

The Collection of Mediaeval and Renaissance Manuscripts at Trinity College, Dublin

Section I. The Roman Inquisition

The complete microfilm of one of the world's great manuscript libraries is an event that will be welcomed by scholars working in all subject areas. Although it is best known for its great Gospel Books, Trinity College Library is the home for a large, comprehensive, and often surprising collection of mediaeval and renaissance manuscripts.

The manuscripts of the Roman Inquisition are an important and fascinating part of the collection. They are divided into three groups; the first consists of 12 volumes of copies of pontifical briefs and bulls. Some of the more interesting date from the time of the Great Schism; another volume encompasses the reign of Rodrigo Borgia, Pope Alexander VI. The volumes in this section probably came from the Roman Dataria or Chancery.

The second group, covering the period 1564-1659, consists of nineteen volumes of the original sentences handed out by Inquisitors all over Europe. It is easy to see why the Inquisition was so feared: a heretic was usually publicly executed, a fate that may have come as a welcome relief after his interrogation. But abjurants did not escape punishment either; many were condemned to life imprisonment, others to a life working the galleys. It is not a coincidence that this collection begins in 1564, the same year as the first session of the Council of Trent, which may be credited with renewing the verve and drive of the Catholic Church. These manuscripts provide excellent examples of the zeal with which heretics were hunted and punished.

The third group is made up of thirty-five volumes of proceedings for witchcraft, heresy, blasphemy and immorality (both clerical and monastic). All of these trials took place in the provincial courts of the Inquisition in Italy and the story of how the manuscripts arrived in Dublin is a fascinating one. It is only due to Napoleon that they left Italy at all; some were returned later in the century, others were separated from the main set, to be purchased by the Duke of Manchester in 1841. They changed hands again, before being presented to Trinity by the Rev. CW Wall in 1854.

Such a collection of records is rare outside Italy and will be of great value to scholars of 15th - 18th century religious history.

LIST OF CONTENTS OF REELS

Reel Ms Title/Description

Series I: Pontifical Briefs & Bulls, copies of which are in the Bullarium Romanum.

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|---|------|---|
| 1 | 1223 | Vol I. Boniface IX, 1389 (Imperfect)
Vol II. Eugenius IV, 1434 |
| 2 | 1223 | Vol III. Eugenius IV, 1439
Vol IV. Pius II, 1463 |
| 3 | 1223 | Vol. V. Innocent VIII, 1489
Vol VI. Alexander VI, 1492-96 |
| 4 | 1223 | Vol VII. Clement VII, 1530
Vol VIII. Paul IV, 1556 |
| 5 | 1223 | Vol IX. Pius IV, 1561-2 (begins from f. 29 and wants ff 150-172)
Vol X. Benedict XIV, 1745 |
| 6 | 1223 | Vol XI. Pius VI, 1778 & (at end) 1777 |
| 7 | 1223 | Vol XII. Pius VI, 1784-87 |
| 8 | 1223 | Vol XIII. Two fragments... Lib 2, Anni VI,
SSmi D. N. Clementis XIII, ff. 1-20; Anni IX, ff. 562-579 |

Series II: Sentences of the Inquisition

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| 8 | 1224 | Vol I Sentences, 1564-68
Lists crimes and punishments; most heretics were publicly executed and even abjurants were forced to undergo 'penances' such as working five years on the galleys. |
| | 1225 | Vol II Sentences and abjurations, 1580. These are mainly from towns in Italy, the Inquisitors being specially delegated from Rome. |
| 9 | 1226 | Vol II Sentences and abjurations, 1581-2. F. 139 is the account of a Franciscan friar suspected of heresy for practising sorcery. He was sentenced to three years in the galleys of Venice, or if he was considered unable to endure that, five years imprisonment. |
| 9 | 1227 | Vol IV Sentences & abjurations, 1582
F.88 The Bishop of Savona was deprived of his see for favouring heretics.
Trials of several Englishmen. |
| 10 | 1228 | Vol V Sentences & abjurations, 1603
Several cases of priests accused of sorcery. |
| | 1229 | Vol VI Sentences & abjurations, 1607
Two Calvinists abjure their Protestant faith, and are given light penances. |

<i>Reel</i>	<i>Ms</i>	<i>Title/Description</i>
11	1230	Vol VII Sentences & abjurations, Jan - June 1615 Most of the cases are of converts born to heretic parents, who present themselves spontaneously. Many are cases of soldiers taken prisoner by the Turks and who were forced to profess Mohammedanism. They all declare that they never actually denied their Christian religion and are under suspicion of apostasy.
	1231	Vol VIII Sentences & abjurations, 1628
12	1232	Vol IX Proceedings 1635-39 This volume contains denunciations and examinations and should really be included with the third series.
	1233	Vol X Sentences & abjurations, 1650 Heresy polygamy and sorcery.
13	1234	Vol XI sentences etc., 1651 Mainly for sorcery, but also includes cases of heresy and bigamy. There are also several professions of the Orthodox faith by Oriental schismatics.
	1235	Vol XII Sentences etc., 1657 Chiefly for sorcery.
	1236	Vol XIII Sentences etc., 1658 Includes names of English converts.
14	1237	Vol XIV Sentences etc., 1659
	1238	Vol XV Liber Sententiarum et Abjurationem, 1608 F.269 is the case of a Spaniard who had been persuaded to turn to Islam on being told that he was of Moorish descent, but on coming to Valladolid and seeing 'la grandezza della fede Catholica', he returned to the Church.
15	1239	Vol XVI Liber sententiarum et abjurationum, 1610
	1240	Vol XVII Liber sententiarum.... 1652 Several Greeks make professions of faith. A Welsh soldier abjures his heresy.
16	1241	Vol XVIII Liber sententiarum.... 1654 The cases are mainly confessions of heresy or sorcery, with several of polygamy or blasphemy.
	1242	Vol XIX Liber sententiarum.... 1655 Cases are similar to above.
Series III		
17	1243	Vol I Depositions of witnesses in the process against the Bishop of Policastro.
	1244	Vol II 'Sancti Offici Sponte Compartmentium coeptus die 28th Decembris 1655'. Denunciations and examinations; English names are numerous.

