

***El Católico Filipino* (1861-1862), the First Religious Newspaper in the Philippines**

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Abstract: *El Católico Filipino* [The Catholic Filipino] was a journalistic publication that appeared in 1861 thanks to the initiative of Pedro Peláez, capitular vicar of Manila, and the Dominican priest Francisco Gaínza. Until its disappearance in December 1862, it contributed to the development of the nascent Filipino press. It was also the first newspaper of a religious nature. The aim of this paper is to introduce this publication to today's reader, offering a descriptive presentation of its main characteristics, and serving as an introduction to the journalism of that era and to this newspaper in particular, for those researchers who may wish to study it further.¹

Keywords: 19th century Philippine journalism, Dominican history, Fr. Pedro Peláez, Fr. Francisco Gaínza, OP, Religious newspapers

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¹ The nearly complete collection of *El Católico Filipino* is available online at the Miguel de Benavides Library of the University of Santo Tomas. <https://digilib.ust.edu.ph/digital/collection/elcatolicfi>.

Historical Context: Filipino Journalism in the Nineteenth Century

The remote origin of Filipino journalism can be traced back to the first war reports published in the mid-seventeenth century by Tomas Pinpin, the pioneer of Philippine printing, and continued with the *Relaciones de sucesos* [Reports of Events] that appeared in that same century and until the eighteenth. These were ephemeral publications with news from around the world, which Mojarro defines as “generally brief narratives in the form of a chronicle whose aim was to transmit a relevant, notable, or extraordinary event, whether religious or civil.”²

The first publication that included printing details, the editor’s signature, numbering, and the intention of periodicity—requirements for being considered a newspaper—was *Del Superior Gobierno* [From the Superior Government], first published on August 8, 1811, with fifteen issues appearing in the following six months.³

The beginnings of Filipino journalism were complicated, due to several problems such as the scarcity of news arriving from Spain and other parts of the world, censorship, financial difficulties in maintaining publications, the limited professionalization of the sector, and the difficulty of acquiring equipment and finding specialized technicians. In addition, the small number of potential readers (people literate in Spanish) made journalistic projects financially unfeasible. Despite all this, in the following decades, determination gradually opened the way and between 1820 and 1860, at least 34 other journalistic publications appeared.⁴ In the 1860s and 1870s

² Jorge Mojarro Romero, “Relaciones de sucesos y terremotos en las Filipinas del siglo XVIII,” *Titivillus*, 4 (2018): 94. In this work, we can find more information about the *Relaciones de Sucesos* and the transcription of two of them reporting separate earthquakes. Valenzuela mentions some “hojas volantes” [flying sheets] that supposedly circulated in the late 18th century, similar in nature to the *Relaciones de Sucesos*. However, unlike these, there is no evidence of any “hoja volante” having been preserved, so their existence cannot be confirmed. See Jesus Valenzuela, *History of Journalism in the Philippine Islands* (Manila: published by the author, 1933), 13.

³ For a detailed discussion on the topic of the first newspaper in the Philippines and its origins, see the interesting text by José Toribio Medina, “El primer periódico de Filipinas,” in W. E. Retana, *El periodismo filipino: noticias para su historia (1811-1894)* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Viuda de M. Minuesa de los Ríos, 1895), 533–559. We also find information about *El Superior Gobierno* in Valenzuela, *History of Journalism*, 17–21.

⁴ The data on the number of publications are taken from Retana’s 1906 catalog, which is the most complete and reliable of those compiled to date and on which all subsequent works on 19th century Philippine journalism are based. Nonetheless, since Retana includes some publications to which he did not have direct access, there is the possibility of minor errors in the count: Wenceslao Emilio Retana, “El periodismo filipino,” in Retana, W. E.: *Aparato bibliográfico de la historia general de Filipinas, deducido de la colección que posee en Barcelona la Compañía General de Tabacos de dichas islas*, Vol. 3 (Madrid: Imprenta de la Sucesora de M. Minuesa de los Ríos, 1906), 1493–1800.

a period of expansion began, with another 30 new publications in those twenty years, along with a greater variety of subjects and journalistic styles and formats. However, it was in the last two decades of Spanish sovereignty in the Philippines, between 1881 and 1899, that Filipino journalism developed extraordinarily, with around 150 publications appearing during this period, 42 of them concentrated in the years 1898 and 1899. The circumstances that facilitated this takeoff were, on the one hand, the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869, which brought Spain and the Philippines closer together in terms of travel duration and flow of news, investment, and Spanish migration to the Philippines. On the other hand, technological and transport advances, together with the rise in the population's educational level, increased the possibilities of publishing and distributing newspapers and expanded the number of readers who demanded them.⁵

As for the subjects addressed in newspapers and magazines, in the early days the news sheets distributed informally and those contained in *Del Superior Gobierno* were often based on translations of foreign newspapers and reported on Spain's situation during the Peninsular War (1808–1814), as well as news of interest to daily life in the Philippines, such as legislative changes or the arrival of ships at the port of Manila and their cargo. Information about Spain and legislative and commercial matters concerning the Philippines continued to weigh heavily throughout nineteenth-century journalism. However, in the second half of the century, Philippine society—especially in Manila—developed economically and improved its educational level. In addition, the number of Spaniards and citizens of other industrialized nations arriving in Manila increased, bringing with them new technologies and a desire to replicate the advances already enjoyed elsewhere in the world. All of this increased the local demand for news, as well as for specialized press on various topics, communication organs of different guilds and interest groups, and magazines devoted to entertainment and leisure activities.

To meet these demands, from the 1860s—and more intensely in the 1880s—numerous journalistic publications aimed at professional groups emerged.

The catalog by Artigas y Cuerva, from 1909, is also very comprehensive; although it is based on Retana's work, it has some differences compared to it, yet it provides very similar data regarding the number of publications issued: Manuel Artigas y Cuerva, *Los periódicos filipinos: la más completa bibliografía publicada hasta la fecha acerca de los papeles públicos filipinos* (Manila: Biblioteca Nacional Filipina, 1909).

⁵ Sabido Aguirre (1955) develops this topic in his doctoral thesis (p. 90 ff.), in addition to addressing the influence that 19th-century press had on the development of nationalist ideas and the formation of the Philippine national identity: Luis Sabido Aguirre, "El periodismo filipino durante la época española." (PhD Thesis, Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1955).

For example, *Boletín del Ejército* [The Army Bulletin]⁶ (1864), *Revista Mercantil* [Mercantile Journal] (1865), *Revista de Medicina y Farmacia* [Journal of Medicine and Pharmacy] (1886), and *Boletín Oficial del Magisterio Filipino* [Official Bulletin of Filipino Education] (1895). Others were dedicated to leisure and sports, such as *La Linterna Ecuestre* [The Equestrian Lantern] (1881) or *Manililla Sport* (1894); and also humorous magazines such as *Manila Alegre* [Happy Manila] (1885) or *El Cínife* [The Wasp]⁷ (1894) came out. There were also magazines specifically aimed at women, such as *El Hogar* [The Home] (1893), and at children, such as *El Liliputiense* [The Lilliputian] (1890).

