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# The Archive of the Crown of Aragon. Seven hundred years of history\*

**Alberto Torra Pérez\*\*** Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó (Archive of the Crown of Aragon) was founded by King James II of Aragon in 1318 as a royal archive housed in his Barcelona palace, and it has existed continuously ever since then. This article presents its history over the course of these 700 years, with a special focus on the circumstances that led to its creation, and it explains its evolution within a broader historical context. This uninterrupted history of the Archive since its origins spans its evolution from an administrative archive at the exclusive service of the monarch to a historical archive open to research and a more general public today.

KEYWORDS: archives, history of archives, registers, Royal Chancery

The English historian Norman Davies used the title 'Vanished Kingdoms' for an interesting examination of the history of European political entities which have disappeared under a diverse range of circumstances, despite their power and importance at some point in history. As its subtitle says, they became 'half-forgotten'.¹ The Crown of Aragon occupies a preeminent place among these vanished kingdoms due to its geographic extension, its lengthy history and its prominent role in European politics at the time. Yet its memory has also survived more than that of the other vanished kingdoms thanks to the abundance and wealth of the documents it left behind and the survival of the institution that has housed them for centuries, the Archive of the Crown of Aragon.

Condensing the Archive's long history is not easy not only because it is uninterrupted but also because it is rife with transformations. Furthermore, it is a widely documented history because the Archive also conserves extensive testimony of its own organisation, operation and even difficulties and conflicts. Such plentiful material is difficult to cover in its entirety and to summarise in just a few pages.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, we shall not dwell on the details of the Archive's vicissitudes, documents and archivists over the centuries but instead try to understand its nature and meaning over time and within its context by focusing on key junctures in its history.<sup>3</sup>

### I

We are commemorating the seven-hundredth anniversary of the creation of the Archive by King James II of Aragon in 1318, a relatively late date given the vast amount of documentation from the counts of Barcelona and the kings of Aragon conserved from the preceding centuries. This thus raises the first question, namely why it was created precisely at that time, which dovetails with a long debate on whether or not previous comital or royal archives had existed in both Aragon and Catalonia. Underlying this debate, as Carlos López stated in his painstaking article, is a legal and terminological problem.<sup>4</sup> It is fairly well proven that the counts of Barcelona took pains to save a large number of documents, at least after Ramon Berenguer I (1035-1076), as a significant number of documents directly related to his feudal power are conserved. However, this is not sufficient to consider it an archive. There are no direct or indirect reports of such an archive, and it seems unlikely for there to be because the legal concept of archive from the Romanist tradition—that is, as a place where public documents are stored, which can only be created by the sovereign, who guarantees their authenticity—did not begin to arise until the restoration of Roman law after the late twelfth century and was not commonly used in the Crown of Aragon until one century later. All the explicit references to the term 'archive' prior to 1300, including the oldest one from 1180,<sup>5</sup> are interchangeable with the more frequent words archa, cartolaria, archis, scrinia or archiva (in plural) to refer to the

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<sup>\*\*</sup> Contact address: Alberto Torra Pérez. Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó. Almogàvers, 77. 08018 Barcelona. E-mail: alberto.torra@cultura.gob.es

piece of furniture or the cabinet that contained documents, which could be deposited in different places and overseen by people outside the royal house.

In the thirteenth century, with the gradual expansion of the Crown's administrative needs, especially after the conquest of the Kingdom of Valencia, the number of documents produced by the royal Chancery increased parallel to its reorganisation and consolidation. But all the reports that could be related to archives always refer to dispersed, partial deposits of documents in religious institutions following the early mediaeval tradition which was widespread around Europe. 6 The most important of these deposits is the one set up by James I in Sixena monastery, mentioned for the first time in 1255. We have precise details on the number of documents it housed, up to 500 of them, and their content, mostly on relations with Castile and Navarra. The monastery's prioress was in charge of its operation and kept the key to the king's chest or cabinet. Royal functionaries sent explicitly for this purpose and duly identified with a royal mandate came to deposit, remove or copy documents in her presence. Even though there are only a handful of references to new deposits after the death of James I of Aragon (1276), the deposit remained in place until 1308, when James II ordered it moved to Barcelona.<sup>7</sup> We are aware of other less important and more or less provisional deposits from the time of James I and his immediate successors, including those at the monasteries of Santes Creus and Sant Joan de la Penya and at the Knights Templar headquarters in Barcelona and Zaragoza. All of them reveal similar conceptions and operations.8

We have to wait until James II for there to be a substantial change with lasting consequences as part of an indepth reorganisation of the royal administration. The registration system of the documentation issued, which had begun in the mid-twelfth century, was consolidated and developed under James II. It is important to underscore this because it lies at the root of the creation of the Royal Archive. Indeed, the very existence of archives since antiquity is closely related to the appearance of serial documentation. This is proven when examining the processes whereby other European royal archives and the archives of the Italian communes were created between the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. 9 Serial documentation implicitly comes with the need to conserve it, and therefore it must be stored properly and be available for consultation by the authority that created it. In short, it requires an archive.

Even though possible forerunners have been put forth, registers in the specific sense that this term had in the Royal Chancery, that is, the volumes in which most of the documents issued by the Chancery itself were copied in their entirety and put in chronological order, are associated with the practice of notaries and do not predate the reign of James I. Seven registers from 1257 to his death in 1276 are conserved. The small number of registers from James I and his two immediate successors, coupled with the no-

tably itinerant nature of the royal court, meant that they did not need to be conserved in any of the existing deposits and must have remained in the possession of the scribes.

