CHAPTER TWO

CHRISTENING, MARRIAGE, AND OTHER ENTRIES

Each christening and marriage entry is made up of several parts arranged in a particular order. Each part usually contains set words and phrases that change little from one entry to the next, but may change from priest to priest. Often the only things that change with each entry are the date and the names—in other words, the specific information you will need to extract. Thus, by being able to identify each part by its key words and phrases, you will be able to quickly locate the specific information you will need.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide you with an example of both a christening and a marriage entry. It is designed to explain the various parts of an entry that are most typically found in Spanish christening and marriage records. This chapter consists of the following sections:

Section 1 – Christening Entries
Section 2 – Marriage Entries
Section 3 – Other Entries
This section gives a sample christening entry and an explanation of how to read it. The sample entry, like all other entries, is composed of several parts. The sample christening entry shown below is divided into the following parts: margin note, date, place, priest’s name, name of ceremony, child’s name and background information, racial designation, sex and legitimacy of child, father, father’s occupation, mother, godparents, warning to godparents, certification of correctness of information, and priest’s signature. Following the sample entry is the Spanish transcription and the English translation.

### Transcription

Pedro  
Ysac  
de La Paz

En el año del Señor de mil ochocientos setenta y dos a tres de junio en la viz Parroquia de María Santísima de los Dolores, yo el Presbítero Miguel Alva—teniente de Cura, bautizé solemnemente, y puse oleo y crisma a—Pedro Ysac, lobo, un infante de 2 días de La Paz hijo legítimo de Justo Rodríguez, zapatero, y de Lucía Moreno fueron sus padrinos Juan Alvarado y Gumicinda Zamora a quienes advertí de su obligación y parentesco espiritual para que conste lo firmé.

Miguel Alva

### Translation

Pedro  
Ysac  
of La Paz

In the year of the Lord one thousand eight hundred sixty-two, on the third of June, in the vice-parish of María Santísima de los Dolores, I, the priest Miguel Alva, deputy of the parish priest, solemnly baptized, placed oil and chrism on Pedro Ysac, lobo, a male infant of two days (of age) from La Paz, legitimate son of Justo Rodríguez shoemaker and of Lucía Moreno; his godparents were Juan Alvarado and Gumicinda Zamora, whom I advised of their obligation and spiritual parentage, in the witness thereof I signed it.

Miguel Alva

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NOTE: The sample christening entry used above is also used in the following explanations of each part of an entry. As each part is explained, the corresponding phrase in the sample entry is emphasized with bold handwriting.
In some christening registers, the priest wrote the child's name in the margin as well as in the entry. Sometimes the margin gives additional information such as the child's race or birthplace.

In the example, the marginal entry is the child's name and place of origin:

Pedro Ysac de La Paz
Pedro Ysac of La Paz

En el año del Señor de mil ochocientos setenta y dos a tres de junio en la vec. Parroquia de María Santísima de los Dolores, yo el Pbro. Miguel Álvarez, teniente de cura, bautisé solemnemente, y
Date Phrase

The date phrase tells when the child was christened. It is either the first or second item in the entry. If it is not first, then the place phrase is first.

In the example, it is the first phrase:

*En el año del Señor de mil ochocientos secenta y dos a tres de junio,*
*In the year of the Lord of one thousand eight hundred sixty-two, on the third of June,*

---

The date phrase almost always begins with either the word *en* or *a*, both of which can mean "on."

The date is usually easy to recognize for two reasons:

1. It may contain numerals, which are basically the same in both English and Spanish. It is usually the only phrase that does contain numerals.

2. The Spanish names for the months are very similar to the English names. You will probably recognize them even if you do not know Spanish.

For additional information on dates see chapter 6.
The place phrase usually gives the name of the parish (and/or city) and sometimes the location of the parish church. It may give the name of the christening place if the child was christened somewhere other than in the parish church, such as in a chapel or dependent church for those living far from the parish church. If there is a place phrase, it is either the first thing in the entry or it immediately follows the date phrase. Some entries have no place phrase as such. They may include the name of the parish in the next phrase, with the priest’s name.