To conclude this brief introduction to nineteenth-century journalism in the Philippines, we must also mention that the language used in almost all publications was Spanish, with the first bilingual newspapers in Spanish and a Philippine language—such as Tagalog, Ilocano, or Cebuano—appearing in the 1880s. *El Pasig* (1862) was the first to introduce some bilingual content in Spanish and Tagalog, and *Patnubay Nang Catolico* (1890) was the first written entirely in a local language, Tagalog. The first English-language newspapers would not appear until 1898. Most newspapers and magazines were published in Manila, although some of them were distributed to other parts of the country. Newspapers were also published outside Manila, especially in areas with a higher concentration of Spanish residents, such as Ilocos (*El Eco de Vigan*, 1884), Iloilo (*El Porvenir de Bisayas*, 1884; *El Eco de Panay*, 1886), or Cebu (*El Boletín de Cebú*, 1886).⁸

The Religious Press

As has been noted, by the mid-nineteenth century journalism in the Philippines was undergoing a period of expansion, with a growing diversification of subjects covered in newspapers and periodicals, and of the professional groups to which they were directed. However, did this specialization also extend to the clergy and to people interested in religious matters? Did a press written by clerics and devoted to religious issues emerge? It did, but to a lesser extent than one might expect. In Valenzuela's words:

⁶ The English translations of newspapers and magazines with original Spanish titles are taken from the book *El Periodismo Filipino, 1811–1910: The First Century of Philippine Journalism*, in which Jaime M. Marcó translates and annotates much of the section on journalism by Retana in his *Aparato bibliográfico de la historia general de Filipinas* (1906).

⁷ Marcó (2018) translates *El Cínife* as “The Wasp,” but we consider “The Mosquito” to be a more suitable translation.

⁸ The data on the languages used in the press and on publications that appeared outside Manila are taken from Retana, *Aparato bibliográfico*.

It seems paradoxical that there had been very few publications that were devoted to religion in the Philippines when the very purpose of Spain's colonization was principally to propagate her religion, a purpose which was offered as one of the circumstances mitigating the establishment of censorship. The religious orders were the ones who gave birth in the Philippines to the art of publishing. They founded schools and colleges, but they were slow in extending the scope of the pulpit to the periodical press.⁹

In the publications that emerged up to the beginning of the 1860s, news related to political and commercial affairs predominated, and other topics of interest to the Filipino reader were beginning to appear. But despite the religiosity of Philippine society and the strong presence of the clergy in cultural and educational life, no newspaper or magazine had been published that was focused specifically on religion, whose defining characteristic was its dedication to religious topics. The first newspaper that we could place in this category, a precursor to others that would appear in the following decades, was *El Católico Filipino*, founded in 1861 by Father Pedro Peláez, which remained active until the end of 1862. Before delving into a detailed analysis of *El Católico Filipino*, the object of this study, let us briefly review other religious publications of this period.

- *La Oceanía Católica* [Catholic Oceania] (1863). We have no information about the contents of this newspaper, which first appeared on January 1, 1863, to know whether it truly deserves to be in the category of “religious press,” aside from its title. Nevertheless, it is an important publication for the present work because it was the result of the merger of *El Católico Filipino* with the newspaper titled *La España Oceánica* [The Oceanic Spain], which had been in circulation since January 1862.
- *Boletín Eclesiástico del Arzobispado de Manila* [Ecclesiastical Bulletin of the Archdiocese of Manila]. Born in 1876, it was promoted and directed by the Dominican Father José Cueto. In the words of an editor of the newspaper *El Oriente*, referring to the *Boletín*, “the publication is dedicated to correcting all vices, rekindling the Catholic spirit of the people for the sake of morality.”¹⁰ In 1892 it changed its name to *Boletín Oficial del Arzobispado de Manila* [Official Bulletin of the Archdiocese of Manila].

⁹ Valenzuela, *History of Journalism*, 71.

¹⁰ Retana, *Aparato bibliográfico*, 1565-1567.

- *La Regeneración* [The Regeneration], subtitled *Diario Católico* [Catholic Daily], lasted barely the month of October 1886, but it clearly aimed to promote the religious values of its readers.¹¹
- *Revista Católica de Filipinas* [Catholic Journal of the Philippines], which had a bilingual version in Spanish and Tagalog, was published from 1888 until the end of 1896. Its subtitle in 1891 was: “Weekly paper dedicated to Catholic propaganda. Consecrated to the Divine Heart of Jesus.”
- *Apostolado de la Prensa* [Apostolate of the Press] was published first in Tagalog and later in Spanish, between 1884 and 1896, with the collaboration of a large group of Filipino priests as contributors.

It should be noted that in 1898 another newspaper appeared with the name *El Católico Filipino*, which should not be confused with the 1862 one studied here. Retana points out that it was focused on preserving religious unity in those tumultuous times and defines it as a “Catholic nationalist” newspaper that “sympathizes with the Philippine Republic.”¹²

Although several religious publications did emerge throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, we can consider them very few in relation to the total number of periodical publications: barely eight out of the nearly two hundred we have counted up to 1899. This fact is striking and confirms what Valenzuela said in the earlier quotation, considering the strong influence of the clergy in cultural and educational life and the fact that the religious orders were pioneers in the introduction and development of printing in the Philippines. By the early seventeenth century all the religious orders had already established their own printing presses, the first being that of the Dominican Fathers in the Manila district of Binondo.¹³

¹¹ Retana, *Aparato bibliográfico*, 1621-1626.

¹² Retana, *Aparato bibliográfico*, 1782-1783.

¹³ More detailed information about the first printing press of each religious order can be found in Wenceslao Emilio Retana, *La imprenta en Filipinas (1593–1810) con una demostración gráfica de la originalidad de la primitiva. Adiciones y observaciones a La Imprenta en Manila, de D. J. T. Medina* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Viuda de M. Minuesa de los Ríos, 1899), 5–42. For a more systematic account of the printing presses and printers of the Spanish period, see Wenceslao Emilio Retana, *Tablas cronológica y alfabética de imprentas e impresores de Filipinas (1593–1898)* (Madrid: Librería General de Victoriano Suárez, 1908), which reports the establishment of the first press, called *Tipografía Príncipe* and promoted by the Dominican priest Fr. Francisco Blancas de San José.

The Founders and Editors of *El Católico Filipino*

The idea for the founding of the first religious newspaper in the Philippines, *El Católico Filipino*, came from Father Pedro Peláez y Sebastián (1812–1863), who created it and became its first editor-in-chief.¹⁴ He was joined by his friend, the Dominican priest Francisco Gaínza Escobés (1818–1879), who, due to his importance in the project, is considered by some sources to be a co-founder. Three other Dominican friars—Amat, Corominas, and Fonseca—also participated.¹⁵

Pedro Peláez was born in the Philippines in 1812 to a Spanish father, mayor of Laguna, and a Filipino mother of Spanish descent. Orphaned at a very young age, he received a scholarship from the Dominican Fathers to study in Manila, at the Colegio de Santo Tomas. He excelled in Philosophy and Theology, becoming professor of Philosophy at the Real Colegio de San José in 1835 and earning a doctorate in Theology at the Universidad of Santo Tomás in 1844. He was ordained a priest in 1837, but despite his close ties with the Dominicans, he remained a secular priest. He obtained a position in the cathedral *cabildo* of Manila in 1839, where he developed his ecclesiastical career, holding various positions of responsibility and eventually becoming capitular vicar after the death of Archbishop José Aranguren in 1861, a position he held for just over a year.

It was in the very cathedral where Pedro Peláez tragically died, when the building collapsed during the earthquake that devastated Manila on June 3, 1863.¹⁶ Admired for his oratory and intellectual ability, Father Peláez fought tirelessly in defense of the Filipino secular clergy against the regular clergy represented by

¹⁴ The information that Peláez was the first editor-in-chief of *El Católico Filipino* comes from a letter sent in 1861 by Francisco Gaínza to the papal nuncio in Madrid, cited in Albert C. A. Flores, “Pedro Peláez’ ‘Breves Apuntes sobre la Cuestion de los Curatos de Filipinas’: a transcription.” *Landas*, 21:1 (2007): 10. Nevertheless, Pedro Peláez’s name never appeared in the newspaper as editor. Throughout 1861, the imprint listed Lorenzo Moreno Conde as the *editor responsable*, as will be seen later.

¹⁵ José Víctor Torres, “A History of the Philippine Press (1811–1910),” in *El Periodismo Filipino, 1811–1910: The First Century of Philippine Journalism* (Quezon City: Vibal Foundation, 2018), p. XXVII. We can find the titles of some works published by Amat, Corominas, and Fonseca in Jorge Mojarro, “List of Books Published by the University of Santo Tomás Printing Press (1850–1872),” *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. LVII, No. 173 (May–August 2022): 377–404.

