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**Register of Papal Documents  
In Latin, manuscript on paper  
Italy, Rome, c. 1490-1519**

*i (paper) + 350 folios, on paper, watermarks, at least three different watermarks, all mermaids with two fins in a circle: Piccard, online archive no. 21201, Rome 1502; no. 21200, Rome 1503, cf. also no. 2119, Rome 1492, no. 21202, Rome, 1523, Briquet 13891, Rome, 1531-35, and Piccard, online archive 21203, Prague, 1530, modern foliation in pencil, top, outer corner recto, (collation, i<sup>20</sup> ii<sup>18</sup> iii-iv<sup>24</sup> v<sup>16</sup> [structure uncertain, one leaf lacking after f. 98, cancelled with no loss of text] vi<sup>26</sup> vii-viii<sup>24</sup> ix<sup>12</sup> x<sup>14</sup> xi<sup>24</sup> xii<sup>20</sup> xiii<sup>12</sup> xiv<sup>24</sup> xv<sup>32</sup> xvi<sup>4</sup> xvii<sup>28</sup> xviii<sup>4</sup>), horizontal catchwords, quires one and two only, apparently unruled except for full-length vertical bounding lines in blind, each folio also has a crease in the middle as if it has been folded in half, and on some folios it appears to have been folded along the vertical bounding lines, (justification, 248-235 x 120-110 mm.), written by numerous scribes in a variety of scripts ranging from quick cursive scripts to scripts approaching a cursive humanistic minuscule in forty-eight to twenty-seven long lines, most documents begin with a simple decorative opening letter in the same ink as the text, in sound condition although on some folios the script has bled through to the other side, rendering both sides difficult to read, some foxing. Bound in its original sixteenth-century vellum binding over pasteboard, cover is flush with bookblock, spine with three raised bands, deckle fore-edge is frayed and darkened, overall in good condition with some worn spots on the front cover, and broken head and tail bands. Dimensions 288 x 238 mm.*

Although the exact origin of this manuscript remains to be determined, it must be considered a register of Papal letters, that is, either copies or, in this case, possibly drafts of outgoing documents retained for reference by their originator. It is a lengthy collection, including more than two hundred letters, many of which may be unpublished and all of which deserve further study as reflections of the Renaissance Papacy at the height of its worldly power and influence. Only two (and possibly three) papal registers are listed in the Schoenberg database.

**PROVENANCE**

1. Most likely written in Rome during the period of c. 1490-1519 as suggested by the date of the majority of the documents (the most recent document dates from 1519), and by the watermarks. Numerous scribes with frequent changes of hand copied it, but early scribes reappear later in the manuscript, and the structure of the collection is complex. It was almost certainly copied at the papal archives and consists of either copies of completed outgoing documents, drafts of documents, or possibly both. The amount of wear on the fore-edge of the paper sheets suggests that it might have been preserved as unbound paper quires for some period of time; this hypothesis would also help explain the lack of chronological order in the letters copied here.

2. Belonged to Harry A. Walton Jr. of Covington, Virginia; his manuscript A-1864 ("A1864" in pencil, inside front cover); see C. U. Faye and W. H. Bond, *Supplement to the Census of Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the United States and Canada*, New York, The Bibliographical Society, 1962, p. 522.

## TEXT

Section I, ff. 1-49v, thirty-nine letters, mostly from Pope Alexander VI, with a few earlier letters from Innocent VIII and Sixtus IV:

ff. 1-4, incipit, "Alexander vi. Ad perpetuam rei memoriam, Cum attento considerationis...";

ff. 4v-5v, Innocent VIII, dated 1490;

ff. 5v-6v, Alexander VI to a Bishop, ninth year of his pontificate;

ff. 6v-7v, Alexander VI, to "dilecto filio Lodovico du Val presbitero," incipit "Nobilitas presentes uestro ..."; in two paragraphs, ending with a judgement;

f. 8rv, Alexander VI, incipit, "Ad perpetuam rei memoriam, Postulare ...";

ff. 8v-9, Alexander VI, incipit, "Ad perpetuam rei memoriam, Ad fidei catholice ...";

