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The Coats-of-Arms of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdictions in the Philippines:

Part I. The Metropolitan Sees

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The Coats-of-Arms of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdictions in the Philippines

MOST REV. MARIANO MADRIAGA D.D.

Part I. The Metropolitan Sees

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

THERE are six metropolitan sees in the Philippines of which the oldest is that of Manila. It was created a diocese suffragan to the archdiocese of Mexico by Pope Gregory XIII on 6 February 1579 with jurisdiction over all the Philippine Islands.¹ On 14 August 1595 it was elevated by Clement VIII to the rank of archdiocese² at which time three new suffragan dioceses were created, viz. Cebú, Nueva Cáceres (Naga) and Nueva Segovia (Vigan).³

To these original jurisdictions created in the sixteenth century a fourth was added in the nineteenth when part of the original territory of the Cebú diocese was carved out into a separate diocese by Pope Pius IX on 27 May 1865.⁴ The episcopal seat of this new diocese was at Jaro near Iloilo on the island of Panay.

¹ *Enciclopedia cattolica* (Citta del Vaticano 1951) VII:1965-6 s.v. "Manila." The date given in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York 1910) is 1578 which appears to be a mistake.

² *Enciclopedia cattolica loc. cit.* Both the *Catholic Encyclopedia* and the *Catholic Directory* of the Philippines give the year 1585.

³ *Enciclopedia cattolica* VIII:1920 s.v. "Nome di Gesu"; VIII:2027 s.v. "Nuova Caceres"; VIII:2032 s.v. "Nuova Segovia." The *Catholic Directory* of the Philippines gives a different date.

⁴ *Enciclopedia cattolica* VII:568 s.v. "Jaro." Cf. *Catholic Encyclopedia* VIII:323 s.v. eodem.

Other dioceses were erected at various times during the twentieth century, among them that of Cagayán de Oro in Mindanao dismembered from the Zamboanga diocese by Pius XI in the apostolic constitution *Ad maius religionis* of 20 January 1933.⁵ With the multiplication of dioceses came the need of grouping them into smaller and more compact ecclesiastical provinces. For 339 years (1595 to 1934) the entire Philippine archipelago constituted only one ecclesiastical province with the metropolitan seat at Manila. This was divided into two ecclesiastical provinces when Cebú was elevated to an archdiocese by Pius XI in the apostolic constitution *Romanorum Pontificum* of 28 April 1934.⁶ These were further subdivided into six ecclesiastical provinces when Pope Pius XII in the apostolic constitution *Quo in Philippina Republica* of 29 July 1951 elevated to the rank of metropolitan archbishoprics the dioceses of Nueva Cáceres, Nueva Segovia, Jaro and Cagayán.⁷

It is the prerogative of the Catholic Church to be at once particular and universal, local and catholic, indigenous and supranational. The archdiocese of Paris differs from that of London, Madrid from New York, Bologna from Chicago, and all these from Manila, Cebú, Vigan, Naga, Jaro and Cagayán: in every case the universal Church takes on a local coloring yet remains basically the same—all of these being metropolitan sees in communion with the See of Rome. Hence the charm of ecclesiastical coats-of-arms. In these armorial bearings are symbolized unity and diversity, catholicity and local traditions, regional peculiarities and the universal heritage of the Catholic Church. In the Philippines the outstanding heraldist is Bishop Madriaga of the diocese of Lingayen-Dagupan. He has designed the majority of the coats-of-arms of the ecclesiastical jurisdictions and almost all of the personal arms of the present incumbents. His articles on ecclesiastical heraldry have appeared in many places but he has graciously consented to pull them all together—*recognita et aucta*—into this series of articles for PHILIPPINE STUDIES.

—M. A. Bernad

⁵ *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 25 (1933) 360-2.

⁶ AAS 27 (1935) 263-4.

⁷ AAS 44 (1952) 163-167. The *Catholic Directory* gives different dates for the erection of these archdioceses, apparently referring to the actual installation of the first archbishops.



