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# **Ignacia del Espiritu Santo: The Historical Reliability of Her Principal Contemporary Biography**

*John N. Schumacher, S.J.*

The cause for beatification of Mother Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, foundress of the Beaterio de la Compañía de Jesús, the first religious congregation for Filipinas, has been in process for several decades now. Through the efforts of her congregation, today known as the Religious of the Virgin Mary, the largest in the Philippines and with missions in a number of other countries, there is widespread devotion to her among Filipinos. Perhaps it even exceeds that given to the official martyrs, St. Lorenzo Ruiz and Blessed Pedro Calungsod. For concerning the facts of their lives before their martyrdoms, there is even less information than about hers, the historically-attested fact of their martyrdoms having supplied for the lack of historical information concerning their earlier lives.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, apart from martyrs, the Roman Congregation for the Causes of Saints is accustomed to receive plentiful information on Western men or women whose cause is being urged, even from earlier centuries. In the case of non-Western peoples, such as Filipinos and other Asians, the European chroniclers of the past rarely gave much information about any non-European, apart from some of the martyrs,

## **Abbreviations Used**

AGI      Archivo General de las Indias, Seville.

APSR    Archivo de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas, Manila.

RVMA    Archives of the Religious of the Virgin Mary, Quezon City.

1. For St. Lorenzo Ruiz, the principal and most reliable source is Villarroel 1987. For Blessed Pedro Calungsod the first book-length study is Leyson 1999. The following year Leyson 2000 was published, with almost identical substance, except for the addition of two chapters on the beatification itself and the celebrations following it. Given the absence of historical data, except on the martyrdom itself, the narration of the life is naturally only an intelligent reconstruction. I have criticized, however, a number of

and extensive records are almost always lacking.<sup>2</sup> In the case of Ignacia del Espiritu Santo, the principal source for her life and activity has traditionally been the account by Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde, S.J., inserted shortly after her death into his chronicle of Jesuit missionary activity in the Philippines (Murillo 1749, ff. 358v–59v). Both the reliability and the sufficiency of this account of her life and her foundation have now been called into question by Fr. Fidel Villarroel, O.P. in his introduction to a seventeenth century account of the founding of the nearly contemporary, but Spanish, Beaterio de Santa Catalina, from which originated the congregation today known as the Dominican Sisters of Saint Catherine of Siena (Villarroel 1996, 5–7). It seems important to consider these objections, and to examine more closely the account of Ignacia by Murillo Velarde.

Some of Father Villarroel's difficulties are easily answered, being based on erroneous information. However, his questions have made me re-evaluate Murillo's account, which forms the core of the historical cause for beatification. I believe it retains its basic value, though it needs to be used with more care than has sometimes been done, including by myself. I shall therefore both present observations of my own, stimulated by Villarroel's critique, and provide answers to his difficulties.

Murillo begins his account by saying: "In 1684 the House of *Recogidas* [here used as a synonym for *beatas*]<sup>3</sup> began to be formed in a place at the back of our College of Manila" (Murillo 1749, 358v;

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historical points in Leyson's reconstruction, apart from the section on the martyrdom, and proposed my own in Schumacher 2000, unfortunately too late for Leyson's second edition. Though I consider mine to have greater verisimilitude, it nonetheless also remains a reconstruction with only limited certainty. Both Villarroel and Leyson have been vice-postulators of the respective causes on which they have subsequently published their books.

2. The most thorough and complete account of Asian saints and blessed is to be found in Clark 2000. It is significant that of the 486 canonized and blessed of Asia he treats, only four Asians (from Sri Lanka and India) were not martyrs, and the facts of the lives of these are known chiefly due to special circumstances. Even some of the martyrs have little or nothing known about them apart from the fact of their having undergone martyrdom for the faith. Theologically speaking, it is not possible that there were not other Asians, especially Filipinos, in a country long and thoroughly possessing the Gospel, who, under God's abundant grace, lived lives of heroic sanctity.

3. Basically the term signifies "women withdrawn [from the world]," living in recollection and prayer. More commonly it was applied to those women who did so on a temporary basis, their husbands being absent or dead. Here Murillo applies it to all who were living in the house of recollection, the *Beaterio*, but whose principal and permanent members were the *beatas*, women dedicated to God by vows or otherwise.

Schumacher 1987, 165). He goes on to say that Ignacia consulted Fr. Pablo Clain, S.J. [Paul Klein], at a time when she was determined to become a beata in the Beaterio of Santo Domingo [i.e., Santa Catalina].

