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- AAS = *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, Roma – Città del Vaticano 1909-
- ADB = *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Leipzig 1875-1912
- AHP = *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, Roma 1963-
- Ann. Pont.* = *Annuario Pontificio*, Roma – Città del Vaticano 1912-
- ASR = Archivio di Stato, Roma
- ASS = *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, Roma 1865-1908
- ASV = Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Città del Vaticano
- Att. S. Sede* = *L'Attività della Santa Sede*, Città del Vaticano 1939-
- BAV = Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Città del Vaticano
- BBKL = *Biographisch-bibliographisches Kirchenlexikon*, Hamm 1990-
- BS = *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, Roma 1961-2000.
- CATH = *Catholicisme hier, aujourd'hui, demain*, Paris 1948-2000
- DBE = *Deutsche Biographische Enzyklopädie*, hrsg. von Walther Killy und Rudolf Vierhaus, München [et al.] 1995-1999.
- DBF = *Dictionnaire de biographie française*, Paris 1933-
- DBI = *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, Roma 1960-
- DDI = *I Documenti diplomatici italiani*, Roma 1952-
- DHCJ = *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús*, Roma – Madrid 2001
- DHEE = *Diccionario de historia eclesiástica de España*, Madrid, 1972-1987
- DHGE = *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques*, Paris 1912-
- DIP = *Dizionario degli Istituti di perfezione*, diretto da Guerrino Pelliccia e da Giancarlo Rocca, Roma 1969-2003
- DNB = *Dictionary of National Biography*, London – Oxford 1882-
- EC = *Enciclopedia Cattolica*, Città del Vaticano 1949-1954
- EI = *Enciclopedia Italiana*, Roma 1949-
- EP = *Enciclopedia dei papi*, Roma 2000
- HC = *Hierarchia catholica ...*, Monasterii – Patavii 1913-2002
- LThK = *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*, Freiburg – Basel – Rom – Wien 1993-2001
- MORONI, *Dizionario* = Gaetano MORONI, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica da S. Pietro fino ai nostri giorni*, Venezia 1840-1879
- NCE = *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, San Francisco – Detroit – Washington 1967-
- NDB = *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Berlin 1953-
- ÖBL = *Österreichisches Biographisches Lexikon*, Graz – Köln 1954-
- ODNB = *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography from the earliest time to the year 2000*, Oxford 2004
- OR = *L'Osservatore Romano*, Città del Vaticano 1861-
- Sussidi* = *Sussidi per la consultazione dell'Archivio Vaticano. Lo Schedario Garampì - I Registri Vaticani - I Registri Lateranensi - Le «Rationes Camerae» - L'Archivio Concistoriale*, nuova ed. riveduta e ampliata a cura di Germano Gualdo, Città del Vaticano 1989, pp. 51-52 (Colletanea Archivi Vaticani 17)

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Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome

THE ARCHIVIO SEGRETO VATICANO:
A GOLD MINE FOR BELGIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY,
CA. 1980-PRESENT

by Kristien Suenens, Dries Vanysacker and Jan De Maeyer

Research (1980-2013) concerning the Middle Ages using the Archivio Segreto Vaticano – Research (1980-2013) using the Archivio Segreto Vaticano concerning the Early Modern Period – Contemporary period (1800-1939; 1962-1965) – Church, politics and society – Philosophical-theological tensions and initiatives – Second Vatican Council – Art, culture, sport culture and research – Colonialism, missionary work and religious institutes – Accessibility

Belgian historians quickly found their way to the wealth and variety of documents contained in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano after it was opened by Pope Leo XIII in 1881. Besides allowing researchers to complete their sources, the Archivio Segreto Vaticano above all enabled them to look at historical developments from a wider perspective, or “helicopter view”.

In order to provide a more efficient framework for their research, The Belgian Historical Institute in Rome/Institut historique belge de Rome was founded in 1902. A federally-funded scholarly institute, it is concerned with the study of the history of Italy and Rome from antiquity to the present, in particular their relationships with the territory now known as Belgium, as well as the European dimensions of these relations. The Belgian Historical Institute in Rome/Institut historique belge de Rome’s official headquarters is in the offices of the Academia Belgica in Rome. Its working address is that of the chairperson of the Institute.¹ The Belgian Historical Institute in Rome/Institut historique belge de Rome’s operations are facilitated by the indispensable help of the Academia Belgica, the Belgian House of Science, Arts and Culture in Rome.² The third partner is the Princess Marie José Foundation, whose work revolves around the world of art and music.³

¹ See <www.bhir-ihbr.be>

² See <www.academiabelgica.it>

³ *Ibid.*

The Belgian Historical Institute in Rome/Institut historique belge de Rome's objectives are achieved in the research by junior and senior researchers in the fields of history, art history, philology and archaeology. This research is made possible by grants provided by both of Belgium's cultural communities. In addition, the Institute also organizes colloquia and congresses with the Roman partners mentioned above. The fruits of all these activities can be found in the previous and current new publication series of the Belgian Historical Institute in Rome/Institut historique belge de Rome. Its former *Bulletin* has now been replaced by the e-magazine «Forum Romanum Belgicum» as its communications instrument.⁴

The results of the research can now be seen in a chronologically and thematically structured overview.

*Research (1980-2013) concerning the Middle Ages using the Archivio Segreto Vaticano*⁵

In contrast to a wealth of past Belgian research of medieval sources in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano,⁶ the period of 1980-2013 seems to have yielded little that is new.

The solace is provided by the series *Analecta Vaticano-Belgica. Première Série (Documents relatifs aux anciens diocèses de Cambrai, Liège, Thérouanne et Tournai)*, started in 1906.

Jeannine Paye-Bourgeois⁷ and Monique Maillard-Luypaert⁸ studied the documents related to the Great Schism, under Popes Benedict XIII (1394-1422) and Innocent VI (1404-1406) respectively. Maillard-Luypaert published an article in the same series about the petitions submitted to the Apostolic Penitentiary in 1410-1411, and is currently preparing the edition of the petitions under

⁴ See the publications section at www.bhir-ihbr.be, which contains a complete list of all past and current publicaties

⁵ We would like to thank our colleague Frederik Keygnaert (KU Leuven) for his valuable help, as well as Martine De Reu (U. Gent).

⁶ See, for inter alia an overview, Dries VANYSACKER, "Molto ma non troppo": *Le bilan de cent ans de recherches historiques*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique belge de Rome», 73 (2003), pp. 155-202.