As mentioned above, major changes came with James II. Almost all the documentation started to be registered more systematically, leading to an extraordinary increase in the number of registers. Around 40 volumes had been filled by 1300, only nine years after his reign started. Furthermore, their organisation was consolidated and expanded into different thematic series (*Commune*, *Gratiarum*, *Curiae*, *Pecuniae*, *Solutionum*, etc.), giving shape to a system that would survive until the eighteenth century with no major changes. This new situation, along with the court's greater stability and James II's well-known obsession with written documents and keeping control over them, fostered the creation of the Arxiu Reial (Royal Archive).<sup>11</sup>

After 1301, there is a great deal of information on the concentration of registers and other documents from James I and his successors at the Barcelona headquarters of the Order of Hospitallers. 12 This can be viewed as an intermediate step between the deposits of documents since the reign of James I and what would definitively become the Royal Archive. On the one hand, similar to Sixena, the king's scriniis sive caxiis were stored in a religious institution over which he did not have direct control. However, unlike Sixena, the keys to this chest or cabinet were no longer held by the prior but by a royal scribe, who ordered the collection moved and authorised copies. And not only did the scribe receive requests for particular searches, but he also created what were essentially comprehensive inventories. Indeed, the first 'reports' still conserved in the Archive today date from this period. 13 The deposit with the Hospitallers seems to have been planned as a single, general deposit to collect all the documentation that had been scattered around monasteries or in the hands of royal scribes or officers until then. Finally, perhaps as a reflection of this transformation, it came to be regularly referred to with the term 'archive'. Just one more step was needed for it to meet Roman law's definition of an archive as 'quo in publico instrumenta deponuntur': 14 it had to be assigned a site of its own under the direct oversight of the monarch.

This step took place in July 1318, when James II ordered rooms built at the site that was customarily used as the chapel in his Barcelona palace, so that 'les registres, els privilegis e els altres escrits de la sua cancellaria e dels altres fets de la sua cort' (the registers, privileges and other texts from his Chancery and other deeds from his court) could be stored there. At the same time, he ordered some basement quarters in the same palace to be made so 'fossen estoiats e conservats les comptes e les altres scriptures del offici del maestre racional de la sua cort' (the accounts and other deeds from the office of the Master Rational of his court can be stored there). Therefore, this order, which we only know of from the invoice for the construction expenses, refers to two different royal archives, those of the

Chancery or registers, and those of the Master Rational, which were always to remain separate.

Even though we should note that the term does not appear explicitly in the invoice, from then on references to the Archive of the registers and deeds of the Chancery are quite common and unequivocal, albeit with slight variations: 'Artchivum palacii regis Barchinone', 'Archivum nostrum regium Barchinone', 'Archivu patrimonial seu del palau de Barcelona' or more simply, 'Archivureyal de Barcelona'. <sup>16</sup> We should underscore the fact that the Archive was founded as the king's archive to exclusively serve the monarch, not the kingdom. Likewise, the bulk of its content, the registers, included documents related to all the kingdoms and territories under his sovereignty. At first, the organisation of these registers was only thematic, not territorial.

# Π

After the initial impetus to create the Archive, it probably languished slightly because it lacked specific staff and regulations. However, a quick phase in the Archive's institutional consolidation got underway after 1346, with the order given to the scribe Pere Perseya to be posted to the Royal Archive of Barcelona full time to 'reconèixer i conservar els instruments, escriptures i registres' (check and conserve the instruments, deeds and registers) housed there and to get the keys to the Archive and its boxes and cabinets from the protonotary.<sup>17</sup>

Similar duties appear in the appointment of his successor, Bartomeu Despuig, two years later. 18 In different orders, he is called 'tenens claves Archivi palacii Barchinone', 'conservator scripturarum patrimonii regii in Archivo Barchinone existencium' or 'conservador de les scriptures reals del nostre Archiu de Barcelona' (conservator of the royal deeds of our Archive in Barcelona). 19 The title of conservator refers to his essential mission to conserve and keep watch over the documents contained in the Archive. Other royal orders addressed to the archivists gradually defined their duties. The most common one consisted in locating the documents that the king requested, along with checking the authenticity of the copies of documents written in the registers and annotating cancellation notes. A list of expenses incurred in the archivist's work is even conserved, primarily related to the conservation, arrangement and binding of the registers, in addition to purchases of paper to write the copies.<sup>20</sup>

At the end of his long reign in 1384, Peter IV of Aragon, (1336-1387), known as Peter the Ceremonious, ended up consolidating the role of the Archive within his court, even though it was not explicitly mentioned in his *Ordinacions* (Ordinances of the Royal House of Aragon), through specific ordinances presented to the archivist so that 'ignorància no puxats allegar de ço que havets a fer en vostre offici' (you cannot plead ignorance of what you have to do in your job). They established the practice of

appointing the archivist or 'tenent les claus' (keyholder) from among the royal scribes, and they were directly under the orders of the chancellor and vice-chancellor. Regarding their training and aptitudes, it only said that they should be 'apte e feel' (suited and faithful). The duties assigned to the archivist were all related to the registers. First, they had to request them from the protonotary, the secretaries, the Master Rational, the queen, the primogenitor and the lieutenants because, it clearly specifies, 'mils seran atrobats en un loch que si en diversos lochs eren aquells registres' (the registers will be found more easily if they are in one place than if they are in many places). Afterwards, they had to be placed in chronological order, inventoried through an entry book, paginated and indexed. Finally, if needed, they had to be restored or, as literally stated, the archivist had to have them 'adobar o reparar' (patched or repaired).<sup>21</sup> Some instructions merely confirm existing practices, as mentioned above, while others seem new because they are only documented after this ordinance, such as the register entry book, which did indeed start that year, while its annotations continued until the seventeenth century.<sup>22</sup> Finally, yet others were never put into practice, such as the complete and exhaustive indexing of the registers.

