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 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 Venaisin 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.

B. The Archivio Segreto Vaticano
Fran Blouin and Len Coombs
in the Archivo Segreto Vaticano

Over the years, the growth and complexity of an archive generally relates in an organic way to the development of the institution that generates the records in the course of its business. This kind of relationship is certainly evident in the records extant in the Vatican Archives. The name Archivio Segreto was to imply private rather than secret. It is derived from its organizational antecedent the Bibliotheca Secreta, which was an area in the then new Vatican Library that was to hold working documents of the church that were accessible only to officials.

In order to understand the holdings of the ASV, it is necessary to have a sense of its history and its relationship to particular events in the history of the Holy See. In the brief overview that follows, three periods are of particular importance: first, the early centuries of the church; second, the organizational reforms of Sixtus V and the reorganization of the Roman Curia; and third, the tumultuous events of the nineteenth century, which had a direct effect on the nature and content of the archival collections.

**Early Centuries.** In his guide to the ASV, Rev. Leonard Boyle, op, points out that even the earliest popes retained letters, acts of martyrs, and other significant documents in a scrinium or chartarium. Since the popes in these earliest centuries of the church did not have a permanent residence, the collected documents were simply handed from pope to pope. By 649, it is apparent that these collections had found a permanent home in the Lateran Palace in Rome. By the eleventh century, the collection is known to have been moved to the slope of the Palatine Hill near the Arch of Titus in the Roman Forum. Most of these early records were on delicate papyrus and have long since disintegrated. Innocent III (1198-1216) was the first pope to recognize the need for a regularized form of record keeping. Copies of letters sent were entered by hand in great registers. This action inaugurated the *Vatican Registers*, still among the most important records of the archives. This series is one of the principal sources for documents on the papacy between the years 850 and the reorganization of the papacy in 1588. From the perspective of the history of the nature of documentation, the *Vatican Registers* are important in that they were regular in format and durable.

Moreover, during this period the papacy began to grow to the point that distinct offices began to emerge and keep records on a regular basis. The Apostolic Camera, the Chancery, the Datary, various secretaries, and the Roman Rota, all have their origins in this period of growth. This organizational framework was not nearly as extensive or formal as that implemented by Sixtus V.

During the period prior to 1588, there were likely many other kinds of documents that constituted the archives. However, during the Middle Ages, particularly after Innocent IV (1243-1254), the popes moved around a great deal. In 1245, Innocent IV is known to have taken a part of the archives with him to the Council of Lyon, after which the records
remained for a while stored in the monastery at Cluny. Benedict XI (1303-1304) had the archives placed in Perugia. Clement V (1305-1314) then had the archives placed in Assisi where they remained until 1339, when Benedict XII (1334-1342) had them sent to Avignon. The archives remained in Avignon during the time of the Great Schism. Once the difficulties were resolved, Martin V (1427-1431) had the records transported by boat and wagon to Rome, where they were temporarily housed in S. Maria Sopra Minerva, then established in his family palace (Colonna) in central Rome. Though important historical records were returned to Rome at this time, including the Vatican Registers, the Avignon material, the paper registers known as the Avignon Registers, were not incorporated into the ASV until 1783.

The travels of significant records of the papacy attest to the rather informal administrative structure that characterized the Holy See during the first fifteen centuries of its history. Records were moved around as needed by the various popes. Moreover, not all popes felt compelled to leave all their documents for their successors because of what Owen Chadwick calls the "family nature of papal government." It was not uncommon for popes to draw their assistants from trusted members of their families. At the death of a pope, then, the papers might be transferred to the family's archives rather than be kept centrally within an administrative division of the Holy See. Some of these materials, such as those from the Borghese, the Barberini, and the Chigi families have come to the ASV and the Vatican Library as personal family donations. Their presence as private manuscripts attests to this widespread practice even into the late seventeenth century.

