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ARCHIVES REPORTS - REGION VII

MAR. 1944

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There Is A CARD INDEX To These Reports,

Reference 20795/C/15

HEADQUARTERS
ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION
APO 394

HJ/lmp

Subcommission for Monuments Fine Arts and Archives

20905/MFAA

31 March 1944.

Memorandum to: Major De Wald, M.F.A. and A. Subcommission, A.C.C.

Subject : Notes on Archive Repositories.

Annexed is a series of Notes on the Archive Repositories I have been able to inspect or visit up to date. My opportunities for observation have, of course, been limited but it may be worth while to mention, for what they are worth, one or two conclusions which suggested themselves to me.

(i) I visited wherever possible the Provincial or other Commissioner and found them all appreciative of the special danger to Archives and anxious to help. I cite in particular Major Armstrong's immediate action at Benevento in regard to the valuable Archives of the Naples Aquarium.

(ii) What these Officers needed was a list, or at least clear indications, of the things they are desired to protect: and I think that my typed list, amplifying the information in regard to Archives which I hope will appear in the printed list, might suitably be circulated to them.

(iii) Another thing which is needed is an understanding on the part of the Italian Officials that they should have recourse to A.C.C. in case of difficulty. Everywhere I found lack of appreciation, and in most cases complete ignorance, of this fact.

(iv) I should like to call particular attention to the cases of Bari and Potenza. At both these places State Archives (to be starred in the printed list) were in considerable danger and in both empty rooms were available in the same building: but in the second instance, because it was the documents and not the men which it was proposed to move into the vacant space, it seemed doubtful whether the Commissioner would be able to take action.

I put this point with great diffidence, appreciating my own small knowledge of the practical difficulties of the situation; but it struck me that possibly there might be on occasion an overstressing of the immutability of the fait accompli in regard to requisitioned buildings.

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Hilary Jenkinson

HILARY JENKINSON.

HEADQUARTERS ALLIED CONTROL COMMISSION
APO 394

HJ/hd

SG 314.8

30 March 1944

Memorandum on
ARCHIVES VISITED
March 1944BARI

A. Provinciale di Stato. No damage by bombing but troops have for some time been billeted actually among the Archives. No complaints against the present occupants--a company of R.E.--and their C.O. told me they were most careful; also they could in some cases (as their Sergeant-Major, who accompanied me round with the Archivist, agreed), board off sections of the documents and help in other ways. But the troops have to pass continuously among large sections of the documents, inflammatory stores are there, and the position is in every way most undesirable. I reported the matter to the Provincial Commissioner, Colonel Vening, who had already been disturbed by the situation and he promised to look into it personally and was confident that he would be able to get the troops moved into empty rooms in the same building.

A. Comunale. No trouble reported.

Ecclesiastical. I called on the Archbishop and saw also his Chancellor and the Archivist of the Chapter. The Cathedral has been damaged by bombing. I was informed that the most valuable part both of the A. Arcivescovile and of the A. Capitolare have been removed to Castel del Monte but the remaining documents are in a room reached from the Cathedral, which I saw; it has been damaged and the door is blocked by debris inside. The Archivist wishes for help to reach the window by ladders. I promised to report this to Colonel Vening and did so.

The A. di S. Nicola, which I visited, are safe, as I was informed by the head of the Chapter, Mons. Vendemia, on whom I called.

(22/23 March 1944)

BENEVENTO

A. Storico Comunale. (the older Archives of the Town), are safe in the Museo del Sannio, with other documents illustrating the history of the Province.

Ecclesiastical. The A. Capitolare, which includes the well-known Beneventan Codices, has been removed from the Cathedral to the Library of the Archbishop Chapter, where I saw them lying unarranged. The Librarian 'believed' that all were there. The A. Arcivescovile was in the "Casa del Duomo" which has been destroyed; and according to the same authority all had perished; this is not so, as I found on visiting the place two large

A. Notarile Distrettuale.
The building containing these is stated to have been bombed and the Archives destroyed; but the ruins have not yet been cleared and some remains may be discovered.

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cupboards in situ containing a certain quantity of Registers with other (non-archive) matter and two more, similarly filled, in a "Scuola Cattolica" nearby. I suggested to a custodian who shewed them to me that the first two should be removed to the same place as the last and that a look-out should be kept when the ruins were being cleared.

A. di S.Sofia. Safe in Museum, as above.

Note. All the above facts were communicated to the Provincial Commissioner, Major Armstrong, who informed me in addition that, having learned that troops had been billeted in a building at Pontelandolfo in which the Archives and Library of the Naples Aquarium are deposited, he had written to the C.O. a letter (of which you have a copy) warning him that he would be responsible for their safety.

(10 March 1944)

CAPUA

A. Comunale. The part of the Municipal Building containing these has been destroyed by bombing. Visited, and suggested to custodian that some documents might be found among the ruins and that a look-out should be kept for them. There were in fact fragmentary indications.

Ecclesiastical. Visited and was informed by the R.P. Paternostro that Cathedral Archives (presumably both A. Vescovile and Capitolare) were safe, having been moved by him to the Seminario. I pointed out that some Registers (presumably part of the A. Perrocchiale) were still lying in the ruins of the Cathedral and he promised to attend to this.