¹⁶ For a detailed study of the academic life, professional rise, and activities of Pedro Peláez in the *cabildo* of the Manila cathedral, as well as his struggle in defense of the Filipino secular clergy and his position on the issue of the parishes, see Roberto Blanco Andrés, “Pedro Peláez, líder del clero filipino,” *Hispania Sacra*, LXIII, 128 (July–September 2011): 747–782. In another work by the same author, further information is provided on the activities of Peláez and other members of the cathedral *cabildo* in favor of the Filipino secular clergy: Roberto Blanco Andrés, “El cabildo eclesiástico de Manila,” in *Gobernar colonias, administrar almas*, eds. Xavier Huetz de Lemps, Gonzalo Álvarez Chillida, and María-Dolores Elizalde (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2018), 108–114.

religious orders dominated by friars of Spanish origin. Following a Royal Decree of 1848 and another of 1861, it was intended that several parishes, which had been in the hands of Filipino secular priests, be handed over to religious orders. According to Blanco Andrés, these measures were contextualized by a mentality that had emerged in Spain in previous decades, which “sought to preserve the territory by strengthening the Spanish element in key decision-making posts, in the administration, the army, and, of course, in the ownership of the parishes.”¹⁷ The protests of the secular clergy were led by Father Pedro Peláez, as a member of the cathedral *cabildo*. Peláez’s action in this matter took several forms, including the publication of a book and articles in *El Católico Filipino*, pressure exerted in Madrid through collaborators, contacts with the papal nuncio in Spain, and articles published in the Spanish press.¹⁸

Pedro Peláez’s activism regarding the *parishes’ question* and his efforts to promote reforms for the clergy of the Philippines—especially in favor of equality between peninsular Spaniards and Filipinos and the elimination of privileges enjoyed by the religious orders—were continued by his disciple, Father José Burgos. Both are recognized as the initiators of the reformist movement in the Philippines.

The article from *El Católico Filipino* reproduced in Appendix 1, published on May 28, 1862 (No. 104), recounts the arrival in Manila of the new archbishop who would relieve Pedro Peláez from his position as capitular vicar.¹⁹ He was Gregorio Melitón Martínez y Santa Cruz, and the article details the reception he received from ecclesiastical, civil, and military authorities, as well as from anonymous residents of Manila who gathered at the port to witness the event and welcome the prelate.²⁰ Beyond its value as a description of such an event in nineteenth-century Manila, the article also narrates the first personal encounter between the outgoing capitular

¹⁷ Blanco Andrés, “Pedro Peláez, líder del clero filipino,” 758.

¹⁸ The referred book is *Documentos importantes para la cuestión pendiente sobre la provisión de Curatos en Filipinas* (Madrid: Imprenta del Clamor Público, 1863). This book was published anonymously, but Father Pedro Peláez, who had recently passed away at the time of publication, is recognized as its principal author. *El Clamor Público* was a Madrid newspaper in which, on May 8, 1850, the article “El Clero Filipino” was published, presenting the issue of parish benefices and the arguments of the protest led by Peláez in Spain. A reproduction of the front page of *El Clamor Público* with this article can be seen in Retana, *El Periodismo Filipino, 1811-1910: The First Century*, 49.

¹⁹ In two subsequent issues of *El Católico Filipino*, dated June 1 and June 4, further details were published about the welcome events held for the new archbishop and his assumption of office.

²⁰ Gregorio Melitón Martínez y Santa Cruz was born in the town of Padroluengo (Burgos), Spain, in 1815. After pursuing his ecclesiastical career in Spain, he was appointed Archbishop of Manila by Royal Decree on July 31, 1861, taking office the following year. He remained in Manila until 1875, when he requested to return to Spain, citing health problems. He died in his hometown in 1885. During his twelve years at the head of the archbishopric of Manila, he worked for the welfare of the native population and even clashed with the Spanish political authorities over the execution of Fathers Burgos, Gómez, and Zamora in the context of the Cavite uprising of 1872.

vicar and the new archbishop. Pedro Peláez held the vacant post for thirteen months after the death of the previous archbishop, José Aranguren, in April 1861. During his tenure at the head of the *cabildo*, Peláez took advantage of the opportunity to advance reforms he considered necessary and fought to prevent the application of the royal decree of September 10, 1861—though ultimately without success. This decree transferred parishes in the hands of Filipino secular priests to the Augustinian Recollects, in compensation for those they had to cede to the Jesuits, who had just returned to the Philippines. This deepened the confrontation that stemmed from the earlier decree of 1849. Peláez reported in detail to the new archbishop on his activities as capitular vicar and on the situation regarding the decree. Martínez, also a secular clergyman, sympathized with Peláez's positions and used his own authority to support the same demands.²¹

Unlike Peláez, Francisco Gaínza Escobés was born in Calahorra (La Rioja), Spain, and entered the Order of St. Dominic, which sent him as a missionary to the Philippines in 1840, at the age of 22. After several years on missions in Nueva Vizcaya and participating in the Spanish expedition to Cochinchina (1858–1859),²² he became a professor at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila, reaching the position of vice-rector in 1860. During those years in Manila, he also held other posts and became friends with Pedro Peláez. In 1863 he was appointed bishop of the Diocese of Nueva Cáceres, where he carried out important work in the development of the local language, Bicolano. He died in Manila in 1879, remembered for his service to the Filipino people and leaving behind an important literary output on various topics.²³

El Católico Filipino: Birth, Format, Content, and Staff

El Católico Filipino was founded in 1861 by Father Pedro Peláez as the first Filipino newspaper of a religious nature, although it also included news of secular current events and other content. It likely already carried the intention of serving as an organ of expression and promotion of demands in favor of religious reforms in the Philippines, especially concerning the administration of parishes.

²¹ For a more detailed explanation of this relationship between Peláez and Martínez, see Blanco Andrés, “Pedro Peláez, líder del clero filipino,” 764–772. An excerpt from a letter by Martínez to Peláez expressing his satisfaction and gratitude for the services rendered as capitular vicar, and requesting the continuation of his collaboration, can be found in Flores, “Pedro Peláez’ ‘Brebes Apuntes,’” 7.

²² Gaínza left two works recounting his experiences in Nueva Vizcaya and Cochinchina: *Memoria sobre la Nueva Vizcaya* (Manila: Establecimiento tipográfico de los Amigos del País, 1849) and *Cruzada española en Vietnam: campaña de Cochinchina* (Madrid: C.S.I.C., 1972).

²³ For a list of the works of Francisco Gaínza and commentary on some of them, as well as biographical information, see the study by Felipe Abad León, “Francisco Gaínza Escobés (1818–1879). Natural de Calahorra, uno de los hijos más ilustres de su historia,” *Kalakorikos*, 15 (2010): 275–290.

In Appendix 2 there is an article from *El Católico Filipino* titled *Visionarios, empíricos y copiadores*, published on May 11, 1862, in the Editorial Section of issue No. 99. It bears no signature, as was customary in *El Católico Filipino* during its twice-weekly period up to June of that year. Unlike other articles, which often followed topics already discussed in earlier issues or were continued in subsequent issues, this article shows no apparent connections with others that would help us contextualize it. Nevertheless, as suggested in the penultimate paragraph, the author seems to be alluding indirectly to some measure that had negative consequences for failing to take local peculiarities or adaptation to current circumstances into account—though he preferred not to mention that measure explicitly. This article is a good example of the learned literary style employed in *El Católico Filipino*, while also revealing the reformist tendency of the newspaper. Since the Philippines was at that time subject to the authority of Spanish political and legislative institutions, we can perceive in this article a demand for policies to be adapted to local realities, both spatial and temporal.

