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## THE ROMAN ARCHIVES OF THE SOCIETY OF JESUS: ORIGINS, RESOURCES AND OPERATION

### Abstract

The article presents the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus. After the parts devoted to recollecting its history, discussing its structure and resources, a great deal of information was given on the realities of the institution's daily work in recent years. Elements of statistics and bibliographic indications referring to the literature on the subject are accompanied by general considerations relating to the archives.

Keywords: archives; Jesuits; historiography; Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus; *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*

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The Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus, known by its Latin official name, *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu*, is the main (central) archives of the Jesuits. It is located in the Eternal City and its task is to collect, organize and make available to researchers a rich collection of documents from the 16th to the 20th century. These are central archives in the sense that it contains documents pertaining to the central body of the order, not all documents pertaining to Jesuits from every era and country. The latter should be sought in local religious archives – wherever the Society was and is active (usually the archives of individual provinces or even houses), although many of these collections are no longer owned by the Jesuits today.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> E. Lamalle, *L'archivio di un grande Ordine religioso. L'archivio Generale della Compagnia di Gesù*, „Archiva Ecclesiae”, 24–25 (1981–1982) pp. 90–91. A catalogue of contemporary Jesuit archives published 20 years ago (T.M. McCoog, *A Guide to Jesuit Archives*, Rome 2001) is understandably in need of updating.

In order to learn about the resources and understand the organization of the order's Roman archive, in which the present article can be of help, it is worth briefly mentioning its genesis and history.<sup>2</sup>

### From the history of the archives

Despite some valuable, albeit fragmentary, studies, the entire history of these archives is still waiting for an analysis worthy of such an interesting subject.<sup>3</sup> Its origins are inextricably linked to the first period of the history of the Society of Jesus. Acknowledged by Pope Paul III in 1540, the order grew rapidly, and it is in the centralized structure of its general government that the genesis of the Roman Jesuit archives must be traced. Since regular correspondence very soon became both a tool of governance and a guarantor of unity among the religious, it became necessary to organize a secretariat to provide aid to the Superior General and his assistants.<sup>4</sup> Thus the *Romanum Societatis Iesu* Archives was born, which shared the fate of St Ignatius Loyola and his first companions. After arriving in Rome in

<sup>2</sup> The article is based on two papers by the author – *Zasób i organizacja Archiwum Kurii Generalnej Jezuitów w Rzymie* (5th General Meeting of Polish Archivists 6–7 September 2007) and *Co archiwista wiedzieć powinien, czyli kilka refleksji dotyczących funkcjonowania archiwum na przykładzie Rzymskiego Archiwum Towarzystwa Jezusowego* (Scientific Conference 'Monastic Archives. Developing and Making Collections Accessible', organized by the Association of Church Archivists, Kraków, 12 January 2008).

<sup>3</sup> In addition to the studies cited in this article, the bibliography of the subject matter includes: E.J. Burrus, *Research Opportunities in Italian Archives and Manuscript Collections for Students of Hispanic American History*, „The Hispanic American Historical Review”, 39 (1959) pp. 428–463 (in particular pp. 439–441); idem, *Mexican Historical Documents in the Central Jesuit Archives*, „Manuscripta”, 12 (1968), pp. 133–161 (in particular pp. 133–136); J. De Cock, *El archivo Romano de la Compañía de Jesús: A.R.S.I.*, „Jesuitas. Anuario de la Compañía de Jesús”, 1997, pp. 114–115 (Italian, German, English, and French versions also exist); W. Gramatowski, *The General Archives of the Society of Jesus*, in: *Inventarium Archivi Romani Societatis Iesu. Manuscripta antiquae Societatis*, part I: *Assistentiae et Provinciae*, Romae 1992 [typescript in the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus], pp. VII–XI (Italian version on pp. I–VI); W. Gramatowski, I. Kadulska, *Dokumenty polskie w zbiorach Archiwum Romanum Societatis Iesu*, in: *Staropolska kultura rękopisu*, ed. H. Dziechcińska, Warsaw, 1990, pp. 163–189; L. Lukács, L. Polgár, *Documenta romana historiae Societatis Iesu in regnis olim corona hungarica unitis*, vol. 1, Romae 1959, pp. 33\*–36\*, 47\*–48\*; F. de Borja Medina, *La Compañía de Jesús y la evangelización de América y Filipinas en los archivos de la Orden*, in: *Memoria Ecclesiae*, vol. V: *Órdenes religiosos e evangelización de América y Filipinas en los archivos de la Iglesia santoral hispano-mozárabe en España. Actas del VII Congreso de la Asociación celebrado en Córdoba (12 al 15 de septiembre de 1992)*, Oviedo 1994, pp. 31–61 (in particular pp. 31–35, 44–52); L. Pásztor, *Guida delle fonti per la storia dell'Africa a Sud del Sahara negli Archivi della Santa Sede e negli Archivi Ecclesiastici d'Italia*, Zug 1983, pp. 302–311 (in particular p. 302); F. del Ser Pérez, *La provincia jesuítica de Castilla en el Archiwum Romanum Societatis Iesu*, „Cuadernos de Historia Moderna”, 20 (1998) pp. 167–188; J. Teschitel, *Archiwum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI)*, „Archivum”, 4 (1954) pp. 145–152; idem, *Das Generalarchiv der Gesellschaft Jesu in Rom*, „Römische Historische Mitteilungen”, 4 (1960–1961) pp. 247–254.

