

PHILIPPINIANA RECORDS

An 18th Century Report on the Ilongots and Futile Attempts at their Evangelization

by Fr. Francisco Antolín, O.P.

1. *Introduction*

Father Francisco Antolín, O.P., the author of the following *Report* on the Ilongots, was born in Alcañiz, province of Teruel, in Spain. He joined the Dominican order in the convent of Santa Lucía in his native town and from there he was sent to Orihuela to pursue the studies in the Order previous to his ordination to the priesthood.

At the age of twenty three, seven years after his first Religious profession, he volunteered for the Philippines. After sailing from Cádiz on January 28, 1768, together with forty three companions, on board the war frigate "Buen Consejo", he reached Manila on 8 July of the next year, not however without having waited in Batavia (Djakarta) during six months for an opportunity to proceed to the Philippines. There, three of his confreres died as a result of the long and painful navigation, which had lasted for seventeen months.

In Manila he taught Philosophy for two years and Theology for three (1771-1776). From this date until October of 1786 he was Vicar of Aritao, and from there he was assigned to Dupax. Deffinitor in the Chapter of 1789, he stayed in Manila for a year as Vicar and Chaplain of the Beaterio de Santa Catalina. Then he was assigned to Cavite as Superior of the Dominican residence there. He died in Manila at the Sto. Domingo Convent on August 30, 1796 at the age of 51.¹

He was a keen observer and tireless researcher on the history and way of life of the people of Nueva Vizcaya, and collected his findings and observations in two important works: 1) *Compendio Cronológico sobre el camino para Cagayán por la provincia y misión de Ituy; su descubrimiento, entradas y sucesos*, MS in the Dominican Archives, Manila, fols. 1-247. This very exhaustive work contains numerous details and important first hand documents about the Nueva Vizcaya missions from their beginning up to 1790, and clearly reflects Fr. Antolín's love for research and for philosophical considerations based on well established historical facts; and 2) "Noticias de los infieles igorotes en lo interior de la Isla de Manila, de sus minas de oro y cobre y sus comercios, y de varias entradas, tentativas y gastos hechos para su descubrimiento y pacificación." This was translated as "Notices of the pagan Igorots in 1787," in ASIAN FOLKLORE STUDIES 29 (1971: pp. 177-253), and 30 (1971: 2: pp. 27-132).² The Dominican Fathers are printing again the "Notices" in the form of a book, with an *Introduction* and additional footnotes and *Appendices*.

Father Antolín wrote another work which bears the title "*Recreaciones históricas*," This hitherto unpublished work was summarized by Mr. William Henry Scott in *Unitas*, Vol. 43, No. 3, September, 1970 pp. 36-53, under the heading "An Original Eighteenth Century View of Spanish Rights of Conquest." Therein Dr. Scott states on p. 52: "The *Recreaciones históricas* is not a work of history, however; rather it is an imaginative excursion into history, which reflects the tastes and techniques of the Age of Reason". It revolves around the Spanish rights to their conquests in the Western Hemisphere as well as in the Philippines.

Undoubtedly, Father Antolín is a most interesting and captivating figure in Philippine Missiological historiography, and Dr. Scott has truly captured and duly appreciated his scholarly worth.

2. *Historical Background*

The Filipino ethnic group known as Ilongots has occupied since time immemorial the mountainous region that runs from the north of Nueva Ecija province to the East of the town of Echagüe in Isabela. Those Ilongots who inhabited the southern slopes of the Caraballo mountains were named Italons, while the ones who lived in the fastnesses overlooking the Christian towns of Aritao, Dupax and Bambang are more specifically known by the name of Ibilaos. The rest simply come under the name of Ilongots. This last group also extended to and occupied the eastern slopes of the Sierra Madre, almost as far as the Pacific sea, interspersed here and there with Negrito ranches.

It is not so easy to determine the precise date of their first contacts with the Spaniards. Yet, they could not have escaped the attention of Don Luis Pérez Dasmariñas when in 1591 he undertook an overland expedition through Upper Pampanga (Nueva Ecija) to subdue the Ituy valley (i.e. the region comprising the towns of Aritao, Dupax and Bambang).⁴

Throughout the 17th century the Dominican missionaries made three attempts, from their bases in Pangasinan, to evangelize the Isinays (people of Ituy). They failed in the first, carried out in 1609, because the Franciscans claimed before the Governor General that Ituy fell within their sphere of evangelization; and the other two, undertaken in the years 1632 and 1652, also failed due in part to the hostility of the Ilongots.