**Reforms of Sixtus V.** The founding of the Vatican Library under Nicholas V (1447-1455), marked the first step in bringing some control over the many volumes and documents in papal collections and in papal offices. Under Sixtus IV (1471-1484), specific quarters were established to house the great manuscript volumes and papers that would form the nucleus of the Vatican Library. At the same time he set aside a space called the Bibliotheca Secreta, which was to house documents of archival value. Documents considered of particular importance relating to privileges, grants, and claims were sent to the impenetrable and nearby Castel S. Angelo. Part of these documents form the current series in the ASV designated Archivum Arcis.

Throughout the sixteenth century efforts were made to bring together various collections of documents, including those of the Apostolic Camera, some which remained in private hands. In 1565, Pius IV (1559-1565) issued a brief that called for a search through papal offices as well as throughout all the Papal States for records and documents generated by the work of his predecessors.

By the late sixteenth century the church, in the aftermath of the Protestant Reformation and the resulting Council of Trent, was resolved to affect internal reform of its own institution and to standardize its practices and dogma in a way that would define what, in fact, Catholicism was in the face of strong Protestant challenges. As a part of this overall effort, Sixtus V (1585-1590) instituted a sweeping reform of the central administration of the church. In 1588, he created fifteen permanent congregations of cardinals, six to administer secular administration and nine to oversee spiritual affairs. His arrangement remained largely intact until the reforms of 1908, though some would argue that it was only as a result of the Second Vatican Council that the basic structure was changed. Though no direct link between the initiative of Sixtus V and the formal establishment of the Vatican Archives can be established, it seems clear that the emerging bureaucracy needed a place to deposit its inactive records.

The records generated by these new congregations were the result of standardization of procedures. The resulting files or dossiers were then clearly the records of the individual congregations and would not travel with individual prefects or administrators. These records then constituted the first components of the archives of the newly established administrative structure of the church. Since so many records have survived, clearly each congregation took responsibility for caring for its inactive files.
It comes as no surprise, then, that in 1610, Paul V (1605-1621) called for the return of archival material relating to the papacy. In December 1611 he prepared rooms in the Belvedere palace in the Vatican to receive the archives. Six months later an archivist was appointed. At about the same time Paul V formally divided the library and the archives into two separate institutions with separate administrations. Over the subsequent forty-five years, documents and registers began to arrive at the new archive. All the holdings of the old Bibliotheca Secreta were transferred. The Vatican Registers and other documents of great importance were transferred from the Castel S. Angelo, including the records of the Council of Trent. Financial documents from the Apostolic Camera were also received. As the records arrived, they were placed in a series of eighty cabinets or armaria. Over the years specific documents became associated with their specific cabinet numbers. These eighty cabinets remain the organizational framework for these early records that are considered the "original Vatican Archives."4

In 1656, Alexander VII (1655-1667) ordered that within the Secretariat of State, individual secretaries could no longer keep inactive files. They were required to transfer the records to the archives. This new authority established the archives as a central depository within the Vatican for inactive records. Over the successive centuries, a variety of departments in addition to that of the Secretariat of State have chosen to deposit records with the ASV. However, it is important to note that not all have chosen to do so. There remain throughout the Vatican several archival collections under an administration wholly separate from the ASV. To the extent possible, they are noted in this guide at the appropriate sections.

Chadwick emphasizes that this new central archive "owed nothing to the notion of helping scholars to write history. It was a business transaction intended to make the administration more efficient." In fact, the archives was a closed institution open only to those in the administration of the Curia who had need to consult the records. Because of its close association with the business of the church during its early existence, the ASV grew further apart from the library and in essence was a division of the Secretariat of State.

**Nineteenth Century.** As a result of three events, the nineteenth century was an exceptionally noteworthy period for the ASV. The first arose from the ambition of Napoleon to consolidate the archives of his empire in Paris. The second was a direct result of the establishment of a unified Italian state and the effective removal of all temporal power from the pope. Third, perhaps in reaction to the second, was the formal opening of the archives for research use.

The first events surround the transport of the archives to Paris. While the territorial ambitions of Napoleon Bonaparte are well known, his ambitions for a consolidated archive for his empire are often ignored. However, he did envision that the greatest art, manuscripts, and archives of his empire would be brought eventually to Paris. He planned a great central archive to be built in Reims (he later decided on Paris), where the archives of European capitals would be brought together. In December 1809, shortly after he arrested and imprisoned Pius VII (1800-1823), he dispatched one of his generals to Rome with instructions to bring to Paris the whole of the Vatican Archives.

