

A Visual Documentation of Fil-Hispanic Churches

Part XXII: The Church of San Miguel Arcángel, Nassiping, Cagayan

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A by-passed landmark

Today's Nassiping is a barangay (political division) of Gattaran in Cagayan Province. Travellers on the Cagayan Highway hardly notice it, except for the Nassiping Reforestation Project and its park that entice tourists. Its old church ruin is also promoted as a tourist site, but little else is known about the area. This is ironic because Nassiping is among the earliest places of the province to be mentioned in historical sources. Nassiping lies on the banks of the Cagayan River, near its convergence with the Chico River (it was the small or 'chico' river in comparison with the Cagayan which was known then as the Rio Grande). In fact, its location along the junction of two rivers greatly influenced its destiny. The Dominican historian Julian Malumbres attributes the name Nassiping to the Cagayan word for twin, *siping*, which doubtlessly refers to the union of the "twin" rivers.¹

Nassiping appears in Spanish records as early as 1591, when it was listed as "Nasipin and Buto" in a survey of *encomiendas* in Cagayan; an *encomienda* was land entrusted to a *conquistador* or a civil servant who would be responsible for that place's material and

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¹ *Diccionario Español-Ibanag* (Manila: Imp. de Ramirez y Giraudier, 1867), p. 252. Julian Malumbres, O.P., *Historia de Cagayan* (Manila: Tip. Linotype de Sto. Tomas, 1918), p. 368. The account on Nassiping in Pedro Salgado's *Cagayan Valley and Eastern Cordillera 1581-1898*, Vol. 1 pp. 244-251, gives English summaries of the Spanish sources used in this article.

spiritual development. This encomienda had 500 tributes and 2,400 souls, slightly more than Camalaniugan two towns further north which also had 500 tributes but 2,000 souls.²

The identification of Buto in the 1591 document is unknown; it cannot be Gattaran or Dummun, two settlements just north of Nassiping, because “Gatara” and “Dumon” also appeared in the same 1591 encomienda list. Could “Buto” be a mis-transcription of “Lubo,” the first mission on the Chico River which was established in 1604, the same year as the re-establishment of Nassiping? The status of Nassiping and Buto/Lubo(?) as an *encomienda* at the convergence of two rivers indicates the existence of a community and resources appropriate to be commended to an *encomendero* for his care and complementary benefit. It was in Nassiping where travellers rested and rowers exchanged shifts; *barangays* or canoes were assembled or repaired, and supplies were replenished.³

Formation and *crescendo* of the mission

In the provincial chapter of the Dominicans held in their monastery in Intramuros on June 15, 1596, the first “houses” (or ministries with at least two friars) in the Cagayan region were accepted. On the northern coast, left of the Cagayan River, were Santa Maria Magdalena de Pata and Santo Tomás de Tulag (later to be re-formed as Abulug); on the right was San Vicente de Buguey. Entering the mouth of the Cagayan River were San Jacinto de Camalaniugan, Santo Domingo de Nueva Segovia, and then Santa Catalina de Nassiping.⁴

In the provincial chapter on May 9, 1604, the house of Nassiping was re-accepted, this time under the protection of San Miguel Arcángel. Its original patron saint, Santa Catalina, had been turned over to Gattaran, (which was accepted as a house only later, as we shall see). This change of patron saint implies a relocation or re-establishment of a site due to any number of reasons, usually some kind of disaster such as epidemic, flood, fire, storm, earthquake (or even a pestilence—would there have been some amount of agricultural land by then?). Curiously, the patron saint of the older Nassiping (Santa Catalina) had been turned over to the younger Gattaran—3 leagues away to the north, or 2 hours by canoe⁵—while Nassiping received a new protector, St. Michael the Archangel. Perhaps when the people of Nassiping moved, it was decided to select a new patron saint through the usual procedure of choosing through lots (if the same name appeared after three draws, that was it). It is for archaeologists to examine if the original site of Nassiping was to the north or south of the present location.

² Felix M. Keesing, *The Ethnohistory of Northern Luzon* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1962), pp. 207-209.

³ Malumbres, p. 369.

⁴ Also accepted in this chapter were the Dominican houses in Binondo (Manila), and Samal (Bataan). *Acta Capitulum Provincialium Provinciae Sanctissimi Rosarii Philippinarum, Ordinis Praedicatorum ab anno 1588 á sua in provinciam erectione primo. Tomus Primus ad anno 1588 ad annum 1698* (Manila: Typis Collegii Sancti Thomae, 1874).

⁵ Malumbres, pp. 305, 342.

In the same chapter of 1604, a license to construct edifices (undoubtedly churches and conventos) was given to Nassiping.⁶ Interestingly, the same license was granted to three other places which had barely been established. Tuguegarao, which was accepted as a house also in 1604, received its first vicar (equivalent to today's parish priest) two years later. Gattaran was accepted as a mission of Camalaniugan in 1616 but was re-accepted in 1623. Aparri was accepted as a mission of Camalaniugan also in 1616, but as a house only years later in 1680. All this implies that even if ecclesiastical organization had not yet been formally instituted, these places were already the subject of Dominican ministrations. It is not clear as to what material was used for these edifices. It may be presumed that if, upon acceptance as a house or mission, a church and convento of simple materials would be constructed, then such a license would suggest that a more permanent building was called for: very probably, one of foundations of masonry, with walls partly of stone and partly of wood.

Although it was a "house" since 1596, no names of ministers assigned to Nassiping appear until 1606. Perhaps these ministers were based in Lallo and took turns spending periods of time in the new missions. In the provincial chapter of 1606, Ambrosio Martínez de la Madre de Dios was assigned as *presidente* of Nassiping. This implies that the pueblo had gained stability and was on the way to its being a *vicaría* (vicarage or quasi-parish). Padre Martínez was one of the pioneer Dominicans in Cagayan, and had worked in Tulag (re-established later as Abulug), Camalaniugan, and Tocolana before reaching Nassiping. He was assisted by Gaspar Zarfate and the lay brother Baltazar López de los Reyes. In 1608 Nassiping received its first vicar, Francisco Jurado de la Cruz; Padre Zarfate had stayed behind to assist him, and two more companions arrived, Domingo González and the acolyte Bartolomé Muñoz del Espíritu Santo (who unfortunately barely lasted a year). Thus in the initial years between 1606 and 1610 there were three, and up to four missionaries assigned to Nassiping. This suggests that this early the Dominicans were already searching for souls in the Itawes region via the Chico River.

However, due to lack of personnel from 1614 to 1616, Nassiping reverted to mission status under Camalaniugan, which became a base for eight missionaries who divided their time among these two places as well as Aparri, Bugay, Gattaran, and Tocolana. In 1616, Nassiping recovered its former status and its ministers were increased to four.

A year later (1617), we learn that the *encomendero* of Nassiping was Don Juan Rodríguez Ladera.⁷ Interestingly, this *encomendero* from Guadalajara, Mexico had two descendants who not only joined the Dominicans but ministered in their home province Cagayan. The elder, Juan Rodríguez de Ladera, was born in 1622 in Mexico and brought to the Philippines with his family.⁸ He was assigned in the chapter of 1663 to Nassiping,

⁶ Malumbres, p. 445.

⁷ Malumbres, p. 369.

⁸ If the younger Juan was born in 1622, this would mean that the elder Juan had returned to Mexico by that time. If the elder Juan was in Cagayan in 1622, then he was not the father of the future Dominican; perhaps he would have been an uncle, or a grandfather. Juan Uguet prepared a list of Nassiping's silver in 1662, therefore P. Rodríguez de Ladera must have served only at the end of that year or in 1663 and perhaps a little after. Malumbres (p. 432) qualifies the two Dominicans as sons of the *encomendero*. See

although the Dominican biographer Eladio Neira places his term from 1661 to 1663. His younger brother Gabriel was also assigned to several Cagayan ministries.

A disastrous earthquake which struck on Nov. 30, 1619, devastated the land from Manila all the way to Nueva Segovia. In Lallo, the Dominican church and convento of stone collapsed. The church in Malaueg was also so damaged that many sections had to be rebuilt.⁹ We can presume that similar damage was sustained by Nassiping. In 1621, the Dominican Provincial, P. Miguel Ruiz, ordained that subsequent constructions of conventos be limited to four cells, with the exception of those at Abulug and Nassiping, which were allowed six.