⁷ Jeannine PAYE-BOURGEOIS, *Documents relatifs au Grand Schisme. Tome IV: Lettres de Benoît XIII (1394-1422). Tome I: 1394-1395. Textes et analyses*, Brussels – Rome 1983 (Analecta Vaticano-Belgica. Première série: Documents relatifs aux anciens diocèses de Cambrai, Liège, Thérouanne et Tournai 31).

⁸ Monique MAILLARD-LUYPAERT, *Documents relatifs au Grand Schisme. Tome VIII: Lettres d'Innocent VII (1404-1406). Textes et analyses*, Brussels – Rome 1987 (Analecta Vaticano-Belgica. Première série: Documents relatifs aux anciens diocèses de Cambrai, Liège, Thérouanne et Tournai 32).

the popes Eugene IV (1431-1447) and Nicholas V (1447-1455).⁹ In the meantime, she has published another book and several articles.¹⁰ In the same context, we are also anticipating the results of Sofie Glansdorff's study of the letters of pope Boniface IX (1394-1404) to their respective "Belgian" bishoprics.

Emmanuel Falzone consulted the Archivio Segreto Vaticano for his doctoral degree, awarded in 2011 by the University of Saint-Louis (Brussels) about the legal power of the bishops of Cambrai. In more concrete terms it is a study of the officialities of Cambrai and Brussels from the late 12th century until the creation of new bishoprics in 1559.¹¹

Both Michiel Decaluwe and Jonathan Dumont concentrated on the relationships between popes and Duke Philip the Good (1459-1467). Decaluwe also worked on the struggle between Pope Eugene IV and the Council of Basel with as his main thrust the supreme authority in the Church from 1431-1449.¹² Dumont's work was for his doctorate from the University of Liege about the political, cultural and intellectual relations at the court of Philip the Good.¹³

Also certainly worthy of mention is the fact that Véronique Lambert made use of the collection *Registri Vaticani* for her study of the records of the St. Donatians's chapter in Bruges, dating from the 9th century to 1300.¹⁴

Otherwise, Belgian historians and art historians researching the medieval period have worked much more on manuscripts from the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana.

⁹ *Les suppliques de la Pénitencerie apostolique pour les diocèses de Cambrai, Liège, Thérouanne et Tournai (1410-1411)* (A.S.V., *Penitenzieria Ap., Reg. Matrim. et Div.*, 1), Turnhout 2003 (Analecta Vaticano-Belgica. Première série: Documents relatifs aux anciens diocèses de Cambrai, Liège, Thérouanne et Tournai 34).

¹⁰ Monique MAILLARD-LUYPAERT, *Papauté, clercs et laïcs: le diocèse de Cambrai à l'épreuve du grand schisme d'Occident (1378-1417)*, Brussel 2001; EAD., *Absoudre et dispenser. Clercs et laïcs des diocèses de Thérouanne, Tournai, Cambrai et Liège devant La Pénitencerie apostolique*, in *De Pise à Trente: la réforme de l'Église en gestation. Regards croisés entre Escaut et Meuse*. Actes du colloque international de Tournai (Séminaire épiscopal), 19-20 mars 2004, éd. par Monique Maillard-Luypaert and Jean-Marie Cauchies, Brussel 2004, pp. 255-271.

¹¹ *Le pouvoir de juridiction de l'évêque et son exercice dans le diocèse de Cambrai au Moyen Âge. Les officialités de Cambrai et de Bruxelles (c. 1180 - c. 1559): deux tribunaux épiscopaux et leur jurisprudence*, Brussel 2011.

¹² *A successful defeat. Eugene IV's Struggle with the Council of Basel for Ultimate Authority in the Church, 1431/1449*, Turnhout 2010 (Bibliothèque de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome 59). See also his article *Albergati's Diplomacy. Communication of Friendship between Pope Eugene IV and the Council of Basel*, in «Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique», 103 (2008), pp. 85-118.

¹³ «*Lilia florentis*». *L'imaginaire politique et social à la cour de France durant les premières Guerres d'Italie (1494-1525)*, Paris 2013 (Études d'Histoire Médiéval 15).

¹⁴ *De oorkonden van het Sint-Donaaskapittel te Brugge (9de eeuw – 1300)*, Brussels 2008 (Koninklijke Commissie voor Geschiedenis).

Research (1980-2013) using the Archivio Segreto Vaticano concerning the Early Modern Period

Belgian research on the Early Modern Period (c. 1500-c. 1800) is concentrated around five main themes.

For the first time there is an enduring interest in the study of Jansenism, the condemnatory bull “Unigenitus” and the role of the university of Leuven. Following in the footsteps of Lucien Ceysens, who still published many articles after 1980,¹⁵ are the studies by Agnès Vatican¹⁶ and Toon Quaeghebeur.¹⁷ This category also includes the research by Bruno Boute on Roman networks and royal agency in the conflict around the right of Leuven to appoint lower-level benefices in the Catholic Netherlands (1597-1619).¹⁸ He has written another article, partly based on the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, about the Leuven professor Jacobus Jansonius (1547-1625).¹⁹

The study of the reports from the Nunciatures is still a research pillar. In the matter of the Nunciature of Flanders, in addition to the articles by Louis Demoulin²⁰, Lambert Henri Vos²¹ and Valérie Busin²² in the second series

¹⁵ See, among others: *Autour de la bulle Unigenitus. Le cardinal André Hercule de Fleury (1653-1747)*, in «Bulletin de l’Institut Historique belge de Rome», 58 (1988), pp. 149-186; *Autour de la bulle Unigenitus. Le P. Damascène Bragaldi, Conventuel (1665-1715)*, *ibid.*, 51 (1981), pp. 147-166; *Autour de la bulle Unigenitus: Louis XIV*, *ibid.*, 55-56 (1985-86), pp. 123-166; *Autour de l’Unigenitus. Le Cardinal Charles-Augustin Fabroni (1651-1727)*, *ibid.* 52 (1982), pp. 31-82; *Autour de l’Unigenitus. Le pape Clément XI*, *ibid.* 53-54 (1983-84), pp. 253-304; *Le pape Adrien VI et la disgrâce de l’Université de Louvain en 1682*, *ibid.*, 70 (2000), pp. 225-232.