Villarroel has pointed out chronological difficulties here, and some other points do need clarification. However, he has unfortunately based himself largely on the out-of-date book of Marcelino A. Foronda, Jr., *Mother Ignacia and her Beaterio: A Preliminary Study*, which not only contains a good number of errors, but, as a "preliminary study" lacks the additional information which has been brought forward while preparing the process for Ignacia's beatification. Thus the basis for some of Villarroel's objections is faulty.

But his contention that Murillo was not necessarily a reliable source for those early years is not totally without some *prima facie* justification. Murillo arrived in the Philippines only in 1723, while Clain, under whose direction Murillo narrates Ignacia to have made the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius that led her to conceive a distinct type of religious life, and who probably guided her early years, was already dead by 1717.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Murillo's book was published only in 1749, long after the events he narrated, as well as shortly after the death of Ignacia. Therefore his account of her life depended in large part on the accuracy of his memories, whether personal or received from others—in this case, almost certainly Ignacia.

In addition to Villarroel's questions, which we will try to answer below, there is one point here he does not explicitly bring up—Murillo's anachronistic presumption of the existence of the Beaterio of Santa Catalina in 1684, since the authorization for that Beaterio was granted by the Dominican Master General only in 1688, and the actual foundation took place only in 1696 (Villarroel 1996, 10). The answer to this difficulty is that Ignacia seems to have been associated or affiliated with the four Dominican women lay tertiaries living in their own homes in the early 1680s, hoping for the foundation of a Dominican beaterio where they could live a conventual life (Santo Domingo 1996, 33–37). Ignacia could have even been a lay Dominican tertiary herself. Being ignorant of the complex and strife-ridden vicissitudes of the foundation of Santa Catalina when he wrote more than a half-century later, and which he had not witnessed, Murillo would have identified this loosely-organized incipient grouping with the organized Beaterio de Santa Catalina of his day, the only one he had ever known.

4. The dates are from Fejér 1985, 1: 268; De la Costa 1961, 615.

Now, to deal with the difficulties of Murillo's chronology. Villarroel suggests that the actual date of foundation could have been 1684 or 1703 or 1699 (Villarroel 1996, 6). The latter date may be ignored, as coming only from Sinibaldo de Mas' *Informe sobre el estado de las Islas Filipinas en 1842*, a valuable source for social and economic conditions in the Philippines of his time, but quite unreliable a source for earlier history, for which he had no documents.<sup>5</sup> The suggestion that the Beaterio may have been founded only in 1703 is presumably based on the fact that in 1748, the oldest beatas after Ignacia, then still alive, were one of her nieces, Christina González, and an otherwise unidentified Agustina Gerónima, both of whom declared themselves to have belonged to the Beaterio for forty-five years ("cuarenta y cinco años de recogimiento"), hence having joined her in 1703. Murillo had named Christina González as the first one to join Ignacia "shortly after" ["de allí a poco tiempo"] her retirement from the world to be a beata, as did "similarly" ["del mismo modo"] (he does not say "at the same time"), others up to the number of nine, of whom he names Theodora de Jesús and Ana Margarita (Murillo 1749, f. 358v; Schumacher 1987, 166). Regarding Christina González, he is obviously wrong, probably writing purely from a somewhat vague memory of what Ignacia had told him of her niece having joined her (and perhaps having been her most faithful companion). For Christina, from the dates she herself gave the ecclesiastical *Notario Mayor* in 1748, was born only in 1684, and hence joined her aunt at the age of eighteen or nineteen (Selga 1948, 3).<sup>6</sup> The "shortly afterwards" betrays the defects in Murillo's knowledge or memory, though he is correct in saying that Ignacia was

5. Apart from such general considerations, an indication of the unreliability of Mas on such matters is the erroneous age he gives for Mother Ignacia at her death (80), as well as for the beginning of the Beaterio, both of which we can know from contemporary primary documents, as will be seen. He probably got his information, in this as in some other matters, from one of the *Guías de forasteros* or *Guías oficiales* of the period, which give a variety of inaccurate dates.

