

A First Glimpse of the Professors of Philippine Secondary Education in the Spanish Period, 1858–1898

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Abstract: General histories of Philippine education written by Encarnacion Alzona and Evergisto Bazaco do not explain who the professors of secondary education during the Spanish colonial period were. They played a significant part in nineteenth-century Philippine life particularly when we consider that the larger number of educated Filipinos then did not go abroad to study and obtained their formation largely from these professors of secondary education. Yet there are hardly any available body of work that identifies them, their background and training, how they attained their status and most significantly, how they promoted change in light of political and educational reforms in Spain in the last half of the nineteenth century.

Twelve pioneer professors before 1865 and selected professors from 1865–1898, some of whom were native secular clergy are given focus in this preliminary study. The idea of equality associated with the struggle for the secularization of parishes, eventually to blossom into a Filipino nationalist consciousness is the major legacy of these professors as proponents of reform and inimitable heralds of change.

Keywords: *Philippine secondary education, Philippine history, professors, Spanish colonial education, Segunda Enseñanza, History of Philippine Education*

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Introduction

Any study of secondary education in the Philippines in the last half of the nineteenth century will depend on two important works: Encarnacion Alzona's *A History of Education in the Philippines* and Evergisto Bazaco's *History of Education in the Philippines*. Alzona's work was published in 1932 and is the first comprehensive attempt to map out the development of education in the Philippines from the contact period with the Spaniards up to the American period. Bazaco's work, on the other hand, appeared twenty-one years after, in 1953, but mainly concentrated on the Spanish period. Both studies helped to give form and substance to our understanding of Philippine secondary education in the 19th century because they complemented each other in sources and perspective. Alzona made use of available materials from the National Archives of the Philippines and the Philippine National Library. She was also able to compare the French system of secondary education to that of the Philippines in the 19th century, giving a wider berth to our understanding of the subject. For his part, Bazaco provided extended and extensive information on private secondary schools operated by the religious orders, through the use of the archives of Letran, the University of Santo Tomas, and other religious orders, which were not used by Alzona. Bazaco's religious perspective contrasted with Alzona's secular view but they nonetheless balanced each other well.

Both authors attempted to improve upon Camilo Osias' *Education in the Philippine Islands under the Spanish Regime*, which was the first general history of Philippine education to be made in 1917. Osias presented the bare details of buildings, teacher training, curriculum, textbooks, even salaries of teachers. But beyond these requirements as laid down by the Program and Regulation for Secondary Education,¹ there is little else he presented. Alzona's, Bazaco's, and Osias' works conform to their nature as general histories of Philippine education with focus on the Spanish colonial period. The natural tendency of the three works is to focus on the big institutions like Santo Tomas, San Juan de Letran, Ateneo Municipal, and Colegio de San Jose. This is why so much space is allotted for the big schools and hardly any for the smaller private schools. There are official histories and historians of each respective religious order who had discussed and will continue to discuss them. The same cannot be said for the rest of the private secondary schools and the professors of secondary education in each of them, who are the primary means of operationalizing the secondary school program during the Spanish colonial period.

¹ *Programa y Reglamento de Segunda Enseñanza para las Islas Filipinas*. Manila: Imprenta del Real Colegio de Santo Tomas, 1866.

Until now, this group of educators is hardly known, information about these *profesores de segunda enseñanza* are quite uneven. Some achieved recognition for their roles as politicians, medical doctors, lawyers, or priests. But they are hardly given credit as teachers of secondary education during the Spanish period considering the crucial part they clearly played as arbiters of students' readiness for a Bachelor of Arts degree and tertiary education. Most significantly, they influenced the education received by *ilustrados*,² who took the lead in the rise of Philippine nationalism in the 19th century, most of whom did not go to Spain or other countries for further studies. These educators enabled young Filipinos at that time, to develop skills, ideas, and a mindset which eventually transitioned to a nationalist consciousness.

This study therefore, is geared towards the identification of these professors of secondary education in the Philippines from 1858–1898. Using the official records of secondary education at the Archives of the University of Santo Tomas, which was designated as the Official Inspector of Secondary Schools as provided for in the Regulation for the foundation of secondary education in the Philippines,³ this study will look at their collective background, training, and experience showing how these had influenced the kind of education received by generations of young Filipinos who fuelled the movement for reforms, the separation from Spain, the creation of the Malolos Republic, and the rise of Philippine nationalism. Through the *Libros de Matriculas* or enrolment lists from 1866-1898; the *Diligencias de Grados* or Minutes of Examinations, *Notas Academicas*, some extant official textbooks, official reports, among others, preliminary but significant information arise about the professors of secondary education. These, in turn, provide a vista not just of the teachers but also of the actual direction that Philippine secondary education took from 1858 - 1898, as their careers developed simultaneously with the establishment and growth of private secondary schools in the Philippines in the same period.

In particular, the professors in Manila, Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, Bulacan, and Pampanga are given priority in this study because secondary education began in Manila and eventually expanded North and South of it, in the very provinces named above, which had the largest populations and best geographic proximity to the capital. As far as the records allow, links between some professors and students are established to support the idea that these connections had some bearing on the roles that a number of students took in the last quarter of 19th century Philippines when

² Literally meaning “enlightened” from the period of Enlightenment in the 18th century, beginning in France and later spread to other European countries. In this study, the use of the term *ilustrado* refers to the educated class which is not limited to those with a university degree. It includes those who had been able to acquire a Bachelor of Arts degree, which is the equivalent to a high school degree today.

³ Ibid., p. 15.

some of the most defining moments of Philippine nationalism and social change occurred.