¹⁶ *Entre Madrid et Bruxelles: les nonces et le jansénisme à l’université de Louvain, à la fin du XVIIe siècle*, in «Bulletin de l’Institut Historique belge de Rome», 72 (2002), pp. 45-90.

¹⁷ See, among others, his article *La pax innocentiana et la Faculté de Louvain selon les archives du Saint-Officie*, in «Bulletin de l’Institut Historique belge de Rome», 74 (2004), pp. 273-343, in which he also indicates having used the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. We certainly must also mention his paper entitled *Damen, an anti-Jansenist in the Service of the Archbishops of Mechlin 1690-1730*, in *The Quintessence of Lives. Intellectual Biographies in the Low Countries presented to Jan Roegiers*, by Dries Vanysacker, Pierre Delsaerd, Jean-Pierre Delville & Hedwig Schwall, Leuven 2010, pp. 249-268 (Bibliothèque de la Revue d’histoire ecclésiastique 91).

¹⁸ *Academic Interests and Catholic Confessionalisation. The Louvain Privileges of Nomination for Ecclesiastical Benefices*, Leiden and Boston 2010 (Education and Society in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 35).

¹⁹ *Saint, Scholar, Exorcist? About Jacobus Jansonius, Professor at Leuven (1547-1625)*, *ibid.*, pp. 84-110.

²⁰ *Correspondance de Vincenzo Montalto, administrateur de la nonciature de Flandre*, Brussels – Rome 1985 (Analecta Vaticano-Belgica. Deuxième série A: Nonciature de Flandre 14).

²¹ *La correspondance d’Andrea Mangelli, internonçe aux Pays-Bas (1625-1655)*, Brussels – Rome 1993 (Analecta Vaticano-Belgica. Deuxième série A: Nonciature de Flandre 15).

²² *La correspondance de Girolamo Di Vecchi, internonçe aux Pays-Bas (1656-1665)*, Brussels – Rome 1999 (Analecta Vaticano-Belgica. Deuxième série A: Nonciature de Flandre 16).

A of the *Analecta Vaticano-Belgica*, there is the research by Bart Wauters²³ as part of his master's thesis. In a volume on diplomatic culture, Wauters and Dries Vanysacker used the Archivio Segreto Vaticano for their articles about the Nunciatures from the 16th to 18th centuries.²⁴ Luc Duerloo²⁵ and Dries Raeymaekers²⁶ concentrated on the traces of evidence about the court of the archdukes Albert and Isabella (1598-1621). Very recently, as part of his current doctoral dissertation at the University of Liege, Julien Régibeau studied the role of the permanent Nunciatures during the Congress of Westphalia (1644-1648).²⁷ Pierre-François Pirlet consulted the correspondence from the nuncios to the Secretary of State as part of his doctoral dissertation about the relations between the confessors of the governors-general of the Netherlands and Rome (1598-1665).²⁸

The reports from the Liege Nunciature in the early modern period are important for understanding the history of the bishopric of Liege. In the second series B of the *Analecta Vaticano-Belgica*, we have articles from Frédérique Donnay,²⁹ and Pascale Derkenne and Philippe Gemis.³⁰ The studies by Jean Hoyoux³¹ about the Liege abbeys and chapters and those by Marie-Élisabeth Montulet-Henneau³² about the Cistercian abbey of Hocht can also be includ-

²³ *De controverse rond de jurisdictie van de nuntius. Het placet op de geloofsbrieven van Spinelli, Valenti-Gonzaga, Tempi en Crivelli, 1725-1749*, Leuven 2001.

²⁴ See Bart WAUTERS, *De opkomst en de ontwikkeling van de pauselijke nuntiatuur. Het voorbeeld van de Nederlanden in de zestiende en zeventiende eeuw*, in *Diplomatieke cultuur*, by Peter Van Kemseke, Leuven 2000, pp. 87-103, and Dries VANYSACKER, *Het ware gelaat achter diplomatieke maskers. Enkele achttiende-eeuwse pauselijke nuntii ontbloot*, *ibid.*, pp. 105-121.

²⁵ *Dynasty and piety: Archduke Albert (1598-1621) and Habsburg political culture in an age of religious wars*, Farnham 2012.

²⁶ 'Siempre un pie en palacio.' *Het hof en de hofhouding van de aartsbischoppen Albrecht en Isabella, 1598-1621*, Antwerp 2009 (University of Antwerp. Unpublished doctoral thesis).

²⁷ *Le rôle politique et diplomatique joué par les nonciatures permanentes du Saint-Siège lors des congrès de paix de Westphalie (1644-1648)* (ongoing research).

²⁸ *Le nonce et le confesseur princier: jeux d'influence au sein des Pays-Bas espagnols durant la première moitié du XVIIe siècle*, in «Revista de la inquisición», 16 (2012), pp. 209-226.

²⁹ *Inventaire analytique de documents relatifs à l'histoire du diocèse de Liège sous le régime des nonces de Cologne: Giuseppe-Marie Sanfelice (1652-1659)*, Brussels – Rome 1991 (*Analecta Vaticano-Belgica*. Deuxième série B: Nonciature de Cologne 7).

³⁰ *Inventaire analytique de documents relatifs à l'histoire du diocèse de Liège sous le régime des nonces de Cologne: Marco Galli (1659-1666)*, Brussels – Rome 1995 (*Analecta Vaticano-Belgica*. Deuxième série B: Nonciature de Cologne 8).

³¹ See, among others, *Les chanoines de la collégiale Saint-Barthélemy à Liège au XVIe siècle*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique belge de Rome», 55-56 (1985-86), pp. 109-122; *Le dossier de l'abbaye bénédictine de Saint-Laurent à Liège aux Archives Vaticanes (3^e partie 1647)*, *ibid.*, 51 (1981), pp. 117-146; *Le dossier de l'abbaye de Saint-Jacques à Liège aux Archives Vaticanes (inspection de 1654)*, *ibid.*, 55-56 (1985-86), pp. 97-108; *Une inspection du couvent de Saint-Aldegonde à Huy en 1647*, *ibid.*, 52 (1982), pp. 83-100.