The shipments via wagon began in 1810 and continued through 1813. In all, 3,239 chests arrived in Paris with very few lost. The inventory prepared by French archivists counted more than 102,435 registers, volumes, or bundles. The great central archives building was never realized, so the archives were stored in the Archives Nationales at the Palais Soubise. With the defeat of Napoleon in 1814, the newly established authorities immediately ordered the archives returned to the Vatican. However, that was easier said than done. Napoleon had expended an enormous sum to transport the load to Paris. Defeated France did not have the resources to return the archives. There are many stories and legends about the fate of the archives during the years between the order for their return and the arrival in Rome of the last of the chests in December 1817.

Because of the costs involved, some analysis was apparently done on the relative importance of various records in the archives. The responsibility for managing this operation
was assigned to Count Giulio Ginnasi, with Marino Marini in charge of the actual work with
the documents. In 1816 Ercole Consalvi, cardinal secretary of state, wrote to various
congregations asking that they "specify what material formerly in their custody might be
abandoned in Paris and, presumably, destroyed." Those deemed of lesser importance were
separated and may have been sold for scrap paper. Other parts of the archives—particularly
many of the records of the Holy Office pertaining to the Inquisition—though considered by
some of major importance, were deliberately destroyed by the papal commissioners
dispatched to oversee the transfer and eager to see the legacy of the Inquisition
extinguished. Some chests were sent via ship and suffered water damage. Other material,
considered unimportant or damaged, never left Paris and remains in the Archives
Nationales.
In any case 3,239 chests were used to get the archives to Paris but only 2,200 were used
for their return, and these arrived over an extended period of time. As the material began to
arrive in Rome, many of the congregations were upset with what was returned and what
was not. Their complaints resulted in the replacement of Ginnasi. John Tedeschi notes that
added work needed to be done; this was financed by the sale of some of the registers of the
Holy Office. However, in all probably about one-third of the material sent was lost. Losses
were particularly great among the records of the Apostolic Datary and the Holy Office.
Tedeschi notes that "among the untold treasures that perished in Paris were the youthful
writings of Tommaso Campanello and the defense testimony of Giordano Bruno."

Bentley Library archivist Len Coombs during pilot project

With the incorporation of the Papal States into the new kingdom of Italy in 1870, documents
of a civil nature identified in the ASV were transferred to the newly established Archivio di
Stato di Roma. The division of the records in the archives was hasty and not always precise.
As a result, records series for some congregations or offices are found in both archives. See,
for example, entries in this guide for the Roman Rota and the Signatura Iustitiae.
Particularly problematic are the financial records of the Apostolic Camera. Initially most of
the cameral records were transferred. However, the Camera at times served both the
temporal and spiritual interests of the pope. In 1918-1919 a significant portion of the
cameral records was returned to the Vatican. Nevertheless material for the Camera is still
found in both archival institutions.
A third event marks the transformation of the archives from an agency of institutional
service to a research repository. On January 1, 1881, Leo XIII (1878-1903) opened the
Archivio Segreto Vaticano to research use. He argued that the best defense for the church in
addressing the charges of its critics would be to open the archives for the world to see. The
church, Leo believed, had nothing to fear from a true history written from the actual
sources. Documents created up to 1815 were made available. Scholars had no access to
inventories or finding aids but rather had to rely on assistance from the staff archivists. But
the archives were opened upon application. The archives then served for the first time as a
center for research as well as a center for the administration of the inactive records of the
Holy See.
Not all papal documentation is found in the ASV. Partly as a result of historical forces and partly as a result of administrative convenience, the historical documentation of the Holy See is spread among a variety of repositories. In describing the locations of the various institutions that house such documents, it is important to make one distinction at the start. There is a great body of papal material found in most archives of the world. These documents are for the most part either documents received in an official capacity by an institution or government or manuscripts purchased by collectors and deposited in an archival repository or library.

