house of Luis Baca and another corner opposite the houses built by the chancre Don Diego de Loaysa.”²⁹

Likewise, Villaseca requested that the new colegio “bear the name and dedication of the blessed apostles Saint Peter and Saint Paul.”³⁰ A few months later, on August 12, 1573, Viceroy Martín Enríquez authorized the foundation of the colegio, stating that “said work would be very convenient and necessary; by this document I grant license and authority to said Provincial, so that he may carry out the aforementioned matters with the persons he deems appropriate, and with those whom, on their own will, wish to found and endow said colegio.”³¹

Currently, there is some confusion as to whether the information about this colegio refers to the Colegio Máximo or to the first seminario or convictorio for non-Jesuit students, also founded in 1573 under the

27 Gerard Decorme, *La obra de los jesuitas mexicanos: Época colonial, 1572–1767*, vol. 1 (Porrúa, 1941), 5. Archivo General de la Nación (México), Temporalidades, vol. 234, ff. 1–2 (hereafter AGN).

28 “Facultas collegium fundandi sociis a Prorege data, México 12 de Agosto de 1573,” in *Monumenta Mexicana 1571–1605*, vol. 1, 77.

29 AGN Temporalidades, vol. 234, f. 1.

30 AGN, Temporalidades, vol. 234, f. 2.

31 “Facultas collegium fundandi sociis a Prorege data, México 12 de Agosto de 1573,” in *Monumenta Mexicana 1571–1605*, vol. 1, 77.

dedication of Saint Peter and Saint Paul.³² However, despite this ambiguity, the sources reveal a pattern that had already emerged in the foundation of Jesuit colegios in Europe, where a dependency between lay founders and the religious order is observed. Lay founders gained status and spiritual salvation through the foundation of the colegios, which also enhanced their social position. It was because of these potential benefits that powerful families competed for the patronage of religious institutions, as they did in Europe. On the other hand, the Society of Jesus also gained advantages, as it strengthened its power by establishing relationships with the elites.³³

For the foundation of the Colegio Máximo, the approval of the provincial, the lay founder Villaseca, and above all Viceroy Martín Enríquez on behalf of the king was necessary, since the final decision rested with the monarch when working in a territory under royal patronage.³⁴

In 1576, the Province of Mexico sent the first triennial catalog to Rome. By that time, only one colegio had been opened, as instructed by General Everard Mercurian: the Colegio de México, which served as the province's principal (máximo) institution. The remaining Jesuit establishments held the status of misiones, despite being located in significant urban centers. That year, the province's twenty-five Jesuits lived in the Colegio de México, the misión of Havana in Cuba, the misión of Michoacán based in Pátzcuaro, and the misión of Oaxaca.³⁵ Although it was the Creole elites who had requested the arrival of the Society of Jesus, the character of the province, as mandated by the king, was primarily missionary. Following the instructions, at the first provincial congregation in 1577, Provincial Pedro Sánchez emphasized that "the main purpose of the Society journey to the Indies is to assist the Indians, and thus it is appropriate that all be encouraged to this and take the necessary measures to achieve this end."³⁶

Despite what was requested at the provincial congregation, the dichotomy between misiones and colegios, or rather, between working with the Indigenous peoples or Spaniards, intensified. In Pátzcuaro (1574), the seat of the misión of Michoacán, the religious order started to engage in educational activities by participating in the tasks of the Colegio de San Nicolás,

32 Arturo Reynoso, *Francisco Xavier Clavigero: El aliento del espíritu* (Fondo de Cultura Económica/Artes de México/Universidad Iberoamericana, 2018), 55.

33 Kathleen M. Comerford, *Jesuit Foundations and Medici Power, 1532–1621* (Brill, 2017).

34 Félix Zubillaga, "El colegio jesuítico mexicano de San Pedro y San Pablo. Su influjo cultural en la Nueva España," *Montalbán* 2 (1973): 577–89.

35 Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu, Mex. 04, Cat. Trien., ff. 03–06' (hereafter ARSI).

36 Francisco Javier Alegre, "Primera Congregación provincial, 5–15 de octubre de 1577," in *Historia de la provincia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Nueva España*, ed. Ernest Burrus and Félix Zubillaga, vol. 1 (Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1956), 522–23.

which belonged to the secular clergy—a matter the superior general did not view favorably, since they had begun to undertake tasks that had not been assigned to them.³⁷

Despite this prohibition, the Jesuits of the Province of Mexico increasingly engaged in the educational sphere, especially during the generalate of Claudio Acquaviva (g. 1581–1615).³⁸ During his governance, there was an unprecedented increase in Jesuit colegios across all provinces worldwide, supported primarily by urban aristocracy, bishops, and municipal authorities.³⁹ During these years, the Province of Mexico expanded into newly conquered territories under Spanish authority, including the Philippines (1581) as part of the Province of Mexico. However, due to the long distance between the two territories, it became an independent province in 1605, receiving reinforcements from New Spain and maintaining similar pastoral activity.⁴⁰ The expansion also reached the northern territories of New Spain, where the Society of Jesus opened the misiones of Sinaloa and Zacatecas in 1592, Guadiana and San Luis de la Paz in 1594, and Parras in 1604.⁴¹

At the beginning of Acquaviva's governance, many of the first Jesuit establishments in New Spain that had held the status of misiones were converted into colegios. This reveals how the ideal of the Province of Mexico as primarily missionary and initially devoted to the Indigenous people was becoming increasingly difficult to sustain. The growth of the Spanish population in the viceroyalty created a demand for education that prioritized the *Studia humanitatis*, which was the foundation of Jesuit and humanist education at the time. This curriculum aimed not only to perfect the individual

37 Ricardo León Alanís, *El Colegio de San Nicolás de Valladolid: Una residencia de estudiantes; 1580–1712* (Universidad Michoacana de San Nicolás Hidalgo, 2001), 65–80.

38 Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Flavio Rurale, *The Acquaviva Project: Claudio Acquaviva's Generalate (1581–1615) and the Emergence of Modern Catholicism* (Boston College/Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2017).

39 Paolo Broggio, “Attività missionaria e strategie insediative nelle province spagnole della Compagnia di Gesù (1581–1700),” in *I gesuiti ai tempi di Claudio Acquaviva: Strategie politiche, religiose e culturali tra Cinque e Seicento*, ed. Paolo Broggio, Francesca Cantù, Pierre-Antoine Fabre, and Antonella Romano (Morcelliana, 2007), 87–118.

