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The Publication of Entries in the Papal Registers concerning Great Britain and Ireland

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The starting point of the present paper is not the general opening of the Vatican Archives for historical research, normally dated to 1880–1881. Almost fifty years before this date, work had already begun on locating sources for British history to be found there. From 1823, the British government employed the Prefect of the Vatican Archives, Marino Marini, to supply transcripts from the papal registers. The forty-eight volumes of transcripts that he prepared (with a further two volumes of indexes) cover a wide chronological range, from 1216 to 1759. They were initially stored in the State Paper Office, and in 1842 and 1845 they were transferred on the instructions of the Home Secretary, Sir James

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Graham, to the British Museum (now the British Library). This was done on the advice of Sir Frederic Madden, head of the manuscripts department at the British Museum. William Hamilton, Minister Plenipotentiary to the Kingdom of Naples, explained the background to the production of these transcripts in a letter of 19 November 1842 addressed to the Rev. Josiah Forshall, secretary of the British Museum, a copy of which is among the papers of Sir John Acton, first Lord Acton. It reads:

In reply to your obliging communication of the 17th respecting 'transcripts of the Papal Registers', which have been otherwise called 'Monumenta Vaticana', I have only to say, for the information of the Trustees of the British Museum, that I obtained permission from the Pope Leo XII to have these Papers transcribed from the Documents in the Vatican and elsewhere, in the year 1825, when on my return home from Naples, that I was much assisted in doing so by His Excellency the Chevalier Bunsen, that the Pope granted my request with the greatest readiness, acknowledging with courteous expressions the aid I had given my friend Canova, in recovering from the French Government in 1815, the pictures, statues, and other works of art, the spoils of Buonaparte in his early Italian Campaigns. On getting the Pope's permission, to have extracts and copies made of the Papal Correspondence with England, preserved in the Vatican, I drew up and signed a regular treaty for the purpose with the Abbe Marini, the Pope's Arcivista [sic], by which he bound himself to have the whole copied; and submitted to the Chevalier Bunsen for collation with the originals, and I bound myself to give him a certain fixed remuneration, at so much per volume, and an allowance for life. When I came home the Government of the time, to whom I reported what I had done, acceded to my offer that they should take up my engagement with the Abbate, – and in the course of about three years, the whole was completed. – Some of the early volumes were, as they were sent to me from Rome, submitted to the present Archbishop of Canterbury, who pronounced the contents to be highly interesting. The other volumes were sent direct to the Home Department. One of the Conditions between the Abbate Marini and me, was that the documents should not be published during his life or without his consent. This consent has long since been given, and I have made the same known to Mr. H. Hobhouse, Keeper of the State Papers, in whose custody they have now been for the last ten years or more. I think too that soon after the collection was completed, a Committee of three persons


5 Cambridge University Library, Add. MS. 8119/I/R117 (enclosed in Add. MS. 8119/I/R116, a letter of 13 January 1870 from Joseph Romilly to Acton). Hamilton's letter is cited by Chadwick, Catholicism (see note 4), p. 146 n. 16.

was appointed to examine the papers, but as I was not one of the three, I never knew what was the result of such examination or whether it ever took place.

The collection consists of 7,000 or 8,000 Documents: about half of that number I am told are of the period between Honorius III or IV and our Edward IV; these I am assured are in an uninterrupted series, – the other half are of later date, and with breaks in the series.

As far as I can form an opinion on Sir Frederic Madden’s suggestion, I see no objection whatever to their being transferred to the British Museum, and think indeed that that is the proper place for the preservation of Documents, which must be illustrative of many points in the history of the country.

There were fears that Marini’s transcripts were inaccurate and his selection of texts tendentious (in other words, that he omitted anything that might be interpreted as discreditable to the papacy). However, there was no means of checking whether these fears were correct, since only the staff of the Archives had access to the original manuscripts.

The earliest evidence of an English scholar being given access to the Vatican Archives comes not long after the preparation of the Marini transcripts. Thomas Stapleton, a member of a prominent Roman Catholic family, wrote on 28 April 1832 to his mentor and fellow-Roman Catholic, John Gage Rokewood, literary director of the Society of Antiquaries, as follows:

I got admission to the papal Archivium for the purpose of examining the original registers of the Popes. They do not commence before the 13th century, but contain numerous documents, – here I found all my intended labours anticipated, Monsignor de Marini the Archivist has for several years been employed in transcribing every document relating to England from the registers, as far at least as the miserable indexes would admit of. I collated his extracts with the originals and found them very correct; this valuable work he has now completed and appended to it a learned preface. The whole MSS [sic] has been sold to the English government and must now be in England.