6. The "Expediente del Notario Mayor," in which this information appears, was part of the record of the visitation of the Beaterio de la Compañía ordered by the Vicar-General of the archdiocese of Manila, Dr. D. Juan de la Fuente Yepes, in 1748 and carried out by the Notario Mayor, D. José Gallardo (Selga 1948, 2–11). The original is in AGI, from which Father Selga apparent took it indirectly through the compilation of documents on the Philippines copied from AGI under the direction of Fr. Pablo Pastells, S.J., and kept in the Jesuit Historical Archive of Catalonia, formerly in Sant Cugat del Vallès, now in Barcelona. However a photocopy of the original documents from AGI is now in RVMA.

joined by her niece. If the Theodora de Jesus who appears in the notary's list of 1748 is the same as the one Murillo mentions, there is a large gap between her and Christina González, for the one named in the notary's list joined the Beaterio only in 1716, and even in 1748 there remained alive a number of others who had joined in between these two. However, since this does not affect the date of foundation of the Beaterio, we may leave it for possible explanation under number four below. If it is a different Theodora de Jesus who appears in the notary's list (such a religious name was not uncommon among eighteenth century Filipinos), there is no problem. The earlier Theodora de Jesus, as well as Ana Margarita, as well as the unnamed ones alluded to by Ignacia in her letter as having joined her in 1685, were presumably dead by 1748, or possibly had not persevered. (Ignacia herself was in her eighties, and died two months after the visitation in whose report these facts are found. It is not even clear whether she was personally able to give information on herself or whether it was given by others; hence its brevity.)

It seems certain that Murillo's only source for the early part of his account was information from Ignacia herself, probably given casually as they worked together on the Constitutions in 1725–1726. Only later would he try to recall it when he wished to eulogize her after her death, since prior to that time he had had no intention of writing her history.<sup>7</sup> That he did work closely with her in the period 1725–1726 on the Constitutions,<sup>8</sup> which she proposed under her own name to the Manila archdiocesan officials in 1726, is clear from the overwhelming internal evidence of the assistance of one who was both a Jesuit and

7. His book is a history of the Jesuits in the Philippines, 1616–1716. It received ecclesiastical approval in 1747, when it would have had no mention of the Beaterio. In fact, the account of Ignacia and her Beaterio has no connection with the preceding part of the chapter in which it appears, but was clearly inserted at a convenient place, with no respect for the context preceding it, no doubt motivated by the fact of her death in September 1748, while the book was in the process of publication. It is this insertion which has formed the principal source for our knowledge of her life. At that time, he would necessarily have been dependent on memory of what he had probably learned from Ignacia over twenty years earlier, and it is not surprising that he has some errors of detail, substantial as the account as a whole may be.

8. In her letter accompanying the Constitutions (*Allegación*), Ignacia mentions the money received from the legacy of General Ignacio de Vertis which enabled her to enlarge the Beaterio and thus receive more beatas. She adds: "Official representatives of General Juan Ignacio de Vertis saw, at about this period, the increase in membership to 80 Beatas and Recogidas, who were bound by rules prepared by themselves to

a canonist.<sup>9</sup> Murillo was both, and the only one in Manila at the time who united in himself these two attributes. Moreover, since he was teaching in the University of San Ignacio and doing pastoral work in the church of San Ignacio, to which the beatas came daily or oftener from their house behind it, he would have had many opportunities to come into contact with Ignacia, even if she had not come or been sent to him personally.<sup>10</sup> This does not mean that Ignacia did not take final responsibility for the Constitutions, and it is clear that she even contributed on her own initiative parts of them. Apart from her explicit declaration that it is she (not the Jesuit provincial nor Murillo) who is presenting these rules for episcopal approbation, and that the rules were "prepared by themselves" [the beatas], there are numerous indications of a Filipina's concern or point of view in the presentation of specific rules that are without equivalent in the Jesuit Constitutions.

Moreover, one notable point is the repeated addition of the devotion to the archangels, especially St. Michael, to the ordinary devotions of the Church the beata is to practice. Not part of ordinary Jesuit spirituality, Ignacia had very likely learned it from the only other Jesuits named in her connection, Fr. Andrés Serrano, S.J., who had published a book on the devotion, *Los siete principes de los angeles validos del Rey del Cielo, misioneros y protectores de la tierra, con práctica de su devoción*, and Fr. Pablo Clain, S.J., who appears to have collaborated on the book.<sup>11</sup> Ignacia's relation to Clain [Klein] has already been mentioned.

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regulate their mode of life" (Ignacia del Espiritu Santo 1974, 39). This indicates that the Constitutions she was presenting had just been compiled in 1725 and/or 1726. The English edition cited here is translated from a copy of the 1726 original, found in RVMA.