40 Alexandre Coello de la Rosa and Josep María Delgado, “Más allá del tiempo: el colegio jesuita de San José de Manila (siglos XVI–XX),” in *De los colegios a las universidades*, 241–83.

41 David Alejandro Sánchez Muñoz, “‘El colegio, por su naturaleza no permite sujeto que no puede subir a caballo y que pueda trabajar recio’: Prácticas cohesivas y estadía de los jesuitas en su establecimiento de San Luis de la Paz, 1590–1767,” *Tiempos Modernos* 42 (2021): 341–58.

but also to provide the basis for the higher faculties of philosophy and theology, offering social mobility. Furthermore, the humanities emphasized the hierarchical distinction between most Indigenous people and Spanish elites, given the significant debate over whether Indigenous people were capable of learning Latin in the sixteenth and part of the seventeenth centuries.⁴²

During Acquaviva's governance, the Jesuit establishments in New Spain were highly unstable and changed status over the years. Most establishments opened during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries took considerable time to attain the category of colegio, as they generally began with the status of residencia or misión before finally being consolidated as colegios. Although this process was not linear, the founding deeds appeared several years after the Jesuit establishments had been set up. This suggests that multiple actors were involved before the colegios were officially established, usually once they had their own revenues.⁴³

After the Society of Jesus opened its misiones in cities such as Pátzcuaro, Oaxaca, and Puebla, elites sought to establish colegios in these cities. In 1587, the elites of Puebla succeeded in founding the Colegio del Espíritu Santo for grammar students, and most of the city's lay students attended. This establishment left behind its status as a misión when it began to have its own revenues, and at that moment it received its founding deed.⁴⁴

Melchor de Covarrubias, a wealthy resident of the city of Puebla, founded the Colegio del Espíritu Santo (1587). Its founding deed describes the relationship he sought to establish with the Society, stating that he "has always wished to found the Colegio that the Society has in said city, and has negotiated this with the Provincials who have served in this Province of New Spain until now."⁴⁵ As with San Pedro y San Pablo, the purpose of this foundation was the salvation of the founder's soul. As noted in the deed, each priest would celebrate three masses in his name, and he would be granted burial in part of the main chapel. Covarrubias coordinated the foundation with Father Antonio de Mendoza, provincial of New Spain, who communicated with the superior general on the matter. For the foundation, Covarrubias delivered 28,000 pesos to Mendoza to purchase properties, houses, estates, ranches, and censos. Finally, upon the founder's

42 Grendler, "The Humanities in Jesuit Schools 1548–1773," 544–68.

43 "Casas," *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, 1:678–87.

44 Rosario Torres Domínguez, *Élites letradas de Puebla: Colegios, estudios y trayectorias (siglo XVIII)* (Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Universidad y la Educación-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2024), 25–55.

45 Antonio Esparza Soriano, *La fundación del colegio del Espíritu Santo* (Gobierno del Estado de Puebla/Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla/Cuadernos del Archivo Histórico Universitario, 1998), 52.

death, the closest relative—or whomever Covarrubias designated—could appoint a patron.⁴⁶

The change in status from misiones to colegios that was starting to take place in New Spain gave the province a new character. Communication among the elites, the provincials, and the superior general gave the Society a unique type of presence in the province. According to Pierre-Antoine Fabre, the value of founding colegios was twofold: first, to allow the Society to maintain its authority in areas where the Jesuits had a weak presence, and second, to reinforce its presence where it was already strong. He also emphasizes that from that moment on, the powerful ceased to be instruments at the service of the Society, and rather, the Society became an instrument at the service of the city actors. Therefore, the Jesuits had to be careful not to let the founders strip the Society of its authority over them.⁴⁷

This relationship with the elites was not always cordial, especially in places where the Creole and Indigenous elites debated their influence over the Jesuit establishments. A representative case is the residencia of Tepotzotlán (1580), which later became a colegio and a noviciado (1606). The residencia initially functioned as a dependent center of the Colegio Máximo de México because it did not have sufficient endowment to be an independent colegio. Upon its opening, it was dedicated exclusively to activities aimed at the welfare of the Indigenous people: the Seminario de San Martín to educate the children of the Indigenous nobility, circular missions in the towns, and a seminario de lenguas where the Jesuits would learn Nahuatl and Otomí to serve the Indigenous peoples.⁴⁸

However, against the will of the Indigenous leaders of the town, the endowment of a wealthy Spaniard from Mexico City, Pedro Ruiz de Ahumada, enabled the foundation of a colegio with its own revenues, which included a noviciado—a unit that was not part of the original plan for the site and was not supported by the Indigenous leaders. In his will, Ruiz de Ahumada requested that the new father provincial of Mexico, Idelfonso de Castro, “admit me as the founder of said house of probation or noviciado, which I want and desire to be founded in this city, distinct and separate from the other houses and colegios already founded in it, or in the town of Tepotzotlán, where I am informed it will be very suitable, due to the good location, climate, and comfort there, or in the part and place that is deemed

46 Soriano, *La fundación del colegio del Espíritu Santo*, 53–60.

47 Pierre-Antoine Fabre, “La correspondance de Jerónimo Nadal,” in *La république des Lettres*, ed. Ilda Mendes and Adma Muhana (Universidade de São Paulo/Centre de Recherches sur les pays lusophones, 2024). The French-to-English translation is my own.

48 “Casas,” *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, 1:678–87.

most convenient.”⁴⁹ The new establishment, which held the status of both colegio and noviciado, received the approval of General Acquaviva in 1606, who decided that the noviciado, the first stage of Jesuit formation, would be permanently established in Tepotzotlán. From then on, it was required to offer nine masses each year for the founder—two sung and seven said.⁵⁰

The Jesuit order began to establish an increasingly strong relationship with the Creole elites for the establishment of colegios. The rest of the colegios founded by lay founders in New Spain followed a similar foundational process. Thus, after originating as a misión in 1592, the Colegio de Zacatecas was officially founded as a colegio in 1616, following the donation by the Spaniards Vicente Zaldívar and his wife, Ana Bañuelos. In addition to being listed as the colegio’s patrons, they endowed it with assets and revenues, unconditionally and irrevocably, through their large estates. Furthermore, by stipulating that masses should be said for their souls after their death, the founding deed reflects the importance they placed on the perpetuity of this foundation. The act stated that “if either of them dies without heirs, or without having named a patron of this work, any of their legitimate children and their successors shall take over, preferring the eldest to the youngest, and the male over the female; and in their absence, the closest relative, and from there, the succession shall continue in equal degree in the same manner for the perpetuity of this foundation and patronage.”⁵¹

These cases are clear examples of Jesuit establishments that began as misiones and were transformed into colegios during the last three decades of the sixteenth century and the early seventeenth century. The misión of Michoacán was established in Pátzuaro in 1574, the seat of the diocese of the same name; however, one year before the diocese moved to Valladolid in 1579, the Jesuit Colegio de Valladolid was founded (1578). Pátzuaro then became a subordinate residencia to Valladolid and did not attain the status of an independent colegio until 1594.⁵²

49 Alma Montero Alarcón, *La expulsión de los jesuitas de Tepotzotlán en 1767: Documentos del Archivo Nacional de Chile* (Museo Nacional del Virreinato/Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes/Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia/Plaza y Valdés, 2010), 108–13. For a deeper analysis of this issue, see Abascal, *El complejo jesuita de Tepotzotlán*.