Although Retana states that *El Católico Filipino* first appeared in 1862,²⁴ that information is incorrect: the first issue was published on June 2, 1861, and the last on December 21, 1862, which was issue No. 147. Initially, it was published twice weekly, on Wednesdays and Sundays,²⁵ with a supplement issued twice a month on irregular dates depending on the arrival of ships bringing news from Europe. Shortly after its first anniversary, in July 1862, it began to be published daily—except on Mondays and on the days following religious feasts—maintaining this daily frequency until its end in December 1862.²⁶ With this change of frequency also came a change of format: from eight pages with three columns in the first period, to four pages with four columns in the second period. Thus, we can distinguish two periods of *El Católico*

²⁴ Retana, *Aparato bibliográfico*, 1542.

²⁵ On the front page, below the year, date, issue number, and title, the following notice appears: “This newspaper is issued on Sundays and Wednesdays. Subscription price: in Manila, 4 reales per month, paid in advance; in the provinces, 4 and a half reales, postage free. Subscriptions are not accepted for one month, nor for any other odd number of months. Subscribers have the right to insert one advertisement of eight lines free of charge once a month. Subscriptions in Manila are taken at the Editorial Office, Calle de Anda No. 21, and in the provinces at the residence of the correspondents.” When its daily publication later began, this text was replaced by: “It is published every day except Mondays and the days following the great solemnities celebrated by the Church – Editorial and Administration Office, Calle de Anda No. 21. – Subscription terms and points at the end of page 4 – Advertisements and insertion terms on said page 4.”

²⁶ We assume that no issue was published on June 30, 1862, as it was a Monday, and therefore the beginning of the second period must have been on July 1. However, the first July issue to which we have had access is dated July 6, and it is labeled “Segunda Época. Año Primero. Número 7” [Second Period. First Year. Number 7], which suggests that there may have been an issue on June 30. From July 6, 1862, onward, issues were published daily until the end of the publication in December of that year.

Filipino in terms of format and editorial aspects. The first period extended from its founding in June 1861 until the end of June 1862, with twice-weekly publication; the second ran from July to December 1862, with daily publication. Another noteworthy difference between the two periods is that in the first, articles were unsigned, whereas in the second many bore initials that allow us to identify their author.

The sections appearing in *El Católico Filipino* varied slightly from issue to issue and between the two periods. The most frequent in the first period were:

- *Sección Editorial* [Editorial Section]. The most extensive, sometimes occupying several full pages. The content was mainly religious, though occasionally historical or commentary on current issues, often in a single text. Although unsigned, it is presumed that Pedro Peláez, Francisco Gaínza, or other Dominicans may have authored many of them.
- *Variedades* [Varieties]. A diverse collection of content, from brief news items from Spain or local news to poems and comments on social life.
- *Noticias extranjeras* [Foreign News]. Sometimes with commentary on the news found in the Supplements.
- *Extracto de la Gaceta de Manila* [Extract from *La Gaceta de Manila*]. This section included new legal provisions of interest to the public.
- *Boletín Eclesiástico* [Ecclesiastical Bulletin]. Information about the saints' calendar, religious celebrations such as processions, prayers, and so on.
- *Gacetilla* [Short News]. Varied content, often with abundant local news.
- *Folletín* [Feuilleton]. Reproduction of literary content.
- *Movimiento del Puerto de Manila* [Port Movement of Manila]. Information on ships arriving and departing, with data about origin, destination, passenger capacity, etc.
- *Prensa de la capital* [Press of the Capital]. Commentary on news published in other Manila newspapers.
- *Noticias de provincias* [Provincial News]. News sent in by correspondents.
- *Anuncios* [Advertisements]. The last page was dedicated to ads for products and services, house rentals, sales of animals, information

about businesses, etc. Subscribers had the right to regularly insert advertisements.

In the second period, the Editorial Section, the newspaper's first and most extensive section, was renamed as *Sección de fondo*, keeping the same type of content and characteristics, including its very high literary quality. When the page count was reduced from eight to four, the number of sections was also reduced, retaining from the first period the sections *Variedades*, *Gacetilla*, *Folletín*, *Noticias exteriores* (formerly *extranjeras*), and *Correspondencia de provincias* (formerly *noticias*), as well as the advertising section on the last page. A new section called *Boletín Local* [*Local Bulletin*] was added, which included all types of news in its subsections, ranging from official appointments or port movements to religious, commercial, or legislative news. While the number and titles of some sections changed in the second period, the types of news and content did not differ greatly.

As mentioned earlier, during its first months in 1861, in addition to the two weekly issues, a Supplement was published twice a month. The frequency was irregular, with one around the 10th of the month and another in its last days. The first Supplement appeared on June 12, 1861, and beneath *El Católico Filipino* bore the inscription: "Review of the news from Europe received by the Mail that arrived at this port last night," and its two three-column pages were divided into sections titled: Spain, Rome, Naples, Turin, France, England, Austria, United States, and Havana, compiling news from each country or city. This explains the irregularity of the supplements, as they depended on the arrival of foreign news to Manila. Later supplements varied slightly its inscription depending on the ship's arrival date, and ranged between two and four pages. The same countries and cities appeared in most, though occasionally new ones were added, such as Turkey, Poland, or Russia, while some of the usual ones were omitted. These supplements continued until June 1862, when they ceased with the start of daily publication of *El Católico Filipino*.

The printing of *El Católico Filipino* was handled by the Santo Tomas Printing Press. According to Retana,²⁷ it originated from the so-called *Imprenta Príncipe*, the oldest and "most historic of all those in the Philippines," acquired by the Dominicans in 1622 and installed at the Colegio de Santo Tomás.²⁸ The printer was Juan Cortada, who managed the Santo Tomas Press from 1857 to 1864 and "was Spanish and known to have some scientific knowledge."²⁹ From the birth of *El Católico Filipino*, the name Lorenzo Moreno Conde appeared on the last page as "Editor Responsable,"

²⁷ Retana, *Tablas cronológica y alfabética de imprentas*, 20-21, 42.

²⁸ Retana, *Tablas cronológica y alfabética de imprentas*, 112.

²⁹ Retana, *Tablas cronológica y alfabética de imprentas*, 55-57.

a position he held until May 5, 1862.³⁰ He was replaced by Francisco de Marcaida as editor beginning with the May 7 issue. When daily publication began in July 1862, he was credited at the end of each issue with the dual title of “*Director, Editor Responsable*,” until the announcement of a change in direction and editing in the October 15, 1862, issue. From the following day until the end of *El Católico Filipino*, the two roles were split: Manuel María Caballero de Rodas served as *director*, and Mariano de Marcaida as *editor responsable*.³¹ From then on, both were credited as such in each issue, alongside Juan Cortada as manager of the Santo Tomas Press.

The End of *El Católico Filipino*

From the first issue, at the end of page 8 there appeared a list under the heading “Correspondents,” which included all the provinces of the Philippines. Next to some of the provinces appeared the name of the correspondent stationed there. The list comprised 56 territorial districts, of which 24 were indicated in the first issue as having a correspondent.³² Most of the correspondents were members of the clergy (parish priests and friars), scribes, military officers, as well as mayors and even two governors. This demonstrates that the project of creating this newspaper had been sufficiently prepared to establish a network of correspondents across much of the Philippine territory. Over the following months, the list added some more correspondents, though it never exceeded thirty. It seems that toward the end of 1861³³ the list stopped being published, until the beginning of the second period in July 1862. At that time the list of provinces and names of correspondents reappeared with 33 names,³⁴ but under a different title. It was no longer “Correspondents” but “Prices and Subscription Points,” indicating that these were the people with whom a subscription to the newspaper could be arranged. In this new period, a second list was also published with subscription points in Spain and other countries, including bookstores, printing presses, and newspaper offices in the following cities: Madrid,

³⁰ The name of the printer appears for the first time in issue No. 2 of the newspaper, dated June 5, 1861. His resignation from the post due to incompatibility with other activities is announced on page 1 of the issue of May 7, 1862: “The editorial staff of *El Católico Filipino* regrets that Mr. Lorenzo Moreno Conde has ceased to belong to it as of the 5th of this month, as his current occupations do not allow him to continue as a member of the staff.”