In their attempt to regulate the conservation and handling of the registers, the ordinances reveal some of the most recurring practical problems. The most important one was ensuring that the registers were entered regularly. The registers of the protonotary and the secretaries remained in their hands or at the Chancery as long as they were still in use. However, the ordinances categorically stated that once the proceeding was over, all registers had to be handed over to the Archive, which was the single, sole depository of them all. Despite this, there were constant difficulties in adding registers from the very beginning. In 1399, King Martin of Aragon (1396-1410) had to enact an extensive provision that ordered that all his father's and brother's registers and deeds still in the hands of the protonotaries and the secretaries be turned over to the Archive.<sup>23</sup> Similar provisions appeared in 1416 and 1422.24 The entry book with the annotations of the registers that entered the Archive, though incomplete, attests to some regularity in the protonotary's delivery of registers, as well as several occasional anomalies. Despite the fact that the vast majority of registers from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries ended up entering the Archive and are still conserved there today in their original order, with just a handful of exceptions, the persistence of this problem forced Ferdinand the Catholic to set a ten-year timeframe from when a register was completed until it passed from the Chancery office to the Archive in the Corts (Parliament) of Barcelona in 1503. Despite occasional noncompliance, this ten-year timeframe to turn over the registers remained in place thereafter.<sup>25</sup>

The ordinances only mentioned the registers, whose oversight and conservation were the main reason the Archive was created. Yet they are not the only documents

that entered it. Though neither systematically nor via regulation, as the king's archive, it collected all kinds of documents that it was ordered to conserve, with vast differences depending on the reigns. For example, a great deal of documentation received in the Chancery from the first half of the fourteenth century and the reigns of James II and Peter the Ceremonious still survives, although it gradually tapered off until it disappeared after the sixteenth century. There were also large influxes of documents due to occasional confiscations, such as the Knights Templars of Barcelona and Barberá when their Order was disolved in 1312 and the barony of Castellvell in 1397.

### III

The dynastic change in 1412 did not immediately alter the Chancery or the document registration system. However, major new developments were gradually introduced which would coalesce over the course of the fifteenth century. One of the consequences of the new dynasty's initial weakness was the burgeoning power of the different kingdoms in the Iberian Peninsula, whose Corts and especially whose standing Diputacions (permanent commissions of the Parliament) were considerably strengthened. In parallel, royal authority was also weakened throughout much of the reign of Alphonse the Magnanimous (1416-1458) due to the king's constant absence, as he was living in Naples and left the government in the hands of his lieutenants. The dynastic union between Castile and Aragon led to the king's permanent absence from the territory of Aragon early in the next century.

These transformations, so briefly summarised here, logically had repercussions on the Archive of Barcelona, not so much its operations as the nature of the documents archived there. In 1419, Alphonse the Magnanimous agreed to a petition from the Valencian Corts and ordered that henceforth the documents on that kingdom should be copied in separate registers which should be deposited in the Royal Archive of Valencia.<sup>26</sup> In 1461, a similar provision was applied for the Kingdom of Aragon (reviving a fur, or special law, from 1348 which was never implemented), which also came to have its own registers deposited in the royal archive located in the premises of the Diputació of Zaragoza.<sup>27</sup> In consequence, the Royal Archive of Barcelona ceased to be the sole repository of the royal Chancery and instead only received documents on Catalonia and the territories that did not have an archive of their own (Sardinia, Mallorca and initially Sicily).<sup>28</sup>

On the other hand, the lieutenancies established in the kingdoms were the site of most of the government and administrative activity, first temporarily during the long years of Alphonse the Magnanimous' absence and then permanently after the fourteenth century, with the royal court's permanent move. The king continued to directly govern the kingdoms of the Crown in parallel with his Consell d'Aragó (Council of Aragon), and their corre-

sponding registers regularly reached their respective archives. However, their numbers were always considerably lower than the number of registers at the lieutenancies because the latter absorbed much of the everyday administration of justice, as registered in the *Commune* series, the largest one, while the king only dealt with matters of particular import. Furthermore, some of the king's registers gradually ceased being sent to the archives, such as the *Curiae* series, the one with the most political significance, which remained at court after 1569.<sup>29</sup> After the death of Philip III in 1621, the registers created in the Council of Aragon were no longer sent to the Archives of Barcelona, Zaragoza and Valencia, which thereafter only received the registers from their respective lieutenancies.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, this could be considered a sort of provincialisation of the Archive throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, even though the institution remained alive. We are familiar with the details of its holdings during this period thanks to the inventory drawn up by the notary Bernat Macip between 1584 and 1590 upon archivist Gabriel Olzina's trial for disloyalty.31 It systematically describes all the registers, parchments and other documents in the Archive, along with their location in cabinets and boxes. What could be considered the first guide to the Archive, written in Latin by the scribe Pere Benet and entitled Brúixola de l'Arxiu reial (Compass of the Royal Archive), dates from several years later.<sup>32</sup> Major efforts to inventory and index the Archive were also made, such as the monumental Liber Patrimonii regii, which systematises the references to the royal patrimony in the registers and parchments related to all places in Aragon, Catalonia and Valencia,33 and the 20 volumes of register indexes created by Josep Llaris in the late seventeenth century, which are still used and consulted today. At the same time, the Archive became significantly more open in terms of both private individuals' ability to secure copies and the documents' consideration as a historical source. Thus, historians were occasionally authorised to consult it, the most famous being Jerónimo Zurita, who extensively drew from the registers and other documents in the Archive in his Anales de la Corona de Aragon.<sup>34</sup>

# IV

Perhaps the most coherent attempt to reform the Archive thus far occurred in the early eighteenth century, after the War of the Spanish Succession had gotten underway and during the brief period when Archduke Charles governed (1705-1714). The 1706 provisions of the Corts of Barcelona are extremely informative in this regard, as they reinforced the role of the Diputació del General de Catalunya (permanent commission of the three Estates of the Parliament) in the Archive through the new figure of the especulador, who was appointed and paid by the Diputació del General, although he received his orders from the royal archivist. His mission consisted in studying and bind-

ing the registers and making indexes and inventories (called espèculs, from the Latin specula, or mirrors, in the terminology of the period) according to a work programme that included the reorganisation of the parchment scripts into chronological order with the goal of facilitating historical research.<sup>35</sup> It was a job custom-made for the Mercedarian Manuel Mariano Ribera, who probably inspired this set of provisions, as he had already conducted numerous inquiries into the Archive's holdings as the historian of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy; indeed, many of his works are still conserved today. His is the first modern inventory of all the registers and the foundation of the inventory still used today.<sup>36</sup> The Corts also worked to open the Archive by allowing consultations of the espèculs and inventories, they expanded the staffing with the figure of the officer or adjutant, and they asked for improvements in the facilities.