50 ARSI, Mex. Epp. Gen, II, 1599–1638, f. 077v.

51 Archivo Nacional de Chile, vol. 274, ff. 238–42 (hereafter ANCH).

52 Pablo Abascal Sherwell Raul, “El colegio de San Francisco Xavier de Valladolid de Michoacán en vísperas de la expulsión de la Compañía de Jesús de la Monarquía Hispánica (1760–1767),” *Antiguos Jesuitas en Iberoamérica*, no. 11 (2022): 1–25.

At the same time, while the debate continued over whether the priority should be *misiones* or *colegios*, or whether to serve the Indigenous or Spanish population, two seminarios for Indigenous youth were established at the end of the sixteenth century. These were San Martín in Tepetzotlán (1584) and San Gregorio in Mexico City (1586). Neither has a founding deed.

San Martín belonged to the colegio and noviciado of Tepetzotlán, and it was part of that complex. There, Otomí and Mexica boys aged seven and older slept apart from their parents and were instructed in the faith and basic literacy. According to the triennial catalogs, San Martín seems to have become independent from the Tepetzotlán colegio and noviciado in the seventeenth century.⁵³ However, in the 1764 triennial catalog, it appears again as part of the Tepetzotlán complex.⁵⁴

It is very likely that San Martín lacks a founding deed because it was part of the Tepetzotlán complex. In fact, a royal *cédula* issued after the expulsion of 1767 refers to San Martín as “its annex,” meaning it was annexed to the colegio and noviciado of Tepetzotlán.⁵⁵

The seminario de San Gregorio opened two years after San Martín, in 1586. Despite having a very similar function, it had attained the status of an independent colegio by the time of the expulsion; however, it has no founding deed.⁵⁶ Although its administration still requires further study, its apparent status as an independent colegio for Indigenous students is particularly significant. A source written after the expulsion, located in the Archivo General de Indias, notes that the city council requested that the revenues of the San Gregorio colegio not be transferred to the *temporalidades*, as “they are not included in the designation of *temporalidades*: because they were not from the Jesuits but from the Indians, to whom they were donated for their education: and only they had their administration, without any ownership.”⁵⁷

I have not yet found any studies that examine the revenues of the San Gregorio colegio or that mention that the Jesuit fathers were only administrators, not owners, of its assets. However, the historian and Jesuit Gerard Decorme notes that the member of the Real Audiencia, oidor Gamboa, after the expulsion, “had implied, in order to save that institution from the clutches of the treasury at the time of the exile, that the revenues of

53 ARSI, Mex 08, Cat. Trien., 1751–1764, f. 116.

54 ARSI, Mex 08, Cat. Trein., ff. 240–244ʳ.

55 Archivo General de Indias, Indiferente General, 3083, f. 122 (hereafter AGI).

56 I thank Jessica Ramírez for informing me that there is no founding document for San Gregorio.

57 AGI, Indiferente General, 3085A, f. 602ʳ.

San Gregorio were not for the Jesuits who did not serve there, but for the boarders and their respective teachers, and that, under this understanding, as it was considered a seminario for Indians, they had not been included in the occupation of the temporalidades.”⁵⁸ He also states that the San José de Acolman hacienda of San Gregorio was the colegio’s only subsidy, which, “not being under the care of the Fiscal of temporalidades, had from the outset been entrusted to the Fathers.”⁵⁹

Decorme also argues that “under those hazardous circumstances, the oidor Gamboa managed to save from shipwreck the temporalidades that sustained that institution and to continue it through secular officials.”⁶⁰ Nevertheless, this case requires more in-depth analysis, especially given that it did not enter the temporalidades, since the Crown sought, by all possible means, to sell all temporalidades to cover the costs of the war after Spain’s involvement in the American Revolution (1779–83).⁶¹

In addition to the absence of references regarding the source of his information, Decorme’s argument, however, requires further scrutiny. His account could be read as suggesting that Gamboa sought to preserve the colegio’s assets in anticipation of a possible return of the Society of Jesus, which was suppressed in 1773 and restored half a century later in 1814. Nevertheless, Decorme cites the testimony of Father Arrillaga in 1855, who requested the restitution of the San Gregorio colegio’s assets assigned to them by the Spanish government.⁶²

My interpretation is different from Decorme’s argument. I consider that, precisely due to the property issues mentioned above, San Gregorio had an administrative structure different from most Jesuit colegios in New Spain, though similar to that of the colegios for the Indigenous elite in Peru. According to Monique Alaperrine Bouyer, who studies these types of colegios in the South American viceroyalty—San Borja and El Príncipe—from an administrative perspective, these colegios “shared nothing in common except their dependence on the Indians’ census funds.” Likely due to this type of administration, dependent on community funds, the source I found in the Archivo General de Indias asserts that it did not be-

58 Gerard Decorme, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la República Mexicana durante el siglo XIX: Restauración y vida de secularización; 1816–1848*, vol. 1. (Tip. El Regional, Alhóndiga y D. Juan Manuel, 1914), 141.

59 Decorme, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la República Mexicana*, 141.

60 Decorme, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús en la República Mexicana*, 113.

61 Pablo Abascal Sherwell Raul, “Las temporalidades de los antiguos colegios jesuitas de la Nueva España: Un análisis de su administración y liquidación (1764–1792),” *Historia Mexicana* 73, no. 4 (2024): 1545–83.

