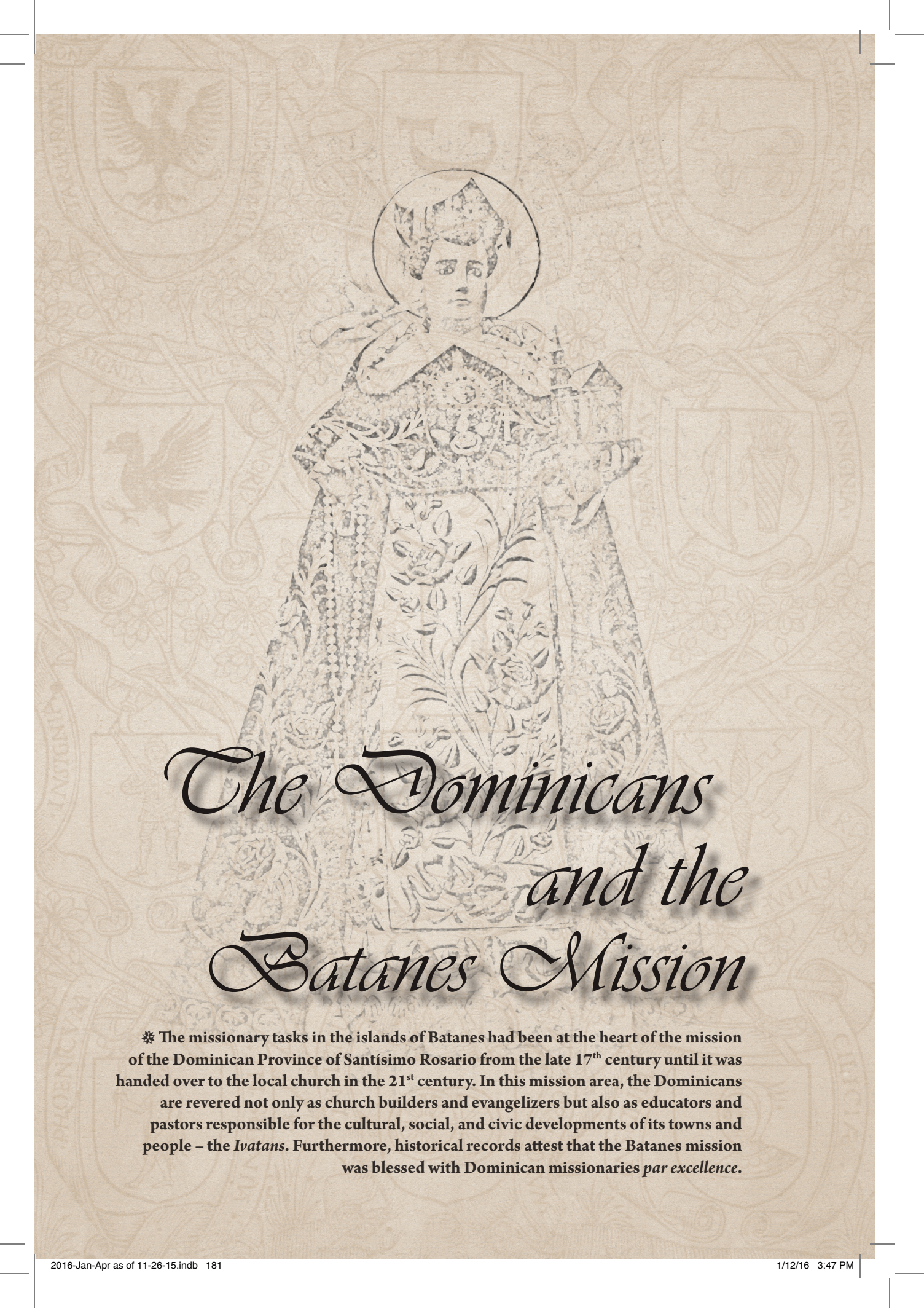




The Dominicans and the Batanes Mission

✱ The missionary tasks in the islands of Batanes had been at the heart of the mission of the Dominican Province of Santísimo Rosario from the late 17th century until it was handed over to the local church in the 21st century. In this mission area, the Dominicans are revered not only as church builders and evangelizers but also as educators and pastors responsible for the cultural, social, and civic developments of its towns and people – the *Ivatans*. Furthermore, historical records attest that the Batanes mission was blessed with Dominican missionaries *par excellence*.



Nicolas Castaño, O.P., (1773-1840): Architect, Engineer, Author, Missionary to Batanes

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The pioneer Dominican missionaries were harbingers of the Word and civilization. Evangelization was the drama of the Incarnation in which lives of people were transformed by the preaching of the Word of God and the refashioning of the physical world to sacramentalize the arrival of the Kingdom of God in various forms of reordering and reorganizing of Nature and social life. It took nearly a century (1686-1783), and many precious lives, before Dominicans finally established a permanent foothold in 1783, on the Batanes islands which lie at the northern tip of the Philippine archipelago. In 1798, a 25 year-old youth, newly ordained priest, (probably) an alumnus of the University of Santo Tomas, arrived in Batanes: Fray Padre Nicolas Castaño, OP. He came to stay for 26 years of his life. He was, by all indications of the records and his activities, an assiduous and good learner of the indigenous culture. He picked up the study of the Ivatan language from where his predecessors left it and carried it on, to be passed on the next generation of Dominican missionaries; and seeing the need for handy catechetical tool, he used his knowledge of the language to write a Catechism of Christian Doctrine (whose manuscript he probably used in preaching), and later prepared for printing—which became the first printed Ivatan text. But while he preached the Word, he, in due time, saw the need to announce the majesty of God in Baroque architecture—the preferred art style used by the Tridentine counter reformation to proclaim the gospel to a largely unlettered world. Father Nicolas built what today continues to be the grandest church facade in the Batanes, and which served as the model and inspiration of all the other later Ivatan churches. He built bridges to ensure that the new Christians had no excuse to miss masses and catechetical instruction on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. He was concerned about the convenience and efficiency of local government officials. So he built decent government buildings for them near the