In the example, the following phrase is the place phrase:

en la viz de Parroquia de María Santísima de los Dolores
in the vice parish of Maria Santísima de los Dolores

This example shows the importance of knowing the format of entries. María de los Dolores is a common given name. If you did not know that it was part of the place phrase or that viz Parroquia referred to the church, you might extract the name of the parish as the child’s name.

The place phrase usually begins with one of the phrases listed below or simply with the word en (“in”). Some alternative phrases that can be used for place are:

- en la iglesia de
  in the church of
- en la feligresía de
  in the parish of
- en la ayuda de parroquia de
  in the vice-parish of
- en la villa de
  in the village of
- en la parroquia de
  in the parish of
- en la doctrina de
  in the curacy of
- en la capilla de
  in the chapel of
- en la ciudad de
  in the city of
- en el curato de
  in the parish of
- en la vicaría de
  in the vicariate of
- en el pueblo de
  in the town of
- este-esta
  this

Self-Evaluation
Using the above list, translate the following:

1. en la parroquia de Marfil

2. en el pueblo de Rosario

3. en esta ciudad

4. en la capilla de San Pedro

5. en la ayuda de parroquia de Nuestra Señora de los Dolores

Answers
1. in the parish of Marfil  2. in the town of Rosario  3. in this city  4. in the chapel of San Pedro  5. in the vice-parish of Nuestra Señora de los Dolores
Priest Phrase

The third part of the entry gives the name and office of the person who performed the christening. This person is usually the parish priest (cura) or his assistant (teniente).

Thus, the first personal name in the entry is usually a priest’s name. In the example, the priest phrase reads:

yo el Presbítero Miguel Alva teniente de Cura
I, the priest Miguel Alva, deputy of the parish priest

The priest phrase often begins with the word yo (“I”). The following titles all refer to priests:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Spanish</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>el cura</td>
<td>the parish priest</td>
<td>el vicario</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>el licenciado</td>
<td>the licentiate</td>
<td>el vicar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>el parroco</td>
<td>the parson</td>
<td>el frairo o hermano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>el teniente</td>
<td>the deputy</td>
<td>el presbítero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>el bachiller</td>
<td>the bachelor</td>
<td>el reverendo padre</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The title may follow the priest’s name or, as in the sample, the priest may have a title both before and after his name. Besides giving the name of the person who performed the baptism, the priest information may include a reference to that person’s authority or to the jurisdiction of the parish or to both. The following phrases have to do with the priest’s authority:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>English Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>encargado</td>
<td>in charge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>con licencia de</td>
<td>with permission of</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>con mi licencia</td>
<td>with my permission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ex licentia parochi</td>
<td>by license of the parish priest (Latin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cum venia parochi</td>
<td>with permission of the parish priest (Latin)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following phrases are common ways of referring to the parish’s jurisdiction:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrase</th>
<th>English Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>de esta jurisdicción y su partido</td>
<td>of this jurisdiction and its district</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>de este lugar y su partido</td>
<td>of this place and its district</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-Evaluation
Using the information above, translate the following phrases:

1. el reverendo padre
2. con licencia de fray José Olivares
3. el licenciado Don Manuel Lopez
4. cura encargado de este lugar
5. yo el presbítero José Jimenez

Answers
1. the reverend father 2. with permission of Friar Jose Olivares 3. the licentiate Don Manuel Lopez 4. parish priest in charge of this place 5. I the priest José Jimenez
Ceremony Phrase

The phrase following the priest’s name says that the necessary christening ceremonies of the Catholic church were complied with. It is the key phrase in a christening entry because it usually introduces the child’s name. In the example it reads:

\[ \text{bautizé solemnemente, y puse oleo y crisma} \]
\[ \text{solemnly baptized, (and) put oil and christening (on)} \]

\[ \text{Ypac en la vig. Parroquia de María Santísima de los Dolores, yo, el} \]
\[ \text{Vicario Miguel Alveo - Teniente de Cura, bautizé solemnemente, y} \]
\[ \text{puse oleo y crisma a Pedro Ypac, lobo, un infante de 2 días de fa-} \]

It could have been written in any one or more of the following ways. Notice that verbs that end in \( é \) mean that “I” did something, whereas those that end in \( ó \) mean that “he” did it.