To be adequate, a discussion of Philippine secondary education from 1866-1898 necessitates going back to the period before 1866 because the roots of secondary education began much earlier. It also contextualizes the educational reforms of 1865 which was preceded by the establishment of primary education in the Philippines.

Secondary Education Before 1865

Although Philippine secondary education was officially organized through the Royal Order of 20 May 1865⁴, it did not preclude the existence of secondary schools before that. Secondary schools grew out of the need to bridge the gap between primary education and higher education in the late 17th century since both were in existence a century earlier.⁵ *Colegios* were established to offer humanities and grammar courses initially to children of Spaniards, because they were needed in preparation for an ecclesiastical career. Eventually, what was referred to as secondary education before 1865 were basically pre-university courses in grammar and the humanities.⁶ Spanish and Latin grammar must be mastered by a student if he is interested in pursuing university degrees in Philosophy and Theology.⁷ The Grammar courses were offered at the *Colegio de Santo Tomas* (actually a residential college, distinct from the university), *Colegio de San Jose*,⁸ *Ateneo Municipal*, and the *Colegio de San Juan de Letran*. These are the actual colleges in existence by the middle

⁴ Alzona, Encarnacion. *History of Education, 1565 – 1930*. Manila: University of the Philippines Press, 1932, 122.

⁵ Schumacher, John N. *Readings in Philippine Church History*. Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 1979, 195. Schools were opened by pioneering missionaries after the founding of towns and churches. Children were taught how to read and write as part of the evangelical process. The Franciscans were specially known for these kinds of schools. The Jesuits founded the *Colegio de San Ignacio* in 1595, eventually becoming a university.

⁶ Grammar studies involved the study of three languages – Latin, Greek, and Spanish. It also included Christian Doctrine, Arithmetic, Rhetoric, Poetry, History, Good Manners and Hygiene, and Music. Humanities actually refers to the course on Philosophy which included advanced Mathematics courses, Natural and Physical sciences, and the purely philosophical courses like Metaphysics, Cosmology, Ontology. See Bazaco, Evergisto. “La Escuela Filipina en el Pasado” in *UNITAS*, Vol. XXVI, No. 2, April – June 1953, 401-402.

⁷ Villarroel, Fidel. *A History of the University of Santo Tomas: Four Centuries of Higher Education, 1611 – 2011*. Manila: UST Publishing House, 2012, 67–68.

⁸ *Colegio de San Jose* was founded by the Jesuits in 1601 and was originally intended as a seminary for Spanish children. It functioned as such until the 1768 expulsion of the Jesuits leaving the students to transfer to other *colegios*. It was later taken over by the secular clergy and converted to a secondary school in 1865 following the official establishment of secondary education. In 1875, the Spanish Crown ordered the turnover of the college and its haciendas to the University of Santo Tomas, which was authorized to install the Faculty of Medicine and Pharmacy there. Rizal had his classes in Medicine in the building of San Jose when he was a UST student from 1877-1881.

of the 19th century where secondary education may be obtained. All of them were in Manila, specifically Intramuros.

As a whole, there was no definite organization nor structure for Philippine secondary education before 1865. Students were not classified according to their level of learning but grouped according to the number of years they have reached based on courses they finished. If one failed a course, he simply re-enrolled until he was assessed to be ready for the next level. There was no limit to the number of times a course was taken, provided that a student should have finished, aside from Spanish and Latin Grammar, Rhetoric, Christian Doctrine, Poetry, Religion, and Urbanity, within six years. Only the professor may decide on whether the student was ready to go to the university. All students have had to pass the oral exam supervised by the *Junta de Censura*, usually chaired by the UST Rector. The rest was usually composed of diocesan clergy and one other Dominican friar.⁹

This dynamic period saw world events like industrial, scientific, and technological advancements combining with Philippine developments such as the integration of the Philippine economy to the world economy and the rapid rise in population from the 18th–19th centuries, to make literacy a premium requirement for as many people as possible in a modern world. As more and more students entered secondary schools fed by a steadily expanding population and a newly-formed, financially-capable middle class, private Latinity schools mushroomed in Manila. Without legislation or officially set standards for schools and teachers, many of those who took courses in *Gramatica* or *Latinidad*, oftentimes not completing them or even flunking university courses, set up secondary schools so that by 1857, the quality of students and secondary education had deteriorated considerably. The situation was so bad it prompted the Rector of the University of Santo Tomas to petition the Governor General to regulate the quantity and quality of Latinity schools. The *Reglamento de Escuelas de Latinidad* became the interim set of rules and regulations aimed at setting a specific standard for Philippine secondary education, specifically the qualification of teachers or *profesores*.¹⁰ This was incorporated into the 1865 official program for secondary education.

By the very next year–1858, three men were granted the title *Profesor de Latinidad* by passing the oral examination given by the *Junta de Censura*. Fr. Domingo Treserra, UST Rector; Frs. Pedro Perez and Andres Chavali, Lectors of Grammar and Humanities; Don Felix Pardo de Tavera, Don Bonifacio Saez de Vizmanos, and Fr.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ See the detailed discussion of this problem in Villarroel, *A History of the University of Santo Tomas*, II, 67 ff.

Zeferino Gonzalez, O.P., Inspectors).¹¹ They were: Sinforoso Apacible, Catalino Jose de Villafranca and Antonio F. Puansen. They became the first teachers to open the first three approved private secondary schools in the Philippines operated by private individuals, not by religious orders before 1865. Within the next seven years before the Royal Decree of 1865 was issued by Queen Isabela, nine more professors would follow the initial three. As pioneers in teaching secondary education, they laid the foundation for what was to be called *Segunda Enseñanza* in 1865.

