

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

The Diplomat Par Excellence

Review Author: Miguel A. Bernad

Philippine Studies vol. 19, no. 4 (1971): 749–751

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

There are also a number of printing errors: among them, "Philip I" (Vol. I, p. 326) should be "Philip II"; "in instrument" (Vol. I, p. 334) should be "an instrument." And perhaps it would have been better to print the English alongside the Spanish text for better reading.

These are minutiae. What bothers the present reviewer is that if the intention was not to translate, but to simplify and modernize the Spanish text for today's reader, there seems to be no point in issuing this particular work. There are other more important writings, both printed and still in manuscript, which could have been stylized for modern reading. The fifty-five volumes of Philippine historical sources edited by Blair and Robertson need updating and supplementing to cover the history of the Philippines from 1900. Or, if energy and financial means are still available, many unread (and probably forever unused) manuscripts in the National Archives, or the Dominican Archives in Quezon City, are still waiting for an editor.

Lest this reviewer appear too negative, it is good to note that there are a number of people who are interested in preserving our national heritage. For this the HCS deserves praise and support.

JOSE S. ARCILLA

THE DIPLOMAT PAR EXCELLENCE

THE ITALIAN DIPLOMAT: AND ITALY AND SCOTLAND. By Alfred Stirling. Melbourne. The Hawthorn Press. 1971. Pp. 93. Two photographs. Two indices.

Many years ago, when the present reviewer was a young schoolmaster tutoring his students in All Things Knowable (from ancient Latin and Greek to Modern European History), it used to be very amusing to hold a public debate on such questions as: "Resolved: That Bismarck was a Greater Scoundrel Than Cavour." Such questions (eminently debatable) were invented by the present reviewer as a device to compel his students (without their realizing that they were being compelled) to read extensively into the exciting stories of how Bismarck united all of Germany under Prussia, and how Cavour united all of Italy under the House of Savoy. Neither process was easy, and various means—fair and foul—were used to bring about objectives that in themselves were not undesirable.

Mr. Stirling's essay on "The Italian Diplomat" recalls to mind those stirring days when Italy was seething with movements and counter-movements for and against unification. The "Italian Boot" was then a conglomeration of distinct states—some of them independent

and sovereign; others under the domination of foreign powers. Venice looked northwards towards Austria; Naples looked westwards towards Spain and France; the Papal States were a temporal kingdom, protected by France. In Paris, Napoleon III was emperor, on nodding terms with Eugenie, his beautiful and resourceful empress. In Turin, Victor Emmanuel was king and Cavour his prime minister.

All this was changed not so long ago—only a hundred years ago—with the unification of Italy into one nation and one state. What devious ways were used to accomplish that end! Some of it by war, and some by diplomacy—and what unorthodox forms of diplomacy! The beautiful Countess of Castiglione was sent off to Paris (“to vamp the emperor”); the 15-year-old Princess Clotilde, daughter of the King of Savoy, was compelled to marry against her will the repulsive Prince Jerome Bonaparte who was three times her age!

But those were minor skirmishes in the diplomatic offensive. The major strokes were those delivered by Cavour through his special envoy, Constantino Nigra. These should really have earned Nigra the title of diplomat par excellence (*per antonomasiam*). Nigra (who was born in 1829 and who died in 1907) is “The Italian Diplomat” of the title—not Machiavelli: although Mr. Stirling does have some things (and good things) to say about that most famous of Italian diplomats.

What a delightful book this is! It has only one defect: it is not long enough. It is a sketch rather than a full-length biography.

The man who wrote this book—Alfred Stirling—had been Austrian Ambassador in the Philippines before he was posted to Rome. He was one of two diplomats who introduced a new type of diplomacy to the Islands: people-to-people, as against the merely traditional government-to-government. Mr. Stirling, who travelled extensively throughout the Philippines, must have travelled as extensively in Italy. There are two splendid chapters in this book. One is entitled “Cavour’s Turin: the Old Capital,” with a sub-section on the Canavese country, where Nigra had lived. Stirling’s description of modern Turin is as good as any description of any place by anyone. It must be read to be appreciated.

The other chapter occurs in the other essay in this volume, on the relationships between Italy and Scotland. Stirling, Austrian Ambassador to Italy, is of Scottish descent: and in this essay he has gone into the trouble of tracing the relationships between the two countries. It is a fascinating story, and it involves some interesting persons: Frederick II; Ariosto; Aeneas Silvius Piccolomini, who became Pope Pius II; Mary Queen of Scots and David Rizzio; and the person called “the Admirable Crichton.” Even Byron and Sir Walter Scott are mentioned here. But the best story in the essay is that of the young

illegitimate prince, son of King James IV of Scotland. The boy grew up to be a fine young man, studious and honorable, trained by Erasmus in the University of Padua, who became Archbishop of St. Andrew. He founded a college "for the training of poor students." Unfortunately, this young, learned and pious Archbishop was also a prince. And when his father (who was also his king) marched against England in the battle of Flodden, he felt it his duty to be by his side. This is how Stirling describes it: "When King James invaded England in the fatal expedition of 1513, the young Archbishop, barely twenty, insisted on accompanying his father and was killed beside him in the battle, along with 'half Scotland', the flowers of the forest. They say that on the night of Flodden the ghost of the Archbishop was seen to say Mass before the high altar of his own cathedral at St. Andrew's for the dead army lying around its king"

MIGUEL A. BERNAD

PHILIPPINE AND INDONESIAN ARCHIVES

A SURVEY OF HISTORICAL SOURCE MATERIALS IN JAVA AND MANILA. By Robert Van Niel. Asian Studies at Hawaii, No. 5, University of Hawaii Press, 1970, 255 pp.

This survey is the result of the author's year of investigation of available written historical sources in Java and Manila. However, it should be observed from the outset that only one month of this period was spent in Manila, and hence the survey of Philippine archival material, as the author notes in his introduction, was intended only to "provide a basis of comparison with the Indonesian experience." (p. 2). The fact that in the final result the Manila survey emerged as something substantial in itself he attributes principally to the "facilitated working conditions for historians in the Manila area and to the general understanding and kind assistance given by persons working in the libraries and archives." Even a cursory reading of the section of this book devoted to Indonesia makes clear that the problems of archival research there are indeed formidable in comparison with Manila.

Though only some forty pages of the book are devoted to Manila source materials, this review will limit itself to these three chapters, as being both the focus of interest of the readers of this journal and the area of competence of the reviewer. One chapter is devoted to the Philippine National Archives, one to manuscript collections in several major Manila libraries, and a final chapter to the religious archives. Shelf lists are provided for the Philippine National Archives, the Dominican archives of Santo Domingo, and the archives of the University of Santo Tomas. Though the brevity of the section precluded more than a list-