³² *Fard et vertugadins au noble monastère de Hocht*, «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique belge de Rome», 59 (1989), pp. 143-164; *Une ère mouvementée à l'abbaye de Hocht: tirrania et scandalo universale (1609-1651)*, *ibid.*, 58 (1988), pp. 55-86.

ed here. Philippe Desmette's study, in the first series of *Analecta Vaticano-Belgica*, is particular to the history of the bishoprics. In it, the author discusses the indulgences for the brotherhoods in the bishoprics of Cambrai and Tournai during the 17th and 18th centuries.³³ Michel Van Nimmen studied the relationship between the Irish bishop O'Daly and the chapter of Tournai in the 18th century.³⁴

The fourth theme is biographical studies of cardinals and members of the Roman Curia. Besides the papers by Carlo De Clercq³⁵ and Luis Demoulin,³⁶ about the 17th-century cardinal Philippe-Thomas Howard and the 18th-century cardinal Scipione Borghese respectively, we must first and foremost mention the unpublished doctoral thesis, books and articles by Vanysacker about the 18th-century cardinal Giuseppe Garampi.³⁷ For his study of this prefect of the Vatican archives (from 1751-1772), nuncio to Warsaw and Vienna (1772-1785) and enlightened Ultramontane diplomat, Vanysacker consulted besides

³³ *Les brefs d'indulgences pour les confréries des diocèses de Cambrai et de Tournai aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles* (A.S.V., *Sec. Brev., Indulg. Perpetuae*, 2-9), Brussels – Rome 2002 (*Analecta Vaticano-Belgica*. Première série: Documents relatifs aux anciens diocèses de Cambrai, Liège, Théroouanne et Tournai 33).

³⁴ Jacques-Augustin O'Daly. *Un évêque irlandais au Chapitre de Tournai au XVIIIe siècle*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique belge de Rome», 52 (1982), pp. 101-120.

³⁵ *Le cardinal Philippe-Thomas Howard et ses activités romaines*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique belge de Rome», 51 (1981), pp. 167-196.

³⁶ *Testament, famiglia et train de vie du cardinal Scipion Borghese (1734-1782)*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique belge de Rome», 58 (1988), pp. 187-214.

³⁷ See, among others, *Kardinaal Giuseppe Garampi (1725-92): portret van een verlicht ultramontaan*, Leuven 1992, 2 vols.; *Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi (1725-1792): an Enlightened Ultramontane*, Brussels – Rome 1995 (Bibliothèque de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome 33); *The Garampi Correspondence: A chronological List of the private Correspondence of Cardinal Giuseppe Garampi (1741-1792)*, Leuven 1997 (*Instrumenta Theologica* XIX); *Monseigneur Giuseppe Garampi aux Pays-Bas autrichiens et dans la Principauté de Liège en 1764*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique belge de Rome», 67 (1987), pp. 165-197; *De ultramontaan Giuseppe Garampi (1725-1792) en zijn relaties in de Nederlanden*, in «Trajecta», 2 (1993), pp. 21-36; *Les activités archivistiques et historiques de Giuseppe Garampi au Vatican (1749-1772)*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique belge de Rome», 65 (1995), pp. 121-184; *Der Widerruf des «Febronius» und Kardinal Giuseppe Garampi in Rom. Eine aufklärerische ultramontane Bekämpfung des Febronianismus, 1764-1792*, in «Kurtrierisches Jahrbuch», 43 (2003), pp. 125-141, 1 fig.; *The Contacts between two Pivots of the 18th-century European ultramontane 'international': Johann Heinrich von Franckenberg and Giuseppe Garampi (1762-1792)*, in *Mechliniensia in honorem Prof. em. Dr. Constantini Van de Wiel septuagenarii*, by Dr. R. de Smedt, Mechelen 1995, pp. 273-295 (= *Handelingen van de Kon. Kring voor Oudheidkunde, Letteren en Kunst van Mechelen*, 98 [1994]); *Rich Man, Poor Man: The unstable Financial Equilibrium of Giuseppe Cardinal Garampi, in Geloven in het verleden: Studies over het godsdienstig leven in de vroegmoderne tijd, aangeboden aan Michel Cloet*, by Eddy Put, Marie-Juliette Marinus and Hans Storme, Leuven 1996, pp. 313-322; *Le cardinal Giuseppe Garampi (1725-1792): l'Internationale ultramontaine face à l'Internationale scientifique. Réseaux complémentaires et concurrents*, in *La plume et la toile: Pouvoirs et réseaux de correspondance dans l'Europe des Lumières*, éd. par Pierre-Yves Beaurepaire, Arras 2002, pp. 309-318.

the *Fondo Garampi* in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, also the *Archivio della Prefettura*, the archives of the previously mentioned Nunciatures.

The fifth theme is the research around the registers of the Sacred Congregation of Rites examined by Annick Delfosse as part of her study of the worship of saints and the veneration of the Virgin in the 17th and 18th centuries.³⁸

Lastly, we must not lose sight of the studies that only indirectly made use of the various collections in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. Bart De Groof consulted the archives of the *Dataria*, the *Fondo Borghese*, the *Fondo Carpegna*, *Lettere dei particolari* and *Protonotari apostolici* for his research on the *Nazione Fiamminga* in 17th-century Rome.³⁹ Hans Cools also used the archives indirectly for his article about Francesco Feroni (1640-1672).⁴⁰

Contemporary period (1800-1939; 1962-1965)

In the last three decades, the Belgian historians researching the 19th and 20th centuries have also found their way to the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. Building on existing research and at the urging of several renowned historians such as Robrecht Boudens, Roger Aubert and Emiel Lamberts, the Vatican sources were primarily examined in research connected to two main themes. A considerable number of publications focussed on the relations between Church and State, from both an international and a Belgian perspective, from the 1830s up to the eve of the Second World War. A second important research component comprises the studies of tensions within the Church around theological and social reforms. Besides these two dominant historical subjects, there was a more modest interest in other themes such as art and culture, missionary work and religious institutes. The release of the Vatican's archives associated with the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) in turn stimulated research on the significant contributions made by Belgian protagonists. Much was also done in Belgium between 1980 and 2010 to make the *Belgica* in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano more easily accessible, as will be described in detail at the end of this article.

³⁸ See, among others, *La Vierge « Protectrice du Païs-Bas ». Instrumentalisations politiques et stratégies identitaires dans les Pays-Bas espagnols* (onuitgegeven doctoraatsverhandeling), Liège 2005; *La «Protectrice du Païs-Bas». Stratégies politiques et figures de la Vierge dans les Pays-Bas espagnols*, Turnhout 2009 (Église, liturgie et société dans l'Europe moderne XVIe-début XIXe siècles).