The First Professors of Latinity/Humanities

Aside from the three professors mentioned above, the nine others who qualified for the title *Profesor de Latinidades/Humanidades* are: Juan Evangelista (1859); Santiago Endaya (1859); Quintin Zalvidea (1861); Agapito Layog (1862); Jose Flores (1862); Pedro Zamora del Corro (1863); Catalino Sanchez (1863); Benedicto de Luna (1863); and Hipolito Magsalin (1865). All together, they became the forerunners of the professors of secondary education who played a significant but little-acknowledged part in transforming the structure of nineteenth-century Philippine society.

Following the requirements laid down by the *Reglamento* in 1858, all of these men acquired degrees in Philosophy at the University of Santo Tomas after their Bachelor of Arts. As expected, they had to satisfy quite stringent requirements to be granted the title *Profesor de Latinidad*. This was the government's response to the proliferation of Latinity schools and teachers who had neither the quality and qualification, nor the guarantee of learning frowned upon by the Spanish colonial government. Applying for the title had to be through a letter to the Governor General himself, whereupon the applicant was to be directed to a Board of Censors, which would determine his competence to teach by an oral examination on all the subjects he would handle. This board would issue an announcement whether they grant or deny the title. The first members of said board, appointed by the Governor General, were enumerated above.¹²

In addition to knowledge in the subjects he would teach, the applicant was also expected to have the aptitude, good conduct, and religiosity to infuse morality in the conduct of his students, to be confirmed by the parish priest of his birth place for the duration of his stay there; in the current place where he would reside and where he would plan to open the school; and the Provincial Chief, respectively. They would validate his exercise of prudence, informing the board of the circumstances and

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² *Reglamento*, 43-44.

conduct of the applicant. If the applicant would satisfy all the above requirements, then he would be granted the title *Profesor* with all the rights and privileges provided in the same *reglamentos*.¹³

There is very little information about these twelve pioneering professors of secondary education to go by. It is safe to say however, that six of them were *indios* (Endaya, Layog, Flores, De Luna and Magsalin); two were Chinese *mestizos* (Puansen and Sanchez); and the remaining five do not have data to classify them under a specific race category (Apacible, Villafranca, Evangelista, Zalvidea, and Zamora del Corro).¹⁴ It is interesting to note that eight of them were born in the *arrabales* or what became districts around Intramuros, considered the city proper of Manila at that time. Binondo, Sta. Cruz, Ermita, and Tondo were the most populous of the districts that ringed Intramuros then. One person each was born in the provinces of Pampanga, Batangas, and Laguna. One had no identified place of birth.

The information above has congruence with the development of secondary education in the Philippines. The first secondary schools were opened in and around Manila, eventually spreading to the outlying provinces around it. It is logical that the first secondary school teachers would also originate from the same areas since their residents would have the first chance to avail of secondary education, a requisite to enter the University of Santo Tomas to obtain a Licentiate in Philosophy. With this degree from the university, becoming a teacher in secondary schools was possible and attainable. By mid-19th century, the number of *indios* and Chinese *mestizos* had long eclipsed the Spanish, Creole, and Spanish *mestizo* population not just in the districts of Manila, in Intramuros, or the provinces, but in the very schools themselves from primary to university level. It is not surprising that half of the pioneering twelve professors were *indios* living in the immediate settlements outside of the city, while three of the largest provinces in terms of population would have one representative each.

It is significant to point out that two of the twelve professors were members of the secular clergy and that only three out of the twelve – Puansen, Zalvidea, and Flores, were authorized to teach the third year courses in secondary education. This means that they had Licentiates in Philosophy and more importantly, they passed another oral examination given by the Committee on Censorship. The rest were strictly authorized to handle just the first two years of secondary education.¹⁵ These

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ *Notas Academicas, 1858 – 1865*, Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomas, Manila. In their petition addressed to the UST Rector, applicants present details of their place of birth, race, and education. Not all the applicants identified their race category.

¹⁵ Ibid.

basic statistical data would practically become the general trend for all the secondary school professors identified from the five provinces of Cavite, Batangas, Laguna, Bulacan, and Pampanga including Manila from 1865–1898. Secondary education gained even more significance and relevance when courses in Medicine, Pharmacy, Philosophy and Letters were opened in Santo Tomas starting in 1871 and 1896 respectively. It should be kept in mind that even before these courses were offered, the course in Law opened in 1734 at Santo Tomas. Even earlier than that, the courses in Philosophy, Theology, and Canon Law were offered in Santo Tomas from the 17th century. Secondary education therefore, had long been considered important because it was a requirement to be able to pursue a university course.

Organizing and Reforming Philippine Secondary Education, 1865–1898

Since the beginning of the 19th century, Spain had been attempting to introduce educational reforms in fits and starts right in her own country. The unstable political conditions there had taken a toll, causing the delay of needed reforms. The fierce struggles between the Liberals and Conservatives characterized most of the nineteenth century in Spain. A liberal prime minister and cabinet would initiate changes, only to be quickly reversed by the return to power of the conservatives and vice versa. In 1857, during a period when the liberals were in control, the Moyano Law was passed which nationalized and organized a public education system in Spain.¹⁶ This law would eventually have a profound effect on the Philippines. It coincided with the recommendation made by the UST Rector to regulate the Latinity schools in Manila in the same year and produced the regulations for secondary education which were eventually incorporated into the whole program of secondary education in the Philippines in 1865.

