

**Viceregal decree : prohibiting the extraction of papers, documents, and books from archives and libraries, and their sale to biscuit-makers, rocket-makers, apothecaries, shopkeepers, and the like, for consumption in their trades : Mexico City, December 10, 1799 / Miguel Joseph de Azanza.**

### **Contributors**

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GREETINGS  
1960-61  
*Zeitlin & ver Brugge*

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En guardia.

SELLO CUARTO, VN CUAR-  
TILLO, AÑOS DE MIL SETE-  
CIENTOS NOVENTA Y OCHO, Y  
NOVENTA Y NUEVE.

*Viceregal Decree*

Prohibiting the extraction  
of papers, documents, and books from archives  
and libraries, and their sale to  
*Biscuit-makers, Rocket-makers, Apothecaries,*  
*Shopkeepers, and the like,*  
for consumption in their trades.

*Mexico City, December 10, 1799*

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## DON MIGUEL JOSEPH DE AZANZA

Caballero de la Orden de Santiago, del Consejo de Estado de S. M.  
Virrey, Gobernador y Capitan general de esta Nueva España y Pre-  
sidente de su Real Audiencia &c. &c.

**S**IENDO repetidos los casos en que algunos individuos han extraído papeles y documen-  
tos de los archivos y oficinas donde debían existir, llevados de la facilidad con que los venden  
por la actual carestía del papel á Biscocheros, Coheteros, Boticarios, Tenderos y otros, para el fin  
de consumirlos en los usos de sus oficios, sin advertir en los perjuicios que ocasionan al públi-  
co; he mandado por Decreto de 4 del corriente, que para cortar del modo posible este perni-  
cioso desorden, se zele con la mayor vigilancia por los Señores Alcaldes de Corte, Jueces ordi-  
narios y Alcaldes de Barrio, que ninguno compre escritos en papel sellado, legajos de escritu-  
ras, ni libros de caxa, quedando únicamente al arbitrio del comprador hacerlo libremente de ba-  
las de los bienos pasados, planas de muchachos de escuela, sobrescritos, y otros impresos y pape-  
les que de ningún modo puedan contener asunto que interese, y de cuya venta pueda seguirse  
perjuicio. Y á fin de que se logre el efecto que deseo, y se eviten los daños que de lo contra-  
rio pueden resultar, he dispuesto se publique esta providencia por Bando en esta Capital y en las  
demás Ciudades, Villas y Lugares de este Virreynato, para que nadie pueda alegar ignorancia,  
ni confiado en ella proceda á dar destino al insinuado papel comprado, sin manifestarlo ántes al  
Juez mayor ó menor del Barrio ó Pueblo, debiendo proceder los Jueces menores en la califica-  
ción de este importante asunto con consulta de los mayores, á quienes han de dar cuenta; en inte-  
ligencia de que se procederá con el mayor rigor aun contra el comprador que por malicia omi-  
tiese este aviso. Y porque puede suceder lo mismo en la venta de libros extraídos de las Biblio-  
otecas públicas ó particulares por los criados ú otras personas, no deberán hacer uso de ellos los  
mencionados compradores, sin asegurarse de la legitimidad de la persona del vendedor, y baxo las  
mismas circunstancias de dar parte al Juez del Barrio ó Pueblo; debiendo poner el mayor zelo  
y cuidado en este importante asunto los Gefes de Oficinas, Secretarios, Escribanos y Oficiales ma-  
yores de las Escribanías y Oficios. Dado en México á 10 de Diciembre de 1799.

Miguel Joseph de Azanza.

Por mandado de S. Exâ.

*Joseph Ignacio Negrety y Soria*



## Don Miguel Joseph De Azanza,

*Knight of the Order of Santiago,  
Member of His Majesty's Council of State, Viceroy,  
Governor, and Captain-General of New Spain,  
President of the Royal Audiencia, &c., &c.*



HEREAS, upon numerous occasions certain individuals, attracted by the high  
cost of paper and the ease with which it can be sold to Biscuit-makers, Rocket-  
makers, Apothecaries, Shopkeepers, and others for consumption in their trades,  
regardless of the public good, have taken papers and documents from the  
archives and offices where they properly belong;

**In My Decree** of the fourth of the current month, in order to curtail  
this pernicious disorder in so far as possible, I commanded the Lords Magis-  
trate of this Court, the Judges Ordinary, and the District Magistrates to exercise the greatest vigilance in  
preventing the purchase of documents executed on stamped paper, bundles of official manuscripts, and  
account books, allowing solely to the discretion of the buyer the free purchase of expired Indulgences,  
schoolboys' notebooks, covers, and other used papers which contain no matter of interest, and from the  
sale of which no harm would ensue.

**Therefore**, to effect the desired end and prevent the harm that would otherwise be done, I have ordered  
this Decree to be posted in the Capital, Cities, Villas, Towns, and Villages of this Kingdom, to the end  
that no person, pleading ignorance of it, will dispose of the said papers without previously displaying  
them before the First or Second Magistrate of the District or Town (the Second Magistrate proceeding in  
this important matter only after consulting the First), to whom the said person shall report; and on the  
basis of this information the most rigorous action shall be taken, even against the purchaser who mali-  
ciously neglects to obey this Decree.

**Also**, because the same thing may occur with the sale of books extracted by servants and others from  
public and private Libraries, the said purchasers may not utilize them without first assuring themselves  
that the vendor is legitimate and reporting as above to the Town or District Magistrate; and the Heads of  
Departments, Secretaries, Notaries, and Senior Administrators of Public Records Offices will enforce the  
execution of this important matter with the greatest zeal. Done in Mexico, December 10, 1799.

Miguel Joseph de Azanza.

(Rubric)

By order of His Excellency,  
[Signed] Joseph Ignacio Negrety y Soria.  
(Rubric)