9. A large part of the early exhortatory chapters of the Constitutions presented by Ignacia show the influence, even in the wording, of the Jesuits' "Summary of the Constitutions," and "Common Rules," of that time; also "The Letter on Obedience," and other writings of St. Ignatius, adapting them where necessary to make them applicable to women rather than the men for whom they had originally been written. However, there is no servile following of the Jesuit texts, and there is much which clearly comes from a devout Filipina, with many years of experience of religious community life. As to the canonist's influence, it is clear from the careful stipulations, especially in chapters 4, 5, 6, on the method of admitting and dismissing, the manner of governance, and the rules for electing a superior (*Rectora*). It is impossible to imagine how any lay woman, or male for that matter, Filipino or Spanish, would have the knowledge of such canonical minutiae.

10. See his account of his pastoral work outside his lectures in the University of San Ignacio in Schumacher 1987, 162-63.

11. For Serrano see Sommervogel 1896, 7:1150-51; and for Clain *ibid.* 1891, 2:1198. Both the first edition (1699) and the second (1711) also contain in a foreword a letter

Fr. Andrés Serrano was the rector of the Colegio de San José (1694–97, followed by Clain), to whom the beatas used to go and beg as an alms salt for their rice in the early days of great deprivation (Murillo 1749, 358v; Schumacher 1987, 166).

Given these facts, we may conclude that Murillo can be relied upon for the history, but for the early period only in a general way and not necessarily in all details. Thus he errs in making Christina González her first recruit. For Ignacia herself in her letter to archdiocesan authorities in 1726, asking for approbation of her Constitutions, says that “as far back as 1685, several poor young native women started to live together who petitioned the Reverend Fathers of the Society of Jesus to help them in their desire to serve God” (Ignacia del Espiritu Santo 1974, 39; emphasis mine). The solution to the apparent contradiction between 1684 given by Murillo and 1685 by Ignacia can be found, it is true, in the exact words used by each. “In 1684 the House of Recogidas . . . began to be formed” (Murillo); that is, 1684 was the beginning of everything with Ignacia’s withdrawal to make a retreat in “the house of the Mother of the Congregation,” in which she determined how she was to serve God.<sup>12</sup> In 1685, on the other hand, “several poor native young women started to live together who petitioned the Reverend Fathers of the Society of Jesus to help them in their desire to serve God” that is, she began to form a community around her. In different senses, both dates may be taken as the beginning of the Beaterio: Ignacia’s personal withdrawal from the world in 1684, and her being joined by others as a community—the actual beaterio—in 1685. They never had any formal date of founding like the Beaterio de Santa Catalina, because they had no canonical status except that of pious lay women, and remained independent of any male religious order. Of the original group, only Ignacia still survived in 1748.

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of Clain on the discovery of the Palaus, and the second contains a series of prayers to the archangels in Tagalog, which very likely came from Clain. It is evident from this and other bibliographical data connected with each, that the two men worked closely together. The evidence is not apodictic, but persuasive.

12. Ferraris has argued convincingly that the house of the “Madre de la Congregación,” was the residence of the Japanese beatas, founded by Doña Julia Nayto, who had been exiled from Japan in the persecution of 1614 and settled in the Jesuit parish of San Miguel [not the present San Miguel, but apparently in the area of Lagyo, outside the city walls between Ermita and Malate, where the first Jesuits had stayed in 1581] among the other Japanese Christian exiles brought there by the Jesuits. They were known to the Spaniards as the “Congregación de las Señoras Japonas [Japonesas]



An alternative possibility, of course, is that Ignacia's retreat of decision may actually have been in 1685, and that Murillo erred in saying 1684. But her baptismal certificate establishes clearly that she was baptized (and therefore presumably born a few days earlier, according to the custom of the time) on 4 March 1663.<sup>13</sup> Murillo's further statement that she was twenty-one years of age when she made her decision, rejecting the marriage which her parents had in mind for her, is consistent with his 1684 date.

However, though Murillo says nothing about her age at death, there is certainty that Ignacia (or the notary who took down her testimony, if she gave any) erred in giving her age as eighty-three in 1748; she had to be eighty-five years of age by 13 July 1748, the date of the visitation and two months before her death. Studies in Philippine historical demography have shown that Filipinos up to the nineteenth century were often mistaken on their ages. Moreover, common experience, especially in earlier centuries, indicates that at least that possibility always exists with persons of great age.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, though both the age and the number of years in the Beaterio are given by the notary for all except Ignacia, for whom only her age is given, it is not at all improbable that being only two months away from her death, she did not even appear before the notary, or was not questioned personally, but that someone else supplied (erroneously) her age.