<sup>4</sup> N.R. Verastegui, *Importanza degli archivi nella storia e nella spiritualità della Compagnia, secondo il “Nostro modo di procedere”*, in: „*Scriptis tradere et fideliter conservare*”: *Gli archivi come „luoghi della memoria” nella Compagnia di Gesù*, Roma 2003, pp. 29–51.

1537, they resided at several different addresses before finding their headquarters in today's Piazza del Gesù, which owes its current name to the new order's mother temple, built between 1568 and 1584 and for centuries adjacent to its Generalate. The Jesuits settled there in 1541, and a few years later the founder and first general took up residence in the rooms that still exist today – the only remnant of the house that preceded the current building, erected between 1599 and 1623.<sup>5</sup>

The archives 'wandered' along with the first Jesuits, and it is not always easy to figure out who exactly helped St Ignatius during those first few years in organizing the rapidly growing correspondence.<sup>6</sup> Until 1773, it was housed in the aforementioned house at the Church of the Gesù, where it also remained after the order's suppression, although the instability of the situation at the time probably explains why so many of its documents were lost or ended up in the hands of different owners, e.g. the collection of plans for Jesuit churches and houses, kept today in the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris.<sup>7</sup> The losses of this period are estimated at hundreds of volumes.<sup>8</sup>

An interesting episode of those years was the action to save the archives from probable confiscation by Napoleon. When the Vatican Archives collection began to be transported to Paris by his orders, St Joseph Pignatelli, fearing for the fate of the Jesuit archives, obtained permission and financial assistance from Pius VII to move the documents discreetly from Gesù to the church of san Pantaleo in the Colosseum area, where the Jesuits then resided in the Eternal City.<sup>9</sup> There, the archives survived for several years, until the end of the French occupation and the resurrection of the Society of Jesus in 1814. The Jesuits then returned to their headquarters in Gesù, along with their archives, although, as it turned out, not for long.

<sup>5</sup> For the architectural complex of the Gesù, cf. P. Pecchiai, *Il Gesù di Roma descritto ed illustrato*, Roma 1952. For the various residences of the early Jesuits in Rome, cf. A.M. de Aldama, *Guida a Roma Ignaziana. Sulle orme di Sant'Ignazio di Loyola*, Casale Monferrato 1990, and M. Ruiz Jurado, *I luoghi di sant'Ignazio di Loyola a Roma*, Gorle 2011. It is interesting to note that the first and third Roman addresses of St Ignatius are presently 'Polish' places – the house of the Resurrectionist Fathers (via San Sebastianello 11) and the Polish Embassy to the Holy See (via dei Delfini 16).

<sup>6</sup> G. Schurhammer, *Die Anfänge des römischen Archivs der Gesellschaft Jesu*, „Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu”, 12 (1943) pp. 89–118.

<sup>7</sup> J. Teschitel, *L'organizzazione dell'archivio generale della Compagnia di Gesù*, „Rassegna degli Archivi di Stato”, 22 (1962) p. 191; E. Lamalle, *Les plans des Archives Romaines de la Compagnie de Jésus. Inventaire*, in: *Le recueil de plans d'édifices de la Compagnie de Jésus conservé à la Bibliothèque Nationale de Paris*, ed. J. Vallery-Radot, Rome 1960, pp. 389–402.

<sup>8</sup> E. Lamalle, *La documentation d'histoire missionnaire dans le 'Fondo Gesuitico' aux Archives Romaines de la Compagnie de Jésus*, *Euntes Docete* 21 (1968), p. 131.

<sup>9</sup> José Pignatelli y Moncayo (1737–1811), Spaniard, Jesuit since 1753, after the expulsion of the order from Spain (1767) resided in Italy, where he contributed to the gradual restoration of the Society's structures; canonized by Pius XII in 1954 (*Diccionario Histórico de la Compañía de Jesús. Biográfico-temático*, vol. IV, Roma-Madrid 2001, pp. 3131–3133). The initiative of Pignatelli and assistance of Pius VII in saving the archives is mentioned by the saint's biographer, D.A. Hanly, *Blessed Joseph Pignatelli (of the Society of Jesus). A Great Leader in a Great Crisis*, New York 1937, pp. 204–206.