³⁹ Bart DE GROOF, *De Nazione Fiamminga in Barok Rome. Een bijdrage tot de geschiedenis van de buitenlandse aanwezigheid te Rome in de 17^{de} eeuw*, Leuven 1994 (onuitgegeven doctoraatsverhandeling).

⁴⁰ *An Italian in the Metropolis: The Amsterdam Career of Francesco Feroni (ca. 1640-1672)*, in *The Quintessence of Lives*, pp. 227-247.

Church, politics and society

The documentation in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano – in particular the documents of the Belgian Nunciature, the Secretary of State and the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs – was in the first place an important source for helping to determine the position of the Church in a society which was undergoing fundamental changes in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Belgian independence in 1830 and – above all – interaction with the liberal Belgian state system created shaky diplomatic relationships between Belgium and the Holy See during the long 19th century. Various authors focused on remarkable individuals or crucial periods within this context.⁴¹ Vincent Viaene, in *Belgium and the Holy See*, provided a synthesis of thirty years of reciprocal influence in the political, social and religious domains in the time of the Catholic revival in Belgium (ca. 1830-ca. 1860).⁴² Henk De Smaele focused on the influence of the Church and religion on voting behaviour in Belgium, with the help of sources from the Archivio Segreto Vaticano.⁴³

The formation of a Christian social doctrine and the rise of Christian democracy were studied and documented – especially in Flanders – by several historians using Vatican sources. Examples include the works by Jan De Maeyer about the socially engaged aristocrat Arthur Verhaegen and by Frans-Jos Verdoodt about the priest Adolf Daens. Both of these men were active in the new Christian workers' movement and in Christian democracy.⁴⁴

Emiel Lamberts also published on the Catholic Church's turn to the people starting in the second half of the 19th century, not only in the Belgian context, but also from a European perspective. In his most recent works *The*

⁴¹ For example: J. P. DE VALK and Emiel LAMBERTS, *Lettres de Francesco Capaccini, agent diplomatique et internonce du Saint-Siège au Royaume Uni des Pays Bas 1828-1831*, Brussels – Rome 1983 (Analecta Vaticano-Belgica, Serie 2, Section C 5); Nicolas HUYGHEBAERT, *La Diplomatie occulte de Mgr. Félix-Marie de Neckere, Recteur de l'Hospice Saint-Julien à Rome*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome», 50 (1980), pp. 217-236; Jan ART, *Les réunions des évêques de Belgique (1884-1900) vues à travers les archives de la Nonciature de Bruxelles*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome», 51 (1981), pp. 197-350; Nicolaas RASSON, *De diplomatie breuk tussen België en het Vaticaan. Het fiasco van de «échanges de vue», 1878-1880*, Brussel 2004 (Unpublished master's dissertation, Vrije Universiteit). The publications are an important addition to historian Aloïs Simon's research on the Belgian Nunciature from the 1950s and 60s.

⁴² Vincent VIAENE, *Belgium and the Holy See from Gregory XVI to Pius IX (1831-1859). Catholic Revival, Society and Politics in 19th Century Europe*, Brussels – Rome 2001 (Bibliotheek der Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome 50).

⁴³ Henk DE SMAELE, *Rechts Vlaanderen. Religie en stemgedrag in negentiende-eeuws België*, Leuven 2009 (KADOC Studies 33).

⁴⁴ Jan DE MAEYER, *Arthur Verhaegen (1847-1917): de rode baron*, Leuven 1994 (KADOC Studies 14). Frans-Jos VERDOODT, *Kerk en christen-democratie. De Katholieke Kerk tegenover de christen-democratie België, inzonderheid de door haar als dissident beschouwde priester Adolf Daens en diens medestanders (1890-1907)*, Ghent 1988.

Black International (as editor) and *Het gevecht met Leviathan*, he used documents from the Archivio Segreto Vaticano collection in his analysis of the strategies used by the Catholic Church, prominent Catholics, and the Vatican to safeguard their position against the omnipotence of the secular state and liberal, socialist and anti-clerical forces in 19th- and early 20th-century Europe.⁴⁵ In *The Papacy and The New World Order*, edited by Vincent Viaene, Vatican sources help these strategies to be examined in an even wider context, namely against the background of the globalizing and imperialist policies of the last quarter of the 19th century.⁴⁶

Belgian historians also used the archives of the Secretary of State, the Nunciature and the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs to shed light on the Belgian contacts and the politics of the early 20th-century popes (Benedict XV and Pius XI), both in the context of the First World War and of the increasing international tension during the interbellum years.⁴⁷

Philosophical-theological tensions and initiatives

Not only did the rapidly changing society of the 19th century prompt the Church and its hierarchy to create a new political and social doctrine; it also generated theological and philosophical tension within the Church. On the basis of archival material in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Theologian Johan

⁴⁵ *The Black International. L'internationale noire (1870-1878). The Holy See and Militant Catholicism in Europe. Le Saint-Siège et le Catholicisme militant en Europe*, Emiel LAMBERTS, Brussel – Rome 2002 (Bibliothèque der Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome 51); ID., *Het gevecht met Leviathan. Een verhaal over de politieke ordening in Europa 1815-1965*, Amsterdam 2011.

⁴⁶ Vincent VIAENE, *The papacy and the new world order: Vatican diplomacy, catholic opinion and international politics at the time of Leo XIII, 1878-1903*, Leuven 2005 (KADOC Studies on Religion Culture and Society 4).

⁴⁷ Jean DE VOLDER, *Benoît XV et la Belgique durant la Grande Guerre*, Brussels – Rome 2011 (Bibliothèque der Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome 41); Jan DE MAEYER and Jan ROOBROUCK, *De l'entre-deux-guerres à l'entre-deux papes? Organisations internationales et politique du Saint-Siège sous le pontificat de Pie XI (1922-1939)*, in *La papauté contemporaine (XIXe-XXe siècles): hommage au chanoine Roger Aubert, professeur émérite à l'Université catholique de Louvain, pour ses 95 ans*, éd. par Jean-Pierre Delville et Marko Javcov, Louvain-la-Neuve 2009, pp. 429-449; Vincent VIAENE, *Dans l'antichambre de l'apaisement Autour des missions de Charles de Broqueville à Rome, 1933-1937*, in *Italie et Belgique en Europe depuis 1918. Actes du colloque de Rome*, Academia Belgica 10, 11, 12. XI. 2004, éd. par Michel Dumoulin, Brussels – Rome 2008, pp. 79-112 (Bibliothèque der Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome 56). The Dumoulin volume was a continuation of the previously published collections of congresses *La Belgique, l'Italie et le Saint-Siège (1914 - 1919)*, in «Risorgimento», 21 (1979), and *Hommes, capitaux et cultures dans les relations italo-belges aux XIXe et XXe siècles*. Actes du Colloque du 50e anniversaire de l'Academia Belgica, 20-23 novembre 1989 Bruxelles, éd. par Michel Dumoulin et Herman Van der Wee, Rome 1993 (Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome. Etudes d'Histoire économique et sociale).