³¹ The announcement of October 15, highlighted under the title *advertencia*, reads: “Although without any change in the editorial staff of this newspaper, as of tomorrow it will be under the charge of Mr. Manuel María Caballero de Rodas, and from the same date its *editor responsable* will be Mr. Mariano de Marcaida.”

³² Of the places listed, twenty-two have one correspondent, and two (Bulacan and Morong) have two correspondents.

³³ We cannot determine the exact date because we have not had access to the issues from September to December 1861, and it no longer appears in the first half of 1862.

³⁴ Some names match those in the 1861 lists, while others are different.

Barcelona, Rome, Turin, Paris, and Havana. This projection can be understood as proof of the newspaper's good progress and ambition, though it disappeared half a year later.

The end of *El Católico Filipino* came without prior announcement. Retana notes that the newspaper *El Pasig*, in its issue of December 18, 1862, referred to *El Católico Filipino* as still existing, and he believes it lasted until the end of that year.³⁵ The last issue available in the University of Santo Tomas Library is that of December 21, 1862, and we assume this to be the actual final issue, given the completeness of the library's collection of this newspaper, particularly for the last months. We have no information of any later issue. In that December 21 issue, however, there is no mention of the cessation of publication nor any important change.³⁶

The reformist stance of *El Católico Filipino* and its most prominent representative, Father Pedro Peláez, provoked hostility among some *peninsulares*, especially within sectors of the clergy. Both Flores and Retana mention the declared confrontation with another newspaper, *Diario de Manila*.³⁷ It was one of the most important newspapers at the time *El Católico Filipino* was being published, and it maintained a rivalry with it that worsened throughout 1862, culminating in open conflict during the second half of the year. This was evident in the frequent exchange of comments on each other's articles, as well as accusations and expressions of doubt regarding the opponent's journalistic or argumentative quality.

The brief note in Appendix 3, which appeared on the front page of *El Católico Filipino* on November 27, 1862—just one month before the disappearance of the newspaper—highlights this ongoing conflict. In the note, it is taken for granted that *Diario de Manila* will continue attacking *El Católico Filipino* in the coming days, and irony is used to criticize the low level of its arguments. The origin of the dispute was the use of the word “race” in an article published by *El Católico Filipino* on November 6, 1862. This led to a debate on the meaning of the term and the historical justifications for and against the application of the term “Latin race” to Spaniards. This debate took up much space in *El Católico Filipino* across several issues that

³⁵ Retana, *Aparato bibliográfico*, 1542.

³⁶ The only difference from the previous issues, although it cannot be interpreted as an announcement of his dismissal or replacement, is that the names of the director and the printer disappear from the last page, leaving only the name of the editor, Mariano de Marcaida.

³⁷ Flores, “Pedro Peláez’ ‘Breves Apuntes,’” 10. Retana, *El periodismo filipino. Noticias para su historia (1811–1894)* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Viuda de M. Minuesa de los Ríos, 1085), 112. *Diario de Manila* was initially founded in 1848 and ceased publication in 1852 to make way for the *Boletín Oficial de Filipinas* (Retana, *Aparato bibliográfico*, 1519). In 1860 it was revived, lasting until 1898, becoming the longest-running Philippine daily of the 19th century and probably the most influential due to the high quality of the writers who contributed to it.

month, in response to the respective articles of *Diario de Manila*. In our opinion, the topic itself was irrelevant, and therefore the polemic surrounding it reveals the severe deterioration in relations between the two newspapers. This confrontation and the accusations made in December 1862 by *Diario de Manila* against *El Católico Filipino* are considered one of the possible causes of the latter's disappearance.

Retana points out the existence of an article published in *Diario de Manila* by the Augustinian friar Fr. Agapito Aparicio, which fiercely attacked *El Católico Filipino* for concealing its political intentions under the guise of religion, and which supposedly was a direct trigger for its abrupt disappearance—though Retana does not provide details of its content.³⁸ Agapito Aparicio was an Augustinian friar, born in Spain in 1832, who came to the Philippines in 1853, completed his formation in Manila, and was ordained in 1855. After ordination, he served in various parishes and rose to become president of the convent of Manila in 1874, later returning to Spain in 1887.³⁹ In the list of correspondents of *El Católico Filipino*—mentioned earlier—Fr. Agapito Aparicio appears in Morong. The last time that list was published, including Aparicio's name (by then as a “subscription point”), was November 1, 1862, less than two months before his confrontation with *El Católico Filipino* from the pages of *Diario de Manila*. Retana also noted in 1895, regarding these disputes as a possible reason for *El Católico Filipino*'s disappearance: *It seems that under the cover of religious ideas, El Católico often revealed political intentions; that is to say, not all its ideas fit within the genuinely Spanish outlook.*⁴⁰ In his 1906 work, Retana provided a bit more detail about the subject of the discussion that led Aparicio to write the article in *Diario de Manila*, which supposedly so decisively influenced the cessation of *El Católico Filipino*:

³⁸ Retana, *El periodismo filipino. Noticias para su historia*, 112. We have not been able to locate Agapito Aparicio's article published in *Diario de Manila*, but according to Retana, *El Católico Filipino* ceased publication two days after the appearance of that article in *Diario de Manila*. Therefore, if this information is accurate, it must have been published on December 19 or 20, 1862.

³⁹ Two brief biographical sketches of Agapito Aparicio, with a list of his assignments in the Philippines, can be found in Gregorio de Santiago Vela, *Ensayo de una biblioteca iberoamericana de la orden de San Agustín* (Madrid: Imprenta del Asilo de Huérfanos del S. C. de Jesús, 1913), 174–175, and in Isacio R. Rodríguez, *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniiana del Smo. Nombre de Jesús de Filipinas*, Vol. IV (Manila: Catholic Trade School, 1968), 108–109. In this second work, the dates of his assignments are also recorded, which shows that between 1859 and 1867 he served as parish priest of Pateros.

⁴⁰ Retana, *El periodismo filipino. Noticias para su historia*, 112. It is noteworthy that in the revised and expanded version of this work on Philippine journalism, which Retana published in 1906 (*Aparato bibliográfico*), he removes this sentence, even though much of the content in both versions is repeated verbatim. Other causes are possible, but this may be due to the evolution of his ideas during those years in Spain, which came to sympathize more with reformist demands than they had during his stay in the Philippines up to 1890.

The phrase you have not been conquered, defeated, or subjugated greatly offended certain old-fashioned friars, and one of them, the Augustinian Fr. Agapito Aparicio, published a ferocious article in *Diario de Manila* against *El Católico*, which contributed not a little to the disappearance of the paper directed by the illustrious Dr. Peláez; who was disliked by those friars because, being very competent in Canon Law, he maintained the conviction (in private, of course) that the religious corporations were usurping the parishes, as they sought to make the friar's permanent position in the parishes of the Archipelago as if it were legally valid.⁴¹

The phrase cited by Retana (*you have not been conquered, defeated, or subjugated*) comes from an article signed by Pedro Peláez (P.P.), published in issue No. 130 of *El Católico Filipino*, dated November 30, 1862, which can be consulted in Appendix 4.⁴² Every year on November 30, the feast day of Saint Andrew the Apostle, the victory over the Chinese pirate Limahong's⁴³ troops—who with a large fleet attacked Manila on November 30, 1574—was commemorated. The attack was repelled by the city's meager defensive forces, and as the miraculous victory was attributed to the intervention of Saint Andrew, he became the patron saint of Manila. The annual celebration included the so-called “Sermon of Saint Andrew,” preached each year by a notable cleric in Manila Cathedral. In 1855 the sermon was given by Pedro Peláez,⁴⁴ and in 1860 by Agapito Aparicio.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Retana, *Aparato bibliográfico*, 1544. In the original Spanish: La frase “tú no has sido conquistada, vencida ni avasallada,” molestó mucho a ciertos frailes de los de antiguo cuño, y uno de ellos, el agustiniano Fr. Agapito Aparicio, se descolgó en el *Diario de Manila* con un artículo feroz contra *El Católico*, que contribuyó no poco a la desaparición del papel que dirigía el ilustre Dr. Peláez; el cual no era grato a aquellos frailes porque, muy competente en Derecho canónico, mantenía la convicción (privadamente, se entiende) de que las Corporaciones religiosas detentaban los curatos, desde el momento en que pretendían hacer valer como legal la inmovilidad del fraile en las parroquias del Archipiélago. An alternative English translation can be found in Retana, *El Periodismo Filipino, 1811-1910: The First Century*, 50.