A fourth attempt, at the start of the 18th century, also produced negative results for it happened that on the night of March 3, 1703, when the Religious, headed by the Father Provincial who had gone there on his canonical visitation, were resting, the neighbouring tribes, especially the Ilongots, assaulted their humble abode in Burubur (near Aritao) killing a man of the military escort,

putting the others, to flight, burning the mission-house and the chapel and forcing Father Provincial together with his retinue and the Religious to withdraw to Pangasinan.

Back in Manila, he obtained from the Governor General the sending of an expedition, made up of 20 Spaniards, 400 natives and 100 mardicas (natives of Ternate, at this time residing in Maragondon) to teach a lesson to these infidels. After having put some of their ranches to the torch, the expeditionary force returned to Manila, leaving the Ilongots as independent as they were before. And the Dominicans, deprived of military protection, also left.⁶

The Augustinian, Father Alejandro Cacho, assigned afterwards to the conversion of the Italonos, was luckier. Having converted some of the latter, he crossed the Caraballo mountains, in order to try his luck in the valley of Ituy, where he and his successors founded eight small mission stations — which later were to be the nuclei of the present towns of Aritao, Dupax and Bambang. They also founded Bayombong, among the Gaddans. In 1740 the Augustinians generously handed their missions of Nueva Vizcaya to the Dominican order.

On the other hand, over these little Christian communities ominously hovered the ever-present hostility of their more aggressive neighbours, the Igorots and Ilongots. To subdue the latter or, at least, to intimidate them, it was found necessary to send against them periodic punitive expeditions. Thus, in 1750, a chosen troop of Cagayanos made a sortie against the Ilongots, advancing cautiously into their domains. They stayed there for two weeks, setting on fire 387 huts and 120 rice-granaries (tambobos).⁷ However, the Ilongots could not be made into paying taxes until 1848, when Don Mariano Oscáriz, military Governor of Nueva Vizcaya, brought them to their knees.

In 1745 the Dominicans had erected a mission for the Ilongots within their own territory in a place located 16°21' degrees, north latitude, and six hours distant from Dupax to the East⁸.

We must not forget to mention here the exploratory trip undertaken by Father Manuel de Olivencia in 1756, in which he was able to reach, across Sierra Madre, the town of Dupax. And so that the Franciscans could have a nearer basis for the evangelization of the Ilongots, the Augustinians ceded them their old missions of Caranglan, Pantabangan and Puncan. Due, however, to the unhealthy conditions of the climate their missions gradually disappeared, except for Binatangan which went on until 1817, when a pestilence of small-pox carried many of the neophytes to their grave and the surviving ones established their abodes in Diaman, two leagues north of Pantabangan.⁹

In the second half of the 19th century and, most specially in its last decade, an earnest and systematic effort was made by the Spanish colonial Government to subdue and Christianize the ethnic groups inhabiting the Cordillera Central and the Sierra Madre. Hence, the sending of punitive expeditions, the establishing of military garrisons in their midst and, ultimately, the creating of the Politico-Military Commandancies, whose main purpose was to keep those freedom-loving people under control, while protecting and facilitating with their presence the preaching of the Gospel by the missionaries.

This policy sufficiently explains the establishment of the "Comandancia Político-Militar de Binatangan," created by the Manila Government through its decree of 10 April, 1891, whose boundaries were: Isabela on the North; the district (sub-province) of Príncipe on the South; the Pacific Ocean on the East, and the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Nueva Ecija on the South. In other words: the same extensive area, so fittingly described by Father Antolín in the following pages.¹⁰

In the missionary dimension, a mission station — named Munguia after the birthplace of its founder, Father Francisco Eloria-

ga, — was erected by Royal Order of 14 July, 1894, in the valley of Madog.¹¹

Unluckily, the Philippine Revolution of 1898 brought to a standstill this so promising politico-military and missionary movement and, as far as the Ilongots are concerned, it was never resumed, at least on an appreciable scale.

