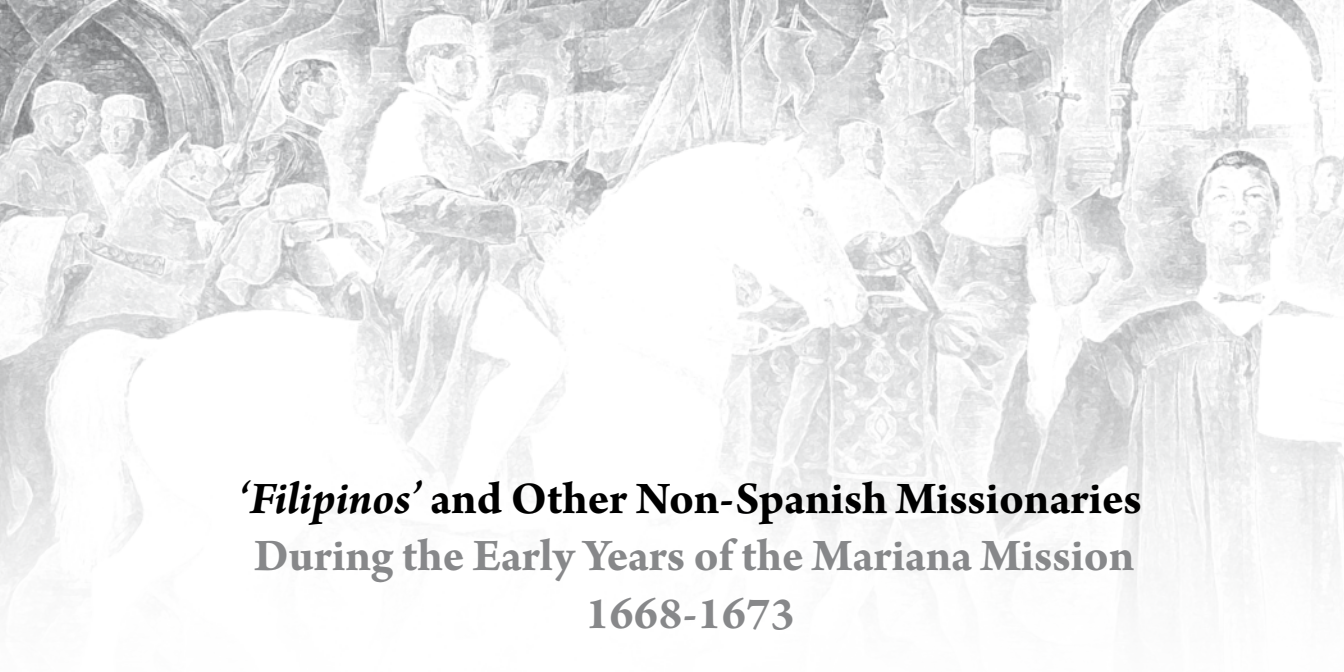




‘Filipinos’ and Other Non-Spanish Missionaries During the Early Years of the Mariana Mission 1668-1673

Augusto V. de Viana

The establishment of Spain's colonies and Christian missions was carried out not only by the Spaniards themselves but by people from other lands and nationalities. These included "Filipinos" and natives from the Philippines. The Mariana Islands in the western Pacific was one of the areas of colonization and Christianization of the Spaniards. The establishment of the colony and mission in the islands was carried out by the Jesuits. The missionaries from this order wholeheartedly joined the enterprise and were responsible for setting up the colony as well as the present towns and villages in Guam, Saipan, Rota and Tinian. They lived a life of self-denial, humility and charity which they offered for the greater glory of God. They did not fear death but actually wished for it seeing it as a way to attain divine reward. A number of the missionaries gave up their lives as martyrs and others because of poor health. They lived giving service to others and accommodated others first before themselves. The rewards they sought were not of this earth. These could only be given by God in the afterlife. Their lives and strong faith serve as examples for present-day Christians.

On the other hand, the missionaries were placed at the crossroads of civilization. In their desire to convert the natives, they had to eradicate native customs deemed as contrary to Christianity. This caused antagonism among the inhabitants they swore to serve. At the same time, the missionaries were part of Spain's colonizing force which ended the freedom of the natives which was a legacy from their forefathers. Like the members of the garrison the missionaries were given the same label of *guirragos* or barbarians by the inhabitants. Many of the missionaries were slain or injured in the armed Chamorro movements which were actually attempts to regain their lost freedom and the preservation of their ancestral practices.

As missionaries the Jesuit priests and brothers took care of the people, taught them the ways of western civilization and recorded history. Such was their role in contributing to the present society of the Mariana Islands.

Keywords: “Filipino,” *Indio*, *Indian*, *natives*, *missionaries*, *Jesuits*, *priests*, *brothers*, *rebellion*, *reduction*

Introduction

The use of the term “Filipino” which refers to all those people born in the Philippines, is quite recent. It was used to refer to all natives of the Philippines only during the late 19th century when ideas of having a Filipino nation began to crystallize. The use of the term in its present context was related to the discussion of nationalism which was defined by Louis L. Snyder as “a condition of mind, feeling or sentiment of a group of people living in a well-defined geographical area, speaking a common language, possessing a literature in which the aspirations of the nation have been expressed, being attached to common traditions and in some cases having a common religion.”¹

Used in the context of the 17th century, a “Filipino” meant a Spaniard born of Spanish parents and born in the colony called Filipinas. A Filipino then was a creole or a Spaniard born in the islands. Since he is born in the islands, the complete term for this category of Spaniard was “Filipino Insular.” Natives of the Philippines, on the other hand, are called *Indios*. The term Filipino, according to historian Teodoro Agoncillo would apply to all natives only in the late 1890s.

During the Spanish colonization, Spaniards born in the Philippines as well as other nationalities served in religious and secular positions. Also included were *Indios* or the brown-skinned natives of the Philippines. Originally the King of Spain prohibited the inclusion of non-Spaniards in the conversion of the heathens. This was changed in 1664 when he allowed non-Spaniards to proselytize in the non-Christian lands. Many non-Spaniards became part of Spain’s evangelizing and colonizing force. They came from countries allied with the ruling Habsburg dynasty aside from Spanish colonies. They were instrumental in laying down the foundations of the present-day countries and territories. Among these territories were the Mariana Islands where many of the missionaries offered their labors and laid their lives in the service of God. Among the non-Spanish missionaries were two Philippine-born individuals, one born of Spanish parents and the other an *Indio* from Pampanga. These two individuals, Fr. Francisco Ezquerro and Felipe Sonson, were mentioned in the Jesuit annals.

Aside from the two, there were other non-Spaniards who helped evangelize the Marianas and change the history and culture of the islands. Their exemplary

¹ Teodoro A. Agoncillo, *History of the Filipino People*. (Quezon City: Garotech, 1990), p. 115.

lives are preserved in Jesuit records for present scholars to study and as examples for present-day Christians.



Map of the Philippines (center) and the Mariana Islands (left)

Fr. Francisco Ezquerra, S.J., (Manila, Philippines)

Fr. Francisco Ezquerra was born in Manila on October 2, 1644.² His parents who were peninsular Spaniards were Juan Ezquerra and Lucia Sarmiento. Ezquerra began to study philosophy at the Jesuit College of San Jose at the age of 15 and was admitted to the Jesuit novitiate in January 1660. He was ordained as a priest on June 15, 1669 at the age of 25. For a short period he taught grammar in Manila and later wrote to the Jesuit General for an assignment to a more difficult mission other than his own birthplace. He had to travel to Lampon on the eastern side of Luzon to catch a galleon bound for Mexico in 1670. He arrived in Acapulco that same year. On March 19, 1672 he boarded the galleon *Buen Socorro* for the Marianas. During the voyage he learned the Mariano (Chamorro) language. The galleon arrived on June 15, 1671 and landed in Ati, Guam.³ This was the same place where Fr. Ezquerra would die as a martyr three years later.

There were three other missionaries who landed with Fr. Ezquerra. These were Fathers Francisco Solano, Alonso Lopez and Diego de Noriega who were all peninsular Spaniards. Despite their arrival, the number of missionaries in the Marianas increased by only one priest as three of them had to leave for the Philippines. These were Fr. Pedro Casanova, Fr. Luis de Morales and Brother Luis Bustillo who left the islands to complete his priestly studies.⁴

² The eulogy written by Fr. Peter Coomans however places Fr. Ezquerra's birth at the end of September 1644. See ARSI (Archivum Societatis Iesu – Archives of the Society of Jesus, Rome) Phil. 13. Fol. 111-118, *Annual Report for 1673-1674 cited in History of Micronesia*, Vol. 6, pp. 221-228. (This source shall be cited as HM with volume number and pages indicated).

³ This place corresponds to the present-day Cetti Bay.

⁴ Don A. Farrell, *History of the Northern Mariana Islands*. Phyllis Koontz. Editor (Saipan: CNMI Public School System, 1991), p. 61.