Ickx produced a detailed study of the conflict between the 19th-century progressive Leuven philosopher Ubaghs and the Vatican.⁴⁸ The Ubaghs “affair” had been analyzed earlier by Leo Kenis as part of his doctorate about the history of the Leuven theology faculty.⁴⁹

Kenis also recently published about another persistent philosophical-theological conflict in the late 19th and 20th centuries: religious modernism and neo-Thomism.⁵⁰ Previous authors including Roger Aubert, Robrecht Boudens and Luc Courtois had published on this issue with the help of sources from the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, often focused on the Leuven professor and later archbishop Désiré-Joseph Mercier (1851-1926).⁵¹ These authors were interested in his struggle against modernism and his role in the spread of Thomist philosophy and the founding of the Higher Institute for Philosophy at the University of Leuven in 1889.⁵² The research on his position on the Flemish struggle for emancipation was also supported with Vatican sources.⁵³

Second Vatican Council

The study of the *Concilio Vaticano II* collection in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano has inspired some intensive research by Belgian Church historians. Most of this research was by researchers at the Katholieke Universiteit te Leuven and the Université Catholique de Louvain. The most important authors

⁴⁸ Johan ICKX, *La Santa Sede tra Lamennais e san Tommaso d'Aquino. La condanna di Gerard Casimir Ubaghs e della dottrina dell'Università Cattolica di Lovanio 1834-1870*, Rome 2005 (Collectanea Archivi Vaticani 56); Johan Ickx also wrote a history of this ecclesiastical court as the archivist of the Penitenzieria Apostolica in 2009: Johan ICKX e Manlio SODI, *La Penitenzieria Apostolica e il sacramento della penitenza: percorsi storici, giuridici, teologici e prospettive pastorali*, Città del Vaticano 2009.

⁴⁹ Leo KENIS, *De Theologische Faculteit te Leuven in de negentiende eeuw 1834-1889*, Brussels 1992.

⁵⁰ Leo KENIS and Ernestine VAN DER WALL, *Religious Modernism in the Low Countries*, Leuven 2013 (Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum Lovaniensium 255).

⁵¹ For example: *Le Cardinal Mercier (1851-1926). Un prélat d'avant-garde. Publications du Professeur Roger Aubert rassemblées à l'occasion de ses 80 ans*, éd. par Jean-Pierre Hendrickx, Jean Pirotte et Luc Courtois, Louvain-la-Neuve 1994; *Two Cardinals. John Henry Newman. Désiré Joseph Mercier*, by Robrecht Boudens, Lieve Gevers, Leuven 1995 (Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum Lovaniensium 123); Luc COURTOIS, *Pie X, Mercier et le modernisme*, in *La papauté contemporaine*, pp. 546-281.

⁵² *Two Cardinals; Les débuts de l'Institut supérieur de philosophie à travers la correspondance de Désiré Mercier avec le Saint-Siège (1887-1904)*, éd. par Luc Courtois et Jacob Milos (in preparation). Ludo Collin studied another prominent professor of the Leuven's Higher Institute of Philosophy, using documents from the Archivio Segreto Vaticano: Ludo COLLIN, *Maurice de Baets et l'Institut supérieur de Philosophie de Louvain*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome», 55-56 (1985-1986), pp. 253-286.

⁵³ Robrecht BOUDENS, *Mercier, het Vaticaan en de Vlaamse Beweging*, in «Wetenschappelijke Tijdingen», 51(1991), pp. 102-116.

are Leo Declerck,⁵⁴ Jan Grootaers,⁵⁵ Mathijs Lamberigts,⁵⁶ Karim Schelkens,⁵⁷ Leo Kenis,⁵⁸ Anthony Dupont⁵⁹ and Joseph Famerée.⁶⁰

⁵⁴ Leo DECLERCK, *Agendas conciliaires de Mgr. J. Willebrands, secrétaire du Secrétariat pour l'Unité des chrétiens. Traduction française annotée. Préface par Thomas Stransky*, Leuven 2009 (Instrumenta Theologica 31).

⁵⁵ Jan GROOTAERS et J. JANS, *La régulation des naissances à Vatican II. Une semaine de crise*, Leuven 2002 (Annuua Nuntia Lovaniensia 43).

⁵⁶ Mathijs LAMBERIGTS and Leo DECLERCK, *Vatican II on the Jews. An Historical Survey*, in *40 Years Nostra Aetate. Past, Present and Future*, by Marianne Moyaert and Didier Pollefeyt, Leuven 2010, pp. 13-56 (Louvain Theological & Pastoral Monographs); Mathijs LAMBERIGTS, *Entwicklungen nach dem II. Vatikanum in den Niederlanden. Die liturgische Entwicklung als Fallstudie*, in *Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil und die Zeichen der Zeit heute*, hrsg. von Peter Hünermann, Fribourg – Basel – Vienna 2006, pp. 283-312; *Le rôle de l'évêque belge dans l'élection des commissions conciliaires en octobre 1962*, in *La raison par quatre chemins*. éd. par Jean Leclercq, Louvain-la-Neuve 2007, pp. 279-306 (Bibliothèque philosophique de Louvain 73); Mgr. E.J. De Smedt et le texte conciliaire sur la religion juive (Nostra Aetate, 4), in «Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses», 85 (2009); Msgr. Emiel-Jozef De Smedt, *Bishop of Bruges, and the Second Vatican Council*, in *Experience, Organisations and Bodies at Vatican II*, by Maria Teresa Fattori – Alberto Melloni, Leuven 1999, pp. 431-469 (Instrumenta Theologica 21); Totius OPTATAM, *The Decree on Priestly Formation. A Short Survey of Its History at the Second Vatican Council*, in «Louvain Studies», 30 (2005), pp. 25-48.