FR. PABLO FERNANDEZ, O.P.

EL TEXTO DEL P. ANTOLIN

“En el año 1755 descubrió y anduvo a pie esta tierra de ilongotes un misionero franciscano, llamado P. Olivencia, y sacó una relación que se imprimió en Manila, y el Superior Gobierno concedió licencia y estipendio para seis u ocho misioneros que fundaron otros tantos pueblos e iglesias, de las cuales, por lo montuoso e incómodo del terreno, por haber enfermado y matado a uno de ellos, y por haberse alzado los indios, sólo han quedado dos iglesias administradas en el día por un solo misionero franciscano en dos pueblos, llamados Binatangan y El Payo, que por estar inmediatos a estos pueblos de Dupax y Bambang, pertenecientes a Cagayán, como seis horas de camino, tienen algunas conveniencias por el trato que la vecindad les franquea, y así han permanecido hasta ahora sin alzarse como los demás.

Esta tierra de los ilongotes no es tan poca que se pueda tener o juzgar por un puñado de gentes escondidas en un rincón; es tierra que se extiende a muchas leguas y podría componer una buena y grande provincia si fuera llana.

Por la banda del Oriente se extiende hacia las costas de la mar desde Palanan a Baler, que es nada menos que cuatro o seis

FATHER ANTOLIN'S TEXT

A Franciscan missionary, named Father Olivencia, discovered and traversed on foot this land of the Ilongots. He wrote, besides, a *Report* that was printed in Manila, and the Government of the Islands granted a license and a stipend for six or eight missionaries who eventually founded as many other towns and churches. Yet, due to the rugged nature of the terrain; and because some missionaries fell sick and one was killed, and because of an uprising of people, only two of them (i.e. of the founded towns and churches) remained, which are administered today by a single Franciscan missionary in the towns of Binatangan and El Payo. These towns, being near Dupax and Bambang, which belong to Cagayan, and which are six leagues apart, enjoy some advantages for trading (i.e. with the Christians) as a result of their nearness to them. Thus, they have remained quiet so far, without revolting as the others have done.

This region of the Ilongots is not so small that it may be looked upon or considered as a handful of people hidden in a corner. It is a land covering an area of many square leagues and that could be made into a large and extensive province provided it were flat.

In its eastern side it extends as far as the sea-shore of the Pacific, from Palanan to Baler, which is equivalent to something

días de travesía por costas. Por el Occidente se extiende desde las llanadas de la misión de Paniquí, en donde está Cauayan, hasta el pueblo de Santor en la Pampanga, y fueran como seis u ocho días de camino, y que por la parte más corta vendrá toda ella a componer un bojeo de ochenta leguas.

La medianía de esta gran porción de tierra viene a caer en los montes llamados Caraballo, que son los que dividen la provincia de Cagayán de la Pampanga, tomándose esta división del curso de las laderas del Caraballo y sus aguas que unas corren al Norte, a aquí empieza la jurisdicción de Cagayán, y las otras vertientes se dirigen al Sur, que es lo que da principio a la jurisdicción de la Pampanga.

Estos montes del Caraballo se internan por medio de la tierra de los ilongotes hasta Casiguran, pueblo de la contracosta, y tienen también dos corrientes contrarias de aguas, tirando las unas de Sur y costa de Baler, y las otras al Norte, juntándose estas en el que llaman Río Grande de Cagayán, y por ser tantas las aguas que descenden de los ilongotes lo hacen navegable desde más arriba de Cauayan.

Con esta división de aguas parece esta convidando la naturaleza y terreno de los ilongotes a que se divida y adjudique a Cagayán las que tiran al Norte, y las que tiran al Sur a la Pampanga, o jurisdicción de Baler, que es la de Tayabas.

Lo interior de esta tierra ilongata y toda la parte que confina con Cagayán y la Pampanga está habitada de ilongotes, o italones, que no se han amansado hasta ahora, y son algo carniceros por matarse unos a otros y tal cual vez se ha visto que salen a los caminos a matar a traición a los cristianos como poco ha que mataron a un cagayán del pueblo de Caranglan.