The reason for its subsequent transfer was the policy of the government of a unified Italy in 1870, far from favourable toward the Jesuits and other ecclesiastical institutions of Rome. Numerous seizures of their estates, libraries and archives also called into question the security of Jesuit documents. In 1873, the Jesuits had to leave the Eternal City. Their General Curia moved to Fiesole near Florence, where it remained until 1895, while the archives were first hidden and then sent in secret to Exaten in the Netherlands, where the German Jesuits, expelled from their motherland by Bismarck's Kulturkampf, had their house of study. The transfer took place in 1893 under the direction of the then archivist, Fr van Meurs.<sup>10</sup> Since the action had to be carried out discreetly, for three months he sent the documents gradually, parcel by parcel, to the addresses of various friends, who, forewarned, sent them forward to their destination.<sup>11</sup>

By the end of 1893, the archives occupied three different locations: the fundamental part of it was in the Netherlands, the more recent documents (those from after 1814) shared the fate of the Curia and were placed in Fiesole, and the archive of the Procurator General of the Order, located in 1870 in the Jesuit Collegium Romanum, was confiscated by the Italian government along with the library of that college. This book collection became the foundation of the present Vittorio Emmanuele II National Library in Rome, where it still resides to this day, while the aforementioned archives were returned to their owners in 1924. After the return of the General Curia to Rome (1895) and of the archives from the Netherlands (1939), all three parts of the archives were brought together in 1945 in the new Curia at Borgo S. Spirito 4, where they remain to this day; since 1995 they have been housed in a special building.

### Archival resources

The archives' structure stems from the order's strictly centralized system of governance and is almost a mirror image of it: the general in Rome exercises authority with the help of his associates called assistants, while an extensive system of correspondence ensures a regular flow of information from all the provinces of the Society. Thanks to such an organized central administration, the basic principles of which have not changed over the centuries, today we have about 2,000 linear meters of documentation.<sup>12</sup>

In its current form, the archives consist of three departments:

<sup>10</sup> Jan Baptist van Meurs (1828–1908), Dutch, Jesuit from 1846 (R. Mendizábal, *Catalogus defunctorum in renata Societate Iesu ab a. 1814 ad a. 1970*, Romae 1972, p. 212 [ref. 11.794]).

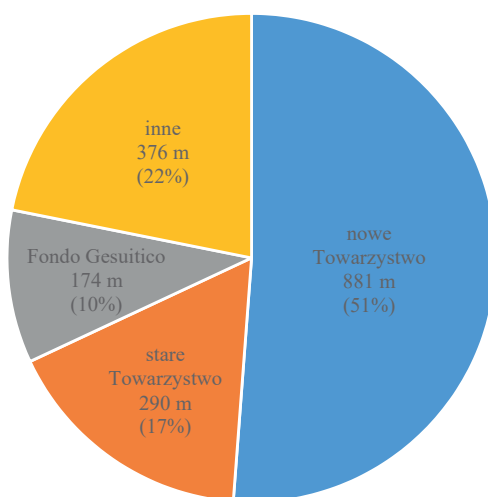
<sup>11</sup> J. Ramón Eguillor, M. Revuelta Gonzáles, R.M. Sanz de Diego, *Memorias del P. Luis Martín General de la Compañía de Jesús (1846–1906)*, vol. 2. Roma 1988, pp. 755–757.

<sup>12</sup> In 1962, the then archivist Josef Teschitel estimated the pre-1773 documents at 556 linear meters (cf. Teschitel, *L'organizzazione dell'archivio generale*, p. 192), while in 1970 Lajos Pásztor estimated the archives' total collection at 900 linear meters (cf. L. Pásztor, *Guida delle fonti per la storia dell'America Latina negli archivi della Santa Sede e negli archivi ecclesiastici d'Italia*, Città del Vaticano 1970, p. 395). Since then, the amount of documentation stored here has increased significantly (mainly due to the acquisition of entire archival collections, such as the archives of the Jesuit Historical Institute and the Roman churches belonging to the order).

- documents relating to the so-called old Society (the period prior to the order's suppression in 1773);<sup>13</sup>
- documents from the time of the so-called New Society (the period after the rebirth of the order in 1814);
- the so-called Fondo Gesuitico, or archive of the Order's Procurator General, containing mainly property and litigation files, such as documentation relating to relations with Roman offices and tribunals, documents relating to Jesuit colleges, etc.

In addition, the new archive has found a place for special collections, forming a *de facto* fourth section, which includes photographs, iconography, maps, building plans, medals, seals and entire separate archival groups, including documents from the Jesuit churches of Rome – Gesù, Sant'Ignazio and the Caravita oratory (in addition to a series of scores of interest to music historians, they mainly contain documents of an administrative and economic nature, such as accounts, registers of Masses celebrated, etc.).