Several committees on educational reform were formed in Manila as early as 1832 taking their time and without clear results of their work.¹⁷ After six years from the time of the Moyano Law, Spain finally addressed the educational concerns in the Philippines. The Royal Decree of 1863 officially established the public elementary school system during the Spanish colonial period. This order has yet to find its rightful place into the teaching of general Philippine history. The few who had read about it, more often than not, unfortunately interpreted its provisions to also cover secondary education. This is far from accurate and very misleading. The Spanish Crown issued the Royal Decree of 1865 which formally set up a national public secondary school

¹⁶ Payne, Stanley G. *A History of Spain and Portugal*, 2 Volumes. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1973. 456).

¹⁷ Villarroel, *A History of the University of Santo Tomas*, Vol. II, 100.

system which was standardized and required.¹⁸ It was called *Segunda Enseñanza* or secondary education.

Among its most salient features are: the authorization for students to voluntarily study the Chinese language, likewise requiring the understanding of French and English; that qualified persons will be able to pursue their education without seriously affecting the collection of funds in the islands, with the University and colleges concerned finding the means to bring the reform forward; the payment of a minimum matriculation fee; the requirement of Spanish as the medium of instruction, and that students should at least be nine (9) years old to begin secondary studies.¹⁹

The University of Santo Tomas played an extraordinary role in this system because of its *Colegio de Santo Tomas*, the secondary school that was part of its operations. The *colegio* was declared as the sole public school in the Philippines and the rest classified as private.²⁰ Santo Tomas, Letran, Ateneo Municipal, and the *Colegio de Bacolor* (Pampanga) were considered the only first class schools while the rest were ranked second class. For most of the thirty-three-year period, the secondary school system was in operation, only Santo Tomas and the Ateneo Municipal offered the complete five-year course on secondary education. They alone possessed the laboratories in Chemistry and Physics, as well as museums of natural history and other related requirements.²¹ The *Colegio of Bacolor's* records covered only four years, from 1866–1870.²² It ceased to operate after that. In 1891, the diocesan seminaries in Vigan, Nueva Caceres, Cebu, and Jaro were allowed to offer courses for the Bachelor of Arts degree and added to the first class schools. Majority of the private secondary schools offered only the first two years of secondary education. Yet there were a select few which were permitted to offer the third year. Credit must be given to the teachers of these schools who passed an examination supervised by Santo Tomas. They are: Fr. Mariano Sevilla, Enrique Mendiola, Ignacio Villamor, Jose Flores, Sebastian Virrey, Ramon Salinas, Quintin Zalvidea, Fr. Valerio Malabanan, and Cayetano Laurena. All the schools they operated were in Manila with only the last two (Malabanan's and Laurena's) schools in Batangas.²³

¹⁸ See the 1865 Royal Order in *Programa y Reglamento de Segunda Enseñanza para las Islas Filipinas*, 3 – 4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5 ff.

²⁰ See Art. I of the *Programa y Reglamento*.

²¹ Articles 73-76 of the *Programa y Reglamento*.

²² *Libro de Matricula de Segunda Enseñanza, 1866 – 1870*. Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomas, Manila, Philippines.

²³ Villarreal, 107.

Many of the professors of secondary education stated earlier were famous historical figures, but not always for being excellent teachers. In addition, they comprise only a small part of the larger number who are lesser known or even unknown. It is important to examine the individuals who were the prime movers and shakers of the secondary school system during the Spanish colonial period. At the same time, it is even more significant to study the collective lives of the *profesores de segunda enseñanza* to understand how they promoted social transformation at a time when there was clamor in Spain and in the Philippines for reforms in the last part of the nineteenth century.

Identifying the Professors of Secondary Education

By Province

The spread of secondary education may be traced by identifying the province where each teacher resided or was born. According to Villarroel, there were 247 individuals who were granted the title Professor of secondary education from 1865–1898.²⁴ This preliminary study covers only 177 people out of 247 professors. The following table shows the distribution of professors according to the geographical coverage of this study:

TABLE 1.0
Distribution of Professors per Province
1865-1898

Manila	37
Batangas	22
Laguna	8
Cavite	8
Bulacan	19
Pampanga	25
No Data	30
TOTAL	177¹

The sample size (177) is more than 2/3 of the total number of professors and more than a simple majority. If those without any indicated province, or were born

²⁴ Ibid, 103. Villarroel provides a table which gives a breakdown of the number of titles awarded per year grouping.

outside the six provinces where this study is focused (30) is subtracted from the sample size, the result is 147, still more than 50% higher than the total number of professors. The results also showed that Manila had the largest concentration of professors with 37, which has quite a difference from the second highest concentration in Pampanga with 25 and the third highest concentration in Batangas with 22.

From the beginning of the secondary school system in 1865, Manila had played a leading role from the number of teachers and even in the number of existing schools. A look at the year 1896-1897 which had the last complete entries in the *Libro de Matricula*, showed that Manila had at least 25 secondary schools, followed by Batangas which only had 7, then Pampanga and Laguna tied with 5 each, and Cavite and Bulacan both with 2 each.²⁵ These figures imply three things. Firstly, that those licensed to teach did not necessarily operate schools. Since the *Programa and Reglamento* mentioned and allowed private tutoring, many of those who did not have the capital to establish a school may have chosen to concentrate on that. Secondly, is the possibility that they engaged in teaching as a means to obtain higher degrees in Law and Medicine. Lastly, that not all those given the title stayed in the Philippines to practice or lived long enough to engage in teaching for many years. Allowance must also be given to those outside of the provinces covered because the information on which this category is based is the birth place. It is quite possible that some of them set up schools in Manila although they were not born in Manila nor in any of the five provinces on which this study is focused. A good example is Ignacio Villamor who was born and raised in Bangued, Abra. He obtained his *Bachiller en Artes* from the Colegio de San Juan de Letran in 1885, passed the examination to teach in 1888 and set up his first school in Intramuros not long after. In 1891, he transferred his school to Quiapo where it was still operating in 1897. He was one of the best teachers of his time as shown by the big enrolment in his school.²⁶

By Race

Race classification was done throughout the Spanish colonial period. The categories in the following table are taken from the records as they actually appear and are simply tabulated for better presentation.