Fr. Ezquerra was given the task to evangelize in Gani, the islands north of Saipan. However, the wind conditions forced him to spend one month in Rota where he preached. He survived by eating vegetable leaves and fruits. Edible roots were in short supply at that time. After preaching in Rota, Fr. Ezquerra moved to the island of Tinian but he was shortly called back to Guam to join the other Fathers at the main residence. A rebellion led by Hurao was brewing in 1671. The natives were accusing the missionaries of causing the deaths of newly-born infants with their holy water. This was because the babies died after being baptized. Similarly old and sick people died after being administered the sacrament of Extreme Unction. The natives believed that the holy water and holy oil being administered in the two sacraments were poisoned.⁵ The seeds of hatred were earlier spread by a Chinese castaway named Choco who had been to Manila. He told the natives that the holy oil and water were indeed used to kill babies and old people. The enraged people began attacking the missionaries.⁶

During the rebellion the missionaries were cooped up in their mission house until the siege was broken by artillery and Hurao's followers were scattered. Immediately after the rebellion the Fathers were divided among various missions. Fr. Ezquerra was assigned to his choice of the southern district of Guam. He selected the village of Merizo as the site of his new parish which he dedicated to the Good Thief, St. Dimas. Fr. Ezquerra had just started building his new mission in Merizo when troubles began to reappear. Fr. Ezquerra and his helpers had to return to Hagatña. The natives were still angry at the missionaries especially when they entered their homes and baptized babies without their consent. On April 2, 1672 the head of the Spanish mission, Fr. Diego Luis de Sanvitores was killed along with his Filipino lay catechist, Pedro Calungsod. After Fr. Sanvitores' death the new mission in Merizo had to be abandoned.⁷

With Fr. Sanvitores' death, Fr. Solano became the second superior of the Mariana mission. Meanwhile the mission was bolstered with the arrival of the galleon

⁵ In his alleged speech inciting the Chamorros to rise up against the Spaniards, Hurao accused the Spaniards of introducing diseases. He specifically mentioned the priests saying "Their priests murder our children with their poisoned water and our sick with their oils while their attendants massacre our people with impunity, by the superiority of their destructive weapons." He also accused the Spaniards of introducing pests like rats, flies, mosquitoes and rheums, fluxes and fevers which were never known before.

See: Document 1676 D1 by Fr. Charles Le Gobien *Histoire des Isles Marianas Nouvellment Cover series a la Religion Chrestienne* (History of the Mariana Islands Newly Converted to the Christian Faith and the Glorious Death of the First Martyrs) in HM 6:450.

Typescript of Hurao's alleged speech is available at the Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam.

⁶ Peter Coomans, *History of the Mission of the Mariana Islands, 1667-1673*, Trans. Rodrigue Levesque (Saipan: Northern Mariana Islands Division of Historic Preservation, 2000), pp. 23-26.

⁷ ARSI Phil. 13, fol. 111-118, *Annual Report for 1673-1674*, cited as Document No. 1674I in HM 6:221-228.

San Diego which brought in the subsidy from New Spain and additional priests namely the Belgian Jesuits Fr. Gerard Bouwens, Fr. Peter Coomans and Fr. Antonio Maria de San Basilio who hailed from Catania in Sicily. Fr. Solano's health however was very fragile, ravaged by fatigue and tuberculosis so he served very briefly. Before he died, he appointed Fr. Ezquerria as the next superior of the mission. The young priest begged Fr. Solano to change his mind. However, he could not change the intentions of the Almighty. Fr. Ezquerria used his new position to place himself with the most onerous tasks. He renovated the church and the Father's residence at San Ignacio (Hagatña). He supervised the rebuilding of the Jesuit residence in the village of Fuña. According to the eulogy written in his honor after his death, Fr. Ezquerria had a special devotion to the Holy Virgin and even used his own blood to write a vow of servitude to her.⁸

As head of the Mariana mission, Fr. Ezquerria led an expedition to the Gani Islands which unfortunately failed and he and six companions had to return prematurely. In mid-April 1673, the mission of San Jose which was previously abandoned was re-established.

While Fr. Ezquerria was superior of the mission, he was attributed to be the author of the mission's report in 1673. One of the details mentioned in the report was about the horse brought by the Spaniards. It was a gift of Don Duran de Montfort, the general of the San Antonio and it was the first seen by the Chamorros.⁹ Somehow the arrival of the horse temporarily stopped the fighting between the islanders and the Spaniards. The Chamorros had never seen a horse before and they considered it as a supernatural being. They offered it coconuts to eat and they thought that they saw that it had a mouth of iron. They thought that the horse ate iron and they were disheartened to learn that they could not raise iron to feed the horse. According to them the horse was forced to feed on grass which was the reason why horses in Guam were neither strong nor happy.¹⁰

The lull in the fighting was temporary. The Jesuit reports contained another lamentable entry which reported on the martyrdom of Fr. Ezquerria and five of his companions in the village of Ati in Guam on February 2, 1674. Ezquerria at that time had just administered the sacrament of Extreme Unction to a native woman who was giving birth.¹¹

⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁹ AGI Filipinas 68-1-40 and AGI Ultramar 562 Jesuit Document No. 8, *Jesuit Annual Report of 1673 Attributed to Fr. Francisco Ezquerria*, cited in Document 1673K in HM: 609-619.

¹⁰ Mavis Werner van Peenen, *Chamorro Legends in the Island of Guam*, MARC Publication Series No. 4. (Guam: University of Guam Micronesia Area Research Center, 1993), p. 17.

¹¹ ARSI Phil. 13 fol. 121-128, *Relacion de las Islas Marianas dese el Mes de Junio de 74 hasta Junio de 75*, cited as Document 1675E in HM 6:283-306. Also ARSI Phil. 13, fol. 111-118, cited as Document 1674I in HM 6: 221-228, *Annual Report for 1673-1674*.

The annual report of 1673-1674 gave a vivid detail of the death of Fr. Ezquerra and his companions:

The year 1674 had hardly begun when a sad but glorious end occurred, that of martyrdom. But first let me mention that the holidays had been spent by the Fathers getting together, as is their custom in the Philippines. This was when they ate the special food brought in by the ships. Fr. Francisco Ezquerra who had followed Fr. San Victores and Fr. Solano as Superior, had been baptizing children along the southern shore, accompanied by six companions. He had finished baptizing ten of them and happy with his success, was returning to his companion Fathers, when it happened. He stopped to baptize twenty-three – twenty-four more in the beach of Ati. This was the district where the port of San Antonio was located. On 2 February (1674), the Father and his companions left this area before daybreak, intending to make it to the residence of San Jose (in Fuña) by nightfall, a distance of three leagues. At daybreak they met four natives carrying a pregnant woman who had difficulties in giving birth. The bearers told Fr. Ezquerra that she was already baptized; he confessed her and applied Extreme Unction. Superstitions intervened and (those present) already started criticizing the Father. One of the companions in turn intervened. The bearers put down the woman and took their slings, hitting the Father in the arm, etc. The companions fled for their own protection, and this was interpreted by the barbarians as a victory. They began to yell and fill the air with piercing shouts: "Weapons, companions, spears!" More barbarians responded and attacked (Fr. Ezquerra's unarmed) companions. Two of them, who were Filipinos, were killed. Sebastian de Ribera was hit by a spear in the back as he was fleeing he threw himself to the sea but was finished off by cruel hands.

The other companion who fled inland into the bush, where he hid among the thorn bushes and brushes. The barbarians could not find him. So they set fire to the bushes. On the seashore the Father was still breathing and guarded by companions. One of them who was armed with an arquebus fired and pierced the calf of the legs of one of the Indians. During this diversion one of the companions escaped and made his way through the trackless ways, intending to warn the Fathers. The other one took the holy oil and went to hide it, so that it would not be desecrated. Meanwhile Fr. Ezquerra confessed his companions.

Much of what happened have been told by the natives. The other companions were attacked along the shore with sling-stones and spears. Fr. Ezquerra kept calling for peace but to no avail. Luis de Vera y Picazzo, a noble Mexican, died first. Before he died he was lying down with many wounds, calling the names of Jesus and Mary. While the Father was bleeding to death, the barbarians despoiled him of his clothes. He begged them to give back his underwear. From his neck still hung the image of the Virgin Mary. In the meantime, the rest of the companions were trying to escape by sea aboard native canoes, which they could not control well and were soon overturned. They were attacked in the water and their bodies buried at sea. One was named Pedro Alezo, from Puebla de los Angeles (in Mexico). Another was Mathias de Altamirano, a native of Oaxaca (also in Mexico). He was a surgeon and spent two years in the mission.

Another was Marcos de Segura, also from Puebla, was trying to go around a headland. As for the Filipino named Francisco Gonzalez, who had escaped much earlier, he had come within two leagues of the residence of San Jose when he came down to the shore too early at the village of Papuro. News of the massacre had spread. The first Indian who met him asked jokingly were the Father was. This Indian was armed with a sword and he attacked the Filipino. The latter dragged himself half-dead. He was received by the chief of the next village, who treated his wounds before taking him by canoe who did the same, until he reached his destination. He recovered quickly.

The account of the killing of Fr. Ezquerria and his companions was followed by his eulogy which narrated the events in his life.¹²

Bro. Felipe Sonson (Pampanga, Philippines)

Felipe Sonson was a native of Macabebe, Pampanga. In some records his name was written as Felipe Loon¹³ but was actually established as Sonson. Sonson

¹² Part of this eulogy is already mentioned in the text.

There follows the eulogy of Fr. Ezquerria. He was born in Manila at the end of September 1644. He began to study philosophy at the age of 15 in the (Jesuit college) of San Jose. He was admitted to the novitiate in January 1660. He was ordained priest on 15 June 1669 at the age of 25. He taught grammar for a while. Then he wrote to the Jesuit General for assignment to a more difficult mission other than his own birthplace. He had to travel to the port of Lampon to reach a galleon for Acapulco in 1670. He sailed from Acapulco on 19 March 1671 for the Marianas. During the voyage he was studying the Mariano language. The ship arrived 11 June. He landed at Ati with another companion, the same place where he was to die three years later. Fr. Ezquerria was first assigned to visit the Gani Islands but the wind condition forced him to spend one month in Rota, where he evangelized while he survived by eating the leaves of vegetables and some fruits, but rarely edible roots were in short supply.