- hice los exorcismos
  I exorcised

- hizo los exorcismos
  he exorcised

- exorcisé
  I exorcised

- bautizé solemnemente
  I solemnly baptized

- puse (los santos) oleo(s) y (sagrado) crisma (a)
  I put (the holy) oil and (sacred) christening (on)

Self-Evaluation

Using the above lists, translate the following phrases:

1. exorcisé

2. puse oleo y crisma a

3. bautizó solemnemente

4. hizo los exorcismos

5. exorcisé, bautizé solemnemente, y puse los santos oleos a

Answers

1. I exorcised 2. I put oil and christening on 3. he solemnly baptized 4. he exorcised 5. I exorcised, solemnly baptized and put holy oil on
Child

Following the christening phrase is the part of the entry that gives information about the child. It usually gives at least the child's given name or names. It may also give the child's age or birth date and birthplace. Rarely does a christening entry give the child's surname.

The child's name may immediately follow the words por nombre (“for a name”) or el nombre (“the name”), or it may follow the christening phrase.

Pedro Ysac, lobo, un infante de 2 días de La Paz
Pedro Ysac, lobo, a (male) infant of two days (of age) from La Paz

In the example, the name follows the christening phrase. The word lobo is a racial designation and the name La Paz is the town where the child lives.

Self-Evaluation
Using the list of ceremony phrases and the information above, translate the following phrases:
1. el nombre fue Juan de Dios

2. bautizó a Joaquín

3. puso por nombre María Encarnación

4. bauticé solemnmente a José María

5. puse los santos oleos y sagrado crisma y por nombre Francisco

Answers
1. The name was Juan de Dios. 2. He baptized Joaquin. 3. He put for a name, Maria Encarnacion. 4. I solemnly baptized Jose Maria. 5. I put the holy oils and sacred christening and for a name Francisco.
Racial Designation

The racial designation of the child, if it is given, will usually appear immediately following the name of the child. Racial designations may also appear after the names of the parents, grandparents, and godparents of the child. (For background information and a list of racial names and definitions see Appendix D.)

In the example the racial designation of the child is *lobo* which is a mixture of Negro and Spanish blood.

*de la Paz*  
*Prelabrino* Miguel Alva, Teniente de Cuna, bautizó solemnemente, y puso al español a Pedro Yesc, *lobo*, un infante de 2 días de *Paz*, hijo legítimo de Justo Rodríguez, zapatero, y de Lucía Moreno*
Sex and Legitimacy Phrase

Between the child's name and the part of the entry that gives the parents' names is a phrase that tells the sex and, usually, the legitimacy of the child. In the example it is *hijo legítimo de* ("legitimate son of").

The following are the most common legitimacy phrases:

- *hijo legítimo de* legitimate son of
- *hija legítima de* legitimate daughter of
- *hijo natural de* natural-born son of
- *hija natural de* natural-born daughter of

Natural-born children are not illegitimate. The following terms imply illegitimacy:

- *adulterino* bastard
- *espurio* illegitimate
- *bastardo* bastard
- *ilegítimo* illegitimate

When any of these terms end in *a*, they refer to a girl.