⁵⁷ Karim SCHELKENS, *Cardinal Paul-Émile Léger and the Establishment of the Mixed Commission on Revelation*, in *Vatican II in Canada*, by Michael Attridge, Catherine Clifford, Gilles Routhier, Ottawa 2011; *Carnets conciliaires de Mgr. Gérard Philips, secrétaire adjoint de la commission doctrinale*, Leuven 2006 (Instrumenta Theologica 29); *Catholic Revelation Theology on the Eve of Vatican II. A Redaction History of the Schema de fontibus revelationis*, Leiden 2010 (Series in Church History 41); *Exegesis in the Wake of Vatican II*, in «Annali di Storia dell'esegesi», 25 (2008); *L'Affaire de Rhodes" au jour le jour. La correspondance inédite entre J.G.M. Willebrands et Ch.-J. Dumont*, in «Istina», 54 (2009), pp. 253-277; *La réception du Dei Verbum entre histoire et théologie*, in *L'autorité et les autorités. L'herméneutique théologique de Vatican II*, éd. par Gilles Routhier, Paris Cerf, 2010 (Unam Sanctam. Nouvelle Série 2); *Lumen Gentium's 'Subsistit in' Revisited. The Catholic Church and Christian Unity After Vatican II*, in «Theological Studies», 69 (2008), pp. 875-893; *Perceiving Orthodoxy. A Comparative Analysis on the Roman Controversy in Catholic Exegesis (1960-1961)*, in *Theology and the Quest for Truth. Historical- and Systematic-Theological Studies*, by Lieven Boeve, Mathijs Lamberigts, Terrence Merrigan, Leuven 2007, pp. 143-164 (Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum Lovaniensium, 202); *The Council Diaries of Edward Schillebeeckx, 1962-1963. Critically annotated Bilingual Edition*, Leuven 2010 (Instrumenta Theologica, 34); *Vatican Diplomacy After the Cuban Missile Crisis. New Light on the Release of Josyf Slipyj*, in «The Catholic Historical Review», 98 (2011), pp. 679-712; Jaroslav Z. SKIRA, Karim SCHELKENS, *The Council Diary of Metropolitan Maksym Hermaniuk C.Ss.R. Annotated critical edition*, Leuven & Nijmegen 2012 (Eastern Christian Studies 15).

⁵⁸ *Vatican II and Its Legacy*, by Mathijs Lamberigts and Leo Kenis, Leuven 2002 (Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum Lovaniensium 166).

⁵⁹ Anthony DUPONT, Karim, SCHELKENS, *Exegese vor dem Zweiten Vatikanischen Konzil (1960-1962)*, in «Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie», 132 (2010), pp. 1-24; IID., *Scopuli Vitandi. The Controversy Concerning Historico-Critical Exegesis Between the Lateran University and the Pontifical Biblical Institute*, in «Bijdragen. International Journal of Philosophy and Theology», 69 (2008), pp. 18-51.

⁶⁰ *The Belgian Contribution to the Second Vatican Council*, by Doris Donnelly, Joseph

Art, culture, sport culture and research

Documents in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano not only were consulted as part of political, social, theological or philosophical research, but also for studies of artistic, cultural and scholarly relations between Belgium, the Belgian Church and the Vatican. For instance, Christine Dupont used the Vatican archives in her study of patronage and networks of Belgian artists in Italy; Dries Vanysacker did research on Pius X's attitude to the use of the bicycle by his clergy, and on the Holy See's attitude to the increasing importance of the phenomenon of "sport" during the Interbellum; André Tihon devoted a study to the history of the Belgian College (Belgisch College) in Rome.⁶¹

Colonialism, missionary work and religious institutes

Only a handful of historians used Archivio Segreto Vaticano sources for research on the history of Congo. Yet, among other things the Archivio Segreto Vaticano contains the already partially released archives of the *Apostolic Delegation to the Belgian Congo*. These documents are interesting for studies of the former Belgian colony and a valuable complement to the sources from the more frequently consulted archives of Propaganda Fide. Vincent Viaene studied documents from the Archivio Segreto Vaticano for his article about the communication between King Leopold II and the Vatican about his African colony.⁶² Wim François did the same for his research on the place of Catholic missions in Congo Free State.⁶³

Famerée, Mathijs Lamberigts, Karim Schelkens, Leuven 2009 (Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum Lovaniensium 216).

⁶¹ Christine DUPONT, *Modèles italiens et traditions nationales: les artistes belges en Italie, 1830-1914.*, Brussels – Rome 2005 (Bibliotheek der Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome 54); Dries VANYSACKER, *Véhicule moderniste ou Instrument d'apostolat? Le dilemme de Giuseppe Melchiorre Sarto/Pie X envers l'utilisation de la bicyclette par le clergé (1894-1908)*, in *La papauté contemporaine*, pp. 245-255; ID., *The Attitude of the Holy See toward Sport during the Interwar Period (1919-1939)*, in «The Catholic Historical Review», 101 (2015), forthcoming; André TIHON, *Le Collège Belge à Rome*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome», 50 (1980), pp. 15-58.

⁶² Vincent VIAENE, *La religion du Prince: Léopold, le Vatican, la Belgique et le Congo (1855-1909)*, in *Léopold II entre génie et gêne: politique étrangère et colonisation*, éd. par Vincent Dujardin et al., Brussels 2009, pp. 163-189.

⁶³ See inter alia: Wim FRANÇOIS, *Een tropische storm in katholieke België. De controverse rond de plaats van de katholieke missies in Congo-Vrijstaat (1905-1906)*, in «Trajecta», 10/2 (2001), pp. 136-159; ID., *De onderzoekscommissie voor Congo (1904-05) en de missies van de jezuïeten*, in «Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis. Journal of Belgian History», 37/1 (2007), pp. 79-142.

