

A. Brief Overview of the Administrative History of the Holy See

The historical documentation generated by the Holy See over the course of its history constitutes one of the most important sources for research on the history of Christianity, the history of the evolution of the modern state, the history of Western culture and institutions, the history of exploration and colonization, and much more. Though important, it has been difficult to grasp the extent of this documentation. This guide represents the first attempt to describe in a single work the totality of historical documentation that might properly be considered Vatican archives.

Although there are Vatican archival records in a number of repositories that have been included in this publication, this guide is designed primarily to provide useful information to English-speaking scholars who have an interest in using that portion of the papal archives housed in the Vatican Archives or Archivio Segreto Vaticano (ASV). As explained more fully below, it is the result of a project conducted by archivists and historians affiliated with the University of Michigan. The project, initiated at the request of the prefect of the ASV, focused on using modern computer database technology to present information in a standardized format on surviving documentation generated by the Holy See. This documentation is housed principally in the ASV but is also found in a variety of other repositories. This guide is, in essence, the final report of the results of this project. What follows is a complete printout of the database that was constructed.

The database structure used in compiling the information was predicated on principles that form the basis for the organization of the archives of most modern state bureaucracies (e.g., provenance). Fundamentally, that is, one cannot understand the true nature of archival material unless one understands the administrative divisions, functions, and processes of the organization that generated those archives. Thus, the conceptual framework for this guide is based on the organizational structure of the Holy See.

Historically, the Holy See (also called the Apostolic See) has functioned in several different capacities, leading to a very complicated structure of congregations, commissions, offices, and so forth; it is the central government of the Roman Catholic church; it has functioned as a royal court; it served until 1870 as the civil government of the Papal States; it has functioned since 1929 as the civil government of Vatican City. Numerous offices have been established and abolished over the years to meet the needs of these different functions. This guide presents a brief history of each of these various offices and then links each office or agency to its extant records.

The administration of the Holy See has a history that is long, complex, and for the early years not fully known. The extant records of the papacy reflect two general periods of development. The first, from the medieval period through the mid-sixteenth century, and the second from the mid-sixteenth through the early twentieth century. The latter part of the twentieth century saw further changes.

During the first period, the affairs of the Holy See were handled primarily by the Apostolic Chancery. As the Chancery became busier, other offices and specialized subdepartments were developed at various times. Among these were the Apostolic Camera and the Datary. Toward the end of this period, special commissions of cardinals began to be created to handle the ever-increasing number and complexity of questions to be examined. The first of these commissions with a permanent character was the Congregation of the Inquisition, set up by Paul III in 1542. This was followed by others.

In 1588 Sixtus V organized the extant commissions or congregations and established additional bodies. Sixtus's Curia was made up of fifteen congregations, each charged with part of the governance of the church and its holdings. This action is considered the origin of the modern Roman Curia. In addition to the congregations, the Curia contained several

other bodies, which over time became grouped into the Tribunals of Justice (the Roman Rota, Apostolic Camera, and Signature of Justice), Tribunals of Favor (the Signature of Favor, Apostolic Datary, and Apostolic Penitentiary), and Tribunals of Expedition (the Apostolic Chancery, Secretariat of Briefs, Secretariat of State, and Secretariat of Memorials).

As time passed and the requirements of the church changed, new congregations and other offices were created and old agencies were abolished (or suppressed, in the language of the church). The Curia was reformed and reorganized by Pius X in 1908. By this time, the agencies of the curia were grouped into three divisions: congregations (administrative), tribunals (judicial), and offices (ministerial). In 1967 Paul VI extensively reformed the Curia by creating five main divisions: the Secretariat of State, congregations, tribunals, secretariats (ecumenical offices), and offices. John Paul II, in 1988, once again modified the Curia.

As the administration of the Holy See evolved, so too did the role of the pope. The papacy developed a royal presence during the Middle Ages. A royal court of the pope took definite form at the time of papal residence in Avignon, France (1305-1377). The court comprised the offices of the papal chapel and the papal household. The court maintained its general form until the pontificate of Paul VI, who extensively reshaped the court, abolishing many of the trappings of royalty, in 1968.