**Diagram 1. Structure and resources of the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus**



Source: R. Danieluk, *Michał Boym, Andrzej Rudomina and Jan Smogulecki – Three Seventeenth Century Missionaries in China. A Selection of Documents from the Roman Jesuit Archives*, „Monumenta Serica. Journal of Oriental Studies”, 59 (2011) p. 423.

Each of these departments is divided into smaller organizational units, and the whole collection is in the records. In addition to general inventories, covering the entirety of a given section, there are also detailed inventories of certain series or

<sup>13</sup> For the so-called old and new Society, cf. R. Danieluk, *La reprise d'une mémoire brisée: l'historiographie de la 'nouvelle' Compagnie de Jésus*, „Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu”, 150 (2006) pp. 269–271.

even volumes, as well as thematic inventories, such as the inventory of polonica from the old Society period or the inventory of Chinese books.<sup>14</sup>

The graphic shows data from 2011, but changes in recent years have not been so significant as to make it completely out of date.

The three main divisions (the old and new Society and the Fondo Gesuitico) share the same types of documentation. These include correspondence, accounts from the order's local premises and historical and biographical materials about the Jesuits, catalogues, directories and documentation on administrative and legal matters. Since the undersigned has already addressed this topic in other articles, let it be forgiven that only a reference to the aforementioned literature can be found herein; the reader may nevertheless find further bibliographic suggestions in it.<sup>15</sup>

### Operation of the archives

As with any archive, the operation of the Jesuit Roman Archives can also be considered on several levels. Here are some of them:

#### 1. Facilities and finance

For the past 27 years, the archives have been located in a new building, better suited for storing collections, as, in the interest of preserving them, the storerooms have been equipped with the necessary installations, taking into account security requirements. Unfortunately, technology does not preclude unpleasant surprises in the form of failures and various shortcomings that made a major renovation of the building necessary in 2020. In considering the construction of archival storage facilities, it is also important to take into account their location (in our case, the proximity to Janiculum Hill does not help to maintain adequate humidity in the halls).

<sup>14</sup> A.P. Bieśet al., *Polonica w Archiwum Rzymskim Towarzystwa Jezusowego*, vol. 1–5, Kraków 2002–2008; A. Chan, *Chinese Books and Documents in the Jesuit Archives in Rome. A Descriptive Catalogue Japonica-Sinica*, vol. I–IV, Armonk-New York-London 2002.

<sup>15</sup> For the origins and types of Jesuit correspondence, cf. R. Danieluk, *Jezuickie inspiracje działań Piotra Skargi*, „Studia Bobolanum”, 2 (2013) pp. 31–34; idem, *Nieopublikowane dokumenty Piotra Skargi w archiwach rzymskich*, „Studia Bobolanum”, 2 (2013) pp. 208–210. For the Archivum Romanum and other types of its documentation, cf. idem, *Święta Lipka w dokumentach Rzymskiego Archiwum Towarzystwa Jezusowego*, in: *Święta Lipka – perła na pograniczu ziem, kultur i wyznań*, Warsaw 2008, pp. 73–77; idem, *Obecność jezuitów na Świętojańskiej w dokumentach Rzymskiego Archiwum Towarzystwa Jezusowego*, „Studia Bobolanum”, 3 (2010) pp. 89–97; *Documenti dell'Archivio Romano della Compagnia di Gesù sulla presenza e attività dei gesuiti nelle Marche tra XVI e XVIII secolo: Possibilità di ricerca*, in: *Studi Maceratesi*, vol. 44: *Ordini e Congregazioni religiose dal Concilio di Trento alla soppressione napoleonica. Atti del XLIV Convegno di Studi Maceratesi, Abbazia di Fiasstra (Tolentino), 22–23 novembre 2008*, Macerata 2010, pp. 163–191; idem, *Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu: un luogo privilegiato per lo studio dell'attività evangelizzatrice dei gesuiti*, „Archiva Ecclesiae”, 53–55 (2010–2012) pp. 221–254; idem, *Starania o przekształcenie poznańskiego kolegium jezuitów w uniwersytet w świetle dokumentów Rzymskiego Archiwum Towarzystwa Jezusowego*, in: *Wokół jezuickiej fundacji uniwersytetu z 1611 roku*, ed. D. Żołędz-Strzelczyk, R. Witkowski, Poznań 2011, pp. 107–121; idem, *Lituanica w Rzymskim Archiwum Towarzystwa Jezusowego: możliwe kierunki poszukiwań*, in: *Jezuici Lietuvoje (1608–2008): gyvenimas, veikla, paveldas/Jesuits in Lithuania (1608–2008): Life, Work, Heritage*, p. 1, ed. N. Markauskaitė, Vilnius 2012, pp. 135–148.