Congo is the subject of additional research, including a number of monographs about Belgian (or Belgian divisions of) religious institutes doing missionary work, which to a limited extent are based on Vatican sources. Among these are the publications about the missionaries from Scheut and the Passionists.⁶⁴ As in most of the other historical articles about religious institutes, however, the authors mainly rely on the provincial or general archives of the orders and congregations. There is less frequent research in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. Exceptions to this are the studies by Leo Van Dyck about Corselis and the Norbertines of Tongerlo, by Philippe Annaert about the school of the Belgian Ursulines in Rome, by Marie-Thérèse Lacroix and again Vincent Viaene about the turbulent 19th-century history of the Dames de Saint-André of Tournai, as well as the recently published collection *The Economics of Providence*, about the financial and heritage management by European religious institutes and a discussion of the “invasion” of French religious refugees in Belgium in the early 20th century.⁶⁵ The work of Loonbeek and Mortiau about the Belgian Benedictine Lambert Beauvuin (1873-1960), protagonist of the 20th-century liturgical and ecumenical movements, also must be mentioned here.⁶⁶

Accessibility

In the last few decades there have been made great efforts to improve accessibility of the “Belgica” in the collections of the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. Jan Art gave the initial impetus with his 1980 article about the archives of

⁶⁴ *Scheut vroeger en nu 1862-1987: geschiedenis van de Congregatie van het Onbevelekt Hart van Maria C.I.C.M.*, by Daniël Verhelst and Hyacinth Daniëls, Leuven 1991; Patrick TAVEIRNE, *Han-Mongol encounters and missionary endeavors: a history of Scheut in Ordos (Hetao), 1874-1911*, Leuven 2004; J. VANDEN BUSSCHE, *De Passionisten in België: een italiaanse congregatie in Noord-Europa*, Wezembeek – Oppem 2007.

⁶⁵ Leo VAN DYCK, *Visitator Frans Thomas Corselis en de Norbertijnen. De Vaticaanse Dossiers*, in «Trajecta», 3/4 (1994), pp. 328-346; ID., *De Abdij van Tongerlo: gebundelde historische studies*, Averbode 1999 (Bibliotheca analectorum Praemonstratensium 19); Philippe ANNAERT, *Le tricentenaire du collège des Ursulines belges de Rome (1684-1984)*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome», 53-54 (1983-1984), pp. 304-314; Marie-Thérèse LACROIX, *La vie à Saint-André au XIXème siècle (1796-1914)*; 2. vols., Tournai 2007; Vincent VIAENE, *The Second Sex and the First Estate: The Sisters of St-André between the Bishop of Tournai and Rome, 1850-1886*, in «The Journal of Ecclesiastical History», 59/3 (2008), pp. 447-474; *The Economics of Providence: Management, Finances and Patrimony of Religious Orders and Congregations in Europe, 1773-c. 1930*, by Maarten Van Dijck et al., Leuven 2012 (KADOC Studies on Religion, Culture and Society); Hendrik MOEYS, *De Zwarte Invasie*, Leuven 2011-2012 (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven. Unpublished master's dissertation).

⁶⁶ Raymond LOONBEEK and Jacques MORTIAU, *Un pionnier Dom Lambert Beauvuin (1873-1960): liturgie et unité des chrétiens*, Louvain-la-Neuve 2001; ID., *Dom Lambert Beauvuin visionnaire et précurseur (1873-1960): un moine au coeur libre*, Paris 2005.

the pontificate of Leo XIII.⁶⁷ Later on, also KADOC-KU Leuven focussed on facilitating research by contemporary historians, in particular by those researchers wanting to study the interaction between religion, culture and society from ca. 1750 to today. “KADOC - Documentatie- en Onderzoekscentrum voor Religie, Cultuur en Samenleving, 1750 – heden” is an interfaculty institute of the KU Leuven, accredited and subsidized as a national cultural archival institution by the Flemish Community.⁶⁸ Along with “ARCA - Archives du monde catholique”, connected with the Université catholique de Louvain at Louvain-la-Neuve, KADOC attempted to bring the Vatican archives to the attention of Belgian historians.⁶⁹

KADOC became operational in 1976-1977. In 1980, it started with the production of inventories and microfilms of *Belgica* in the archives of the Secretary of State, the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs and the Belgian Nunciature. Several inventories were created, covering the pontificates of Pius IX, Leo XIII, Pius X and Benedict XV. To increase its accessibility to the public, selected documents were put on microfilm. A more recent contribution involves the pontificate of Pius XI.⁷⁰ This latest project, financed with the support of the Flemish Community, was entitled “Flanders and the Vatican”. The project aimed to contradict the prevailing opinions that research in the Vatican archives is too complex, too expensive and out of historiographical fashion. It tried to find ways to make the Archivio Segreto Vaticano attractive once again. With this goal in mind, a digital heritage guide was designed, which would guide the public through the archives of the Holy See. Specialized researchers were given the opportunity to navigate to the chronological lists containing the *Belgica* which could be of value to their research. The archival documents and their components are globally described in accordance with international standards in the web databank ODIS, while contextual information concerning individuals, families, organizations or institutes, as well as periodicals, is provided. The goal of the project was to be

⁶⁷ Jan ART, *Quelques fonds d'archives du pontificat de Léon XIII (1875-1903) se rapportant à l'histoire de la Belgique*, in «Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome», 51 (1980), pp. 473-491.

⁶⁸ See <www.kadoc.be>

⁶⁹ See <www.arca.be>

⁷⁰ For more information about the microfilm collections and lists, see <www.kadoc.be>. In the last few years, several historians have indirectly consulted the documents in the Archivio Segreto Vaticano and used them in their research in this way. Examples include the previously mentioned dissertations by Nicolaas Rasson and Hendrik Moeys, and articles from the collection *The Economics of Providence*, or more information about digitale access to the collections from the pontificate of Pius XI, see <www.vatican.be> or Jan ROOBROUCK, *Van regestenlijst tot webdatabank: een nieuwe koers voor de navigatie naar de Vaticaanse Belgica*, in «Bibliotheek & archiefgids», 83/2 (2007), pp. 16-23.

a powerful stimulus to research by linking with general Church and social/cultural history.⁷¹

In the meantime inventories have been published of the Vatican archival documents covering the period of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands (1815-1830), as well as an overview of the literature and inventories connected with the Archivio Segreto Vaticano in the Belgian State Archives.⁷²

In this way, various institutions in Belgium are trying to bring the “gold mines” of the Archivio Segreto Vaticano closer to the public, and to stimulate research in it.

⁷¹ See <www.vaticane.be>

⁷² J. P. DE VALK, *Inventaris van Romeinse archivalia betreffende het Verenigd Koninkrijk der Nederlanden 1813-1831*, 2 vols., Brussels – Rome 1991 (Analecta der Belgisch Historisch Instituut te Rome, Serie S 9-10); Dries VANYSACKER, *Overzicht van inventarissen en van literatuur i.v.m. het Archivio Segreto Vaticano et de Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, aanwezig in het Algemeen Rijksarchief te Brussel*, Brussels 1999.