

HISTORY, PROPAGANDA, AND GLORY IN THE EARLY DOMINICAN CHRONICLES OF THE PHILIPPINES

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RESUMEN

Título español: Historia, propaganda y gloria en las primeras crónicas dominicas sobre las Filipinas

Durante el primer siglo de presencia dominica en Filipinas, sus cronistas –Aduarte, Santa Cruz, De los Ángeles y De Paula, y Peguero– escribieron cuatro historias de la Provincia del Santo Rosario. Aunque finalmente sólo se imprimieron dos, las crónicas sirvieron como herramientas discursivas esenciales para dar a conocer sus logros en misiones lejanas. Sin excepción, todas las órdenes misioneras participaron en la producción de estos complejos textos, que formaban parte de los géneros literarios típicos de la literatura colonial. El carácter histórico de la crónica eclesiástica oscilaba entre el suministro de información exacta y la omisión de hechos específicos, al tiempo que mostraban ciertas estrategias narrativas que servían al objetivo último de los frailes dominicos. Este trabajo analizará la estructura de estas crónicas, su historia contextual y la retórica particular que emplearon al presentar la cristianización de los habitantes de Filipinas bajo su jurisdicción religiosa.

PALABRAS CLAVE

literatura colonial, historiografía, dominicos, Filipinas (siglo XVII), historia de la iglesia en Asia

ABSTRACT

During the first century of the Dominican presence in the Philippines, their chroniclers –Aduarte, Santa Cruz, De los Ángeles and De Paula, and Peguero– wrote four histories of the Province of the Holy Rosary. Although only two were finally printed, the chronicles served as essential discursive tools to propagandize their achievements in far-away missions. Without exception, all missionary orders engaged in producing these complex texts, which formed part of the typical literary genres of colonial literature. The historical nature of ecclesiastical chronicles fluctuated between furnishing exact information and omitting specific facts while displaying certain narrative strategies that served the ultimate goal of the Dominican friars. This paper will analyze the structure of these chronicles, their contextual history, and the particular rhetoric they engaged in as they presented the Christianization of the inhabitants of the Philippines under their religious jurisdiction.

KEYWORDS

colonial literature, historiography, Dominicans, 17th-century Philippines, history of the Church in Asia

1. A SURVEY ON THE EARLY HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE SPANISH EAST INDIES AND ECCLESIASTICAL CHRONICLES¹

Both civil and ecclesiastical chronicles constituted a considerable part of the literary production printed in colonial Manila. These also furnish the most abundant source of information to reconstruct the history of Spanish Philippines, especially during the first two centuries. The study of Philippine colonial historiography still presents a fundamental challenge to contemporary scholarship as it seeks to recon-

¹ The present research begun with a generous fellowship from the Research Center for Culture, Arts and the Humanities, University of Santo Tomás, for the period 2020-2021.

struct the history of the histories of the Philippine archipelago from the sixteenth century. In doing so, the slow process of the creation of the Philippine nation emerges, as well as the centuries-long shaping and formation of Philippine identity and the changing views of Spaniards toward Southeast Asia and the different peoples of the archipelago, including the Chinese and the Muslims.² It is worth bearing in mind that colonial historiography is constituted by narratives that responded to their authors' interests or the institutions that commissioned these particular textual productions. Therefore, the way they portrayed and drew up the Philippines and the early Filipino people determined or at least deeply influenced Western views towards the archipelago during early modern times. Just as Edmundo O'Gorman conceived of a Western invention of America, the same could be said about the Spanish chroniclers toward the Philippine archipelago as well.³

These abundant religious chronicles were relatively disregarded because in the Philippines, unlike in Latin America, colonial literature has not been regarded until very recently as an independent area of research.⁴ Spanish historians of the colonial period have likewise marginalized this field of study by radically separating the Philippines from the rest of the territories of the Spanish monarchy,⁵ even if it had historically been administered as a region of New Spain and notwithstanding the close cultural and commercial links it had continuously maintained with Hispanic America at least until the cessation of the galleon trade in 1815.⁶ A lack of available translations can be argued too as a reason.

² A praiseworthy attempt is the syncretic summary of Jesuit historiography by René B. Javellana, SJ, «Historiography of the Philippine Province» 2016, included in the Brill series of *Jesuit Historiography Online*, accessed 31 July 2021.

³ Edmundo O'Gorman, *La invención de América*, México DF, FCE, 1958.

⁴ Jorge Mojarro, «Colonial Spanish Philippine Literature between 1604 and 1808: A First Survey», in *More Hispanic than We Admit 3*, ed. Jorge Mojarro, Quezon City, Vibal Foundation Inc., 2020, pp. 423-465.

⁵ See, for example, the monumental summary by Esteve Barba, *Historiografía indiana*, Madrid, Gredos, 1992.

⁶ For a complete registry of transpacific galleons, see Edgardo Angara and Carlos Madrid, *The World of the Manila-Acapulco Galleons*, Quezon City, Vibal

However, Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson translated a few essential accounts in their well-known massive compilation.⁷

While the Spanish historian Patricio Hidalgo Nuchera enumerated thirty-two Philippine chronicles between the arrival of Miguel López de Legazpi and 1898,⁸ there are a few more that his exhaustive list missed, such as the *Conversión que los descalzos agustinos han hecho en las Filipinas...* by Fr. Rodrigo de San Miguel, OAR (1626),⁹ the *Historia de la Santa*

Foundation Inc., 2017, pp. 224-240.