With an eye on the future of the institution that the archives serve, i.e., the Jesuit General Curia, provision has been made accordingly for more space for the documents to gradually find their way here. With such collection growth as in the last quarter century, the problem of space should not arise in the coming decades.

Another important aspect is, of course, financial security. Napoleon is said to have stated that three things are needed to wage war: money, money and more money. It seems that this statement of the Emperor of the French can also be successfully applied to the maintenance of the archives. In the case of the historical archives of the Jesuit General Curia, it is maintained entirely from the budget of that office. In addition to the salaries of employees, the costs relate to the maintenance of the building (including carrying out the necessary work), the purchase of necessary equipment (computers, scanners, photocopiers, etc.) and the operation of the institution itself, which, obviously, always involves expenses, such as the preservation of documents or their digitization. All this has to be covered by the budget of the office that owns the archives.

## 2. Personnel

In order to carry out its task of collecting, organizing and providing access to documents, the archive needs adequate personnel. In addition to the four Jesuit archivists, there are currently six employees who perform all the necessary work, from the functions of storeroom and reading room service to the inventory and digitizing of documents to running the archive secretariat and other day-to-day matters. It should be added that since 2010, the archive has taken over most of the duties of the Historical Institute of the Society of Jesus, which also means research work, participation in conferences and publication – for example the periodical *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, published twice a year. It turns out that a team of ten people is a relatively modest workforce for all this work.

The number and professional qualifications of personnel will undoubtedly depend on the size, nature and operation of each archive. At the same time, it seems obvious that not everyone can do everything, and this should be kept in mind when deciding whether to hire new employees. On the other hand, it is also worth mentioning the opportunities for employees to improve their professional qualifications by taking part in various courses and trainings, as well as by participating in the work of the Italian Association of Church Archivists (*Associazione Archivistica Ecclesiastica*) and other similar organizations.

## 3. Collection of materials

Like any other historical archive, the *Archivum Romanum* also systematically receives documents produced by the General Curia when they become obsolete to the point of being excluded from the curial office and in the transitional archive. In practice, this means a period of about 15–20 years from the end of a given curial practice. Unfortunately, it is usually up to the producing offices to decide which documents are transferred to the historical archives, and the advice of an archivist is not always sought.

From time to time, for various reasons, groups of files not directly related to the Curia's activities find their way into the archives, such as the legacy of Jesuit historians that had worked at the aforementioned Historical Institute and died in Rome, or the entire archives of that Institute, or the legacy of historian Robert Graham, a long-time employee of La Civiltà Cattolica and a member of the team commissioned by Paul VI to research the Vatican Archives with regard to the activities of the Holy See and Pius XII during World War II (the work resulted in the publication of 12 volumes of documents, while the legacy itself was handed over to the Vatican Secretariat of State several years ago).<sup>16</sup> Essentially, however, the archives only collect documents that are the product and testimony to the activities of the General Curia, which reflects its mission and which sometimes causes surprise to some visiting researchers who expect that all documents pertaining to Jesuits around the world are kept there.

According to theoretical archival science, each archive is supposed to be, as it were, a reflection of the institution that produces it. It is worth keeping the above in mind in organizing the archives (whether it refers to registry, transitional or historical archives), in setting the rules for the transfer of documents by 'our' office, influencing, where possible, also the decision on which documents should be transferred to the Historical Archives. Of course, it is necessary to know well how 'our' office operates, to be in contact with its employees, influencing them so as to avoid, if possible, a situation in which they hand over documents that are out of order or worthless.

#### **4. Ordering and preservation of materials**

The ideal situation is when the historical archive receives documents already organized and inventoried from the registry or transitional archive. Such ideal situations are, fortunately, possible and do occur: many secretariats of the Curia transfer organized batches of material to the Roman Archives. The archivist then only needs to mark these documents with a reference number, place them in storage and record them in the register. Unfortunately, there are times when, for various reasons, documents in need of sorting out are handed over to the archives, which of course prolongs and complicates the work of the archivist.

In the event where it is impossible to inventory the entirety of a given fond at once, it is worthwhile to start by creating at least some sort of general inventory that will allow the archivists to become acquainted with the collections they have, such as dividing the legacy received from several people by their names (this method will be used, for example, to develop a set of files (fond) of individual Jesuit historians whose legacies we keep). The second stage will be to describe a particular set in more detail, such as by type of documents (letters, lecture scripts,

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<sup>16</sup> Robert A. Graham (1912–1997), American, Jesuit since 1929 (*Catalogus defunctorum in renata Societate Iesu (III)*, 1986–2000, Romae 2001, p. 40), worked in Rome in 1966–1977; the 12-volume edition of Vatican documents addressed in the article is: P. Blet, R.A. Graham, A. Martini, B. Schneider, *Actes et Documents du Saint-Siège relatifs à la Seconde Guerre Mondiale*, Città del Vaticano 1965–1981.



personal notes, etc.), and finally to create a detailed inventory, such as a detailed list of letters by correspondents' names or dates.