Malumbres explains that it was from Abulug that the missionaries ventured to Pata, the westernmost mission (trudging the precipitous cliffs by the sea) and to the Apayao country further south (canoeing down the eponymous river). Similarly, Nassiping was clearly organized as a strategic resting place for those moving on, or coming from, both the Chico and the (Cagayan) Grande rivers. In the early 17th century, Nassiping served as the crucial link between the capital at Nueva Segovia and the southernmost towns of Tuguegarao and Cabagan (now San Pablo). Just as significant if not more so, Nassiping was the “entrance” so to speak of the Chico River, that led to the various populations that are today called Itawes, Isneg, Kalinga, and Malaueg. A mission in Lubo along the Chico not far from Nassiping (5 hours by canoe¹⁰) was accepted as a house in 1604 (it disappeared from the Acts after 1606); Tabang (just across the Chico from Lubo) and Malaueg (both 1608); Piat (1610), Tuao (1612), Santa Cruz de Gumpat (1614), Mauanan (1725), and Aripa (1747). The development of land routes and the establishment of other mid-way towns along the Cagayan River such as Iguig, Amulung (5 leagues away, 3 ¼ hours on a *barangay*¹¹), and Alcalá eventually diminished the significance of Nassiping, as we shall see.

We get an idea of how developed the land was around Nassiping through an eye-witness account of its vicar, Pedro Muriel. In 1631, not just one but two plagues of locusts hit Nassiping. A swarm of locusts three leagues long and a quarter wide completely covered the forests and ground, and it looked like the rice fields were burning. In August, a native called Andrés Dasil called in desperation on the Lord and the Blessed Mother to deliver them from the pestilence. He asked that at least one half of his rice land be spared, the other half to be devoured by the locusts. The next morning revealed that indeed, the locusts had gone, and one half of the land was still green. In the second plague, locusts had descended on a field of corn comprising two lots. In the first, five laborers were striving to drive away the pests; on the other side, only one woman, Maria Auagan, was left to her own devices. Sensing an urge from within, she prayed on her knees for the Lord’s mercy on her field. This petition was granted, while the land just opposite was devoured. This was testified by 100 witnesses.¹²

also their biographies in Eladio Neira, O.P., ed., *Misioneros Dominicanos en el Extremo Oriente*, Volume 1, 1587-1835 (Manila: [Provincia de Nuestra Señora del Rosario, 2000], p. 511.

⁹ Malumbres, pp. 37-38.

¹⁰ Malumbres, p. 344.

¹¹ Malumbres, pp. 306, 341.

¹² Malumbres, pp. 34-36, citing the Dominican historian and bishop of Nueva Segovia Diego Aduarte.

Apart from rice fields, there were grazing grounds for cattle. In a status report prepared in March 1743, the vicar of Nassiping José Martín Alpéñez noted that, of the 64 cows left him by his predecessor P. José Estrada, there were now 84.¹³

The seniority of Nassiping in the area may be seen when, during deficiencies of personnel, the ministry of Gattaran was aggregated to Nassiping. For the years 1656-1659, 1688-1696, 1700-1710, 1718-1729, 1733-1814 (101 years), and 1841-1877 (36 years), the vicar of Nassiping also attended to Gattaran. (Paradoxically, at the end of the latter period when Gattaran regained its full stature as a parish, the tables were reversed.) In 1738, a fledgling mission was added to the ministry of the vicar of Nassiping. This was a settlement of a group called the Aripas, in an eponymous locality on the left near where the Chico or Itawes River joins the Cagayan. It was dedicated to San Jacinto de Polonia, and was officially accepted as a visita of Nassiping in the chapter of 1753; but it dropped from the Acta after 1767. The people abandoned the place towards the Itawes interior; its bell, taken from the makeshift chapel, used to hang in the tribunal of Nassiping.¹⁴

Decrescendo in Nassiping

Despite the strategic position of Nassiping along the Cagayan, its population started to decrease gradually way before the end of the 17th century. As early as 1673, the low number of the inhabitants of San Miguel de Nassiping and San Vicente de Tocolana led the chapter of that year to make the recommendation (not carried out) that the residents be relocated to Malaueg and Tuguegarao. The situation only worsened in the next century, not only in Nassiping but the rest of the province as well. Malumbres notes that the period from 1751 to 1801 was marked by large numbers of Cagayanes leaving their homes due to the “anguished situation” at that time, referring to the evils of the Tobacco Monopoly.¹⁵ (Despite the dwindling numbers of parishioners, the vicar of Nassiping in 1743 was still able to commission 10 *roquetes*—surplice-like garments—for the altar-boys called *sacristanes*, 5 each for Nassiping and Gattaran.¹⁶)

The unstable population, coupled with intermittent deficiencies in personnel, was reflected in the constant and extended aggregation of the ministry of Gattaran to Nassiping as seen above. At times, even both Nassiping and Gattaran were served by the ministers from Lallo. This happened from 1712 to 1714, and then for a period of 24 years, from 1814 to about 1838.

The identification and establishment of more convenient stops along the Cagayan River inevitably led to the by-passing of Nassiping. In 1735, the house of Nuestra Señora de la Victoria de Amulung was accepted by the Dominican provincial chapter; it provided a

¹³ José Martín Alpéñez, “Razón del estado de la cassa Yglesia y Pueblo de Nassiping en 2 de Marzo de 1743,” AUST: APSR A, Rollo 131, Tomo 14, images 47-49 (APSR, Cagayan, Tomo 14, doc. 8, fols. 62-63).

¹⁴ Malumbres, pp. 305, 344; Keesing, pp. 216-218.

¹⁵ Malumbres, p. 430.

¹⁶ Alpéñez, op. cit.

necessary stop-over between Nassiping and Iguig. But between Amulung and Nassiping still lay 5 (others say 7) leagues, or 3 ¼ hours of tiresome rowing. Fifty years later, in 1787, the town of Fulay was established: midway between Nassiping and Amulung on the junction of the eponymous river and the Cagayan, it met the conditions for a settlement. In 1847, Santa Filomena de Fulay was accepted as a house in the Dominican provincial chapter; its name was changed to Alcalá in 1863.¹⁷ Malumbres observes that Nassiping was the leading locality along the river until the progressive development of Alcalá.¹⁸

On March 4, 1877, the last Spanish Dominican parish priest of Nassiping, P. Parella, ruing that his church and convento were in such a ruinous state, declared that it would be better for Nassiping to be the visita or mission station of Gattaran. Nassiping had not been listed in the provincial Acts since 1874.¹⁹ Curiously, parish priests for Nassiping for the period 1878-1897 are named in the catalog of Neira (based in turn on earlier Dominican catalogs), but these names appear as the curas of Gattaran in the official Acta.

Finally, in a sort of last-minute vindication, Nassiping was re-established as a town in its ancient seat, by virtue of a Royal Decree signed on November 27, 1897. It was one of the last towns in Cagayan to be so established, along with Córdoba (separated from Amulung) and Santo Niño (relocated from Tabang, the erstwhile Lubo).²⁰ But the next year, the country would throw off its colonial yoke, and Nassiping would be thwarted again of its independence and significance.

Clues to the building of the church of San Miguel de Nassiping

The ruins of the church complex at Nassiping pose a challenge to those seeking to reconstruct its building history. There are no clear documents on when or how it was built. From what was presented above, we know that a license to construct edifices was given in 1604. Due to unspecified damage caused by the earthquake of 1619, reconstruction of the convento began around 1621, with the instruction that it contains six cells to house missionaries traversing the Cagayan and Chico rivers.

On the 19th of September, 1687, a strong earthquake damaged a number of stone buildings in the province. In November of that year, there was a great flood whose waters reached the top of the altar table in Lallo. The following year another temblor left many structures in disrepair. Previous to these disasters, the Dominican historian Juan Peguero remarked that “all the churches in Cagayan were of stone and brick, very solid, beautiful, and large; and the houses and conventos were adequate and well-done.”²¹ We may assume that Nassiping also sustained some damage as a result of these earthquakes and flood. No other disasters in the area are reported by Malumbres, although of course this does not preclude similar devastating events that went unrecorded.

¹⁷ Malumbres, pp. 88, 306, 369, 409, 412.

¹⁸ Malumbres, p. 278.

¹⁹ Malumbres, p. 370.

²⁰ Malumbres, pp. 396, 420, and 453.

²¹ Malumbres, pp. 19 and 51.

Towards the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th, a rare “builder-priest” was assigned to Nassiping. Gabriel Serrano is credited by Dominican biographers with the church facade of Buguey (he was assigned there 1686-1690, and then in 1704-1708); the bell tower of Tuao (he was assigned there in 1690-1692); and the stone vault in Cabagan (now San Pablo), which he probably worked on when he ministered in neighboring Tuguegarao in 1720-c.1722; “and many other improvements.” He was assigned in Nassiping three times (1692-1694, 1700-1702, and 1708-1710), for a total of six years. The pair of caliper- or S-curved brick benches at the entrance of the church patio are similar to the two pairs at Cabagan, and point to his intervention in these two places. Perhaps the reason why he was sent to Nassiping was precisely to undertake its rehabilitation. At the same time, he was ministering to Gattaran, and so very likely accomplished some restoration work there too.²²

Like an opening in the clouds, a document from 1743 informs us that the roof of both church and convento were being repaired. The work was started by José Estrada, assigned in 1741-1742, and continued by José Martin Alpeñez (1742-1743). P. Alpeñez listed his purchases for the repair: *56 barretas de hierro* (steel bars), and a few nails.²³

A brick dated *1º de Marº 1850* on the exterior wall may indicate last major renovation of the church. By 1877, when the parish priest recommended that his church become a visita of Gattaran, the structures were already beyond any serious repair.