Even though these initiatives of the 1706 Corts were brought to a sudden halt at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession in 1714 with the instatement of the new Bourbon dynasty and the Nueva Planta decree to reorganise the government and administration of Catalonia, the majority of them were somehow revived throughout the eighteenth century and became part of the Bourbon reform programme. At first, however, not only was the recently created post of the especulador eliminated, but so was the archivist. He was replaced by the main scribe of the court, so the keys of the Archive were left in the hands of its most modern minister.<sup>37</sup> Even though it was not a total rupture, soon thereafter the Cámara (Council of the Chamber) of Castile had to intervene in view of evidence of the Archive's neglect. Reports were issued on its status which led to the enactment of the 1738 Royal Decree that in the end restored the approaches stipulated in the Cort's provisions from 1706. Even though the Archive remained under the oversight of the Audiència (Royal Court), the figure of the archivist was restored and given many of the attributions that had been assigned to the especu*lador*; the staff was expanded, specifying that they had to be doctors in ancient languages and humanities; and a long-term work programme was defined which once again included re-binding and arranging the registers and reorganising loose documents, among other tasks.<sup>38</sup>

The Archive was now definitively viewed as a historical archive, because the implementation of this Royal Decree also meant the immediate cessation of the transfer of completed registers from the governor and captain general, which had presided over the Audiència since the Nueva Planta decree. These registers, the continuation of those from the lieutenancies in previous centuries, had continued to be delivered to the Archive as usual after 1714. However, after 1738, they remained in the Audiència premises. Thus, the Archive became a closed archive and the last registers that entered it were those that had ended ten years earlier, in 1727.

In 1740, Javier de Garma was appointed archivist in implementation of the Royal Order and launched the

work programme.<sup>39</sup> The new situation was spelled out by a regulation enacted in 1754 on Garma's request. 40 Some of his proposals which sought to enlarge the institution were not included, such as assembling the royal archives from Zaragoza, Valencia and Mallorca in the Barcelona archive, and the publication of a diplomatarium which would compile international treaties, royal wills and testaments and other important documents.<sup>41</sup> The regulation maintained the role of the Audiència, this time with the figure of the conservator judge charged with overseeing the Archive's work. The post lasted until it was eliminated in 1818, although it soon ceased to be truly effective. The Archive's association with the Audiència, on the other hand, was reinforced several years later when the king authorised it to be transferred from the chambers of the royal palace which it had occupied since it was founded in 1318 to the Audiència premises in the former palace of the Diputació.42

The 1754 regulation also stipulated the name Archive of the Crown of Aragon. This name was not exactly new, nor should it be associated with Garma's failed project to gather all the royal archives, as it often is. Even though it had most often been called the 'Royal Archive' since its creation, after the sixteenth century the reference to the Crown of Aragon is not unusual given the need to distinguish it from the other royal archives, especially the archive of the Crown of Castile in Simancas. 43 In the period when the Archduke Charles governed, this name was used by the archivist when he signed his official certifications as Archivarius regii Archivi generalis Coronae Aragonum. The Royal Order from 1738 still spoke of the 'Archivo real y general en essa mi ciudad de Barcelona'; nonetheless, in the oath Garma swore two years later, he appeared as the archivist of the 'Real Archivo de la Corona de Aragon'.44

The projects undertaken with the enactment of the Royal Order of 1738 and the Regulation of 1754 made considerable headway under Garma's oversight. During this period, more than 4,000 registers were bound, a collection of papal bulls was prepared and loose documents were reorganised in chronological order, as opposed to the way they were traditionally stored in cabinets and sacks. However, upon his death in 1783, all these efforts ground to a halt and the Archive was once again plunged into a lengthy crisis, with the post of the archivist left vacant or occupied by unqualified staff for 30 years. As a wretched example of this neglect, at some indeterminate point during this period and under unclear circumstances, the Archive suffered one of its most important losses with the destruction of the great royal cartulary known as the Liber Feudorum Maior.45

# V

The culmination of the work undertaken in the eighteenth century and the Archive's permanent transforma-

tion into a general historical archive geared at and open to historical research with the addition of holdings from different provenances took place in the first half of the nineteenth century, in parallel to the gradual decline of the old regime and the advent of the liberal state.

This period was marked by the figure of Pròsper de Bofarull i Mascaró, who was appointed archivist in 1814, a job he held until 1849 except for a brief hiatus between 1840 and 1844. 46 Despite the controversies recently raised over his figure and his actions at the head of the Archive, his tenure was decisive in transforming a petrified institution into a benchmark historical research centre with international reach within just a few years. Reading his precise reports and reviewing the countless inventories and collections of transcriptions that he personally oversaw, one comes to appreciate his orderly, systematic method and the clarity and modernity of his ideas on what the Archive should be. His perseverance and accomplishments are even more surprising if we consider the turbulent period in which he lived. We are partly indebted to him for the survival of the Archive, which did not succumb to the centralising forces that emerged from the French Revolution like other similar institutions in Europe.<sup>47</sup>

It is not an exaggeration to say that the current Archive of the Crown of Aragon was born under Pròsper de Bofarull, and that it still maintains much of the personality with which he imbued it.<sup>48</sup> He managed to conclude the major projects initiated in the mid-eighteenth century, especially the arrangement and binding of the Chancery registers, along with the development of their definitive inventory and the chronological sequencing of the parchment charters, with their own inventory as well. He undertook many other classification and inventory projects and created collections of legal proceedings, codes of law, etc. Another crucial aspect of his action was his effort to recover the archives of vanished institutions, either old ones such as the Diputació del General de Catalunya or contemporary ones like the Junta Superior de Catalunya (governing body in Catalonia during the war against the Napoleonic occupation, 1808-1812).<sup>49</sup> His efforts were also crucial in preventing the loss of the archives and libraries from the disentailed monasteries during the Liberal Triennium (1820-1823) and their subsequent permanent disentailment in 1835. In some cases, he literally saved them from the flames.<sup>50</sup>

What still remains of his conception of an archive as an essential historical source is his benchmark founding of the *Colección de documentos inéditos del Archivo de la Corona de Aragon*, 17 volumes of which appeared under his oversight, which was later carried on by his son and successor, Manuel de Bofarull.<sup>51</sup> He made a significant contribution to awareness of the Archive, which was increasingly visited by local and foreign historians despite the access restrictions, which only began to be lifted in 1844.<sup>52</sup>