¹ This is the last article submitted by Dr. Florentino Hornedo to the *Philippiniana Sacra* before he passed away last December 9, 2015.

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churches. By getting the Ivatan people to work with him, they learned in turn how to build homes which have remained typhoon-proof to this day. To make social life more efficient in the new lowland settlements, especially Ivana which in his time was the centre of three tribal communities (Ivana, Itbud/Uyugan, and Sabtang), he arranged streets and roads to facilitate the development of better community spirit—for his vision was certainly ecclesial: communitarian.

Key words: *Evangelization, Baroque, Ivatan, Catechism, community-building*

Father Nicolas Castaño, O.P., is described in 25 lines in a two-column page in *Misioneros Dominicanos en el Extremo Oriente 1587-1835* by Frs. Hilario Ocio, OP, and Eladio Neira, OP.² In view of the material evidence of his missionary work in Batanes from 1798-1824, the Ocio-Neira account is minimal and indicates little of the contributions of Father Nicolas to the Christianization and civilization of the Ivatan people which remain greatly evident to this day: the Catholic Faith, the massive lime-and-stone churches, convents, bridges, and the now iconic Ivatan vernacular domestic architecture. This paper aims to show—to the extent this is still possible this late date—what good and lasting culturally transformative influence this unsung Dominican missionary had on Batanes. (For this purpose, this paper does not include Fr. Nicolas's work in Santa Rosa de Biñan, Laguna, from 1826-1840, where he died.)

Brief Curriculum Vitae³

Fr. Nicolas Castano was born in Acevedo, Leon, in 1773. He entered the Dominican Order at the Convent of San Pablo de Valladolid. At twenty years of age, he joined the Holy Rosary Province. Upon completion of his studies and ordination to the priesthood in the Philippines, he was assigned to the Batanes mission where he served as assistant in Basco from 1798-1802. And from 1802 to 1806, he was assigned as Vicar in the Mission of San Carlos de Mahatao. Then from 1806 to 1810, he was assigned to the Mission of San Jose de Ivana which included the districts of Itbud and San Felix de Itbud.⁴ And finally he was reassigned to the Mission in [Santo Domingo

² Hilario Ocio, OP and Eladio Neira OP, *Misioneros Dominicanos en el Extremo Oriente 1587-1835* (Manila, Filipinas 2000), pp. 418-419. Henceforth, this work will be referred to as Ocio-Neira. (This work is *Orientalia Dominicana, General No. 7*.)

³ Based on Ocio-Neira, *Ibid*.

⁴ Ocio-Neira say "San Felix de Itbayat," which is incorrect. The place which was at that time a place of exile of the people of Sabtang was known as San Felix de Itbud. And it is still called San Felix today, although depopulated because of the return to Sabtang by the exiles in 1841. The Spanish records write "Itbur," but for indigenous Ivatan it is "Itbud." What was then referred to as Itbur is now the municipality of Uyugan; and Itbud is now a barangay of the municipality of Uyugan.

de] Basco, “with Mahatao, and the Blessed Virgin Mary Mission⁵ as extensions for several consecutive years from 1810 to 1824, being at the same time Vicar Provincial.

Around mid-1824, he returned to Manila, and was *definidor* in the Provincial Chapter of 1825 in which he was made Vicar of San Juan del Monte. The following year (i.e. 1826), he was named Vicar and Parish Priest of Santa Rosa de Biñan (Laguna), remaining in this ministry until his death which took place on 8 August 1840.

In the meantime he had been nominated on 14 August 1830 as *Visitador* of the Batanes Islands, and on 20 August 1834 was confirmed as Prior of the Santo Domingo Convent in Manila, but he did not assume the office.

At the end of his brief biography, a note says that his *Catechism of the Christian Doctrine in the Batanes Language* was printed in Manila in 1834.

Father Nicolas Castaño arrived in the Philippines as member of what is known in the chronicles of the Holy Rosary Province as “Mission 45” which arrived on 20 June 1794. He was one of eight Dominicans (two of whom died in transit) who left Spain on board the Warship *San Pedro Alcantara*, stayed briefly in the convent of San Jacinto de Mexico, boarded a ship to the Philippines in Acapulco, and arrived in the Philippines, along with another group which had left Spain earlier in 1893 but had become part of Mission 45, on 20 June 1894.⁶ After his arrival in Manila in 1794, he had to finish his studies toward his ordination, and once ordained to the priesthood, he was assigned to mission in Batanes in 1798, a mission which had been established only 15 years earlier on 26 June 1783.