²⁵ Libro de Matriculas de Segunda Enseñanza, 1896-1897.

²⁶ Libro de Matriculas, 1881-1885 and Notas Academicas, 1888.

TABLE 2.0
Distribution of Professors by Race, 1865 - 1898

Indio	78
Mestizo Chino	9
Mestizo Español	4
Español Filipino	2
Mestizao	2
Español Peninsular	2
No Data	80
TOTAL	177²

The figures for those without race classification is 80 which is only slightly higher than the figures for Indios which is 78. This number taken together with the rest of the categories (19) add up to 97, definitely higher than a simple majority of 89 or 90. It should be pointed out that the classification by race is arbitrary, showing 2 mestizos without any indication whether they are Chinese mestizos or Spanish mestizos. In the second half of the nineteenth century, the Chinese mestizos began to identify themselves with indios according to a leading authority on Chinese Filipinos.²⁷ There are also indications that Spanish mestizos and Spaniards born in the Philippines identified themselves with indios, as the examples of Fr. Jose Burgos and Fr. Pedro Pelaez demonstrate.²⁸ Whatever the case, it is indisputable that the indios made up a significant part of the professors of Philippine secondary education from 1865-1898 despite the absence of information on a number of them, because there was never a time in the whole Spanish colonial period that the Spaniards (born in Spain, in the Philippines, or other Spanish colonies) outnumbered the natives of the Philippines.

Secular Clergy

Nine of the professors were members of the secular clergy. The number is small but significant based on the good quality of students who were mentored by

²⁷ See Wickberg, Edgar. *The Chinese in Philippine Life*. 1850-1898. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965).

²⁸ See Villarroel, Fr. Jose Burgos – University Student. (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1971). Fr. Burgos was a Spanish mestizo while Fr. Pelaez was the son of Spaniards born in the Philippines. Both played a leading role in the struggle for the secularization of Philippine parishes, which pitted the regular orders, mainly composed of Spaniards against the secular clergy which by then was made up of native priests or indios.

these priests. The most outstanding of them were: Fr. Valerio Malabanan, Fr. Mariano Sevilla, and Fr. Perfecto Mañalac. It is not difficult for a secular priest to be a teacher of secondary education since they took up Philosophy and Theology in the university and later in the 1890s, in the seminaries. Members of religious orders teaching in private colleges were the only ones exempted from having the required university degree.²⁹ Members of the secular clergy have had acquired degrees in Philosophy and Theology before their ordination, with some opting to go to higher studies for their licentiate and doctorate degrees.

Fr. Valerio Malabanan was the oldest of the nine secular priests in this study. Having been ordained before the Royal Decree of 1865, he automatically qualified to teach at the secondary level.³⁰ He was said to have requested to “retire from pastoral duties” in the same year, then opened a school for secondary education in Tanauan, Batangas.³¹ In fact, Fr. Malabanan’s name appears in the *Libro de Matricula* as professor of the school which he founded only in 1871. He was then 40 years old, relatively young to seek retirement or to be permitted to do so. His students won awards in academic excellence many times, for which they had to travel to Manila for the examinations. One of those outstanding students was Apolinario Mabini.³²

Fr. Mariano Sevilla was ordained in 1863 and assigned to various posts and parishes. He taught at the Colegio de San Jose at one time, and at another, was chaplain of the Military Hospital. He obtained a doctoral degree in Theology from the University of Santo Tomas.³³ As a contemporary of Burgos, he became involved in the issue of the secularization of parishes and actively supported the movement. Exiled to the Marianas in 1872 as a consequence of the Cavite Mutiny, he was allowed to return to the Philippines in 1874. His name as professor of secondary education first appears in the *Libro de Matricula* of 1881. Struggling with only a few students during the early years, his school later became one of the most sought-after educational institutions in Manila.

²⁹ Art.11, Capitulo II, *Programa y Reglamento*, 17.

³⁰ Only the details pertaining to being professors of secondary education will be included in this study specially because these are the portions of their lives that are not known, inaccurately disseminated or both. For additional information on the secular priests in this section, see E. A. Manuel’s *Dictionary of Philippine Biography*. 9 volumes. (Quezon City: Filipiniana Publications, 1955). Lesser known figures do not have any available biographies at all.

³¹ This information is from *Filipinos in History* published by the National Historical Institute in 1990, Vol. 22, 35 – 36.

³² For the details of the success of Fr. Malabanan’s students in academic competitions see Villarroel, “Apolinario Mabini – His Birthdate and Student years” in *UNITAS*, Vol. 50, Nos. 2 – 3, 1977, 322.

³³ He was part of the period referred to by Schumacher as the “flowering of the Secular Clergy” in “The Filipino Clergy Yesterday and Tomorrow”. De la Costa, Horacio and John N. Schumacher, *The Filipino Clergy*. (Quezon City: Loyola House of Studies, 1982, 91-96).