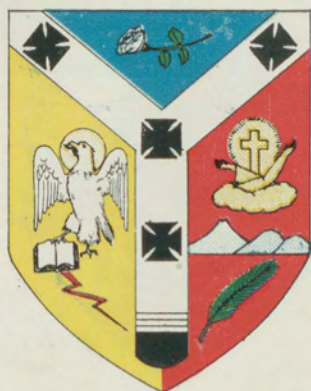
MANILA



CEBU



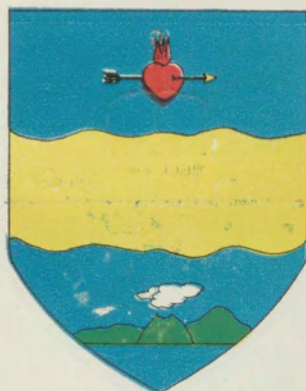
NUEVA SEGOVIA



NUEVA CACERES



JARO



CAGAYAN

ARMS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF MANILA

THE arms of the metropolitan see of Manila is an adaptation of that granted by His Catholic Majesty Philip II of Spain to the "*insigne y siempre leal*" city of Manila a picture of which may be seen in Espasa⁸ and in Bishop Morrow's *History*.⁹ The same arms without the Spanish crown surmounting the Spanish castle was used as the superescutcheon in the arms of the Philippine government both under the American colonial regime and under the Commonwealth and is technically described in the Revised Administrative code of 1917 as follows:

... over all the arms of Manila, per fess gules and azure, in chief the castle of Spain or, doors and windows azure, in base a sea lion argent langued and armed gules, in dexter paw a sword hilted or.¹⁰

Translated into less technical language that means that the shield is divided horizontally into two fields, the upper red and the lower blue. In the upper field against the red background is depicted the castle of Spain in gold with doors and windows in blue. In the lower field against the blue background a silver-colored sea lion holds in its right paw a gory gold-hilted sword. It is to be noted that this description does not correspond with the colored picture of the Seal appearing in Espasa.¹¹

For the adaptation to serve as arms of the archdiocese of Manila four changes were made in the original arms of Manila.¹² These changes are: (1) the addition of a silver crescent in the dexter chief; (2) the conversion of the Spanish castle into a mere tower; (3) the addition of one more window to the

⁸ *Enciclopedia universal ilustrada europea-americana* (Barcelona n.d.) 32:876.

⁹ Louis LaRavoir Morrow *A Short History of the Filipino People* (Manila 1936) p. 91.

¹⁰ *Revised Administrative Code of the Philippine Islands* (otherwise known as Act 2711 of 10 March 1917) book I article 5 section 18; afterwards amended by Act 4258, Commonwealth Act 602, Commonwealth Act 614 and Act 731. *Official Gazette* 42: 1436.

¹¹ Vol. 23 facing p. 1364.

¹² The adaptation was made by Bishop Madriaga and adopted by the late Archbishop Gabriel Reyes of Manila.—Editor

original two windows in the castle; (4) the gory gold-hilted sword held by the marine lion is replaced by a cross fitché.

The silver crescent placed in the dexter chief (that is to say, at the upper right hand corner of the shield) represents the Immaculate Conception, patroness of the Manila cathedral and of the entire Philippines. The crescent as a symbol of the Immaculate Conception is accepted among ecclesiastical heraldists in the United States as can be seen from an examination of the arms of the American hierarchy published yearly in Kenedy's *Official Directory* and from the explanation of such found in various issues of the *American Ecclesiastical Review*.

The reason for converting the Spanish castle into a mere tower is to make it represent God Himself whom the psalmist calls in Psalm 60 *turris fortis contra inimicum* (*turris fortitudinis a facie inimici* in the Gallican psalter). This is also the reason for adding one more window to the original two in the castle in the arms of Manila. The three windows make the tower represent the Blessed Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Ghost, three Persons in one God. The allusion here is to the well-known story of the martyred virgin St. Barbara of whom it is said that her father ordered a bath house constructed for her and then went on a journey while the structure was abuilding. In her father's absence Barbara ordered three windows to be constructed in the bath house instead of the two originally planned, in honor of the Blessed Trinity.

It might be interesting to note that in heraldry a tower differs from a castle in size and in the number of towers or protrusions appearing above the battlement. "What I observe from the Italian Sylvester Petra Sancta," says Nisbet, "is that castles have triple towers above the embattlement, and a tower has but one above the embattlement; which is more agreeable to the general practice in Europe. Towers differ from castles being smaller and are not triple-towered as castles..."¹³ This agrees with what Espasa says, "*Para llamarse castillo han de tener dos o tres torres.*"¹⁴

¹³ Alexander Nisbet *A System of Heraldry* (Edinburgh 1816) I: 409.