Por la banda del Oriente, hacia la contracosta, la habitan muchos aetas o negros, que hacen muy poca o ninguna hermandad con los ilongotes de tierra adentro, y son sus enemigos.

like four to six days travelling along the coast. In the West it runs from the flatlands of Paniqui, where Cagayan is located, to the town of Santor in Pampanga, that is, something like a journey of six to eight days. Looking into it from its narrowest portion, its area may be eighty leagues all the way around.

The center of this vast tract of land can be placed in the so called Caraballo Mountains, which are the ones that divide Cagayan from Pampanga, basing this division on the direction of the slopes of the Caraballo and its watersheds, some of which run towards the North where the jurisdiction of Cagayan starts, while the opposite watersheds are oriented southwards, within the jurisdiction of the province of Pampanga.

These Caraballo Mountains crisscross the land of the Ilongots as far as Casiguran, a town of the Pacific coast, and have two watersheds that flow in opposite directions; the one flowing towards the South and coast of Baler, and the other towards the North. The latter flows into what is called the Great River of Cagayan; and, since the amount of water that descends from the Ilongots is so large, the said river becomes navigable, even before it reaches the town of Cauayan.

Due to this division of waters, it seems as if nature and the very terrain of the Ilongots appear to indicate that the watersheds should be divided, and those facing the North would belong to Cagayan, while those that run in a southerly direction belong to Pampanga in the jurisdiction of Baler, which belongs to Tayabas.

The hinterlands of this Ilongot region and all that area that borders Cagayan and Pampanga is inhabited by Ilongots or Italons, who so far have not entered the ways of civilization and are noted for their murderous habits, often killing one another. It has been also observed that every now and then they go out into the roads to murder Christians treacherously, as they killed a short time ago a Cagayano from Caranglan.

On the eastern side, towards the coast of the Pacific, the land is peopled by many Aetas or Negros who usually do not live on friendly terms with the Ilongots of the hinterlands, but are rather their enemies.

El número de estos ilongotes, o italones, que es lo mismo, y su cómputo se podría hacer leyendo la *Relación* impresa en Manila el año 1755, y la Cédula Real de Fernando VI del año 1757, en la cual se hace relación de sesenta rancherías de ilongotes descubiertas, y sin duda quedarían algunas otras por descubrir, que no entrarían en esta cuenta; pero en estas cuentas, o cómputos, de descubridores suele ser más el ruido que las nueces.

En el día está disminuida la población de esta tierra por las viruelas y otras enfermedades, y el estar tan esparcidos hace parecer más gente ilongota de lo que son en la realidad. De las seis u ocho iglesias y pueblos que se levantaron al principio, y después se han ido alzando poco o poco, sólo ha quedado el pueblo de Binatangan que es como la cabecera, y el del Payo con dos o tres rancherías bien distantes unas de otras, que podrán tener como 1,000 almas administradas por un solo misionero metido en aquella incómoda soledad, fuera de los apóstatas circumvecinos que vendrán a ser otros tantos, a quienes el celo del misionero no deja de llamar, pero con poco o ningún fruto por falta del brazo secular que los obligue y sujete a cumplir con sus obligaciones.

La riqueza de esta tierra y la ocupación del ilongote se reduce a la cera y al tabaco que benefician desde lo antiguo para venderlo o trocarlo por ropa, sal y armas de hierro, como flechas, cuchillos y lanzas, que les llevan los de estos pueblos de Cagayán y los pampangos y pangasinanes por la Pampanga; y, como su principal cosecha ha sido hasta aquí la del tabaco, han tenido un producto considerable desde que se estableció el estanco en la Pampanga, y cada día irá en aumento el plantío, y la gente que, apostatando de

The number of Ilongots or Italons — both terms mean one and the same thing — and its sum total will be found by reading the *Report* printed in Manila in 1755 and the Royal letter of Ferdinand VI in 1757, in which it is written that there were sixty ranches of Ilongots, already discovered. Doubtless, there may remain some more not yet discovered, and yet it is very true that in the reckonings or computations done by discoverers, numbers are usually inflated.