Fr. Perfecto Mañalac y del Rosario like Fr. Malabanan and Fr. Sevilla, was able to open a secondary school in San Roque, Cavite in 1878 which lasted until 1882. There are no other information from the records after that. From among his students, three stand out: Daniel Tria Tirona, Ladislao Diua and Mariano Trias y Montoya. Daniel Tirona disrupted the elections in Tejeros during the revolution in 1897, Ladislao Diua was co-founder of the Katipunan while Mariano Trias became one of the generals under Aguinaldo.³⁴

The six other secular priests are not as famous as Fr. Malabanan and Fr. Sevilla. This is not only because secondary education has not been scrutinized as closely as it should as a research topic but also due to the lack of information on the priests. Fr. Pedro Zamora del Corro and Fr. Catalino Sanchez were part of the twelve pioneers in teaching secondary education prior to the 1865 decree. The documents from the *Notas Academicas* include letters which they wrote as part of their individual petition to teach in a secondary school, to establish a school or to transfer residence. Fr. Zamora was petitioning to open a school in Binondo in 1863, for which reason he was also requesting permission from the Archbishop in a separate letter, to allow him to live outside the Conciliar Seminary (San Carlos). Even more sparse is the information in Fr. Sanchez's letter: that he is a Chinese mestizo, born in Sta. Cruz, Manila and petitioning to open a school. Nothing more is available from his file.³⁵ In 1877, Fr. Cesar Anaya y Castellanos was given the title *Profesor de Segunda Enseñanza* but no other information is available, not even his birthplace. Frs. Miguel Catala y Contreras, Manuel Roxas y Manio, and Isidoro Torres y Dayao do not have any data at all except for their birthplace. Fr. Catala was born in Bauan, Batangas, Fr. Roxas in Calumpit, Bulacan, and Fr. Torres in Malolos, Bulacan.³⁶

At this point, it is relevant to ask why secular priests comprised a small but significant number of secondary teachers from 1865 up to the end of the Spanish colonial period in 1898? Why were they engaged in secondary education when they were all supposed to be working in parishes? The answer is simple: because there was a very limited number of parishes available for assignment to native secular priests. This situation had its roots in the 18th century,³⁷ when the secular clergy had a stunted beginning, a premature launch, a slow, painful growth, and impressive results beginning in 1850. Ironically, just as they were beginning to prove themselves quite up to and even exceeding expectations of the Spaniards specially the regular orders,

³⁴ *Notas Academicas*, 1878-1882.

³⁵ *Notas Academicas*, 1863.

³⁶ *Notas Academicas*, 1877, 1887, and 1897 respectively.

³⁷ The highs and lows of the development of the Filipino secular clergy is discussed in the excellent work of De la Costa and Schumacher. See footnote no. 35.

other foreigners and fellow natives, circumstances converged to deny them the credit they had worked long and hard to attain and rightfully deserve.

Two royal orders caused the long-standing enmity between the secular clergy and the religious orders to flare up again and fuel the burning issue of the secularization of parishes. On March 9, 1849, the King of Spain issued an order in which eight parishes in Cavite were to be turned over to the Recollects, as requested by their Procurator. This was unwelcome news for the native clergy because the said parishes covered by the order had been under them for a long period. It was at this point that two of the most accomplished members of the secular clergy became partners in organizing their colleagues in resisting the royal order and trying to get it revoked.³⁸ This were Fr. Pedro Pelaez, Vicar Capitular of the Cathedral Chapter meaning he was the acting Ecclesiastical Governor of the Archdiocese of Manila after the death of the Archbishop;³⁹ and Fr. Mariano Gomez, Vicar Forane of Cavite. Their work became more important after the issuance of another royal order on 1 September 1861 which took away more parishes in the Archdiocese of Manila to be given to the Recollects as part of their compensation for the parishes, missions, and other work they turned over to the Jesuits who returned to the Philippines and concentrated in Mindanao.⁴⁰ Pelaez worked harder to the point that he petitioned that the Archbishop to recommend the royal order's revocation. To the deep regret of all, Pelaez died in the earthquake of 1863 which caused tremendous damage to Manila and killed a sizeable portion of its inhabitants.

Fr. Jose Burgos took over from Pelaez and capably continued the work he left unfinished. In 1864, Burgos even wrote a *Manifiesto* in Pelaez's defense which was published in Madrid.⁴¹ In the years that followed, he never relented in his position even when he received a letter from the Archbishop of Manila reprimanding him for deterring several members of religious orders recently arrived from Spain from taking over their parishes in Cavite. His reply is best read but Burgos makes clear that "we are all equal in God's sight, the Filipinos deserve better treatment in Church."⁴² We are familiar with his own tragic end: implicated in the 1872 Cavite Mutiny, tried by a military court in secret and executed in Bagumbayan by *garrote vil* with Frs. Gomez and Zamora. Thus, in 1872, the secularization movement was violently crushed. All

³⁸ Schumacher in *The Filipino Secular Clergy*, 92.

³⁹ Villarroel, *A History of the University of Santo Tomas*, II, 93.

⁴⁰ Fernandez, Pablo. *History of the Church in the Philippines (1521 – 1898)*. (Manila: National Bookstore, 1979), 122-123.

⁴¹ A portion of it appears in Schumacher, John. *Readings in Philippine Church History*, (Quezon City: Loyola School of Theology, 1979), 222-223.

⁴² Both the Archbishop's and Burgos' letters are published in De la Costa, Horacio. *Readings in Philippine History*. (Manila: Bookmark, Inc., 1965), 178-179.

those directly or remotely suspected of being part were arrested, majority of whom were exiled in the Marianas. (One of them was Fr. Mariano Sevilla.)