ff. 9-10, Alexander VI, incipit, "Ad perpetuam rei memoriam ...";

ff. 10-11v [margin, Absolutio pro fratre <?> sancta Ja. de Sp<?>] incipit, "Sedes apostolica ...";

ff. 12-13, incipit, "Alexander vi, Uenerabile seu moderno episcopo Universari Vicariis romanorum dilecte filio abbatis monasteriis S. Thome Burgundiones ... pontificatus nostri anno nouo";

ff. 13v-14, Alexander VI, margin: "Indulgentia pro capella regnorum Anglia";

f. 14v, marginal note: "Iudex";

ff. 14-15v, incipit, "Alexander vi, Dilecto filio Magistro Eutt de Blandare ... Gratia deuotionis et familiares obsequia ...";

ff. 15v-17, Alexander VI, dated 1501, margin: "Confirmatio ecclesie .. domus ordinis praedicatorum";

ff. 17v-18, Alexander VI, dated 1500;

ff. 18-19v, incipit, "Alexander vi, Carrissimo in christo filio Iohanni dant ...";

ff. 19v-20, Innocent VIII;

ff. 20-21v, Alexander VI, margin: "Promisio vnus proratis ...";

ff. 22-22v, Alexander VI, to Nicholas, a Cistercian Abbot from the diocese of Brandenburg;

ff. 22v-23v; ff. 24-25, Sixtus IV, margin: "Erectio studii ..,"; ff. 25-26, Sixtus IV;

ff. 26-27, Alexander VI to "Dilectio filio Bernardo andree," rector of Toulouse (?);

f. 27rv, Alexander [VI] to a Bishop;

ff. 27v-28, Alexander [VI] to "Dilecto filio Bernardo Andree";

ff. 28-30v, Alexander [VI];

ff. 30v-31v, Alexander VI, margin: "copia indul, R. d.";

ff. 32v-34, incipit, "Dilectio filio magistro Guillermo de p<?> cap<mo> ...";

ff. 34-35v, no heading;

ff. 36-37v, incipit, "Dilectio filio magistro domino Jarebario cap<no> nostro ... palatii apostolici auditorii ...";

ff. 37v-39; ff. 39v-41; ff. 41-43; ff. 43-45, margin: "Reservatio"; ff. 45-47;

ff. 47-49v, incipit, "Alexander vi, Ad perpetuam rei memoriam, Inter nostras multiplices que nobis ex apostolatus officio ... pontificis nostri anno decimo; below: Hadrianus/ Io. de Saldana";

Section II, ff. 50-89v, not entered chronologically:

ff. 50-53v, Pius III (1503);

ff. 54-58, probably Julius II, incipit, "Ad r<?> querendum pastoralis officii debet mei studio inpendentes .. vndecimo kalendas iunii anno primo";

f. 58rv, Julius II, 1503, incipit, "Iulius episcopus servus servorum dei. Dilectis filiis capitulo ecclesie halberstadensis salutem et apostolicam benedictionis. Deuotionis uestre sinceritas pro meretur ut votis ... anno millesimo quingentesimo tertio. Pontificis nostri anno primo";

ff. 58v-59v, Innocent VIII, dated 1492; ff. 59v-60, Innocent VIII;

ff. 60v-66v, probably Pope John XXII, 1316-34, with a marginal note mentioning Clement V, 1305-14, incipit, "Iohannes. Ad ea ex quibus nullus augmentur ...," with numerous marginal notations;

ff. 66v-67v, incipit, "Nouerint universi presentes ...";

ff. 68-82, Innocent VIII, 1485;

ff. 82v-83v, margin: "Bulla priuilegiorum capelle Regine"; incipit, "Alexander vi, Carissimo in christo filio ...";

f. 84rv, incipit, "Pius iii, ad perpetuam rei memoriam, siquis dominus noster custodio diuina dispositione ...";

ff. 84v-87v, incipit, "Alexander vi venerabilibus futurus ... uel collectis et <digites?> in casibus etiam <archepolitanum?> post pontificalibus ..."; [ff. 88-89v, blank];