Last but not least in the revival of the institution was his determination to give the Archive worthy, representative premises. In 1838, Pròsper de Bofarull managed to get the Palau del Lloctinent (Viceroy's Palace), a building that dated from the mid-sixteenth century just a few metres from the original site of the Archive in the old Palau Reial (Royal Palace), assigned as the Archive's home. It had been occupied by Santa Clara convent for 100 years but was returned to the state upon the disentailment. After he had retired but before his death in 1859, Pròsper de Bofarull was able to attend the opening of the new headquarters in December 1853 after it had been refurbished.<sup>53</sup> The Palau del Lloctinent came to both culminate and represent the complete transformation of the old royal archive into an institution that was at once thoroughly modern and rooted in the past. The last step in this transformation took place shortly thereafter, with the 1857 enactment of the law which assigned archives, libraries and museums to the Department of Public Instruction, which at that time was part of the Ministry of Development; this, in turn, allowed the Cuerpo Facultativo de Archiveros y Bibliotecarios (Corps of Archivists and Librarians) to be created.<sup>54</sup>

### VI

In the past two centuries of its history, the Archive's holdings have increased immensely. Here we shall just cite a few general points on their nature. Some new holdings are strictly complementary to ones already housed in the Archive but had not joined it previously due merely to the historical circumstances outlined above. One example is the registers of Philip IV (1621-1665) and Charles II (1665-1700), which had been sent to the Archive of Simancas and were transferred to the Archive of Barcelona in 1852 along with other papers from the Council of Aragon. The same holds true of the registers that had remained at the Audiència after 1738, which entered the Archive of the Crown of Aragon during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). Along with these registers, the collection of *conclu*sions civils (civil rulings) that had started in the fourteenth century was also added during this period, thus returning these materials to the archive where they had always been kept until they were retained by the Audiència before the move to the Palau del Lloctinent in 1853.

Other new acquisitions include archival holdings from institutions which no longer exist, whose archives had been abandoned. Here we could cite the documentation from the Diputació del General de Catalunya, which was housed in the Audiència and was sent to the Archive by a Royal Order dated 1827; the Archive of the Royal Patrimony, which was added in 1936 and which 100 years earlier had united the archives of the two former magistracies of the royal administration which no longer existed, namely the Master Rational and the General Bailiff of Catalonia;<sup>55</sup> and the archives of the religious institutions which had been disentailed in the nineteenth century or recovered during the Civil War, which joined the archive at different points throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in a not always orderly and complete fashion.

Many of the collections that entered after the Civil War, especially in the 1960s, are different in nature, as they came from the provincial state administration. The most noteworthy of these holdings is from the administration of the Treasury, whose historical part dates back to the eighteenth century. There has also been a noteworthy number of acquisitions from noble and hereditary collections from the entire former Crown of Aragon through purchases, deposits or donations.

Because of both the growth in its collections and the larger number of researchers working there, at several points the Archive has had to remodel its facilities. In the 1930s, a reading room was set up for the first time. In the 1960s, the document storage rooms were modernised and expanded and a conference room was built. Finally, in 1994, a new site on Carrer Almogàvers was opened to ensure that the storage rooms offered the documentation the ideal conservation conditions, and the Palau del Lloctinent was given a complete overhaul and reopened to the public in 2007.

Throughout this past century, the Archive's role as a historical research centre has also been enhanced thanks to the contribution of its archivists, who include Valls Taberner, Martínez Ferrando, Udina Martorell and Rafael Conde, just to cite a few. They are the authors of invaluable research based on the Archive's documentation. In this sense, the most important transformation that the Archive has undergone in recent years is joining the digital age with its presence on the Internet, which enables its most sought-after fonds to be consulted directly.

This effort to disseminate the holdings to both an expert and a more general audience on the Internet and via the publications and exhibitions from recent years should not be incompatible with maintaining the tradition of the archive as a research centre. As has been said before, great historical archives are also archives with history. Only through knowledge of and respect for this history, which we have attempted to condense in these few pages, can we preserve this centuries-old archive and its documents.

# Notes and references

- [1] Norman DAVIES, Vanished Kingdoms: The History of Half-Forgotten Europe, Allen Lane, London, 2011. In the US edition (Viking, New York, 2011), the subtitle is different: The Rise and Fall of State and Nation. The Spanish-language edition is: Reinos desaparecidos: la historia olvidada de Europa, Galaxia Gutemberg, Barcelona, 2013.
- [2] An initial compilation of documents on the history of the Archive entitled *Historia del Archivo de la Corona de Aragon* was prepared by its then-director Francesc de Bofarull i Sans in the early twentieth century, but it was never published and only incomplete galley proofs remain. It was expanded in the monumental posthumous work of another director of the Archive, Rafael

- Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y archivos de la Corona de Aragon*, Institución Fernando el Católico, Zaragoza, 2008.
- [3] The part of this article on the mediaeval period is a summarised version of what the author already outlined in 'La conservación de la memoria: archivos regios', in J. Ángel SESMA Muñoz (coordinator), La Corona de Aragon en el centro de su historia 1208-1458. La Monarquía Aragonesa y los reinos de la Corona, Grupo C.E.M.A., Zaragoza, 2010, pp. 271-284. More details on the history of the Archive can be found in subsequent guides: Eduardo González Hurtebise, Guía histórica y descriptiva del Archivo de la Corona de Aragon en Barcelona, Madrid, 1920; Jesus Ernesto Martínez Ferrando, El Archivo de la Corona de Aragon, Aymá, Barcelona, 1944, and Archivo de la Corona de Aragon. Guía abreviada, Junta técnica de archivos, bibliotecas y museos, Valencia, 1958; Federico Udina Martorell, Guía histórica y descriptiva del Archivo de la Corona de Aragon, Ministerio de Cultura, Madrid, 1986. Also useful for an overview are two more recent works by its former director, Carlos López Rodríguez: ¿Qué es el Archivo de la Corona de Aragon?, Mira Editores, Zaragoza, 2007 and Speculum. Vida i treballs de l'Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó, Irta, Valencia, 2008.
- [4] Carlos López Rodríguez, 'Orígenes del Archivo de la Corona de Aragon (en tiempos, Archivo Real de Barcelona)', *Hispania*, XLVII (2007), pp. 413-454.
- [5] This is a ruling on Lluçà and Merlès castles which states that King Alphonse had submitted 'alia similia sacramentalia de suo archivo producta' as proof in the trial (Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó (ACA), Chancery, Perg. Alfons I, 302; published in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, Reyes y archivos, doc. 2. Carlos López Rodríguez has highlighted that this mention is isolated in 'Orígenes del Archivo', pp. 423-424. By the same author, 'Sobre la autenticidad del documento con la primera mención a un Archivo en 1180', in Aragon en la Edad Media, 23 (2012), pp. 173-206.
- [6] This was a common and well-documented practice. Cf. Serafino Pistolese, *Les archives européenes du onzième siècle a nous jours. Essai historique et juridique*, Biblioteca d'arte editrice, Rome, 1934, p. 5; Robert I. Burns, 'Religious houses as archives/depositories: A letter of credence from the Majorcan to the Barcelona Templars (1244)', *Estudis Castellonencs*, 6 (1994-1995), pp. 235-242.
- [7] Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *El Archivo real del monasterio de Santa María de Sigena (Huesca). Primer tercio del S. XIII-1308* (unpublished). A summary of the references on this deposit and its documents was provided by the same author in *Reyes y archivos*, pp. 28-30 and docs. 4-8, 10-20, 30.
- [8] Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, Reyes y archivos, pp. 32-34; Carlos López Rodríguez, 'Orígenes del Archivo', pp. 435-439.
- [9] Giorgio CENCETTI, 'Gli archivi dell'antica Roma nell'età repubblicana', *Archivi*, s. II, VII (1940), pp. 7-17, cited

by Elio Lodolini, *Lineamenti di Storia dell'archivistica italiana*. *Dalle origini alla metà del secolo XX*, Nuova Italia Scientifica, Rome, 1991, p. 18. A summary of the history of European royal and communal archives during the Middle Ages in Eugenio Casanova, *Archivistica*, 2nd ed., Stab. Arti Grafiche Lazzeri, Siena, 1928, pp. 318-339.

- [10] These are the same seven registers as they are listed in the first known inventory made in 1306 by the scribe Mateu Botella (ACA, Memorials, 6 and 7/1). They correspond to eleven volumes from the series of registers of James I as they are currently conserved in the Archive because of alterations to them caused by successive rebindings (ACA, Chancery, Reg. 9-16 and 19-21). A detailed study in Alberto Torra Pérez, 'Los registros de la cancillería de Jaime I', in Jaume I. Commemoració del VIII centenari del naixement de Jaume I. Vol. I, Institut d'Estudis Catalans, Barcelona, 2011, pp. 211-229.
- [11] Regarding the administration, the documents and the Royal Archive during the times of James II, the extensive introduction by Heinrich Finke in the first volume of the following publication is still valid: *Acta Aragonensia*. Quellen zur deutschen, italienischen, französischen, spanischen, zur Kirchen- und Kulturgeschichte aus der diplomatischen Korrespondenz Jaymes II. (1291-1327), W. Rotschild, Berlin-Leipzig, 1908, pp. I-CLXXXX.
- [12] Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y Archivos*, pp. 30-31 and docs. 24-34; Carlos López Rodríguez, 'Orígenes del Archivo', pp. 440-446.
- [13] They include an exhaustive index of the *Liber Feudorum Maior*, a royal cartulary from the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, a detailed inventory of the registers from James I to James II and another inventory of parchment charters, all probably made by the same scribe, Mateu Botella, who was commissioned to do so by the king (ACA, Memorials, 1, 2, 6 and 7). Cf. Jaume RIERA I SANS, *Catálogo de memoriales e inventarios. Siglos XIV-XIX. Archivo de la Corona de Aragon*, Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Salamanca, 1999, pp. 19-24.
- [14] Digesta, 48, 19-9.
- [15] Invoice dated 8 May 1319 in reference to a verbal order given by the king to his steward Arnau Messeguer (ACA, RP, Master Rational, vol. 627, fol. 137v-138r; published in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y Archivos*, doc. 35).
- [16] Francesc de Bofarull I Sans, *Historia del Archivo*, docs., XXXVI (1332), XLVI (1346), LXIV (1369) and LXXXV (1399), respectively.
- [17] 'Cum per recognoscendis et conservandis instrumentis, scripturis et registris que in Archivo nostro regio Barchinone recondita sunt ne corrosionibus tinearum seu arnarum morsibus vastari valeant seu consumi (...)' (ACA, Chancery, Reg. 1060, fol. 186r; published in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, Reyes y Archivos, doc. 40. The original letter is conserved in the Archive of the Cathedral of Barcelona). Even though the name of the scribe is written as Passeya in this document, other times