Connecting today’s ruins with the clues

Most of the complex is of brick, but one notices that much of the first two stories of the belltower is of irregularly cut blocks of stone. Furthermore, the tower is set on a plane lower than the nave of the church, such that one has to stoop to descend from the church into the baptistery on the ground floor of the tower. The entrance arch of the baptistery is observed to be lower than the corresponding passage from the church. Because of this, the baptistery has a dank “basement” feeling. Could it be that the tower is the sole remnant of those edifices for which a license to construct was given in 1604?

The church, convento, and atrium walls are of brick. So too is the third and uppermost level of the bell tower, with its pyramidal dome. Bricks are used for the inner sides of the windows of the two lower storeys of the stone tower. The two outer corners of the base of the tower are buttressed by pairs of columns, also of brick. The lower plane, the rough cut stone, and the brick additions point to the tower being the earliest part of the church complex.

The use of rough stone, rubble-work masonry or *mampostería* is manifest in churches throughout the Cagayan Valley. A number can be dated to the 17th century: Malaueg (now Rizal), begun before 1641 and renovated in 1651; Cabagan (now San Pablo, Isabela),

²² Neira I, p. 245.

²³ Alpeñez, op. cit.

1650s-1660s, enclosed later in brick; Fuga, in the Babuyan Islands (1660s); Fotel (now Pudtol, Apayao), c.1675-1676; and Tocolana, now a district of Lallo.²⁴ The ruins at Tabang (now a district of Santo Niño), very possibly date from this period: the mission appears in the Acts in 1608 but was constantly dependent on Piat by the 1650s. If the bell tower at Nassiping is indeed the one begun in 1604, it would be the earliest example of *mampostería* in the Cagayan region.

The introduction of brick to rebuild or repair churches in Cagayan must have arrived soon after the earthquakes and other disasters that hit the region beginning in 1619. The convento must date from just after the 1622 directive that only it and that of Abulug could have six cells, as opposed to the rest which could only have four.

The repair or re-building of portions of the church and convento with brick would have taken place mostly throughout the 17th century, considering the floods and earthquakes that took place during that century. It was most probably during this time that the *terraplén* (embankment or plane) of the church and convento were raised, in relation to the bell tower; this may have been a response to the floods. A more detailed study on the sizes and qualities of bricks, as well as the techniques in which they were laid (measuring the distance between each layer, or the alternating of pieces, for example), must be carried out in order to determine the periods of brick manufacture and application. The bricks moulded for the curved benches at the entrance of the atrium during the time of Father Gabriel Serrano (1692-1694, 1700-1702, and 1708-1710) may be used as benchmarks (pun not intended) for similar bricks used in other parts of the church structure. In turn, these bricks must be compared with those in places where Father Serrano is known to have worked: Buguey (1686-1690, and 1704-1708); the bell tower of Tuao (1690-1692); as well as the stone vault curved benches in Cabagan (now San Pablo; 1720-c.1722). Apart from the bricks, the rubble used to fill the walls and the manner in which they were poured also have to be studied.

Some brick-making activity was carried out in the 1850s, as attested to by a unique piece bearing the date *1º de Marº 1850*. A brick *horno* or kiln used to stand at the river's edge. It was last seen by this author 1991; no trace of it could be found anymore in 2018, having been reclaimed by the river in the interim. It would have meant a lot if some bricks from this kiln could still be found, and compared with those of Father Serrano's time at the turn of the 17th century, and with the 1850 artifact.

Mention must be made of the impressions in the intrados, or undersides of the arches, of the windows of the bell tower. These are markings left on the wet mortar by woven bamboo mats, called *lago-t* in Ibanag or *sawali* among the Tagalog. Such mats, supported by wooden arches, held the newly-applied masonry as it set.

²⁴ For more details on these churches, please see the pertinent articles in previous issues of *Philippiniana Sacra*.

Inside the church

The eastern end of the church still retains its two side retablos, but it has not been possible to ascertain if the original main retablo is extant. It seems there was no sacristy; but liturgical vessels and vestments may have been kept behind the side retablos.

The images on the retablos reflect the devotions of the congregation. A virile wooden image of the patron saint, San Miguel Arcángel, stands by the main altar. It cannot yet be determined if this is the same image regarded as a miraculous healer in the 18th century or perhaps earlier. In 1723, a child from Tuguegarao went to Nassiping, complaining to the priest of a splitting headache. He was advised to seek comfort in front of the image of San Miguel Arcángel, and he was cured.²⁵ In the niche of the left retablo is an image of Santa Catalina de Alejandria, recognized by her martyr's palm (although recently a cloth with the face of Christ has changed her to Santa Veronica, perhaps for Holy Week). In the right retablo is San Pedro with his keys. Also in the vicinity is a robust image of the Risen Christ. All four images stand on *andas*, or processional supports borne on the shoulders. There used to be an image of Our Lady, for which a former curate donated two mantles in 1743.²⁶

Among the objects in the Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia Museum housed in the Archbishop's Residence in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, is a photograph of a crucifix which, according to its caption, was "323 years old, and found by Judge Sevilla" in the ruins of Nassiping. The crucifix seems to be of ivory and from the early 19th century, not as old as indicated. Behind the crucifix is an interesting assemblage of what look like two parts of a retablo with rococo motifs, which would date it to the last quarter of the 18th century or the first years of the 19th. Neither the crucifix nor the rococo assemblage are extant in Nassiping today.

In 1662, an inventory of the silver objects in Cagayan was commissioned by the Dominicans. Such a list typically included the liturgical vessels, the processional crosses and banners, as well as the rosaries, crowns, and other accoutrements of religious images. That the list was made gives a fair impression of how wealthy the churches in Cagayan were at this time. In the register, the provenance of each item was to be indicated: whether it was paid for by the Dominicans or by the residents. In the inventory for Nassiping, Father Juan Uguet noted that the silver lamp that hung over the main altar and the cross for the guion (processional banner) were paid for the town's citizens. In an updated list made in 1776, Father Manuel de Torrijos recorded that the silver from the old chalice, ciborium and pyx, was used in the crafting of eight *ramilletes* (candle stands in the form of stylized bouquets).²⁷

The pulpit with its arched niche is similar in style to that in Camalaniugan. It is located on the left side and somewhat half-way down the nave, again like its counterpart in

²⁵ Malumbres, p. 63.

²⁶ Alpéñez, op. cit.

²⁷ Manuel de Torrijos, O.P., "Libro e imventario de la plata que ay en servicio de las Yglesias de esta Provincia de Cagayan. Ordinis predicatorum." Originally prepared on Dec. 17, 1662; copy made, with additions, in 1776. (AUST: APSR C, Rollo 57, images 15-16 [APSR, Cagayan, Tomo 11, doc. 8, fols. 332-333]).

the latter church: very probably, this had something to do with bringing the preaching closer to as many people as possible.

Quadrangular holes on the north, or left, side of the wall adjoining the belltower indicate where the beams supporting the choirloft were inserted. On this choirloft, now long gone, used to sleep Saint Francisco de Capillas, the proto-martyr of the Dominicans in the Philippines. This was witnessed by Andres Mallabo, who assisted the saint for a year. He also observed that when he closed the friars' cells in the morning the disciplines or scourges in P. Capillas' room were quite bloodied. At times, Mallabo saw the saint standing at night, with his arms emulating Christ. Although Capillas is not 'officially' recorded in the *Acta* nor in Neira, Malumbres presents Mallabo's account to testify to the saint's presence in Nassiping. According to Mallabo, all the residents of Nassiping called him "Santo Capillas."²⁸ Francisco Fernández de Capillas was assigned to Cagayan in 1641, first in Tuao and then in other unspecified places until March 1642 when he embarked for China. He was beheaded in Fogan in 1648. Pope Benedict XIV proclaimed him the protomartyr of China in 1748; Saint Pius X beatified him in 1909, and Saint John Paul II canonized him in 2000.²⁹

Adjoining the church on its north, or left side is the bell tower. Its ground floor housed the baptistery, as typical in most Philippine colonial churches. The baptismal font in this case was carved of solid stone; only one other like it of stone is known in the province, that in Tuguegarao. The Nassiping font is now showcased in the Cagayan Museum in Tuguegarao. Its base is ornamented with a swathe of vertical ovals reminding one of *broas* (lady finger biscuits); binding it just below the rim is a band with a thick but flattened rope design.