Section III, ff. 90-103v:

ff. 90-91v, Innocent VIII, 1486, margin: "Bulla Innocentium ..."; incipit, "Innocentius episcopus .. ad perpetuam rei memoriam romanum pontificum in quo diuina ... Providentia omnium specta ... anno millesimo quadragentesimo octavagesimo sexto, xi kalendas septembris ..";

ff. 92-94v, incipit, "Alexander vi, Dilecte filio petro de Campania et leo Aquint. Regimini universalis ecclesie quamquam insufficiente libris ... Jo. de Galnes, F., de Attavantis F., de Valencia";

ff. 94v-96, Alexander VI, ending, A. drapo, A. de Cabredo, F, de Attavantis";

ff. 96-98, [new hand] Julius II, 1504 [ends top, f. 98; ff. 98v-103v, blank];

Section IV, ff. 104-127v:

ff. 104-111, [new hand, new quire] Eugene IV, 1431-47, incipit, "Eugenius episcopus seruus seruorum dei ad perpetuam rei memoriam. Licet ea que de mandato nostro finit plenam obtineant ...";

ff. 111v-118, incipit, "Dilecto filio magistro Lelio de Theranio Canonico felicem scriptoris et ..., Grata deuotionis et familiaritatis obsequia que nobis et apostolice sedi hactenus ... [ending mentions Innocent VIII];

ff. 118-119v, Alexander VI, incipit, "Dilectis in christo filiabus abbatisse monasterii sancte Elisabet de Valencia <?> sororibus tam p..tibus apud <?> regularem vitam ...";

ff. 120-121, incipit, "Ad perpetuam dei memoriam, Dilectis filius ..." [ends top f. 121, remainder blank];

ff. 121v-123v, Pius II, 1459, margin: "Supprimitur monasterium et ...";

ff. 123v-126, margin: "Ecclesiam Avinonensis reduantur de Regularii ad secularium"; incipit, "Venerabili ... Juliano Episcopo sabianenesi cardinalis petrum ad vinculo ..." [ends top f. 126, same hand, different ink; remainder and ff. 126v-127v, blank];

Section V, ff. 128-152, petitions:

ff. 128-129, records of a petition and the resulting decision, ending "... Fiat ut petitur, R.," with marginal notes, f. 129, "Fiat R"; ff. 129rv, note f. 129v, "Car S praxedis"; ff. 129v-130, margin, "Fiat R";

ff. 130v-133v, incipit, "Julius ii, Ad perpetuam rei memoriam, In superior dignitatis specula ...";

ff. 134-137, Sixtus IV, 1482, margin: "Erectio Capelle des Moutiz (or Moutim) les tours in Colle ...", incipit, "Sixtus, Ad perpetuam rei memoriam, Illius qui pro.. (mentions Ludovicus, king of France)";

ff. 137-138v, Sixtus IV;

ff. 139-143, Innocent VIII, 1485;

ff. 143v-147v, Julius [II], margin: "Ecclesiae Brandeburgensis ...";

ff. 147v-150 Iulius [II];

ff. 150-152, very tiny cursive with ink bleeding through from the other side, almost illegible; note it concludes on f. 152, first folio of the next quire, probably in another hand [f. 152v blank];

Section VI, ff. 153-258v, various letters, many concerning new foundations:

ff. 153- 155, incipit, "Ad perpetuam rei memoriam, Tertiarum omnium ...";

ff. 155rv, then continues f. 156rv (another scribe began the following document on 156; this is copied around it with a formal tie mark);

f. 156, *Confirmatio exemptionis omni noua exemptione ac certorum priuilegiorum quorum tenores habetur professis*, incipit, "Ad perpetuam rei memoriam, Romanum pontifex pacem et <quietem?> semper desiderans subditorum ... pro parte dilectorum Ludouici abbatis et conventus monasterii beatorum Marie et petri apostolorum ... ordinis sancti bernardi Senonentii diocesis ..";