⁴² In our opinion, this article by Pedro Peláez shows that, despite his reformist activism and his disputes with the Spanish authorities and with the more conservative sectors of the clergy and the peninsular community, Peláez maintained a deep love for Spain and a positive view of its evangelizing and civilizing role in the Philippines.

⁴³ Although the name of this pirate of Chinese origin is transcribed in pinyin as Ling Fen, in Spanish and English sources it appears written in various forms, such as Limahon, Lima-Hong, Li Ma Hong, and others.

⁴⁴ A complete transcription of the St. Andrew's sermon delivered by Pedro Peláez in 1855 can be found in Beatriz Álvarez Tardío and Jorge Mojarro, “El discurso (1855) de Pedro Peláez: estilo y análisis de autoría con herramientas digitales,” in *Lingüística y humanidades digitales: avances y desafíos para el siglo XXI*, eds. Ana Segovia Gordillo and Cristina V. Herranz-Llácer (Madrid: Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, 2023), 31-46.

⁴⁵ In Vela, *Ensayo de una biblioteca*, 174, the bibliographic reference to the St. Andrew's sermon delivered by Agapito Aparicio in 1860 is recorded as follows: Agapito Aparicio, *Sermón histórico predicado en la catedral de Manila el día 30 de Noviembre de 1860 en la fiesta oficial que anualmente celebra el Excmo. Ayuntamiento de esta M. N. y S. L. Ciudad de Manila Al glorioso Apóstol San Andrés por la batalla obtenida por los españoles contra el pirata Limahong, por el M. R. P. Fr. Agapito Aparicio, de la*

Given the difficulty of identifying the exact reason that led those responsible for *El Católico Filipino* to cease its publication after December 21, 1862, it is fair to think that a combination of factors, to varying degrees, may have influenced that decision. On the one hand, the confrontation with *Diario de Manila* was intensifying and becoming more serious, because of political disputes and rivalries. Most of the editors of *Diario de Manila* were not clergymen, but they were *peninsulares*⁴⁶—perhaps some of those to whom Retana referred in his 1895 remark quoted earlier.⁴⁷ As for the clergy, as mentioned before, Pedro Peláez was active in defending the Filipino secular clergy against the privileges of the religious orders, almost entirely composed of *peninsulares*, and was particularly belligerent regarding the *dispute over the parishes*. This earned him enemies among members of the clergy, especially within the religious orders whose privileges he opposed. By extension, the newspaper he represented may also have become a target of animosity. Other positions defended by Peláez in *El Católico Filipino* may also have provoked hostility, such as his advocacy of censorship to prevent the entry of ideas he considered potentially harmful.⁴⁸ These and perhaps other reasons may have created the conditions that led to the decision to bring the life of *El Católico Filipino* to an end.

Nevertheless, *El Católico Filipino* did not die in the strict sense, but was merged with another paper called *La España Oceánica*, which had been founded on January 15, 1862, and whose last issue, dated December 31, 1862, also made no mention of its imminent disappearance.⁴⁹ Both merged to give rise to *La Oceanía Católica*, a newspaper about which we have no information other than Retana's confirmation of its existence.⁵⁰ 

Orden de Agustinos Calzados y cura párroco de Pateros (Manila, Impr. de los Amigos del País, 1861).

⁴⁶ In Retana, *Aparato bibliográfico*, 1534–1536, we can find information about several of the first editors of *Diario de Manila*: Lorenzo Moreno Conde, Francisco Ramos Borguella, Manuel Marzano, Francisco de P. Martínez, José Felipe del Pan, Ricardo de Puga, and others.

⁴⁷ *It seems that under the cover of religious ideas, El Católico often revealed political intentions; that is to say, not all its ideas fit within the genuinely Spanish outlook.* Retana, *El periodismo filipino. Noticias para su historia*, 112.

⁴⁸ Blanco Andrés “El cabildo eclesiástico de Manila,” 99-100: *Durante la vacante, surgieron diferencias con Diario de Manila, a raíz de una serie de críticas de Peláez sobre la permisividad del Gobierno con la entrada de publicaciones progresistas...* [During the vacancy, differences arose with *Diario de Manila* as a result of a series of criticisms by Peláez regarding the Government's permissiveness toward the entry of progressive publications...]

⁴⁹ The complete collection of *La España Oceánica* is also available in digital format at the University of Santo Tomas Library. <https://digilib.ust.edu.ph/digital/collection/laespanaoce>

⁵⁰ Retana, *Aparato bibliográfico*, 1547.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

El Católico Filipino. Wednesday, May 28, 1862. No. 104 (First Period)

LLEGADA A SU SEDE DEL NUEVO ILUSTRÍSIMO ARZOBISPO.

En hora temprana de la mañana del domingo 25 del actual fondeó en este puerto el vapor de guerra *D. Antonio Escaño*, con la correspondencia de Europa.

A su bordo venía el Ilustrísimo Sr. D. Gregorio Melitón Martínez y Santa Cruz, muy digno Arzobispo de Manila, acompañado del Sr. Provisor nombrado para la diócesis, del secretario de Cámara y de sus familiares.⁵¹

Apenas cubiertas las primeras formalidades de Marina y Sanidad, atracaron al buque del Estado las galanas falúas de los Excmo. Sres. Capitán General del archipiélago y Comandante General de Marina; la de este Ejército y una del Resguardo, las cuales conducían al Sr. Vicario Capitular, y una comisión de ambos cleros y algunos particulares; otra comisión de jefes de los diferentes institutos de este ejército y un Comandante de E. M. en nombre de S. E. el Capitán General.

Recibidos por el ilustre Prelado viajero en la cámara del buque, dirigióle la palabra el primero nuestro distinguido amigo el Sr. Vicario Capitular, y en sentida frase le dio la bienvenida, congratulándose por la acertada elección S. M. confirmada por la Sede Apostólica, para esta importante silla metropolitana. El Sr. Arzobispo contestó con dulzura y benevolencia y lo mismo a la comisión del ejército que le felicitó por órgano del Comandante del N.º 10 D. Miguel Gúrtler y Maroto, el cual estuvo muy feliz al dirigir a S. I. su breve arenga. En seguida recibió las ofertas

⁵¹ See footnote 20 for a brief biographical sketch of Gregorio Melitón Martínez.

dirigidas a nombre del Excmo. Sr. Capitán General por su enviado, con la finura y el acierto que son patrimonio del ilustrado y brillante cuerpo de E. M.

Dada grata respuesta por el Prelado a aquellas comisiones y después de imprimir todos los circunstantes el ósculo de respeto en el santo anillo emblema de la excelsa autoridad espiritual de los príncipes de la Iglesia, se trasbordó el venerable viajero a la falúa de la Capitanía General al eco de entusiastas vivas a la Reina (Q.D.G.) y a su propia persona, confundidos con los acordes de la música. Una numerosa banda acompañó hasta el desembarcadero a S. S. I. y su comitiva, montando una embarcación del país empavesada.