It seems clear from this letter that Stapleton gained access to the original registers of papal letters at a remarkably early date, even though he limited his study of them to checking the transcripts made by Marini and did not, as far as I am aware, publish anything deriving from them. In this last respect he contrasts

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7 Chadwick, Catholicism (see note 4), pp. 25, 31. A similar charge could have been made against Augustin Theiner, Marini’s successor as Prefect, in his case the offending transcripts having been prepared for Johannes Janssen and Lord Acton: see Martina, Apertura (see note 2), pp. 265f.

with the Prussian scholar Georg Heinrich Pertz, who first consulted the Vatican Archives about a decade before Stapledon.9

In the 1860’s the question of gaining access to the Vatican Archives for England was again being aired. Among the principal proponents of such a scheme were Lord Romilly, who as Master of the Rolls has responsibility for the Public Record Office, the Roman Catholic historian Lord Acton, and Joseph Stevenson, an editor employed by the Public Record Office and a convert to Roman Catholicism. Stevenson’s involvement is apparent from his correspondence with Acton, in which he advises Acton about a letter that Acton was in the process of writing to Romilly concerning research in the Vatican Archives.10 That Acton struck the right note in this letter is apparent from Romilly’s reply of 26 September 1866:

_I have long been very anxious to obtain for the students of history an account as accurate as could be, of the documents contained in the Archives of the Vatican which I should expect to be the most valuable that could be examined, and I communicated on this subject with Dr. Russell the President of Maynooth11 … He has, I believe been using his utmost interest to obtain for England admission into the Vatican, but has not been able fully to accomplish his purpose, although he has had the countenance of the Pope and of Cardinal Antonelli.12 He was promised that if our Government would send to Rome a Roman Catholic Agent to ascertain what documents are in the Vatican relating to England he would be favourably received and every assistance given to him. But upon more minute enquiry Dr. Russell found that such agent would not be allowed admission into the Secret Archives where the most curious and valuable papers are preserved without interest and a liberal expenditure of money. Upon finding this to be the case I abandoned at least for the time being all intentions of applying to H. M. Government on the subject; but your letter had renewed my desire to obtain access to these papers & has induced me to believe that through your instrumentality it might be accomplished. I am therefore disposed to make an application to H. M. Government for this purpose: but before I do so I wish to know whether you could give me (approximately) a statement of what sum would probably be required for the purpose, you state a few hundreds; could it be done for 5 or 6? I wish also to know whether you will permit me to make use of your letter to me in my application to the Treasury, and also to state that the Agent whom the Government might send should receive your cooperation & assistance. If the Government entertained the proposal my advice would probably be asked concerning the person to be employed in which case I should consult you._13

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10 Stevenson’s letters are among Acton’s papers in Cambridge University Library, Add. MS. 8119/I/S215–217.
11 Charles William Russell (1812–1880), President of Maynooth College since 1857.
12 Pope Pius IX and the Cardinal Giacomo Antonelli, Secretary of State.
13 Cambridge University Library, Add. MS. 8119/I/115a (copy).
This letter illustrates the difficulties faced by those wishing to promote a scheme for which the approval of both the papal and the British government was necessary. Its contents are notably prescient. It was indeed a Roman Catholic, Joseph Stevenson, who was sent to Rome and his work was indeed financed by the British government. Stevenson was the first of a series of transcribers employed by the British government through the Public Record Office with a view to finding and copying documents of value to British history. He did not begin work until 1872, the year in which he was ordained, following the death of his wife. His mission was part of a wider programme of research promoted by the British government in foreign archives, including those of Vienna, Venice and Simancas, and many French repositories. There is no evidence to support the fears of Rawdon Brown, who was responsible for the Venetian Calendar, that Lord Acton had attempted to divert funds from that venture to the Roman one.