At present, due to the small-pox and other diseases, the population of the land is diminished. Also the fact of their being so scattered, makes their Ilongot people appear more numerous than in reality they are. Of the six or eight churches or villages that were established at the start and which afterwards defected little by little, only the village of Binatangan has remained, which is something like its capital, and El Payo, besides two or three ranches that are quite apart from each other. They are inhabited by souls administered by a single missionary who lives in the midst of that uncomfortable solitude. To these we must add their neighbours, the apostates, who may, perhaps, be just as many, whom the zeal of the missionary continuously keeps calling back yet with little or no effect due to the lack of cooperation on the part of the civil power, which should compel and subject them to the fulfilment of their commitments.

The wealth of this land and the occupations of the Ilongots are limited to the collection of wax and tobacco, from which they make some profit since ancient times by selling or by bartering it for clothing, salt, and iron weapons such as arrows, knives and spears, that are carried to them by the people of Cagayan and by the Pampangans and Pangasinans through Pampanga. And as tobacco is the main harvest they have been sowing, they have considerably profited from it ever since the tobacco monopoly was implanted in Pampanga. From this follows that its cultivation will increase from day to day; and also the people who have given up their Christian faith by joining them, are beginning to do the same, motivated by the freedom with which they can plant and

los cristianos, empieza ya a ir acudiendo, atraídos de la libertad con que lo pueden plantar y vender sin que nadie hasta ahora les haya intimado orden alguna, pues están como ovejas sin pastor, no sólo cuanto a lo político y temporal, sino también cuanto a lo espiritual; y así ni los obispos de Cagayán, Camarines y Manila han ejercitado su jurisdicción en estos ilongotes, ni los alcaldes mayores de Cagayán y Pampanga la suya pues ninguno ha tomado posesión, que es lo primero.

Y, aunque el alcalde de Tayabas parece que envía todos los años un comisionado a cobrar el tributo de los tres pueblos de la contracosta, Baler, Casiguran y Palanan, que son la mayor parte de indios tagalos, no se mete con ilongotes, que están la tierra adentro.

El número de almas arriba insinuado, es de los que están vecinos a Cagayán, comprendiendo en ellos varios apóstatas de estos pueblos de Dupax, Bambang, Bayombong hasta Cauayan que, por librarse de las obligaciones de cristianos y vasallos del Rey, se han allí refugiado, muchos de ellos después de haber hecho muertes y robado haciendas y mujeres ajenas.

Tampoco faltan cagayanes y aun desertores que, como saben que allí no los han de buscar ni obligar al tributo, viven allí a su gusto, mezclados con los infieles. Las veintisiete almas que, hace un mes, se huyeron del pueblo de Angadanan, ciertamente se sabe que tiraron para tierra de ilongotes que es adonde está un afamado valentón, llamado Lagutao, cristiano y apóstata, que está hecho mandarín y cabeza de otros apóstatas e infieles ibalibones, los cuales por tener conocimiento y parentesco con los cristianos que viven por todas estas misiones, pueden hacer mucho daño si antes no se pone remedio, y así mucho se recelan los misioneros de Paniqui que se huyan otros muchos por temores de tributo, estanco u otros motivos.

Por lo que hace al número de almas ilongotes de lo más interior de esta tierra, como también de las que confinan con los pueblos de la Pampanga y Baler, no tengo clara noticia, y así me

sell it, with nobody until now having intimated to them any order (to the contrary), as they are like sheep without a shepherd, not only as regards to civil and temporal matters but also in what pertains to their spiritual affairs, since neither the bishops of Cagayan, Camarines and Manila have exercised any jurisdiction over these Ilongots, and not even the Alcaldes Mayores of Cagayan and Pampanga have asserted their authority in as much as nobody has taken possession of them, which is the main priority.

And although the Alcalde of Tayabas — as it seems — sends every year a commissioner to collect the tribute of the three towns located along the coast, Baler, Casiguran and Palanan, which are inhabited by Tagalogs for the most part, he is not concerned about the Ilongots who live in the hinterlands.