¹⁴ 27:1111b.

The Castilian heraldic castle (the same that appears in the arms of the city of Manila) is described by Sylvester Petra Sancta thus:

Castellum aureum cum ostio ac speculis cyaneis, cum sabulea lapidum commissura, et prominentibus in summo eius fastigio, ternis turriculis, perinde aureis, in parmula purpurata.¹⁵

This description corresponds with that of the already quoted Revised Administrative Code: "In chief the castle of Spain or, doors and windows azure."

One detail (though somewhat unimportant) should be noted in the above description: *sabulea lapidum commissura*. The tower or castle must be "masoned," i.e. the individual blocks of masonry should be evident. Nisbet says:

Castles, towers and other buildings have one peculiar attribute in blazon which is, whatever tincture they be of, if the sediment of the building be of another colour from the stones, represented by lines or tracts, then the building being argent is said to be masoned of such tincture, as sable, which the Latins call *lapidum junctura* or *lapidum commissura*.¹⁶

Espasa says the same thing much more simply:

Los castillos, torres, muros, puentes etc. se llaman mazonados cuando la raya de unión de las piedras con que están contruidos es de diferente esmalte que el resto del escudo.¹⁷

The marine lion in the original arms of Manila holds a gory gold-hilted sword in its right paw; hence the description in the Administrative Code: "A sea lion argent langued and armed gules, in dexter paw a sword hilted or." In the archdiocesan arms a cross cleché fitché is substituted for this sword. A cross fitché is a cross whose base is pointed (*cruz apuntada* in Spanish; in Latin *crux in imo spiculata*; in Italian *croce aguzzata*). "Crosses of this description are said to have been carried by the early Christians on their pilgrimages so that

¹⁵ Quoted by Nisbet *loc. cit.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ 27:1111a.

they might readily be fixed in the ground whilst performing their devotions."¹⁸

The appropriateness of this symbol is obvious. The sea lion may be taken to represent the people of this island republic and the pilgrim's cross which may be easily fixed on the ground symbolizes both the faith of the Filipino people and their missionary role in spreading that faith in the Orient. This missionary role of the Filipinos as the only Christian nation in the Far East was emphasized by the late Pope Pius XI in his radio broadcast to the Philippines on the occasion of the 33rd International Eucharistic Congress held in Manila in 1937.

The cross fitché has other symbolic connotations. "The strength of any people comes from God": *sufficientia nostra ex Deo est*. "Vainly the guard keeps watch if the city has not the Lord for its guardian." "Armed might avails not to win the day; victory is from above." "Count as thou wilt from the strength of thy array, God will give thy enemies the mastery; He alone sends victory and defeat."¹⁹

Finally there is an obvious appropriateness in the cross fitché in symbolizing the faith of a people that has made it a part of their Constitution to "renounce war as an instrument of national policy and adopt the generally accepted principles of international law as a part of the law of the nation."²⁰

ARMS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CEBU

The coat of arms of the archdiocese of Cebú attempts to commemorate three facts, namely: (1) the planting of the cross in Cebú by Magellan; (2) the official name of the archdiocese as that of the most holy name of Jesus; (3) the archdiocese occupying the entire island of Cebú.

The planting of the cross by Magellan is commemorated by the two red-tongued silver lions on a blue background plant-

¹⁸ Cussan *Handbook of Heraldry* (4th ed. London 1893) p. 63.

¹⁹ 2 Cor. 3.5; Psalm 126.1 (Knox trans.); 1 Mach. 3.19 (Knox trans.); 2 Par. 25.8.

²⁰ Article 2 section 2.

ing a Latin cross of gold on a green terrain. The lions bear the shield of Magellan which is composed of four silver bars placed alternately with three silver and sable cheque bars.²¹

The cross is Latin and fitché. A Latin cross is that which "has its horizontal limbs *couped* and *enhanced* (or set higher than their usual position) so that each is of the same length as the upper limb."²² A cross fitché as we have explained above is one whose base is pointed so that it can be easily planted in the ground.

The blue field hints at the gentleness, the courtesy as well as the loyalty displayed by the people of Cebú to Magellan and his men.²³ The green terrain upon which the cross is planted suggests a fertile land.²⁴

The cross bears a silver placard with the letters IHS, the first three letters in the Greek spelling of the name Jesus—*nomen quod est super omne nomen*—from which the archdiocese gets its official name. The placard, incidentally, serves as another (and a shorter) cross-beam which makes the whole cross heraldically archiepiscopal in form.