Stevenson concentrated on the reign of King Henry VIII. Somewhat optimistically the terms of his appointment stated that he was to proceed from that point as far as James II, then Mr. Stevenson is to commence with the reign of William the Conqueror, … and proceed down to the end of the reign of Henry VII … In other words, he was to cover the years 1066–1688, a period of over six centuries. Stevenson was soon reporting that the quantity of material is overwhelmingly large, far exceeding what he had expected. He was given almost unlimited access to the Archives. It is quite remarkable that the papal authorities favoured an employee of a non-Roman Catholic government, admittedly a convert to Roman Catholicism, in this way. Although from 1877 Elie Berger of the École Française de Rome was given access to the registers of Pope Innocent IV, Stevenson and the Norwegian scholar Peter Andreas Munch, who had worked in the Vatican Archives in 1859–1861, were apparently the only scholars given such wide access before 1879. It was in this year

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15 Cf. R. A. Griffiths, From private enterprise to public service. Rawdon Brown and the Venetian Archives, in: Griffiths/Law, Rawdon Brown (see note 14), pp. 73–97, at pp. 87f.
18 Poncet, Entreprises (see note 3), pp. 10f.
that another celebrated scholar began work – Ludwig Pastor, who also was given relatively free access to the Archives.20

However, Stevenson’s work did not proceed smoothly in every respect, as is apparent from the correspondence of Thomas Duffus Hardy, Deputy Keeper of Public Records.21 Stevenson was criticised by a dissenting minister, the Rev. John Waddington, and by a clerk of the Foreign Office stationed in Rome, Henry Clarke Jervoise. Little weight was attached to Waddington’s criticism. As Lord Acton, who was consulted about both critics, courteously put it: Something was heard in the winter of a Mr. Waddington, who threw doubts on Stevenson’s fidelity; but he seems to have been inspired more with theological zeal than with suspicion founded on facts.22 Clarke Jervoise stated in a letter of 23 June 1873 addressed to Lord Granville, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs:

I am told that original documents were placed before him and that he was allowed to make his own extracts: his papers were however retained, for examination, it was said, and have not been returned to him, as he had expected, but he has been furnished instead with what purport to be copies made from his own notes, and he has not been allowed any opportunity of comparing these copies with the original documents or the transcript made by himself:
If this be the case there can be no security that Mr Stephenson’s [sic] notes have not been garbled …
The above incident is a further proof of the extreme jealousy with which these Archives are withheld from the light of an open and fair examination.

Clarke Jervoise’s suggestions were taken more seriously than were Waddington’s. Hardy made enquiries of Stevenson,23 and he was soon able to report to Lord Romilly, whom Lord Granville had consulted, in reassuring terms:

The copies which were kept from him have been delivered up to Sir Augustus Paget, our Minister in Rome … The Roman authorities have detained his notes and memo-

21 PRO 1/122. The individual letters in this file are not numbered, but they are grouped together according to year. To avoid confusion, I should mention that, in this and the following footnotes, PRO is the classmark of the section of the National Archives concerning the former Public Record Office’s own history, as described in: Guide to the Contents of the Public Record Office, vol. II, London 1963, pp. 241–243.
22 Letter of Acton to Lord Granville of 8 August 1873, copy in: PRO 1/122.
23 Letter of 2 December 1873, in: PRO 1/38 (non vidi).
Stevenson resigned at the end of 1876. It later emerged that not all the transcripts that he had made had been consigned to the Public Record Office. After his death, some were in the possession of the Jesuit historian John Hungerford Pollen and others in the archives of the Archbishop of Westminster, and the Deputy keeper Henry Maxwell Lyte attempted to secure them for the Public Record Office. Stevenson was succeeded by William Henry Bliss. Like Stevenson, he was a convert to Roman Catholicism – a point of more than purely biographical interest, for there was some criticism in England of the use by the government of Roman Catholics for editorial projects. William Turnbull, yet another convert, who had been employed in the Public Record Office to publish diplomatic papers from the reign of Elizabeth I, resigned in 1860 as a result of pressure from the Protestant Alliance. Not content with this success, the Protestant Alliance later accused Turnbull of having illicitly removed certain items from the Public Record Office. This charge was wholly without foundation. The authorities, aware of the strength of anti-Catholic feeling, declined in three cases to appoint Roman Catholics as editors. It was a curious twist that in 1863 Stevenson, just a few years after being appointed Turnbull’s successor, converted to Roman Catholicism. In the case of the Roman mission, there were compelling reasons for the employment of a Roman Catholic, for it is unlikely that the special conditions of work that Stevenson and Bliss enjoyed would have been extended to non-Catholics.

