

Ordinances and Records of the Cofradía del Señor San Pedro Apóstol of Valdeosera
In Spanish, manuscript on parchment and paper
Northern Spain, La Rioja, Valdeosera, c. 1557-1558; c. 1569; c. 1609-1726

83 folios on parchment and paper (with watermarks similar to Briquet "Main" nos. 10917 (Bordeaux, 1553), or 10922 (1575); and Briquet "Main" no. 11292 (Perpignan, 1552, Ancenis, 1559, Nantes, 1561, Spain, 1560); and Briquet "Main" no. 11302 (Carcassonne, 1596), modern foliation in pencil, top outer recto, 1-83, seventeenth-century foliation of ff. 12-83 in Arabic numerals in ink, top outer recto, 1-64, 66-70, 7[1?], 7[2?], 7[2?], with losses to the corners of the last three leaves obscuring what were presumably 71-73 and with a skip in foliation between ff. 64 and 66, with ff. 1-8 on parchment and ff. 9-83 on paper (collation, i⁸ ii² iii²⁰ [-20; cancelled with no apparent loss of text; neat stub remains] iv²⁰ v²² vi¹²), no catchwords, no quire or leaf signatures, no visible ruling (justification ff. 1v-8v, 131-138 x 96-109 mm.; ff. 9-83, 152-175 x 99-137 mm), ff. 1v-8v (booklet I) written mostly in long lines in a careful semihybrida script, with chapter openings written in a larger calligraphic Gothic script with some decorative penwork extensions on the opening letters, with words or phrases in the scribe's hand in the lower margin identifying the chapters's subject matter, and with additions on f. 8v written in two semihybrida hands and one elongated Gothic hand, ff. 9-83 (booklets II and III) written mostly in long lines (with an informal two-column format adopted on ff. 11r-v, 77v, 79v-81v) in a number of sixteenth-, seventeenth-, and eighteenth-century cursive hands, with additions made to margins and blank leaves in a number of hands belonging to the same period, significant crossing out of text on f. 7, loss to the text on f. 10 on account of a large tear in the outer margin, some periodic staining and wear. Sixteenth-century limp parchment binding, with parchment of upper cover stitched to parchment of lower cover along the lower edge of the spine, traces of original ties on the inside of the lower cover, cloth tie now attached to the fore-edge of the lower cover, traces of earlier sewing holes in the first quire, quires have been stitched together along the top and bottom, with lower stitching coming loose, stitched to the binding through an upper support of leather and a lower support of parchment, both on the outside of the spine, inscription in ink on the upper cover, "San Pedro," inscriptions in various hands visible on the inside of the upper and lower cover, the parchment of the binding is heavily worn and darkened on the outside, with some tearing along its creases and edges. Dimensions 180-192 x 138-144 mm.

This composite manuscript preserves a copy of the Rule of the Confraternity of San Pedro of the town of Valdeosera, along with records of the same confraternity that extend continuously over a century. This is a remarkable witness to the history of this confraternity and the now-uninhabited town of Valdeosera, neither of which have been the subject of much published scholarship. The manuscript survives in what is most likely a binding contemporary with its earliest contents.

PROVENANCE

1. This manuscript has been assembled from three discrete booklets (I-III below), all copied in Spain, judging from evidence of language, script, and watermarks. The parchment booklet (I) containing the Rule of the Confraternity of San Pedro of the town of Valdeosera was probably copied c. 1557-1558 or shortly thereafter, judging from the bishop identified in its opening lines, Diego Fernández de Córdoba Velasco, who was bishop of the diocese of Calahorra y La Calzada for a very short time, from 1557 to 1558. Given the opening reference to "este obispado de calahorra y de la Calçada" (this bishopric of Calahorra y La Calzada) on f. 1v, this booklet was most likely produced within this diocese, if not in the town of Valdeosera itself. The same is probably true of

the first paper booklet (II), which contains a confirmation of the Rule issued in 1569, along with a similar reference to "este obispado de Calahorra y la Calçada" (f. 9).

The final booklet was certainly produced in Valdeosera, and used for texts added by various members of the confraternity throughout the seventeenth century and into the early eighteenth century; the earliest date noted within this booklet is 1609, while the latest is 1726. The watermarks suggest that this booklet was probably assembled around the same time that the second booklet was copied, and was intentionally left blank to allow for added texts; the seventeenth-century foliation indicates that the booklet must have assumed its final shape during the seventeenth century.

Now no longer inhabited, Valdeosera was a town in the province of La Rioja, south of Logroño and near the village of San Román de Cameros. A chapel dedicated to St. Peter the apostle in Valdeosera's thirteenth-century parish church, Nuestra Señora de la Asunción, testifies to the saint's importance to the town, either before the foundation of the Confraternity of San Pedro or as a result of this confraternity's dedication (see Madoz, 1849, p. 284).

2. Several names have been inscribed on the inside of the lower cover in eighteenth- or nineteenth-century hands. These include "Nicasia Rubio Moreno" and "Jose Benito Moreno, Cura Economo de la Villa de la Baldeosera" who has dated his inscription "año 1835." The latter inscription strongly suggests that this manuscript remained in Valdeosera up to this year.