The arms of the diocese of Baker City in Oregon has the same charge with this difference: the lions, the cross and the three-peaked mountain drawn in Italian style on which the cross is planted are all gold, and the form of the cross is that which is called *botonne* in heraldy, that is a cross the limbs of which terminate in triple buds.²⁵

The archdiocesan arms of Cebú has a silver border which is wavy on the inside. This is technically called "bordure wavyed" (in Latin *bordura, morgo, fimbria vel limbus undulatus, undatus vel undosus*). "A bordure wavyed is formed on the inner

²¹ A drawing of this shield appears in Espasa 32:55.

²² Cussan *op. cit.* p. 60.

²³ Pigafetta *Relazione del primo viaggio intorno al mondo* (edizione Alpes).

²⁴ See explanation of the arms of the late Bishop McCloskey when bishop of Zamboanga in *Ecclesiastical Review* 56 (June 1917) 624.

²⁵ Cussan *op. cit.* p. 61.

side by a line, crooked like a wave of the sea."²⁶ This heraldic figure is used by ecclesiastical heralds in the United States to suggest an island. An example of this usage was the diocesan arms of Zamboanga as depicted in the shield of the late Bishop James McCloskey when bishop of Zamboanga (at a time when the diocese of Zamboanga included all of Mindanao and adjacent islands).²⁷ Other examples are the diocesan arms of Grand Island, Nebraska and of El Paso, Texas.

There is incidentally a disagreement among various nations as to the proper width of a bordure waved. Espasa presents what may be taken as the Spanish view:

Bordura. Rodea el campo del escudo, viniendo a formar como un ribete o borde. Tiene de ancho la mitad del de la banda, o sea la sexta parte de la latitud del escudo.²⁸

The Italians agree with the Spaniards: "*La Bordura circonda lo scudo occupandone la sesta parte.*"²⁹ But the English and French heraldists disagree. Says Nisbet:

It takes up the fifth part of the shield by the English. But by our practice, sometimes less, sometimes more, as it is charged or not charged, and suits the figures... With the French... it... possesses the third of the field.³⁰

ARMS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NUEVA SEGOVIA

On chief gules, a sword palewise with blade proper and hilt or, debruised by an open book with inscription *Gladius Spiritus* and with edges or; on base azure, a river argent fesswise and an *Alocasia macrorrhiza* proper.

In less technical language that means that the shield, like that of Manila, is divided horizontally into two fields, the upper red, the lower blue. In the center of the upper field a naked sword with gold hilt points down vertically. The blade is debruised by an open book with gold edges and with the inscription *Gladius Spiritus* (Sword of the Spirit) upon the open

²⁶ Nisbet *op. cit.* I:171 and II:10.

²⁷ Vide supra n. 24.

²⁸ 27:1107.

²⁹ Spreti *Enciclopedia storico-nobiliare italiana* I:31.

³⁰ Nisbet *op. cit.* I:169.

page. In the lower field against a blue background is the plant called "biga" (*Alocasia macrorrhiza*) and below it is a wavy horizontal silver line representing a river.

The sword and the book are symbols of St. Paul, patron saint of the cathedral at Vigan. The sword was the instrument of his martyrdom, the book stands for the gospel which he preached as an apostle.³¹ The inscription *Gladius Spiritus* is taken from his epistle to the Ephesians (6.17): "Make the helmet of salvation your own, and the sword of the Spirit, God's word." The red background stands for his burning zeal for souls and for his martyrdom.

The snaky figure in silver that traverses the bottom of the field represents the Abra river on the north bank of which is the seat of the archdiocese of Nueva Segovia.

The popular name of the seat of Nueva Segovia is Vigan which derived its name from the Ilocano word "bigaan," a contraction of "cabigaan" meaning where the "biga" abounds, a plant of the taro family but bigger than the taro and with bigger tubers; hence its scientific name *Alocasia macrorrhiza* meaning an alocasia with big root.

ARMS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF NUEVA CACERES

A pallium divides the shield into three fields. On chief azure is a rose drawn in natural form. Both the rose and the blue background represent our Lady of Peñafrancia, the patroness of the Bicol region.