The number of souls mentioned above, refers to those who live in the proximity of Cagayan. Among them must be included some apostates from the towns of Dupax, Bambang, Bayombong and from as far as Cauayan who, so as to get rid of their obligations as Christians and vassals of the King, have sought shelter there, many of them after having committed murders or grabbed others' property or women. Neither are there lacking Cagayanos or deserters who, knowing that nobody will go after them so as to compel them to pay the tribute, live there as they please, mixed with the infidels. The twenty seven people that fled a month ago from the town of Angadanan, as is well known, took the route of the land of the Ilongots, where there lives a very notorious brave man, named Lagutao, a Christian and an apostate who has become the leader and head of others apostates and Ibalibon pagans. These being acquainted and having some blood relationships with the Christians who live all over these Missions, may do much harm unless due measures are taken at the proper time; and thus, the missionaries of Paniqui are greatly afraid that others may also flee for fear of taxes, monopolies and from other motivations.

Regarding the number of Ilongot souls living deeper in the hinterlands, as well as those bordering the towns of Pampanga and Baler, I do not have much definite knowledge, and so I refrain

abstengo de echar cuentas a bulto; y, aunque pudiera aquí poner una lista de los pueblos o rancherías que están en varios ríos y montes, por tener en mi poder una mapa bastante extenso de todos los ilongotes, hecho por uno de los misioneros que fue testigo ocular, pero me abstengo por la brevedad y por no incurrir en la nota de ponderativo, como lo están los que descubren tierras.

Lo que me consta es que bajan bastantes, y con bastante frecuencia, a comunicar con los de Pampanga sus negocios, que no son otros hablando ingenuamente que los de su tabaco, y no hace muchos meses, según oí decir, que bajaron hasta sesenta ilongotes.

También por estas partes de la Pampanga y contracosta es la tierra de los ilongotes el refugio de hermitaños huidos, y no para hacer penitencia. Siempre ha sido así y lo será con grave detrimento de pueblos y provincias cristianas.

Léanse las relaciones de la muerte del mariscal y gobernador de Manila en el año 1715 y se verá que la herida mortal se la dió Don Vicente Lucea, el cual tuvo que andar toda su vida fugitivo, reclamando incesantemente el Rey su persona, y ¿en dónde se refugió? Lo dirán las relaciones o, si no, los viejos.

from making a more or less approximate reckoning. And, although I might jot down here a list of the towns or ranches that are located on the several rivers and mountains, in as much as I have in my possession a quite detailed map of all the Ilongots that was drawn by a missionary who was an eyewitness, I refrain, however, from doing so for reasons of brevity and also not to appear boastful as happens to those who discover new lands.

Of one thing I am sure and that is that many often come down to engage in business with the people of Pampanga, which business is none other than their tobacco. As I have heard, it is not yet many months since some sixty Ilongots visited the lowlands.

Also in these parts of Pampanga and in the coastal region of the Pacific, this land of the Ilongots has been a place of refuge for runaway "hermits" — not precisely to do penance —. So it has always been and shall be, to the grave detriment of Christian towns and provinces.¹²

Let the Reports on the death of the "Mariscal" and Governor of Manila in the year 1719 be read, and it will be found out that the mortal wound was inflicted on him by Don Vicente Lucea who, as a fugitive, had to shift places all his life, while the King was incessantly reclaiming his person, and ¿where did he find a place of refuge? Let the Reports say it and, if not, the old men.¹³

FOOTNOTES

¹ Hilario Ma. Ocio, O.P., *Compendio de la Reseña Biográfica de los Religiosos de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas*, Manila, Establecimiento tipográfico del Real Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1895, p. 476.

² Cfr.: APSR (Archives of the Province of Our Lady of the Rosary), MSS, Section "Cagayán," Vol. 30, fols. 1-237.

³ Cfr.: APSR, MSS, Section "Cagayán," Vol. 35, document 4, fols. 76-156.

⁴ Cfr. Pablo Pastells, S.J., *Historia General de Filipinas*, Vol. III, pp. CLIX-CLXII; Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, Vol. XIV, pp. 281-303.

⁵ Hilario Ma. Ocio, O.P., *Monumento Dominicano, o sea, Memorial de las Casas que ha adquirido la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas, desde 1587 hasta 1898*, MS in the UST archives, Section "Provincia", pp. 219 ff.