62 Abascal, “Las temporalidades de los antiguos colegios jesuitas de la Nueva España: Un análisis de su administración y liquidación (1764–1792),” 114.

long to the Society of Jesus but to the Indigenous population—a view quite different from Decorme’s interpretation. Even though the king provided the salaries, they were in fact paid by local Indigenous peoples, drawn from community funds.⁶³

However, San Gregorio is not the only case in which recent historiography has debated whether its revenues belonged to the religious order or were merely administered by the order. Another example is the colegio-seminario of San Ildefonso, where some historians, such as Enrique González González, argue that it “did not belong to the Jesuit Order, although the latter administered them and managed their income.”⁶⁴ According to the same author, most Jesuit seminarios in New Spain did not belong to the Society of Jesus; rather, the Jesuits only administered the seminarios, such as “San Ildefonso and San Gregorio in the capital, those in Puebla, and those in Querétaro, Guadalajara, and Zacatecas.”⁶⁵

As we will see, most seminarios had founders or patrons that were corporations or institutions, such as the Crown, municipal councils, or bishops, all of which I discuss later. All these actors exercised strong influence over their governance and revenues.

San Ildefonso was a seminario under royal patronage, like many other colegios or seminarios previously established in Europe.⁶⁶ It was likely the most famous of the Jesuit seminarios in New Spain whose patron was the Spanish Crown. Sources can be confusing regarding whether it was a colegio or a seminario, as both terms are often used interchangeably.⁶⁷ Triennial catalogs up to 1764 refer to it as a “seminario,”⁶⁸ while its founding deed, located in the Archivo General de Indias, identifies it as a “colegio.”⁶⁹ Although this seminario appears in the triennial catalogs from 1594,⁷⁰ it was officially founded as a royal institution in 1618, when it merged with

63 Monique Alaperrine Bouyer, “La administración de los colegios,” in *La educación de las élites indígenas en el Perú colonial* (Instituto Francés de Estudios Andinos, 2007), <https://books.openedition.org/ifea/670>.

64 Enrique González González, “Uneven Chances: Education in Colonial Mexico City,” in *A Companion to Viceregal Mexico City*, ed. John F. López (Brill, 2021), 273.

65 Enrique González González, “Entre Europa y América: Transmitir letras y saberes en la Nueva España,” in *México 1521–1821*, ed. Cándida Fernández de Calderón (Fomento Cultural Banamex, 2022), 464.

66 Brockey, “The Early Years of the Colégio de Santo Antão in Lisbon.”

67 Reynoso, *Francisco Xavier Clavigero*, 59.

68 ARSI, Mex. 08, Cat. Trien., ff. 240–44v.

69 Mónica Hidalgo Pego and Georgina Flores Padilla, *El Colegio de San Ildefonso de México: Documentos de fundación y reglamentos (1573–1867)* (Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Universidad y la Educación-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2015).

70 ARSI, Mex. 04, Cat. Trien., f. 66.

the colegio of San Pedro y San Pablo under the title Real Colegio de San Pedro y San Pablo y San Ildefonso. It functioned as a colegio-residencia, convictorio, or seminario—that is, an establishment where a student community lived while attending classes at the Colegio Máximo de México.⁷¹

Its founding deed clearly states that “its patronage belongs [to His Majesty]” and later affirms that the king “has taken said colegio under his protection and care, as evidenced by his Royal decree, which entrusts the administration of said colegio to the Society of Jesus of this city of Mexico and its religious members.”⁷² As patron of the colegio, the king declared that it would be “under my protection and under the charge of the Society, [. . .] I entrust the governance and administration of the colegio of San Pedro and San Pablo to the Society of Jesus and its religious members, with the patronage remaining mine.” Thus, this colegio, which would bear the title of “royal” due to its patronage, was joined by the Seminario de San Ildefonso, “remaining the king our lord as the universal and perpetual patron of said colegio.”⁷³ Therefore, since the king was the patron, he was also the patron of its revenues, although in practice the Jesuits managed them. For this reason, it was the first colegio to reopen in New Spain after the expulsion of 1767.

Because of its administration—as in the case of San Gregorio—the use of San Ildefonso’s temporalidades was also debated after the expulsion. Historian Mónica Hidalgo notes that on February 4, 1773, “the Royal Superior Board of Applications confirmed that no temporalidades funds existed [in San Ildefonso], and therefore the assets and their revenues had to be returned to the colegio and remain in their original purpose.”⁷⁴

Decorme already noted the issue of temporalidades and their administration by the Jesuits. Although this Jesuit historian does not refer explicitly to any particular seminario, he acknowledges that the Society of Jesus held properties in New Spain that the Society administered but did not own. Decorme cites this information while describing a document from the Puebla deputation to the executive power, dated July 30, 1829, during the first decade of independent Mexico. According to him, this was the last official note concerning the restoration of the Jesuits in Mexico during the War of Independence. It states: “One of the injustices was the occupation of temporalidades that did not belong to the Jesuits, but to the poor, of whom the Jesuits were only the administrators. Such were certain estates in this Province, which, against the

71 Mónica Hidalgo Pego, *Reformismo borbónico y educación: El colegio de San Ildefonso y sus colegiales (1768–1816)* (Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Universidad y la Educación-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2010), 26–30.

72 Hidalgo Pego and Flores Padilla, *El Colegio de San Ildefonso de México*, 37.

73 Hidalgo Pego and Flores Padilla, *El Colegio de San Ildefonso de México*, 38.

74 Hidalgo Pego, *Reformismo borbónico*, 63.

claims of the Bishops of this Province, were alienated to the detriment of the Indians, to whose benefit they had been left by a benefactor.”⁷⁵

Although the question of ownership and administration of revenues requires further study, several indications suggest that the management of seminarios did not belong to the Society. It is no coincidence that the first former Jesuit establishments to reopen after the expulsion were the previously mentioned colegio-seminarios of San Gregorio and San Ildefonso. Since they had belonged to the king, there was no confusion over the administration of temporalidades, unlike the other institutions.⁷⁶ Likewise, these establishments were also the first to return to the Jesuits when the Society was restored in the viceroyalty during the War of Independence (1810–21).⁷⁷

Another representative seminario of the province is San Jerónimo (1585), in the city of Puebla. The bishop of Puebla, Diego Romano, played a key role in allowing the Jesuits to enter the city, as he sought to reduce the influence of the mendicant orders.⁷⁸ However, the patron of San Jerónimo was not the bishop, but a cleric, Hernán Jerónimo de Santander. San Jerónimo began as a misión but, according to a document concerning its foundation, it changed its status to seminario in 1585 when it began to have its own revenues. Hernán Jerónimo oversaw the foundation and temporal assets as its patron and founder, with the approval of Provincial Antonio de Mendoza and Pedro Sánchez, rector of the Colegio del Espíritu Santo in the same city, to which it was subordinated.⁷⁹ The founding deed, dated November 1, 1585, details the properties and funds that the seminario would have for its maintenance. It appears under the name “colegio,” highlighting the difficulties in distinguishing between seminarios and colegios.⁸⁰

The Founding Deeds in the Period of Consolidation (1620–76)

At the end of Claudio Acquaviva's generalate in 1615, and with the accession of Muzio Vitelleschi (g. 1615–45), the province of Mexico entered a period of consolidation, during which few colegios were founded. The co-

75 Decorme, *Historia de la Compañía de Jesús*, 241.

76 Pablo Abascal Sherwell Raull, “Hacia una visión de los excolegios jesuitas reformados en algunas regiones de la Nueva España y sus nuevas funciones tras el extrañamiento de 1767,” *Revista de Historia Moderna* 41 (2023): 326–59.