**Self-Evaluation**

Using the vocabulary above, translate the following phrases:

1. *hija legítima de*  
   2. *hijo natural de*  
   3. *hijo legítimo de*  
   4. *espurio*  
   5. *hija adulterina de*

**Answers**

1. legitimate daughter of  
2. natural-born son of  
3. legitimate son of  
4. illegitimate son  
5. illegitimate daughter of
Parents

The parents' names follow the legitimacy phrase and are usually joined by y ("and") or y de ("and of"). Besides giving the parents' given names and surnames, this part of the entry may also give other information about the parents, such as their race or residence or the father's occupation. In the example the father's name is Justo Rodriguez and the mother's name is Lucia Moreno. The example also includes information about the father's occupation (zapatero). This information will be explained in the following part.

If both parents are unknown, this part of the entry will say de padres no conocidos ("of unknown parents") or hijo de la iglesia (literally, "child of the church"). If only the father is unknown, it will give the mother's name and sometimes add y de padre no conocido ("and of father unknown").

If the child was abandoned (expuesto or abandonado), the entry may not give the names of the parents. Instead, it will probably tell in whose house (casa) the child was left.

Self-Evaluation
Using the vocabulary above, translate the following phrases:
1. hijo de la iglesia
2. hija de Ruperto Rodriguez y Dolores Duran
3. hijo de Narcisa Bustillos y de padre no conocido
4. hija natural de Enrique Chavez y de Margarita Corral
5. expuesta en la casa de Guadalupe Garcia

Answers
1. (son or male) child of the church 2. daughter of Ruperto Rodriguez and Dolores Duran 3. son of Narcisa Bustillos and of father unknown 4. natural-born daughter of Enrique Chavez and of Margarita Corral 5. abandoned in the house of Guadalupe Garcia
Occupation Designation

The names of occupations of individuals may or may not appear in an entry. If the occupation of an individual is indicated in the entry, it will appear immediately following the name. (For background information and a list of common occupations see Appendix C.)

In the example, only the father's occupation is given. Zapatero is a "shoemaker."

Grandparents

Some christer-ing registers, especially those after 1837, give the names of the child's grandparents (abuelos), both paternal (paternos) and maternal (maternos). (The sample entry does not give the names of Pedro's grandparents, however.)
Godparents

The godparents’ names are usually introduced by the words fueron padrinos (“godparents were”) or simply padrinos (“godparents”). Occasionally other words such as que lo tuvieron y tocaron (“who held and touched him” [the child]), follow padrinos and precede their names. There is never more than one godfather and one godmother. Occasionally there may be only one or the other. The word for “godfather” is padrino; for “godmother” it is madrina.

Some entries tell more about the godparents than just their names, such as their race, residence, marital status, and the godfather’s occupation.

In the example, the godparent phrase reads:

fueron sus padrinos Juan Alvarado y Guminicinda Zamora
his godparents were Juan Alvarado and Guminicinda Zamora

Self-Evaluation
Using the above vocabulary, translate the following phrases:

1. abuelos paternos: José María Almeida y Natividad Quiñero
2. fueron padrinos Antonio Castillo y María del Refugio Chaves
3. madrina Juana Juárez
4. abuelos maternos, Juan Martínez y Fermina Sanchez
5. fueron sus padrinos que lo tuvieron y tocaron Pedro Salgado y Susana Torres

Answers
1. paternal grandparents: Jose Maria Almeida and Natividad Quintero
2. godparents were Antonio Castillo and Maria del Refugio Chaves
3. godmother Juana Juarez
4. maternal grandparents, Juan Martinez and Fermina Sanchez
5. his godparents who held and touched him were Pedro Salgado and Susana Torres
Warning Phrase

In Catholicism, godparents have the duty of looking after their godchild’s spiritual welfare. They have a spiritual relationship with their godchild, which, among other things, prevents them from marrying the godchild. One of the last parts of the christening entry says that the priest warned the godparents (and sometimes the parents) of their duties created by their spiritual guardianship.