⁶ *Dominicos donde nace el sol* (Historia de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas de la Orden de Predicadores), Barcelona, Herder, 1958, pp. 204-295.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 206-209; Salazar, Vicente, O.P., "Relación de los sucesos y progresos de la tropa que de Cagayan se despachó para esta Misión de Ituy este año de 1750, MS in APSR, Section "Cagayan," Vol. 29, fols. 152-154.

⁸ Ocio, *Monumento dominicano*, p. 307.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Father Francisco Bilbao Elorriaga was born in the town of Munguía (Vizcaya) on June 4, 1861, and on December 8th, 1879 he donned the Dominican habit in Ocaña, Toledo. On June 27, 1891 he arrived in the Philippines, where he was almost at once assigned to the province of Nueva Vizcaya, in order to learn, as assistant to the missionary of Dupax, the Isinay dialect. On November 27 he was appointed the first missionary of Pudi, in the district of Binatangan, which is located some six leagues West of Dupax, and there, in a beautiful valley near the ranch of Canaden, and with the help of the "Comandante Politico-Militar, Don Tomás Tejeiro, he laid the foundation of a town that was named Munguía after his native place in Spain. First he built a provisional wooden chapel which was inaugurated on December 8, 1895.

In March of 1896 he effected an exploratory excursion across the Caraballo mountains in the direction of Nueva Ecija, and a year later, always guided and protected by an escort of trusted natives, he undertook a still longer and more perilous trip through the Sierra Madre, until he reached the *contracosta*, or shores of the Pacific ocean. On this occasion he visited places not yet trodden by European travellers and discovered the head-waters of the Ibanag. Then, on some barges, constructed by his guides for this purpose, he went down the river as far as Echague, where he rested from his hazardous exploratory journey.

In the month of September of 1898 he fell a prisoner of the Revolutionary forces and, after fifteen months of a painful captivity, he returned

to Manila in December 11 of the next year. By this time his health was so utterly broken that his Superiors quickly sent him to Spain for a much needed rest in his native land. Unhappily, all the cares lavished on him by his brother, Don Tomas, and by the skill of the best doctors of Bilbao, could not nurse him back to health. He breathed his last in Amorebieta on 11 October of the same year of 1899. (Cfr.: "El P. Francisco Bilbao Elorriaga" in *El Santísimo Rosario*, Vergara, Spain, Diciembre, 1900, pp. 729-734).

The mission station of Binatangan clearly fell within the missionary sphere of influence of the Dominican Order since its waters flowed into the province of Cagayan and, furthermore, it had been started, although informally, in 1746 by Father Juan de la Cruz Moya, and later by Father Pedro Bordallo, Vicar of Bambang. In spite of this, the Franciscans took possession of Binatangan in April of 1756 as a result of the famous trip of Father Manuel de Olivencia, then missionary of Baler who, having crossed the mountain ranges of Sierra Madre, reached Dupax, where he was solemnly received with the ringing of the church bells and a solemn *Te Deum* by Father Cristóbal Rodríguez, its Vicar. Yet, *pro bono pacis* (for the sake of peace) as Father Ocio remarks, the Dominicans did not raise any objection to the Franciscan's stay. Finally, in 1817, as already stated, the Franciscans abandoned Binatangan after having moved it to a place called Diaman, located two leagues North of Pantabangan. (Cfr.: Ocio, *Monumento*, pp. 308-309).

¹² In order to round off the above given description, we shall add here another, although brief yet juicy, that is found in Antolín's *Noticias*. It has been already translated by William Henry Scott for the book that hopefully will be off the press in a few months.

Looking . . . to the east, there live the Ilongots administered by the Franciscans. They are of different dialects and customs. Their mountains present a very different appearance from those of the Igorots. Those of the Ilongots are dark with woods and underbrush, and are much frequented by mists, clouds and rainstorms. They do not display the pine forests of the Igorot mountains. As they have so many rivers and forest land, they abound in fish and such game as deer and boar hidden and flourishing among the trees. They also abound in roots, rattan palms, and various fruits which the natives and animals eat. There is plenty of honey and wax from the many bees that suck the blossoms there. Since it is wet land, it produces plenty of sugarcane, sweet potatoes, squash, cucumbers, mustardseed, and whatever vegetables they plant. It is not a land of minerals, because metals never form in wet, shady lands unheated by the sun. Even though silver coins are very little used there, they buy spears, knives, strange cutlasses, iron arrowheads, pots, clothes, salt, mats, and other little commodities from the Christians with tobacco, which they have always planted, nowadays more than before. They don't buy animals or food, nor wine, since they have a surplus of all of these. They neither buy nor sell slaves. There are about 5,000 Ilongot, Ibilao and Italon souls. They are intractable, and killers, and are continually at civil war among themselves and with the Negritos along their borders.