Villarreal's other difficulties, based on Foronda, may equally be explained. They read as follows (with numbers in brackets supplied by myself for clarity's sake):

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recogidas." Though "La Madre" (Doña Julia Nayto) herself had died in 1627, the rest of the Japanese beatas continued to live there until the Congregation became extinct with the death of the last beata, Doña Tecla Ignacia, in 1656. It is likely that the Jesuits in charge of the Japanese community of San Miguel continued to have some supervision or intervention in the former Japanese beaterio, and that Fr. Pablo Clain would have sent her there for the Spiritual Exercises. This conclusion of Ferraris (1975, 3-9), based on the data concerning the Japanese beatas found in Francisco Colín, S.J., *Labor evangélica* (1663), seems much more probable than an earlier suggestion I had made (Schumacher 1987, 166, n. 11) that it was the house of Mother Francisca del Espíritu Santo, foundress of the Beaterio de Santa Catalina.

13. See the baptismal certificates of her father (evidently an adult convert to Christianity), of herself, and of her siblings, taken from the baptismal book of the Chinese parish of Los Santos Reyes in the Parian, now preserved in APSR, in Ferraris 1987, 93-96.

14. See Owen 1998, 244, where he concludes from his study of Tigaon, Camarines Sur, that in the 19th century "many of the inhabitants of Tigaon . . . seemingly did not know precisely how old they were or what they were legally named."

[1] The Beaterio's early "status is not clear, although it may be presumed that it was formed with the approval of the ecclesiastical authorities." [2] With regard to its organization, "no copy of the original *Constituciones*, as drawn by Fr. Klein and Mother Ignacia is known to exist," and [3] "the first known manuscript [of the *Constituciones*] dates from 1747." Furthermore, [4] "nothing is known about the early Beatas who were followers of Mother Ignacia," apart from their names and respective age preserved in a list of 1748. (Villarreal 1996, 7)

As to [1], it seems very clear from the letter of Mother Ignacia in 1726, attached to the *Constituciones y Reglas* she submitted on that date, that in fact there never had been any ecclesiastical approval, and no one thought they needed any. For they were simply a group of lay women living together for pious purposes, just as the early Dominican tertiaries had done at one point before the Beaterio de Santa Catalina came into being in 1696, living in the house of Doña Antonia Esguerra (Ferraris 1987, 70; Henson 1976, 8–9). In fact there was even less need of any approval for Ignacia and her companions, since they were not even lay tertiaries, such as the beatas of Santa Catalina had been, making the latter in some sense affiliated to the Dominican order even before the notion of a formal beaterio came into being.

As the Jesuit provincial, Fr. Bernardo Pazuengos, would later say in answer to the royal *cédula* ordering that everything savoring of a religious congregation should be removed from the rules of the Beaterio de la Compañía, "the beatas being lay-women, their voluntary pronouncement of the simple vows as approved by their confessors does not violate the laws" (Ferraris 1987, 138).<sup>15</sup> That is to say, both then and now, any lay Christian, man or woman, may make private vows, as long as they do not ask recognition of these by the Church, though spiritual guides usually counsel that one's confessor be consulted first. The Jesuits had no juridical or other authority over Ignacia's beatas, who were not Jesuit tertiaries, as it were, since the Jesuit constitutions

15. This document, dated 6 July 1764, and recorded by the notary Jose Esteban Arzadum, was found appended to the so-called "1795 constitutions," evidently in answer to the similarly appended royal cedula of 6 November 1761, all found in RVMA (Ferraris 1987, 164, nn. 12, 14). A copy of the royal cedula had evidently been sent to Fr. Pazuengos, who, while disclaiming any Jesuit authority over the Beaterio or its constitutions, added this defense of the current status of the Beaterio. Apparently his reply was copied by the notary to be added to the royal cedula, to indicate that the Jesuits placed no obstacle to the revision of the constitutions. Hence the document remained in the Beaterio, together with the royal commands. Why no further action was taken at this point will be discussed below.

did not permit such. Before the ecclesiastical approval of the Constitutions of 1726, they were simply lay women who performed their acts of piety at the Jesuit church. Hence they had no absolute need of any ecclesiastical or civil approbation. Probably it was the Jesuit canon lawyer, Murillo, who pushed them to seek at least ecclesiastical approval, so that they might thus have a corporate personality to ask for *protección civil* from the king. It is very likely, of course, that, as Ignacia intimates in her letter presenting the Constitutions for archdiocesan approval, they went at times to various Jesuits, Father Clain, and later, others, for spiritual direction, but they had no obligation to do so.