Bliss enjoyed similarly favourable conditions of work to those of Stevenson. He commented:

_Not many Popes have received such favours from England as to induce them to be specially liberal in opening their Archives to Englishmen, but as a fact Englishmen have received permission to make research that has been denied to others._

A change is evident in Bliss’ activities from 1880 onwards. In addition to transcribing (through his own efforts or with the help of _amanuenses_) sixteenth-century and later documents in Roman archives, he devoted considerable energy to examining the registers of papal letters of the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, making summaries of many entries concerning Britain and Ireland. He described his work in some detail in successive _Annual Reports of_
the Deputy Keeper of Public Records. His work was not greatly affected by
the general opening of the Vatican Archives, but on the occasion of its twenty-
fifth anniversary he wrote:

When the Archives were opened by Leo XIII to all nations I was invited by Card.
Hergenröther to come down and sit with the others instead of continuing to work in
the upper rooms, in order to avoid the jealousy of the new-comers.

One serious disadvantage of the work done by Marini, Stevenson and Bliss in
the Vatican Archives was that it was not published – unlike, for instance, the
documents edited by Rawdon Brown from Venetian and other north Italian
archives, which by 1884 filled six volumes (in eight parts). In 1889 there were
doubts about whether financial support for Bliss’ Roman mission would con-
tinue. The Deputy Keeper of Public Records, Henry Maxwell Lyte, visited
Bliss in Rome and proposed a change in the programme of research in the
Vatican Archives, which was accepted by the government: Bliss was now en-
trusted with the publication of entries in the papal registers concerning Britain
and Ireland. The publication The Calendar of Papal Registers was to take the
form of summaries in English.

In order to understand why this particular method of publication was
adopted, we must consider the policy that Maxwell Lyte adopted very soon
after becoming Deputy Keeper in 1886 concerning the publication of various
series of registers of the English royal government, registers that begin at the
end of the twelfth century and that take the form of rolls. The publications
consisted of calendars (or summaries or abstracts) of the enrolled documents,
for such was their number that publication in extenso was not a realistic pros-
pect. In this way, the Calendars of Patent Rolls, Close Rolls and other classes in
the Public Record Office were initiated. The first volume of the Calendar of

28 See, for instance, the description of the Lateran Registers of Boniface IX in: Annual Report of
the Deputy Keeper of Public Records 51 (1890), pp. 24–28. The first mention of this work is in:
29 Letter of 3 December 1905 to Johnson, in: PRO 1/144.
30 R. Brown (Ed.), State Papers and Manuscripts relating to English Affairs existing in the Ar-
chives and Collections of Venice and in other Libraries of Northern Italy, 6 voll., London
1864–1884. A further thirty-two volumes were published from 1890 to 1947.
31 See Bliss’ letter to Maxwell Lyte of 11 July 1889, in: PRO 1/144.
32 Sir Reginald Welby of H. M. Treasury wrote humorously to Maxwell Lyte: The Treasury will
approve the idea of your going to Rome (physically not religiously); letter of 11 March 1890, in:
PRO 1/169.
33 See Cantwell, Public Record Office (see note 26), p. 318. Maxwell Lyte referred to the scheme
the Deputy Keeper of Public Records 52 (1891), p. 22.
34 Maxwell Lyte announced his plans for the Calendar of Patent Rolls in: Annual Report of the
Deputy Keeper of Public Records 49 (1888), p. XIV.
Patent Rolls appeared in 1891, the first volume of the Calendar of Close Rolls the following year. In the case of each of these series of rolls, the attempt had previously been made to prepare calendars arranged according to the names of the places and persons to which the documents referred. The entries in the Close Rolls of 12 Henry III were published in this way in 1866, and the same occurred for the Close Rolls of 1–9 Edward I from 1881 onwards. In the context of the theme of the present volume, this point deserves emphasis, for the method of publication was not dissimilar to that later devised for the Repertorium Germanicum.\textsuperscript{35}

Maxwell Lyte, however, abandoned this method. He favoured instead a calendar which followed the order of the original rolls. As regards the English summary, Maxwell Lyte stated that

\begin{quote}
considering the undesirability of encouraging students to refer directly to invaluable manuscripts, which must suffer from frequent handling, I have caused the abstracts in the Calendar to be made so full that in ordinary cases no further information can be obtained from the Rolls themselves.\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

He prepared detailed instructions for those engaged on the Calendars of Patent and Close Rolls in order to ensure consistency of approach. Although calendars of English public records had been issued throughout the nineteenth century, the scale of the programme that Maxwell Lyte inaugurated was quite new, and his initiative resulted in the issue of large numbers of volumes in a short space of time.\textsuperscript{37}