(15 March 1944)

CASERTA

A. Provinciale di Stato. Not yet visited; reported safe.

A. del Palazzo Reale. Safe and in reasonably good condition. The custodian reports no trouble.

(15 March 1944)

FOGGIA •

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A. Provinciale di Stato. Badly damaged by bombing and some of the Archives destroyed. The Provincial Government has walled up the undamaged part, in which had been placed also documents rescued from the damaged portion, and all remaining documents, including the important A. della Dogana delle Pecore, are at present inaccessible. I visited with the Archivist, Sig. Voza (who is living at Lucera) and interviewed also the "Presidente

• This statement of the position relative to the A. di Stato in general and the Archives of the Dogana delle Pecore in particular, though accurate according to what was told me by Sig. Voza, conflicts in some respects with the Memorandum of Major Ward Perkins dated 22 Jan 44, and should be checked.

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del Consiglio", and it was agreed that if transport could be obtained the Archives of the Dogana ought to be extracted and removed to the Sezione del A. di Stato at Lucera (4.v.) I reported all this to the Provincial Commissioner, Colonel Andrews (whose office is in the same building), and instructed the Archivist to apply to him.

Ecclesiastical. I called on the Bishop and saw also his Chancellor who shewed me the A. Vescovile (modern) and explained that the early Archives are at the Cathedral at TROIA (United Diocese) and are safe. I visited the A. Capitolare which are at present safe in a kind of sacristy opening from the stalls in the damaged Cathedral; the roof of this is damaged and I recommended their removal.

(21 March 1944)

LECCE

A. Provinciale di Stato. I visited with the Archivist (Sig. Cota), who informed me that the older documents (including Notarial Archives and various deposits) are in safety at S. Cesario, where they are regularly visited. His own Archives Building is in good condition and he has moved or is moving the more valuable documents from the upper floors. No trouble in regard to troops. I reported all this to the Commissioner, Major Turner-Colles.

Ecclesiastical. Cathedral (and Archives) reported undamaged. I did not visit.

(24 March 1944)

LUCERA

Sezione del A. Prov. di Stato. I visited with the Archivist (see above FOGGIA), who reported no trouble.

A. Notarile Distrettale. Visited with the Archivist. No trouble.

A. Storico Comunale. In "Biblioteca Comunale". Visited with the Librarian, Sig. Gifuni. No trouble.

(20 March 1944) 381

MATERA

A. Notarile Distrettale. I visited, but, it being Sunday, the Archivist could not be found. An official at the Palazzo del Tribunale, which is partly in occupation by troops, took me round and assured me that the Archives were all safely locked up in various rooms; though they had been removed for some reason, in one case at least, which I saw, from their places. I reported to the Commissioner, Colonel McCaffrey.

(26 March 1944)

NAPOLI

See separate memorandum.

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COSTUNI

Ecclesiastical. I visited the Cathedral in passing and, in the absence of the Chancellor and Archivist, was assured by a member of the Chapter that all was well. I saw the A. Parrocchiale in the Sacristy.
(24 March 1944)

POTENZA

A. Provinciale di Stato. These have suffered badly. I visited them with Sig. Tommaso Pedio, a young magistrate who, as I understand, was asked by the provincial authorities to do what he could, he having some previous knowledge of the Archives though not a member of the Staff. The Archivist was believed to be in Naples. The Archives (which are in the Palazzo della Biblioteca), have suffered first from plundering by the Germans, then from bombs, which have broken the windows, then from irruption by Allied troops, and finally by the requisitioning of other rooms in the building (empty at present) which might have served as a temporary place of deposit for documents. I reported all this to the Provincial Commissioner, Major Nichols, and also told Sig. Pedio to write a brief account for the Commissioner, of which I asked the latter to send me a copy. Major Nichols promised to do what he could and I hope it will be possible to let Sig. Pedio have the use of the empty rooms or, failing this, to help him to get the windows filled up.* When I saw the place snow had drifted in and was lying on the top of some of the volumes. I had unfortunately little time at my disposal.

A. Notarile Distrettale. I visited these very briefly with the Archivist in charge and saw that all was well.

(27 March 1944)

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TARANTO

A. Provinciale. There is not a Sezione of the A. di Stato here but I was informed at the offices of the Province that nothing was wrong in regard to their (modern) Archives. I was also given to understand the same in regard to the Comune.

Ecclesiastical. I saw an official of the Cathedral and was informed that the Archives there were all right.

(25 March 1944)

TPANI

A. Provinciale di Stato. I called here in passing and, though I was unable to inspect in the absence of the Archivist, was told that all was well.

A. Notarile Distrettale. These are in another part of the same building as the preceding, near the Cathedral. I visited with a like result.

Ecclesiastical. The Cathedral is under extensive repair by the Italian Ministry of Works. I was told by a custodian that the Archives (preserved, I gathered, in the lower church) were safe.

(21 March 1944)

* According to letter (23 Mar 44) of Major Nichols, transmitting Sig. Pedio's report, windows have been boarded up.

