

ZOZAYA, Leonor: "Rescuing written memory: the recuperation of disperse documents en Modern Age Madrid".

Key words: written memory, community memory, municipal archives, Madrid.

This paper deals on the systems used to search for, and retrieve, documents so they could be preserved in the township archives of Early Modern Madrid. The dispersion, and occasional, lack of control over many documents, because they had either been stolen or not even had been part of the archives, caused irreparable losses (such as territorial, jurisdictional and economical) to Madrid.

This paper is based on the information given by the Books of Acts of the Town Hall of Madrid, a documental source which has been analysed systematically for the dates between 1553 and 1610. The Acts or Accords show not only the degree of dispersion of the deeds as well as the proposals and actions taken to avoid this situation generating the loss of municipal documentation.

It was a task basically undertaken by the Corregidores (or town magistrates) and the Aldermen, who proceeded to manage the return of the deeds to their archives, and, to a lesser point, obtaining the help of other municipal employees, like the General Procurers or the Constables, was also instrumental. Paradoxically some of the disperse deeds of the town were in the hands of private people somehow related to the corporation, such as clerks or accountants or other, in other cases, to non related people.

In the Town Council meetings took place to establish the procedure to try to recuperate public documentation in private hands, which was of diverse nature according to who was the solicitor and whether or not it was known in who's hands it was. If this latter was the case, the document was requested at the Town Hall or otherwise to the private detentors, visiting them in their houses when necessary. If, however, the place was unknown, the

documents were requested publicly along the width and breadth of the town using diverse systems, depending on which institution was searching for the proper documentation: the Town Council or the Church. The systems used could be, for example, through publication through the crier, excomunion letters, and public demands both in churches as well as in public squares, not only in Madrid but, the case being given, also in other parts of the Peninsula.

The present paper deals in depth on these systems for the recuperation of written memory, its causes and consequences. It is thus demonstrated that the fact that although many Town documents would not be in the Town Archives, necessarily meant that they would go unkown.