He had sooner reached Tinian when he was recalled to Guam to join the other Fathers at the main residence, on account of a war situation. At the end of the war, the Fathers were divided among various missions. Fr. Ezquerria was assigned his choice of the southern district of Guam. He chose the village of Merizo as the site of his new parish which he dedicated to the Good Thief (St. Dimas). He had no sooner finished putting on the roofs on the buildings that new troubles started. So, he and his helpers had to return to the main residence for a few days. However after Fr. San Victores was killed, the new mission had to be abandoned. The galleon San Diego arrived bringing the subsidy and the new ministers from Spain.

Fr. Solano, who had become superior after the death of Fr. San Victores, was broken by fatigue. A few days before he died, he appointed Fr. Ezquerria as third superior. He tried to have Fr. Solano change his mind about it, but try as he may, he could not change the intentions of the Almighty. So he used his new position to place the most onerous duties upon himself. The church and the house at the main residence of San Ignacio (Agaña) were renovated under his supervision. The house at Fuña was rebuilt. His virtues were superior as well. He had a special devotion to the Holy Virgin. He had even used his own blood to write a special vow of servitude to her.

Another expedition to the northern islands failed. The Father and his six companions had to return prematurely. By mid-April (1673) the former mission of San Jose was reoccupied.

Signed:

Fr. Coomans

Fr. Cardenoso

Fr. San Basilio

Fr. Lopez

¹³ This came from the narrative by Fr. Luis Morales who described Sonson to be 80 years of age and "a very holy man," and that he was a companion of Reverend Fr. Diego Luis de San Vitores.

See Domingo Abella, *Vignettes in Philippine-Marianas History* (Manila: International Association of Historians of Asia, 1962), p. 14-15.

was described in his eulogy written by Fr. Gerard Bouwens in 1686.¹⁴ There is no record of his birth but Fr. Bouwens' eulogy mentioned him as being of 51 years old at the time of the Chinese insurrection in the Philippines.¹⁵ He was referring to the Chinese revolt in 1662.

Sonson began serving the church through the Augustinians who administered Macabebe and the rest of the province of Pampanga. There he learned to read, write and participate in church rites. He dedicated himself to St. Isidore. When he reached a competent age, he got married and had a son. When the Chinese insurrection broke out, he valiantly fought on the side of the Spaniards. When his wife died he gave everything to his son and placed himself totally at the service of the church. He was described as a man of good ability, docility and humility, always observant to the Law of God and fearing to offend any of His Commandments. He also had a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary and wore the scapulars of Our Lady which he kept until the day of his death.

As lay worker for the Augustinians he wore a cord of St. Augustine, the mark of his slavery to the Holy founder of the Order. He was instrumental in the construction of various churches and convents and was made master carpenter. Later he volunteered himself to serve in the Parian in Manila which was under the Dominicans. He grew in faith and devotion as the Dominicans taught him how to pray and mortify himself. He continued to show the same humility and obedience to the will of the Dominican Fathers. It was at this time, around 1665 when he met Fr. Diego Luis de Sanvitores who received a royal approval to set up a mission in the Ladrones Islands. Fr. Sanvitores was recruiting his companions for his new mission. At that time he had just recruited only four people.

Sonson saw the new mission as a chance to further serve God and he begged Fr. Sanvitores to take him with him despite his advanced age. He threw himself at his feet until Fr. Sanvitores relented only if the Dominicans would permit him to go. When the permission was finally given, Sonson resided at the Jesuit College in Manila (Colegio de San Jose). There Sonson was joined by Fr. Tomas de Cardeñoso and other lay companions until they found sufficient members of the mission. They left for Acapulco that year and while aboard ship Sonson became adept in Spanish and was also writing in his native Pampang language. The mission arrived in Guam on June 16, 1668. True to his devote character, he served with great humility and spiritual fervor though at times he was heard shouting at his subordinates. Sonson built many churches and residences which were complete with all amenities including tables, altars and chairs.

¹⁴ RAH (Real Archivo de Historia) 9/267, *Noticia de la vida exemplar de H. Felipe Sonson Donado de la Compania de Jesus Agana, Pebrero 10 de 1686*, cited as Document 1686H. in HM 8:555-573.

¹⁵ Actually Sonson was 75 years old.

At certain times Sonson accompanied the missionaries to keep them safe from hostile Chamorros and had to carry an arquebus. However as his age advanced, he had difficulty carrying a weapon. On July 23, 1684, the Chamorros staged a serious rebellion which almost wiped out the Spanish colony. On that day rebels led by Antonio Yura, Matias Yay and Ignacio Osi sneaked into the Governor's residence seriously injuring him. During the same attack the assailants found Sonson, pinned him down and tried to cut off his throat. The rebels failed to kill him but he received two wounds, one of which was in the hollow of his left eye. Sonson was left for dead, bathed in his own blood. Fr. Luis Morales wrote that he was killed during the attack.¹⁶ However in the 1686 eulogy written by Fr. Bouwens, Sonson actually survived. When the missionaries found him they thought that he was already dead but they noticed that he was still breathing. They administered to him the last rites. While he was undergoing treatment for his serious wounds, a piece of his bone came out of his eye. Despite his serious injuries Sonson slowly recovered.¹⁷

After the rebellion Sonson lived in six different residences of the Jesuits. His health steadily declined, a sign that Fr. Bouwens said, that the Lord is telling him that his reward was coming near. His advanced age and congested chest took away his desire to live. Despite his deteriorating condition he never showed signs of being important. He never gave room for perturbation and sadness. When his companions tried to give him medicine for his phlegm he asked what is the necessity for the medicine if he was going to die. When they made him eat he asked: Why, since I am to die, should I eat?¹⁸ He tried his best to eat until he could not swallow anymore. Sonson was administered the last rites on January 11, 1686. During his last moments he was invoking the names of Jesus and the Blessed Virgin. At eleven that morning he passed away. Sonson served the Marianas mission for a total of 18 years. He served quite a long period of time outliving Fr. Sanvitores, the original founder of the mission and the other superiors in the colony. Other Indios who came with him with the first Mariana mission in 1668 were either dead or had returned to the Philippines.

Sonson's remains were buried the next day together with the insignias of the Virgin, St. Augustine, St. Dominic and St. Ignatius, the founders of the religious orders he served, and his beloved scapular. He was dressed in the cassock of the Jesuits. His body was carried to its resting place by no less than the Governor of the colony, Captain Jose de Quiroga and his two adjutants, Jose de la Cruz and Jose de Carabajal.¹⁹ This gesture is considered a great honor for an indio from the Philippines.

¹⁶ Abella, *loc. cit.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Loc. cit.*

¹⁹ *Loc. cit.*

Fr. Antonio de San Basilio, S.J. (Catania, Sicily)

Fr. San Basilio was born in the city of Catania in Sicily in 1638. He had a noble lineage but his humility was able to hide this fact his entire life. He joined the Society of Jesus in 1659 and while he was studying for the priesthood he lived as a perfect model of all virtues. He was in regular contact with God not only during his novitiate but also the whole time he was studying. He made significant progress matching wonderfully virtue with knowledge, resulting in being a singular modesty, composure and peacefulness in his contacts. Because of these qualities he was showered with affection by whoever came in contact with him.²⁰

He was remembered for his charity with which he was very particular and he did it not only for the love of God but also for his neighbors. He carried this virtue as a missionary and his first care was to accommodate others, by making their beds, washing the feet of his companions, visiting and consoling the sick. This character made him act as a physician, surgeon and male nurse to any ailing person.²¹

He arrived in the Marianas in 1672 where, in the island of San Juan (Guam), attended to a certain Indian who, besides being asthmatic, had a leg and thigh being eaten by cancer. Fr. San Basilio carried the man himself to a hut he built with his own hands. He acted in a way as if he was the humblest of servants. He took care of the man's body and took greater care to the salvation of his soul and disposed him for a good death. His usual method of curing was with the prayer of St. Francis Xavier to whom he was very devoted. Some wonderful effects of this devotion were seen in the sudden cure that the Lord was pleased to give through the prayers and charity of his servant.

As a missionary, Fr. San Basilio had to climb cliffs on his hands and knees to reach the inaccessible villages. He travelled barefooted and used his hands to grab the leaves of the saw grass which left his hands and feet bloody as if they were cut by razors. In another instance he avoided climbing the cliffs and decided to go around the island by walking by the beach when a furious wave rose up from the ocean and carried him away for quite a fair distance. The Father commended himself to God and then another wave brought him back suddenly to the shore to the great admiration of those who were in his company.

Another of his sterling virtues was humility in which he judged himself as everything to everyone. His way of speaking was very humble. He was the one who made the beds, trying to make his subjects welcome when they came from outside.

²⁰ RAH 9/2677, *Composite Reports for 1674-1676*, Cited as Document 1676A in HM 6: 343-345.

²¹ *Loc. cit.*

Once the soldiers of the garrison brought a child home from battle. He cured his wounds, made his bed, washed him and gave him something to eat as a very loving mother would have done while he was teaching him devotions, with a noble fruit and a great hope for a larger Christian community. Like other missionaries he wore a hair shirt as a sign of embracing poverty. He made other use of other kinds of hair shirts. After his death his companions found three of these stuck to his flesh. Fr. San Basilio's bed consisted of a hard wooden board. His usual food was a few unsavory roots and an occasional treat was little rice which was to him a great luxury. There were also some fish at times. Fr. San Basilio walked most of the time barefooted and his legs which were always exposed to the sun looked as if they were burned. From this mortification was born a heavenly and angelic purity which gave a special fragrance to anyone who had contact with him.