In the very year that Philippine secondary education was officially organized in 1865, the Filipino secular clergy was locked in a losing battle for the parishes they ministered, some of them since the late 18th century.⁴³ This year also fell within what Schumacher referred to as “the flowering of the secular clergy” which he arbitrarily put between 1850-1872.⁴⁴ After the 1872 Cavite Munity and the execution of Gomburza, the Spanish government’s perception that the secular clergy fomented rebellion only gave rise to more unemployed native priests. The answer to the questions above is now even clearer: Filipino secular priests who did not have any parish assignment, or with no job as a consequence of the official policy of the Spanish Crown to reduce the parishes under their control, found an opening for themselves as Profesores de Segunda Enseñanza or Professors of Secondary Education. Teaching was traditionally a part of the parish priest’s function since the early days of Spanish colonization. A Filipino secular priest was not likely to arouse suspicions when teaching in a secondary school, handling students who were generally from nine to sixteen years old. The situation was aided by the fact that the University of Santo Tomas had a long history of assigning the teaching of Latin Grammar to the secular clergy in the Colegio de Santo Tomas.⁴⁵ Having the secular clergy as teachers in secondary schools was not a new idea. At the same time, a nationally integrated secondary school system which began in Spain then extended to the Philippines would inevitably garner a higher appreciation of the secular clergy’s qualifications, specially when a number of them lived up to their reputation of being university educated. As professors of secondary education, they shaped values, planted ideas, and influenced the mindset of generations of students. Some of these students in turn, became professors of secondary education themselves, to continue what their mentors began.

Chain of Crucial Connections

It is not an accident that the development of Filipino nationalist consciousness took place right within the period when Philippine secondary education was operational. Some of the best and the brightest among the lay and religious, so to speak, had a hand in the formation of the country’s intellectual class - the *ilustrados*. The name of Rizal is always invoked when they are mentioned, so are the names of Lopez Jaena and del Pilar. It should be remembered however, that

⁴³ A fairly recent work enriches our understanding of where these parishes are, and who were their parish priests. See Jose, Regalado Trota. *Curas de Almas*. 4 Vols. (Manila : UST Publishing House, 2008).

⁴⁴ De la Costa and Schumacher, *The Filipino Clergy*, 91.

⁴⁵ Villaruel, *A History of the University of Santo Tomas*, II.

the larger part of the *ilustrados* were home grown, who never went to Europe for higher education. Even less in number were those who obtained university degrees. But nearly all of them had undeniably attained a certain level of secondary education with a significant portion who were successfully able to finish the course. These were the individuals who worked without fanfare but made the most difference. I refer in particular to the professors of secondary education to whom we owe the ideas, examples, and the mindset that bore fruit as Filipino nationalist consciousness.

No doubt, for the secular clergy, the long-running acrimonious issue of the parishes unfairly combined with racial bias became the convenient justification of the Spanish government for denying them precedence. It explains why Frs. Pedro Zamora del Corro and Fr. Catalino Sanchez, two of the pioneering professors before 1865, applied for permission to teach in 1863, because they were among those whose parishes were turned over to the Recollects. In fact, if we look again at the three other secular priests who opened secondary schools, Fr. Valerio Malabanan of Tanauan, Batangas, Fr. Perfecto Mañalac of San Roque, Cavite, and Fr. Mariano Sevilla of Manila, it is clear that they were all from the Archdiocese of Manila, where the most number of parishes had been lost. Most if not all of them, were contemporaries if not of Fr. Pelaez, then of Fr. Burgos. Both were assigned Inspectors of Secondary Schools and knew the professors in this capacity. Some of the students in the schools they inspected would later be examined by Burgos for their Philosophy degrees at Santo Tomas, like Moises de Vera, Wenceslao Pasco, Matias Ameno de los Angeles, Juan Segismundo, and Crispulo Trinidad. Benedicto de Luna was a batchmate, obtaining his Licenciante in Philosophy on the same day as Burgos in Santo Tomas. Quintin Zalvidea had the unique experience of being examined by Burgos for his Licenciante in Philosophy in 1860 when five years later, he examined Burgos for the latter's degree in Canon Law in 1865.⁴⁶ Every single one of the students above became professors of secondary education with dozens of students under them.

It is not to be forgotten that Paciano Rizal was said to be living in the household of Fr. Burgos at the time that the Cavite Mutiny took place in 1872. The same may be said of Marcelo H. Del Pilar, who was also living in Fr. Mariano Sevilla's house. His elder brother, also a secular priest, Fr. Toribio del Pilar shared the same fate as Fr. Sevilla as exile in the Marianas.⁴⁷ Each of the two younger brothers became stalwarts of the Propaganda movement. There is much to learn from these examples of personal encounters which took place outside of the classroom.

⁴⁶ All these information are contained in Villarroel, *Jose Burgos—University Student*. Manila: University of Santo Tomas Press, 1971.

⁴⁷ These information were discussed in the Schumacher's annotations in *Readings in Philippine Church History*, 251.

Going back to Fr. Valerio Malabanan, who had one of the best secondary schools and was one of the best professors, we find two students, Apolinario Mabini and Miguel Malvar who would literally make history. The good priest had a profound effect on Mabini, that the latter would go back to visit whenever he was in his home province. Mabini also opened his own secondary school in Manila, in Intramuros to be precise, for just two school years – 1893-1894; and 1894-1895. He was granted his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1887 by the UST Rector, then he petitioned to take the examination for secondary school professors the following year, 1888. He obtained a unanimous vote of *Aprobo* from the three examiners – Fr. Francisco Garcia, Fr. Vicente Avila, and Fr. Mariano Gisbert.⁴⁸ He was teaching in Raimundo Alindada's school from 1889– 1893, stopping only when he opened his own school. He had 59 students in 1893 and 41 students in 1894, not as high as the big schools of Enrique Mendiola or Ignacio Villamor as Villarroel rightly observed. But it was not so bad either because he was studying Law and was not a full-time professor like Mendiola and Villamor. Mabini would go on to become a member of La Liga Filipina and later became adviser to Aguinaldo, assuming the Presidency of the cabinet during the Malolos Republic. On the other hand, Miguel Malvar's record is different. He was not as outstanding a student as Mabini. But he did pick up a chain of crucial connections in secondary school, which he used to great advantage during the Revolution and specially against the Americans during the Philippine-American War.⁴⁹ Practically all officers under his command were school mates and proved particularly effective in evading the Americans.