[2] With regard to its organization, "no copy of the original *Constituciones*, as drawn by Fr. Klein and Mother Ignacia is known to exist." But Murillo makes it quite clear that they had no constitutions while Fr. Clain was alive.<sup>16</sup> Ignacia in her letter to the vicar-general implicitly says the same. In fact, there is no clear evidence (indeed it may be considered unlikely, since Clain did not remain continuously in Manila, being Rector of the College of Cavite for some years) that he was even their regular spiritual director, except for the initial retreat of Ignacia, and perhaps a few years afterward. Certainly he was not their only one, since Ignacia says in her letter to the archdiocesan authorities that in 1685 they began to ask help from "the Reverend Fathers of the Society of Jesus." As we have tried to show, the first constitutions seem to have been drawn up between Father Murillo and Mother Ignacia only in the period 1725–26.

[3] "[T]he first known manuscript [of the *Constituciones*] dates from 1747." Foronda—and consequently Villarroel—are simply mistaken in saying that the first known manuscript of the Constitutions of 1726 is from 1747.<sup>17</sup> As far as can be ascertained, there is no 1747 manuscript now, nor was there ever. Foronda drew such a conclusion from the fact that he seriously misread the 1795 notation of Fr. Nicolás Cora on the copy of the Constitutions which has been attributed to the year 1795.

16. Perhaps the first to give rise to this error was De la Costa (1961, 508), but he gives no evidence for his statement and clearly was merely expanding on what he inferred from Murillo Velarde. Moreover, it is simply a passing paragraph that he devotes to Ignacia.

17. As phrased by Villarroel, his statement might be taken to mean that Foronda *saw* a manuscript of 1747. Rather Foronda simply postulates that there was one from the fact that the manuscript he saw had been supposedly copied from one of 1747 (because of a misreading of his we will correct in the next paragraph). Moreover, he says clearly: "The 1747 manuscript has also still to be found . . ." (Foronda 1975, 66). He thus argues

He refers to it as "another manuscript dated March, 1795, with a marginal note on the title page: 'Copied according to the edition of 1747' [*Copiado según la edición de 1747*]" (Foronda 1975, 66). But first of all, the manuscript itself is not dated at all; it is the notation of Father Cora which contains the date. Moreover, that marginal notation, if more carefully read, actually says: "Expurgado segun el edicto de 1747. S. Juan de Letran y Marzo 2 [?] de 1795. Fr. Nicolas Cora comisario del Sto. Oficio" [Expurgated according to the edict of 1747. San Juan de Letrán and March 2 [?] of 1795. Fray Nicolas Cora [,] Commissary of the Holy Inquisition], followed by his *rúbrica* [seal], indicating that the notation is by his own hand (RVMA).<sup>18</sup>

Evidently Foronda glanced too quickly, and since he misread the Spanish, his English translation is wrong, as is his (and consequently Villarroel's) assumption of a 1747 copy of the Constitutions.<sup>19</sup> As a matter of fact, the expurgation simply consisted, as may be seen on the

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from a later manuscript which he believed to have been copied from the non-existent one of 1747. In my own research into the various constitutions in RVMA, there was no such 1747 copy among the several other copies of different dates in the 18th and 19th centuries, nor was the archivist aware of any. Sister Ma. Rita Ferraris, in her earliest book accepted the reading of 1747 (1969, 20), but as archivist, in her later books rejects the existence of a copy of that date, and uses the correct reading of the notation which Foronda misread.