The States of the Church, also known as the Papal States, took shape as a region under the civil control of the papal court during the Middle Ages. The popes authority over the territory rose and fell with the political fortunes of the various powers interested in Italy, but in the sixteenth century the Papal States became fixed as a territory in central Italy, from Bologna and Ferrara in the north to Terracina in the south. (Non-contiguous areas of the Papal States included Pontecorvo and Benevento in Italy and Avignon and the county of Venaissin in France.) The Papal States controlled this territory until the era of the French Revolution. From 1798 until 1814, the territory was first divided between the Roman and Cisalpine republics, then between the Kingdom of Italy and a restored Papal States, and finally between the Kingdom of Italy and the region around Rome, which was annexed to France. In 1814 the Papal States were restored to previous boundaries. Except for a period of republican rule in 1849, they survived intact until 1860. The papacy ruled this territory, which was a source of significant wealth for the work of the church. Administration of these lands and their inhabitants required all the accoutrements of government. Just as the spiritual power of the pope required an extensive bureaucracy in support, so too did his temporal power require a civil bureaucracy not unlike others of the states of Europe. By the mid-nineteenth century, the political forces interested in a united kingdom in Italy gained considerable strength backed by effective armed force. In 1860 the armies of Pius IX (1846-1878) were defeated and all papal lands with the exception of those in Rome and its vicinity were annexed to the new kingdom of Italy. For the next ten years Pius IX accepted the protection of a French garrison. But with the outbreak of the Franco- Prussian War, the French withdrew and unification forces occupied Rome itself. On September 20, 1870, the remainder of the Papal States was annexed to Italy, and the pope's civil authority came to an end. The pope took refuge in the Vatican and considered himself a prisoner. The matter was resolved when the Vatican City was established as a sovereign state, under the terms of the Lateran Treaty of 1929, for the purpose of assuring the independence of the popes. The state continues to have a government separate from the administration of the Catholic church, but because of the states small size, the civil government of the state requires only a small administrative structure.

The bulk of the archives of the Holy See pertain to the latter periods of this history, that is, from the sixteenth century to the present. Moreover, as a result of the growing bureaucracy of the Curia, the court, and the Papal States, the records in the archives are divided and organized according to the activities and functions of the particular congregations, offices,

tribunals, colleges, and so forth. These sorts of divisions are characteristic of archives generated by modern bureaucratic organizations.

This guide provides a comprehensive overview of extant historical documentation generated by the Holy See since the ninth century. Most previous guides have quite rightly emphasized the great holdings of medieval and Renaissance records in the Vatican Archives, such as the *Vatican Registers* and the contents of the original cabinets or "armaria." This guide has a different point of departure; it is organized around the bureaucratic structure of the Holy See from the time of its establishment under Sixtus V and is thus divided into the following sections: Part 1, College of Cardinals; Part 2, Papal Court; Part 3, Roman Curia (Congregations, Offices, and Tribunals); Part 4, Apostolic Nunciatures, Internunciatures, and Delegations; Part 5, Papal States; Part 6, Permanent Commissions; and Part 7, which includes miscellaneous official material and separate collections of personal papers and organizational records. The organization of the first six sections reflect this post-1588 conception of the bureaucratic structure of the Holy See, though earlier material is included. In general the holdings and structure of the records generated by the Holy See in these more recent centuries are not as well known as those for the late medieval period. The seventh section lists some official records series that the project staff could not match with the specific offices and agencies that form the bureaucratic framework of the previous six. This seventh section also includes listings of personal papers of individuals acquired by Vatican archival repositories. Though designated personal papers, many of these collections have material that shed light on the official work of the Holy See. Also listed in this section are collections of records of institutions separate in organization from the Holy See but formed for a religious purpose. These institutions include religious orders, confraternities, and particular churches.

ALL RECORDS GENERATED AFTER 1939, ARE CLOSED TO RESEARCH IN THE VATICAN ARCHIVES AND IN OTHER VATICAN REPOSITORIES. Therefore, the agencies created by the curial reforms of the Second Vatican Council and the reforms of Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI have not been incorporated into this guide. Moreover, the structure of the government of the state of Vatican City created at the time of the Lateran Treaty of 1929 has not been incorporated into the guide.