77 Rosalina Ríos Zúñiga, “Ausencia y presencia de colegios jesuitas en la educación superior en México: San Ildefonso y San Gregorio (1800–1856),” in *De los colegios a las universidades*, 296.

78 Jessica Ramírez Méndez, “Fundar para debilitar: El obispo de Puebla y las órdenes regulares, 1586–1606,” *Estudios de Historia Novohispana* 49 (2013): 40–82.

79 Enrique Aguirre Carrasco, *Documentos relativos al Colegio Jesuita de San Jerónimo* (Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla, 2003), 25, 57.

80 Carrasco, *Documentos relativos al Colegio Jesuita de San Jerónimo*, 37.

legios established in this period began with that status and not as misiones or residencias. The dilemma between prioritizing misiones or colegios appears to have diminished. This was likely because the province had more clearly defined its two ministries. This clarity allowed for a more precise delimitation of areas assigned to colegios and misiones, with certain colegios charged with supervising missionary territories.

The Province of Mexico consolidated as a mixed province in the seventeenth century. By the eighteenth century, the order's authorities considered dividing it into a missionary area and a colegios area.⁸¹ Nevertheless, the distinction between misiones and colegios was never absolute, as the two ministries complemented each other—a phenomenon observed not only in the Americas⁸² but also in several European provinces.⁸³

During this period, lay magnates began establishing houses with the status of colegios from the outset. One example is San Luis Potosí (1622),⁸⁴ in the diocese of Michoacán, which offered only grammar courses and conducted missions in the surrounding towns. Another colegio that functioned with this status from its founding was the one in Querétaro (1625). Diego Barrientos Rivera and his wife, Doña María Lomelín, close to Viceroy Marqués de Cerralvo (1624–25), founded this colegio. The founding deed demonstrates the links between the elites, the authorities, and the Jesuits. The founders declared that “we renounce and transfer [these rights] to said father provincial and his successors, so that they may have and collect them.”⁸⁵

Two types of colegios emerged in the province during this period of consolidation, differing from most traditional colegios offering instruction. The first were colegios that administered missionary territories, and the second were colegio-universities. Among the former, the Colegio de San Andrés in Mexico City, established in 1624 and granted the status of colegio in 1672, was intended to oversee the missions of northern New Spain, where lay magnates also engaged in their spiritual exercises.

81 Reynoso, *Francisco Xavier Clavigero*, 49.

82 Robert H. Jackson, *Jesuits in Spanish America before the Suppression: Organization and Demographic and Quantitative Perspectives* (Brill, 2020), 4–16.

83 Cristiano Casalini and Francesco Mattei, “Il collegio gesuitico come struttura (non solo) educativa: Il caso del Germanicum,” *Rassegna di Pedagogia* 1, no. 2 (2016): 105–22; Javier Burrieza Sánchez, “Los misioneros de la restauración católica: La formación en los colegios ingleses,” in *Missions d'évangélisation et circulation des savoirs: XVIe–XVIIIe siècle*, ed. Charlotte de Castelnau-L'Estolle, Marie-Lucie Copete, Aliocha Maldavsky, and Ines G. Županov (Casa de Velázquez, 2011), 93–96.

84 Archivo Histórico Nacional, clero-jesuitas, 91, N. 56–58, ff. 1–5 (hereafter AHN).

85 José Ignacio Urquiola Permisán, *La fundación y los bienes del colegio de San Ignacio de Querétaro* (Miguel Ferro, 2017), 117.

Another example is San Luis de la Paz (1680) in present-day Guanajuato, which served as the missionary center for the eastern Bajío region.⁸⁶

The Colegio of San Francisco Javier in Mérida, on the Yucatán Peninsula, founded in 1616, became the only institution in the province during this period of consolidation to function as a university from 1624. It was granted the authority to confer academic degrees, a privilege that had until then been reserved by the Royal University of Mexico (1551).⁸⁷

Although this colegio was founded in the previous period, it was during this stage that it began functioning as a university. In its founding deed, the Castilian lay founder and encomendero Martín Palomar donated several houses to the Jesuits, on the condition of being granted the title of founder or patron. He also requested that his body be buried within the building upon his death. Furthermore, should the Society refuse to accept the colegio, the funds would revert to the city. The deed also made clear that the new foundation was intended for the teaching of letters and Christian doctrine to children. The document was dated in Mérida on December 3, 1609, and the king ultimately authorized the erection of the colegio of Mérida on July 16, 1611.⁸⁸ One of Palomar's objectives in founding the institution was to diminish the power of the Franciscans, who held a monopoly over the region's evangelization. The founder endowed the colegio with pious works so that masses would be said for his soul, hastening its release from purgatory.⁸⁹

Finally, during this period of consolidation, some colegios underwent a refoundation. One example is the Colegio of Valladolid in Michoacán, whose founding deed corresponds to a very late refoundation, appearing many years after it had originally obtained the status of colegio. Valladolid was the first establishment to hold the status of colegio outside the vice-regal capital (1578); however, its 1660 founding deed shows that a refoun-

86 Abascal, "Hacia una visión," 326–59.

87 Adriana Rocher Salas, "Para lo divino y para lo humano: Los colegios jesuitas de Yucatán," in *Espacios de saber, espacios de poder: Iglesia, universidades y colegios en Hispanoamérica siglos XVI–XIX*, ed. Rodolfo Aguirre (Bonilla Artigas/Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Universidad y la Educación-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2013), 259–88.

88 Enrique González González and Rafael Patrón Sartí, "El capitán Martín de Palomar, regidor, encomendero y benefactor: su testamento (Mérida, Yucatán, 1611)," *Estudios de Historia Novohispana*, no. 43 (2010): 249–50.

