Abstract
Throughout the 19th century, there was a boom in historical sciences. The History of the Church was studied by all historians, specially by the Protestants. The Catholic historians followed suit. Due to controversies of the First Vatican Council and the exegetical problems based on historical arguments contrary to the doctrine of Rome, the Church was reluctant towards historical research. In spite of the difficulties, Leo XIII, taking a traditional stance with respect to the Roman question in defending the temporalist view of the papacy, decided to open the Vatican Secret Archives to show that the Church need not fear History, but rather History is to agree with the Church. The opening of the Archives encouraged once again historical studies regarding the papacy and fostered the creation of the various Historical Institutes in Rome. Moreover, Leo XIII created a Commission of cardinals for historical studies and established the Vatican School of Paleography and Diplomatics. A great number of sources and monographic works were published, and historical scholarship as well as the auxiliary sciences had a remarkable improvement.

Keywords
Vatican Secret Archives, Leo XIII, Historical Institutes