18. The annotation in Fr. Cora's hand makes it clear that this is an original document and not merely a copy of a document from AGI. Moreover, it would make no sense to mark out certain rules with an asterisk to indicate that they were no longer to be considered binding, if the copy which he annotated were not to be left to the beatas. Furthermore, since this was the work of an ecclesiastical jurisdiction, there would be no reason to send it to the Consejo de Indias, which, in any case, had already received the indication of the "offending" rules in the 1758 report of the *Oidor* Don Francisco Henríquez de Villacorta, and through a royal decree of 6 November 1761, had ordered these points in the Constitutions to be changed by the archbishop, as we have explained above. However, when the decree was received in Manila on 29 May 1764, the archbishop was dead, and the country was only beginning to recover from the British Occupation, which had ended only a few months before. When the new archbishop arrived in 1767, Basilio Sancho de Stas. Justa y Rufina, he would be fully occupied with the imposition of episcopal visitation on the religious orders, the expulsion of the Jesuits, the abandonment of the parishes in protest by the friars, the controversies over his mass ordinations of secular clergy, and the tumultuous Council of Manila, that perhaps the matter was forgotten. It is just possible that his successor, Abp. Juan Antonio Orbigo de Gallego, O.F.M., (1789-1797) became aware of the cedula in the 1790s and had the matter taken up by the Commissary of the Inquisition. But this is purely a matter of speculation.

19. It is not clear what this *edicto* of 1747 might be. The word is most commonly used of the decrees of the Inquisition. It would not be a document from the King,

copy annotated in 1795, in putting an asterisk before those rules that implied that the Beaterio was a religious congregation in the canonical sense of the word. Nothing was actually changed in the text (Ferraris 1987, 138–39).

In her most recent work, based on her Ph.D. dissertation in history at the University of Santo Tomas, Ferraris, the former archivist of the R.V.M. congregation, states that the original Constitutions of 1726, presented by Ignacia for archdiocesan approval, are to be found in RVMA, entitled “Constituciones y Reglas de las Beatitas Yndias Doncellas que sirven a Dios Nuestro Señor en este Beaterio de Manila debajo de la dirección espiritual de los Reverendos Padres de la Compañía de Jesus” (Ferraris 1987, 100–101; 124, n.11; 211).<sup>20</sup> A further copy, dated and notarized as an authentic copy of the original Constitutions by D. José Gallardo on 27 August 1753, was made for the visitation ordered by Archbishop Pedro de la Santísima Trinidad Martínez Arizala, and again carried out by his vicar-general, Dr. Don Juan de la Fuente Yepes in 1753.<sup>21</sup>

However, at this point we must raise the question of whether that “original” of 1726 is in fact such. All of those copies of different years referred to above, including that indicated as original by Ferraris, use modern Spanish spelling. The so-called “1795 copy,” however, does not. This copy, very elaborately decorated with intricate designs surrounding the title, is in fact without any date before or after its text.

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which would be called a *cédula* or *decreto*. In fact the royal cédulas on this matter would only come in the 1750s and 1760s. The Inquisition in Manila was not, properly speaking, a tribunal, but a commissariat with limited subordinate powers, headed by a commissary subject to the Tribunal in Mexico. Its classic history, Medina 1899, has no mention of any edict on this subject or in this period. The main work of the Manila *Comisario* was the expurgation of books considered heterodox or dangerous. The only mention of Father Cora in Medina’s study concerns a book of 1800 (170), and there is nothing regarding beaterios. It is possible that the term here refers to some type of general edict on beaterios issued by the Tribunal in Mexico.

20. It is this manuscript which has been privately published by the R.V.M. Sisters in the English translation referred to above: *Rules and Constitution* [sic] 1974. Besides the Constitutions and Rules, this pamphlet contains the “Allegation,” [additional statement] containing the 1726 letter of Ignacia to the Vicar-General, as well as the favorable recommendation of the ecclesiastical Fiscal Promoter, and the documents dealing with the legacy of General Ignacio de Vertis, establishing an *obra pía* in favor of the Beaterio.

21. This reproduction of the 1753 notarized copy in the RVMA today is from AGI Filipinas, 252. A further copy is contained within the Oidor Henríquez de Villacorta’s report, and there are other duplicates in AGI, Filipinas, 162, all of which are in RVMA in photocopies.

It has been called the 1795 copy because of the notation in another hand in its upper corner by Fr. Nicolás Cora, Commissary of the Inquisition, described above. This notation indeed bears the date of 1795, but was evidently put there at some time after the manuscript itself was done. The same may be said of the asterisks put before the "offending" rules. It is my contention that this copy of the Constitutions is the original of 1726.