It was natural that Maxwell Lyte should adopt the same method of publication when it came to the very extensive series of registers in the Vatican Archives. In a letter of 11 June 1890 addressed to Bliss, Maxwell Lyte was quite specific about the model to be followed:

\begin{quote}
My idea is that this Calendar – or at any rate that part of it which will deal with the medieval Regesta – should be printed uniformly with a Calendar of the Patent Rolls which is now in the press. For this purpose I send you some sheets of this work as samples by which you will see that most of the entries on the Patent Rolls can be reduced to one or other of a certain number of formulae. I believe that most of the entries
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{35} The Rev. F. C. Hingeston-Randolph adopted a similar method of publication (but with the records printed in extenso) for the registers of the bishops of Exeter, the first volume of which appeared in 1889; see D. M. Smith, Guide to Bishops’ Registers of England and Wales, London 1991, especially p. 77 (with some criticism of Hingeston-Randolph).


in the Regesta could be similarly treated, … The enclosed Calendar of the English, Scottish, and Irish entries on the first 131 pages of the first Register of Clement V. will give you some idea of the form in which I should like the Calendar to be prepared, although it probably contains many errors, due mainly to the fact that it has been made from the abstracts printed at the Vatican, instead of from the original MS.\[^{38}\]

Maxwell Lyte prepared detailed instructions concerning the method of publication.\[^{39}\] The Preface to the first volume of the resulting Calendar of Entries in the Papal Registers relating to Great Britain and Ireland, in briefly describing the method of publication, refers specifically to the Calendars of Patent and Close Rolls.\[^{40}\]

The work of Bliss on the Calendar can be traced in his correspondence with Maxwell Lyte, which survives in the National Archives.\[^{41}\] This correspondence documents in great detail the preparation and production of the Calendar. Bliss was not reluctant to inform Maxwell Lyte of the problems that he encountered; for instance, the unreliability of the Italian postal service, or the fact that the Abate Pressutti, the editor of the registers of Pope Honorius III (1216–1227), had ‘detained’ one of these volumes (Vatican Archives, Reg. Vat. 13), so that Bliss could not see it.\[^{42}\]

A considerable amount of criticism was directed at the first two volumes of the Calendar of Papal Letters. Bernard MacCarthy reviewed them very severely. His attacks on the Calendar\[^{43}\] were even taken up more than once in the House of Commons.\[^{44}\] Some of the criticism is justified. Bliss, for instance, had difficulty in adequately calendaring the longer and more complex letters and overlooked many letters which ought to have been included. Bliss’ shortcomings were recognised at the time. Thus, Charles Trice Martin of the Public Record Office was involved in checking volume 1 before its issue,\[^{45}\] and Charles Johnson, also of the Public Record Office, assisted with the index to volume 2.\[^{46}\] Indeed, Bliss was no more satisfactory as an indexer than as an au-

\[^{38}\] PRO 1/55, no. 194 (draft). Maxwell Lyte’s reference is to: Regestum Clementis Papae V ex Vaticanis architypis … cura et studio monachorum Ordinis Sancti Benedicti editum, which began to appear in Rome in 1885.

\[^{39}\] PRO 1/55, no. 216 (30 June 1890); Sayers, Vatican Archives (see note 1), p. 197.


\[^{41}\] Principally in: PRO 1/144. The individual letters in this file are not numbered.

\[^{42}\] Letter of Bliss of 25 January 1891, in: PRO 1/144. For the lack of space for readers in the Vatican Archives see below at n. 70.

\[^{43}\] See especially B. MacCarthy, A Calendar of Papal Registers, in: Irish Ecclesiastical Record 16 (1895), pp. 329–343. There is much material concerning MacCarthy’s attacks in: PRO 1/144.

\[^{44}\] See Sayers, Vatican Archives (see note 1), pp. 197–201.

\[^{45}\] See his letter to Maxwell Lyte of 17 November 1892, in: PRO 4/10/18.

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Thor of calendars, and Maxwell Lyte stated that he had *never allowed any of his indexes to be issued without independent revision*. Following the appearance of volume 2, and perhaps influenced by the criticisms of Bliss’ work, Maxwell Lyte seems to have accepted that Bliss needed a collaborator in Rome in order to continue his work on the Calendar. Johnson arrived in Rome at the beginning of the following year and assisted Bliss in various ways. He was jointly responsible for volume III. His letters to Maxwell Lyte show that he was of a rather different stamp from Bliss, taking an interest in German-language scholarship concerning the Vatican Registers.