TEXT

I. ff. 1-8v

f. 1, inscriptions in later hands;

ff. 1v-8v, incipit, "*A gloria y honor de dios todo poderoso. Se sigue la regla quel señor obispo don diego mando hazer en este obispado de calahorra y de la Calçada para todas las confradias deste dicho su obispado ... y juramvs de no ir ni contra ello ni contra cosa alguna ni parte dello. Deo gratias*"; with additions in two later hands and license in a third hand, "Nos el licendo Joan de Sepulueda gouernador Prouisor e vicario general";

Rule for the Confraternity of San Pedro of the town of Valdeosera, issued by one "obispo don diego," most likely Diego Fernández de Córdoba Velasco, bishop of the diocese of Calahorra y La Calçada from 1557 to 1558. This rule has been divided into short chapters, a significant portion of one of which has been crossed out, possibly by the scribe himself (f. 7r-v). This cancelled material appears to refer to attendance at councils.

II. ff. 9-10v

f. 9r-v, incipit, "En este obispado de Calahorra y la Calçada por el ilustrisimo y reverendisimo señor don Joan de quignones obispo ... treinta dias del mes de Junio anno de mill quinientos y sesenta achas"; with additions in several hands including license, "el licendo Sepulveda";

A confirmation of the rule of the Confraternity of San Pedro in Valdeosera issued in 1569 by Juan Quiñones Guzman, bishop of the diocese of Calahorra y La Calçada from 1559 to 1576.

f. 10rv, incipit, "Otro si hordenamos y mandamos que ..."; with additions on f. 10v pertaining to the fees pertaining to different offices in the confraternity;

A further addendum to the rule concluding with a number of signatures.

III. ff. 11-83

f. 11r, *Matrícula de los Confrades señor San Pedro de Valdosera y otros lugares deste año del 1609*;

A list of confraternity members in two columns, with crosses marking the names of deceased members.

ff. 12-76, incipit, "LIBRO DE LA COFRADIA de señor San Pedro de la Villa de Valdeosera ... se passa a libro nuevo";

Records entered in a number of hands describing the charitable obligations and donations of the confraternity and of individual members, many of whom sign their names. These records begin with the year 1627 and also include notes pertaining to the annual visit of the diocesan *visitador general* as well as periodic lists of members.

f. 76v, blank, with space cancelled with crossed ink lines;

f. 77, a list of confraternity members, dated between the years 1714 and 1722;

ff. 77v-78, *Valdosera, año de 1662, Memoria del numero de cofrades de Señor San Pedro y su cofradria sita y fundada en cita Villa de Valdosera*;

List of confraternity members dated between the years 1662 and 1673, with an addition for the year 1722, likely a continuation from the list on f. 77. Crosses mark the names of deceased members.

f. 78v, a continuation of the earlier records with a single entry, dated 1726;

f. 79, a single record entry, dated 1686 and crossed out;

f. 79v, nearly blank, but for a vertical line dividing the page into two columns and two names, one in each column;

ff 80-81, a list of confraternity members in two columns;

ff. 81v-82, *Memoria de los confrades de san felices de baldosera*;

List of members of the Confraternity of San Felices in Valdeosera.

f. 82, a single record entry, dated 1656;

ff. 82v-83, a list of the confraternity's stewards (*mayordomos*) from 1632 to 1655;

f. 83, records of payments, dated 1672; [f. 83v, blank].

This manuscript's three booklets contain the Rule of the Confraternity of San Pedro of the town of Valdeosera, along with its confirmation and additions to that Rule, and confraternity records beginning several decades later and spanning over a century. While the initial rule may have

been copied for the use of a particular member of the *cofradía*, the subsequent additions point to communal use by the *cofradía* or a succession of its officials.

Medieval confraternities in Spain were voluntary organizations whose members devoted themselves to the public expression of forms of piety in order to promote the welfare of the community. Gabriel Le Bras has called them "artificial families in which all members were united by voluntary fellowship," who "had as their objective to satisfy within a narrow group the most poignant needs of body and soul" (Le Bras, 1955-1956, p. 423).

Among the many ways in which medieval confraternities met the "poignant needs of body and soul," charity was paramount. Through almsgiving and practical services such as lodging, hospitality and nursing, confraternities physically supported the poor and needy of their communities, while at the same time furthering their members's aspirations for the afterlife. The preface to this manuscript's Rule notes the preeminence of charity among virtues: f. 1v, "Dize el apostol Saint Pablo que la maior virtud entre todas las virtudes es la caridad porque todas las buenas obras que los hombres hazen sin la caridad ninguna perficion tienen ..." (Saint Paul the Apostle says that the best of all virtues is charity, for all good works that men do without charity have no perfection).

Confraternities created communities that extended beyond the family or the parish and often competed with other ecclesiastical institutions. Members paid special veneration to a common patron or cause (here St. Peter the apostle), prayed for each other, cared for the same shrines and wore the same clothing when they marched in procession. Just as parishes created bonds between parishioners, these brotherhoods (*cofradías*) maintained the connections between the living and the dead, the rich and the poor. Confraternities were an important part of an individual's social and religious life and many men and women engaged in multiple memberships. This may explain the inclusion of a brief list of members of another confraternity in Valdeosera within the final booklet of this manuscript (ff. 81v-82).

In his monograph on the *cofradías* of Astorga (Province of León), Gregoria Cavero Dominguez (1992) provides a very thorough study of the phenomenon of medieval confraternities, exemplified by the city of Astorga. His study could be expanded to encompass other Spanish cities, drawing on this manuscript and other similar sources. Cavero Dominguez observed that the ordinances for a specific *cofradía* were often bound together with other documents pertaining to the confraternity including Statutes or Chapter Proceedings. This manuscript is an example of such a compilation. There is presently no history of the confraternities of Valdeosera. The evidence provided by this manuscript would be key to writing this history, especially if it was studied in the light of other examples or complementary documents, still to be identified.

LITERATURE

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