What Some of His Confreres in Batanes Said of Him

In a historical report by Fr. Felix Serrano, O.P., in San Jose de Ivana in 1888, included in a *reseña* on the Dominican mission in Batanes, he says,

The Rev. Father Fray Nicolas Castaño succeeded Father Sanches [as vicar in Ivana] in 9 October 1802 up to 10 March 1810. This Father ordered the construction of the tribunal, the bridge in the middle of this town of San Jose de Ivana, [and] improved the arrangement of the streets. In his time he printed the *Catechism of Christian Doctrine*—the only book [so far] printed in the Batanes language; he composed the Spanish-Ivatan Dictionary. In the time of Father Castaño paganism was completely eradicated in this

⁵ This probably refers to what is known today as Chanarian which at that time was also known as “Santa Maria del Castillo.” Even today, its Patron Saint is Sta. Maria. This is now known as part of “Barangay Chanarian-Tukon,” belonging politically to the Municipality of Basco. Chanarian lies nearly half-way between Basco and Mahatao.

⁶ Ocio-Neira, pp. 415; 418.

town, for as I look page after page through the books of baptismal records, I find no one but only children. It is also said that Father Castaño was like an *angel tutelar* of all the towns of these islands. He contributed in a grand manner in the building of *tribunales* of this province. The good fame of his name will be imperishable in these islands. He was born in the Villa de Acebedo in the *obispado de Leon*; and son of the Convent of Santo Domingo de Soria.⁷ (Translation mine.)

A note adds that Fr. Nicolas was named *Visitador de las Islas Batanes* because of his outstanding achievements, on 14 August 1830. A look at the glossary of Dominican terminology of designations, *Aclaracion de Terminos* in Ocio-Neira does not show the term *visitador*. It must be one of the local honorific terms which did not have universal meaning in Dominican usage at the time. In 1830, Fr. Nicolas was already stationed in Santa Rosa de Biñan, in Laguna. That he was confirmed (but did not take possession) as Prior of the Convent of Santo Domingo in Manila was certainly a singular distinction and recognition of religious and administrative worth.⁸

In a bibliography of Dominican missionary writings of known authorship, probably by Fr. Anastacio Idigoras O.P., written in Manila in August 1900, a remark concerning Father Castaño's *Catecismo de Doctrina Cristiana* (Manila 1834, 80 pp.) says, *el language es castizo y elevado*.⁹ Father Castaño did his homework in preparing his Catechism. He started by working on a dictionary, ostensibly to acquire proficiency in the language. He hobnobbed with the people of Basco from 1798 to 1802, of Mahatao from 1802-1806; Ivana in southern Batan from 1806-1810, in which years he certainly became familiar with the people of Sabtang and their kind of Ivatan dialect because they were residing in the districts of San Felix in the southern part of Ivana, and in San Vicente district on the northern part of Ivana as exiles from 1792 to 1844; and back to Basco and its outlying district of Chanarian 1810-1824. His work on his Catechism which he started in Batanes was being improved and polished and finally got printed in 1834 some ten years after he had left Batanes. We shall take a closer look at this text later.

⁷ Documentos de Batanes vol. 3, p. 515. This report was written by Fr. Felix Serrano, OP, in Ivana, 22 November 1888, included in a historical summary of the Dominican missions in Batanes from 1686 to 1888. "Documentos de Batanes" is a typescript transcript of documents in the Archivo de la Provincia del Santisimo Rosario (APSR) which used to be at the Fathers' residence at the University of Santo Tomas, Manila. It is in 3 volumes. There are two sets of these transcripts that I know of: one by Fr. Julian Malumbres, OP, and the other by Fr. Honorio Muñoz, OP. I am using Typescript No. 10 of Malumbres (which corresponds to Typescript No. 13 of Muñoz). Henceforth DDB in this paper. Historian Fr. Pablo Fernandez, OP, says Fr. Castaño was a "first rate missionary," in "Founding and Development of the Towns in Batanes, Philippines (1783-1898)," in *Philippiniana Sacra*, vol. XVIII (1983), no. 53, p. 183.

⁸ See Ocio-Neira, p. 12

⁹ DDB, vol. 3, p. 606. "The language is pure and elevated."

Today, the most visible of the legacies of Father Castaño is the facade of the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception at Basco – known as Santo Domingo de Basco before it became a cathedral of the first bishop of the Prelature Nullius of Batanes-Babuyan, the Most Rev. Bishop Peregrin de la Fuente, O.P., DD, in 1950. And the reason for the name is because Batanes from the founding of the Mission in 1783 was put under the Patronage of the Immaculate Conception and named *Provincia de la Concepcion*. Fr. Mariano Gomez, O.P., said in his report in 1889 that “Father Nicolas Castaño erected the facade in the years 1812 to 1825.”¹⁰ It seems that the older facade may have been aligned with the present convent, but he shortened the church and pushed back the facade by “8-9 meters,” leaving a spacious quadrangle front of the imposing facade. In so doing, the facade stands out in a distinct impressive Baroque profile a bit apart from the missionaries’ residence.