Maxwell Lyte was also looking for someone to work with Bliss in Rome in the longer term. There were three possible candidates, Michael A. Costello, who later assisted with the indexing of Irish names in the Calendar, the eminent Oxford medievalist Reginald Lane Poole, who proved to be too expensive, and Jesse Alfred Twemlow, who was appointed. Twemlow had studied at the Ecole des Chartes and had been recommended by Frederick York Powell, Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford. He began work in October 1896. After meeting the Twemlows, Bliss reported to Maxwell Lyte: His wife is an active little Frenchwoman … He is a pleasant and bright man, but so Frenchified that I think he understands French more quickly than English. Relations between the Bliss and Twemlow were to be far from cordial. Bliss was soon writing to Maxwell Lyte complaining of Twemlow’s slowness, among other faults. Twemlow’s letters to Maxwell Lyte do not paint a more favourable portrait of Bliss. Maxwell Lyte clearly found it difficult to supervise the work of two scholars who were meant to be collaborating, but failing to do so effectively, in distant Rome.

Given that Bliss himself admitted that he worked too fast and made errors as a result, his criticism of Twemlow does not appear to be well founded, and there is no doubt that Twemlow was the more meticulous scholar of the two.

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47 Quoted in a letter from Twemlow to Maxwell Lyte of 15 May 1900, in: PRO 1/160. Cf. above at n. 46.
48 A letter of 17 November 1892 from C. T. Martin of the Public Record Office to Maxwell Lyte makes it clear that Martin had already been recruited to check Bliss’ work for volume 1: PRO 4/10/18.
49 These letters also survive in: PRO 1/144. He was back in Rome in 1904, now looking for additional materials concerning the reign of Elizabeth I.
50 The relevant correspondence is in: PRO 1/144.
51 See York Powell’s letter of 3 September 1895 to Maxwell Lyte in: PRO 1/160.
54 For example, letters of 8 and 15 November 1896, in: PRO 1/144.
55 Twemlow’s correspondence with Maxwell Lyte survives in: PRO 1/160. The individual letters in this file are not numbered, nor on the whole are they kept in chronological order.
56 See, for instance, his exasperated letter of 15 February 1900 to Twemlow in: PRO 1/160.
A long letter from Twemlow to Maxwell Lyte of 14 May 1897 makes clear how much revision of Bliss’ work was needed. It was perhaps fortunate that with the appearance of volume V in 1904 the involvement of Bliss in the Calendar largely ceased and he returned to transcribing post-medieval records in the Vatican Archives and elsewhere.

Maxwell Lyte recognised the improvements brought by Twemlow to the Calendar. Nonetheless, to judge from his correspondence with Twemlow, his relations with him were less cordial than with Bliss. He constantly complained about one or other of Twemlow’s alleged failings, especially his slow rate of progress. Twemlow made various proposals for improvements in the editorial method of the calendar. He suggested, for instance, with reference to the litterae secretae of Eugenius IV that they should be printed in Latin and in chronological order. These suggestions and most of his other proposals were not adopted by Maxwell Lyte.

Bliss, Johnson and Twemlow, were responsible for fourteen volumes of the Calendar containing papal letters, based on the Vatican and Lateran Registers and covering the years 1198–1492. Twemlow was the sole editor of most of these volumes. Bliss was responsible for one volume containing petitions to the pope, based on the Registers of Supplications. A letter of Bliss implies that a second volume was in preparation, but it never appeared. All these volumes were published under the auspices of the Public Record Office between 1894 and 1960.

In 1947 the Public Record Office relinquished responsibility for all Calendars that did not concern its own holdings, including the Calendar of Papal Registers, although, as we have seen, the last volume published under its aegis did not appear until 1960. Harold Cottam Johnson of the Public Record Office, writing to Rev. Aubrey Gwynn, S. J., in 1951 proposed that the Irish Manuscript Commission should take over editorial responsibility for the series. It is very fortunate that the Commission was willing to do so. It was