The baptistery's interior, including its dome, is plastered with white lime. Fixed in the center of the dome is a wooden pendant, from which most probably hung a lamp. To one side of the room is a niche, most probably for a representation of St. John baptizing Christ. Opposite the niche is the lone window which provides some amount of natural light. As noted above, the tower is on a plane lower than the church, so that one has to stoop to get inside. This condition gives the baptistery a damp "basement" feeling.

The bell tower originally had two bells. The earlier one, inscribed *S.^{TE} MICHAEL: ORA PRO NOBISNASiPiNG: IVNIO. 6. DE 1726*, was commissioned by Father Juan Sebastian, vicar from 1725 to 1727. The exact date on the bell suggests that it was cast on site by itinerant bell casters. When P. Sebastian was vicar of Tuguegarao (1739-1746) he remembered his days in Nassiping and gave alms towards the confection of two mantles for the image of Our Lady. Today neither the image of Our Lady, nor her mantles, nor even the 1726 bell—which was carried away by heartless thieves in 2005—remain, to remind us of the goodness of Father Sebastian.

²⁸ Malumbres, p. 369.

²⁹ Neira 1, pp. 152-153.

Only one other bell remains. It is dated 1803, and inscribed S. MiGVEL ARCANGEL. It may have been commissioned either by Domingo Fortó, who was vicar from 1802 until he died here on Feb. 15 the next year, or by his successor Melchor Martínez, who unfortunately also died on Nov. 26 this same year, in Lallo. It is worth remembering that P. Fortó was responsible for the building of the wondrous church in Tumauni, with its myriad brick forms. It remains a matter of conjecture if he was able to undertake some work on the church in Nassiping (he was 63 at the time, and he spent only about a year here).

Thanks to a financial report prepared by Father José Martin Alpéñez in March 1743, we are given a rare view of what a convento pantry contained. Alpéñez, who arrived in September the previous year to take care of not just Nassiping but also of Gattaran, found no silver in the church coffers. But what he found in the kitchen and storerooms he dutifully listed down:

Rice, 250 *chinantas*;³⁰ in Gattaran, 53 *chinantas*
 Sugar, 4 ½ *tenajas*³¹
 Cacao, 7 *gantas cagayanas*³²
 Cinnamon, 2 *cates*³³
 Lard, 1 *tenaja*
 Vinegar, ½ *tenaja*
 Oil, 2 *tenajas*
 Candles, 470; in Gattaran, 390
 Small portions of pepper, cumin, *culanta* and mustard, each in its own container
Carajayes (wide frying pans); enough plates and cups for a house
 Mung beans, 1 *tenaja*
Viscocho (biscuits), 1 *tenaja*
 Salt, 3 *chinantas*; in Gattaran, 1 ½ *chinanta*
 Santol fruit in brine [would this be pickled santol?], 1 *tenaja*
 One *gallinero* (chicken coop) with 40 chickens

As noted earlier, the convent had 74 head of cattle to dispose of.³⁴

A landmark pleading to be seen

A ruin like Nassiping pleads to be preserved with care and understanding. Scientific archaeological excavations must be carried out to tease out clues that could shed light on its history. The vegetation that obscures the walls must be cleared, to give justice to the majesty

³⁰ The *chinanta* was a weight used in the Philippines, the 10th part of a *pico*, equivalent to 13 pounds and 12 ounces, or to 6 kilograms and 326 grams.

³¹ A *tenaja* was a large earthen jar, also known as a *tapayan* among the Tagalogs.

³² A *ganta* was a dry measure especially for grains, equivalent to 3 liters; it cannot be ascertained how different a *ganta cagayana* was from the typical *ganta* used in the rest of the Philippines.

³³ The *cate* was a weight used in the Philippines, the 10th part of a *chinanta*, equivalent to a Castillian pound and six ounces, or to 632 grams and 60 centigrams; 22 ounces.

³⁴ Alpéñez, op. cit.

of the ruins. The remains must be stabilized to prevent any more damage. If the structures are to be retrofitted for worship, materials appropriate to the site and culture must be applied to maintain the patina of age.

Typhoon Ompong (International name: Mangkhut) devastated Cagayan and much of Northern Luzon on September 15, 2018. It brought down some of the trees at the back and front of the church of Nassiping, affording better views of the age-old structures. Unhappily, the Indian trees which continue to “photo-bomb” the north side of the church were left standing. Hopefully, it will not take another cataclysm to fully clarify the dignity of Nassiping to visitors and passersby. When this is revealed, then perhaps Nassiping will regain her queenly role over the twin rivers.

Table of Dominican ministers of the vicarage of Nassiping, Cagayan

Legend for biographical citations and other annotations:

Names in bold	Vicars or parish priests
Indented names	Assistants or socios
name in italics	additional name from Neira (the listings in <i>Acta</i> often use only religious names, discounting other family names)
*	formerly assigned here as an assistant
b.	born
Bd.	Blessed
d.	died
F.	Fray
L.	Laicum, member of the Third or Lay Order, also known as <i>hermano</i> .
MC	Malumbres, Julian, O.P. 1918. <i>Historia de Cagayan</i> . Manila: Tip. Linotype de Sto. Tomás.
N1	Neira, Eladio, O.P., ed. 2000. <i>Misioneros Dominicos en el Extremo Oriente</i> . Volume 1, 1587-1835 [Edited, updated and corrected version of Hilario Ocio OP's <i>Compendio de la Reseña Biográfica de los Religiosos de la Provincia de Nuestra Señora del Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores</i> (Manila, 1895)]. Manila: [Provincia de Nuestra Señora del Rosario].
N2	_____. 2000b. <i>Misioneros Dominicos en el Extremo Oriente</i> . Volume 2, 1836-1940 [Continuation of Ocio's <i>Compendio</i> , updated by Gregorio Arnaiz O.P. up to 1940.] Manila: [Provincia de Nuestra Señora del Rosario].
nA	not in the <i>Acta</i>
nN	not found in Neira
P.	Padre
x	nth time assigned in the place
x ^N	date taken from Neira

Please take note that information in the *Acta* may differ from other sources. These differences are noted in the rightmost column, with the corresponding source. An educated guess was resorted to in the cases when there were contradictions between the *Acta* and Neira.

If the minister died in Nassiping, this is indicated in the Lifespan column.

Years (taken from the corresponding Acta and Neira 1 and 2).	Name/ Remarks	Lifespan	Biographical source
1596 June 15. In the provincial chapter, the house of Santa Catalina de Nassiping was accepted, together with the houses of Binondo (Manila), Samal (Bataan), and Nueva Segovia, Pata, Camalanyugan, Tulag (ancestor of Abulug), and Buguey (these last six in Cagayan).			
1604 May 9. In the chapter, the house of San Miguel Arcangel de Nassiping was accepted—perhaps re-accepted, established in another location—together with the houses of San Pedro Apostol de Tuguegarao and Maquila (today's San Pablo, Isabela), San Raymundo de Lobo (in the Itawes region), Santa Ines de Monte Policiano de Lobo (ancestor of Tabang), Santa Catalina de Sena de Nabunga (ancestor of Iguig), and Santa Maria de Talama (vicinity of Tumaui). In this same chapter, a license to construct buildings (most surely churches and conventos) was extended to Nassiping, together with Tuguegarao, Gattaran, and Aparri (Gattaran was still to be accepted as a house in 1623, and Aparri in 1680).			
1606 April 16. In the provincial chapter, the house of San Miguel Arcangel de Nassiping, together with the house of San Antonio de Dummung (accepted in the chapter of May 24, 1598) and the mission of Santa Catalina Virgen y Martir de Gattaran (accepted later in 1623), were placed under the presidency of Ambrosio de la Madre de Dios, together with Gaspar Zarfate and Brother Baltazar de los Reyes. In this context, presidente could be understood as temporary head of mission, with no permanent residency as befitting a ministro or vicario, and perhaps reporting to the nearest larger house (in the case of Nassiping, this would be Lallo).			
1606-1608	Ambrosio <i>Martínez</i> de la Madre de Dios, <i>presidente</i>	c.1570-1626	N1:67; wrote a grammar, dictionary, passion, passages of the gospel and others in Ibanag
1606-1611	Gaspar Zarfate (2 terms)	?-1621	N1:69; worked on the grammars of Ibanag prepared by others.
1606-1608	Baltasar <i>López</i> de los Reyes, L.	1561-1618	N1:493
1608-1610	Francisco Jurado de la Cruz	?-1611; was in Piat 1610-1611 but d. in Nassiping, embracing a cross.	N1:96; first vicario of Nassiping
1608-1610	Domingo González	1574-1647	N1:85-86; later rector of UST; historian of the Province
1608-1609	Bartolomé Muñoz del Espiritu Santo, acolyte	1587-1609	N1:493
1610-1614	Diego Sánchez (2 terms)	?-c.1614	N1:88
1612-1614	Tomás Villar	?-1624	N1:87