89 Marcela Rocío García Hernández, "Las capellanías de misas en la Nueva España," in *La iglesia en Nueva España: Problemas y perspectivas de investigación*, ed. María del Pilar Martínez López Cano (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México-Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 2010), 267–303.

dation took place, with significant involvement from the bishop and the cathedral chapter.

In 1660, construction of the new colegio began under the direction of Roque Rodríguez Torrero—a beneficiary of the Puruándiro district and secretary to Don Francisco Marcos Ramírez de Prado, bishop of Michoacán—who assumed the patronage of the Jesuits' house and church. Rodríguez donated his assets, totaling 25,000 pesos, for the construction of the church, which, together with the colegio, would be dedicated to Saint Francis Xavier. Upon his death, Rodríguez appointed Marcos Ramírez de Prado as executor; he reaffirmed the founder's obligations and committed to donating 3,000 pesos annually to complete the sum Roque had promised. From that point onward, conflicts arose between the bishop and the superior general of the Society, so the initial plan for the colegio was never implemented. As stated by the record, "neither the conditions proposed by the Superior General in the consultation were accepted by the founder's representative, nor the propositions made by the bishop were adapted by the Religious of the Society, despite many conferences held on the matter."⁹⁰ Consequently, the general did not accept the bishop's proposal, in which the endowment would serve only for the construction of the colegio, leaving no funds for its maintenance. In the end, the founder remained patron of the church, while the colegio was left without an endowment.⁹¹

The information in the founding deed indicates that the Colegio of Valladolid had a collective patronage independent of the Society, and that its material assets were not necessarily owned by the religious order. It also shows that the cathedral chapter exercised strong influence over the colegio.⁹² This refoundation demonstrates that tensions between regular and secular clergy, present since the sixteenth century, intensified significantly in the seventeenth century and became particularly pronounced under the Bourbon dynasty, as I discuss below.⁹³

The Period of Splendor and Their Founding Deeds (1676–1767)

In contrast to the previous period, which was characterized by few foundations and the consolidation of the colegios, the number of foundations increased again between 1676 and 1766. Jesuit historians Ernest Burrus and

90 ANCH, vol. 276, f. 5.

91 ANCH, vol. 276, ff. 1–6^v.

92 Abascal, "El colegio de San Francisco Xavier de Valladolid de Michoacán."

93 Pablo Abascal Sherwell Raull and Enrique González González, coords., *Secularización eclesiástica novohispana: Del predominio de las órdenes religiosas al ascenso episcopal* (Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Universidad y la Educación-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2025).

Félix Zubillaga characterize this era as one in which colegios in the province flourished and student enrollment increased. During this period, the colegios of Chiapa (1681), Monterrey (1714), Celaya (1721), León (1760), Guanajuato (1744), San Ignacio (1701) and San Francisco Javier in Puebla (1738), Havana (1724), and the residencia of Puerto Príncipe in Cuba (1744) were established, in addition to the strengthening of already existing colegios.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, some colegios in the province failed to consolidate and, in fact, disappeared, such as the colegio of Monterrey, which ceased to operate in 1745.⁹⁵

This period was marked by turmoil within the monarchy and a change of dynasty. The new reigning House of Bourbon, which ascended to the Spanish throne in 1700, sought to strengthen the secular clergy over the regular one. The Jesuits tried to adapt to this new royal political dynamic. They experienced moments of tension, as well as rapprochement with the secular clergy.⁹⁶ During this era, other colegios, such as the one in Oaxaca, were refounded. Existing colegios were strengthened relative to the misiones. However, some colegios, like Guanajuato, maintained a strong missionary presence.⁹⁷

During this new era of secularization—that is, the gradual predominance of the secular clergy over the regular in the Church of New Spain—the Society administered a seminario conciliar in the city of Durango. These seminarios, whose establishment was mandated by the Council of Trent (1545–63) for the training of young priests, were under the supervision of the bishops, unlike Jesuit colegios, which the Society administered directly. However, in the Viceroyalty of Peru, the Jesuits had already administered some of these seminarios.⁹⁸ The seminario conciliar of Durango, founded in 1706, belonged to the cathedral chapter. From 1715 onward, it was annexed to the Jesuit colegio to provide more competent teachers and chairs. At that time, there were very few priests in the diocese.⁹⁹

94 Francisco Javier Alegre, *Historia de la provincia de la Compañía de Jesús en la Nueva España*, ed. Ernest Burrus and Félix Zubillaga, vol. 4 (Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1956), 1.

95 Decorme, *Obra de los jesuitas mexicanos*, vol. 1, 108.

96 Adrian Pearce, *The Origins of Bourbon Reform in Spanish South America, 1700–1763* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

97 Rafael Gaune Corradi, “Jesuit Missionaries and Missions in the Iberian Colonial World,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Jesuits*, ed. Ines G. Županov (Oxford University Press, 2017), 15–17.

98 Leticia Pérez Puente, *Los cimientos de la iglesia en la América española: Los seminarios conciliares, siglo XVI* (Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Universidad y la Educación-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2017), 11–14, 183–250.

99 Miguel Vallebuena Garcinava, “El seminario conciliar de Durango, una institución de mérito académico y una historia accidentada,” in *Una mirada sobre la educación superior en Durango (1634–2016): 160 aniversario del colegio civil del*

The founding deed of the seminario states that “it had not yet been founded due to an application made by the venerable Dean and the chapter of this Holy Cathedral Church, which belonged to them, and which had been given by the reverend fathers of the Society of Jesus due to a debt of tithes owed by some particular women residing there.” The prior of San Agustín stated that the Jesuits granted the colegio to the cathedral, and later, the rector father affirmed “that the reason the colegio-seminario of San Pedro was founded was due to this colegio by inheritance given to this Holy Cathedral Church.”¹⁰⁰ Additionally, the door of the seminario held the royal coat of arms, demonstrating the power granted to the monarch by the royal patronage over the bishops.¹⁰¹

As in the sixteenth century, several colegios founded in the eighteenth century did not initially hold the status of colegios. Many started as hospicios, especially in the Bajío region, where missionary activity was intense. Initially a frontier area, the Bajío region became the most urbanized and dynamic region of Spanish America starting in the second decade of the eighteenth century.¹⁰² There, the Jesuits founded three colegios within a few years. Celaya was established as a colegio in 1721.¹⁰³ In contrast, León began as a hospicio in 1731 and formally became a colegio in 1760.¹⁰⁴ León was founded through the endowment of the priest and bachelor Nicolás de Aguilar y Ventosillo, who donated all his property to the Jesuits. He did so because “through their care in divine worship, they will reform bad habits and establish a good way of life in the community,” and also to ensure “the proper education of youth.”¹⁰⁵ This colegio resembles those founded by lay patrons, since although its founder was a member of the secular clergy, there is no evidence of strong involvement by the bishop, the cathedral chapter of Michoacán, or other secular church authorities.