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57 In: PRO 1/160.
58 Letter of 26 May 1906 in PRO 1/160. See also his letter of 2 March 1897 in the same file.
60 Letter of 9 November 1902 to Maxwell Lyte, in: PRO 1/144: I hope the Volume of MS Calendar of Petitions, following the printed one, has been found.
61 Letter of 10 April 1951, in: PRO 1/1251: We decided in 1947 that we should have to suspend the calendars of foreign archives relating to Great Britain and to devote our limited funds, printing facilities and editorial resources entirely to the publication of the Records in our own custody. This decision was taken reluctantly, particularly in view of the great value, as we were assured, our Calendars of Foreign archives possessed for students. We were particularly sorry to bring to an end the Calendar of PapalRegisters, which we would like to have continued at least to the year 1534, possibly to 1558 … It seems to us desirable that the continuation should form part of
initially envisaged that Her Majesty’s Stationery Office would continue as the publisher, but eventually the Irish Manuscripts Commission assumed this role as well. The British Academy and more recently other bodies have provided additional financial support. In the revived series, six volumes, published in seven parts, have so far appeared, covering the years 1484–1521 and prepared by Michael Haren and Anne Fuller. These volumes of the Calendar display a number of editorial improvements vis-à-vis the earlier ones; for instance, the dating of letters according to the modern calendar (in addition to the Roman) and the provision of introductions, which discuss, among other matters, the processes by which papal letters were issued and the legal significance of the various clauses contained in them. There are now chronological indexes and indexes of incipits, fuller subject indexes than hitherto, and indexes of persons and places which identify British and Irish place-names (often garbled in the registers). The summary is more detailed and takes full account of the various legal clauses, which are crucial to an understanding of the letters. Also included are letters from the lost Lateran Registers when their contents are indicated in the extant tables of contents (the so-called rubricellae). It is intended that the series should continue until 1534. Mrs Fuller’s second volume covering the remaining Lateran Registers of Leo X is expected to appear soon, while Dr Haren is working on the registers of Adrian VI and Clement VII.

The Calendar of Papal Registers is the most frequently cited and the most substantial of the publications with which this paper is concerned. To a great extent the ground it covers – or rather the ground it does not cover – has determined the nature of the other publications of sources for British history in the Vatican Archives. I have mentioned that the Calendar of Papal Registers included one volume of petitions to the pope. This was published in 1897 and covers the years 1342 (when the registers begin) to 1419. Annie Dunlop (née Cameron) and several other scholars set about publishing the later Scottish petitions to the pope in the Calendar of Scottish Supplications to Rome, the first volume appearing in 1934. The Scottish History Society published the first three volumes, the University of Glasgow (through the Scottish Academic Press) the present series and should be similar in format and plan. A joint publication with the Irish Historical [sic] Manuscripts Commission would be very favourably considered, especially in view of the preponderance of Irish business. PRO 1/1251 and PRO 1/1350 are files concerning negotiations between the Public Record Office and the Irish Manuscripts Commission, 1951–1952.

62 The overlap with the first series is to be explained by the fact that the last volume of this series (vol. 14) covers all the Vatican Registers of Innocent VIII and the Lateran Registers of 1 Innocent VIII, while the first volume of the revived series (vol. 15) covers the remaining Lateran Registers of Innocent VIII.

following two, covering the period to 1471. A sixth volume, by James Kirk and Roland Tanner, is in preparation. Annie Cameron also published fifteenth-century cameral sources concerning Scottish benefices, the only volume of its type for any part of the British Isles, although earlier Michael A. Costello had begun to publish records of the annates payable from Irish benefices, and William Edward Lunt edited the financial accounts of fourteenth-century papal collectors in England.

Historians have frequently lamented the fact that the Calendar of Papal Registers completely ignored the Avignon Registers. Bliss was well aware that the Avignon Registers were the original registers from which most of the fourteenth-century Vatican Registers were copied. He was also aware that from the pontificate of Innocent VI (1352–1362) onwards not all the letters in the Avignon series were copied into the Vatican series, something that Heinrich Denifle had pointed out to him. Because of lack of space, it was not possible for a reader to consult more than one volume at a time in the Vatican Archives, and this presumably rendered impracticable a publication based on both series of registers. There were plans to publish a supplement to the first three volumes

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70 Bliss wrote to Maxwell Lyte on 30 January 1893: As the space allotted to each reader in the archives is no more than two feet, collation of two volumes of registers in not possible (PRO 1/144). Bliss later pointed out that lack of space made it difficult to compare the registers with printed works: letter to Maxwell Lyte of 7 October 1896, ibid. This provides a partial explanation, although by no means a sufficient excuse, for the failure of Bliss’ first volume to use earlier publications of the papal registers, notably the various editions for Innocent III (the most accessible being that printed in the Patrologia Latina), Pressutti’s for Honorius III (the first volume of
of the *Calendar* (to 1362), a volume which would have included those letters of Innocent VI in the Avignon Registers which were not copied into the Vatican Registers and therefore excluded from volume 3 of the *Calendar*. Later Charles George Crump of the Public Record Office proposed the publication of entries in the Avignon Registers concerning Great Britain and Ireland, beginning with John XXII. Neither of these plans reached fruition, although Crump’s memorandum was marked approved by Maxwell Lyte.