In the provincial chapter of May 4, 1614, Nassiping was temporarily aggregated to the vicarage of Camalaniugan; subsumed together with Nassiping were Aparri, Buguey, Tocolana, and Gattaran. The vicar of Camalaniugan then was Francisco de Cabrera; he was aided in the work by seven other religious—Francisco Hurtado, Gaspar Hurtado, Pedro Mártir de la Plaza, Carlos Clemente Gan, Diego Collado, Pedro Gascón, and Brother Juan García Lacalle. Nassiping reverted to its vicarage status in 1616.			
1616-1619	Ambrosio Martínez de la Madre de Dios, 2x	c.1570-1626	N1:67
1616-1617	Tomás Villar, 2x	?-1624	N1:87
1616-1617	Marcos de Saavedra	?-1631	N1:120
1616-1617	Francisco Rodríguez, L.	?-1634	N1:103; 1608-1619 <i>enfermero</i> in Lallo
1617-1619	Juan de Valverde	?-?	N1:112
1617- the encomendero at this time was D. Juan Rodriguez Ladera (Malumbres:369).			
1619	Diego Collado	c.1585-1641	N1:109-110; in 1619 left for Japan.
1619-1621	Antonio de Cañizares	c.1588-1630	N1:123
1619. Earthquake on Nov. 30 which devastated Manila all the way to Nueva Segovia; the Dominican church and convento of stone collapsed. The church in Malaueg was also so damaged that many sections had to be rebuilt. (Malumbres:37-38).			
1621-1623	Francisco de Cabrera	c.1580-1624	N1:101-102
1621-1623	Domingo González del Rosario, L.	c.1585-1633	N1:495
1621. The Father Provincial, Miguel Ruiz, ordained that from this date new conventos would only contain four cells, with the exception of those in Abulug and Nassiping which would have six. Malumbres points out that in Abulug were based the missionaries who continued on to Pata and the Apayaos (Malumbres:369).			
1623-1625	Marcos de Saavedra*	?-1631	N1:120
--	Matías Rubí	?-c.1620	NB1:119; listed in Acta of 1623 but seems to have died by then.
1625-1627	Francisco Mola	c.1582-?	N1:110
1627-1629	Alonso Sánchez de la Visitación	c.1590-1640	N1:118
1629	Pedro Muriel	?-1641	N1:119; 1629-1631 was in Pata.
1631-1633	Pedro Muriel	?-1641	N1:119
1631 Not just one but two plagues of locusts that hit Nassiping in this year, as witnessed by P. Muriel (Malumbres:34-36).			
1633-1636	Alonso Fernández	?-1636, maybe in Lallo	N1:111; Hernández

1633-1637	Alonso Sánchez de la Visitación, 2x (2 terms)	c.1590-1640	N1:118
1637-1641	Juan Bautista de Meneses (2 terms)	?-1643	N1:135
c.1641-1642	Francisco Fernández de Capillas, (San)	1607-1648	N1:152-153-nA, not in Neira; but in a marker beside the present church.
	Even though San Francisco de Capillas is not ‘officially’ recorded in the Acta nor in Neira, Malumbres presents an eyewitness account of the saint’s holiness. Andres Mallabo, who assisted the saint for a year, remarked that the residents of Nassiping called him “Santo Capillas” (Malumbres:369). Francisco de Capillas was assigned to Cagayan in 1641, first in Tuao and then in other places until March 1642 when he embarked for China. He was martyred there in 1648.		
1641-1643	Jerónimo de Zamora	c.1589-1655	N1:116
1643-1645	Andrés de Haro	1594-1670	N1:126-127; listed in the Acta as Haro
1645-1648	Antonio Gómez de Espejo	1604-1678	N1:499-500; acc. to Acta, he was transferred from Nassiping in 1645 to Tuao; Andres de Haro was transferred from Tuguegarao to Nassiping [not reflected however in Neira].
1647	Not listed		
1648-1650	Andrés de Haro, 2x	1594-1670	N1:126-127; listed in the Actas as Haro
1650-1652	Juan Huguet	?-1667	N1:161; Huguet
1652	Matías de Armas	?-1655	N1:153-154; 1652-1654 was in Abulug.
1654-1655	Jerónimo de Zamora, 2x	c.1589-1655	N1:116
1656-1658	Luis Oñate del Rosario	1607-1678	N1:154; ministry of Gattaran was assigned temporarily to Nassiping (1656-1659)
1656	José Jiménez de Jesús María, with Gattaran	c.1625-1656	N1:509
1657-1659	Antonio Gómez de Espejo, 2x	1604-1678	N1:499-500

1659-1661	Luis Oñate del Rosario, 2x	1607-1678	N1:154
1659-1661	Salvador de Santo Tomás	1626-1696	N1:193-194
1661-1663	Juan de Uguet, 2x	?-1667	N1:161; Huguet
1663	Juan Rodríguez de Ladera	1622-1670	N1:511- 1661-1663
1665	Pedro del Barco	1628-1665	N1:194
1665-1671	Luis Oñate del Rosario, 3x (2 terms)	1607-1678	N1:154
1669-1670	Pedro González	1642-1670	N1:210
1671-1673	Pedro Sánchez	1624-1694	N1:207
In the chapter of 1673, in view of the low number of inhabitants of San Miguel de Nassiping and San Vicente de Tocolana, it was recommended that the residents be relocated to Malaueg and Tuguegarao.			
1673-1675	José de San Jacinto	1643-1699	N1:209
1675-1678	Tomás de León Araujo	1632-1681	N1:191
1678-1686	Bernardo Álvarez (4 terms)	1634-1691	N1:195
1682-1696, the ministry of Santa Catalina Mártir de Gattaran was aggregated to that of Nassiping.			
1686	Francisco González	1658-1691	N1:247; 1688-1690
1687 Sept 19. A strong earthquake caused damage on buildings of stone. In November of the same year, there was a great flood whose waters reached the top of the altar table in Lallo (MCag:51).			
1688. Another earthquake heavily damaged the churches in Cagayan, which were described by P. Juan Peguero at this time as “of stone and brick, well-built, beautiful and large; and the houses and conventos were competent and well-disposed” (Malumbres:19).			
1688-1690	Domingo Mutta	1653-1714	N1:233-234- Mutta
1690-1692	Miguel de la Villa	1661-1725	N1:237
1692-1694	Gabriel Serrano	1662-1722	N1:245; Tuao, torre (1690-1692); Buguey, fachada (1686-1690, 1704-1708); Cabagan, bóveda (in Tuguegarao, 1720-c.1722), y muchas otras mejoras.
	P. Serrano was a builder-priest. He is credited with the church facade of Buguey (he was assigned there 1686-1690, and then in 1704-1708); the bell tower of Tuao (he was assigned there in 1690-1692); and the stone vault in Cabagan (now San Pablo), which he probably worked on when he ministered in neighboring Tuguegarao in 1720-c.1722; “and many other improvements.” He was assigned in Nassiping three times (1692-1694, 1700-1702, and 1708-1710). The pair of caliper- or S-curved brick benches at the entrance of the church patio are similar to the two pairs at Cabagan, and point to his intervention in these two places.		
1694-1696	Jerónimo de Ulloa	1644-1701	N1:219

1696-1698	Diego Constantino	1672-1715	N1:255
1698 (died before occupying his post)	Francisco González	1692-1698	N1:257
1700-1710, the ministry of Gattaran was aggregated to Nassiping.			
1700-1702	Gabriel Serrano, 2x	1662-1722	N1:245; see note above on Serrano's first term (1692-1694).
1700-1702	José Galfaroso de la Trinidad	1648-1702	N1:217; 1700 till his death in Lallo, was working among the Mandayas and founded Sta. Cruz de Gumpat.
1702-1704	Alonso Tejedor	1669-1713	N1:256
1704-1706	Francisco de la Vega	1662-1710	N1:244
1706	Fernando Díaz	1658-1706	N1:256
1706-1708	Mauro Falcon	1676-1708	N1:266-267- 1706-1708
1708-1710	Gabriel Serrano, 3x	1662-1722	N1:245; see note above on Serrano's first term (1692-1694).
1712-1714, the ministries of Nassiping, Gattaran and Tocolana were aggregated to Lallo, under Diego Constantino (vicar, and former of Nassiping, 1696-1698; 1672-1715, Niera 1:255) and Marcos Arroyuelo (?-1716, Niera 1:257).			
1714-1716	Pedro Moreno , with Gattaran	?-1724	N1:280
1716-1718, the ministries of Nassiping, Gattaran and Tocolana were again shortly aggregated to Lallo, under Andres Diez (1656-1718; Niera 1:247-248).			
1718-1729, the ministry of Gattaran was aggregated to Nassiping.			
1718-1719	Francisco de León	?-1719	N1:276
1718-1720	Juan de Cárdenas	1689-1728	N1:290
1720-1722	Pedro Moreno, 2x	?-1724	N1:280
1722-1725	Manuel Muñoz , (2 terms)	1694-1728	N1:295
1723. A child from Tuguegarao went to Nassiping, complaining to the priest of a splitting headache. He was advised to seek comfort in front of the image of San Miguel Arcangel, and he was cured (Malumbres:63).			
1725-1727	Juan Sebastian	1690-1746	N1:289-290
1726. A bell was commissioned for Nassiping with the date June 6, 1726; it was stolen in 2005. P. Sebastian, as vicar of Tuguegarao (1739-1746) would give alms that would be used for two mantles for the image of Our Lady, according to a report of 1743.			