- it appears as *Passea* and even more frequently as *Perseya* (examples in ACA, Chancery, Reg. 1062, fol. 165r; Col·lecció d'Història de l'Arxiu, box I, docs. 7 to 11).
- [18] 'Commitimus sive comendamus vobis claves Archivi nostri Barchinone, ita videlicet quod dictum Archivum necnon registra, privilegia, cartas et alias scripturas inibi existentes custodiatis, ministretis et de nostro mandato non alias transumpta nobis vel aliis personis necessaria ex registris vel privilegiis aut aliis cartis vel scripturis transcribi facere valeatis et predicta omnia ab omni sorde vel corrosioni custodita prout expedit teneatis' (ACA, Chancery, Reg. 1062, fol. 105r; published in Francesc de Bofarull I Sans, Historia del Archivo, doc. XLVII).
- [19] Ibid., docs. L (1354), LI (1355) and LIV (1357), respectively.
- [20] Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y Archivos*, doc. 44 (1363-1368).
- [21] The whereabouts of the original text of the ordinances sent to the archivist Berenguer de Segarra, published by Francesc de Bofarull I Sans (*Historia del Archivo*, doc. LXXVIII), is currently unknown. However, a copy is conserved in the confirmation by Alphonse the Magnanimous in 1452 (ACA, Chancery, Rec. 2551, fol. 89r-90r; facsimile edition and study in Rafael Conde y Delgado De Molina, *Las primeras ordenanzas del Archivo Real de Barcelona, 1384*, Ministry of Culture, Madrid, 1993). These ordinances were incorporated as a complement to the *Ordinacions* of Peter the Ceremonious in some manuscripts.
- [22] ACA, Memorials, 51.
- [23] ACA, Chancery, Rec. 2232, fol. 27r-v (published in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, Reyes y Archivos, doc. 49). On that same date, he ordered the son of the deceased secretary of John I, Bernat de Jonqueres, to hand over the registers he still had in his possession to the Archive, explaining that 'sicut omnes aque ad mare velut matrem aquarum confluunt, sicut omnes scripturas in predecessorum nostrorum illustrium curiis et nostra contextas et omnia registra et protocolla ipsarum dicti nostri Archivi sere concludant, ut exinde valeant ipsarum regaliarum et iurium nostrorum occulta deduci in lucem' (ibid., fol. 27v-28r; edition ibid., doc. 50).
- [24] Ibid., doc. 55 (1416) and 56 (1422).
- [25] Still in 1738, when the Audiència determined that no more registers should enter the Archive, the last ones to be transferred were precisely from ten years earlier (1727).
- [26] '(...) que de les provisions, letres, actes e cartes axí de justicia com de gracia, e altres qualsevol tocant fets del dit regne o dels habitadors de aquell, sien fets registres e libres sparços en los quals les dites coses sien escrites e registrades, los quals registres e libres, feta differencia de fets a fets segons es acostumat, sien intitulats registres de regne de Valencia, an axi com es a dir, Commune primum Valencie, Gratiarum primum Valencie, e axi dels altres axi en fet com en nombre dels dits registres. E que advenint lo cas que los dits registres deguen esser posats en archiu,

- aquells sien mesos e conservats perpetualment en l'archiu del nostre Real de Valencia (...)' (provision dated 13 September 1419; published in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, Reyes y Archivos, doc. 272).
- [27] The provisions from 1348 and 1461 can be read in *ibid.*, docs. 189 and 193.
- [28] A detailed analysis of the causes and consequences of the rupture of the Crown's single archive which had existed until then in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, 'Una discutible decisió arxivística del segle XV', in *Lligall*, 8 (1994), pp. 11-18.
- [29] They are still conserved in Madrid, at the Archivo Histórico Nacional, Consejo y Cámara de Aragon (National Historical Archive, Council and Chamber of Aragon), books 2292 and following. Regarding the Crown of Aragon's registers in this Archive from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries, see María Jesús ÁLVAREZ COCA, 'Aragon en la administración central del Antiguo Régimen. Fuentes en el Archivo Histórico Nacional', in *Ius fugit*, 2 (1993), pp. 9-42; 'La Corona de Aragon: documentación en el Consejo y la Cámara de Castilla (1707-1834): fuentes del Archivo Histórico Nacional', in *Hispania*, 49 (1989), pp. 895-948.
- [30] Most of the registers from the reigns of Philip IV (1621-1665) and Charles II (1665-1700) which remained at the royal court after 1621 were sent to the Archive of Simancas with other papers from the Council of Aragon after it was eliminated in 1707. In 1852, they were once again dispatched to the Archive of Barcelona after being repeatedly requested by its director, Pròsper de Bofarull, including not only the registers and papers on Catalonia but also those on the other kingdoms. They have remained there since then, separately, as the section on the Council of Aragon. The proceedings on this transfer are conserved in ACA, Secretariat, box 16 (published in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, Reyes y Archivos, docs. 171 and 174).
- [31] ACA, Memorials, 70/1-5.
- [32] Burxula del present Arxiu Real de Barcelona / Regii Archivi Barcinone versoria (ACA, Memorials, 61). Studied, edited and translated from the Latin original by Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, La brújula. Guía del Archivo Real de Barcelona. Pere Benet (1601), Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Madrid, 1999.
- [33] Its eight large volumes, which were thus traditionally named *Mulasses*, were made by the officers of the Master Rational and the General Bailiff of Catalonia on the orders of Philip II in 1582 (Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y Archivos*, p. 115). Atanasio Sinués Ruiz y Antonio Ubieto Arteta, *El patrimonio real en Aragon durante la Edad Media: índice de los documentos consignados en el 'Liber Patrimonii Regii Aragoniae' del Archivo de la Corona de Aragon,* Anubar, Zaragoza, 1986; Carlos López Rodríguez, *Liber Patrimonii Regii Valentiae*, Universitat de València, Valencia, 2006.
- [34] The order signed in May 1549 by Maximillian of Austria, as the governor of Spain, to allow Zurita to consult the

- archives and documents needed for his position as the chronicler of Aragon, in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y Archivos*, doc. 67. Regarding Zurita's time at the Archive of Barcelona, some notes can be found in Ferran Soldevila, 'Zurita com a historiador', in *VII Congreso de Historia de la Corona de Aragon. Crónica, ponencias y comunicaciones*, vol. I: *Crónica y Ponencias*, Barcelona, 1964, pp. 11-52; and Vicente Salavert Roca, 'Zurita y el Archivo de la Corona de Aragon', in *Ibid.*, vol. II: *Comunicaciones*, Barcelona, 1964, pp. 129-143.
- [35] Constitucions, capitols, y actes de cort, fetas, y atorgats, per la S.C.R. magestat del rey nostre senyor don Carlos III rey de Castella, de Aragó, comte de Barcelona etc. en la cort celebrà als cathalans, en la ciutat de Barcelona, en la casa de la Deputació del General de Cathalunya, en lo any de 1706, in the Estampa de Rafael Figueró, Barcelona, 1706, ch. XCVII and XCVIII.
- [36] Repertorium omnium et singulorum regiorum regestorum in aula magna superiori regii Archivii Barchinone collocatorum noviter per speculatorem regii Archivii (ACA, Memorials, 81).
- [37] Nueva Planta de la Real Audiencia del Principado de Cataluña establecida por su magestad con decreto de diez y seis de enero de mil setecientos y diez y seis, Joseph Texidó impressor, Barcelona, 1716, art. X. The original manuscript, with the king's signature, is in ACA, Reserve, 1.
- [38] ACA, Reial Audiència, Reg. 18, fol. 183r-189v; published in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y Archivos*, doc. 67.
- [39] ACA, Reial Audiència, Reg. 217, fol. 288v-290v; published in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y Archivos*, doc. 104. Jaume Riera i Sans, 'El personal de l'Arxiu Reial de Barcelona durant el segle XVIII', in *Butlletí de la Societat Catalana d'Estudis Històrics*, IX (1998), pp. 87-104; on Garma, pp. 102-103.
- [40] Royal Order dated 7 February 1754 (ACA, Història de l'Arxiu, box V; published in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y Archivos*, doc. 108).
- [41] Report dated 14 September 1751 (*ibid.*; published *ibid.*, doc. 107).
- [42] The transfer was carried out in 1770. All the proceedings undertaken were described in detail by Garma and approved by the Royal Order dated 18 February 1772, a luxuriously bound parchment copy of which is conserved (ACA, Secretariat).
- [43] Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y Archivos*, p. 162.
- [44] ACA, Reial Audiència, Reg. 217, fol. 290v-291r; published in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y Archivos*, doc. 105.
- [45] Tomás Pardo, who was appointed archivist in early 1805, only found 89 loose written sheets belonging to the two volumes of this royal cartulary, which was originally comprised of a total of almost 900 sheets of parchment. The certificate signed in December 1807 that reports on this does not explain the cause of this destruction or