As a sign of penance Fr. de San Basilio wore a cross made of penetrating barbs. His obedience to his superior was exacting on himself. The slightest insinuation from them was enough. If perhaps some order from the superior got to him while he was far away to go to the capital, he would say with special affection, "O' Lord, if I only had wings to fly, and carry out your orders."²²

Fr. de San Basilio's adherence to poverty was pushed to the extreme. He practically owned nothing. His meager possessions consisted of a breviary of the poorest quality and his hat was made of palm leaves. In one occasion, he was sent a chasuble with a lustrous piece. He rejected it saying that it was too lustrous and expensive.²³

Fr. de San Basilio had the tranquility of spirit, serenity of countenance and conformity with the will of God especially in 1674 when he was made superior in the mission. He held a special devotion to the Virgin and inspired everyone to serve her. A letter dedicated to Our Lady was found among his papers after his death showing his affection and trust in her patronage.

The Virgin Mary paid him back for his devotion and patronage. There were stories about miracles involving Fr. de San Basilio. One night, the Father was watching over a sick man named Don Luis de Vera, one of his companions who was to give his life for the faith later on when he was killed with Fr. Francisco Ezquerra in 1674. The eyewitness said that Don Luis saw Fr. de San Basilio kneeling and praying. Over him was a lady with a victorious look, holding a candle over him. The effect of the priest's prayer and the appearance of the lady resulted in his sudden recovery. Don Luis became well in a very short time without any need for medicine.²⁴

²² *Ibid.*, p. 344

²³ *Loc. cit.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

In another instance, Fr. de San Basilio was walking on a mission with ten lay companions. He arrived in a village very tired and hungry from the journey. Instead of thinking about himself he thought about his companions who were equally suffering. He had to ask an Indian nearby for some alms. The Indian produced three pieces of a local root called *suní*. Fr. de San Basilio took the roots, cleaned them with a knife and blessed them. He then called his companions to eat. Though the roots were but a mouthful, all of them were able to eat and were satisfied. There were even some food left over, much to the admiration of everyone.²⁵

The end came for Fr. de San Basilio on January 27, 1676. That day the Father was buying a quantity of *nica*²⁶ in the village of Upi from two Indians so he could use to feed the soldiers and missionaries of the garrison. The goods were in very bad state and Fr. de San Basilio gently complained to the two sellers. He also noticed that some of it was missing. As he bent down to count, one of the Indians gave him a savage blow to the head, causing him to fall to the ground. With more blows the two Indians took his life away.²⁷

The Indians of the village of Tarragui where the Father resided felt bad about the death of the saintly priest and a number of them led by a Visayan lad named Francisco Masongsong looked for the patricides who had fled to the remote part of the island. Masongsong and his group then burned down Upi. What made the natives desire to kill Fr. San Basilio was attributed to the incident a few days earlier when Governor Damian de Esplana killed two Indians in the vicinity. The relatives of the slain natives may have wanted to avenge their kinfolk although Fr. San Basilio had nothing to do with their deaths.²⁸

Fr. Bouwens tried to find Fr. de San Basilio's burial site but failed.

Fr. Teofilo de Angelis, S.J. (Sienna, Tuscany) ²⁹

Fr. Teofilo de Angelis (also spelled as d' Angelis) was born in Sienna, Tuscany in 1641. According to his eulogy written in 1685, de Angelis was born into a well-regarded family. After having studied Rhetorics and Philosophy, he joined the Society in Naples on November 7, 1673 at the age of 22. At that time he was already a sub deacon with such a detachment and fervor. According to his own statement recorded by his superiors:³⁰

²⁵ *Loc. cit.*

²⁶ This was a local food of the Chamorros which comes from an edible root which grew in the islands. What exactly was this root is unknown.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 342.

²⁸ *Loc cit.*

²⁹ Actually his birthplace was Sienna, not Tonana, Italy, according to Levesque.

³⁰ *Some Eulogies Mostly Written by Fr. Bouwens* in May 1685, cited as Document 1686L L6 in HM 8:321-327.

My vocation (says he) comes from having heard the preaching of two missionary Fathers of the Society. I used to recite every day seven Our Fathers and Hail Marys in honor of the seven joys of the Blessed Virgin Mary and to abstain from meat every Wednesday, also in her honor. I have since grown in my devotion toward this Blessed Virgin by reciting every day, either the Rosary, that of the Mass, or attending the Blessed Sacraments, have had masses said in her honor, one year after I have consecrated myself with the vow of chastity, on the day of her glorious assumption. I applied to the Society in particular, on account of my desire to propagate the Gospel, and to procure the glory of God with every effort; hoping to see in the holy Cross raised by everyone and once to underwrite firmly the Holy Faith with my own blood.

De Angelis' determination to enter the Order was opposed by his parents. However he overcame this opposition by leaving his cause to the Blessed Virgin whom he firmly trusted. He discussed his vocation with the Father of the Society who was his teacher and confessor. The Father in turn, with de Angelis' agreement discussed it with his immediate superior and added that he could recommend him. While waiting for the reply he attended the Sodality of the Nail in Sienna and often repeated the words of St. Francis Xavier and St. Ignatius de Loyola *Vince te ipsum* (Conquer thyself).³¹ His health was frail as he suffered from *phthisis* with coughing of blood and a great difficulty of breathing. He was always resigned to the divine will. Nevertheless he was accepted into the novitiate at Naples. Despite his physical condition, his only complaint was not being useful for anything and being a burden to the Order. In spite of being bothered by sickness, he managed to apply his genius so much so that he graduated with honors and above average praise.³²

After graduating, De Angelis left for Rome to ask the Pope to obtain a quantity of indulgences and useful privileges in behalf of the Indies. He went to the shrine of Loreto where he ratified his vows to the Virgin, then went to Genoa to embark with others for Cadiz in June 1678. When he arrived in Cadiz the ship bound for the Indies already sailed. So he and his companions went to Seville where they were distributed to other colleges until another passage for Mexico was available. He went to Salamanca to study Theology further where he gave his defense and publicly displayed his genius and application. After he returned to Seville and Cadiz, he boarded the ship named Nazareno which got stranded on a shoal. He then boarded another ship named Santiago with only a crucifix and a breviary. Upon arrival in Mexico, he got permission to go to the novitiate of Tepotzlan to do this third year of probation until the arrival of the next Philippine-bound galleon. He spent the time in contact with God and in the exercise of every virtue. There he lived in a college

³¹ *Ibid*, p. 326.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 321-322.

with novices and boys. He was older than most of the boarders. He joined in doing domestic chores, helping the cook, washing dishes and setting up the tables in the refectory. The superior there proposed that he be an example for everyone.³³

After crossing the Pacific, Fr. de Angelis arrived in Guam June 1681. He had hardly arrived when he applied himself to learn the Chamorro language in order to make himself available for the apostolic labors in the country. He spoke the new language as if it was his own and such elegance which delighted his listeners. He knew the language enough to teach it with the other missionaries who arrived with him. De Angelis translated the Mirror of Confession in the Mariano language according to the explanation of the Christian Doctrine and Roman Catechism. Later he exercised his ministry in Hagatña and was later given the supervision of the district of Ritidian where he taught to the children and prepared the older ones for communion and confession.

As head of the church in the district, Fr. de Angelis was also known as “Loyola” or “Picolomini.”³⁴ As a missionary he was described by Fr. Manuel Solorzano then superior of the Mariana mission as extremely zealous and good at caring for souls. He had a first rate love for spiritual matters. He was an observant religious and obeyed quickly the instructions of his superiors and companions.³⁵ He did not tolerate scandals or the public sins of their land which could cause ruin to the flock. If one of them would fall back he would admonish the sinner in a fatherly manner without amendment or compromise. Fr. de Angelis exerted a strong vigilance to prevent the new converts from sliding back to their old customs. As a result of his zeal, he received threats on his life. For those persons accused of serious crimes and condemned to death, Fr. De Angelis would either obtain pardon of the governor or reduction in the punishment.³⁶

He was demanding of himself and he deprived himself even of the most basic needs. He ate very little and only in the morning, having skipped supper on the pretext of weakness of stomach. He did this in a country where food was so coarse and tasteless and could be considered a penance. The longest time he slept was only four hours and he spent the night praying. He often beat himself with a sharp whip made up of a small iron chain. He continually mortified his weak and delicate body with the rough hair shirt. Fr. de Angelis was often called to assist the dying and to comfort them in the final passage. He accomplished this task with a special talent. As

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 326.

³⁴ Peter Coomans, Belgian *Jesuits in the Marianas. List of Jesuit Missionaries in the Marianas During 1668-1700 Period. op. cit.* pp. 473-478.

³⁵ ARSI Phil 13 fol. 259-265, *Confidential Report to Fr. General Oliva 25 May 1682*. Cited as Document 1682D in HM 7:531.

³⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 327.

he was practically penniless, he made an irrevocable donation to the Blessed Virgin all his works, indulgences and spiritual property.

As a person he kept himself pure and chaste. He disdained his own opinion and preferred to follow others especially when superiors were involved. During the Chamorro wars the religious fervor of the soldiers cooled down. He was greatly resentful of the local custom of Chamorro parents renting out their daughters to young unmarried men called *urritaos*. He tried to stop the custom and this was the cause of the hostility of the parents of the girls who stand to lose a lucrative income and for the men who were stopped from procuring mates on a temporary basis.

The natives wanted to kill Fr. de Angelis and this opportunity came during the Chamorro rebellion in 1684. While travelling to Rota on July 24, 1684 the assailants grabbed the priest and put a rope around his neck. They hanged him from the mast of the boat. Seeing that he would not die fast enough, they cut the rope and beat him with sticks. Fr. de Angelis thanked the Lord for his impending martyrdom and asked Him to grant pardon on his about-to-be murderers. After they killed him the barbarians undressed his body and left it on the sand for the rest of the day. The next day they threw the body into the sea with a stone attached to it.³⁷ At the time of his death, Fr. de Angelis was 33 years old.