f. 157rv, *Committitur erectio vicarie et receptio illius cui habeat conferrri in canonicorum ordinis sancti Augustinum et reseruatio iuris nominari dei et profundi ...*, incipit, "Ex iniuncto nobis de super apostolice seruatis officio ad ea libenter intendimus per que beneficia ecclesia ualeant ubilibet propagacio et Regularem vitam ... pro parte dilecte fili magistrum Antonii de Narbonesio presbiterum <Caturcensis diocesis> ... canonicos prior.. beate marie de Caylario ordinis sancte Augustine Lemouinencii dyocesis ...";

f. 158, *Committitur Erectio cap[itule] iuxta voluntatem testatoris defuncti et apostolica bonorum pro eis dote cum prestate compellendum detentores ad illi consignandum ac reservatio Iuris prioratis quotiens per... hac prima uite uacarie ... ac prouisio illius ab illa .. fundatione vacantis ..*, incipit, "Beatissime pater Olivi quondam angeletus ... quod in ecclesia sancti angeli dicti castri una perpetua <capma?> pro vno perpetuo capellano missas et alia diuina ...":

ff. 158rv, incipit, "Ex iniuncto nobis de supri quamquam insufficientibus meritis apostolice ... quod oliui quondam angeletus eni .. Spoletanii diocesis ...";

ff. 159, incipit, "Ad perpetuam rei memoriam, Ex iniuncto nobis de super quamquam insufficientibus meritis apost. .. officio ad rei libenter intendimus ... quod oliui quondam angelus ... anno videlicet Mcccclxxxxxii de bonis ...";

ff. 159v-160, *Erectio, Committitur resignatio parochialis ecclesie et suprimitur nomen rectoris illius ac in illa ..*, incipit, "Iudex ...";

ff. 160v-161, *Cessio regiminis monasterii monialium cum pensione procede. Et supressio ordinis ... ac erectio ...*, incipit, "Romanum pontificis prouidenter ...";

ff. 161-162, margin: "Erectio cappellanis ...";

f. 162v-163, a petition with marginal notes underlining important points, for example, "Conceditur episcopo ...", "petitur ...," etc.;

ff. 163v; ff. 164-165v, note in the margin, f. 164v, "Licentia ..", "Reservatio ..", "exemptio ..."; ff. 165v-166v, short judgement; ff. 167-169v, long petition with marginal notes, 169v-172, petition followed by short judgements, f. 172;

ff. 172v, margin: "pro erectione cappelle" [ends mid folio, remainder blank];

f. 173, *Confirmatio erectionis capellane per ordinarium confirmate cum certis patris <?> inter fundatorie et rectorem ecclesie in ...*, incipit, "Ad perpetuam rei memoriam, Per fidelium vota ex quibus ...";

f. 173v, *Confirmatio concordie inter episcopum et capitulum Nicien[cis] ex una ac comitatem Nicien[cis] ex alia partibus ...*;

ff. 174-175; f. 175rv, *Erectio Capelle in college...*;

ff. 176rv, margin: "Nova erectio prioratus ...," [Ends top f. 176v, end of quire, f. 177 blank].

ff. 177v-178, margin: *Erectio <capelle?>*, incipit, "Alexander, Dilectis filius archiepiscopo et ... ac antonio de boniensis, Inter curas ...";

ff. 178v-179, John XXII (1316-34), margin: "Erectio studii generalis in civitatis caturcensis [Cahors]"; incipit, "Johannis pape xxii, Ad perpetuam rei memoriam, ... pontificatus nostri anno sextodecimo"; [f. 179v, blank]

ff. 180-181v, Theodoricus [?];

ff. 181v-182v, Innocent VIII, dated 1485;

ff. 183-186v, Alexander VI, margin: "monasterio supprimitur";

ff. 186v-188, Sixtus IV [f. 188v, blank];

ff. 189-190v, incipit, "Alexander, Venerabili fratri episcopo constanencium, Vt inter beatudinis amatrices habitu sacre religionis ...";

ff. 191-193, margin: "translatio ecclesie..."; [f. 193v, blank];

ff. 194-197v, incipit, "Dilectio filius maioris et sancte marie in Gallinei ...";

ff. 198rv, Alexander IV, 1254-61, *Confirmatio erectionis .. ecclesie ...*;

ff. 199-202v, margin: "Erectio cappellanis";

ff. 203-208, Alexander VI, 1494;