The Extant Legacies of Fr. Nicolas Castaño in Batanes

The legacies of Fr. Castaño are: (1) Santo Domingo Church in Basco [now the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception], and its convent, (2) the municipal building of Basco (3) the convent of the Church of San Jose in Ivana, (4) the former *tribunal* of Ivana, (5) the Tuhel Bridge in Ivana, (6) the bridge of Mahatao, (7) an Ivatan Vocabulario, and (8) the *Catechism of Christian Doctrine in the Ivatan Language*. What is called legacies in this section refers to two distinct historical realities which are: (a) the extant architectural/engineering artefacts still in place today, or have been modified since, and (b) the cultural and civilizing consequences of these legacies as they continue existing and living dynamically as heritage in the Ivatan way of life to the present.

The Church of Santo Domingo at Basco and its Convent

It is not known how the appearance of the Church of Santo Domingo at Basco may have looked prior to 1812 when the present facade was constructed under Fr. Castaño was begun, but as it probably had a facade according to the and uppermost broken cornices-proposed stone church of Fr. Francisco de Paula Esteban in 1795, it may have been a dignified but plain structure similar to the facade of the church of Itbayat (See Plate 3) which was reconstructed only at the end of the 1970s by Fr. Domingo Deniz, O.P. (See Plate 4).

Today, the work of Fr. Castaño stands unchanged after over 200 years, except for the restoration of the pediment and the crucifer after the damage done by a strong earthquake (intensity 7.3 on the Richter scale) on 16 July 2000. (See Plates 1 and 2 for a recent photo, and a photo taken over a century ago.)

¹⁰ DDB, vol. 3, p. 544.

The general aspect of the facade is that of a rectangle lying on its length, and surmounted by a nearly equilateral triangle. Binding the rectangle and the triangle are six thick pilasters rising from foundation to top, and serve partly as buttresses. Between the bases of the two central pilaster-buttresses is the main door which is of a round arch crowned on the outer side with a shallow lancet arch. On each of the panels between the pilasters which frame the door and the two pairs of outer pilasters are round arch niches—also crowned with shallow lancet arches. Intersecting, as it were binding, the pilasters on the triangular upper facade are three parallel horizontal broken cornices which form three quadrangular panels between the lower and middle cornices; the central one bears a large window directly above the main door, and illuminates the choir loft. The two side panels are decorated with lancet relief arches. The top central quadrangular panel between the middle and the uppermost broken cornices stands above the rooftop and has two round arches in which hung one bell each—thus qualifying this facade as *espadaña*, thus making a separate campanile unnecessary. The pediment surmounting the bell arches is the crucifer.¹¹ All six pilasters are crowned with baroque finials which lead the eye upwards to the cross at the apex.

The original *cal y canto* (lime and cut stone) material of the wall of the facade was hidden behind a plaster of smooth lime and sand stucco that was masked by layers of lime white wash repeatedly applied over the years prior to the coming of coloured wall paint.

The choir loft located right behind the facade and just above the lobby of the nave was both a functioning choir room and a structural buttress of the facade from the inside. This was especially necessary considering that a number of Dominican church facades in the Cagayan valley had collapsed (e.g. the churches of Iguig, Tocolana, Camalaniugan, the San Vicente funerary chapel, San Pablo) suggesting a structural weakness.¹² But in the immediate post-Vatican II liturgical changes, the choir loft of the Basco church fell into relative disuse and dismantling began in churches like that of Mahatao. Church choirs relocated themselves near the sanctuary during religious services and liturgy. Fortunately, there is a renewed use of the traditional choir lofts

¹¹ Sometime after 1907 when Dean Worcester took a photograph of the church (See Plate 2), crosses were mounted on the two finials on the right and on the left of the crucifer thus it was that for many years there were three crosses at the top of the facade. But when the restoration was done after the earthquake of 2000, the two added crosses were removed in accordance with the evidence of the 1907 photographs.

¹² In fact in Batanes, two other church other than that of Basco's church facade had also been severely damaged: the facade of the Church of San Jose in Ivana by the earthquake of 2000; and the Church of San Vicente Ferrer in Sabtang in October 1956 by a typhoon which blew down the upper faced inwards into the original choir loft which consequently was completely wrecked and never restored. Parish priest in Sabtang during the collapse of the facade in 1956 as well as the grave damage to the facade of the Ivana church in 2000 was Fr. Gumersindo Hernandez, OP, veteran missionary of Batanes for about half a century. It was also he who had them repaired in both cases.

and the reconstructed choir loft of Basco is back and may be serving again its ancient function as a buttress.

The rectory (or convent)¹³ at Basco in 1783 upon the arrival of Fathers Artiguez and Calderon, the pioneers of the permanent founding of the Batanes mission, was built with perishable materials where the Basco municipal building stands today. It is some distance from the site of the first chapel to ensure that in case of fire, the two do not burn together. But in the course of time, as the Fathers learned, Batanes weather can be nasty and distance between their residence and the church building was inconvenient; and by 1795 in the time of Fr. Francisco de Paula Esteban, OP, the solution was a stone convent next to the church which was also to be of stone. Fr. Nicolas first arrived in Basco in 1798 as a 25 year old neophyte, so he did not seem to have had major role in decisions like sites of convents. But in 1812 after returning to Basco from his Ivana assignment, when he was 39, with experience and authority, he built a stone and lime convent large enough not only for the resident missionary but for occasions when it was necessary to accommodate visiting missionaries and guests. The church had been built according to church tradition *ad Orientem* angles with it. (See Plate 2.) It is a large *cal y canto* building with spacious basement, roofed with cogon which one may still see in the 1907 photograph. Over the years, upgrades for new ideas of convenience and efficiency have been added, but on the whole it is as Fr. Nicolas built it with is *paletada* finish.