The use of computer databases opens up new possibilities whereby, once the relevant information is entered, it is possible, for example, to immediately find the answer to the question of whether the collection of the files of a particular Jesuit historian contains letters to any of his colleagues, and so on. The problem remains, of course, in the introduction of a great amount of information into the computer and its updating, which is an indispensable condition for the usefulness of such a database, and in this field the Roman Archives still has much work to do. This makes the aids produced by previous archivists all the more deserving of attention and use. These are usually card files, which describe a given piece of documentation in a threefold key: persons (*personae*), places (*loca*) and subjects (*res*), constituting *de facto* indexes: of names, geographical names and subject matter. Here we are dealing with a kind of card file, which may be an ideal aid in many searches.

The mission of the historical archive is to preserve documents forever, and although this 'forever' is, of course, a relative term this does not absolve archivists from the obligation to give the collections in their possession adequate care and to provide for their preservation in the budget and in the operation of the archives. Technologies and approaches will, of course, depend on the age and type of collections, as well as the problems that preservation activities are intended to address.

In the case of the Archivum Romanum, a large portion of the documents was preserved and inventoried while in the Netherlands. Thanks to the technology used at the time, valuable documentation from the 16th–18th centuries was secured. Many other documents are still awaiting preservation, which is a real challenge that is not easy to meet for many reasons.

In addition to the use of specialized technologies, it is also important to remember the proper way of storing collections, which promotes their preservation. To preserve documents in good state, certain conditions are necessary: proper humidity and temperature, avoidance of sunlight, proper arrangement of items on shelves, binding of loose pages into volumes or their storage in one or another fascicle, binder or package – all of these make documents survive longer, or shorter if no such preservation methods are applied. Rather than merely eradicating the effects of incompetent storage, it is also worthwhile to take preventive measures.

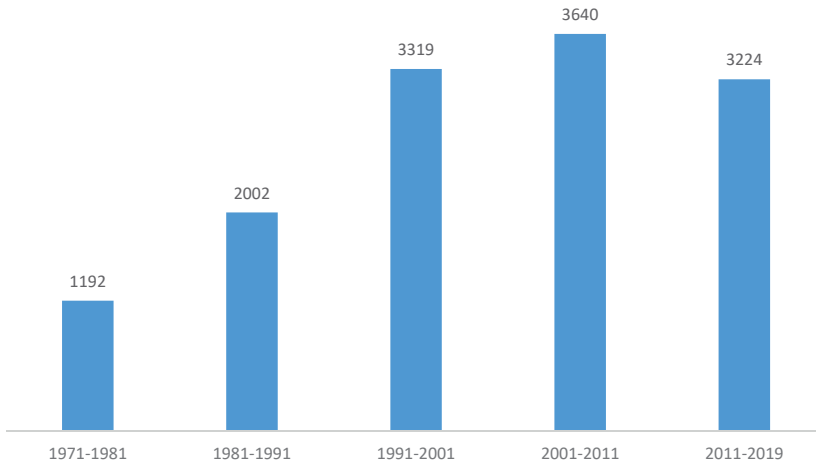
The frequency of making collections available to researchers is also an important aspect. Statistics of recent decades prove that thousands of volumes are consulted annually in the reading room of the Roman Archives (4,775 in 2004 alone), and each such consultation is, after all, a potential risk and danger of damage or even theft, hence the importance of the archive security issue. Efforts should be made to ensure that the documents are safe from the not necessarily dishonest but often incompetent researchers when consulted in the reading room.

## 5. Sharing materials

The archive is open to researchers, making available, like the Vatican Archives, documents from the period up to October 1958. The ever-increasing number of searches carried out and the systematic presence of researchers from many countries

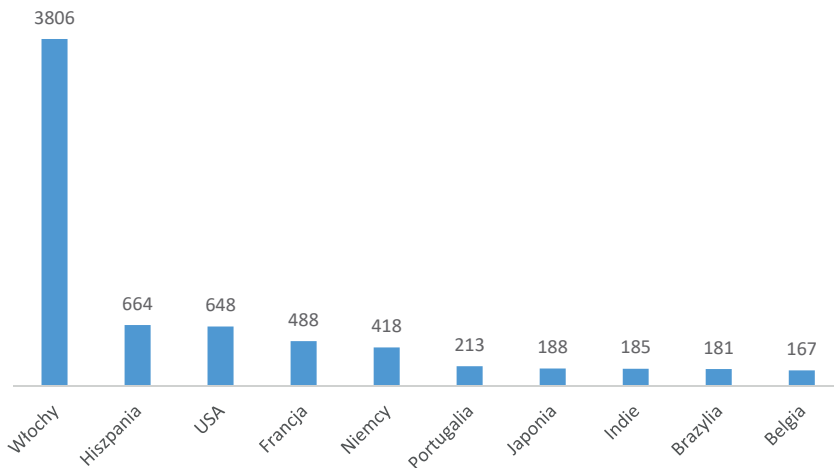
unequivocally and eloquently testify to the value of these collections. The graphic below illustrates this frequency from 1971 to 2019.

