DESCRIPTIVE HANDLIST OF THE ARCHIEPISCOPAL ARCHIVES, FLORIANA

Joseph Busuttil

The list of the written material available for consultation at the Archbishop's Curia had been drawn up by the late Mgr. Arturo Bonnici in 1974.[1] Since that time most of the Curia archival material has been transferred from Valletta to the new Curia in Floriana. Those documents which one can consult are to be found partly on the ground floor in that section of the Curia next to the Chancellor's office and partly in one of the large halls on the first floor.

The purpose of this short paper is precisely to draw up a list of all the material that has been catalogued and indexed since Mgr. A. Bonnici's departure and which one can consult on the first floor. Each volume, bundle of documents or case has its own separate index. In addition, however, there are card indexes and general indexes. Those related to pre-nuptial material have been made for the most part by Mr. Lawrence Zahra, one of the Curia officials.

A. CONTI (C) – 120 cases containing hundreds of bound and unbound *fasciculi* or fascicules of the 17th and 18th centuries. These include the financial accounts sent to the Curia from time to time by the different procurators of those churches and monasteries in Malta and Gozo which fell under the Bishop's jurisdiction. A card index is also available.

B. SCRITTURE del '500 – 46 box files containing documents ranging from *processi* to lists of all sorts. Most of them are original writings and some of them predate the coming of the Knights to Malta.

C. SUPPLICATIONES (S) – 72 cases of petitions or requests made to the various Bishops or Vicars General between the years 1602 to 1960. Earlier petitions are to be found among those documents already referred to under the heading *Scritture del '500*, above. Those sent after 1960 can be read in the bound volumes of *Suppliche* housed on the ground floor.

D. PATRIMONIA SACRA (PS) – 360 box files containing documents related to the *Patrimonium* which every cleric was expected to have (1618-1877). A card index can also be used.

E. In between the volumes of *Conti* and the *Patrimonia Sacra* there are shelves containing the following :

    i. 15 box files of written material concerning female convents or monasteries. They include *Patrimonia*, *Professiones* as well as a few registers.

1. A. Bonnici, ☐The Archiepiscopal Archives, Malta☐, *Melita Historica*, vi, 3, 1974, 306-12.

   ii. 7 box files of *Inventaria* and 11 of *Visitationes*, that is, papers connected with Episcopal visitations; 3 box files of bequests made *ad pias causas*; 1 of *Relationes Parochorum* and another of *Indulgentiae et Reliquae*.

   iii. 9 box files of *Quaestiones* or *Causae* referred to Rome (*Melivetana*).

   iv. 8 box files of writings termed *Varia*, that is papers not classified under other headings. Four of them contain parchments.

   v. 4 box files of writings entitled *Edictorum Supplementum*, that is writings including Pastoral Letters, and a fifth box file of *Mandata* and circulars issued by different Vicars General.

   vi. Finally 4 box files containing lists and privileges of Curial *Alarii* and *Servientes* of different churches.

F. ACTA and PROCESSUS of the early part of the nineteenth century. Some other similarly indexed bundles, also containing *Acta* or *Processus* of the same century, are to be found in the adjoining space behind the hall.

G. CORRISPONDENZA e RESCRITTI (CR) – 104 volumes or cases, the last four of which are called *Corrispondenza Speciale*. They contain letters and other written material from the seventeenth century to 1959, sent by or addressed to the various Bishops of Malta.

H. ARTE SACRA (AS) – 4 volumes or large cases of *Petitiones* made and presented on behalf of the different parish priests and rectors of churches. A fifth case includes the minutes of the meetings of the *Commissio* set up by Bishop Mauro Caruana. The corresponding sketches and plans are to be found in a separate cupboard. A card index is also available.

I. VISITATIONES of Mgr. M. Caruana (VMC) – 3 thick volumes or cases. The same shelf contains 3 or 4 volumes of *Facultates* or *Licentiae* granted to priests from 1602 onwards. It also contains the newly-indexed ninth volume of *Varia*.

J. PROPRIETÀ (PF) – 88 volumes or cases containing hundreds of *Processus* of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries compiled for the purpose ascertaining the value of certain lands. The first 15 cases contain writings dealing with lands in Gozo, the rest with lands in Malta. Each fascicule generally includes *Mappae* or sketches of the lands in question. A card index is also available.

K. DIMISSORIAE (D) – 24 volumes or cases of dimissorial letters (1602-1914).

L. DICTA-INFORMATIONES-RUBRICAE (DIR) – 30 large box files containing documents related to different *Processus* of the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

M. MANDATA (M) – 12 volumes or cases containing written instructions given by the different Vicars General from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries.

N. BASTARDELLA ACTORUM CIVILIUM (BAC) – 31 bound and unbound *Bastardella* or registers (1606-1784) complementing in more respects than one the volumes of *Acta Civilia* on the ground floor.

O. STATI LIBERI (SL) – 204 volumes or cases of pre-nuptial files (1573-1891).

Beginning from 1896 these types of documents were either bound so as to form separate volumes or else, as is the custom in our times, left unbound. Most of the documents from 1892 onwards have a separate index.

P. In addition to these groups or bundles of documents the upper floor also houses other writings connected with marriage, namely, dispensations, freedom of marriage papers connected with marriages to be held outside Malta and registers of banns. With the exception of the latter (covering the period 1715 to date), all the groups of bundles or volumes have their own separate index which, for the most part, has been compiled by the office which handles pre-nuptial matters, as is still the case today.