In the example, the warning phrase reads:

\[
\text{fueron sus padrinos Juan Alvarado y Yumicinda Zamora} \\
\text{quienes advirtió de su obligación y parentesco espiritual} \\
\text{para que conste lo firmado.}
\]

This part of an entry is usually made up of a combination of the following phrases:

- a quienes advertí
  whom I advised (of)
- a quienes advirtió
  whom he advised (of)
- les advertí
  I advised them (of)
- a quienes dije
  whom I told
- a quienes hice saber
  whom I informed (of)
- a quienes instruí sobre
  whom I instructed concerning
- y demás obligaciones cristianas
  and other Christian obligations
- su(s) obligación(es) (de enseñarle la doctrina cristiana)
  their obligation(s) (of teaching him [or her] Christian doctrine)

Self-Evaluation

Using the above vocabulary, translate the following phrases:

1. a quienes advertí su obligación

2. a quienes advirtió su parentesco y obligación

3. les advertí su obligación y parentesco espiritual

4. a quienes hice saber el parentesco espiritual que contrajeron y la obligación de enseñarle la doctrina cristiana

5. a quienes advertí el parentesco espiritual que han contraído y demás obligaciones

Answers

1. whom I advised of their obligation  
2. whom he advised of their guardianship and obligation  
3. I advised them of their obligation and spiritual guardianship  
4. whom I informed of the spiritual guardianship that they contracted and the obligation of teaching him the Christian doctrine  
5. whom I advised of the spiritual guardianship that they have contracted and other obligations

Witnesses

Occasionally you will find witnesses (testigos) listed in a christening entry, but they are more common in marriage entries (see section 3). The sample entry does not give the names of any witnesses.
Certification Phrase

The last phrase of the entry simply says that the priest signed the entry to certify the correctness of the information. In the example, the certification phrase says:

para que conste lo firmé
in witness thereof, I signed it

Other phrases that could have been used are the following. Note that the subject of verbs ending in é is “I” and the subject of verbs ending in ó is “he.”

en constancia lo firmé (con el señor cura)
in witness thereof I signed it (with the parish priest)

para constancia lo firmó
in witness thereof he signed it

por verdad lo firmé
in witness thereof I signed it

Self-Evaluation
Using the above vocabulary, translate the following phrases:
1. para que conste lo firmé

2. por verdad lo firmó

3. para constancia lo firmó con el señor cura

4. en constancia lo firmé

Answers
1. in witness thereof, I signed it 2. in witness thereof he signed it 3. in witness thereof he signed it with the parish priest 4. in witness thereof I signed it
Summary — Christening Entries

Following is a summary explanation of each of the possible parts of a christening entry and a self-evaluation exercise.

Marginal Notation
When given, usually includes the child’s name and may include reference to child’s sex, race, birthplace, etc. (see page 2-3).

Date Phrase
Indicates day, month, and year of christening; is either the first or second item in the entry; always begins with the word en or a (see page 2-4).

Place Phrase
Either the first phrase in an entry or immediately follows the date phrase; usually gives name of parish and sometimes its location (see page 2-5).

Priest Phrase
The third part of an entry; the priest’s name is usually the first personal name written in an entry and may be given in connection with the words cura (“parish priest”) or teniente (“assistant”) (see page 2-6).

Ceremony Phrase
The key phrase in a christening entry because it usually introduces the child’s name; explains that the christening ceremony of the Catholic church was performed (see page 2-7).

Child
Immediately follows the ceremony phrase; usually gives at least the child’s given name(s); rarely is child’s surname given; may give child’s age or birth date and birthplace (see page 2-8).

Racial Designation
If given, will appear immediately following the child’s name(s); racial designations may also appear after the names of the parents, grandparents, and godparents of the child (see page 2-9).

Sex and Legitimacy Phrase
Usually appears in the entry between the child’s name and parents’ names (see page 2-10).

Parents
If the parents’ names are given, they will almost always follow the sex and legitimacy phrase; if father’s name is given, it usually precedes the mother’s name; the mother’s name usually follows the word y (“and”) or y de (“and of”) (see page 2-11).

Occupation Designation
If the occupation of any individual is indicated in the entry, it will appear immediately following his name (see page 2-12).

