

Religious archival holdings in the National Archives of Prague

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Religious archival holdings kept in the National Archives of the Czech Republic (former The State Central Archives in Prague) have been mostly generated by Catholic institutions both secular (the Archives of the Prag Archbishopric, Vyšehrad Chapter and All Saints Chapter) and regular. The amount of survived documents was influenced by several decisive historical events during the ages, first of all by the Hussite Revolution in Bohemia in the first period of the 14th century, dissolution of Jesuit Order in 1773 and subsequent Josephine reforms in the Habsburg Monarchy. Massive destruction of many religious monuments, valuables and records ensued after the Communist seizure of the power in Czechoslovakia in 1948. Archival holdings of in 1950 by force dissolved monasteries had been gradually handed over to the Central Archives of the Ministry of the Interior, which became a part of the Central State Archives in 1954. After the restoration of democracy in 1989 majority of owners have decided to leave their records under administration of the Archives. The Břevnov Benedictine Archives, the Archives of the Czech Grand Priory of the Knights of St. John, the Archives of the Knights of the Cross with Red Star and the Archives of the Royal Canonof Premonstratensians at Strahov Abbey are ranked among the oldest archival holdings. Beside these records, the National Archives also kept a numeral group of smaller monastic collections. During 50s and 60s of the 20th century archivists reordered all holdings and produced new inventories to them. 8619 charters can be found among the monastic records. Since 1997 the National Archives have been taking part in a nation-wide project of cataloguing seals, seal matrices and casts. Thanks to this project, all seals of monastic holdings will be also catalogued. Making accessible monastic charters online and CD ROMs within the international project „Monasterium“ will be benefiting not only to researchers but will play also a substantial role in taking care of physical condition of these documents.