Finally, Guanajuato opened as a hospicio in 1733 and was officially established as a colegio in 1744. The founding process was lengthy, given that Doña Josefa Teresa de Busto y Moya sought to have it recognized as a colegio from the time it began operating as a hospicio in 1732. The king

Estado, coord. Miguel Vallebuena Garcinava (Universidad Juárez del Estado de Durango, 2016), 35–39.

100 José de la Cruz Pacheco Rojas, *El colegio de Guadiana de los jesuitas, 1596–1767* (Plaza y Valdés/Universidad Juárez del Estado de Durango, 2004), 157.

101 Rojas, *El colegio de Guadiana de los jesuitas, 1596–1767*, 151.

102 John Tutino, *Making a New World: Founding Capitalism in the Bajío and Spanish North America* (Duke University Press, 2011).

103 AHN, Clero-Jesuitas 127, N. 37, ff. 2^v–7^v.

104 ANCH, vol. 282, ff. 51^v–52. AHN, Clero-Jesuitas 91, N. 63, f. 57.

105 Archivo Histórico Casa de Morelos, fondo diocesano, sección gobierno, serie religiosos, sub-serie jesuitas, 1748, exp. 10f. núm. 19, leg. 122. ff. 1–8 (hereafter AHCM).

granted this request many years later. Although the reason for the delay is not documented, ongoing research suggests that the decision also aimed to strengthen, above all, the secular clergy.

Despite royal opposition, the colegio was founded because there was a significant shortage of clergy in the area during a period of strong missionary activity in the monarchy. The town of Guanajuato was experiencing rapid population growth due to mining, and few priests were available to minister to the people living near the mines. The king sought to incorporate peripheral areas into the colonial order and thus promoted missions to strengthen control over his overseas possessions. He requested the establishment of the colegio in the “city and royal mines so that these priests could preach, teach, and hear confessions of the people working there.”¹⁰⁶ This long founding process shows that founding deeds took longer to appear in regions that began as mission areas, as was the case in the early decades of the Province of Mexico in the sixteenth century. Moreover, this case illustrates the continued cooperation between the Bourbon monarchy and the Society of Jesus in New Spain until the expulsion of 1767.¹⁰⁷

Many colegios experienced refoundations during this period. One example is the Oaxaca colegio, which was first established as a misión in 1574. It appeared as a colegio in the triennial catalog of 1592¹⁰⁸ and was re-founded in 1685 by Don Manuel Fiallo, a wealthy resident of the city.¹⁰⁹ No further information exists to determine the reason for this refoundation. However, it may have been due to a change in patronage, strengthening the Society’s ties with the city’s aristocracy.

During these years, several seminarios were established throughout the province. Their founding process was slow. One example is the seminario of San Pedro in Mérida, Yucatán. It was established in 1699, but the royal license was not issued until 1711.¹¹⁰

Unlike most seminarios, patrons of which were the Crown or municipal councils, the seminario of San Pedro had a lay patron. A wealthy merchant, Diego Rodríguez de Olmo, “appointed as his sole and universal heir

106 AHCM, fondo diocesano, gobierno, religiosos hipólitos jesuitas, 281, exp. 1.

107 María Teresa Álvarez Icaza Longoria, “La labor de los jesuitas en el Arzobispado de México (1748–1765),” in *Quadripartita Terraum Orbe: 500 años de evangelización*, ed. Alfonso G. Miranda Guardiola and Berenise Bravo Rubio (CEM/UNAMPosgrado, 2019).

108 ARSI, Mex. 04, Cat. Trien., ff. 44–45^v.

109 AGN, temporalidades, vol. 206, s/f.

110 Rafael Patrón Sarti, *El antiguo colegio de San Pedro en Mérida, Yucatán: Una residencia para universitarios (siglo XVIII); La fundación, los benefactores y el corpus documental* (Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, 2023).

Don Gaspar Güemes.”¹¹¹ This illustrates the degree of authority granted to the Society by the patron, highlighting the link between the religious order and local elites. The founding deed states: “Without any intervention, jurisdiction, or authority by any judge or ecclesiastical or secular prelate, in this foundation or any part of it, henceforth excluded, and only under the governance and institute of the said sacred religion of the Society of Jesus, and of the Reverend Father Rector.”¹¹²

Two more seminarios were established by the mid-eighteenth century, one in Pátzcuaro and another in Zacatecas. Like most seminarios, they had no lay patrons, but governmental ones, likely because they were not directly responsible for the educational component. The first was Santa Catarina of Pátzcuaro (1751), which probably operated similarly to San Ildefonso in Mexico, though with much less influence in the province, as it was a royal seminario.

The title of its founding deed reads “Foundation of the Royal Seminario of the City of Pátzcuaro.”¹¹³ Supported by the townspeople, it aimed to reestablish the teaching of philosophy and moral theology in the city, because grammar studies were the only ones offered in Pátzcuaro up until then.¹¹⁴ This shows that some seminarios were not only places of residence but also centers of instruction.

Like most seminarios, the Jesuits administered the revenues of Santa Catarina, even though the revenues did not belong to the Society of Jesus. A source from 1776, after the expulsion, notes that the city council emphasized it could use the money from temporalidades to reopen the former seminario, since its funds were “entirely separate from those of the regulars.”¹¹⁵ As we can see, the city councils contested the reopening of such establishments due to the unique nature of the foundation and administration, arguing that their funds did not belong to the temporalidades.

The seminario established in the city of Zacatecas (1759) was founded shortly after Santa Catarina opened and received the title Seminario de San Luis Gonzaga.¹¹⁶ Historian Rosalina Ríos notes that, like Santa Catarina and San Ildefonso in Mexico City, San Luis Gonzaga was “under the administra-

111 Gaspar Güemes was a priest of the diocese and a resident of the city of Mérida. Patrón Sarti, *El antiguo colegio de San Pedro en Mérida*, 94.