Although there are many among the Ilongots with cracked skin and scabious because they warm themselves too much by the fire, there are plenty among the young people with white faces and good features who, if they were well dressed, would pass in Manila for mestizos without even being the descendants of any foreigners but only having been raised with little sun and much shade and fresh air — unless, to speak facetiously, they are descendants of Chinese or Japanese who arrived by air. The women file their teeth for the sake of good looks. The Franciscan missionaries have founded some missions there and made a description with a *Relacion* printed in the year 1755. The lack of gold or any other valuable metal is the cause of their little commerce and their land not being one to be coveted, nor has it been practical up to the present to explore it and subjugate it by arms. Only

these religious have gone in as apostles, although the people and land are so ungrateful that the harvest doesn't correspond to the labors of the missionaries. (*Noticias de los infieles igorrotos en lo interior de la isla de Manila, de sus minas de oro, cobre y su comercio; y de varias entradas, tentativas y gastos hechos para su descubrimiento y pacificación*, MS in APSR, Section "Cagayan", Vol. 35, doc. 4, fol. 84).

¹³ Cfr. *Compendio Cronológico sobre el camino para Cagayán por la provincia y misión de Ituy, su descubrimiento, entradas y sucesos*, MS in the Dominican archives in the Philippines, Tomo 30, fols. 154-157.

In the above statement Father Antolín seems to imply that Vicente Lucea, the true murderer of Governor Bustamante, found a shelter, at least for a time, in the land of the Ilongots.

The best description of the Ilongots, bequeathed to us by the Spanish times, is that of Ramón Jordana Morera in *Bosquejo Geográfico e Histórico Nacional del Archipiélago Filipino*, Madrid, Imprenta de Moreno y Rojas, 1885, pp. 69-78. Therein he summarizes their traits and customs, as follows: physical moral and psychological (stature, color, hair, spirit of vindictiveness, propensity to committing murders treacherously, and other inordinate tendencies, except that of stealing, which they seldom commit); wretched housing; domestic utensils, hunting and agriculture; lack of education and industry; belief in a Supreme Being and sacrifices; monogamy, burials, clothing; weapons, head-hunting; ranches; way of reckoning time and of counting objects; fear of fire-weapons, etc.

About the Ibilaos—who are Ilongots known by this name—Father Juan F. Villaverde left us a brief but vigorous description in *Correo Sino-Anamita*, Vol. XIII (1879) pp. 18-19. He emphasizes their cowardice, teacherous cruelty, hatred for the Negritos, weapons, ranches, agriculture. "Among them, it is an indispensable prerequisite for anyone about to get married, to present to the woman as the most priceless gift, a finger, and ear, or any other part of the body of a person already assassinated... The parents take along their little children in their expeditions, to teach them and accustom them to cut at least the head of those already murdered...". Cfr. also: Campa, Buenaventura, O.P., "Carta al R.P. Fr. Evaristo Arias, O.P.," in *El Correo Sino-anamita, o Correspondencia de las Misiones del Sagrado Orden de Predicadores en Formosa, China, Tung-King y Filipinas*, Vol. XXV, Imprenta del Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1891, pp. 561-646; PP. Pablo Fernandez, O.P. and Jacinto de Juan, O.P., "The Social and Economic development of Nueva Vizcaya, Philippines, 1571-1898" in *Acta Manilana*, Series B, No. 1 (8), December, 1969, pp. 59-134; Campa, Buenaventura, O.P., "An Exploratory trip to the Ilongots and the Negritos in 1891," in the *UST Journal of Graduate Research*, Vol. 17, No. 2, March 1988, pp. 67-82.