The Municipal Building of Basco

After the missionaries transferred to the convent of Basco, the erstwhile house of the missionaries was made into *casa real* (government building), and then a *tribunal* (court house).¹⁴ The Fathers' house which became a courthouse was *cal y canto* and its thick walls were eventually retained and incorporated into later enlargements and improvements so that today, the old structure is no longer visible but there is within the structure, what used to be noticeable by the very thick wall of over a meter in thickness.

Streets, Bridges and Tribunal in Ivana

When Fr. Castaño was assigned in Ivana in 1806, there certainly was an existing *cal y canto* convent so there was no need to build one; but he was an improver

¹³ Fr. Neira explains, "*En Filipinas se llamaba convent no solamente la casa religiosa erigida canonicamente como tal, sino tambien a la casa parroquial o residencia de uno o mas religiosos,*" in Ocio-Neira, vol. 1, p.12.

¹⁴ The Provincial Capitol today was the residence of the Spanish governor until 1898. It is a stone building, but in the report of Jose Ma. Peñaranda in 1830, it was still a building of "*carizo y tabla.*" But it was a larger structure, so the smaller one—the former house of the Fathers—became the court house. (See DDB vol. 3, p. 406. Also FG. Hornedo, *Taming the Wind* (Manila: UST Publishing House c2000, p. 63.)

of structures when he was not building one. As Ivana was the missionary centre for southern Batanes covering Ivana, Uyugan and Sabtang, it needed a convent with enough quarters and convenience for several missionaries both residents and transients. Fr. Francisco de Paula Esteban and Fr. Lorenzo Montoya had preceded him, and they had built the church in Radiwan. He was there till 1810.

In his pastoral care as missionary, he focused his attention on the community. He redesigned certain aspects of the community's roads and streets. In his time, the population, in spite of their having been "reduced" to reside "within hearing of the bells," Ivana town is such that a compact settlement cannot be made because the available terrain for building homes is a narrow stretch of littoral land as it still is to this day. So the town was a long linear settlement some two kilometres long from the district of San Felix on the South to Vatang on the north. The settlers on the San Felix district were half of the population of the Island of Sabtang who were in exile in Ivana since 1791; the other half were in San Vicente on the north. And there were settlers, too, in Vatang and a small number of households in Huhmuren on the other side of Mavatuy which added another couple of kilometres to the stretch of the Ivana mission. The challenge to then 33 year-old Dominican Fr. Nicolas was facilitation of socialization and communal cohesion in what was a melting pot of erstwhile very disparate though small community cultures of the native Ivana, the Sabtang exiles who were certainly not happy about their exile and their having to eke out a living daily by cultivating their lands across the seasonally violent Ivana-Sabatang strait, and the Itbud-Uyugan people who were forced out of their mountain homes on the Southeast of the Batan Island. The Church of San Jose built on a hill slope for lack of enough flatland, and also to ensure that the sound of the mission bells could reach farther to announce the liturgical hours was the centre of community and religious life. All roads and streets must lead to it. So Fr. Nicolas made sure that the road that led from the farthest reaches of this community led straight to the Church. This road was the *Calle Real*. And all side roads must lead to this road, too.

But during the Monsoons, the mountains of inland Ivana drained their waters right through the middle of the town at the district called Tuhel. And the flooded brook kept those from north of it from mass on Sundays and Holy Days, and from catechism classes. Fr. Nicolas solution was to build the Tuhel Bridge which has been serving the Ivana people for over 200 years now. (See Plates 5 & 6.) The bridge is made of stones and pebbles held together by a strong mortar of lime and sand. The arches were moulded by well-sewn polished reeds, known in Ivatan as *nidkel* (the same thing used by Ivatan as inner lining and ceiling of their cogon thatch roofs). Traces of how they built the bridge is evident to this day.

When modern vehicles and transport of heavier cargo was seen to threaten the bridge, reinforcements with concrete have been added in the 20th century; and a

new national road with heavier duty bridge has been constructed a block downstream parallel to the old *Calle Real*.

It seems that Fr. Nicolas thought of close coordination and cooperation between Church and local government officials. So the *tribunal* building and ancillary were built not far from the church and convent on elevated ground. And the buildings served Ivana for the next hundred years until the American era redesigned public education and constructed schools in the vicinity of the Spanish era structures, and new town hall was built on lower ground along the new National Road which now connects the town to the rest of the municipalities on the Batan Island.

Making an “Ivatan Dictionary” is often said of him. But the extant evidence of “Ivatan dictionaries” done by the Dominican missionaries to Batanes are called *vocabularies* or plain glossaries or word lists. In the 325 years of Catholic missionary work in the Philippines, I have heard of some three hundred volumes of *Vocabularios de la lengua* and *Artes de la Lengua* with glossaries and grammars of the various ethnic languages of peoples of the Philippines which missionaries studied and documented in book-length works. These are great monuments to the missionaries’ noble, you might say, sublime, desire to have the Filipino people hear the Word of God in their own languages and cultures. Fr. Nicolas, as “a first rate missionary” in Fr. Pablo’s words, did desire with all his heart to be able to preach and administer the Sacraments in the most fruitful way possible to him. He desired to be a first rate preacher so much so that even when he was already assigned to Sta. Rosa de Biñan in Laguna, he continued to work on Ivatan thus publishing the *Catecismo de la Doctrina Cristiana* in 1834—about a decade after he had left Batanes.