112 Patrón Sarti, *El antiguo colegio de San Pedro en Mérida*, 108–9.

113 AHN, clero-jesuitas 87, N. 16.

114 AHCM, fondo diocesano, serie colegios, subserie jesuitas, caja 6, Pátzcuaro, Leg. 225 bis.

115 AHN, clero-jesuitas 87, N. 6, papel No. 1, f. 3^v.

116 ARSI, Mex. 08, ff. 240–244^v.

tion of the Society of Jesus, but [it] did not belong to [the Society].” This means that the Jesuits only administered and managed the seminario’s revenues.¹¹⁷

The establishment of San Luis Gonzaga was the result of the city council’s desire to have a formal colegio-seminario for studies. In 1751, the cabildo requested that the king erect a seminario with its own revenues and teaching, to be placed under the administration of the Jesuits. The aim was to “prevent the hardships caused by children traveling such long distances, at least sixty leagues, to attend the nearest seminarios.”¹¹⁸

The foundation became viable when Francisco José Pérez de Aragón donated his property to the project.¹¹⁹ However, it never fully consolidated, since as late as 1765 the viceroy requested from the king the constitutions and ordinances to govern the seminario, as well as its endowment.

Although San Luis Gonzaga lacks a known founding deed and did not consolidate as a colegio during the Jesuit period, its significance lies in the direct support it received from the city council.¹²⁰ While this practice was common in early modern Europe,¹²¹ the initiative of city councils to found colegios in New Spain increased in the eighteenth century, a trend that intensified after the expulsion of the Jesuits.¹²²

Another colegio for Indigenous elites was established in the eighteenth century: San Francisco Xavier de Puebla (1744).¹²³ It differed from San Gregorio and San Martín in Tepotzotlán because its foundation resembled that of most New Spanish Jesuit colegios, with lay founders. The founder was a wealthy woman from Puebla, Doña Ángela Roldán, who aimed to create a colegio modeled on San Gregorio for the spiritual benefit of the Indigenous population. She carried out her plan in November 1738, endowing it with 50,000 pesos in reales and a hacienda “for the maintenance of six language instructors, a schoolmaster to teach reading and writing to the Indians, and

117 Rosalina Ríos, *La educación de la colonia a la República: El Colegio de San Luis Gonzaga y el Instituto Literario de Zacatecas* (Centro de Estudios sobre la Universidad-Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2002), 36.

118 Archivo Histórico de Zacatecas, Fondo Ayuntamiento Colonial, Serie Enseñanza, caja 1, exp. 1768. I thank Rosalina Ríos and Francisco Soto Luján for giving me access to the source.

119 ANCH, vol. 274, ff. 244^v–245.

120 ANCH, vol. 274, ff. 244^v–245.

121 Paul F. Grendler, *Jesuit Schools and Universities in Europe 1548–1773* (Brill, 2019), 1–118.

122 Dorothy Tanck Estrada, *La educación ilustrada: 1786–1836* (El Colegio de México, 2005).

123 Vanessa Morales González, “La administración de las temporalidades del colegio de San Francisco Xavier de Puebla (1767–1773),” *Estudios de Historia Novohispana*, no. 72 (2025): 241.

another brother to manage the temporal affairs of the colegio.” Ángela stated that she had no compulsory heirs and possessed “sufficient wealth to execute the foundation.” She also stipulated that the Colegio del Espíritu Santo contribute 1,000 pesos and commit 20,000 pesos of its capital to provide language missionaries, as had been done in previous years.¹²⁴ This foundation took place during a period of intense missionary activity in the Hispanic monarchy, involving various religious orders, including the Jesuits. The monarchy sought to consolidate its frontiers, while the growing influence of science increasingly shaped the missionary field, aiming to integrate distant territories into the colonial framework.¹²⁵

In 1767, the year of the expulsion of the Society of Jesus, the Province of Mexico had 678 members, distributed across one Casa Profesa, one noviciado, 26 colegios and residencias, 12 seminarios, and 114 misiones.¹²⁶ Although colegios existed throughout the province, the Jesuits were unevenly distributed, with more than half concentrated in Mexico City, Puebla, and the town of Tepotzotlán, totaling ten main establishments.¹²⁷ From that moment on, a new phase of exile began for members of the Society, during which the Crown assumed ownership of their former establishments. When gathering information from each colegio, the commissioners in charge of temporalidades paid special attention to the founding deeds, as these would determine the new use of the Society’s former houses. This documentary corpus allowed me to reconstruct the foundation of the former Jesuit colegios in the province of Mexico.

Conclusions

In this article, I argue that the foundational process of the colegios—embodied in the founding deeds—had a distinct and diverse background. The deeds, collected by the commissioners of temporalidades in order to determine the new use of the Society’s former houses, reveal the differences among Jesuit colegios in the province of Mexico. These differences are evident in their modes of administration as well as in their relationship with their founders, whether wealthy lay patrons, municipal councils, or the Crown itself. Therefore, this study contributes to the historiography of Jesuit colegios not only by extracting

124 AGN, Indiferente virreinal, caja 5283, expediente 51, ff. 2^v–3^v.

125 David Rex Galindo, *To Sin No More: Franciscans and Conversion in the Hispanic World, 1683–1830* (Stanford University Press, 2017); Ivonne del Valle, *Escribiendo desde los márgenes: Colonialismo y jesuitas en el siglo XVIII* (Siglo XXI, 2009).

126 Francisco Javier Clavijero, “Breve descripción de la Provincia de México de la Compañía de Jesús, según el estado en que se hallaba en el año de 1767,” in *Tesoros documentales de México, siglo XVIII*, ed. Mariano Cuevas (Patria, 1946), 297.

127 Salvador Bernabeu Albert, “El vacío habitado: Jesuitas reales y simulados en México durante los años de supresión (1767–1816),” *Historia Mexicana* 58, no. 4 (2009): 1261–303.

the data contained in the deeds but also by situating them in their historical context and their ties with various actors, especially New Spanish elites and the Spanish Crown. To fully contextualize them, it is necessary to trace their relationship with other documentary sources, particularly correspondence, which provides a deeper understanding of the deeds themselves.

Thus, the founding deeds of Jesuit colegios in New Spain constitute key documents for understanding the establishment of these educational and religious institutions, as well as the fate of their properties after the Jesuit expulsion. While they may at first appear to be mere legal formalities, the deeds reflect a long and complex process involving negotiations among the Society of Jesus, local elites, the secular clergy, and the Spanish Crown. The foundations of the colegios were, in many cases, the outcome of agreements that formalized the creation of these institutions. In many cases, they were the product of years of debate over their governance and financing, as well as over the balance between civil and ecclesiastical authority. Analyzing the founding deeds as a documentary genre makes it possible to discern how different actors—including lay founders, the Crown, and bishops—exercised decisive influence over the constitution and development of the colegios.

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