**Diagram 2. Frequency of use of the collections of the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus from 1971 to 2019**



Source: own research.

**Diagram 3. Nationality of visitors using the collections of the Roman Archives between 1995 and 2019**



Source: own research.

As can be seen, the overall trend is upward (the last number is smaller, but it refers to eight years, not ten, as in the other time frames).

If we want to give a pictorial representation of the nationality of researchers visiting the Roman Archives over the past quarter century, a diagram 3 would emerge.

Sharing collections naturally entails a whole series of consequences.

Certainly, the work should be organized to ensure that all the objectives of the archives are carried out in parallel. It would be inappropriate, for example, to focus on providing service to researchers using the archives while neglecting other work, such as inventory, and vice versa: inadequate assistance with searches should never be excused for being overly busy. A certain balance between the different levels of the archives' operation is therefore necessary here, and this means more than one challenge for the management.

The adoption of some sort of calendar and regulations would be a basic aid in the work. The Jesuit archive is open to researchers from mid-September to the second half of July, Monday through Friday (not counting public holidays according to the Italian calendar), from 9 am to 4 pm. Applicants are received by one of the archivists. Having presented a letter of recommendation and an identity document, they fill out the appropriate form and agree to abide by the rules and regulations in effect, which stipulate, in addition to the obvious security standards, the frequency of requesting the documents. By filling out a special receipt, anyone can obtain two archival units at 10 am, 11 am and 3 pm. Documents already digitized (even if containing hundreds of volumes, it is still only a small part of our collection!) are made available only in this form.

What is needed, of course, is a suitable workplace for the reporting researchers and the staff to support them. The reading room allows for the admission of about 30 people, although recent restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic meant that only 8 people were admitted at a time in 2020. It is equipped with computers, although the visitor is obviously allowed to use their own. One employee, who also serves as a storekeeper, is scheduled to operate the reading room.

Ordering reproductions is permissible. Photocopies are made only for books in the reading room, while in the case of archives, only digital reproduction is available. Until 2005, the archives employed a photographer who carried out orders placed by researchers for a fee. For the past few years, reproductions have been made by archive staff.

The use of the archives' collections is free of charge, with the exception of reproductions in any of their forms (photocopy, digital photo).

Apart from the workspace, personnel and rules and regulations of the archive, the assistance provided to researchers is also important. In addition to the initial interview, inventories in the reading room and other aids (dictionaries, bibliographies, some monographs and publications of the Historical Institute) also facilitate the search efforts at the Archivum Romanum. Some of them are also available on the computer and on the archive website <http://www.sjweb.info/arsi/>.

As far as the Internet is concerned, although it is difficult to overestimate its advantages in the field of library and other searches wherever the relevant information is already available online, one needs to consider and decide what exactly

needs making it available online: should it be only preliminary information about the archive, or inventories, or the documents themselves?

With its own website, the Archivum Romanum made its presence in the world of information, which is undoubtedly a good thing. The consequence, however, of even this small dissemination of knowledge about the archive was and is an increase in correspondence. Not only questions about the possibility of searches or inquiries for information and reproduction of documents are received via email, but even requests to conduct searches that are most often not feasible. While ‘revealing’ ourselves on the Internet, therefore, we must also reckon with this consequence.

It is necessary to prepare and determine whether and how the archive intends to conduct correspondence. In our case, we always respond to inquiries about general information or those for which the answer does not require excessive searching. Any time we are able to assist, we do so. However, if the request concerns longer search, we must apologize, explaining that due to lack of staff and other work, fulfilling this request is beyond our means. The vast majority of our correspondents understand this, although some inquiries seem to indicate that their authors imagine that our archive has some sort of vast database, including information on all Jesuits from every era and every country. Unfortunately, we do not possess such collection and all we can do is bring those people down to earth...

In general, it should be acknowledged that sharing collections is a good thing also because it allows us to influence the shape of the historiography of a given topic. In the case of the Roman Archives, this is more than obvious, for it is common knowledge that historians’ interest in Jesuits’ issues in the broadest sense has increased in recent decades. This is evidenced, for example, by the increase in the number of publications devoted to this issue: in 1981–1990 these amounted to 11,227, while in 1991–2000 this number grew to 20,217!<sup>17</sup> At least some of these studies were made possible by ARSI documents. The turnout of researchers seems to confirm that this interest is not waning. In recent years, an average of 400 to 600 researchers visited the archive every year (that number of permits were issued to use the collection), although 2020 was naturally a special year in this regard.