There is no separate glossary opus that I know apart from the great collective work of generations of Dominican Missionaries of Batanes from 1686 to 1933. Some contributed more than others certainly, but each compiler of Ivatan lexicon eventually contributed to the enrichment of the common labour, so that in 1915 was published the *Vocabulario Español-Ivatan*, and in 1933 the volume of *Vocabulario Ivatan-Español*. The *Español-Ivatan* was reproduced in a limited number of copies in the 1970s, I was of the impression, by Fr. Excelso Garcia, O.P. (Fr. Gumersindo Hernandez, O.P., who was missionary in Batanes, gave me a copy; and a Librarian at the Rizal Library of the Ateneo de Manila University salvaged in the 1980s a condemned hard bound copy of the 1933 *Ivatan-Español* print and gave it to me.)¹⁵ Fr. Nicolas certainly must have done his own compilation of a glossary in aid of his own apostolic commitments, but I am certain his labour would have been absorbed as enrichment of the communal labour of the missionaries. I say he was certainly a

¹⁵ I have subsequently supervised six Ivatan teachers studying at the Graduate School of the Saint Dominic College of Batanes, Inc. who translated in 1996 the *Vocabulario Ivatan-Español* to English and Filipino for the benefit of Ivatan teachers and students. Their works are at the Ivatan Studies Center at the Saint Dominic College of Batanes in Basco, Batanes.

contributor to the two published glossaries to which contributions as late as the first three decades of the 20th century by Fathers Jose Serres, O.P. and Jesus Fernandez, O.P. (of blessed memory among Ivatans) were still being added.

What matters more is the evidence of Fr. Nicolas lexicographic contribution as indicated in his *Catecismo* for being (1) a pioneer print of Ivatan as a language, and (2) an index to achievements and difficulties of learning a language without the aid of true bilinguals.

The Catecismo de la Doctrina Christiana

The Catechism of Fr. Castaño was a landmark achievement in a long series of missionary communal endeavour by Dominicans striving with devotion and persistence to produce effective instruments and aids to proclaim the Word of God among a people whose culture and language were vastly different from theirs, which was made more difficult by the absence of competent bilinguals to mediate the dialogue between two mutually non-comprehensible languages. That despite the impossible situation the Faith was proclaimed and received so quickly and has lasted for centuries is no less than a miracle.

But for the purpose of this study, this paper will focus on a reader's impressions of the Catechism as printed artefact in Wenceslao Retana's *Archivo del Bibliofilo Filipino*, vol. 2, pp. 269-306.¹⁶ To do this, I shall pay attention to features of the print with a view to facilitating for today's reading of the 1834 text, or provide a sort of bridge between today's Ivatan reader and the palaeography of the text. I shall focus attention on (1) orthography and phonology, and (2) grammar and diction.

1. Orthography and Phonology of the Castaño Text

The vowels are A, E, I, O, U.

a. Fr. Castaño would have understood the vowel A/a as identical to the Spanish A/a.

b. The letter E/e was a problem in orthography because in Ivatan phonology the sound is ə, and since there was no orthographic equivalent for this phonetic symbol, the missionaries including Fr. Nicolas represented it with a digraph that is puzzling to the modern Ivatan reader: UE/ue, as in *namuen* (our) and *iamuen* (us) in the "*El Persignarse*" (The Sign of the Cross). In today's Ivatan orthography now being used by the public schools in Batanes, these are *namen* and *yamen*.

¹⁶ We acknowledge with gratitude the generosity of the University of Santo Tomas Library, Manila, for making available to the writer a complete photocopy of the Retana reprint; and I am grateful to Melany "Melai" Magpantay, doctorate in History student at the University of Santo Tomas Graduate School, for her assistance in obtaining the photocopy of the *Catecismo*. A stamp on the pages of the document indicate that it is part of the Antonio Vivencio del Rosario Heritage Library.

c. The I/i is used rather inconsistently. It is *iamuen* in the *Persignarse*, and *yamuen* in the *Salve Regina*. In fact it is also written interchangeably with Y/y in the rest of the *Salve*.

d. The vowel O/o appears to be interchangeable with U/u. But when it stands alone in the Ivatan article U/u, it is printed as V. But the V appears in the word *Virgen* as in “*Santa Maria Virgen*” where it is obviously sounded as V rather than U.

The Diphthongs ia/ai; au/ua; ay/ya; ei/ie; io/oi

the orthography of the *Catecismo* so that *ai/ia* may well be written as *ay/ya*. These diphthongal pairs appear not to be covered by any consistent rule in Etc.