1727-1729	José Prego	1694-1752	N1:295
1729-1731	Andrés López	1703-1733	N1:305
1731-1733	Juan Bautista de Olsina	1701-1735	N1:305- Olzina
1733-1814, the ministry of Gattaran was aggregated to Nassiping.			
1733 (perhaps died before assuming his post)	Andrés López	1703-1733	N1:305
1733-1735	No listing in the sources.		
1735. The house of Nuestra Señora de la Victoria de Amulung was accepted by the Dominican provincial chapter. It provided a necessary stop-over between Nassiping and Iguig. The distance between Nassiping and Amulung would in turn be cut shorter by the establishment of Fulay (now Alcalá) fifty years later.			
1735-1737	Antonio Ortega	1690-1735	N1:293- Ortego
1737-1738	Diego de la Torre	1686-1738	N1:279
1739-1740	Pedro Velasco	1696-1740, in Nassiping	N1:305- Nolasco
1741-1742 Sept.	José Estrada	1703-1754	N1:304-305
1742 Sept.-1743?	José Martin Alpéñez	1709-1773	N1:323- nA; only appears in a document at the APSR (see References)
1743 March; P. Alpéñez prepared a report on the status of his church and community in Nassiping, with notes on Gattaran and the new mission of Aripa which were also under his administration. Though the vicar spent at most only a year in Nassiping, he records that he was able to make to evangelizing trips to the hinterlands, baptized three adults in Aripa, and encouraged 12 souls and two apostates to come back to town, after 24 years of separation. He even went as far south as Tumauni, where he baptized 22 adults.			
1743-1747	Jacinto Roca (2 terms)	?-1747	N1:324
1747-1769, the ministry of San Jacinto de Aripa was added together with that of Gattaran to Nassiping. It appears in the Acta from 1753 to 1765, always under the ministry of Nassiping.			
1747	José Martínez	1703-1754	N1:304-305
1751-1753	José Estrada	1703-1754	N1:304-305
1751-1801. The slow increase in population in this half century was due to the uncertainty of the times, leading to many residents to leave the province (Malumbres: 430).			
1753-1755	Ignacio Abría	1719-1784	N1:333-334
1755-1762	Francisco García (3 terms)	1728-1762, in Nassiping	N1:357
1763-1765	Felipe Sotelo	1727-1778	N1:351
Ministerial terms increased from two to four years, from 1765.			
1765-1769	José Borja	1726-1769	N1:349

1769-1773	Antonio Peñalosa	1729-1801	N1:358
1773-1780	Joaquín Sancho (2 terms)	1743-1828	N1:384
1781-1787	Vicente de Castro (1 ½ terms)	1717-1787, in Nassiping	N1:327
1787. The town of Fulay was established, midway between Nassiping and Amulung. Its name was changed to Alcalá in 1863, highlighting its progress that ironically led to the decline of Nassiping.			
1789	Salvador Llocens	1743-1789	N1:381- Llosent
1790-1793	Antonio Pascual	1763-1803	N1:397- Pascual Anton
1793-1798	Francisco Pérez	1767-1821	N1:405
1798-1802	Vicente Vicar	1768-1833	N1:413- Ricart
1802-1803	Domingo Fortó	1740-1803 Feb 15, in Nassiping	N1:389. Was assistant in Cabagan, 1773-1777, then vicar of Tumauini, 1777-1789, then Buguey, 1789-1802.
1803, a bell dedicated to San Miguel Arcangel was given to Nassiping. Dated 1803, it may have been commissioned either by P. Fortó, who died here on Feb. 15 the same year, or by P. Melchor Martínez, who died on Nov. 26 also this same year, in Lallo.			
1803	Melchor Martínez	1765-1803 Nov 26, Lallo	N1:409
1803-1805?	Tomás Sánchez	1772-1811	N1:410- nA
1805	Padre Flaviano Montesinos, interim	1776-?	MCag:345
	Padre Montesinos, a native of Camalaniugan, was a secular priest from the diocese of Nueva Segovia; he is the only secular priest (and non-Dominican) in this roster.		
1806-1810	Juan Guidotti y Monsagrati	1774-1838	N1:431
1810-1814	Tomás Roselló	1765-1852	N1:425
1814-c.1838, Nassiping and Gattaran were aggregated to Lallo.			
1814 (under Lallo)-1818	Tomás Roselló	1765-1852	N1:425
1814-1819	Rafael Adriansen Fabie, presidente (1 ¼ terms)	1789-1819	N1:530- Adrianses
1818-1825 id.	Tomás Avizanda	1776-1827	N1:436
1825-1829 id.	Luis García	1778-1833	N1:433
1829-1830 id.	Salvador Avilés	1801-1830	N1:448
1830-1832 id.	No listing (perhaps interim priest only)		

1832-1833 id.	Matías de la Cruz	1804-1846	N1:465-466- nA
1833-1838 id.	Domingo Pérez, and Julián Velinchon	1802-1838; 1833-1841	N1:450. N1:475 (Velinchon)
1838 or 1837, Nassiping received its own parish priest, after its dependence on Lallo for about 24 years.			
1837-1841	Pedro Carballeiro	1811-?	N1:478- nA
c.1837-1839	Francisco Guilarte	1811-1839	N2:18- nA
1839-1840	Antonio Romaguera	1812-1863	N2:20- nA
1841 to about 1877- the ministry of Gattaran was aggregated for the last time to Nassiping.			
1841-1845	Pedro Coello	1814-1856	N2:24
1847. Santa Filomena de Fulay accepted as a house in the Dominican provincial chapter. Its name was changed to Alcalá in 1863.			
1845-1846	Pedro del Espíritu Santo	1816-1877	N2:25- Pedro Alcantara Garcia, 1843-1846
1846-1847	Manuel Martínez Fernández	1818-1883	N2:56- nA
1849-1851	Claro Arroyo	1817-1873	N1:41-42
A brick dated <i>1º de Mar.º 1850</i> on the exterior wall may indicate last major renovation of the church.			
1851-1855	Juan de Dios Rico Gómez	1822-1879	N2:35
1855-1856	Manuel González Núñez	1825-1876	N2:49
1857-1858	Jose Ma. Menéndez González	1828-1858, in Nassiping	N2:71- nA
1859	Andrés Chaveli Moya	1830-1867	N2:88-89
1860	José Candell Perez	1834-1871	N2:99-100- nA
1860-1863	Francisco Seco Sánchez	1834-1863	N2:98- nA
1863-1864	Tomás Parella Prat	1838-?	N2:110
1864-1867	No listing in the sources		
1867-1871	Santiago Capdevila	1841-1904	N2:116
1871-1872	Alejandro Díaz de Sarralde de la Rosa	1846-1886	N2:136- nA. He rebuilt the convento in Tumauini, 1872- 1878
1872-1874	Venancio Huerta Fernández	1849-1885	N2:148-nA
1874-1878	Tomás Parella Prat, 2x	1838-?	N2:110
1874 Nassiping not listed in Acta and hereafter.			
1877 March 4. The last Spanish Dominican parish priest of Nassiping, P. Parella, observing that there were no proper church and convento buildings in his parish, and that these would be too difficult to build, recommended that Gattaran be made the parish and Nassiping its visita (Malumbres:370).			