There is only one student of Fr. Sevilla I will cite as example because not only is he a well-known hero, but more so because biographies about him say the same thing: that there is little known about his early education. They concentrate on his education at the University of Santo Tomas since it is a well-established fact. Emilio Jacinto was Fr. Sevilla's student as he appears in the records in 1889-1890.⁵⁰ Since the Sevilla school was licensed to teach only up to the third year of secondary education, Jacinto had to move to a school which offered the last two years of the course. So he went to Santo Tomas and obtained his Bachelor of Arts in 1895, continuing on to Law right after. As most biographies say, his studies were interrupted by the Philippine revolution. His most significant piece of writing was the Kartilla of the Katipunan.

⁴⁸ *Diligencias de Grados*, 1888, Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomas, Manila. In his article on Mabini in 1977, Villarroel did not find the documents showing that Mabini passed the examination to qualify for teaching in the secondary level. He took Mabini's word for it as written in a letter. See Villarroel, *Apolinario Mabini – His Birthdate and Student Years*, 324-326.

⁴⁹ Glenn May discussed these connections in detail in his "The Old School Tie in Batangas" in *A Past Recovered*. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1987.

⁵⁰ *Libros de Matriculas*, 1889 – 1895. Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomas, Manila.

The examples presented here are only a small part of the infinite connections which developed in the course of the thirty-three year existence of Philippine secondary education in the Spanish period. The network of connections by itself, cannot explain how and why Filipino nationalist consciousness blossomed in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is only by examining the context of the time that we would be able to appreciate the full import of history.

Proponents of Reform, Heralds of Change

Although this article foregrounds the professors of Philippine secondary education in the Spanish period, it cannot be denied that even before indios (as the natives were called), later referred to as Filipinos, became professors of secondary education others preceded them who had a hand in their formation. It is at this juncture that credit must go to the big institutions – the University and Colegio of Santo Tomas (since 1629), San Juan de Letran, Ateneo Municipal (since 1859), (before 1768) San Ignacio, and (until 1870), San Jose. These institutions and their professors offered courses in the Humanities and Religion which at the very least, inculcated ideas of truth, justice, equality, and respect for one another. Such ideas and principles would not remain in the realm of the abstract but inevitably will be brought down and applied to everyday living. The same concepts would attain greater relevance with the French revolution's call to liberty, equality, and brotherhood, resonating even louder when the removal of the parishes from the secular clergy would be rationalized by racial inferiority.

By 1812, the Cadiz Constitution set the bar high when it granted all colonized subjects the same rights as Spaniards, turning its own wheel of change that will extend to the Philippines – in the faraway Ilocos rebellion and the Binondo seating dispute between the Natives and the Chinese Mestizos to cite two examples. With the opening of Philippine ports in 1814, commercial goods, people, and ideas gained wider circulation which included the introduction of new technology in transportation, communication, printing, and agriculture. The independence of Latin American states created ripples here. For the Spanish government, the role of Creoles and secular priests as rebels in the independence movements created the suspicion that the same could happen in the Philippines. For the natives and the secular clergy, it became a model for emulation. Led by Fr. Pelaez, they worked hard to attain advanced degrees in the university, to be picked up by younger priests like Burgos. By the mid-nineteenth century, a growing number of young men had accumulated considerable education. This was possible due to the economic stimulus of world trade. Connecting with the world market meant that local products not only found

markets, but products that were in demand were cultivated in the Philippines like indigo, to be sold for profit. These political, economic, and even religious developments taken all together, congealed to produce the Philippine middle class consisting mostly of merchants and trading families. This is where most of the ilustrados originated.

Being able to spend for education meant that secondary schooling was a must. Since the origin of most secondary schools was Manila, children of middle class families from the provinces and municipalities mingled with the children from Manila itself. Even without a national language, they were able to communicate through the medium of instruction, which was Spanish. Rizal's autobiography is full of these occasions, just as his correspondence included letters to his classmates and friends from the Ateneo and Santo Tomas like Vicente Gella, who would go on to become a professor of secondary school in Antique, his home province. By this time, Burgos was a martyr but his presence did not end in Bagumbayan. The issue of equality was as important as ever, made more relevant with the liberal reforms in Spain. The pioneer professors in secondary education inculcated the importance of equality in their students. Although the curriculum and books were prescribed, there is always the example which the teacher chose to expound a point. As contemporaries or associates of Burgos, the recollection of events are ever present and the injustice done to all those implicated in the Cavite mutiny was difficult to assuage. As teachers, they became proponents of reform by instilling in their students the legacy of excellence typified by Burgos, echoed by Rizal in his repeated exhortations on education. Excellence is founded on justice and the application of justice requires equality. To become excellent, one has to have a fair opportunity to attempt at being so – that is justice. And in order to be just and fair, every person must be treated equally. History has shown the Filipino search for equality played out in the 1896 revolution. Our first look at the professors of secondary education in the Philippines from 1865 – 1898 shows their participation in the system ensured the continuation of reform, the search for what is best for people with an emerging national consciousness. In truth, the professors of secondary education not only guaranteed reform – they heralded change.^{PS}

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