En el muelle de Magallanes pisó la tierra de su diócesis el Sr. Arzobispo, recibéndole en él varias músicas militares, gran golpe de gente de todas condiciones y el coche de gala del Excmo. Sr. Capitán General, que le condujo a la morada arzobispal. En la puerta de aguardaba el Excmo. Ayuntamiento de la Capital, de ceremonia y un numeroso grupo de individuos de ambos ilustres cleros, de quienes recibió cordiales y respetuosas felicitaciones, así como del digno Sr. Gobernador Capitán General que pasó a visitarlo a muy poco de su llegada.⁵²

A todos contestó S. I. con palabras de cortesanía, de unción y de gratitud, revelando en su semblante cuánto le conmovían los testimonios de afecto y respeto de todas las clases sociales de este vecindario, así dirigidos a su persona como a la imperecedera religión de que es muy digno pontífice en estas apartadas regiones, no contaminadas por el hálito emponzoñado de los descreídos, ni por el frío aliento de los indiferentes.

En medio de la recia borrasca que azota el inquebrantable edificio de que fue primera piedra el Pescador de Tiberíades, debe ser grata al nuevo Pastor la muestra de los sentimientos piadosos de esta mixta grey confiada a su sagrada autoridad, grey fiel a las tradiciones legadas por Magallanes y Legazpi, a cuya fe, a cuyo genio, a cuyo patriotismo, es debido el descubrimiento y la conservación de estas ricas provincias de la española monarquía.

Muy en breve entrará el nuevo prelado a desempeñar sus arduas funciones, que hará fáciles su celo, su ilustración y su piedad. Nos congratulamos de que se

⁵² In May 1862, the Governor and Captain General of the Philippines was José Lemery e Ibarrola (1811–1886), who held the post from January 1861 until July 1862. A distinguished military officer and politician, he had previously served as Governor and Captain General of Puerto Rico before being assigned to the Philippines. His administration coincided with the return of the Jesuits and the 1861 Royal Decree ordering that parishes in Cavite, then under the care of Filipino secular clergy, be turned over to the Jesuit order. This measure sparked protests from Pedro Peláez, in his capacity as capitular vicar of Manila, as well as from other reformist clergy.

encuentre ya ocupada la santa silla metropolitana de Manila: pero seríamos injustos si no rindiésemos un tributo de reconocimiento al muy digno Vicario Capitular que en la viudez de la Santa Iglesia de Manila, la ha gobernado con el notable acierto de sus luces y de su virtud.

Concluimos dando nuestro respetuoso parabién al Ilustrísimo Sr. Arzobispo reciénvenido, pidiendo para él los auxilios de Dios Nuestro Señor y toda suerte de prosperidades y encomendándonos a sus oraciones.

M. M. C. de R.

Appendix 2

El Católico Filipino. Sunday, May 11, 1862. No. 99 (First Period)

VISIONARIOS, EMPÍRICOS Y COPIADORES.

Los visionarios modernos, porque visionarios siempre ha habido, diz que quieren hacer del género humano una sola familia.

El género humano es en efecto una sola familia; pero solo ante Dios y por la caridad.

Por lo demás, pasarán años y siglos y cielos de siglos, y se sucederán las generaciones, y vendrá el día del grande y último cataclismo para el planeta que habitamos, y nunca se habrá realizado la utopía ociosa de la refundición de la humanidad en una sola familia.

Los pseudo-filósofos socialistas no tienen en cuenta para nada las leyes físicas que rigen al universo, ni las influencias cósmicas y telúricas a que están sometidas las diferentes regiones de la tierra: que de distinta manera ha de ser gobernado, siempre con arreglo a los principios de la justicia eterna, el carnívoro escandinavo, habitador de zonas heladas, y el ictiófago malayo que puebla un laberinto de islas situadas bajo un cielo tórrido.

Así que, las conquistas de las razas intertropicales han sido siempre limitadísimas y sus guerras las guerras de piratas de los canales, mientras que las razas del Norte del viejo mundo han elevado sus armas en huestes inmensurables a países lejanos, ya por espíritu belicoso, ya por necesidades de su existencia amenazada a causa de exuberancia de población y escasos recursos del suelo.

No es posible, pues, siendo tan diferentes las razas, las inclinaciones, las costumbres, las tradiciones, los rasgos fisionómicos, las necesidades y los climas de los diferentes pueblos, unirlos bajo unas mismas leyes sociales de derecho y de economía, ni, por legítima consecuencia, darles un modo de ser uniforme.

Y sin embargo, pensadores graves, acreditados publicistas, autores de fama dedicados a escribir libros didácticos: dan por lo común en el casi inevitable escollo de hacer aplicaciones prácticas de su enseñanza de una manera uniforme para todos los países.

El derecho, la economía política y la agricultura son los ramos que con preferencia sufren estas aberraciones producidas por el ligerísimo examen de las necesidades ajenas y por mirar los países ajenos por el lente óptico del propio.

En cuanto al derecho, pretender en un pueblo gobernar a la sociedad de hoy como a la de ayer, previniendo y penando sus faltas y sus delitos de una misma manera, es desconocer completamente la marcha de la humanidad. Hoy en el seno de la Europa una *ley de razas* no podría promulgarse: hoy las leyes suntuarias no tendrían fuerza. En cambio, si hubo en lo antiguo pueblos en cuyo código penal no había castigo para el parricidio por una razón idéntica a la de no existir una ley contra los que escalen la luna; porque no se concebía semejante crimen; en nuestros días está previsto todo cuanto cabe en la larguísima serie de transgresiones que sin cesar cometen los hombres.

De la misma manera que por circunstancias de tiempo han tenido que modificarse los códigos, tienen forzosamente que variar por circunstancias de lugar, sobre todo los códigos civiles de que dependen la paz de las familias, los intereses del comercio y el equitativo arreglo de la propiedad.

Tal ley agraria puede ser conveniente en las islas Británicas, que sea perniciosa en España: tal código comercial adolecerá de gravísimos inconvenientes en una nación y en otra sería altamente beneficioso.

Relativamente a la economía política, hemos leído muchas obras y fuera de principios generales, que son por lo común aplicables a todas partes, confesamos con franqueza que no hemos visto ninguna completamente aceptable.

Los economistas franceses, Miguel Chevalier a su cabeza, porque esta primacía ninguno de sus compatriotas puede disputársela, tienen tanto de empíricos cuando se refieren a países que no son la Francia, que sus libros son poco aprovechables. Los ingleses suelen tener ideas de economía aplicada algo más aceptables, aunque siempre envueltas en errores de bulto cuando se particularizan.

En gran parte, nace este defecto del poco estudio que hacen de la índole especial de un pueblo extraño que, o conocen solo por los libros, no siempre órganos de la verdad, o por rápidas excursiones en que son víctimas de las primeras impresiones, o de preocupaciones que no han sabido desarraigar.

Pero si los extranjeros estudian poco y muy superficialmente las naciones que no son las suyas, nosotros los españoles hacemos lo contrario. Tanto estudiamos la organización social, administrativa y económica de los demás; de la Francia y la Inglaterra con preferencia: que olvidamos con lamentable frecuencia nuestras tradiciones, nuestras costumbres y las verdaderas necesidades de nuestro pueblo, y copiamos sin examen y harto lastimosamente cuanto se hace en aquellos países de índole tan diversa.

Materia es esta en que, pese a nuestra voluntad, nos deslizáramos más de lo que permiten las condiciones en que nos hallamos colocados, y preferimos usar de una sobriedad de palabras perjudicial a la tesis que nos propusimos desarrollar. Solo diremos que de cuanto se ha copiado para nuestra organización moderna, las dos terceras partes es malo en política, en legislación, en burocracia, en economía, en costumbres, etc.