Augustin Strobach, S.J. (Moravia, Czech Republic)

Fr. Augustin Strobach was born in Iguale, Moravia (now Czech Republic) from pious and noble parents. He was raised in a deeply religious environment and he had two brothers who joined the Jesuit order. His father, who was already in his ripe old age, used to say he had yet to follow the examples of his sons. He was still bound by the vows of matrimony. Augustin learned his first letters in the college of the Society. He was praised not only for his innate intelligence but more so, for his virtues when he joined the sodality of the Blessed Virgin.³⁸

He then moved to Olomutz where he studied Philosophy in its famous university and got the degree. Later he was invited to the novitiate of Brno which he entered on October 15, 1667. At that time, he was 21 years old. He studied virtues with fervor more suitable for a veteran than for a novice. According to his eulogy which was written in 1685, he proved himself to be a true son of St. Ignatius so much so that his superiors sent him to teach at the school of Znoim where he served for four years. Strobach completed his studies with honors and consequently became a priest.³⁹

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 331-332.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 302.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 456-458.

As a priest and later as a missionary in the Marianas he was known as Estrobac in Spanish records. At times he was known as Carlos Xavier Calvenese.⁴⁰ Fr. Strobach became a lecturer of rhetorics and humanities at the universities of Egra (Zagreb) and Litomerice. Later he was given a job where he could serve in the Indies.

Fr. Strobach left for Genoa on his way to Cadiz. Upon arriving there, the departure of the fleet for the Indies was postponed. The voyage was postponed because of the accident of the *Nazareno* which ran around on a shoal called *El Diamante*. He had nothing but a breviary and a crucifix. He used the time to learn the Spanish language and to prepare himself for the labor of the Indies. The voyage to Mexico lasted for 67 days. While he was still in Mexico he attended the sick and the dying and the teaching of Christian doctrine.⁴¹

Upon arrival in the Marianas, Fr. Strobach was assigned to the residence of San Jose def Inarajan in Guam where he made himself apt in attracting the natives to catechism and the administration of the sacraments. Fr. Strobach was described to be close to the hearts of the people, of great charity and zeal for souls, humble and observant of the religious laws and patient under hardship and promptly obedient to the wishes of his superiors. Fr. Manuel Solorzano, then head of the Mariana Islands mission, wrote in his confidential report to the Jesuit Fr. General that Fr. Strobach was born and made for this mission.⁴²

Together with Fr. Peter Coomans, he served in San Antonio in the village of Mapupun. Later he was sent to minister the natives of the island of Rota. As a preacher he showed the quality of his talents in teaching the natives the mysteries of the faith. He lived in an abject state of poverty and strict discipline. He wore a hair shirt and usually slept on a board without a pillow or a mattress to shorten his sleep. This was to give more time to prayer and contemplation. Fr. Strobach ate very little and aside from abandoning the central European custom of having a heavy breakfast in the morning, he only took *nica* every morning. He always passed up the opportunity to drink chocolate which was a luxury during that time. Even in Mexico where the refreshment was more available he said he never wished to taste the drink. Whenever his superiors gave him some sweets as a treat in celebration of a special event such as the arrival of a ship, he never touched them but reserved the same for

⁴⁰ Jesuits were allowed to take aliases, possibly to bridge the gap between nationalities such as the case of Fr. Boranga who took the name of Perez and Fr. Andres de Mancker who took the name Alfonso de Castro. Strobach was said to have taken the name Carlos Calvenese but this was disproven by Levesque who found out that Strobach and Calvenese were two different persons. Fr. Calvenese went with Fr. Andres de Mancker to China sometime in 1705.

⁴¹ Biography of Augustin Strobach by Ambrosio Ortiz Naples, cited as Document 168SW in: HM 8:457.

⁴² ARSI Phil 13 fol. 259-265, Confidential Report to Fr. General Oliva 25 May 1682. loc. cit.

travelers who would come to his residence. Fr. Strobach never ate meat, preferring to eat fish instead, just as the natives preferred to eat land crabs which do not dwell in the sea but lived underground. Fr. Strobach never chased mosquitoes from his hands or from his face although they were bothersome. He did the same with the rain and the burning sun of a very hot country. Ever humble he wrote his name as *estropajo* which meant in Spanish as dishwashing rag.⁴³

Fr. Strobach loved poverty as one would love a dear mother. He never complained about the lack of anything. He did not own a single thing that was considered unbecoming by a poor man. Whatever other people gave him as a gift, he kept it clean, something that he paid attention to last longer. A cassock given by his province lasted him the whole voyage and was still serviceable in the Marianas.⁴⁴

Like any priest Fr. Strobach promoted the virtue of chastity to such a degree. He hardly experienced any impure emotions. He watched over the morals of the Indians under his care and separated them from their old licentious ways and made them observe Christian chastity and purity in their customs. Once he learned that a young man serving him at his residence had committed an act that was less than honest. He immediately dismissed him as unfit in his company because he would scandalize others instead of serving to edify them. He loved God so dearly that he dreaded offenses made to Him.

Ever obedient to his superiors, Fr. Strobach obeyed their bidding without any interpretation, no matter how difficult. He was not always content in doing the tasks imposed on him. He offered himself readily for other duties.

Fr. Strobach was so loved by the natives of Rota or Zarpana that his requests to them were always and willingly carried out. During the intermittent Chamorro revolts, the rebels were inciting the other natives to rise up and kill the *guirragos*, (the Chamorro term for barbarians) which was what they called the colonists and the missionaries. The rebels sent false news that the missionaries and soldiers in Guam were all killed during the 1684 rebellion and they were inciting the people of Rota to rise up and kill the remaining Spaniards and soldiers. Instead of siding with the rebels the Rotanese chased out the would-be killers.

However, death came to Fr. Strobach during the same rebellion in 1684. On July 23, 1684 his superiors called him to attend a conference in Hagatña in Guam to discuss means in promoting the Christian missions. Contrary winds would not allow him to proceed to the island. The winds relented on the 27th and he left for Guam the next morning. While approaching the island, he saw flames of the buildings of

⁴³ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 447.

the colony instead. The island was being burned by the rebels and he believed that the rebels might have made themselves masters of the colony. He decided to return to Rota and on the way he decided to go to Saipan. While passing off the island of Tinian one of his sailors went ashore to find out the state of the island during the rebellion. Fr. Strobach was recognized by the Tinianese who were sailing on other canoes. They caught him and dragged him ashore as a prisoner. The natives took him to one of the chiefs who was acting as the governor of the island. Then he was taken to another chief a few miles away.⁴⁵

Knowing that his end was near, Fr. Strobach began to read his breviary and held his crucifix. The natives took these away from him and accused him of being a *macana*⁴⁶ or deceiver. They cut his breviary and crucifix to pieces. Fr. Strobach then asked his captors what faults he committed against them. They could not find any reason to accuse him of. Fr. Strobach then whispered:⁴⁷

I do not fear death, because I am sure there is no crime and I have God as my protector. He will defend me, and will help me.

These words enraged the barbarians and replied, “What can your God do? We here have not a chance to hear who is this God whom you are boasting about.” Then one of the sacrilegious ones whose name was Zuijan raised a stick and struck the servant of God. The savage blow made him fall to the ground. Then with repeated blows they finished him off. The exact date of Fr. Strobach’s death is unknown. This was because of the troubled situation during the Chamorro rebellion and news about the conflict was then fragmentary. Latter accounts point the fateful date as August 24, 1684.⁴⁸

Karl Boranga, S.J. (Vienna, Austria)

Also known as Fr. Carlos Boranga, Fr. Boranga was another non-Spaniard who died a martyr’s death in the Marianas. In Jesuit records about the Marianas his name was listed as Perez.⁴⁹ He was born on June 29, 1640 in Vienna, Austria of very important parents. His father was the fencing master at the imperial court in Vienna. As a young man he developed a fear of God and fervent dedication to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Joseph. When Austria was invaded by the Swedes led by Gustav Adolf, he and his family lived in Venice until the enemy was defeated and driven back. Boranga returned to Vienna and studied at the schools of the Jesuits to study

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 460.

⁴⁶ Actually the name meant sorcerer.

⁴⁷ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁴⁹ Coomans, *op. cit.*, pp. 473-478.

the humanities and Christian virtue. He almost failed to enter the Society of Jesus because of his weak condition. He was admitted to the Society on October 7, 1656.⁵⁰

After becoming a priest he became a teacher in the schools of Vienna where he showed extraordinary application to the satisfaction of everyone. It was at this time when he wrote a letter to the Father General of the Jesuits asking for an assignment in the Indies. While waiting he suffered an accident which broke his leg. He was crossing a bridge which collapsed. After recovering from his injury he was assigned as a chaplain in the army under General Kopp who was fighting the Hungarians. Then he was sent to Seville to await the galleon to take him to Mexico. During his voyage across the Atlantic and later the Pacific he wore inadequately thin clothes but never complained. Upon arriving in Mexico Fr. Boranga visited jails, hospitals and hospices and temporarily served as the superior of the Jesuit residence. He immediately applied himself in learning the Spanish language, taking care of his flock and visiting them in their homes. He abstained from drinking chocolate, practiced flagellation and wore a hair shirt. While serving in this capacity he became ill with a fever.⁵¹

Fr. Boranga later boarded the galleon bound for the Philippines and after a voyage of 77 days he arrived in the Marianas. He had barely arrived in Guam when he was assigned to Rota along with Fr. Peter Coomans and Brother Balthazar Dubois where he was known for his modesty, chastity and adherence to poverty. Fr. Boranga chased away those who have license contrary to chastity.⁵² He ordered youths serving under him to sleep in a place adjacent to his room so they could not leave at night and meet at prearranged places outside. They would be placed under his watchful eyes. He denied himself worldly pleasures. He lived simply and even when he was sailing in the high latitudes he wore scant clothing. Fr. Boranga believed that poverty was a chance to converse with heaven. As a missionary in the Marianas Fr. Boranga was described as sufficiently conversant in the Mariano language. Fr. Solorzano sent him to Rota along with Fr. Peter Coomans to cultivate the natives in matters of the faith.⁵³

His end came violently during the Chamorro rebellion in 1684. News of the rebellion reached Rota when the rebels spread word that all missionaries and soldiers in the Marianas were wiped out. News also arrived regarding the death of Fr. Strobach. In order to eradicate foreign influence that threatened their native customs, rebels assaulted Fr. Boranga in the village of Aosan (Agusan) in Rota with stick blows and finished off with spear thrusts. According to Fr. Jose Bonani, who wrote a history of the Mariana mission covering the years from its foundation from 1668 to 1717,

⁵⁰ *Biographies of Fr. Carlos Boranga*, cited as Document 1685X in HM 8:468-469.