ff. 208-212, margin: "probatur fundatoris ecclesie";

ff. 212v-214v; ff. 215-216v, incipit, "Dilectis filiis prori priotatus sancti saluatorum ...";

ff. 217-218, Alexander VI, 1500, incipit, "Dilectis filiis Reginaldo subdecani et <?> de sancti c<?> > ecclesie ...";

ff. 218v-219, Alexander VI, 1502; ff. 219v-220v, Sixtus IV, 1480; ff. 220v-222v, Sixtus IV, 1484; ff. 222v-224v, 1502; ff. 224v-225, margin: suppressio; ff. 225-226 [ends top; remainder and f. 226v, blank];

ff. 227-228v, incipit, "Sacre religionis sub qua dilecti filii <servos?> ordinis predicatorum ...";

ff. 229-231v, margin: "Erectio parrochialis in Collegiatam, motu proprio", incipit, "Sixtus iv, Ad perpetuam rei memoriam, Ex superio prouidentia ...";

ff. 231v-232v, incipit, "Hodie motu proprio parrochialum .. Ville de Alesto ...";

ff. 232v-234, Sixtus IV, margin: "confirmatio dicte rectionis";

ff. 234-235, Sixtus, margin: "Vno prioratus"; ff. 235v-236, Innocent VIII; ff. 236-237v, Alexander VI;

ff. 237v-239v, Julius II, *Confirmatio cum nova erectionis duorum* ...;

ff. 240-242v, Alexander VI;

ff. 243-245v, Alexander VI, *Committitur confirmatio erectionis vnus et erectio alterius beneficorum* ...;

ff. 245v-251, Alexander VI, *Suppressio monasterii* ...; [ends top f. 251, remainder, and ff. 251v-258v blank];

### Section VII, letters confirming unions:

ff. 259-350v, beginning with a heading, "Vniones"; in the margin, "Vnitur parrochialis"; sixty-nine letters confirming the unions of parishes, monasteries, etc.; most are not dated and lack headings with the names of the Popes [contents are not calendared completely]:

Selected entries include:

f. 290, a short paragraph that clearly seems to be a note concerning a union, to be copied in full at a later date;

ff. 319rv, Nicolas [V?, 1447-55], incipit, "Nicolaus episcopus servus servorum dei ad futuram rei memoria ..Ex iunctio nobis de super ...";

ff. 321, margin: Gregorii, *Confirmatio vnionis autem ordinaria facte de duobus prioratibus ad invicem* ...;

f. 343, Leo X, in the sixth year of his reign, i.e. 1519, incipit, "Dilectis filio decano .."; [ending f. 346v; ff. 347-350v, blank];

This manuscript includes copies, or perhaps drafts, of more than two hundred Papal letters. In a general sense, therefore, we can consider it a Papal Register—a copy of outgoing documents kept by their originator. However, many of its characteristics are unusual, and raise significant, still-unanswered questions. The letters vary widely in content and type, addressed to recipients across Europe. Many are answers to petitions, and other letters address the foundation of parishes, chapels, churches, and monasteries – sometimes addressing the suppression of one foundation and the establishment of a new one. The manuscript concludes with letters that concern "unions," often the union of different parishes. There is some very general organization within the manuscript according to these different types of documents, but it is certainly not strictly adhered to. Within some sections the contents are in a general chronological order, but again, this is often disrupted. This is not a formal manuscript. Numerous scribes, most of whom use very quick, current scripts and numerous abbreviations, copied out the documents on paper.

Although it is likely that the Papacy kept copies of the letters it sent out across Europe from early in its history, the *Registra Vaticana*, systematic registers of letters, date only from the Papacy of Innocent III (1198-1216). This series of formal parchment volumes continue into the last half the



sixteenth century. The registers dating from after 1378 until the Council of Trent are the least studied series. Given this fact, it is likely that many of the letters in our manuscript, most of which date c. 1490-1519, have never been published (see Boyle, 1972, p. 108).