1878-1897, parish priests are named in Neira (based in turn on Ocio and Arnaiz) for Nassiping, but these names appear as the curas of Gattaran in the official Acta.			
1878-1880 (under Gattaran)	Deogracias García	1846-1924	N2:158
1881-1883 (under Gattaran)	León López Collado	1857-1897	N2:191
1886-1890 (under Gattaran)	Pedro Linacero Hernando	1861-1928	N2:216
1890-1897 (under Gattaran)	Braulio Prieto Martín (2 terms)	1861-1941	N2:232
1897-1898 (under Gattaran)	Cipriano Rodríguez Guerra	1871-1957	N2:293-294; captured in Gattaran by the revolutionaries in August 1898.
1897 November 27. By Royal Decree, Nassiping was re-established as a town, in its ancient seat. It was one of the last towns in Cagayan to be established, along with Córdoba (separated from Amulung) and Santo Niño (relocated from Tabang) (Malumbres:396, 420, 453).			

PS

References

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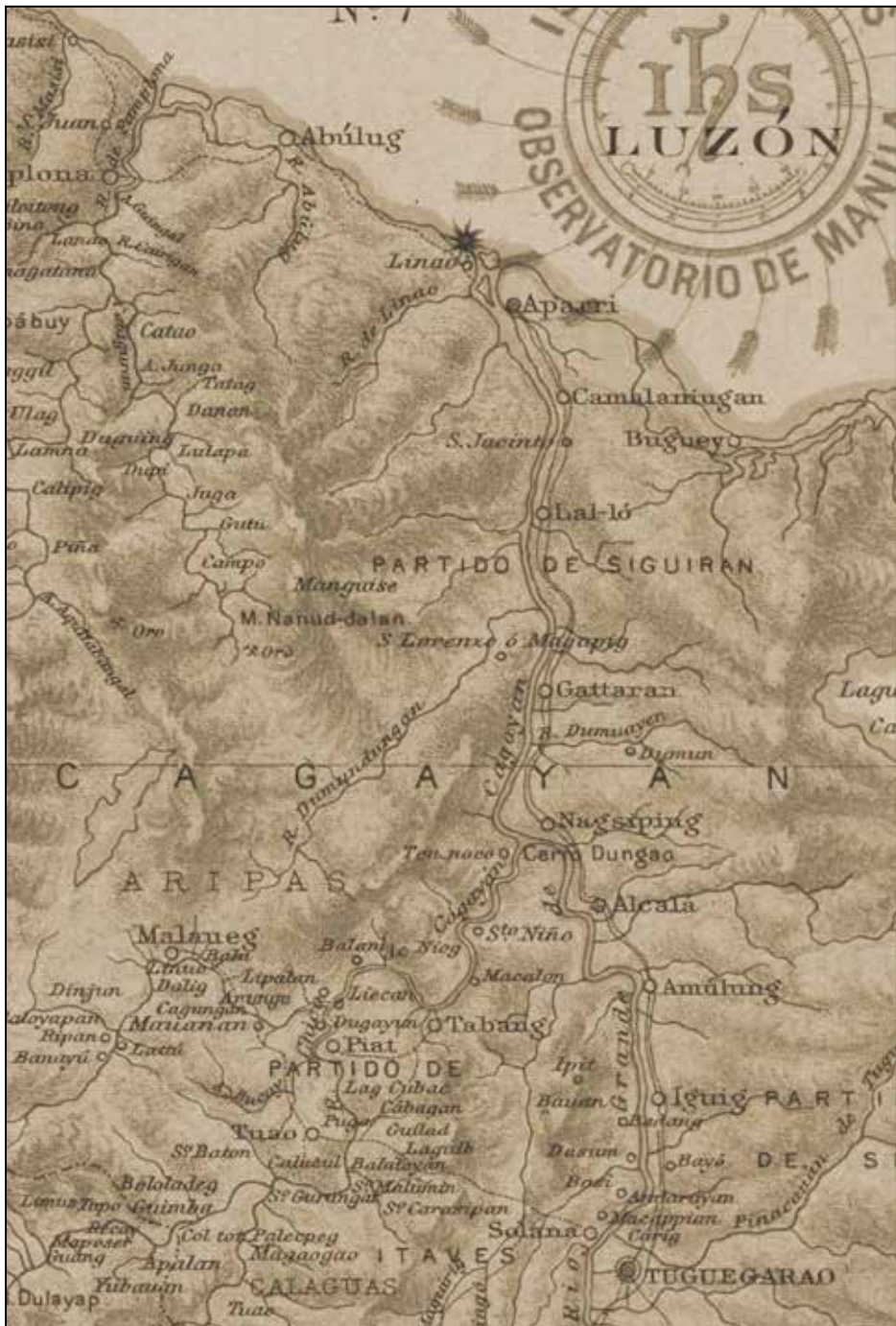


Pedro Murillo Velarde, *Carta Hydrographica*, ..., 1734

Map showing Nassiping near the junction where the Chico or Itawes River joins the Cagayan River.

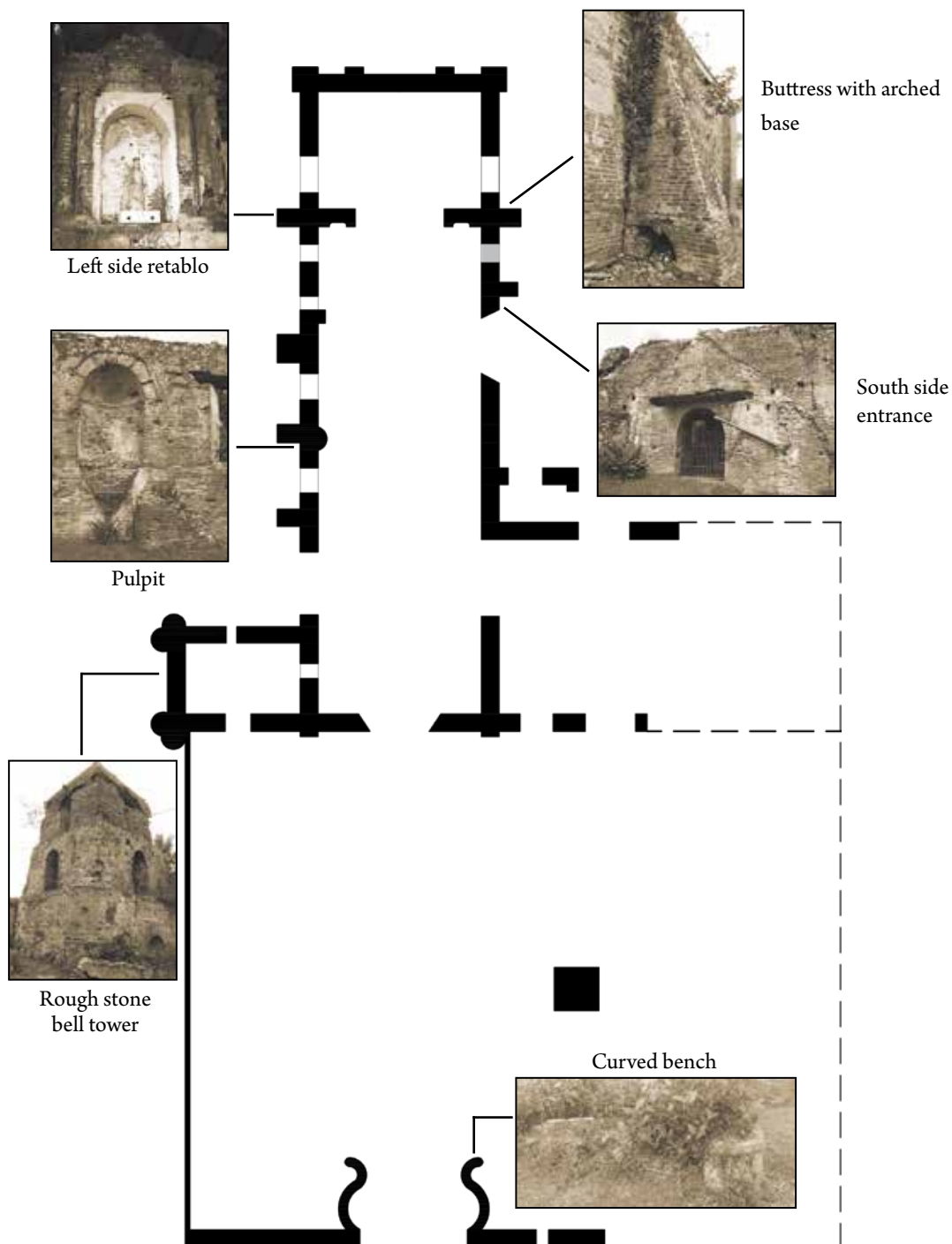


Map of the Philippines showing
Nassiping, Cagayan.



Map of central Cagayan province, with Nassiping in the middle. The short-lived mission of Aripa used to thrive in the vicinity of the left fork of the river, before reaching the settlement of Santo Niño.