This guide is concerned only with papal documentation generated by the Holy See that was intended to be retained within the offices of the Holy See. The principal repository for this material is the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. However, archival materials from the Holy See exist in a number of archival repositories. As a result of the division of the archives in 1870, the Archivio di Stato di Roma contains a huge collection of records regarding the civil administration of the Papal States. This guide integrates civil administrative material in the ASV and major civil administrative series (prior to 1870) in the Archivio di Stato di Roma. Furthermore, as noted above, many other congregations maintain their own archives. Those whose records are described in this guide to the same level as the descriptions for series in the ASV are as follows:

1. The historical archives of the Congregazione per l'evangelizzazione dei popoli, formerly and popularly known as the Congregation "De Propaganda Fide." This is the congregation of the Curia that has responsibility for the missions of the church. The holdings of the historical archive of the Propaganda Fide are listed in this guide in the section "Roman Curia: Congregations." The archive is located in the historic headquarters of the congregation on the Piazza di Spagna in central Rome (address: Piazza di Spagna 48, 00187 Rome).

2. The archive of the Reverenda fabbrica di San Pietro. The Fabbrica is the agency of the church that was responsible for the construction of St. Peter's Basilica. It now has responsibility for the maintenance of the building among other duties. The holdings of this archive are listed in this guide in the section "Roman Curia: Congregations." The archive is located in a series of rooms within the basilica itself (address: Fabbrica di San Pietro, 00120 Vatican City).

3. The Archive of the Sezione dei rapporti con gli Stati, formerly the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs. This congregation is described in the guide in the section "Roman Curia: Congregations." Founded in 1814, the archive is therefore primarily a nineteenth-century collection of documents concerning a wide range of topics relating to the worldwide interests of the Holy See (address: Palazzo Apostolico, 00120 Vatican City).

4. The Archive of the Penitenzieria (Paenitentiaria) apostolica. This office predates the reform of Sixtus V and is described in this guide in the section "Roman Curia: Tribunals." (The name of this office was historically spelled Poenitentiaria, which spelling is used elsewhere in this guide.) It has had responsibilities for matters of conscience, certain questions
regarding marriage, and for certain dispensations. Its archive spans most of its history with records as early as 1409 and on through the nineteenth century (address: Via della Conciliazione 34, 00193 Rome).

Bentley archivist Tom Powers

4. The Archive of the Officio delle celebrazioni liturgiche del Sommo Pontifico, formerly Prefect for Apostolic Ceremonies (Prefettura delle cerimonie pontificie). This office has responsibility for arranging ceremonies, for example, for the consecration of bishops and for the reception of foreign sovereigns and ambassadors. This agency is described in the section "Papal Court." Its small archive includes material from the fifteenth century onward (address: Palazzo Apostolico, Loggia I del Cortile di S. Damaso, 00120 Vatican City).

5. The Archive of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, formerly known as the Holy Office. This archive is not open for consultation (address: Palazzo del S. Uffizio, Piazza S. Uffizio 11, 00120 Vatican City).

It is useful at this point to recall that the pope is and has always been the bishop of Rome. As such, the archive of the diocese of Rome, while pertaining to a local diocese, does have a special relationship with the general records of the Holy See. The archive of the diocese of Rome is located in the offices of the Vicariato next to the basilica of St. John Lateran (address: Palazzo Lateranense, Piazza S. Giovanni in Laterano 6, 00184 Rome).

In addition to the archives within the Holy See, there is significant papal archival material in three repositories not connected with the Vatican. These holdings have been incorporated into the structure of this guide and described in connection with their appropriate offices.

1. At Trinity College Dublin there is a collection of Lateran Registers and of registers from the Holy Office (address: College Street, Dublin 2, Ireland).

2. At the Archives Nationales, Paris, there is a collection of registers from the Camera, from the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, and a few volumes from other offices. These were left behind when the bulk of the ASV holdings were returned (address: CARAN, 60 rue des Francs-Bourgeois, 75141 Paris, France).

3. At the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, there is a series of printed records from the Congregation of Rites (address: 58 rue de Richelieu, 75002 Paris, France).