On dexter or an eagle argent nimbed holding an open book proper from which issues a thunderbolt gules. A "nimbed" eagle is one with a halo or aureole. This silver eagle against the gold background represents St. John the apostle and evangelist, the titular of the cathedral at Naga. The open book represents the Gospel. The thunderbolt alludes to the nickname "Boanerges" given by our Lord to St. John and his brother James, meaning sons of thunder. Why is the thunderbolt

³¹ Weber *Church Symbolism* (2nd. ed. 1928) plate 26 facing p. 208 fig. 55.

red? Apparently it is the custom to so represent it. Espasa says, "*El rayo se representa de gules.*"³²

On sinister against a red background are three mountains representing Mounts Mayon, Isarog and Bulusan. Above the mountains are the insignia of the Franciscan Order and below the mountains is a green palm branch drawn diagonally with the top sinisterwise. This group of symbols obviously alludes to the Franciscan St. Peter Baptist martyred in Japan among the other Japanese martyrs on 5 February 1597, who was erroneously considered bishop-elect for the see of Nueva Cáceres at the time of his martyrdom and hence is venerated as the secondary patron saint of the cathedral.³³

A word about the pallium. In its natural form the pallium is a circular band of white wool decorated with crosses of black silk, with two pendants similarly decorated. It is about two inches wide and is worn about the neck and shoulders. The pendants hang down in front and at the back. It is worn by the Pope as a sign of the plenitude of the pontifical office and by metropolitans (archbishops, primates and patriarchs) as a sign of their participation in the supreme pastoral power of the Pope. It is also given to some bishops as a mark of special favor although it does not give them precedence over other bishops nor does it increase their powers or their jurisdiction.

The pallium is used in heraldry. According to the Vatican *Enciclopedia cattolica* it must hang from the upper edge of the shield from each side of the processional cross.

Il pallio, araldicamente reso d'argento caricato di croci di nero, scende ai lati della croce dal bordo superiore dello scudo dei patriarchi, degli arcivescovi, come insegna di giurisdizione metropolitana, e degli altri che ne abbiano il privilegio.³⁴

This statement conveys the sense that the pallium is something outside the shield like the mitre, crozier, processional cross and the hat with tassels. In the arms of the see of Nueva Cáceres it is a "charge," that is, a figure placed upon the shield itself.

³² Espasa 27:1108c.

³³ Domingo Abella *Bikol Annals* (Manila 1954) I:34.

³⁴ *Enciclopedia cattolica* I:1761.

'Thus it is in the arms of the Anglican sees of Canterbury, Armagh and Dublin.³⁵

ARMS OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF JARO

On dexter canton argent an eagle issuant sable. On a band sinister or three roses gules. On base azure a coconut tree proper from a terrain vert.

The black eagle in the silver canton at the top of the shield and the three red roses on the golden band sinister undoubtedly refer to St. Elizabeth of Hungary or of Thuringia, patroness of the Jaro cathedral. The German eagle is characteristically black and St. Elizabeth was the daughter of the king of Hungary at the time and was the wife of a landgrave of Thuringia which is in Germany. "The black eagle is said to be the bravest bird, the emblem of magnanimity and fortitude of mind; and of such a colour was the eagle of the Roman Emperors, now used by the Germans, because the colour black is the strongest colour and appears at a great distance. Sylvester Petra Sancta says, '*Cur Imperii Aquila sit furva? quia hic est aquilae genuinus color, et quia idem color censeri potest omnium colorum potentissimus.*'"³⁶

The three red roses remind us of the legend narrated about St. Elizabeth:

St. Elizabeth is generally represented as a princess graciously giving alms to the wretched poor or as holding roses in her lap; in the latter case she is portrayed either alone or as surprised by her husband who, according to a legend, which is however related of other saints as well, met her unexpectedly as she went secretly on an errand of mercy, and, so the story runs, the bread she was trying to conceal was suddenly turned into roses.³⁷

The coconut palm on a green knoll on the lower portion of the shield represents Jaro.

³⁵ Cussan *op. cit.* p. 120. Fox-Davis *A Complete Guide to Heraldry* p. 126. Scott-Giles *The Romance of Heraldry* p. 29.

³⁶ Nisbet *op. cit.* I:327.

³⁷ *Catholic Encyclopedia* V:300.