⁷ See Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, eds., *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*, 55 vols., Cleveland, The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1903-1909. For the seventeenth century alone, see *Relación de las Islas Filipinas* (1604) by Pedro Chirino, SJ, in vols. XII and XIII. Antonio de Morga's *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (1609) are in vols. XV and XVI, while the chronicles of the Recollect missions are in vols. XXI, XXXV and XXVI. An abridged version of Fr. Juan de Medina's *Historia de la orden de S. Agustín* (1630) can be read in vols. XXIII and XXIV. Excerpts from the chronicles of Fr. Francisco Colín, SJ, Fr. Juan Francisco de San Antonio, OFM, and Fr. Juan J. Delgado, SJ, appear in vol. XXVIII. Aduarte's chronicle (1640) is in vols. XXX, XXXI, XXXII and XLI. A small portion of Fr. Baltasar de Santa Cruz's *Historia* (1692) can be read in vols. XXXV and XXVII. Excerpts from Fr. Gaspar de San Agustín's *Conquistas* (2nd part), wrongly attributed to Fr. Casimiro Díaz, OSA (1718), are in vols. XXXVII and XLII. Ethnographical accounts of several chroniclers can be found in vol. XL. A fragment of Fr. Vicente de Salazar's chronicle (1742) is in vol. XLIII, while an excerpt from Fr. Murillo Velarde's *Historia* (1749) is in vol. XLIV and a short fragment from Fr. Juan Maldonado de Puga's *Religiosa Hospitalidad* (1742) in vol. XLVII. Regarding the underlying political agenda of this important editorial enterprise, see Glòria Cano, «Evidence for the Deliberate Distortion of the Spanish Philippine Colonial Historical Record in *The Philippine Islands 1493-1898*», *Journal of South East Asian Studies*, 39:1 (2008), pp. 1-30, and Glòria Cano, «Blair and Robertson's *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*: Scholarship or Imperialist Propaganda?», *Philippine Studies* 56:1 (2008), pp. 3-46.

⁸ I have excluded from this list texts that were not produced during my essay's timeframe, likewise texts that fit better in other genres such as accounts, treatises, or reports. See Patricio Hidalgo Nuchera, *Guía de Fuentes Manuscritas para la Historia de Filipinas conservadas en España*, Madrid, Fundación Histórica Tavera, 1998, pp. 487-496.

⁹ See Ángel Martínez Cuesta, *Historia de los Agustinos Recoletos, vol. 1: Desde los orígenes hasta el siglo XIX*, Madrid: Editorial Avgvstinvs, 1995, p. 25. The text,

Iglesia Metropolitana de Filipinas (1650) by the Manila-born secular priest Francisco Moreno,¹⁰ Juan de Bustamante's *De las Islas Philipinas* (1596?),¹¹ and Fr. Francisco Combés' *El Gobernador Deseado* (1662?). Needless to say, these chronicles that remained in manuscript form have been very rarely consulted.¹³

Philippine colonial historiography can be categorized into civil and ecclesiastical works,¹⁴ with the latter further subdivided into those that were ostensibly part of an official history of the religious order and those that had specifically addressed ethnographic and regional subjects. The differences between the historiographic writings of the religious orders and the particular way in which each narrativized their activities have not been studied either within the Philippine colonial context. Uncharacteristically, religious authors also engaged in writing civil chronicles, such as Fr. Francisco Combés' *Historia de Mindanao y Joló* (1667) and Fr. Juan de la Concepción's fourteen-volume *Historia General de Philipi-*

whose complete title is «Conversión que los descalzos agustinos han hecho en las Filipinas, su viaje a Japón, con los martirios más notables de nuestros tiempos, que mandó escribir Urbano VIII» can be read in the journal *Boletín de la Provincia de San Nicolás de Tolentino*, vols. 7-8 (1916-1917). A copy of the manuscript is in the library of the Hispanic Society in New York.

¹⁰ This was published in Manila in 1877 by Imprenta de «El Oriente».

¹¹ This manuscript from the Lilly Library of Indiana University is currently being edited by Clive Griffin and John Crossley. See Jorge Mojarro, «Juan de Bustamante, autor de *De la Historia de las Philipinas*», *Guaragua: Revista de Cultura Latinoamericana*, 65 (2021), pp. 11-39.

¹² One copy of the *Primera Parte* and two copies of the *Segunda Parte* of this work are kept at the Lilly Library of Indiana University. These have never been published nor mentioned by any bibliographer.

¹³ It needs to be mentioned that an important chronicle has been recently recovered, that of Fr. Diego de Oña, SJ, *Labor Evangélica: Ministerios apostólicos de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús, Segunda Parte*, ed. by A. Coello de la Rosa y V. Peña Filiu, Madrid, Sílex, 2020.

¹⁴ This categorization is followed in the exemplary multivolume work on the historiography of colonial Mexico by Juan A. Ortega y Medina and Rosa Camelo, eds., *Historiografía Mexicana*, México DF, UNAM and Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1996-2012, 5 vols.

nas (1788-1792). Some authors also produced works on especial events, like the *Relación de los alzamientos de la ciudad de Vigan* (1763) by Fr. Pedro del Vivar, OSA.

The specific genre of ecclesiastical chronicles can be described as standard histories that dealt with the affairs and events of the missionary provinces, focusing on their activities and highlighting consistently the friars' labor and sacrifices. However, far from being the boring history of strictly religious affairs as indicated by their titles, these voluminous books ran the gamut of topics, including civil affairs, wars, natural calamities, new missions among non-Christian peoples, biographies of notable people, and the relation of miracles, scandals, and even gossips. As stipulated in their statutes, the religious orders mandated the task of writing chronicles to delineate their activities in the provinces where they were carrying out their missions and inform learned people and ecclesiastical hierarchies in Spain and Rome about the progress in the propagation of the faith. An additional goal was to praise the work of the outstanding members of the order, especially those who had died as martyrs and thus became worthy of beatification. As elucidated by Antonio García Rubial, regular friars were consistent in generating a more solid and abundant historical literature due to their deep corporate sense, and taken as a whole, these chronicles constituted one of the foundations by which ecclesiastical provinces were identified as social bodies.¹⁵

Therefore, being a chronicler was a mandatory and critical responsibility generally given to the member of the order who possessed a better aptitude for studying and writing, especially a person with a taste for and knowledge of letters.¹⁶ The result of their work was a book that had to possess all the features of a monument handed down to posterity: a

¹⁵ Antonio García Rubial, «Historiografía eclesiástica en Nueva España», in Rosa Camelo y Patricia Escandón, eds., *Historiografía mexicana: Volumen II, La creación de una imagen propia. La tradición española Tomo 2: Historiografía eclesiástica*, México, DF, UNAM and Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 2012, p. 688.