⁵¹ ARSI Phil. 20, fol. 338-342, *Biography of Carlos Boranga*, HM 8: 301.

⁵² *Op. cit.*, p. 475.

⁵³ ARSI Phil 13 fol. 259-265, *Confidential Report to Fr. General Oliva 25 May 1682*, *loc. cit.*

Fr. Boranga was killed not by Rotanese but by natives from Saipan. Later his remains were retrieved from Rota and were placed inside the vault of the Profess-House in Vienna.⁵⁴

Bro. Balthazar Dubois, S.J. (Tournai, Belgium)

Fr. Balthazar Dubois (also spelled as Duvois or Du Vois) was a French-speaking Belgian who was born of honorable parents on March 15, 1654. He joined the Society in Tournai in 1675. While studying he devoted his time to prayer and contemplation. He developed a devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary and the Holy Table. He volunteered to go to the Indies and arrived in the Marianas in 1679. He was 24 years old then.

Bro. Dubois first served in Guam where he served as temporal coadjutor and was in charge of temporal matters of the Mariana mission. He was transferred to Rota in 1682 where Fr. Solorzano wrote that he will be of great help in building the house of God as he had a talent for building things. Bro. Dubois built churches in the island as well as the residence of the Fathers.⁵⁵ On July 23, 1684 during the Chamorro rebellion, the Indians from the village of Apurguan attacked him inside the Jesuit college. They inflicted many wounds on him and broke his skull. At the time of his death he was 30 years old.

Fr. Basilio Le Roulx, (Brussels, Belgium)⁵⁶

Fr. Basilio Le Roulx was born in Brussels, Belgium in 1643. Records remember him with the French name Basile Le Roulx which creates confusion about his Belgian or French origins.⁵⁷ A report made in 1678 showing the physical inspection of the missionaries bound for the Philippines and the Marianas describes Fr. Le Roulx as born in Brussels and that he had light brown hair. He had missing upper teeth. At that time he was 35 years old. Fr. Le Roulx arrived in the Marianas in 1679 and witnessed the great Chamorro rebellion of 1684. He served in the village of Umatac in 1688

⁵⁴ *Biographical Update by Fr. Bonani*. In: Stocklein-Welt-Bott No. 9 and VII, No. 151 in: HM 8:478-480.

It was likely that only his skull was taken as this was the practice in Europe, according to Levesque. In Spain the skull is taken and given to the nearest blood relative. The location of the vault is directly under the main altar of the church of the Profess-House in Vienna.

⁵⁵ ARSI Phil 13 fol. 259-265, *Confidential Report to Fr. General Oliva 25 May 1682*, loc. cit.

⁵⁶ Actually Belgium. Dubois and Le Roulx are French-speaking Walloons from the Flandro-Belgian province, not Flemings, according to Levesque.

⁵⁷ The list of Belgian missionaries who served in the Marianas obtained by Levesque indicates that Fr. Le Roulx was from St. Omer, France. Another source which were the annual report for 1698 and 1699 indicates that he was from Brussels.

and witnessed a foiled soldiers' mutiny that year. He helped bless the mutineers who were about to be executed. In 1694 he was serving as the Vice Provincial of the Mariana mission. In 1695 together with Fr. Bouwens he accompanied the expedition to subjugate the defiant natives of Tinian and Saipan in 1695.⁵⁸ The Chamorros made a final stand in the island of Aguiguan that year. He returned to Guam and was in charge of one of the districts where the Chamorros from the northern islands were forcibly relocated. In 1699 he was given charge of two districts because of lack of priests. Fr. Le Roulx died in April or October 1703.

Fr. Peter Coomans, S.J. and Fr. Gerard Bouwens, S.J. (Antwerp, Belgium)

Aside from Fr. Dubois and Fr. Le Roulx two other Belgians appeared in Jesuit records of the Marianas. These were Fr. Peter (or Pedro) Coomans and Fr. Gerard (or Gerardo) Bouwens.⁵⁹ Both served as superiors of the Mariana mission. History owes them the wealth of historical information from their various reports about the situation of the islands and their letters. Fr. Coomans died a martyr's death in Saipan in July 1685 at the age of 37. According to Levesque he was the last of the early missionaries of the 17th century to die in this manner.

Fr. Bouwens on the other hand, was a participant in the last Chamorro wars and was wounded in the Chamorro rebellion of 1684. He witnessed the final subjugation of the Chamorros in the Gani Islands of the Marianas and the forced evacuation of the natives from these islands to Saipan, Rota and Guam. He was known as the second founder of the Mariana mission for his efforts. He died of dysentery on February 24, 1712.

Fr. Bartolome Besco, (Sabandia, Italy)

Fr. Bartolome was born in Sabandia near Naples. Other records about him mention that he was from Savoy. He served in Palapag, Samar during the 1650s.⁶⁰ Later he became Vice Provincial in Cebu and served in Dagami. The Bishop of Cebu objected to having foreign Jesuits serving in his diocese saying they are occupying posts that should be reserved for Spaniards. He wrote to the King asking him to

⁵⁸ ARSI Phil. 306-325, *Jesuit Annual Report for 1696*, anonymous author, cited as Document 1696F in HM 9: 671.

⁵⁹ For detailed information on the lives of Fathers Peter Coomans and Gerard Bouwens, kindly refer to *Belgian Missionaries in the 17th Century Marianas: The Role of Fr. Peter Coomans and Fr. Gerard Bouwens*, by the author in: *PHILIPPINIANA SACRA*, Vol. XLVI, No. 136, January-April 2011, pp. 85-109.

⁶⁰ Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, Vol. 36 (Cleveland: A.H. Clark and Co., 1902-1909), p. 36.

This source shall be hereinafter referred to as BR with volume and page number supplied.

remove all foreign (non-Spanish) Jesuits to avoid lawsuits and scandals.⁶¹ Fr. Besco was reported to be in Manila in 1663 where he negotiated with Chinese rebels.⁶² Mexican records also mentioned him in 1677. He replaced Fr. Carlos Rios at the last minute in the galleon bound for the Marianas and arrived there that same year. In the same galleon was Fr. Peter Coomans who served as superior of the mission from 1674 to 1676. Fr. Coomans was carried off to the Philippines while meeting the Manila-bound galleon and had to return to the islands via Mexico. Fr. Besco made Fr. Cooman's his assistant. His service in the islands was short-lived because he died of natural causes on July 26, 1680.

Fr. Juan Tilpe (Neiss, Austria)

A native of Bohemia, Fr. Juan Tilpe was born in 1644 and arrived in the Marianas in 1681. He was in charge of the administration of the seminary-college in Hagatña where he taught the Chamorro children and impart to them the arts and good morals aside from serving the temporal affairs of the mission. He carried out his work with great charity and to the total satisfaction of the Fathers.

Fr. Tilpe was also known by his alias Luis Turcotti. Fr. Tilpe's name was often written or mistranscribed as Felipe. He was described by Fr. Solorzano who served as superior of the mission in 1681 as a tireless worker with great charity and blessed with a zeal for souls and no less prompt to observe and obey the rules of the mission. He was a modest humble and patient, worker in words and died of the mission. He was the author of many reports and letters during the early part of the 18th century. Fr. Tilpe served in the villages of Umatac in 1688, then to Agat in the same year⁶³ and back to Umatac in 1693. On May 19, 1699 Fr. Tilpe wrote a letter describing the conditions of the Marianas. The natives of the Gani Islands were being evacuated as part of the *reduccion* or the removal of the natives from the scattered villages and concentrating them in a few towns. The inhabitants were moved from these northern islands to Saipan, Guam and Rota. Eventually even Saipan would be depopulated. Fr. Tilpe reported that Carolinian canoes were used in the evacuation. A total of 1,920 persons were evacuated that year.⁶⁴

In 1695 he became the curate of Rota. While serving in the island, he wrote a letter which narrated a plot of three Chamorros to exterminate not just the

⁶¹ RAH 9/2667, Doc. 11. Objection to Foreign Jesuits by the Bishop of Cebu, cited as Document 1670C in HM5:114.

⁶² BR 36:227.

⁶³ RAH 9/2677, *Letter of Fr. Zarsosa to Fr. Xaramillo, dated Marianas 22 May 1689* in HM 9:174.