Our volume is certainly not a formal register like Vatican Registers, and the question of the exact circumstances of its origin is perhaps its greatest puzzle. The series of registers kept by the Avignon Papacy, however, which were quite different from those kept in Rome, may shed some light on the problem. As Leonard Boyle has observed, although the term Register is usually used to describe file-copies of incoming or outgoing letters, the Avignon letters were instead drafts, minutes and copies of letters. In contrast with the formal Vatican Registers, they are on paper, and also at times include letters from earlier or later popes within a given volume (see Boyle, 1972, esp. p. 120, and, in general, pp. 114-131).

Another series of registers, the Lateran Registers are paper registers of common letters beginning with the Great Schism of 1378. The Vatican registers continue, and include letters of the Camera; the Lateran registers, however, include Chancery letters, including benefices, pardons, dispensations, and indulgences. It is worth noting that the Lateran Registers were taken to Paris in 1810 by Napoleon, and although they were returned in 1817, many of them were lost (thirteen of these are now in Trinity College, Dublin). The Lateran Registers, however, in contrast with the Avignon series – and in contrast with our volume – are formal copies. Supplications and the papal reply were also registered in yet another series, known as the Register of Supplications starting in 1342. One section of our volume, ff. 128-152, is striking similar to this Register in contents and script.

The origin of our manuscript, therefore, deserves careful study by experts in Papal diplomatics to determine its relationship both to the final copies of the documents on the one hand and to the copies found in various Registers on the other. Its script and format suggest that at least some of its contents may in fact be drafts of letters, comparable to the earlier Avignon Registers (on f. 290 there is a short paragraph that must be a note, recorded for use late in registering the whole letter). Its relationship to the Register of Supplications also deserves careful analysis. If this volume is in fact a collection of drafts of letters, or even a preliminary register of some type, later to be drafted in a formal copy, it is a rare survival of tremendous potential interest to historians of the papal archives.

Most of the letters included in the volume date from the reigns of Popes Sixtus IV (1471-1484), Innocent VIII (1484-1492), Alexander VI (1492-1503), Pius III (1503), and Julius II (1503-1513); the final letter is from Leo X (1513-1521); documents from Alexander VI are probably most common. Earlier letters are also included sporadically. One of special interest on ff. 178v-179 is a letter of Pope John XXII from the sixteenth year of his papacy, or 1332, establishing a *studium generalium* at his birthplace in Cahors; this letter is different than the Bull from the same year, also authorizing the establishment of a University in Cahors printed in James Walsh, *The Popes and Science, the History of Papal Relations to Science during the Middle Ages and Down to our own Time*, New York, Fordham University Press, 1908, p. 418.

The Renaissance popes represented in this volume are among the most illustrious and infamous in the history of the Church, and wielded tremendous temporal as well as spiritual power across Europe. Alexander VI or Rodrigo Borgia, has been the subject of lurid tales of murder and corruption, most without basis in fact; his current biographers note that his skill as a jurist, politician, and administrator, as well as his patronship of the arts should be remembered alongside his admitted devotion to sensuality and his overly fond love of his many children. Julius II, his rival, was the great rebuilder of Rome and the patron of Michaelangelo, as well as a decidedly worldly pope of great political ambition.

## LITERATURE

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Katterbach, B. *Inventario dei registri delle Suppliche*, Vatican City, 1932.

Levilain, Philippe, general editor. *The Papacy: an encyclopedia*, English edition of *Dictionnaire historique de la papauté*, New York, Routledge, 2002.

## ONLINE RESOURCES

Piccard Online:

<http://www.piccard-online.de/ergebnis1.php>

Chronological list of popes with links to their biographies in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12272b.htm>

Sägmüller, Johannes Baptist. "Ecclesiastical Letters," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 9, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1910. 10 Sept. 2009:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/09202a.htm>

Thurston, Herbert. "Bulls and Briefs," in *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1908. 17 Sept. 2009:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03052b.htm>

Kirsch, Johann Peter. "Papal Regesta." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*. Vol. 12, New York: Robert Appleton Company, 1911. 13 Sept. 2009:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12715a.htm>

The Vatican Archives; the Diplomatics of Papal documents:

[http://asv.vatican.va/en/dipl/1\\_papaldocuments.htm](http://asv.vatican.va/en/dipl/1_papaldocuments.htm)

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