<i>Reel</i>	<i>Ms</i>	<i>Title/Description</i>
18	1245	Vol II cont. Vol III Liber Sponte Comp., 1627-29 Again, mainly denunciations, many involving English people.
19	1246	Vol IV Depositions etc. in various cases taken at Naples chiefly against ecclesiastics, 1631-38.
20	1247	Vol V Cases of polygamy in Milan, 1632-35 Ff. 1-272 are occupied with the case of Don Diego di Cordova
21	1248	Vol VI Copies of proceedings in various towns of Italy, 1631-38.
	1249	Vol VII 1636-1711 This document begins with a case of sorcery in Rome.
22	1250	Vol VIII 1672-90 Cases mainly from Ancona and Siena.
	1251	Vol IV 1669-1710. Ancona etc. Information on a sect known as 'Quietists' in Ancona.
23	1252	Vol X 1692-97 Cases from Rome and Bologna.
	1253	Vol XI Parma and Borgo Sandonino 1697-8 Conta Dominicum del Prato ponsum Reum....
24	1254	Vol XII Bisanzone e Roma 1690-1695
	1255	Vol XIII 1694-98 Faenza, Avignon, Viterbo Cases of heresy and blasphemy.
24	1256	Vol XIV 1687-1710 Milan, Rome, Florence, Malta, Cremona, Naples.
25	1257	Vol XV, 1699 & 1701 Spoleto: informatio de vita et moribus necnon de conceptu et fama Theclae Baldini
	1258	Vol XVI, 1707-1710 Bologna, Cremona etc.
26	1259	Vol XVII, 1693-1726 Rome, Perugia, Saluzzo etc. Mainly trials for blasphemy.
	1260	Vol XVIII, 1632-1710 Spoleto, Ancona, Venoza etc. F.325 is a memorial to the Pope from the Hebrew community in Ancona in which they recount the briefs issued by former popes for their protection. This document was provoked by the anti-Semitic behaviour of the Anconian Christian community.
27	1261	Vol XIX, 1627-1715 Turin, Mantua, Cremona, Rimini, Vicenza, Modena. F.595 concerns a monk who, in 1640, intended to abandon certain articles of the Catholic faith, but a vision which appeared to him three nights running made him change his mind.

<i>Reel</i>	<i>Ms</i>	<i>Title/Description</i>
	1262	Vol XX, 1718-1788 Venice, Rimini, Spoleto. Copy of the proclamation by The Grand Master forbidding all to assist the Corsairs under penalty of 5 years in the galleys.
28	1263	Vol XXI, 1718-21 Faenza. One case concerns a nun who had dabbled in the heresy of Quietism; she was forced to denounce herself.
	1264	Vol XXII, 1717-21 Rome, Ancona, Spoleto, Malta, Mantua, Perugia.
	1265	Vol XXII, 1636-1711 Malta, Modena, Velletri, Florence, Genoa.
29	1266	Vol XXIV, 1718-27 Siena, Mantua, Trivento. It is evident from this volume that there was some dispute between the Inquisitor and the Bishop of Pienza as to the extent of the Inquisitor's jurisdiction.
	1267	Vol XXV, 1725-27 Rome, Perugia, Florence. Mainly cases of blasphemy & heresy.
30	1268	Vol XXVI, 1731-60 Florence. Documents relating to the controversy between the Holy Office & the lay ministers of the Grand Duke.
	1269	Vol XXVII, 1722-55 Venice, Spain. Includes material about a dispute between the Inquisition and The Republic of Venice.
31	1270	Vol XXVIII, 1768-84 Civita Vecchia. Includes a petition from galley slaves complaining of the inhumanity of their treatment.
	1271	Vol XXIX, 1783-95 Civita Vecchia. More complaints from galley slaves. Also several complaints from individuals against officials of the Inquisition.
32	1272	Vol XXX, 1632. 1721-89 Rimini, Malta, Venice. F.8 Papers relating to the church of SS Simon and Jude in Rimini which was destroyed by an earthquake in 1786. Subsequent ff. refer to repairs.
	1273	Vol XXXI, 1785-90 & 1697 Rimino & Faenza. F.374 Complaint about a company of actors who represented the tragedy of Samson in the theatre.

<i>Reel</i>	<i>Ms</i>	<i>Title/Description</i>
33	1274	Vol XXXII, 1630-35 Perugia, Naples etc. F.669, Forli 1634 is about writings of a diabolical nature found in the chamber of Agnostini de Providenti, guardian of the convent of Forli.
	1275	Vol XXXIII, 170, 1710 Rome & Spoleto
	1276	Vol XXXIV, Venice. Circa la reperizione del supposto Cadavere di Fr. Paolo Sarpi.
34	1277	Vol XXXV, 1692-1727 Various cases from Malta, Milan, Fiorenza, Rome & Spoleto. At the end of f.86 is a short table of contents to this volume.
	1277a	Volume of unlisted scraps, mostly indices.

SPECIAL NOTE: The descriptions given above include some of the more interesting cases noted by Abbot in his "Catalogue of the Manuscripts..." The Catalogue should be consulted for fuller information.

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The Collection of Mediaeval and Renaissance Manuscripts at Trinity College, Dublin. Section II. Secular Studies

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B: LAW

C: HERALDRY

D: GENERAL

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