The Consonants

Ivatan consonants as Fr. Castaño thought of them, and as they appear in the *Catecismo* are the following: B/b; C/c; D/d; F/f; G/g; L/l; M/m; N/n; Ñ/ñ; P/p; R/r; S/s; T/t; Z/z. There are 14 consonants including those that appear only in loan words from Spanish.

a. The consonant B/b is consistently written as standing for the Ivatan sounds of B/b and V/v. *Cabusoyan* (enemy) is sounded as *b* by native speakers; but *anibuen* (hallowed, venerated) is *aniven* to native speakers.¹⁷

b. The consonant C/c is used in the Catechism generally as representing the K/k sound in Ivatan; and in Spanish loan words when it is followed by vowels A/a, O/o, U/u, or by consonants such as R/r, as in *canta* (song), *comulgar* (Holy Communion), *Cruz*, (Cross), *Cristiano* (Christian), *Cristo/Christo* (Christ); but when followed by I/i it is sounded by Ivatan as S/s (which is not how it sounds in Spanish).

c. The consonant D/d in final position is R/r in the *Catecismo*: thus *manganuguer* (to believe), *mapaysecasecar* (to judge). In today’s Ivatan orthography, the two words would be *manganuhad* (to believe), and *mapaysakasakad* (to judge). But it is not consistently so because when he writes *tayuncad* (sign), he uses d as in present day Ivatan.

d. The consonant F/f appears in loan words like *Confirmacion* (the Sacrament of Confirmation), or *Confesal* (Confession).

¹⁷ It may be argued that Ivatan native phonology may have changed. That is possible, but my father who was born in 1892, and my grandparents on both sides who were born in the 1860s-70s with whom I grew up in mid 20th century very clearly distinguished B and V because they affected word meaning: *abu* (nothing, not present) and *avu* (ash); *bahayan* (the upper end of a sloping farmland), *vahayan* (to provide a house for someone), *makabahay* (to reach the upper end of a sloping farm), *makavahay* (to acquire a house), etc.

e. The use of the consonant G/g is puzzling to Ivatan speakers because in the *Catecismo*, it is consistently used to represent the sound like the Tagalog H/h, or the Spanish J/j. In the later editions of the Catechism by the Dominicans in Batanes, the Spanish letter *jota* (sounded like the Tagalog H/h is used; so that the *Catecismo*'s *manganuguer* is *manganuged/manganujed* (where the g is read as *jota* or the Tagalog H/h sound as in the Spanish *general* (general) or *gemir* (to sigh)).¹⁸ But there are more awkward uses of the G/g sounded as the Tagalog H/h, as in *gañit* in the *Padre Nuestro* and *ygogo* in the Ten Commandments. Problem is that *ganit* in Ivatan is "illness" or disease, and *ygogo/igugu* means "cause of a cough." But Fr. Castaño means "heaven" and "to desire" or "to covet."

f. The consonants L/l, M/m, N/n, P/p, R/r, S/s, and T/t do not present problems to present day native Ivatan speakers. But the Ñ/ñ, although not much problem to present day native speakers, is an indigenous sound and presents no difficulty, except in spelling due to attempts of the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino to impose a Tagalog-based notion of writing the Ñ/ñ as NY/ny. Ivatan resists this because Ñ/ñ is indigenous as in many Ivatan words such as *mañina* (precious, holy), *mayñid* (short), *añin* (typhoon).

g. The consonant Z/z is in loan words and proper nouns such as Zacarias, Corazon, Perez, and the like. But Ivatan pronounce it as S/s.

The Digraphs

The digraphs CH/ch, GU/gu, NG/ng, and QU/qu are not much problem for today's Ivatan readers because these are still current in modern orthography; but they also appear in the *Catecismo* in unfamiliar spellings.

a. The Ch/ch is used in the *Catecismo* to represent a sound some linguists indicate with "dz" or the English J/j. But this sound is not in the *Catecismo* phonology. Thus in words like *lichalichat* (suffering, as in "passion of Christ"), Ch/ch is the orthographic equivalent of the sound Dz/dz or the English J/j which is indigenous to Ivatan phonology. Thus the use of Ch/ch is strange. But Ch/ch is correct orthography in native Ivatan words as *vuchid* (cogon), *chidat* (lightning; a species of silver-coloured fish). However, the Ch/ch in frequently used proper nouns are no problem because Christo/Cristo, Christiano/Cristiano appear interchangeably and readers are used to it.

b. GU/gu though not properly a digraph in the way CH/ch and NG/ng are digraphs, they are usually in proper nouns and are not problematic because readers are used to them as names. But for non-proper nouns, Filipinos prefer *gerra* to *guerra*.

¹⁸ In fact the dual sound of the Spanish G/g is still current: G followed by U/u as in *Guerra* (war) or *Echagü* (a proper name) is hard G; but soft (like Tagalog H/h) as in *angel* (angel).

The problematic U after the G, after all, is a device in Spanish to tell the speaker to pronounce the G as a hard sound since without it, the G as in *ginete* (horse rider) is sounded like the Spanish *jota*.

c. NG/ng is native to Ivatan as in the indigenous title for chief (*mangpus*), and many other indigenous words. But its use in the *Catecismo* as final *ng* may be the result of careless listening. *Chirin* (word) is not *chiring*.

d. The QU/qu, like the GU/gu (see above), is a Spanish phonetic device and may not be a problem here.

2. Grammar and Diction

There is much to say about grammar, but let me limit myself to a few non-native speakers trying to learn a foreign language without the aid of competent bilinguals as in the case of the Spanish missionaries vis-a-vis the Ivatan of the 18th century.