This deficiency in the *Calendar of Papal Letters* has been partly remedied by the massive series of calendars of *lettres communes* of the Avignon popes published by the École Française de Rome, which is based principally on the Avignon Registers. The series does not extend into the Great Schism, but the registers of the Avignon popes in this period are of especial interest for Scottish history, because the kingdom of Scotland, unlike England, was part of the obedience of Avignon. It is therefore very appropriate that calendars of letters of Clement VII and Benedict XIII concerning Scotland should have been prepared.

Scottish scholars have been pioneers in research in two distinct archives which have been transferred to the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, those of the Rota and the Apostolic Penitentiary. The Scottish entries in these archives have been identified and photocopied or microfilmed. The Manuialia of the Rota from 1464 (when they begin) until the abolition of papal jurisdiction in Scotland contain 374 Scottish cases. James Robertson is planning to publish the Scottish cases from the Manuialia and the other record series of the Rota in the form of summaries with full indexes. As far as I am aware, the publication

which appeared in 1885), Berger’s for Innocent IV (which began to appear in 1884), Prou’s for Honorius IV (1886–1888), Langlois’ for Nicholas IV (1887–1893), and A. Theiner (Ed.), *Vetera Monumenta Hibernorum et Scotorum Historiam illustrantia*, Rome 1864. However, all these works are cited in the Preface to Bliss, *Calendar* (see note 40), vol. 1.


72 Memorandum of 1 November 1908: PRO 4/10, no. 32.


of the petitions from Scotland in the registers of the penitentiary is not so far advanced.  

Since they became available for research in 1983, there has been considerable interest in the registers of supplications of the penitentiary, largely as a result of the work of Ludwig Schmugge and his collaborators. This applies to England and Wales as well as to Scotland. Peter Clarke and I have located and transcribed the petitions – over 4,000 of them – from the ecclesiastical provinces of Canterbury and York (that is to say, from England and Wales) in the fifteenth century registers. This material will be published, by the Canterbury and York Society, in the form of full transcripts of the more individual petitions and summaries in English of the more formulaic ones. It is planned to submit the work to the publisher in August 2011. Once these volumes are finished, we hope to continue the process of locating, transcribing and publishing petitions from England and Wales for the sixteenth century, that is, as far as the reign of Queen Mary (d. 1558).

A number of distinctive features of the study and publication of entries in the papal registers concerning Great Britain and Ireland emerge from the foregoing account. One is the pioneering work done by Scottish scholars in a number of series that had hitherto received relatively little attention: the registers of petitions, the records of the apostolic chamber, the registers of the penitentiary, and the manuals of the Rota. Another is that the most popular means of publication has been to calendar – that is, to summarise the contents of – the documents, in the English language, in contrast to the continental practice of either printing the entries in full or providing a summary in Latin. This method of calendaring, as we have seen, reflects the policy adopted by the Public Record Office in the publication of its own registers (or rolls) – an approach that was widely followed by British scholars in the case of records outside the Public Record Office, for instance, episcopal registers. The failure in the English-speaking world to maintain Latin as a requirement for advanced study in the humanities

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means that these publications are much more accessible today than if they had been appeared in Latin. Finally, I should mention one further respect in which the British and Irish experience differs from that of most other European countries: The publication of materials concerning Great Britain and Ireland from the Vatican Archives has never been the responsibility of a national research institute in Rome. The Calendar of Papal Registers was promoted by the Public Record Office and financed by the British government. Most of the other ventures have been more or less private in character, that is, the result of the initiatives of individual scholars. When after the Second World War the Public Record Office wished to give up its involvement in the Calendar of Papal Registers, it invited the British School at Rome to take over responsibility for the publication. However, the British School, which is primarily an institute for archaeology and the fine arts, declined to do so. It would be interesting to speculate on how the development both of the School and of British research in the Vatican Archives might have been affected if the response had been positive – but that is beyond the scope of this essay.

78 Sayers, Vatican Archives (see note 1), p. 203.