- when it happened. Francesc MIQUEL ROSELL (reconstitution and editing), *Liber Feudorum Maior. Cartulario real que se conserva en el Archivo de la Corona de Aragon*, 2 vol., C.S.I.C., Barcelona, 1945-1947, especially vol. I, pp. VII-IX.
- [46] His appointment is copied in ACA, Història de l'Arxiu, box VI (published in Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y Archivos*, doc. 125).
- [47] In the Corts of Cadiz (1810-1814), the possibility of centralising all the royal archives in Madrid, following the French model, was discussed. The opposition of Bofarull, who defended the presence of the Archive in Barcelona, was published under a pseudonym when this project was reconsidered during the Liberal Triennium (1820-1823): Félix Fluralbo, [Pròsper de Bofarull I Mascaró], Reflecsiones sobre los perjuicios que ocasionaria á algunas provincias de España y en particular á la de Cataluña la traslacíon de sus archivos á Madrid que propuso la comision de Cortes en su dictamen y minuta de decreto presentado á las mismas en 19 de marzo de 1814, Imprenta de José Torner, Barcelona, 1821.
- [48] Manuel MILÁ I FONTANALS, Noticia de la vida y escritos de Don Próspero de Bofarull y Mascaró, archivero y cronista de la Corona de Aragon, Imprenta de Juan Oliveres y Monmany, Barcelona, 1860. Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, 'Próspero de Bofarull, entre el viejo y el nuevo Archivo de la Corona de Aragon', in Archivi e storia nell'Europa del XIX secolo. Alle radici dell'identità culturale europea. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi nei 150 anni dall'istituzione dell'Archivio Centrale, poi Archivio di Stato, di Firenze. Firenze, 4-7 dicembre 2002, Ministero per i beni e le attività culturali, Rome 2006, vol. 2, pp. 627-666.
- [49] The archive of the Diputació was turned over by the Audiència in 1828 (Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, *Reyes y Archivos*, doc. 160). The archive of the Junta Superior de Catalunya, which took over governance during the war against the French between 1808 and 1812, was deposited by General Castaños in 1817.

- [50] A detailed account of the rescue of the archive of the abbey of Sant Cugat del Vallès near Barcelona has been preserved, written by the archivist chosen for this purpose in the early days of August 1835, when the burning and looting had already begun (Coleción de partes y trabajos de importancia, Vol. 3, fol. 143-144, in ACA, Secretariat, 290/3). Regarding the torturous addition of the monastic collections to the Archive, Alberto Torra Pérez, 'Fondos documentales monásticos en el Archivo de la Corona de Aragon', in Memoria Ecclesiae, VI, Asociación de Archiveros de la Iglesia en España, Oviedo, 1995, pp. 121-146.
- [51] Rosa M. Gregori Roig, 'El Archivo de la Corona de Aragon y el mundo librario: La CODOIN, una publicación propia entre los siglos XIX y XXI', in *Edición y propaganda del libro. Las estrategias publicitarias en España e Hispanoamérica (siglos XVII-XX)*, Delta, Madrid, 2018, pp. 223-257.
- [52] Vicente SALAVERT ROCA and Antonio María ARAGÓ CABAÑAS, 'Datos acerca de investigadores nacionales y extranjeros en el Archivo de la Corona de Aragon (1849-1911)', in Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos, LXV (1958), pp. 69-102.
- [53] Manuel de Bofarull y de Sartorio, Memoria que en la solemne apertura del Archivo General de la Corona de Aragon, en el nuevo edificio á que ha sido trasladado de Real órden, leyó su archivero D. --, el día 18 de diciembre de 1853, Imprenta de J. Oliveres y Monmany e Hijo, Barcelona, 1853.
- [54] The articles in the *Ley de Instrucción Pública*, known as the Claudio Moyano law, dated 9 September 1857, which are of interest to archives, are nos. 158, 163 and 166 (*Gaceta de Madrid*, 10 September 1857). Agustín Torreblanca López, *El Cuerpo Facultativo de Archiveros, Bibliotecarios y Arqueólogos (1858-2008). Historia burocrática de una institución sesquicentenaria*, Ministry of Culture, Madrid, 2009.
- [55] Rafael Conde y Delgado de Molina, 'L'Arxiu del Reial Patrimoni de Catalunya, fons de l'Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó', in *Lligall*, 18 (2001), pp. 11-63.

# **BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Alberto Torra Pérez holds a bachelor's degree in mediaeval history. He joined the Cos Facultatiu d'Arxivers i Bibliotecaris (Corps of Archivists and Librarians) in 1985. He has spent his entire career at the Archive of the Crown of Aragon, where he served as the deputy director since 1999 and currently as director. His interests in the field of historical research have focused both on the field of hagiography and the worship of saints and on the study and publication of the Archive's holdings and documents.