Basic plan of the Nassiping church complex by Ar. Argel Miryl P. Castañeda, University of Santo Tomás GS-Cultural Heritage Studies Program, 2019, based on a plan by Ar. Javier Galvan Guijo, 2004.



RTJ 1991



The flat farmland is punctuated by the hulking bell tower of Nassiping.

RTJ 1991



Much of the area in front of the church has been converted into a vegetable orchard.

RTJ 2019



View of the church from the southwest.

RTJ 2019



The broken façade faces west, and confronts the Cagayan River.

RTJ 1991



The church patio has been converted into a corn patch.

RTJ 1991



In the middle of the patio is the remnant of the pedestal for the atrial cross.

RTJ 2018



One of a pair of curved brick benches at the entrance of the church patio.

RTJ 2018



One of two pairs of curved brick benches at the side entrances of the church patio at San Pablo, Isabela. Perhaps these unique features can be attributed to Fr. Gabriel Serrano, who was in Nassiping 1692-1694, 1700-1702, and 1708-1710; he is credited for the brick vault over the presbitery in San Pablo.

RTJ 1991



The bell tower is distinguished by its pyramidal masonry cupola, unique in the Cagayan Valley.

RTJ 2019



While the first two levels of the tower are of rough stone blocks, the rest of the church as well as the third level of the tower are of brick. A deep cleft between the tower and the nave shows that they were built at different times.

RTJ 2019



Closer view of the western side of the tower, which faces the river.

RTJ 2019



View of the second and third levels of the tower, of rough stone and brick respectively. The square holes may have held supports for an overhang over the second level window, or a balcony for the third level.

RTJ 2019



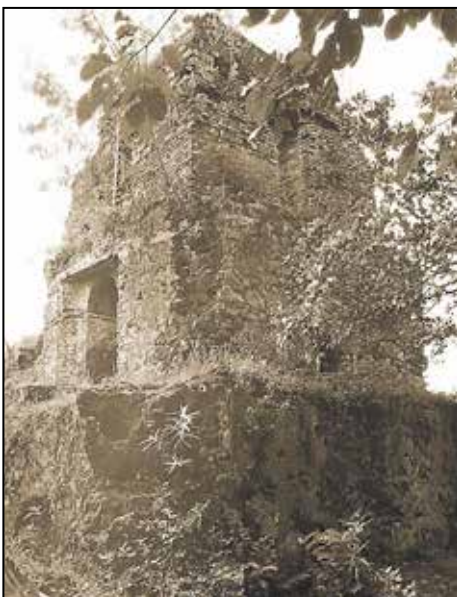
View of the tower from the northwest, showing the coupled columns of brick at the corner.



RTJ 2019

View of the northern face of the tower. Coupled columns of brick were constructed at the northwest corner (right) and northeast corner (left, in ruins).

RTJ 2002



View of the tower from the northeast, showing the ruins of the coupled columns. The window on the east side is the only one in the tower with a quadrangular frame.



RTJ 2018

View of the tower from the nave, or the south side. Note the different heights of the entrance to the tower. The entrance from the nave is higher, while the original entrance of the tower itself is lower. The rectangular opening above this entrance led from the choir loft to the bell tower. The Dominican protomartyr San Francisco de Capillas would sleep on this choirloft.

RTJ 2019



Impressions in the intrados (underside of the arch) indicate that a *sawali* mat (woven bamboo strips) over a wooden frame was used to hold up the masonry as it dried.

RTJ 1991



Floor of the third level of the tower. Ropes for ringing the bells passed through the hole in the center.

RTJ 1991



This bell, inscribed *S.^{TE} MICHAEL: ORA PRO NOBISNASiPiNG: IVNIO. 6. DE 1726*, was commissioned by Fr. Juan Sebastian, vicar from 1725 to 1727. Evidently Fr. Sebastian had a soft spot for Nassiping. Around 1743, as vicar of Tuguegarao (1739-1746), he gave alms that would be used for two mantles for the image of Our Lady. Unfortunately, this bell was stolen in 2005.

RTJ 1991



This bell, dated 1803 and inscribed *S. MiGVEL ARCANGEL*, still hangs from the western side of the tower and as such faces the river. Ironically, this area of the church is hardly populated, with most of the people living along the sides of the highway passing by the back of the building.

RTJ 2002



Interior of the ground level of the bell tower, showing a lime-plastered dome, a wooden pendant (probably for attaching a lamp), and a niche for a small altar or image. This space was in fact the baptistery.

RTJ 1991



Another view of the interior of the baptistery. The baptismal font was extracted from where there is an empty space now. The photo also shows that this space is below the ground level of the church. This suggests that the bell tower was the earlier structure, and the rest of the church was built next to it but on a higher plane.

Cagayan Provincial
Calendar 1974



Stone baptismal font of Nassiping, now in the Cagayan Provincial Museum, Tuguegarao.

RTJ 2002



Stone baptismal font of Tuguegarao cathedral.

North wall of the nave. The ruined architecture speaks for itself, with a minimum of landscaping.



RTJ 1991

RTJ 2019



Portion of a buttress on the northeast end of the church.

North-east end of the church.



RTJ 1991

RTJ 2018



The same view, only the Indian trees deprive the church of its communication.

RTJ 2002



East end of the church.

RTJ 2019



Buttress on the east end of the church where the brick cover has disintegrated, affording a view of the filling materials within.

RTJ 1991



View of the church from the south-east.

The ruins are slowly attracting more visitors.



RTJ 2002

RTJ 2019



Portion of the south wall, corresponding to the apse. A window has been walled up.

RTJ 2002



Entrance to the south side of the church; a substantial canopy must have been attached to the wall at one time.

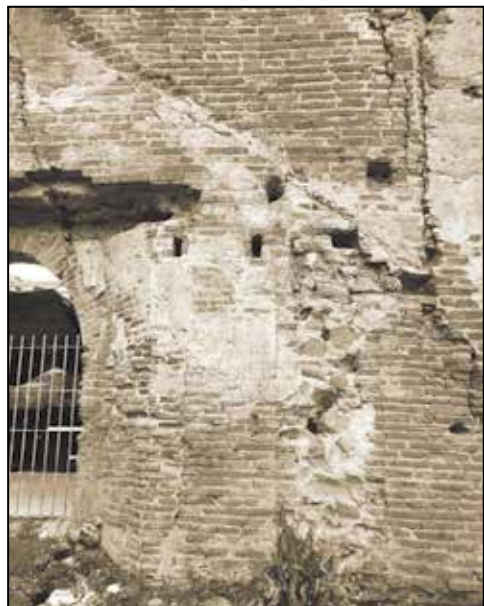
Detail of the south entrance.

RTJ 2019



Unique open arch at the base of a buttress, just outside the apse.

RTJ 2019



RTJ 2019



Interesting arrangement of brick halves and portions on the south wall.

Brick with a net design.



RTJ 2019

RTJ 2019



Brick with a floral design.

Brick with the date "March 1, 1850" inscribed on it.



RTJ 2008



RTJ 1991

View of the nave from the bell tower.



RTJ 1991

View of the nave towards the main altar.



RTJ 1991

Pulpit, on the north wall.



RTJ 2002

Main and side altars.

RTJ 2018



View of the nave from the main altar.

RTJ 1991



Main entrance, viewed from the nave.

RTJ 1991



Portion of the narthex of the church, with the arched door leading to the convent.

RTJ 2019



A closer view of the narthex, with rectangular openings that may have supported shelves or holy images.

RTJ 2002



Left side retablo, with the image of Santa Catalina de Alejandria.

RTJ 2002



Side view of the left retablo.

RTJ 2002



Right side retablo, with the image of San Pedro Apostol.

RTJ 2002



Side view of right side retablo.

Archdiocese of Nueva Segovia Museum, Vigan



Crucifix, probably of ivory, with a background carved rococo elements. The inscription on the photograph says it was found by Judge Sevilla in the ruins of Nassiping.



RTJ 2002

Image of the Risen Christ.



RTJ 2002

Image of the patron saint, San Miguel Arcángel.

Image of Santa Catalina de Alejandria.
A cloth with the Lord's features has
converted her to Santa Veronica.



RTJ 2018

RTJ 2002



Image of San Pedro Apostol.



RTJ 2018

Closer view of San Pedro Apostol.

View from the bell tower looking towards the narthex, the entrance to the convento, and the ruins of the convento.



RTJ 1991

RTJ 2002



Closer view of the entrance to the convento, as seen from the narthex.



RTJ 2019

View of the doorway between the nave and the convento, seen from the convento.

Ruins of the façade of the convento.



RTJ 1991



RTJ 1991

Ruins of the *horno* or brick kiln. It was not seen anymore in 2018.



RTJ 1991

View of the Cagayan River from the churchyard of Nassiping. The junction with the Chico River is slightly beyond the left of the picture.



RJY 2002