¹⁶ In the particular case of the Dominican chronicles, the biographical catalogs do not indicate whether the order's chroniclers held official positions. However, it is improbable that a friar would be encouraged to write an official chronicle, with the investment of time that the task entails, without having been previously

rigorous organization that categorized events within chronological periods and geographical regions, a sublime and often baroque style that avoided any kind of expressive commonness, a recourse to an abundance of biblical references or the classics of antiquity, and a careful selection and elaboration of the narrative material.¹⁷ Didacticism and moralism were likewise two distinctive features to be found in ecclesiastical chronicles.¹⁸ Moreover, in religious chronicles was not only important what was declared, but what was deliberately omitted.¹⁹

To study the literary nature of seventeenth-century Philippine chronicles and their partial textual analysis, one must consider the reflections of Hayden White regarding the literary character of historiographical works. White re-elaborated two ideas from R.G. Collingwood's philosophy of history, namely, «that the historian was above all a storyteller and [...] that historical sensibility was manifested in the capacity to make a plausible story out of a congeries of "facts", which, in their unprocessed form, made no sense at all».²⁰ White emphasized how the historian builds a specific plot connected with a set of historical events to configure a concrete historical situation as either tragic, dramatic, ironic,

appointed in the provincial chapter. In this regard, it should be noted that on several occasions the office of chronicler of the Province of the Most Holy Rosary coincided with that of provincial. Thus, in chronological order, the official chroniclers of the Dominican Order must have been Fr. Diego Aduarte, Fr. Domingo González, Fr. Francisco de Paula, Fr. Juan de los Ángeles and Fr. Baltasar de Santa Cruz. All of them became for a certain time provincials, except Aduarte, who was a procurator. The case of Fr. Juan Peguero, as will be seen, was very circumstantial. Fr. Francisco Carrero and Fr. Melchor de Manzano de Haro maybe also held the position, although they dedicated their efforts to narrate the martyrdoms that the Dominicans were suffering in Japan.

¹⁷ Jorge Mojarro Romero, «Notas en torno a tres crónicas eclesiásticas hispano-philipinas del siglo XVIII», *Transmodernity: Journal of the Peripheral Cultures of the Luso-Hispanic World*, 4:1 (2014), pp. 100-111.

¹⁸ Antonio García Rubial, «Historiografía eclesiástica en Nueva España», p. 694.

¹⁹ Francisco Esteve Barba, *Historiografía Indiana*, p. 9.

²⁰ Hayden White, «The Historical Text as a Literary Artifact», *Tropics of Discourse: Essays in Cultural, Criticism*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985, pp. 83-84.

or parodic. White claimed that this act constituted a literary and even a “fiction-making” operation. Moreover, White added that «the older distinction between fiction and history, in which fiction is conceived as the representation of the imaginable and history as the representation of the actual, must give place to the recognition that we can only know the actual by contrasting it with or likening it to the imaginable».²¹

Rolena Adorno seemingly echoed White’s claim about the fictional nature of historical texts in her study of Latin American colonial literature. She stated that «the writings of the Indies, even those that presumably narrated historical events, are better characterized as polemical or moralistic narratives than as objective history, and also for how they are best studied by examining the persuasive features of their representation, not by attempting to confirm or accepting their claims to the truthfulness of the events narrated».²² Therefore, research on colonial historiography need not focus so much on the truth of the historical event as narrated, but rather on the discursive strategies of the authors in offering a credible and plausible text because it is precisely there where the fictional features are found and the very writing process and its subsequent publication finds its rationale.

In the Philippines, as in Spanish America, the events narrated in the ecclesiastical chronicles were geographically limited to the areas where the religious orders worked. The members of the Order of Preachers, who worked in Manila, Zambales, Cagayan valley, Nueva Vizcaya, and regions of Bataan and Cordillera, were the most active religious order in the Philippines when it came to chronicling their own activities and publishing them in a book format. The first volume of the order’s *Historia de la Provincia del Sancto Rosario en Philippinas, Iapon, y China* was published by Fr. Diego Aduarte, OP, in 1640 and then supplemented by Fr. Baltasar de Cruz, OP, in 1693, Fr. Vicente de Salazar, OP, in 1742, Fr. Domingo Collantes, OP, in 1783, and Fr. Juan Ferrando, OP, and Fr. Joaquín Fonseca, OP, between 1870 and 1872, in six volumes. At least three

²¹ *Ibidem*, 98.

²² Rolena Adorno, «Overview», *The Polemics of Possession in Spanish American Narrative*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 2007, p. 8.

more chronicles were written in that period, which, however, were left unpublished until today.²³

The present research will attempt to explore specific aspects that characterized the historiographic writings of the first Dominican chroniclers during the seventeenth century, thus becoming a necessary and preliminary study that will contribute to the knowledge of Spanish Philippine historiography.

2. FR. DIEGO ADUARTE OR THE URGE TO PUBLISH

Arriving in the Philippines in 1595, the first Dominican chronicler had a very adventurous and unusual life. He took part in two Spanish expeditions to Cambodia, participated in the rescue of the Governor-General Luis Pérez Dasmariñas in China, and traveled to Europe on two occasions in 1603 and 1607 as the general procurator of the Dominican province. He returned to the Philippines only in 1628 when he began his

²³ I am referring to the unpublished *Parte Segunda* (1676?) by Frs. Francisco de Paula, OP, and Juan de Los Ángeles, OP; Fr. Francisco de Paula wrote about the events occurred between 1638 and 1644 –he passed away in 1664–, and must have been taken up by Fr. Juan de los Angeles, who narrated the events that took place in the Province up to 1675. The first part of this work was completely dedicated to China and was based on the voluminous chronicles written by Vittorio Ricci, inaugurator of the mission, and Juan Bautista Morales. Both the original manuscript (*Historia-Provincia*, Tomo 2) and a typewritten transcription are found in APSR. We do not know the reasons for which its publication was discarded and it was decided to publish that of Baltasar de Santa Cruz, which in good part is a paraphrase of it. It is most likely that it did not pass the censorship of a member of another religious order, perhaps because of the way in which the events in Japan and China were narrated.

The manuscript of *Compendio Historial* (1690) by Fr. Juan Peguero, both found at the Dominican archives in Ávila (APSR) and the manuscript *Historia de la Provincia* by Zeferino González, which should be conserved at the APSR but seems to be lost. The first three parts of Peguero's *Compendio Historial* have been transcribed and edited in *Philippiniana Sacra*, vol. LV, n° 164 (2020), pp. 161-190; n° 165 (2020), pp. 357-384, and n° 166 (2020), pp. 533-556.

assignment as the chronicler of the Province of the Most Holy Rosary. Between 1629 and 1634, he published several accounts of the Dominican missions in Japan and the Philippines, leaving behind several others that remained unpublished. His masterpiece, *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japón y China*, only saw the light in 1640, four years after his death,²⁴ thanks to the intervention of Fr. Domingo González, OP, who wrote the last chapters and memorialized Fr. Aduarte's life.

Aduarte's four known and very significant accounts were published by the presses of the University of Santo Tomás:

1) *Relacion de los Martires que ha hauido en Iapon desde el año de 1626 hasta el de 28, en particular de seys de ellos de la religion de Sancto Domingo...* (Manila: Imprenta del Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1629).²⁵ This account is an abridged version of chapters xxx and xxxi, book II, of Aduarte's *Historia*.

2) *Relacion de varias cosas y casos, que han sucedido en los reynos de Iapon, que se han sabido en estas Islas Philippinas...* (Manila, Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1631).²⁶ This account is an abridged version of some excerpts of chapters xxxii and xxxviii, book II, taken from Aduarte's *Historia*.

3) *Relacion de algunas entradas, que han hechos los religiosos de a Orden de nuestro Padre Sancto Domingo de la provincia del Sancto Rosario en las Islas Philippinas en tierras de infieles de las mismas islas...*

²⁴ The best biography of Aduarte is still that written by Manuel Ferrero, OP, in «Introducción», in *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japón y China*, Madrid, CSIC, 1963, tomo I, pp. xxiii-xxix.

²⁵ I have examined a copy with last few pages missing at the library of the University of Barcelona. The other two different editions of Sevilla (1632) are probably abridged, both of which can be found in the British Library in London, Tokyo University, and Sophia University in Tokyo. It was also translated to Italian in Rome in 1632.

²⁶ I have seen the copy conserved at the Lilly Library of Indiana University. It lacks the title and the preliminary pages. An additional copy of this book is supposed to be held at the APSR. This book was mistitled in Wenceslao E. Retana, *Orígenes de la Imprenta Filipina*, Madrid, Librería General de Victoria Suárez, 1911, p. 115. The first two accounts of martyrdoms were issued in a single volume in 1633 (Valencia: Silvestre Esparsa). The only known copy is kept in the library of Universidad de Navarra.

(Manila, Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1633).²⁷ This historical account was based on excerpts taken from chapters XXIX, XXXVI, XXXVII, XL, XLI, XLII and XLIII, book II, of Aduarte's *Historia*. This is the only account that actually included some information regarding the development of the missions in Luzon.

4) *Relacion de los gloriosos martirios de seis religiosos de S. Domingo desta Provincia del Santo Rosario de las Filipinas, que han padecido este año, y el pasado de 33...* (Manila, Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1634).²⁸

The fact that only these editions have survived does not exclude the possibility of other editions that did not stand the test of time. The bibliographer Wenceslao Retana surmised from Aduarte's prologue of the 1634 book that an account was printed every year, specifically for the stated purpose of disseminating missionary news in Europe.²⁹

There are two noticeable aspects of those early accounts. First of all was the immediacy and urgency behind the printing of these accounts and the Dominican friars' express use of their printing press for that purpose. Aduarte explicitly related in the third account that as he was still occupied preparing the definitive chronicle, «por no ser como los malos pagadores, que suelen pagar tarde y mal, se han hecho y hacen algunas relaciones de servicios particulares de importancia que la dicha Provincia ha hecho al Señor en estas regiones tan remotas» [for not wishing to be considered as bad debtors who typically pay late and niggardly,

²⁷ There used to be a copy in the Biblioteca Nacional de España in Madrid. The only known copy is conserved today at the State Library of New South Wales, Australia. Interestingly, the prologue of this account includes the announcement of the forthcoming publication of the general chronicle in 1635, as that year marked the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Province of the Holy Rosary.

²⁸ No copy survives of the original edition. It was published again in 1637 in Valladolid. A copy of this second edition is held in the library of the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.

²⁹ Wenceslao E. Retana, *Orígenes de la Imprenta Filipina*, p. 118. See also Rady Roldán-Figueroa, *The Martyrs of Japan. Publication History and Catholic Missions in the Spanish World (Spain, New Spain, and the Philippines, 1597-1600)*, Leiden & Boston, Brill, 2021, pp. 53-142.

certain particular and vital matters of the said Province were made to the Lord's glory in these regions that are considered so remote].³⁰ Martyrdom accounts taking place in Japan had become instant bestsellers in New Spain and Europe, encouraging the piracy of their original editions.³¹ Secondly, of Aduarte's four accounts, only one dealt –and even partially– with events that had taken place in the Philippines, even though most of the missionaries had been working in the archipelago. As we have seen earlier, the printed accounts served as news articles that would later form chapters of his ultimate work, which was the first Dominican chronicle of their missions in Asia, a milestone of the Manila printing press.

Printed in 1640, Aduarte's chronicle is divided into two books with 139 chapters in total. Nearly half of the chronicle is devoted to events or lives of missionaries who lived in the Philippines. At the same time, the rest dealt with the actual foundation of the Dominican province, the adventures of Aduarte in Cambodia, the Dominican establishment in northern Formosa, the failed attempts to open a mission in China, and the bloody martyrdoms in Japan. However, only fifteen dealt adequately with the most interesting but omitted issue: how the Dominican missionaries successfully established their Philippine missions. There are two possible reasons for this lack of reportorial attention to their Philippine activities. In the first place, Japan was then regarded from the time of St. Francis Xavier, the Apostle of the East, as a promised land for the missionaries even as letters and reports regarding the supposed superiority of Japanese culture had been fueling the European imagina-

³⁰ Diego de Aduarte, OP, «Al Lector», in *Relacion de algunas entradas, que han hechos los religiosos de a Orden de nuestro Padre Sancto Domingo de la provincia del Sancto Rossario en las Islas Philippinas en tierras de infieles de las mismas islas...*, Manila, Colegio de Santo Tomás por Jacinto Magarulau, 1633.

³¹ See, for example, the convoluted history of the different editions of Diego de San Francisco, *Relacion verdadera y breve de la persecución y martyrios que padecieron por la confession de nuestra sancta fee catholica en Japon quinze religiosos de la Provincia de S. Gregorio de las Islas Philippinas*, Manila, n.p., 1625). See Cayetano Fuertes Sánchez, *Vida clandestina de un misionero en Japón. Diego de San Francisco, OFM (1614-1632)*, Sevilla, Círculo Rojo, 2014.

tion from the 1550s onwards. Secondly, to highlight the loyalty and the faith of the members of the Order of Preachers, propelling the stories of martyrs actually became more useful than narratives about conversions. Martyrdoms were not considered a consequence of a failed enterprise but a proof of a friar's self-abnegation and willingness to die for Christ.

One of the most notable omissions is the narration of the conversion of the natives. The *Reglas*, or rulebooks of every order, did not provide information on the procedures required to open a new mission. While Aduarte provided a general view of the *modus operandi*, he neglected to provide details and the specific actions that reported the proper approach and encounter with the so-called *infielos*. Chapter XLVIII of the second book dealt with the beginning of the conversions of the Mandaya people. Aduarte started with a very compelling statement:

Although the conversions of the kingdoms of Japan and China turns thither much [missionary] effort in Spain, since these kingdoms are so magnificent, and summons many noble spirits, that is not the only conversion; nor ought the others to be despised where the Lord more quietly (and perhaps in a humbler way) works marvelous effects among the heathen who are converted –and also among the ministers, who profit greatly by so noble a work.³²

According to the description provided by Aduarte, the method of starting a new mission owed much to the patience of the missionary, his capacity to withstand a life of months-long material scarcity, including hunger, even as he lived close to the community he sought to convert. In this case, the hero was identified as Fr. Jerónimo de Zamora, OP, who had wanted to reopen the abandoned missions of Fitol and Capinatan in today's Apayao province, towns that the Dominicans had already reached in 1609, but with little success. Fr. Zamora started to give the Mandaya people little presents every time they visited Nueva Segovia (today's Lal-lo) to trade. Gaining the community's trust was deemed essential before establishing a mission, and the waiting period proved to

³² The translation is taken from Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. XXXII, p. 226

be long and hard. For example, Fr. Miguel de Benavides, OP, described in *Relación del Estado de le Fe* (Valencia, 1601) that:

when the friars arrived Pangasinan, the natives could not wait to kick them out. They asked often when the friars will leave and refused to provide them food. In such a situation suffered during three years, having several hardships, and all the five friars felt ill ... And the main thing is no one was converting to our holy faith. They started to believe in the friars only after three years (when they allowed boys to be baptized, but no girls). And the reason that God provided was the natives saw the lifestyle of the friars, their fasts and their penitences, and their patience, and the fact they never hurt anyone, but they used to help. After that, the natives stopped being distant and started to believe what they were saying.³³

After a year, Fr. Zamora decided to visit them on one of his trips when some Christians accompanied him, and he was welcomed. Fr. Zamora was able to gather all the *principales* of the surrounding towns and talk to them. Fr. Aduarte described the scene in very biblical terms:

When they were all together, the father –standing in the midst of them in an open place, like St. Paul in Athens– expounded to them the mysteries of our faith, demolishing the delusions of their errors and the teaching of the devil, the Father of Lies, and saying much that was suitable for both purposes. To this, they listened with attention, although the doctrine was new to their ears. God enlightened them within, and hence they did not answer as the Athenians did to St. Paul –some making a jest of it, and others saying that they would hear him another time as to this matter, while there were few that believed; but here all said at once that they believed what they were taught, and wished to receive this holy law, placing themselves in his hands to be disposed of as he thought best.³⁴

³³ Jorge Mojarro Romero, «Historia misional y literatura en un raro impreso de fray Miguel de Benavides, obispo de Nueva Segovia: *Relación del estado de la fe* (1601)», *Philippiniana Sacra*, vol. 51, n° 153 (2016), pp. 288-289. The translation is mine.

³⁴ Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. xxxii, pp. 228-229.

According to the chronicler, the outstanding qualities of the preacher enabled the acceptance of the new religion. By reducing the success to this sole factor, a holy one, the reader was deprived of any other explanation that could have explained the behavior of the Mandaya people, such as their desire for peaceful trade relations with the nearby Catholic towns or their need for protection against threatening neighbors. A sense of unidirectional predestination permeates the whole chronicle. Moreover, in the dynamics of the narration, there is an underlying assumption that is brought to bear on the reader now and then. The success of the missions was not due to the consequence of the Dominican missionary efforts but to God, who had used them as his instruments. In the same way, any hardship, obstacle, or failure was never attributed to the ineptitude of the missionary or the unwillingness of the native people, but to the direct interference of the devil, who was characterized as becoming desperate as he lost ground in the Province of the Holy Rosary:

Though Father Fray Gerónimo was eager to carry out the orders [to go to the land of the Mandayas] of the chapter, he was unable to do so until the beginning of September, on account of the obstacles placed in his way by the devil, who saw how much he was to lose by the expedition. He finally embarked to go up the river with one of his companions, Father Fray Luis de Oñate ... All of his qualifications were necessary, because in the midst of that voyage, at one most dangerous passage, full of great rocks, where the waves are high and the current is stronger, they were unable for three days to make a yard of headway by the greatest efforts that they could put forth, such was the force of the current –or of the devil, who, being unable to do more, strove in this way to interfere with the fathers on their journey.³⁵

The above narration simultaneously combined exaggerations, which derived from an unshakeable optimism that attributed conversions to the intercession of the Virgin of the Holy Rosary (or any other religious figure), with precautionary notes that demonstrated the friars' proper behavior in not baptizing anyone unless they could prove they had

³⁵ Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. xxxii, pp. 231-232.

perfectly mastered the basics of the *doctrina christiana* and accepted a proper Christian lifestyle.

Exaggeration is clearly noted in the retelling of the conversion of the leaders who had to learn a language (Ibanag or Ilocano) that they had not actually mastered:

On the first Sunday in October, which came very soon, an Indian chief and his wife were baptized; and four days later, his brother, a youth. It was attributed to the particular favor of the Virgin of the Rosary, whose festival is celebrated on that Sunday, that so barbarous a race, without knowing how to read or write, and bred in those mountains without commerce or communication even with other Indians, should so quickly learn so many prayers. This is still more wonderful because they were not taught in their own language, only spoken in the mountains, but in that of more highly civilized Indians, which is quite different from theirs. Although they usually all understand this latter, they never speak it among themselves, which increased the difficulty of this matter and the grace shown by enabling them to conquer it in so short a time.

The children were more skillful when it came to learn the doctrine and they started to teach it to their own parents. There was one who barely knew how to speak and was able to teach his parents the prayers and the questions of the catechism so fast that within two days, he was ready to get baptized.³⁶

Regarding the cautionary note told of the friars who were always tempted to engage in mass conversions:

The truth of history requires us not to pass over the glory of his works. He [Fr. Luis de Oñate] was not to baptize any adults, however well instructed, until Father Fray Geronimo returned, for fear of meeting with the impediments which are so frequent in such cases –as being separated from their legitimate husbands and wives, or the guilt of unjust enslavements, and of wrongs done by the more powerful to the weaker, or any of a thousand other impediments

³⁶ Fr. Diego Aduarte, OP, *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japón y China*, ed. Fr. Manuel Ferrero, OP, Madrid, CSIC, 1963, vol. II, p. 448. My translation.

which only those who are skillful and experienced in the ministry of new conversions can detect and settle.³⁷

Therefore, Aduarte made an effort to systematically present to the reader a false dichotomy of the missionary events in Apayao, delineating reality into two counter-opposed spheres: the one leading to God and another to the devil. Aduarte constructed within his narrative a semifictional landscape where friars, government officials, and natives became mere puppets amid a battle between good and evil.

Conversions were depicted as taking on a fast track after strategically emplacing reports of miraculous events throughout every chapter, like the case of a young female who became saddened due to her inability to master any prayer until she saw the Virgin Mary in a dream. After that, she was not only able to pray correctly, but she became a community leader as she helped her own father in teaching the prayer to many other women. In fact, the conversions cannot be in any case attributed to the sole action of the friars, but to the help of trusted men and women from Christianized towns who had voluntarily accompanied the friar and who knew the geography as well as the local language. The role of these catechumens was often underrated simply because the chroniclers failed to identify them. Fortunately, in this chapter, we came to know an important native who even rose to the military rank of *maestro de campo*, Francisco Tuliao.

On the other hand, Aduarte reported that the conversion of the Isinay people came about due to their insistent petitions. Even though the natives lived in the plains of Ituy in the fertile Magat river valley, not far from the southern Cordillera, the friars had not been able to reach the area due to personnel shortage and the perils of crossing the mountains from Pangasinan. The first Dominican chronicle stated that in an earlier attempt, the chiefs of the Isinay people had journeyed to Manila to petition for a priest. They even went to Calasiao for the same reason when they heard that the Dominican provincial had been visiting. Looking for

³⁷ Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, vol. xxxii, p. 236.

other sources of this alleged willingness to convert, we found that as early as in 1608, the martyr Jacinto Orfanell had sent a letter to a Dominican friend in Barcelona narrating of his hardships in Japan, where he wrote:

Here, in these lands [East Indies], there are two ways to convert people. One is typical from easy-going people who looks for priests to make them Christians, as it happens in the land of Manila, and there is another one more difficult, which is this one from Japan.³⁸

After several requests, two friars –the seventy-three-year-old Fr. Tomás Gutiérrez and Fr. Juan de Arjona– were assigned to Ituy, whereupon began their story. During nine days of heavy rain, they crossed rivers, mountains, valleys, and forests to deal with the persistent presence of leeches. When they arrived, they were extremely well-received by the Isinay people. The friars noticed that the villages were clean and well-organized, located in a very fertile area and that they lived peacefully. Parents usually offered their children to be baptized, and friars could translate the basic prayers in less than three months. However, a policy of resettlement seemed to be necessary, given that the area was too widely dispersed to be serviced by only two friars, an idea that the Isinay people initially opposed. A more severe problem was the presence of the Alegueses, a nomadic ethnic group that seemed to threaten the peace of the Isinay people. The summary of the events finished with the almost mandatory attribution of miracles.

The chapter of the first mission in Ituy is exemplary in its structure: missionary efforts, followed by successful conversions and miracles. However, also noticeable is the narrator's omission of his sources or any concrete and disturbing fact that could potentially disrupt the self-righteous tone of the chronicle. In Aduarte's chronicle, the insistence on the power of divine intervention and the portrayal of missionary life as a

³⁸ Jacinto Orfanell, «Carta al maestro Fr. Rafael Rifos (Kyodomari, 18 February 1608)», *Cartas y Relaciones*, ed. J. Delgado García and M. González Pola, Madrid, Institutos de Filosofía y Teología «Santo Tomás», 1989, p. 117.

continuous and heroic fight between the forces of good and evil actually serves to hide from the reader the missionary's real *modus operandi*. The underlying notion pervading the whole chronicle is providentialism or the conviction that God's will already predetermined all events. His chronicle, therefore, was not aimed to explain in realistic and detailed terms the daily affairs of Dominican activities, but their actions as mere tools of God.

3. BALTASAR DE SANTA CRUZ OR THE URGE TO BLAME

Aduarte's *Historia* enjoyed a second edition in 1693 in Zaragoza, where the second part of the Dominican history by Baltasar de Santa Cruz was also published. Father Santa Cruz arrived in the Philippines in 1666. Except for the two years he spent in Abucay (1671-1673), he worked in high ecclesiastical positions in the Province and at the University of Santo Tomás. He was also known for publishing the first work of fiction in the Philippines, *Historia Magistral de los Santos Anacoretas Barlaam y Josafat* (Manila, 1692).³⁹

Without altogether abandoning the sanctimonious tone of Aduarte's chronicle, Santa Cruz's historiographic method is stylistically more straightforward. It included information about the most important civil events, such as the arrival of new governor-generals, the battles in Manila Bay against the Dutch, and the powerful earthquake of November 1645. Most of the chapters of his chronicle did not deal with the progress of the missions in Luzon. Like Aduarte, Santa Cruz focused his narrative on two subjects: biographies of deceased Dominican confreres and their struggles in their foreign missions in China, first opened by Fr. Angelo Cocchi in 1631.⁴⁰ Again, the successful conversions in the Philippines did not serve as the main focus of the narrative.

³⁹ Hilario Ocio, OP, and Eladio Neira, OP, *Misioneros Dominicanos en el Extremo Oriente, 1587-1835*, Manila, Life Today Publications, 2000, vol. 1, pp. 197-198.

⁴⁰ For the first decades of Dominican presence in China, see José María González, OP, *Misiones Dominicanas en China (1632-1700)*, Madrid, Studium, 1964, vol 1.

Also, whenever he felt it necessary, Santa Cruz mercilessly criticized the behavior of another lay Spaniards and the civil government. After he left the aforementioned promising mission of the Mandaya in 1636, no account was made of what happened subsequently. The mission was dismantled in March 1639 after a revolt of the natives. Baltasar de Santa Cruz was evident in his pinpointing the blame on the civil government for having exhausted the people's patience. The authoritarian alcalde Marcos Zapata had been ordered by the *gobernador* to build a military fort, for whose construction Mandaya people were hired. However,

... the tired natives had to carry such heavy things on their backs that they finally gave up, especially because of the ill-treatment given by the corporal of the fort, which exhausted the wellspring of their sentiments after the corporal had punished the wife of a *principal* for something she did which he disliked, forcing her to remain one whole day milling rice. As a consequence of this humiliation, this woman and her husband became the instigators of the rebellion.⁴¹

Invading the fort, they killed twenty unarmed soldiers and set the stronghold on fire. Then they entered the convent, where they killed a newly baptized *sangle*, capturing the priest. However, they placed him in a boat with his holy pictures and books and sailed him down the river to the closest secure convent. It seemed that the Mandaya had not directed their anger at the Dominican priest Martín Real de la Cruz out of their respect for him as a holy man, thereby sparing his life. Although Santa Cruz did not elucidate further, the narrative pointed to the author's discontent with the civil government's greed and the misdeeds that destroyed an entire mission that had been so difficult to establish. The narrative's moral lesson is clear: the interference of the civil government in territories under the control of the Order of Preachers had only led to ruin and collapse.

More detailed is the account of a massacre in the unpublished *Parte Segunda* by Francisco de Paula and Juan de los Ángeles, which included

⁴¹ Baltasar de Santa Cruz, OP, *Tomo segundo de la Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de Filipinas, Japon y China del sagrado Orden de Predicadores*, Zaragoza, Pasqual Bueno, 1693, p. 19. My translation.

a narrative of its parish priests.⁴² For example, the priest was apprised beforehand about the preparation of the revolt, at which point he thought of calming down the people during the mass and capturing its leaders there. The real instigator was identified as a humiliated husband who could join the forces of the two villages of Callyigan and Sicafu. The anger of the Mandaya was directed against the soldiers who surprisingly had not been apprised of the danger. Nevertheless, the priest was able to save five of them. The final paragraph is very significant:

While they were showing their worst ferocity and toughness of heart, they softened when they saw the priest, and they even carried his things to the boat. They confirmed with facts as they had loudly proclaimed that their anger was not against the Father, whom they loved, but against the soldiers, especially the corporal, who was hated by everybody and whose misbehavior they had wanted to revenge.⁴³

The chronicler's criticism of the Spaniards became especially strong if their behavior adversely affected the Dominican missions and their properties. The recount of the 1639 revolt of the *sangleyes* echoed the details found in Santa Cruz's *Historia*. To punish the Chinese rebels, the military forces as ordered by the governor were to burn the whole Parián, including the convent and the church that the Dominicans had founded,

which was beautiful and had three golden altarpieces, the best these islands had and whose damage was valued at 18,000 pesos. This would have been less

⁴² When comparing this unpublished *Segunda Parte* with Santa Cruz's *Tomo Segundo*, it seems evident that the latter followed the first text not only in the ordering of the chapters, but also in the paraphrasing of many excerpts with little changes. We do not know why this *Segunda Parte* was not approved for publication. Baltasar de Santa Cruz did not mention this fact either during his hagiographical praise of Fr. De Paula as a chronicler. See Libro II, chapter xxxiii.

⁴³ Francisco de Paula and Juan de los Ángeles, *Parte Segunda de la Historia de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas Japón y China...*, APSR, Filipinas, tomo 2, chapter 3, unpaginated. I supplied the translation.

excusable had that been perpetrated by the enemies, but the very Spaniards had done this because they said it was convenient to prevent the sangleyes from any ease of escape.⁴⁴

When narrating the battles against the Dutch, the Spanish victories were attributed less to the bravery of the soldiers than to the intercession of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. Likewise, when dealing with the native revolts of 1690 that had taken place in Pampanga and spread after that to Pangasinan, Ilocos, and Cagayan, Santa Cruz dismissed the rightful demands of the natives who had complained of the burdensome taxes and maltreatment that they had suffered at the hand of the officials. The chronicler merely explained that the devil had only misled the good-natured natives.

4. FATHER PEGUERO OR THE ACCOUNT OF MERITS

In May 1688, the Master of the Order of Preachers, Fr. Antonin Cloche (1628-1720), sent a letter to Manila requesting news from the Province of the Holy Rosary. Fr. Bartolomé Marrón, provincial of the order in Manila, ordered Fr. Juan Peguero to carry out the task, but the latter was puzzled. Aduarte's chronicle was already well-known, and manuscript copies of its second part written by Santa Cruz had been already sent to Rome and Madrid a few years earlier for publication. Peguero seemed unable to comprehend the assignment. Should he relate again what had already been documented? Instead, Peguero chose to make a summary of the most relevant facts of the Dominicans in Southeast Asia by sourcing facts from both chronicles as well as supplementing his work with some documents from the archives. The result was an unpretentious document that has remained very relevant because it allows the present-day reader to clearly discern its merits.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Baltasar de Santa Cruz, OP, *Tomo segundo de la Historia*, p. 19.

⁴⁵ See Jorge Mojarro, «An annotated transcription of *Compendio Historial* (1690), by Juan Peguero, OP (Part 1)», *Philippiniana Sacra* vol. 55, no. 164 (2020), pp. 151-180.

The structure of the document is unusual. The narrative strand is kept to a minimum since Peguero concerned himself more with the enumeration of data and descriptions. The manuscript can be roughly divided into three parts:

1) A general introduction, dealing with the foundation of the province, their properties, the miracles obtained through St. Dominic and the Holy Rosary, the excellent reputation that the Dominicans enjoyed among the natives, an account of the foundation of the missions by chronological order, and the listing of each mission.

2) A catalogue of the friars, lay brothers, and martyred Christians classified by region.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ In this section can be found some information regarding Lorenzo Ruiz, the Filipino martyr: «Lorenzo Ruiz, mestizo, born of a Chinese man and a Tagalog woman, from Binondoc, (a town outside Intramuros administered by the Order of Preachers, whose convent and church he served as a boy), was a member of the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary. God was merciful to him because being married and with children (whose wife lives to this year of 1690) and having to escape from justice after being involved with or accused of murder, and his life was in danger. He joined Father Antonio González and his confreres to serve him, thinking he was going to Macao. When he realized he was in Japan, he wanted to return in the same boat, but he had to stop in Isla Hermosa, where his life would suffer the same danger. Finally, he stayed in Japan, where he was imprisoned with the friars, and watching the terrible tortures they suffered, he fearfully asked of a translator, «Will I save my life if I refuse my faith?» Before he received any answer, he turned self-conscious. He claimed that he had just said that in jest, that he had spoken like an ignorant unaware of what he was saying, because although he had not come to Japan to preach like the Fathers and because he had needed to escape from the justice in Manila, he became a Christian. For Christ and his holy law, he would give up his life and a thousand more if he had them. He was then tortured with water, which was forced down into his stomach and expelled under pressure (and other parts as had been told), and although he was offered his life if he renounced his faith, he never capitulated until he was killed in the martyrdom of the caves and hung by the feet to be executed on 23 September 1637 in Nagasaki». See Juan Peguero, *Historia en Compendio de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas de la Orden de Predicadores, sacada de los dos tomos de historia y otros papeles que tiene dicha Provincia*, APSR (Ávila), Filipinas, tomo 695, ff. 46r-47v. My translation.

3) A biographical catalogue of all missionaries of the province from its foundation year until 1690.

Surprisingly to today's reader, this account of merits fails to enumerate the number of conversions and the population that fell under the spiritual care of the Dominicans, which was actually the ultimate goal of their missionary activities. Neither did it highlight the fact that the Dominicans had established a European-style printing press or that they had founded a university. Since Peguero's account was written expressly for the Master who had demanded it, the chronicler focused on the Dominican struggles, sacrifices, and martyrdoms. This was because the order competed with other missionary orders to achieve as many beatifications and canonizations from the Pope. Peguero's manuscript, unlike those that his predecessors had printed, was not a tool of propaganda. There was no need to pepper the text with wondrous tales of conversions, miracles, adventures, or natural calamities. Peguero's account aimed to compete, and in that competition, what mattered the most were the Dominican martyrs and not the natives they had converted.

5. CONCLUSION

Colonial literature written by missionaries emplaced at its center their activities, no matter how circumstantial the text was. Ecclesiastical chronicles were the primary tool that the religious orders used not only to construct a definitive history of their accomplishments but also to attract new vocations and highlight their successes even as they omitted untoward incidents as they sought to curry favor with the Pope, who as the head of the church hierarchy could reward the heroism of the religious order with privileges.

Aduarte's sanctimonious tone foregrounded the power, even a divine one, that the Dominicans tried to obtain over the natives. Santa Cruz's chronicle often reflected the order's interminable tensions with the civil government, a clash that actually would last until 1898, while Peguero's deliberately ignored its contextual reality, the Philippines, to focus solely on the Dominican members, their accomplishments, and the sacrifices

that mattered the most to them. Even as some of these ecclesiastical chronicles sometimes marginalized the natives and the civil government or neglected the missionary activities of other religious orders, they can also be better appreciated not only for their provision of historical data but also as standardized instruments that built convenient narratives in their writers' quest for supremacy and power. Indeed, other conspicuous features are also observed in these early Dominican chronicles: their almost absolute neglect of the documentation of native pre-hispanic beliefs and culture,⁴⁷ the construction of narratives that were permanently rooted in the idea of providentialism, the constant reduction of human destiny as the outcome of a perpetual battle between the forces of God and the devil, and, of course, their didactic tone that obsessed with the morality of human actions. Further research into the four Dominican chronicles presented in this essay is warranted, even as their complex structures clearly point to the multiple functions those texts hoped to accomplish: to announce to the Christian world that the Order of Preachers boasted of extraordinary members, to defend the interests of the Province of the Holy Rosary, to create stirring narratives that would inspire new vocations with their heavy emphasis on the adventurous and risky missions of Japan and China, and to leave impactful literary monuments for contemporary readers and posterity.

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⁴⁷ In this sense, 17th Dominican chronicles of the Philippines, unlike the narratives of the first encounters in America, already belong to second phase in the production of knowledge in which the curiosity for native cultures is rather scarce. See Mercedes Serna and José Luis Villar, «Introducción», *Crónicas de la conquista espiritual de América. Antología*, Madrid, Cátedra, 2023, p. 24.

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