The structure of the Spanish as well as English sentences is ordinarily subject-predicate. Ivatan sentence structure is predicate-subject (like many other Philippine languages), thus, “Give us this day our daily bread...” would ordinarily be “*Ituruh Mu diamen sicharaw aya u kanen namen a kararaw....*” But the *Catecismo* says, “*V canen namuen a cararao iturug mo diamuen sicharao aya....*” In English this would be “Our daily bread give us this day...” It is intelligible but awkward; but the Ivatan had to learn it that way—until today. The Spanish form of the Lord’s Prayer followed literally the Latin “*Panem nostrum quotidianum da nobis hodie....*” and then imposed it on Ivatan. “*Kanen namen a kararaw*” is fair enough for “daily bread,” but a more dynamic equivalent would have been “*U ichaviay namen a kararaw....*”

“Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors...” is rendered as “*pacabuguen mo u gatos namuen, acma su capacabo nmuen su gatos nu may gatos diamuen;...*” The word “*may*” is not Ivatan. Later editions of the prayer use “*u nacagatus diamen....*” which is idiomatically correct.

The Spanish “*libranos de mal*” is rendered as “*laungan mo iamen du maraguit.*” *Laungan* (to bend over) is figurative, but it seems *iahuad* (to keep safe from; to protect) would be more appropriate. Enough said, but in fact the later editions of the Catechism used by the Dominicans have corrected many of the grammatical and dictional weaknesses of the Castaño Catechism.

The *Catecismo* of Fr. Nicolas Castaño was a landmark achievement in its own day, and it brought the Ivatan language into the world of printed text. But its shortcomings may be understood as the result of lack of competent bilinguals to mediate the learning and translation of ideas and lexicon across two different

languages and cultures. However, it was works like this that pushed the process of continuing to polish and edit the Ivatan Catechisms over the centuries which in the end were effective channels of evangelizing the Ivatan. And in a rather short time, the whole of Batanes was Christian.

Summing Up

Father Nicolas Castaño, O.P., I affirm was, in Fr. Pablo Fernandez's words, "a first rate missionary." His preaching and its evangelizing and salvific fruits cannot be assessed fully except by God alone; but his civilizing imprint on Ivatan culture and community life is undeniable. All the churches of Batanes after his magnificent facade of the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Basco and its convent and technique of construction is reflected in the best traditional domestic architecture, for there is no doubt that the earliest apprenticeship of native Ivatan house builder was in the building of church and convent pioneered in elegance and technical perfection by Fr. Nicolas. His concern for good town planning and community building was a big boost to building social cohesion in the newly formed lowland towns made up of erstwhile scattered people in the mountains. He organized their roads and streets for them, and built bridges. To give the local governments a sense of purpose and respectability, he built government buildings and court houses for them.

And he carried in his memory and heart the people of Batanes to whom he first came as a young 25 year-old missionary in 1798. He lived with and for them for over 25 years; and when he left them on a new assignment in Santa Rosa in Biñan, Laguna, he brought with him his project of an Ivatan Catechism, worked on it while far away in Laguna, and had it published in 1834, a decade away from his beloved Batanes and its people. ■



Plate 1: The Basco Cathedral façade today

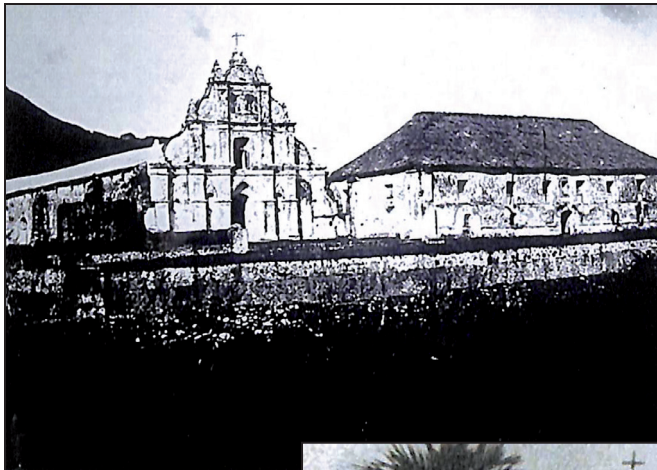


Plate 2: The Basco Church façade and convent in 1907 (photo by D.C. Worcester)

Plate 3: The Itbayat Church in 1977



Itbayat Church, 1977 (Photo by Mar Gabito)

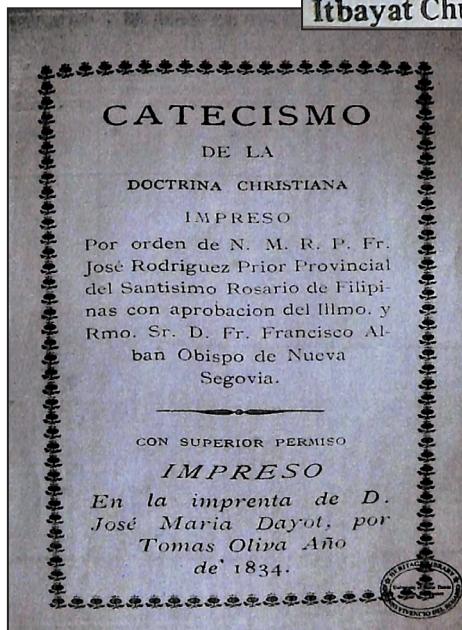


Plate 4: Title page of Fr. Castaño's *Catecismo in Retana*



Plate 5: The Tuhel Bridge in Ivana (Photo 2015)



Plate 4: Title page of Fr. Castaño's *Catecismo in Retana*