An interesting phenomenon is the fact that until recently the vast majority of historians favoured the period of the old Society. Since the opening of the archives’ new headquarters (1995), there have been about 80% of them, and given that the new Society’s collections account for more than half of the archives, this means that its knowledge and use is disproportionate to its resources.

### **Instead of a summary**

Announcing the opening of the documents stored in the Vatican Archives from the pontificate of Pius XII, Pope Francis said, on 4 March 2019, that the Church is not afraid of history and therefore he, following the example of his predecessors in

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<sup>17</sup> Cf. Danieluk, *La reprise d’une mémoire brisée*, p. 303. The statistics are based on the bibliography: L. Polgár, *Bibliographie sur l’histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus, 1901–1980*, vol. 1–3, Roma 1981–1990. WorldCat <https://www.worldcat.org/advancedsearch> provides the following data (after entering ‘jesuit’ in the keyword field): 1981–1990: 5,849 titles; 1991–2000: 9,981 titles; 2001–2010: 19,761 titles; 2011–2020: 24,530 titles (accessed on: 4.11.2020).

the office of Peter, entrusts historians with another portion of Church documentation in the hope that they will be able to use it properly.<sup>18</sup> Whether this is actually the case is another interesting topic, but this is not the subject matter of the present article, which can be concluded by reminding the readers that the Society of Jesus is following in this footsteps set by the popes and making its own archives available to researchers. Historiographical trends and topics that capture more or less attention of Clio's adepts are changing, but the idea guiding them remains valid: using the experience of the past to better understand the present, because only in this way can the future be well planned.

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<sup>18</sup> „L'Osservatore Romano”, 4–5 III 2019, p. 1.

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## RZYMSKIE ARCHIWUM TOWARZYSTWA JEZUSOWEGO: GENEZA, ZASÓB I FUNKCJONOWANIE

### Abstrakt

Rzymskie Archiwum Towarzystwa Jezusowego (Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu), jest głównym (centralnym) archiwum jezuitów. Znajduje się przy kurii generalnej zakonu, a jego zadaniem jest gromadzenie, porządkowanie i udostępnianie badaczom zbioru dokumentów z okresu od XVI–XX w. Jest archiwum centralnym w tym znaczeniu, że zawiera dokumenty odnoszące się do centralnego zarządu zakonu, nie zaś wszystkie dokumenty dotyczące jezuitów z każdej epoki i z każdego kraju. Od 1541 do roku 1773 mieściło się w domu przy kościele del Gesù, gdzie pozostało również po kasacie zakonu, choć niestabilność ówczesnej sytuacji doprowadziła do zaginięcia wielu dokumentów. W 1873 r. jezuita musiał opuścić Rzym ze względu na politykę władz włoskich. Kuria generalna przeniosła się do Fiesole koło Florencji, gdzie pozostała do 1895 r., zaś archiwum zostało najpierw ukryte, po czym wysłane w sekrecie do Exaten w Holandii, gdzie niemieccy jezuita mieli swój dom studiów. Pod koniec roku 1893 archiwum znajdowało się w trzech różnych miejscach: zasadnicza jego część była w Holandii, dokumenty nowsze (te z okresu po 1814 r.) w Fiesole, zaś archiwum prokuratora generalnego zakonu, znajdujące się w 1870 r. w jezuickim Collegium Romanum, zostało wraz z biblioteką tej uczelni skonfiskowane przez rząd włoski. Księgozbiór ten stał się zaczątkiem dzisiejszej

Biblioteki Narodowej Vittorio Emanuele II w Rzymi. Wspomniane archiwalia powróciły do swoich właścicieli w 1924 r. Po powrocie kurii generalnej do Rzymu (1895) oraz archiwaliów z Holandii (1939), wszystkie trzy części archiwum spotkały się w 1945 r. nowej kurii przy Borgo S. Spirito 4, gdzie pozostają do dzisiaj; od roku 1995 umieszczono je w specjalnym budynku. W obecnym swoim kształcie archiwum składa się z działów: 1. dokumenty dotyczące tzw. „starego” Towarzystwa (okres poprzedzający kasatę zakonu w 1773 r.); 2. akta z czasów tzw. „nowego” Towarzystwa (okres po odrodzeniu zakonu w 1814 r.); 3. tzw. Fondo Gesuitico, czyli archiwum prokuratora generalnego zakonu zawierające głównie akta majątkowe i procesowe; 4. zbiory specjalne. Zasób jest na bieżąco opracowywany i udostępniany do kwerend naukowych badaczom z całego świata. Sukcesywnie rośnie liczba zdigitalizowanych archiwaliów.

Słowa kluczowe: archiwum; jezuici; historiografia; Rzymskie Archiwum Towarzystwa Jezusowego; Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu