

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

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Salvador P. Escoto

Philippine Studies vol. 58 nos. 1 & 2 (2010): 239–272

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Documentary Sources

SALVADOR P. ESCOTO

The Manila Archbishop's Visitation of Parishes, 1773–1775 A Look into the Lives of the Common People

This paper provides notes from records of the inspection tours conducted by Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina on the different towns and institutions that he visited in four phases from 5 February 1773 to 16 November 1775. The notes provide information on each town's parish priest, the physical state of the church and other facilities, demographic data, and comments on the people's moral situation. Against the friars' accusations that the native clergy lacked intellectual acumen and sufficient training, the archbishop recorded his evaluation of the individual priests he observed. The notes yield insights on the lives of ordinary people, particularly the Tagalog, in the Spanish Philippines.

**KEYWORDS: EPISCOPAL VISITATION · SECULARIZATION CONTROVERSY ·
NATIVE CLERGY · AUGUSTINIANS · EIGHTEENTH CENTURY**

Researchers attempting to write about the lives of the common Filipino people before the last quarter of the nineteenth century are faced with an arduous task. Most state documents, personal correspondence, memoirs, and economic reports during the Spanish colonial period chronicle only the events that concerned the Spaniards in the island colony. Thus, the administrations of governors-general, the accomplishments of prelates, and the intent and effects of royal decrees are discussed extensively in these records, while the native population is hardly mentioned. So glaring is the omission that the renowned historian, Teodoro Agoncillo (2001), declared that real Philippine history did not begin until 1872.

Many of his fellow historians do not agree with Agoncillo's controversial postulate. Although it is true that government officials and even private Spanish writers rarely showed interest in the lives of the common people, a famed anthropologist-historian pointed out that valuable information could be gleaned from these supposedly barren records. In his aptly titled book, *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain*, William Henry Scott (1982) stated that these sources often offer "fleeting glimpses . . . or implied references to Filipino behavior and conditions." He added that "every researcher in Spanish or Philippine archives quickly learns that almost any document contains some little Filipino glimpses for which he was not looking and which did not interest the author of the document." Furthermore, some chroniclers, especially men of the cloth, devoted a good portion of their writings to the natives. Most outstanding was the Jesuit Francisco Ignacio Alcina (2002), who wrote a monumental work about the natives and culture in seventeenth-century Samar.

Among the sources that provide information about the culture and activities of the native Filipinos are the bulky *legajos* (box files) generated by episcopal visitations when the Ordinaries undertook inspection tours of the parishes in their respective dioceses. The scope of these fact-finding missions was extensive, encompassing many aspects of ecclesiastical and secular life (Cortes 1981; García de los Arcos 1988; Manchado 1988; 1996). Because of these inquiries into the various aspects of the parish, episcopal visitation records are rich quarries that yield a plethora of information for researchers and historians—windows through which scholars are able to take a good look at the demography and daily life of the people as well as their religious, social, moral, and cultural values. The broad range of the episcopal visits is manifested in their objectives:

To ascertain the spiritual status of the people and to eradicate the prevalent vices in the communities such as adultery, fornication, robbery, usury, indecent apparel, witchcraft, and other public sins. To make certain that commercial activities (fairs or *tiangués*) during Sundays and holy days as well as parties during the Holy Week and designated days of abstinence are banned.

To investigate and evaluate the priests' personal lives and job performances, their relationship with their parishioners, and their compliance with church rules and regulations.

To inspect the condition of church buildings, rectories, and cemeteries, including essential appurtenances, e.g., baptismal fonts, confessionals, altars, sacred vessels, and vestments, and to enforce the teaching of catechism and of the Spanish language to schoolchildren.

To audit church funds and to make sure that data on baptisms, confirmations, marriages, burials, and donations are duly recorded in the parish books (*libro parroquial*).

To investigate hospitals, *colegios* (schools), *beaterios* (enclosed private houses of pious women, called *beatas*, who followed the norms of a religious order), and confraternities including their finances, properties, membership, and/or numbers of personnel, students, and patients.

To ascertain the population of each town based on the tributes and the classification of those exempted from paying taxes by reason of lineage, rank, personal service, sex, age, and physical disability.

In his tours, the archbishop was always accompanied by a priest of high rank, who functioned as his secretary; a young ecclesiastic, who acted as a page; an accountant; and a footman. Upon their arrival in town, the welcoming ceremonies were usually followed by an inspection of the church, including the altar, baptismal font, sacred vessels, liturgical vestments, and the confessionals. Afterward the archbishop examined the parish book (*libro parroquial*), which contained information on church funds; the registry of baptisms, marriages, and funerals; as well as the income from real estate and

donations. A check was then made to verify whether the conditions or intentions of the donors had been carried out. The following morning during mass, a list of public sins was read in Spanish and in the vernacular to the assembled congregation, which was enjoined to report any miscreants to the Ordinary.

Usually the archbishop spent two to three days in a big town, sometimes with side trips to big villages or haciendas, and a day in smaller towns. The parish priests and/or the parishioners reported the prevailing vices in the town or the immoral lives of some individuals. The prelate then summoned the transgressors and admonished them personally, threatening them with punishment if they persisted in their sinful practices. Likewise, the pastors themselves were not spared severe reprimand for personal misbehavior or serious dereliction of duty.

The inspection tours of Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina, which began on 5 February 1773 and ended on 16 November 1775, were divided into four phases, each circuit ending with his return to Manila. He visited 39 parishes, of which 27 were administered by the secular clergy—7 in the province of Tondo; 6 in the *extramuros* (suburb); and 14 in the provinces of Laguna de Bay, Balayan (now Batangas), and Cavite. The fourth phase concerned the remaining 12 parishes that were managed by the Augustinians, 10 of which were located in the province of Bulacan and 2 in the province of Tondo. The brief accounts shown below provide English translations of notes from the records of these tours.

First Phase: Province of Tondo

All the information provided in the notes on this phase of the visits are derived from the document entitled: “Testimonio en relato de las Iglesias . . . acontecidos en Manila,” 5 April 1773, Archivo General de Indias (AGI).

Taytay (previously under the Jesuits)

Date: 6–8 February 1773

Parish priest (5 years): Dr. Don Alejandro Domingues, Spaniard born in the Philippine Islands, disabled, almost blind; *Acting pastor* (2½ years): *Bachiller* (with a Bachelor’s degree) Don Luis Pilapil, Tagalog, competent.

Church: stone, wood, and tile roof, damaged by earthquake in 1771, under repair. Confessional windows need double grille.

Population: 389 full tributes, 123 bachelors or young unmarried men (*bagong binata*), 169 maidens or young unmarried women (*dalaga*), 306

school-age children (*niños de escuela*), 83 *reservados* (tribute-exempt). Total: 1,956 souls

Comment: People are docile, devout, and industrious, and they reside mostly in the town (*en mucha sociedad*) and not scattered in distant sites.

Antipolo

Date: 9–10 February 1773

Parish priest: Bachiller Don Fernando de la Cruz, 30, indio, competent and praiseworthy behavior (*loables costumbres*).

Church: beautiful, stone and tile roof. The pastor was told to repair the church, but the parish has very limited funds.

Population: 193½ tributes, 35 bachelors, 43 maidens, 48 children (*niños de escuela*), 95 *niños de pecho* (literally, “suckling babies,” but obviously included toddlers and preschool children). Total: 657

Comment: Due to Antipolo’s lack of arable land and stony soil, its people live miserably. Many work as farmhands in neighboring towns and return on weekends to hear mass. A woman was denounced as a witch, but after a thorough examination the archbishop found the accusations unfounded. He considered her a good Christian and threatened punishment to those who persisted in calling her a witch.

Bosoboso (a mission territory with a rugged, mountainous terrain, previously under the Jesuits)

Date: 11–12 February 1773

Missionary (5 years): Bachiller Don Eugenio de San Nicolás, age 40, Chinese mestizo, gentle, had baptized and catechized many infidels.

Church: stone and thatched (*nipa palm*) roof. Rectory: wood and thatched roof. No church funds.

Population: 142 Christians and many uncounted infidel Negritos.

Cainta

Date: 13–15 February 1773

Parish priest: Bachiller Don Juan Mancilla, creole, 40, very industrious.

Church: Beautiful, of stone, wood, tile roof, damaged by earthquake; pastor told to repair it as soon as possible.

Population: 238 tributes, 136 singles (*jóvenes*), 135 children, 91 *reservados*. Total: 903

Comment: A prominent resident (*magnate*) was living in sin with a woman, and had previously ignored the parish priest's threat of arrest, but finally begged pardon from the archbishop. For atonement, the accused was ordered to ask forgiveness in front of the church congregation for three consecutive Sundays during high mass, with a sincere promise to amend his life.

Mariquina

Date: 16–17 February 1773

Parish priest (5 years): Bachiller Don José Rodríguez, 35, Japanese mestizo, vicar forane, very efficient, learned (*muy instruido*), and faithful in carrying out his ministry. Coadjutor: Fr. Juan Franco.

Church: stone, wood, tile roof, under repair; confessionals need double grille; repair of church, rectory, and cemetery was defrayed mostly by pastor. Church fund: P400 owed to the pastor.

Population: 557½ tributes, 526 singles (jóvenes), 348 school-age children, 779 preschool children (*párulos*), 197 reservados. Total: 3,001

Comment: Inhabitants well indoctrinated and most of them learn catechism in Spanish. The economy is based on agriculture and hunting.

San Mateo (previously under the Jesuits)

Date: 18–19 February 1773

Parish priest (5 years): Bachiller Don Felipe Roque Ramos, 35, well mannered, industrious, and devoted to his ministry.

Church: beautiful, spacious with brick walls but damaged by earthquake; under repair; materials worth P300 ready for repair, half of it paid with the pastor's own money.

Population: 327 tributes, 151 singles, 156 children, 219 preschoolers, 103 reservados. Total: 1,283

Comment: Although most people reside in the community, some live in the mountains and are reluctant to settle in the town.

San Pedro Makati (hacienda town formerly under the Jesuits)

Date: 20–22 February 1773

Parish priest (5 years): Bachiller Don Manuel de Guzman, 32, Chinese mestizo, vicar forane; good, exemplary life.

Church: stone, wood, tile roof, but damaged by earthquake. The archbishop wants it repaired, but neither the parish nor the priest has funds. No rectory

either, so the pastor resides in a separate quarter of the magnificent hacienda house, where the owner also lives. The parish has a *cofradía* (confraternity) called Anunciata, but the pastor was ordered to change the name to *Purificación de Nuestra Señora* in order to expunge all vestiges of Jesuit influence.

Population: 213 tributes, 116 singles, 260 children, 99 preschoolers, 108 reservados. Total: 1,009

Comment: The archbishop exhorted the pastor to give more religious instruction to hacienda tenants, who are mostly transients and hardly catechized, to preach to the faithful in Spanish, and to catechize the children in the same language.

Second Phase: Extramuros (Parishes outside the city walls)

All the information given in the details concerning this phase of the visits are found in the following document: "Testimonio en relato de las Iglesias . . . acontecidos en Manila," 5 April 1773, AGI.

Quiapo (always under the secular clergy)

Date: 28 February 1773

Parish priest (2 years): Don Gaspar Jiménez, 40, Spanish mestizo.

Church: A beautiful church of stone and wood with a tile roof, heavily damaged by an earthquake in 1771; people are asked to contribute toward its repair. (See figs. 1 and 2.)

Population: 406 tributes, 61 singles, 205 children, 109 preschoolers, 348 reservados. Total: 1,610

Comment: Practically all live in the town (*mucha reducción y sociabilidad*). Most people are poor, but well indoctrinated in the faith. Many are good scribes/copyists and dedicate their time to the art of good handwriting (*buenos plumarios y aplicados a las letras*).

Santa Cruz (previously under the Jesuits)

Date: 7 March 1773

Parish priest (2 years): Dr. Don Vicente Máximo Gutiérrez, creole, his "age [not mentioned] implies much learning and experience."

Church: beautiful, of stone, wood with a tile roof; has three naves with columns in the middle.

Population: 594 tributes, 447 singles, 200 children, 121 preschoolers. Total: 1,956



Fig. 1. Quiapo Church c.1940s
Source: AHC 1146-0103

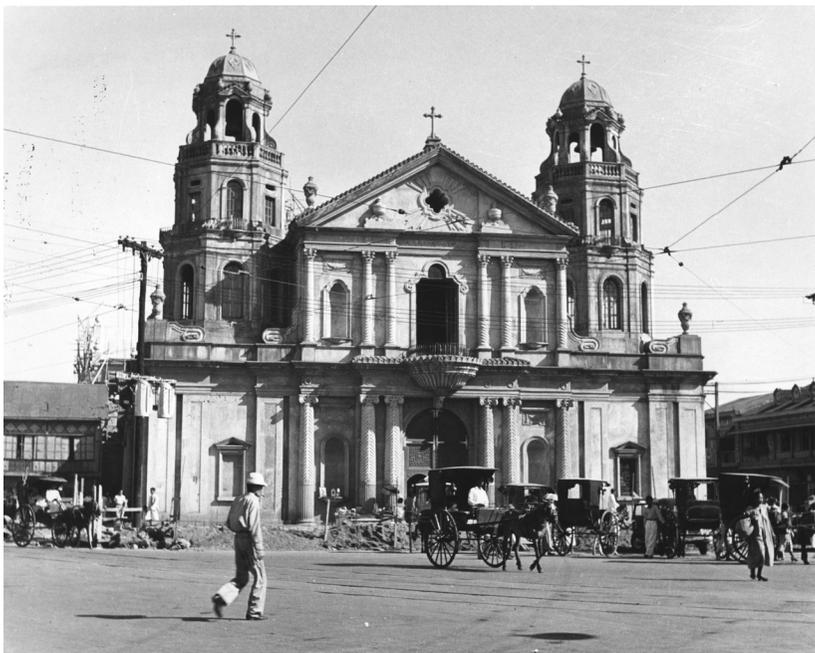


Fig. 2. Quiapo Church
Source: AHC 1146-0203



Fig. 3. Binondo Church
Source: AHC 1033-0409

Comment: Inhabitants comprise three *gremios* (corporate groups): natives, Chinese mestizos, and “various Spanish families.” Residents told the archbishop that the evildoers in the community come from other towns.

Binondo

Date: 14 March 1773

Parish priest (6 years): *Licenciado* (licentiate) Don Luis del Corro, 32, creole, efficient, and a man of letters.

Church: beautiful but it has no contiguous rectory (fig. 3), because the building attached to the church belongs to the Dominicans, who previously administered the parish.

Population: 1,382 tributes, 1,644 singles, 2,808 children, 801 preschool, 402 reservados. Total: 8,419

Comment: Inhabitants are mostly natives and Chinese. There are also many distinguished Spanish families, whose household members and servants do not pay taxes, thus making it difficult to determine the exact number of the population. Furthermore, being a port town, Binondo has a large mix of “nationalities.” When the time comes to register residents, many people move out of town. A woman was denounced for living in sin with her lover, and the pair was forced to separate. The archbishop publicly rebuked many others who were denounced for usury and sinful cohabitations.

Parian (formerly under the Dominicans)

Date: 19 March 1773

Parish priest (6 years): Bachiller Don Agustín del Rosario, 30, Chinese mestizo, competent, honest, and faithful (*exacto*) in carrying out his ministry.

Church: in good condition

Population: 320 tributes, 106 singles, 80 children, 81 infants, 40 reservados. Total: 1,033

Comment: Usury and immoral cohabitations are the common public vices.

San Miguel

Date: 21 March 1773

Parish priest (5 years): Bachiller Don Francisco Xavier de Victoria, 50, indio, quite learned (*bastante literatura*), industrious but sickly, and has an acting parish priest.

Church: totally destroyed by earthquake. A decent *camarín* (storehouse) serves as a house of worship.

Population: tributes 235, 110 singles, 111 children, 74 preschoolers, 72 reservados. Total: 837

Comment: Inhabitants are generally poor, but docile.

Ermita (always under the secular clergy)

Date: 25 March 1773

Parish priest (3 years): Bachiller Don Manuel Hernández, 60, Spanish mestizo, strong and active.

Church and rectory: totally destroyed by earthquake. A *camarín* serves as church and school.

Population: 400 tributes, 132 singles, 99 children, 68 preschoolers, 120 reservados. Total: 837 [should be 1,219?]

Santiago (located at the main entrance of the city)

Date: 28 March 1773

Interim pastor: Don Nicolás de Leon, indio, quite good in ministry, income paid from the royal coffer in Mexico.

Population: Has only 214 residents, composed of Pampangueño soldiers' families.

Comment: No church but a decent *camarín*.

N.B. “With Holy Week approaching, visitation was suspended and Archbishop Sancho de Santas Justa y Rufina returned to Manila, April 5, 1773.”

Third Phase: Provinces of Laguna de Bay, Balayan, and Cavite

The data in this section come from the following source material: “Testimonio en relato de las Iglesias y Curatos,” 15 February 1774, Filipinas, legajo 635, AGI.

Cavite el Viejo (previously under the Jesuits)

Date: 18–? January 1774

Parish priest: Don Manuel del Rosario, 28, Portuguese mestizo, leads an honest, blameless life and is very faithful in carrying out his ministry (*exactísimo en desempeñar el cargo*).



Fig. 4. Cavite el Viejo Church
Source: Sierra 1998, 161

Church: brick, wood, and tile, 75 varas long, 14 varas wide, and 28 varas high (fig. 4). Rectorry: good and spacious, 7 varas long and 3½ varas wide. Church fund: 880–1–6. Some liturgical vestments are so worn out that the archbishop authorized the purchase of new ones with church money.

Population: 855 tributes, 748 singles, 799 children, 335 reservados. Total: 4,417

Comment: People are generally docile, devout, and industrious. Two couples were reported to be living separately from their spouses without “the magistrate’s permission” and were ordered to live together.

Silan[g] (previously under the Jesuits)

Date: 21–? January 1774

Parish priest (5 years): Don Juan Tomás de Legazpi, 30, Chinese mestizo, exemplary life, moderately qualified to administer a parish (*medianamente instruido en desempeñar el cargo*).

Church: 58 varas long, 14 varas wide, roof under repair. Church fund: 399–6–1. Confraternity: named Anunciata under the Jesuits, but was changed to

Holy Rosary at the suggestion of the archbishop and with the Dominican provincial’s approval. The archbishop also ordered the pastor to stop the allegedly Jesuit-initiated practice of bringing the sick [slung in a hammock] from the barrios to the church in order to receive the last sacrament.

Population: 655 tributes, 315 singles, 242 children, 668 infants (*infantes*), 469 reservados. Total: 3,010 excluding 40 beggars

Comment: Although the people at large are generally good, there were reported cases of gambling, drunkenness, illicit cohabitations, and moral turpitude, and the pastor has limited success in curbing these vices.

Indan[g] (formerly under the Jesuits)

Date: 24–? January 1774

Parish priest (4 years): Don Juan Evaristo Cabrera, 28, Spanish mestizo, proficient and very faithful in carrying out his ministry.

Church: in ruins, needs at least P600 to repair it and the parish fund has 545–6–½ cash.

Population: not entirely settled in the town (*todavía no . . . sociedad*); 512 tributes, 280 singles, 275 children, 619 preschoolers. Reservados: 34 incumbent and former *cabezas de barangay* with wives, 8 singers (*cantores*), 3 servants; 72 due to old age and “royal cedula.” Total: 2,315

Comment: People are very remiss in hearing mass. Residents in Indan[g] and in the two immediate preceding towns have improved in learning Spanish, especially the school children, who talk [*sic*], read, and pray in Spanish.

Tunasan (hacienda town)

Date: 26–27 January 1774

Parish priest: Don Miguel Silverio, 29, Chinese-Pampangueño mestizo, vicar forane, well mannered (*buenos costumbres*), very capable and intensely faithful in carrying out his ministry (*exactísimo*).

Church: Currently a camarín made of nipa and bamboo, no church fund. A new, strongly built church (*de cal y canto*) is about to be finished to which the parish priest had contributed a third (673–1–½) of the entire construction cost. He had also spent 277–6–0 of his own money to build the rectorry (8 *brazas* long [1 *braza* ≈ 2 varas], 6 wide, 3 height). The parish needs a catechist and Spanish teacher, but there is no more money to pay them. A futile petition was made to the provincial governor for assistance. The parishioners tried to help, but the contribution was very small and not enough to support a teacher.

Population: 376 tributes, 230 singles, 115 children, 131 infants (niños de pecho), 140 reservados. Total: 1,588

Comment: Much of the prevailing vices in the hacienda are carnal in nature (*lascivia*); gambling, usury, and swindling are committed mostly by transients.

Biñan (hacienda town)

Date: 28 January 1774

Parish priest: Don Juan de Torrente (on leave). Acting pastor: Don Evaristo Esteban, 28, Tagalog, moderately qualified in administering a parish (*medianamente instruido de su obligación*).

Church and rectory: totally destroyed by the British during the war in the early 1760s. New church: strong, solidly built (*de cal y canto*). No rectory yet and the pastor lives in a house near the church, which belongs to Colegio de Santo Tomás, the residence of the hacienda administrator who is a Dominican brother.

Population: 1,466 tributes and 1,389 other residents (including children and reservados). Total: 4,744

Comment: “Ungovernable, the worst of all haciendas, impossible to govern because houses are widely dispersed. Notorious for its excesses in lechery, drunkenness, robbery, swindling, greed, and usury, because fugitives (*foragida*), and violent (*sanguina*), vicious people (*gente de mal vivir*) could enter and leave with ease.”

Cabugao a.k.a. Tabuco: (formerly under the Dominicans, located near the hacienda of Calamba)

Date: 31 January 1774

Parish priest (8 years): Don Manuel García, 52, Pampango, very experienced in the care of souls, honest and gentle (*de mucho reposo*), faithful in carrying out his ministry.

Church: Earlier church totally destroyed by earthquake, replaced by a makeshift made of nipa while a new one is under construction. No church fund left. “Has a coadjutor in hacienda with its own church also made of nipa.”

Population: 565 tributes, 267 singles, 193 children. Total: 1,757

Comment: “Inhabitants poor and small in number. Despite its long distance from Manila, the people have made much progress in learning the Spanish language, especially the school children, who talk [*sic*], read, and pray in Spanish.”

Santo Tomás de los Montes

Date: 1 February 1774

Parish priest (5 years): Don Salvador Dionisio de los Santos, Chinese mestizo, honest, average competence.

Church: solidly built but still unfinished [the former church also destroyed by earthquake?]. Small rectory made of bamboo and nipa.

Population: 459½ tributes, 164 singles, 198 children [no reservados?] Total: 1,240 [*sic*, should be at least 1,281]

Comment: People very poor and inclined to idleness.

Rosario

Date: 2 February 1774

Parish priest (9 years): Don Manuel Eduardo Gatdula, 54, Pampango, exemplary priest, highly experienced in care of souls.

Church: remarkably clean [The old church was totally demolished by earthquake?]; a makeshift of nipa and bamboo. A strong, solidly built church is under construction despite the great difficulty of obtaining limestone from a distant quarry and the hefty expenses in transporting the material. Rectory is of wood, brick and nipa roof. Church fund: 435–3–6 owed to the pastor.

Population: 716½ tributes, 105 singles, 294 children, 211 reservados based on ranks/lineage and personal services, 680 reservados by *polo* (forced labor). Total: 2,723

Comment: Although far from Manila, the natives are the most reasonable (*racional*) among the Tagalog, very docile, and well disposed to learn the Spanish language, especially the school children.

Balayan

Date: 3–4 February 1774

Parish priest (“for many years”): Don Francisco Xavier de Castro, 60, Indio Tagalog, vicar forane.

Church: Very beautiful, strongly built.

Population: 893 tributes, 228 singles, 548 children, 348 reservados. Total: 2,920

Comment: For livelihood, the people dedicate their time to agriculture, fishery, and the weaving of cotton and silk fabrics, *mantas mezclillas* (blankets woven with different sorts of thread), and handkerchiefs. Has a barrio called Lian[g], under the care of an assistant priest (unnamed and financially independent). Lian[g]’s residents are included in the town population count.

Maragondong

Date: 5 February 1774

Parish priest: Don Juan Fernández de la Cuadra, 38, creole, exemplary, simple life, sometimes has only one cassock, noted for his charity and love for his flock.

Church: of stone, wood and tile roof; rectory solidly built. Church fund: 143–6–¼.

Population: 399 tributes (519½ including hacienda Naic, which has 120½), 240 singles, 219 children, 565 preschoolers, 167 reservados. Total: 2,230 [should be 1,700?]

Comments: The people of Maragondong are quite lax in hearing mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation. Excluded in the census is another group of people of “different ethnicity” (*otra casta de gente*) called Mardicas, who live along the sandbar outside the town and are exempted from paying tribute. There are about 400 to 500 of them: 284 adults, 66 children, and 100 infants. Their number has been dwindling due to malnutrition (lack of rice) and the almost yearly raids of the Moros.

Malabon (always under the secular clergy)

Date: no date reported

Parish priest (“for a number of years”): Don Francisco Nayto, 31, Chinese mestizo, exemplary life, average competence. Under the jurisdiction of the parish are two haciendas: (1) Santa Cruz, owned by the Dominicans, and (2) San Francisco de Malabon, owned by the Countess de Lizárraga. A coadjutor lives in Santa Cruz and administers to the tenants.

Church: Previous church of stone, wood, and tile roof totally ruined (by earthquake?). Camarín of nipa have served as temporary places of worship in the town and in the two haciendas.

Population: 2,544 taxpayers (*tributantes*), including both haciendas; 296 singles, 1,472 children, 363 reservados. Total: 1,758 [*sic*, must be 4,675].

Comment: Fornication and abductions of women (*rapto de mujeres*) are prevalent. Furthermore, fairs (*tianggues*) are held on Sundays and holy days. The archbishop severely reprimanded the pastor for turning a blind eye on these trading activities, threatening him with grave punishment if he again allows such abuses.

Bacoor

Date: 7 February 1774

Parish priest (9 years): Don Silvestre de Miranda, 47, Indio Pampangueño, competent, highly experienced in the care of souls, faithful in carrying out ministry.

Church: stone, wood, and tile roof; rectory of wood, brick and thatched (nipa) roof. Has a *cofradía* named Nuestra Señora de los Remedios, but owns no land and is solely maintained by donations.

Population: 620½ tributes, 292 singles, 720 children, 232 preschoolers (a fourth of them Chinese mestizos), 187 reservado by age, 40 reservado by ailments. Total: 2,712

Comment: The town has very limited parcels of land. Even families who are permanent residents (“who live honestly”), still remain very poor because the lots they own are very small. Many landless people roam around throughout the year. Since they have nothing to do to keep them busy, they have become gamblers, thieves, and pickpockets. The archbishop suggested that the pastor coax the nonresidents to settle permanently in the town and, if unsuccessful, ask the civil authorities (*arma secular*) for help.

San Roque

Date: 8 February 1774

Parish priest (20 years): Dr. Don Vicente Manleon y Peralta, 60, Spaniard, a distinguished man of letters (*excelente en letras*), exemplary life, well mannered, and dutiful. Because he exemplifies a quintessential model of parish priests, he was appointed vicar of the entire province.

Church: The old beautiful church was destroyed by an earthquake; the new church is of wood and brick with a tile roof. Church fund: 215–2–1 owed to the pastor. Has a *cofradía* named Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, which is supported by donations.

Population: (number of tributes not mentioned), 777 singles, 565 children, 1,952 infants; reservados: 121 by age and sickness, 109 by law/privilege (referring to Spaniards and Spanish mestizo), and 120 children of Spanish mestizo. Total: at least 5,937, which includes 2,293 residents of the two villages of Estansuela and Leyton.

Cavite Port

Date: 9 February 1774

Parish priest: Bernardo del Rosario (no age given), Chinese mestizo, good character, competent, and has a pleasant and charitable disposition.

Church/rectory: of stone, wood and tile roof

Population: “393 married,” 878 singles, 277 children, 696 infants. Total: 2,244

Comment: Has two *cofradías*, Jesús Nazareno, located in a Recollect church with fund administered by the members under the Prior’s direction, and Santísimo Sacramento y Las Almas del Purgatorio, whose mostly Spaniard members handle the fund with great care. Being a port town, it has a large concourse of Spanish, French, English, Chinese mestizo, Pampangueño, Ilocano, and Pangasinense residents. There are very many bad people in the port that lead dissolute lives, vicious vagabonds that contaminate the morals of native Caviteños.

The Archbishop visited the Chapel of Nuestra Señora de Soledad located in Cavite Port and was received by the chaplain, Don Rafael Ochoa, a humble priest of affable character (*bellas cualidades*). The chapel is more richly furnished and endowed than all the churches in the entire province and has invested between P5,000 to P6,000 capital in business. The episcopal visitation was ended because it was almost Lent.

Fourth Phase: Visitation of Parishes under the Augustinians

The episcopal visitation of the Augustinian parishes in the provinces of Bulacan and Tondo was unprecedented in Philippine ecclesiastical history. Because the religious missionaries christianized the Philippines before bishoprics were formed, they enjoyed certain privileges such as exemption from episcopal visitation. However, with the establishment of the four dioceses in the islands, this exemption was revoked by various popes and endorsed by the kings of Spain. The lack of secular priests and the skillful maneuvering of the religious orders foiled its implementation. Archbishop Basilio Sancho de Santa Justa y Rufina, who arrived in Manila in 1767, and Simón de Anda, who was appointed governor-general of the Philippines in 1770, both staunch, pugnacious regalists, were determined to enforce, ruthlessly if need be, the royal decrees.

The Dominicans readily submitted to episcopal visitation, but in the beginning the Augustinians were the most recalcitrant among the various friars orders. With the assurance of the archbishop in October 1771 that he had trained enough indigenous priests to replace the Augustinians, Governor Anda evicted them from the twenty-two parishes they administered in the province of Pampanga and had them deported to Spain. In 1775 the governor-general also expelled the intractable Augustinian provincial superior and the *definidores* (councilors or chief advisers), with the assistance of the *visitador general* (general inspector) of his order. Predictably, the new provincial superior, Fray Gerónimo Noroña, was more accommodating, and he consented to the archbishop’s visitation of the ten Augustinian parishes in the province of Bulacan and the two in Tondo, which took place from 13 October to 16 November 1775.

On this visit, the archbishop was accompanied by Bachiller Don Doroteo Masangcay y Coronel, rector of the Manila Cathedral and acting secretary, page, accountant, and valet. He was later joined by the new Augustinian provincial superior. The party departed in the evening of 13 October aboard a sampan and arrived in Bulacan on the 14th.

Details given in the reports in this section are found in “Testimonio en Relato en la Santa Visita de las Parroquias de Bulacan y dos de la Tondo administradas por los Religiosos Agostinos . . . en calidad de curas colados,” 11 December 1775, Ultramar, legajo 691, AGI.

Bulacan

Date: 14–16 October 1775

Parish priest: Fray Alfonso, definidor and vicar forane, 50, faithful in complying with church regulations. He has several coadjutors (names and their specific number not mentioned).

Church: (damaged by the British and is under repair) stone and roof of bamboo and nipa. Rectory of stone and wood. Church fund: P1,853 owed to pastor for church repair. No baptismal font. Parish records (*libro parroquial*) were written on thin Chinese paper. The archbishop demanded that the font be promptly installed and that thick, durable paper from Spain be used in the parish book of accounts.

The parish confraternity, *Cofradía de Nuestra Señora de la Correa de San Agustín y Santa Mónica*, is endowed with tracts of arable land and has 99–6–6 in the cashbox (*caja*). The archbishop ordered that its revenue be apportioned

as follows: 6 *quiñones* (one *quiñon* being equivalent to about 5.76 hectares) for the maintenance of the church, 4 *quiñones* for the confraternity's religious functions, 2 *quiñones* for needy orphans and daughters of past *hermanos mayores* (hermano mayor was a title given to a leading resident) who had rendered valuable services to the association, and 1 *quiñon* for the two teachers (normally a male and a female) who teach Spanish and the Christian doctrine.

Population: Tributes 1,537. Total: 5,105

Comments: A married man had an illicit relationship with a woman, and the archbishop obliged him to end the affair and one of them (the woman?) was required to move to another town. Usury is rampant not only in the town, but in the entire province. It usually consists of charging weekly interest of 4 *reales* (half peso) for a P10 loan, or demanding two or three times the amount for every quantity of rice lent. The prelate ordered restitution be given to the victims and wrote letters to the *alcalde mayor* and provincial magistrates to punish the miscreants. Furthermore, he forbade vendors from selling a variety of textiles (*ferias de varios géneros*) on Sundays and holy days of obligations, a common practice in the town, and warned violators that their merchandise would be seized and distributed to the poor of the town and to the prisoners in the province. Unless the violations were rectified, the archbishop threatened to replace the pastor with a secular priest.

Guiguinto

Date: 16–17 October 1775

Parish priest: Fray Andres Patiño, 34.

Church: stone, wood, tile roof; rectory needs repair. Church funds: 229–0–4 owed to the pastor.

Population: 938. Tributes, 248. Due to its small population, Guiguinto is not considered officially as a parish.

Church: The *Cofradía de la Correa de San Agustín y Santa Mónica* has 33–5–4 in the coffer. Endowment: 7 *quiñones* and 960 brazas of farmland. The archbishop considered the rent of 3 *quiñones* as sufficient to carry out the confraternity's religious activities. The rest of the income (from 4 *quiñones*, 960 brazas) was designated for the maintenance and upkeep of the church.

Comment: Again church records were written on thin Chinese paper and, likewise, *ferias* were held on Sundays and holy days. The archbishop gave a similar admonition and warning to Fray Patiño as he did to Fray Alfonso of Bulacan.

Malolos

Date: 18–20 October 1775

Parish priest: Fray Joaquin Naturana, 36.

Church: Beautiful church and a huge rectory (fig. 5). Church funds: 193–6–6 owed to the pastor. Its *Cofradía de la Correa de San Agustín y Santa Mónica* has a cashbox of P86. Allotment of its (20 *quiñones*) land: 6 for the confraternity yearly expenses, 6 for orphans of deserving *hermanos* and deputies of the *cofradía*, 1 for the salary of two catechetical and Spanish language teachers, and 7 to repair the embankment of the church.

Population: Tributes 1,694½. Total: 7,147

Comment: Confessional grilles have one latticework only and should be doubled. Again, *feria* is held on forbidden days.

Palombong

Date: 20–21 October 1775

Parish priest: Fray Manuel Recio, 35.

Church: stone, tile roof, rectory is wood with a nipa roof. Church fund: P105 owed to the pastor. *Cofradía:* A gratification of P8 was taken from its fund and given to the *hermano mayor*.

Population: Tributes 314. Total: 1,330

Hagonoy

Date: 20–22 October 1775

Parish priest: Fray Santiago Villoria, 38.



Fig. 5. Malolos Church
Source: AHC 1023–0204

Church: Beautiful and made of stone and wood with a tile roof; rectory of the same material but construction unfinished. Again parish book of accounts consists of thin paper from China. Church fund: 56–5–0 new proceeds from *octavas* (an ecclesiastical fee, 1/8 of some amount) collected in observance of an unmentioned festival day and burial. *Cofradía* has less than 2 *quiñones* land, rented for P20 a year, and has a liquidity of 107–3–0.

Population: Tributes 938. Total 4,618

Comment: The people in Hagonoy are described as apathetic and lax (*desidioso y flojo*) in complying with their religious duties. The archbishop posted on the church door his petition to the *alcalde mayor* to provide boats and bamboo rafts so that the people could cross the river and thus eliminate their alibi for not hearing mass on Sundays. A fortune-teller was denounced and therefore summoned by the archbishop who requested her to predict a future. The soothsayer demurred, saying she had lost her instruments. Furthermore, she insisted that she had not dissented from any teachings of the Catholic Church. As penance, the prelate told her to discontinue prognosticating, make a general confession, and dismiss her proselytes, if she has any.

Calumpit

Date: 23–24 October 1775

Parish priest: Fray Andres Arias, 40.

Church: stone, wood and tile roof (recently renovated); rectory wood, thatched roof. Church funds: 2–2–0. *Cofradía* has 1 *quiñon* and 37 brazas of land, and a cashbox of 31–4–¾.

Population: Tributes, 552. Total: 1,481

Comment: People have been hearing rumors allegedly spread by respectable individuals against the pastor and the *alcalde mayor*. In his sermon, the archbishop told the congregation not to believe them.

Quingua (now Plaridel)

Date: 25–? October 1775

Parish priest: Fray Bernardino Notario [age not mentioned]

Church: Beautiful church and rectory: stone, wood, and tile roof. Church funds: 45–5–½ owed to pastor. *Cofradía* has P80 cash and 17 *quiñones* of land. Allocation: 4 *quiñones* for its expenses; 4 for *hermanos*, delegates, and orphans; 1 for teacher's salary, and 8 for church upkeep.

Population: Tributes, 762½. Total: 3,261

Comment: People are quite docile. A man was reported to have an illicit relationship with his stepdaughter. Despite his protestation of innocence, they were forced to separate.

[After Quingua, the archbishop must have gone back to Manila for a short break.]

Baliwag

Date: 2–5 November 1775

Pastor: Fray Domingo Inchaurrealde, 37, good-hearted and faithful in carrying out his ministry.

Church: Beautiful, new church; rectory under repair. Church funds: 288–3–4 owed to the pastor. Confraternity has P8 in cashbox and 200 brazas of land.

Population: Tributes, 996. Total: 4,542

Comment: Some rich families claimed exemption from tributes and church contribution with the alibi that they had their domiciles elsewhere, but the archbishop forced them to pay their dues.

Angat

Date: 6–9 November 1775

Parish priest: Fray Manuel Urteaga, 40, conscientious and kind to people.

Church: New church. Church fund: 450–5–0 owed to the pastor. Church has no baptismal font, confessionals need double grilles. Confraternity has 27–2–0 cash and 1 *quiñon* of land rented for P30 a year. The archbishop ordered that 200 brazas of land be returned to their previous owners.

Population: Tributes, 664. Total: 3,426

Comment: People are docile and industrious.

Big-a

Date: 9–12 November 1775

Parish priest: Fray Antonio Ruíz, 28, good reputation.

Church: Beautiful church and rectory. Church fund: 49–2–½. Confraternity has 40–6–0 cash and 7 *quiñones* and 450 brazas of land. Allocation: 3 *quiñones* for its expenses; 1 *quiñon* for teachers; 3 *quiñones* and 450½ brazas for the church upkeep.

Population: Tributes, 446. Total: 1,684

Comment: Very good town people. A husband, together with the executor, was denounced for failure to fulfill his wife's last will.

Tambobong

Date: 12–14 November 1775

Parish priest: Fray Remigio Hernández, 62, former provincial superior, assisted by three coadjutors.

Church: Beautiful church and rectory, Church fund: 165–5–¾. Parish record written on Chinese paper. Confraternity has 42–3–¼ cash but no land.

Population: Tributes, 1,708. Total: 8,833

Comment: A couple had separate residences and the archbishop ordered them to live together.

Tondo

Date: 14–16 November 1775

Pastor: Fray Gregorio Gallego, 35.

Church: Former church destroyed by the British. New, beautiful church and rectory constructed with Augustinian fund. Parish owes 22,700–3–¾ to the order. Confraternity has no fund.

Population: Tributes, 1,156½. Total: 7,299

Comment: People are highly cultured and dedicated to music, poetry, and writing.

Visitation of Other Religious Institutions

Details given in the accounts in this section were obtained from the archival document entitled “Expediente sobre la visita del arzobispo de Manila de los hospitales, beaterios, casas de recogimiento de esa ciudad y de sus extramuros, incluyendo el Colegio de Sta. Potenciana,” 29 December 1774, Filipinas, legajo 643, AGI.

The inspection of hospitals, beaterios, *casas de recogimiento* (houses akin to a convent providing female education whose residents were known as *recogidas*), and colegios was a more complicated matter. Papal exemption, royal decrees, monastic privileges, and founders of these institutions could restrict or even nullify the power of an Ordinary to inspect their facilities. For instance, the king denied the archbishop’s petition to visit the Obras Pías de la Santa Misericordia and its school, Colegio de Santa Isabel. So with his request to visit the Beaterio de Santa Catalina, because the founder in his will opposed visitation, and its exemption status had long been recognized by previous archbishops of Manila. Other institutions like hospitals were considered both civil and ecclesiastical entities, with both the royal and the

church authorities sharing supervisory powers. One could not unilaterally conduct a visitation without the other. Since the governor-general had more important things to do, he usually appointed a government official to represent him in this investigatory assignment, and the archbishop under such circumstances followed suit.

The visitation of the institutions (24 November to 19 December 1773) mentioned below was delegated to two prominent dignitaries: José Ricardo Villaseñor, lawyer of the Board of Registration, commissioned by Governor Anda to represent the secular government; and Dr. José Antonio Correa, a canon of the Cathedral, appointed by the archbishop to represent the ecclesiastical authority. They were assisted by Fray Francisco de la Aldea and José Memije y Quiroz. The delegation gave a report that is abridged here.

San Lázaro Hospital (for lepers)

24 November 1773: There were 43 men and 29 women in various incremental stages of their disease. Each ward was partitioned by a screen of curtains made of fine abaca (*medriñaque*). When asked whether they were given proper treatment and care by the physician, by the priest, and by other hospital attendants, “Yes!” unanimously replied the patients. Similarly, they had no complaint about the food and medicine. Upon examination, the hospital’s book of account was found in good order.

San Gabriel Hospital (for Chinese)

25 November 1773: The investigators were attended by the head of the hospital, Fray José Azcárate. There were eight patients behind the *medriñaque* screen. Everything was fine. (Revisited on 12 December 1774, when there were 39 men and 30 women patients; satisfactory conditions were implied.)

Royal Hospital (for military and naval personnel)

27 November 1773: The hospital administrator (*mayordomo*), the chief physician Francisco Jurado, and the head chaplain waited on the visitors, who inspected first the chapel, which was ablaze with lighted candles. On the altar were laid out the sacred vessels and liturgical vestments; a damascene carpet covered the chapel floor. In the surgeon’s ward there were 57 patients and in the infirmary (*sala de medicina*) 6 patients. All had blankets, mattresses, sheets, and pillows and received proper medical care. It was visited again on 18 November 1774, by Miguel Cortes de Arredondo y Arioso, dean of the

cathedral and commissioned by the archbishop, and Atty. José Ricardo de Villaseñor who represented the governor-general. This time the surgeon's ward had 47 patients and the infirmary had 54. The increase in the number of patients was due to the admission of ailing mariners of the recently arrived frigate, *Juno*, which had sailed directly from Spain.

Colegio de Santa Potenciana

1 December 1773: The *visitadores* (inspectors) were attended by the major chaplain, Prof. Licenciado Gregorio de Olaes, and Directress Petrona de Lozada. The school had 24 *becas* (scholarships) and 8 *pupilas* (pupils) (the maximum number fixed by the king) and a maintenance staff of 1 sacristan, 6 servants, and 1 *comprador* (purchaser). All the girls were asked if they were provided with adequate food and medical care, and each gave a positive reply with no complaints. It was visited again on 8 November 1774. Once more, the maximum limit of 24 *colegialas*, 8 *pupilas* was maintained except for 3 *agregadas* (supernumeraries); the number of the service personnel remained the same. Santa Potenciana had a deposit box, which contained the girls' dowries and monies for various intentions. For security reasons it had three keys. A royal official, the Dominican prior of the convent, and the school chaplain each held one. Its contents were not mentioned, but it stated that the box was found empty after the British occupation of Manila in 1762–1764.

Beaterio de la Compañía

1 December 1773: It had 32 beatas, 52 *pupilas*, 7 widows, and 31 *recogidas*. During the interrogation, the residents reported that everything was fine and that they had no complaints. During a second visitation made on 15 December 1774, the beaterio had 28 beatas, 46 Spanish girls, 29 native and mestiza *recogidas*, and 4 widows, most of whom maintained themselves as seamstresses and embroiderers. The education of the Spanish girls and some of the mestizas and natives were paid for by their parents on a yearly and monthly basis. This beaterio was founded by Mother Ignacia del Espíritu Santo in 1685.

Beaterio de San Sebastian

9 December 1773: It had twelve beatas under the direction of Prioress Mother Tomasa de Jesús. The account book of alms given by benefactors was audited and passed muster. Another inspection on 19 December 1774 found eleven beatas dressed in black and wearing *correas* (a cord cinch

worn by religious) like those of the Augustinian tertiary. The beaterio maintained itself well through alms, needlework, and assistance from the Recollect fathers.

Conclusion

Episcopal visitation during the Spanish colonial period had a far-reaching significance—much more than its modest ecclesiastical term suggests. The bulky documents it generated reveal many interesting facts and fascinating incidents that are now priceless source material in local Philippine history. They tell among other things what was unique or noteworthy about a certain town, and the difference in the cultural, educational, and moral milieu between a provincial town, a port, or a hacienda and the suburbs of Manila. They demonstrate the number, competence, and racial background of the secular priests whom the archbishop used to replace the regular clergy in the parishes in metropolitan Manila and neighboring provinces. They show the shortcomings and achievements made by the Augustinians in the towns they administered. Most important of all, these documents are a valuable contribution to demography and other areas of inquiry that shed light on the life of the common people.

Of the towns mentioned in the visitation records, it is understandable that people who lived in the suburbs were generally well educated and well versed in the Spanish language, like Quiapo or Tondo, whose inhabitants were described as highly cultured and dedicated to music, poetry and notarial or literary writing. Thus, it was a pleasant surprise that Cabugao alias Tabuco, “despite its distance from Manila,” showed remarkable progress in learning Spanish, especially the school children. A substantial number of people in San Roque must have learned a good smattering of the language, because it had a large number of Spanish mestizo residents (229 of them), although it also had 121 *reservados* due to old age or infirmity. Perhaps San Roque was the record holder in productivity: of the incomplete population of 5,937 (married couples accidentally left out), it had 1,952 babies, 565 schoolchildren, let alone 777 singles. The case of Rosario is interesting and quite unique. The town had many Spanish and Spanish mestizo residents because its 211 *reservados* were explicitly mentioned as based on “lineage (Spaniards) and personal services” (their servants). Furthermore, Rosario had a much larger group of *reservados*—680 *polistas* or forced laborers—implying that there must have been a lot of public works going on in that

town. Most complimentary of all, Rosario's inhabitants were said to be very eager to learn the Spanish language and were praised as "the most reasonable (*racional*) and docile among the Tagalog people."

Other towns deserve special mention. Balayan had the fine distinction of being described as a bustling industrial town, where fishing, weaving, and agriculture flourished. Binondo and Parian had the largest concentration of Chinese, while a huge number of Chinese mestizos lived in Santa Cruz and the port of Cavite, and comprised about a fourth of the entire population of Bacoor. Regarding reservados, Silan[g] had 469 of them, and although no explanation was given for its having so many, perhaps most of them were hacienda tenants. For its part, Indan[g] gave a clear-cut reason for its 117 reservados by citing specifically the numbers of incumbent and past *cabezas de barangay*, cantores, servants, aged, and infirm people. The worse category of reservados, notorious for loose living and rampant immoralities, were the transient tenants, sharecroppers, tramps, sailors, and vicious men that peopled Cavite Port and haciendas like Makati, Calamba, Lian, Malabon, and Naic. Drunkenness, robbery, rape, prostitution, cohabitation, embezzlement, gambling, and others were prevalent in those places and the authorities seemed helpless to suppress these practices. Biñan was considered the worst and Tunasan the best, which does not mean that some of the abominable vices were not found in the latter.

When Archbishop Sancho arrived in the islands in 1767, there were only fifteen parishes in the archdiocese run by the secular clergy. Six years later, the number had increased to twenty-seven parishes, ten of which were taken from the expelled Jesuits and two from the intimidated Dominicans. Of the thirty-nine parishes visited by the archbishop, twenty-seven were administered by secular priests and twelve by the Augustinian friars. The secular or diocesan clergy comprised twenty-five parish priests, two acting or interim pastors, one military chaplain, six assistant priests three of whom were assigned to big parishes and three to haciendas—a total of thirty-four. They were racially mixed: five were Spaniards—two born in Spain (peninsulares), one "Filipino" (a term referring to Spaniards born in the Philippines), one creole (a Spaniard born in the New World, probably in Mexico). The rest consisted of two Portuguese mestizos, five Spanish mestizos, one (actually two because of "Nayto") Japanese mestizo, six Chinese mestizos, three Tagalog, three Pampangueños, two described simply as "indios" with no reference to their home region or province, and five were ethnically unidentified. Some,

if not all, were probably natives since four of them were assistant priests. Most of the peninsular and creole pastors were older and assigned to more stable and bigger parishes.

The raging issue at this time was the friars' virulent accusations that, because the native clergy lacked intellectual acumen and sufficient academic training, they were abysmally unqualified to be ordained priests. It is fitting, therefore, to mention the evaluations made of their abilities by the archbishop as well as their scholastic accomplishments in order to have a comparative idea of their competence. Three had doctorate degrees (all Spaniards—a peninsular, a "Filipino," and a creole); one had a licentiate (a creole), and nine had bachelor degrees (a creole, a Spanish mestizo, a Japanese mestizo, three Chinese mestizos, two indios, and one unidentified). Almost all of these degree holders were assigned in suburban parishes. Four (three Chinese mestizos and one Tagalog) were rated "medianamente instruido," i.e., they barely had enough knowledge of theology, philosophy, canon law, and liturgy. (Some Augustinians may have had some of these degrees, but this was not reported.) The archbishop was generally generous in evaluating the competence of his clergy, sometimes giving lavish praise to some of them, while he was more subdued in his comments about the Augustinians.

The ages of the secular priests were distributed as follows: early fifties (3), 60 (3), 47 (1), 40 (4), early to mid-thirties (9), late twenties (3), 26 (just 1)—the ages of 7 other clergymen not mentioned—with an average age of 39. All twenty-five parish priests had several years experience as pastors, including one 26 years old, who probably received a canonical dispensation since he was ordained at 23. Of the twelve Augustinian pastors, most of them were in their thirties and only two were 40 years old; the oldest was 50. In regard to assistant priests, Bulacan had "several" coadjutores and Tambobong had three, but their names and ages were not mentioned. During this period the average-size town had about 1,000 to 2,000 inhabitants. The largest towns visited by the archbishop were: Tambobong (8,833), Binondo (8,419), Malolos (7,147), San Roque (5,937 incomplete), Bulacan (5,147), Malabon (4,628), and Cavite el Viejo (4,417). The first, third, and fifth largest were under the Augustinians. Of the remaining four under the secular clergy, two were administered by Spanish creoles, one by a mestizo Portuguese, and the last by a Chinese mestizo.

Two impressions are likely to emerge from the archbishop's visits to the Augustinian parishes. On the one hand, these friars took great care of their

parish churches, which were generally large, beautiful, solidly built, and sometimes newly constructed—the most magnificent site and pride of the town. To their lasting credit, the Augustinian pastors spent a large portion of their own resources or their religious order's assets in order to build a worthy house of worship.

On the other hand, the following three violations were quite prevalent in the towns under their watch:

1. The parish record (*libro parroquial*), which contained baptismal, wedding, funeral, and other entries of vital importance, was written on lightweight Chinese paper instead of the thick, durable paper from Spain. Accordingly, the archbishop ordered the Augustinian pastors to rewrite the parish records on sturdier paper;
2. Some churches had no baptismal fonts and most of the confessionals had transparent grilles. Again, the friars were ordered to double the latticework and to set up the baptismal fonts as soon as possible;
3. The archbishop was appalled to discover that fairs were regularly held on Sundays and holy days in some of their towns. Consequently, he threatened to replace them with diocesan priests unless these illicit practices were stopped.

Episcopal visitation usually extended its inquiry to various areas of secular interest and concern in order to achieve its spiritual end. For instance, its contribution to demography is invaluable for its role in checking the status of the local population through the number of tributes. The counting of tributes was of crucial importance, because the civil government as well as the parish priests depended on them for income. Through its baptismal and funeral records plus the registrations of new taxpayers (a few newcomers skipped town at registration time, especially in Binondo), the parish priest kept track of the numerical fluctuation of its inhabitants and compiled a count of the total population in the community. The grand total of these accumulated data drawn locally from all the parishes or towns gives the only available approximation of the number of inhabitants in the entire country under Spanish rule.

Researchers may rank the episcopal visitation records as far inferior in value to high-quality archival materials that fill up some lacunae or alter the interpretations of certain events in history. Yet, episcopal visitation is

unique in that it is *demoscetric*, i.e., it is inherently directed and oriented toward the common people. While other documents focus their attention on powerful government officials, royal decrees, and a variety of colonial issues, episcopal visitation worked at the grassroots level, shedding light on the quotidian bustle of the ordinary folks, and on the terrain and ethos of the towns where they lived. It offers a plethora of diversified information on the indigenous population, its public sins and scandals and other earthy, sometimes humorous, incidents—a veritable smorgasbord of data for historians and scholars to feast on. The episcopal visitation documents are more like windows through which Filipinists can have a good look at the livelihood of the common people, their social life and economic problems, their foibles and moral lapses, and the educational and cultural condition in the community. It provides more than the “cracks in the parchment curtain” of Dr. Scott, the renowned archeologist-historian and contradicts Agoncillo's explosive pronouncement that Philippine history begins only in 1872. In short, without the visitation records of the Manila archdiocese and of the three suffragan dioceses throughout the archipelago (Nueva Cáceres in Naga, Nueva Segovia in Vigan, and that of Cebú), it is not an exaggeration to state that our knowledge and understanding of local Filipino history during the Spanish colonial period would be substantially incomplete.

Abbreviations used

AGI	Archivo General de Indias, Seville
AHC	American Historical Collection, Rizal Library, Quezon City

Note

The editorial office thanks the American Historical Collection of the Rizal Library, Ateneo de Manila University, for permission to reproduce four photos of churches, and Joan Escoto for providing the short description of her late husband.

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Salvador P. Escoto, an historian, was a former editorial associate in the Philippine Studies Program of the University of Chicago. He earned a Ph.D. degree in history from Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois, and taught at St. Francis College (now St. Francis University) in Joliet, Illinois. After he retired he specialized on the late eighteenth-century Philippines, particularly the administration of Simon de Anda, the Spanish governor-general from 1770 to 1776. He passed away on 9 January 2008.