⁶⁴ ARSI Chile, *Letter from Fr. Tilpe Rota, 19 May 1699 on the Condition of the Mission and the Evacuation of the Gani Islands, 1697-1698*, cited as Document 1699D in HM 10: 220-226.

missionaries but all the colonists and those who were allied with them in 1701. These individuals were part of those evacuated from the other islands and forced to resettle in Guam. A plague struck the resettled people and one of them made a plan at his deathbed to assassinate all Spaniards and their allies. The plan which was given to his surviving accomplices was so cleverly done. The conspirators were to send messengers to the villages all over the colony on the pretext of arranging marriages with single people. The plan was revealed to the Fr. Provincial who in turn told the Governor of the colony and the commander of the garrison. The officials had the guards doubled and patrols were stationed at all places. The ringleaders of the projected uprising were arrested: two were hanged, 100 were severely whipped and many were ordered to become galley slaves.⁶⁵

In 1709 Fr. Tilpe was listed as the Vice Provincial of the Jesuits in the Marianas. He was most probably the superior of the mission as he wrote the Jesuit Annual Report for 1708-1709 in which he reported that the Gani Islands were still being visited. He also reported the baptism of 167 children and the administration of the sacrament of matrimony to 87 couples. In the same document he mentioned the death of 87 children most probably from disease. A total of 299 natives died after being administered the holy sacraments and twelve died without receiving them.⁶⁶ The low figures indicate the rapidly declining population of the Marianas after the Chamorro wars. The same years also experienced severe typhoons and floods. The population of the Marianas had fallen to only 4,145 individuals in 1710 from a high estimated population of 40,000 in 1668.⁶⁷ Fr. Tilpe died of natural causes in 1710.

Fr. Antonio Condari or Cundari (Sicily, Italy)

Born in Palermo, Sicily Fr. Antonio arrived either in 1689 or 1690 along with Fr. Luis de Morales, one of the original missionaries in the Marianas.⁶⁸ His health inspection report indicated that he was 35 years old, of white complexion, average height and with scar that could be seen behind the right side of his beard.⁶⁹ He was

⁶⁵ Stocklein's Welt-Bott No. 6. *Letter from Fr. Tilpe to Fr. de Boye, June 1702*, cited as Document 1702C in HM 10: 368-369.

⁶⁶ ARSI Phil. 14, fol. 96-99v, *Jesuit Annual Report 1708-1709 by Fr. Tilpe*, cited as Document 1709G in HM 11:50.

⁶⁷ PNA (Philippine National Archives) Marianas, Bundle 2, 17-18-1822. Report of Governor Luis Pimentel.

It was highly unlikely that the native population of the Marianas in 1668 exceeded 30,000 or 40,000 as estimated by the Jesuits. Governor Pimentel estimated that it was more like 24,000. His figure was consistent with other figures by other chroniclers like Fr. Astrain (9,000) and Fr. Salgado (13,000).

⁶⁸ AGI ex-45-2-7/10 *Fr. Cundari Leaves Europe to the Marianas*, Cited as Document 1689J in HM 9:345.

⁶⁹ AGI ex-45-2-7-10, *Physical Inspection of Fr. Cundari*, cited as Document 1689J in HM 9:346.

the second medically-trained missionary in the Marianas. The first was a brother of St. John named Francisco Beltran who left in 1688. Fr. Antonio served in Merizo and Pago in Guam and was a companion of Fr. Morales and Fr. Cuculino. The church census of 1693 finds him in Merizo,⁷⁰ Guam in 1704 and left the Marianas in 1705. The date of his death is unknown.

Br. Jaime Chavarri (Chaveri) (Naples, Italy)

Brother Jaime (sometimes written as Jacob) Chavarri was the pharmacist in the mission during the early part of the 18th century. Described as a coadjutor born in Naples, Bro. Chavarri arrived in the Marianas in 1693 or 1694. Bro. Chavarri joined Fr. Cundari as the second medically-trained missionary in the Marianas. Aside from running the pharmacy of the colony, he was also in charge of the infirmary making him its physician and surgeon. In addition to his duties, he looked after the domestic affairs of the colony. He saved the life of Fr. Basilio Le Roulx who almost drowned when the boat they were riding hit a reef and capsized.⁷¹ According to Fr. Le Roulx, Chavari “behaves like an angel and has many stupendous cures that many after God owe their lives to the Brother.”⁷² According to records he left the islands in 1741.⁷³

Fr. Andres de Mancker (Germany?)

Fr. Andres de Mancker stayed in the Marianas for a year. He arrived in the islands in 1680 and was known by his alias Alfonso de Castro. He was said to have died in Manila in 1681 although another record showed that he was sent to China in 1705.

Fr. Matias Kuklein (Muglitz, Czechoslovakia)

Also known as Fr. Cuculino, Fr. Kuklein was born in 1645 in Muglitz, Bohemia. He was said to have arrived in the Marianas in 1682. In 1684 he accompanied the expedition led by Captain Jose de Quiroga to subdue the natives of Saipan. Together with Fr. Coomans, Fr. Matthias served as chaplain. He survived the Chamorro rebellion which broke out that year. During this event, Quiroga’s force was surrounded by angry hostiles inside their makeshift fort made of logs until Quiroga and his men sallied to destroy the villages and crops of the rebels thus causing their

⁷⁰ ARSI Phil.? Church Census of 1693, cited as Document 1695 C in HM 9: 345.

⁷¹ ARSI Phil. 14, fol. 86-87. *Letter of Fr. Le Roulx to Fr. General Gonzalez dated Agaña, 23 May 1695*, cited as Document 1695C in HM 9: 631.

⁷² ARSI Phil 14, fol. 86-87, *Letter from Fr. Le Roulx to Fr. Gen. Tirzo Gonzalez, dated Agaña 23 May 1695*, cited as Document 1695 in HM 9: 631.

⁷³ *Belgian Jesuits in the Marianas List of Jesuit Missionaries in the Marianas during 1668-1700 period*, (Dufresne: Levesque Publications, 2000?), pp. 473-478.

defeat. Fr. Kuklein provided the information about the expedition to Saipan which appeared in the Jesuit annual report in 1685.⁷⁴

In May 1686 he paddled out to sea to meet what the men in the garrison thought to be two Spanish ships. He brought with him hosts and a little wine to celebrate mass for the poor sailors. Upon boarding one vessel it turned out to be the *Cygnnet* which was a pirate vessel commanded by the English pirate Captain Swan. The pirates were prowling the Pacific in search of Spanish galleons to plunder. The pirates were down to only three days' provision amounting to three pints of corn. They were on the verge of mutiny and they threatened to eat their officers unless food could be properly provided.

Fr. Kuklein was held hostage aboard the *Cygnnet* for nine days. He was well-treated during his captivity. The pirates said that they had no intention of waging war on the Spanish colony and that they were only interested in acquiring supplies. They also said that they were willing to pay money for whatever supplies the Governor of the colony could offer. Fr. Kuklein said that the food supplies needed by the pirates are also scarce in Guam but said that the Governor Damian Esplana would be willing to provide them with their needs. The governor later provided them with six hogs, six sacks of rice, jars of pickled fish, fruits and coconuts. The pirates later went on their way towards the Philippines where they abandoned Captain Swan in Mindanao.⁷⁵

Fr. Kuklein also provided letters testifying to the conduct of Governor Esplana who abandoned his post in 1688.⁷⁶ There was no record of Fr. Kuklien's presence in the colony in 1688-1689. He left the Marianas in 1688. Jesuit records indicated that Fr. Kuklein died on December 16, 1696.⁷⁷

Other non-Spanish missionaries in the Marianas from its early years up to the 1730s were:⁷⁸

⁷⁴ *Jesuit Annual Report for 1684-1685 written by Matthia Kuklein* cited as Document 1685J in HM 8:255-300.

⁷⁵ More Pirates in Guam in May 1686, *The Narrative of Captain William Dampier*, cited as Document 1686 F in HM 8:548.

Also BR 38:241.

⁷⁶ AGI Fil. 13-1-9, Block, 7, pp. 38-65. *Testimony of Fr. Kuklein*, cited as Document 1688C C10 in HM9:154-156.

Also: AGI Ultramar 562, Col. Simancas, *The Case Against Governor Esplana for Leaving Guam in 1688*.

⁷⁷ Coomans, *op. cit.*, pp. 473-478.

⁷⁸ Information about these missionaries comes from Levesque, *Belgian Jesuits in the Marianas List of Jesuit Missionaries in the Marianas during 1668-1700 period*, (Dufresne: Levesque Publications, 2000?). *ibid.*

Fr. Juan Adan Gerstl or Gestel (Austria)

A native of Austria, Fr. Gerstl is also known as Fr. Adam Gerstl. His date of birth is unknown and he arrived in the Marianas in 1683. He was described as the Jesuit with the strongest character while sailing aboard a galleon from Cadiz to Mexico in 1681. While the ship was sailing the Atlantic, the crew of the vessel undertook a firing practice on the day of feast of the Purification (February 2, 1681). One of the ship's gunners caught fire and blew up his hand. The man wanted to jump overboard and end his misery. Fr. Gerstl assisted in the amputation of the gunner's hand. He accompanied the visitor Xaramillo who made a report on the Marianas. During the voyage from Mexico to the Marianas he accompanied the visitor Fr. Juan Xaramillo who made a report on the Marianas. With him in the same galleon were Fr. Kuklein, Fr. Kerschpaumer and Fr. Paul Klein. They arrived in the islands on May 31, 1681.⁷⁹

A gifted painter, Gerstl made the portraits of the martyrs of the Marianas – Fr. Luis de Medina, Fr. Diego Luis de Sanvitores, Fr. Francisco Ezquerra and Fr. Antonio de San Basilio. Each painting had a short explanation in Spanish and Latin. These portraits are now lost. He left the Marianas in 1684 and died in Manila in 1691.

Fr. Felipe Maria Muscati (Malta)

Fr. Felipe was born in 1655 and arrived in the Marianas in 1689. He was described as a coadjutor brother. Reports showed that he was serving in the village of Fina with Fr. Bouwens in 1690-1693 where they managed a school with 16 to 18 girl students. There they were taught by an old woman in making mats and other articles. In 1693 he was curate of San Antonio de Fina. Fr. Muscati and Fr. Bouwens put finishing touches to the church which was built in October 1689. He was recalled to the Philippines in 1695 and died in Guam on June 14, 1739.