Grandparents
If names are given (especially in entries after 1837), they will appear in connection with the words abuelos (“grandparents”), paternos (“paternal”), and maternos (“maternal”) (see page 2-12).

Godparents
Usually introduced by the words fueron padrinos (“godparents were”) or simply padrinos (“godparents”). There is never more than one godfather and one godmother (see page 2-13).

Warning Phrase
One of the last parts of a christening entry; gives priest’s warning to the godparents of their duties as the child’s spiritual parent (see page 2-14).

Witnesses
If witnesses’ names are given, they will appear in connection with the word testigos (see page 2-14).

Certification Phrase
Indicates that the priest signed the entry to certify the correctness of the information (see page 2-15).
Self-Evaluation
From the sample entry which follows, identify each separate phrase by writing the complete phrase next to the name of the part it represents. Write your answers under "Responses." Refer to any information to assist you.

María
h.l.
A veinte días del mes de noviembre del año de mil ochocientos cuarenta y uno en la parroquia de la Santa Cruz yo el reverendo padre, José López, ex licentia parochi de Pedro Miramontes encargado de este lugar y su partido puse oleo y sagrado crisma y bautizé a María de la Luz india hija legítima de Juan Castillo panadero y Lourdes Espinoza. Fueron sus padrinos Lauro Villalobos y Sara Vazquez a quienes advertí de su obligación y parentesco espiritual. Para que conste lo firmé.

José López
Pedro Miramontes

Transcription
María
h.l.
A veinte días del mes de noviembre del año de mil ochocientos cuarenta y uno en la parroquia de la Santa Cruz yo el reverendo padre, José López, ex licentia parochi de Pedro Miramontes encargado de este lugar y su partido puse oleo y sagrado crisma y bautizé a María de la Luz india hija legítima de Juan Castillo panadero y Lourdes Espinoza. Fueron sus padrinos Lauro Villalobos y Sara Vazquez a quienes advertí de su obligación espiritual. Para que conste lo firmé.

José López
Pedro Miramontes

Translation
María
h.l.
On the twentieth day of the month of November of the year one thousand eight hundred and forty-one, in the parish of Santa Cruz, I the reverend father, José Lopez, by license of the parish priest, Pedro Miramontes, in charge of this place and its district put oil and sacred chrism and baptized María de la Luz, indian, legitimate daughter of Juan Castillo, baker, and Lourdes Espinoza. Her godparents were Lauro Villalobos and Sara Vazquez whom I advised (of) their obligation and spiritual parentage. In witness thereof I sign it.

José Lopez
Pedro Miramontes
**Responses**
Below are the names of each part that could be found in a christening entry. Write the complete phrase or name of the person, as written in the sample entry, next to the name of the part it represents. If a part is not given in the entry, write the letters "N.G." (not given) next to the name of the part.

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<thead>
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<th>Ceremony phrase</th>
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<th>Place phrase</th>
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<th>Racial designation</th>
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<th>Witnesses phrase</th>
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**Answers**

Date phrase: *a veinte días del mes de noviembre del año de mil ochocientos cuarenta y uno*

Occupation designation: *panadero* (occupation of Juan Castillo)

Ceremony phrase: *puse oleo y sagrado crisma y bautizé*

Child: *a María de la Luz*

Warning phrase: *a quienes advertí de su obligación y parentesco espiritual*

Place phrase: *en la parroquia de la Santa Cruz*

Grandparents: N.G.

Sex and legitimacy phrase: *hija legítima*

Parents: de Juan Castillo (panadero) y Lourdes Espinoza

Marginal notation: *María h.l.*

Godparents: *Fueron sus padrinos Lauro Villalobos y Sara Vazquez*

Certification phrase: *para que conste lo firmé*

Priest phrase: *yo el reverendo padre, José Lopez, ex licenta parochi de Pedro Miramontes encargado de este lugar y su partido*

Racial designation: *india* (race of María de la Luz)

Witnesses phrase: N.G.