Los hombres son idénticos, como individuos de una misma especie, en el nacer, en el morir y en otras condiciones de su existencia material: son asimilables en otras de organización, según sus razas y la mancomunidad de sus intereses; pero jamás formarán un pueblo solo y único sometido a un modo de ser uniforme, porque esta sería la *perfección* que no es ni será dado obtener a la criatura, porque es atributo del CRIADOR. Caminemos a la posible *perfectibilidad*, cada pueblo según los medios que Dios pone a su alcance y según los intereses bien entendidos de cada localidad.

(unsigned)

Appendix 3

El Católico Filipino. Thursday, November 27, 1862. No. 127 (Second Period)

A VER VENIR.

Ayer hace el *Diario de Manila* como que quiere replicar a nuestros artículos, sobre la cuestión en que hace días venidos enredados. El público debe estar hastiado de ella y debemos ya ser, por respeto a él, todo lo sobrios que podamos en nuestras réplicas. Hoy la daríamos cumplida; mas como el buen colega ofrece continuar por el

áspero camino que ha emprendido, aguardamos a que llegue al fin de él para hacernos cargo de una vez de todo cuanto diga, aunque si no hace una brusca salida, tememos que se extravié en el laberinto por donde anda.

Entretanto, no podemos menos de extrañar que escaramuce fuera del campo natural de estas maniobras y bien desdichadamente por cierto. Es un rasgo estratégico como otro cualquiera. Allá se las haya.

C. de R.

Appendix 4

El Católico Filipino. Sunday, November 30, 1862. No. 130 (Second Period)

A MANILA EL 30 DE NOVIEMBRE.

Levántate perla del Oriente; deja presurosa tu lecho de flores, Reina de cien islas; adórnate con tus mejores galas, hija del Cristianismo y pupila de la España; abandona tu acostumbrada indolencia este día aniversario de tu glorioso renacimiento a la fe y a la civilización.

Naciste a ellas el día de tu conquista: pero no decimos bien, tú no has sido conquistada, vencida, ni avasallada: tú solo has sido pacificada y atraída a la Religión de CRISTO y a la cultura social; a la verdad y a la virtud; a la luz y al bien. Naciste pues al mundo civilizado el día de tu pacificación, de tu sumisión dichosa, de tu adhesión sin límites al pueblo generoso que te recibió en tu seno, que te adoptó por hija. No te cobijó con su sombra poderosa para explotar tus riquezas y hacerte esclava: era hartos rico para necesitar de aquellas y demasiado generoso para imponer la esclavitud: era en una palabra católico por excelencia y la ruin codicia y la crueldad despiadada, no podían albergarse en su corazón magnánimo.

Sentiste como por instinto la dichosa suerte, y erguías orgullosa tu hermosa y medio salvaje cabeza, mirando compasiva a tus hermanas, que ceñidas como tú con un cinturón de blanca espuma, y adornadas como tú de selvas vírgenes, y depositarias como tú de grandes tesoros, cayeron no obstante en poder de tutores distintos, ay! muy distintos del que te diera la bondadosa Providencia.

Pero tu orgullo iba un día como este a convertirse en humillación, tu libertad en esclavitud, tu dicha y gozo en desgracia y llanto. Tierno arbusto apenas presentado al aire y al sol, ibas a ser tronchado por aciaga tempestad; edificio todavía en cimientos

ibas a ser hollado por planta implacable; naciente sociedad de la Oceanía, apenas ingresada en la Iglesia de CRISTO, unida a la España por recientes lazos de amor, ibas a verte sumergida de nuevo en la barbarie y en la superstición, y a trocar el cetro de oro de S. Fernando e Isabel la Católica por el yugo de hierro de un pirata, de Lima-Hon.

Al ver en tu bahía las naves de este invasor sanguinario, al ver sus feroces tropas pisar tu risueño suelo, al ver sus alfanjes y partesanas tocar a tus débiles muros sin que de ello te apercieses, al ver a tu feroz enemigo dentro de tu recinto y arrimando a tus frágiles casas la tea incendiaria, los ángeles tus custodios cubrieron su rostro con las alas doradas por no ver tanta desdicha; y desplegándolas en seguida, hendieron en un momento los espacios y fueron a postrarse ante el trono del ETERNO implorando a tu favor su inagotable misericordia. Unió a estos ruegos los suyos el apóstol a quien este día celebra la Iglesia; y la poderosa mediación de Andrés, ardoroso amante de la Cruz, aplacó la indignación divina irritada por tus pecados.

El anciano Labezares se sintió entonces rejuvenecido,⁵³ y con él los pocos españoles, vueltos apenas de su sorpresa, juraron no entregar sino con sus vidas la ciudad que dejara a su cuidado, su antiguo compañero, compañero de armas y jefe, Legazpi: sin reparar en su corto número, sin detenerse por su desapercibimiento ni por verse casi desarmados y sin más parapetos que unas débiles palmas, hacen frente a las numerosas fuerzas invasoras y consiguen repelerlas fuera de la ciudad.

Al tercer día repiten estas el ataque; pero el Cielo continuaba protegiendo la nueva adquisición del catolicismo español, y concurriera ya a su defensa el infatigable Salcedo, que acudió de Vigan al ver pasar las naves chinas. La multitud de enemigos que sembraran estos contornos con sus cadáveres, y el del mismo general Sioco que yacía entre los otros,⁵⁴ convencieron a Lima-Hon de que era impotente a conquistar

⁵³ “El anciano Labezares” [The elderly Labezares] refers to Guido de Lavezares, a Spanish military officer who took part in exploration and conquest expeditions in the Americas and joined Ruy López de Villalobos’s 1543 expedition to the Islas de Poniente (later the Philippines) as treasurer. He served as Governor of the Philippines from 1572 to 1575, succeeding Legazpi after his death and remaining in office until the arrival of Francisco de Sande, the governor appointed in Spain. Lavezares was therefore the governor during Limahong’s attack in 1574. There is no full consensus regarding his birth date, though 1512 is the most frequently cited, which would make him 62 years old at the time of Peláez’s account—yet he still took an active role in the battle. He died in Manila, but sources disagree on the year of his death, placing it between 1580 and 1582.

⁵⁴ Sioco was Limahong’s lieutenant, of Japanese origin (probably “Shoko” or “Shyoko”). Among the soldiers, sailors, and settlers who sailed with Limahong’s fleet, there were not only Chinese but also Japanese, though their proportion is unknown. As Peláez recounts, Sioco was killed in combat.

For further information about the course of the battle and its participants, see Juan Francisco Maura, “La Relación del suceso de la venida del tirano chino del gobernador Guido de Lavezares (1575): Épica española en Asia en el siglo XVI,” *Lemir: Revista de Literatura Española Medieval y del Renacimiento*, 8 (2004): 2–26.

una colonia en cuyo centro se enarbolaba la cruz y el pendón de Castilla: corrióse a Pangasinan, de donde a poco fue desalojado.

En tanto tus victoriosos defensores después de recorrer con la vista las humeantes ruinas que los rodeaban, reconocieron que nacías hoy de nuevo al Cristianismo y a la civilización, levantaron al cielo sus fatigados brazos, y haciendo un trofeo de sus rotas armaduras, prometieron al Dios de los ejércitos conmemorar todos los años tan insigne beneficio, que atribuyeron piadosos a la mediación de San Andrés.

Por eso, noble hija de España, ondea este día por tus calles el estandarte de tu amorosa madre: por eso no conduces en triunfo al templo y lo rindes a Dios y a tu Santo Patrono: por eso llenas hoy el aire con el humo del sagrado incienso y lo conmueves con el sonido de las campanas y de músicas guerreras: por eso en fin gritas desde lo íntimo de tu corazón: *el Catolicismo y España hasta el fin de los siglos.*

P. P.



