

“had made extensive use of the holdings of the National Archives.” Ironically this constitutes the weakness of their contributions—the papers all reflect the bias of the voluminous documentation generated by whites. In each of the historical essays the “great white man” dominates; the Indian remains a peripheral figure in what is really not “Indian” but “white man’s” history.

In his introductory essay to the volume, “Doing Indian History,” Francis Prucha notes that the “correction of existing historical writing comes from discovery of new sources, from application of new techniques, and from more sophisticated probing of the records with new questions.” Quite true. As historians we must begin to supplement the documentary record, for, as Oliver W. Holmes states in his essay, “over 95 percent of all documentation originated with whites.” Both Crampton and Ewers point the way. We must begin to use native oral testimony for our treatment of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In order to come closer to the heart and the mind of the Indian we must also learn the historical value of artifacts and pictures. Then with new questions we should go back to the archives.

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The Tetramachus Collection. PHILIPPE VAN RJNDT. Toronto: Lester and Orpen, c1976. 287 p. ISBN 0 919630 58 8 \$8.95.

Tired of the drab, dusty image of archives? Weary of new acquaintances, or even old friends, expressing surprise that you do not more closely resemble a mediaeval scribe? Despite your best efforts at self-liberation and ego-building, do you still feel uncomfortably like Clark Kent beside the Historian-Superman? Have you never dreamed of reading a novel in which an archives was at the origin of international intrigue involving sex, scandal and assassination? You may be tempted then, on first impulse, to refer your snide tormentors and Superman to *The Tetramachus Collection*. Read the book; but resist the impulse.

The subject of all the intrigue is a bound volume of documents relating to Vatican-Nazi relations in Poland during World War II, and utterly devastating for the reputation of the Iron Cardinal and heir apparent to the papacy, Rozdentsy Cardinal Meyerzczuk of Poland. The theft of the collection from the depths of the Secret Archives by Father Martin Belobraditz touches off world-wide speculation about its contents as well as a flurry of recovery operations by several secret service operations including ISIS, a semi-private organization operated by the CIA and the KGB, and engaged, in this instance, by the Vatican. While many archivists will regret the theft of manuscript material from an archival repository, the leftward leaners may find themselves in sympathy with Father Martin, the simple Polish priest with the suffering social conscience and the desire to expose corruption and power politicking in the highest echelons of government, albeit in the ecclesiastical sphere. What indignation must the genuine archivist feel, however, when Father Martin’s simplicity leads him to rip a page from the Collection to send to the Vatican as proof of possession—and worse still, to entrust it to the Italian post office!

The so-called Secret Archives of the Vatican possesses holdings dating back to the thirteenth century. Despite its very complex arrangement, which simply grew like Topsey, and which is rendered only slightly more comprehensible by hundreds of *indices*, the vast majority of the papers it holds have been open to researchers since 1881. In 1967, they were opened down to and including 1878. Thus the name Secret Archives, while a novelist’s delight, has no logical significance. The title originated in the eighteenth century when an archivist gave it to his inventory of a series of regular office documents; the name stuck as a division of the Vatican Archives. When Philippe van Rjndt acknowledges that his story deals with a very small fraction of the holdings of the Secret Archives, he never makes it clear that the bulk of them have long been exploited. ISIS found it had an

embarrassingly slim file on the Secret Archives. A sheepish agent excused this deficiency saying, "It's simply a matter of no one ever having been interested in the archives, possibly because no one could get at them." There is a lesson there somewhere for archival repositories.

The story of this prodigal collection is fast-paced but so complex at times that only with considerable difficulty does one maintain a grip on the corporate affiliations (public and secret service) of the various characters. Alexander Players, for example, was a former KGB agent seconded to ISIS and sent, at the request of the CIA, to infiltrate the Canadian secret service, to which, unbeknownst to ISIS, he had already defected before he was recalled by ISIS to embark on the quest for the holy collection. Van Rjndt, however, has achieved a skilful blend of fact and fiction that often leaves one wondering where the former ends and the latter begins. Pope Urban XI recalls, definitely but vaguely, Paul VI. Cardinal Meyerzczuk is a speculative characterization of Jozsef Cardinal Mindszenty of Hungary.

With regard to the Secret Archives it is apparent that van Rjndt's authenticity owes no small debt to Maria Luisa Ambrosini's *Secret Archives of the Vatican* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1970). Van Rjndt's description of Father Martin's route to the inner vault of the Secret Archives (pp. 11-15) bears a remarkable resemblance in detail, and even in phraseology, to Ambrosini's account of her own tour of the Secret Archives (pp. 3-6). However, while Ambrosini's tour ended outside the inner vault, at the closed "large dark door," the story of the Tetramachus Collection begins inside it. One can only speculate on the existence of the sophisticated security system which van Rjndt describes as guarding the Secret Archives. From Ambrosini's description of the "deeply cultured," "very courteous," and "modest" or even "humble" Monsignor Giusti, Prefect of the Secret Archives, van Rjndt has created Cardinal da Silva, the fictitious prefect, a cultured, scheming, secretive, efficient bureaucrat, possessed of intelligence, but no great abundance of courage or principle. The real and fictitious prefects both possessed the quality of "serene detachment."

Cardinal da Silva is not an engaging personality. He is not even a particularly conscientious archivist. Da Silva had extensive financial dealings with Nazis scurrying to get out of Europe in their dog-days of 1945, and on the lam for years thereafter. These matters, documented in various collections held in the inner vault, would have remained in secure obscurity had da Silva maintained his professional principles. However, for greater safe-keeping, and in direct violation of the principle of provenance, da Silva had removed all references to himself in relation to the Nazis, and placed them in the back of the Tetramachus Collection. As luck (or divine retribution) would have it, he had picked precisely the wrong collection in which to hide himself. Almost as inexcusable was da Silva's toleration of the "circulation" of the Tetramachus Collection outside the Archives, and his failure to poke his nose into the briefcase of Father Martin, who, unattended, had just spent several minutes poking his own among the Vatican's top secret papers before walking off with the Tetramachus Collection. As if archivists had not yet consumed a sufficient portion of humble pie, they are obliged to devour the whole thing when they learn that Urban XI calls on none other than an historian to redeem the archivist's blunders and recover the Tetramachus Collection.

Many archival repositories will probably not purchase *The Tetramachus Collection* for their reference libraries. Most archivists, having read the novel, will not mention it to their tormentors. They may even, through the Association of Canadian Archivists, the CIA or ISIS, initiate a discreet campaign to buy up all copies on the market. The young turks will burn the book—after surreptitiously enjoying it from cover to cover. Compared to their usual archival literature, it's a damn good read.

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