Fr. Antonio Kerschbaumer or Kerchpaumer (Salurn, Bavaria)

Fr. Antonio was known by his Spanish alias Antonio Cerezo. He was born in 1643 and he professed his final vows before Fr. Pedro de Espinar the Procurator General of the Jesuits for the Indies.⁸⁰ He arrived in the Marianas in 1682 along with

⁷⁹ Ms. No. 128, Schwartz Collection, Georgetown University, Journal of Fr. Paul Klein from Cadiz to Mexico in 1681, cited as Document 1681M in HM 7:474-475.

The author of the journal Fr. Paul Klein also known as Pablo Clain would serve as the secretary to Fr. Antonio Tuccio, the Jesuit Provincial in the Philippines and curate of Giuiian, Samar. He would document the Carolinians and Palauans drifting the Philippines and write a report advocating the exploration and Christianization of the Caroline and the Palau archipelagoes.

⁸⁰ Document No. 5, Schwartz Collection, Georgetown University Washington, D.C. Letter from Fr. Joseph Neuman dated Seville 15, August 1679, cited as Document 1679Q in HM 7:183.

the new Governor of the islands Antonio Saravia. He served as confessor to Sargento Mayor and later Governor Jose Quiroga. When he was in Manila in 1688 the Spanish authorities wanted to interrogate him regarding the 1684 Chamorro revolt.⁸¹ Fr. Antonio left the islands in 1705. The place and date of his death are unknown.

Fr. Francisco Antonio Palavicino or Pallavicino (Italy?)

Fr. Francisco was born in 1663 and arrived in the Marianas in 1688. He served in the village of Agat and stayed in the islands after 1693. He was said to have left the Marianas before 1695 or 1707. He died in Naples in 1743.

Fr. Juan Schirmeisen (Czechoslovakia)

Fr. Schirmeisen (or Schirmeysen) arrived in 1688 according to a Jesuit record⁸² while another by a record compiled by Fr. Bonani in 1689. While he was serving in Guam, the great epidemic wiped out a significant number of the native population. Twenty natives died in a little more than a week and more than eighty after three months. The disease was like influenza whose germs were brought over by foreigners. The natives were advised to moderate their excessive bathing which was said to be the cause of the disease and to accept the sacraments. They were also advised to eat biscuits and fowl to strengthen themselves.⁸³

Fr. Schirmeisen was involved in blessing the afflicted. He was seen as a miracle worker and helped those who were in imminent danger or death. One woman named Antonia Eguegue who was very ill as her throat was choked up with catarrh was blessed by the priest and her health returned. The same happened to a woman named Rosa Assarri.

In 1690 Fr. Schirmeisen served as chaplain of a sloop. Fr. Schirmeisen blessed many people who were dying of the disease. He avoided the fate of Fr. Coomans who was carried off to the Philippines in 1674 by disembarking immediately upon seeing Guam. Fr. Schirmeisen assisted the condemned mutineers who conducted an uprising in August 1691 to a "good death."⁸⁴ He was said to have died in 1719.

⁸¹ RAH 9/2669, Docs. No. 20 & 29, B1 and B3. Jesuit Letter dated San Pedro (Makati), 29 April 1690 in HM 9:373.

⁸² Levesque, *Belgian Jesuits in the Mariana, s List of Jesuit Missionaries in the Marianas during 1668-1700 period. op. cit.*

⁸³ ARSI Phil. 14, fol. 75-82v, Jesuit Annual Report for 1689-1690 by Fr. Lorenzo Bustillo, cited as Document 1690G in HM 9:412.

⁸⁴ AGI Phil. 562, Document No. 3, Fol. 13, *Annual Report for 1690-1691 by Fr. Bustillo*, cited as Document 1691D in HM 9:496.

Bro. Antonio de los Reyes and Fr. Melchor de la Cruz (Mexico)

Records about these two Mexican missionaries are sketchy. There is no record of the birth of Brother Antonio. His probable arrival in the islands was either as early as 1676 or as late as 1681. He might have arrived with the group of Fr. Kerschbaumer that year and probably died in 1688.

Like Brother Antonio, there is no record of the birth of Fr. Melchor who arrived before 1686 or 1690. His departure from the islands and date of death are unknown.

Fr. Jose Bonani (Austria)

Fr. Bonani arrived in Guam on June 16, 1718. He was later assigned to Agat and served as the curate of Rota. Like Fr. Coomans during his time, he wrote a history of the Mariana mission from its foundation by Fr. Sanvitores in 1668 to 1718. The census of 1747 finds him as the curate of Umatac.⁸⁵

Analysis and Conclusions

Non-Spaniards were part of Spain's colonizing and evangelizing force during the 16th and 17th century. They included individuals from areas comprising present-day Germany, Belgium, Italy and the Czech Republic which were allied with the ruling Habsburg dynasty. Also included were individuals from Spanish colonies like Mexico and the Philippines. Together with the Spanish missionaries they planted the seeds of Christianity in these regions. Today the Marianas are a deeply devout Catholic community. The growth of these seeds came at a price which was paid in blood and extreme hardship. Many of the missionaries belonged to noble and honorable families. They were also trained at the best schools of the time and these Jesuits served as the vanguard of the Christianization effort. They joined the Christian missions whole-heartedly, shunned self-glorification and lived a life of self-denial, humility and charity. They embraced extreme poverty and deprivation with the strong faith that only through such conditions could they commune and communicate with God.

Aside from deprivation and sacrifice the life of the missionaries was fraught with danger. Aside from the physical danger of climbing cliffs and sailing open seas to

⁸⁵ AHPA (Archivo Historico de la Provincia de Aragon) E1-C-B, Historical Synthesis of the First part of the Report Compiled at the Request of the Governor, cited as Document 1747A in HM 14: 23.

The same document contains other names of non-Spanish missionaries now assigned to the islands such as Fr. Francis Xavier Reitemberger who was assigned as the curate of Rota; Fr. Wolfgang Urfaren in Inarajan; Fr. Francis Xavier Stainback, was Rector of San Juan de Letran in Hagatña. The other non-Spaniards mentioned were Fr. Francis Xavier Stempel and Fr. Louis Knapp.

spread the Gospel, there were also the hostile natives, mutinous soldiers, corrupt and self-seeking public officials and enemies of the Spanish empire such as the English, Dutch and French pirates. Life in the islands was not at all too boring. The missionaries did not fear death and many of them suffered from poor health. They actually sought death as martyrs. Indeed they served as examples for today's Christians.

Aside from spreading the Gospel and looking after the spiritual health of the first Christian communities, the missionaries took care of the physical and cultural well-being of the natives. The missionaries established the first schools. The first two schools were established at Hagatña, one for boys, the college dedicated to the holy guardian angel and the one for girls, which was dedicated to Santa Rosa de Lima. Churches were built at the various villages. Today these churches are the core of the present communities. A hospital both for natives and colonists was also built. Before 1682 there was no physician assigned in the islands. Some of the missionaries who arrived after that year had some medical training. Missionaries like Bro. Chavarri managed the hospital and pharmacy of the colony and also served as its surgeon. Another missionary, Fr. Antonio de San Basilio served as physician, surgeon and male nurse to any ailing person. The missionaries also comforted the dying and helped them move peacefully to the afterlife. Under the care of the missionaries the colonists demonstrated new trades such as brick-making and weaving and introduced new plants and animals.

The missionaries through their writings left behind a rich treasure of historical information. Some of the information are contained in relatively voluminous documents while others were scarce, fragmentary and even conflicting. The information contained in the documents gives us their perspective of history. Very often they were the only chroniclers of the history of the colony. Admittedly the missionary records especially the eulogies are hagiographies. There were even stories of alleged miracles such as the appearance of the Virgin while Fr. de San Basilio was praying for the sick and his multiplication of edible roots for his hungry companions.

Missionary records are considered authoritative historical sources and were the main sources of information about the Mariana Islands colony at its infant stage. Whenever possible historical sources even those written by the religious need to be cross-referenced and verified. This could be done through the research of materials such as writings by secular officials. Even the oral tradition of the Chamorros helped in verifying the information provided by the Jesuit sources. One example is the story about the first horse in the islands brought by the Spaniards. Its coming was mentioned in Fr. Ezquerra's report and its use and demeanor was recorded in Chamorro folklore. Historical information about the lives of the saintly pioneering missionaries may serve as basis for their future recognition by the Church as saints

and martyrs. More studies should be done in this field to shed light on the history of the first missionaries and how this contributed to the present.

In their era the missionaries were at the crossroads of history. In their desire to introduce and propagate Christianity their ideals and activities run counter to the ancestral customs of the natives. At the same time Spanish colonization destroyed the freedom enjoyed by their forefathers and many natives became victims of the abuses of the colonizers. Even with their religious purpose it cannot be denied that the missionaries including “Filipinos” like Ezquerro and Sonson were part of the colonizing force. Their loyalty is to the Spanish crown which they had to protect. Thus they paid an active part in preserving Spanish domination. These conditions sparked Chamorro resistance to the colonists and the missionaries. Their very presence in the islands also posed a danger to the natives. Foreigners harbored diseases like influenza to which the natives had no immunity. Understandably this contributes to the hostility of the natives and the missionaries were lumped together with other foreigners as *guiragos* or barbarians. Many missionaries were slain or injured in the armed movements. The chroniclers at the time described the native resistance as the work of the devil but they were actually attempts of the Chamorros to win back their lost freedom and to preserve their precolonial rights and practices. There is a tendency today of some historians who are now considering the Chamorro resisters like Hurao, Aguarin and others of his kind who were considered villains in colonial historiography as heroes of the native people.

Despite the changing views of historians and the clash of opposing belief systems and the fact about the missionaries being part of tools of imperial domination, it cannot be disputed however that the missionaries both Spaniard and non-Spaniard dedicated their lives in the service of the Almighty and their only desired reward was the one that can only be given by God.■



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