The indications that such is the case are as follows. (1) Though the Jesuits had been expelled in 1768, with the consequence that the institution was by 1795 generally called the Beaterio de San Ignacio, the title-page maintains the phrase "under the spiritual direction of the Reverend Fathers of the Society of Jesus" ("*debaxo dela direcçion espiritual de los RR. Padres dela Compañia de Jesus*"). This is the more surprising inasmuch as official attitudes toward the Jesuits long remained hostile, and it would have been provocative to place that phrase on a 1795 copy. (2) Besides the fact that this assertion of Jesuit spiritual direction was no longer true, since there were no Jesuits in the Philippines by that time, the so-called 1795 copy uses older spellings—*debaxo* for *debajo*, *direcçion* for *direccion*, *dela* for *de la*—as well as abbreviations—*Nro* for *Nuestro*, *RR.* for *Reverendos*, none of which are found in the more modern form presented in the most recent book of Ferraris (1987, 124, n.11), and taken incorrectly to be the 1726 original. (3) In the index of documents in RVMA, it is noted that the Spanish original of the "Allegation," that is, the additional material found in the English edition of the Constitutions—Ignacia's letter, the favorable opinion of the ecclesiastical fiscal, and the documents concerning the legacy of General de Vertis—were originally found appended to this "1795 edition."

In the light of these facts, it seems that we must conclude that it is the latter which actually dated from 1726, when it was presented to the archdiocese. Presumably, once it had received approval, it would be returned to the Beaterio.<sup>22</sup> All the subsequent copies of 1753, 1764, and their duplicates use modernized spelling, most probably introduced in 1753. The one identified by Ferraris as original, though containing the date 1 Julio 1726, must be a copy which copied the original

22. In the absence abroad of Sister Ma. Rita C. Ferraris, the original archivist, her substitute was only able to show me a xerox copy, and could not find the original. However, Sister Rita informed me in a letter of 8 April 2002 that it has always been in the RVMA, and formed part of the precious exhibits in the museum of the archives. The xerox copy had been made for the use of researchers because of the delicate state of the 18th century document. She identified it as being bound in covers, and on the original

date as well as the title and text, modernizing the spelling in the process.<sup>23</sup> All those copies located here or abroad date from before the expulsion of the Jesuits; hence there is no improbable anachronism in their including in their title: "debajo la dirección espiritual de los Reverendos Padres de la Compañía de Jesús." On the other hand, neither the Tagalog manuscript edition of 1871, nor the first printed Spanish edition of 1888 contain in their title any reference to the Jesuits, though the latter had returned to the Philippines in 1859 and were in informal contact with the Beaterio.<sup>24</sup> This likewise explains why the documents concerning the legacy of General de Vertis were not found with the copy hitherto supposed to be the original of 1726, even though the Oidor Henríquez de Villacorta evidently saw them in 1761, since he made inquiries about the de Vertis legacy, which none of the beatas then living could answer. That is to say, what he had before him, and what was used to make the copy "from the original" for his report to the king was the so-called "1795 edition," which he and the beatas present knew to be that of 1726. Finally, whatever motivated the Commissary of the Inquisition finally to undertake the "expurgation" of the Constitutions, it was logical that he would introduce his asterisks on the original and official copy. How else would the beatas know what had been expurgated?

In conclusion to this point, we must say that Ferraris errs in identifying what must be a later copy as the original, even in her latest book.<sup>25</sup> Secondly, there is no reason to think that there ever was any 1747 edition, nor that there was a 1795 edition, at least ones that have

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paper, where the ink has in some places eaten into the paper. Hence it cannot be one of the documents photocopied abroad. This is also indicated by the fact that it contains no identifying stamp of the AGI or the archdiocesan archives.

23. This may well have happened in the 1880s when Mother Marciana de Leon, the superior, ordered the recopying of a number of old documents preserved in the Beaterio. These copies are preserved today in RVMA. See Ferraris 1972, 10.

24. Up until the end of the Spanish regime, the spiritual directors of the Beaterio were secular priests appointed by the archbishop. The Jesuits of the 19th century wished the Beatas to come to Mindanao to run the schools for girls being established. The archbishop of Manila would not allow them to volunteer for Mindanao unless they formally severed their connection with the Beaterio of Manila. In effect, the various houses they soon opened in Mindanao were separate beaterios. It would only be after the end of the Spanish regime and its Patronato Real that the Manila and Mindanao beatas were able to join together again, now in a canonically recognized religious congregation (Ferraris 1975, 34-54).

25. If our conclusions are correct, it was in her earliest book, (Ferraris 1969), that she was actually using the original, the one cited as original in the 1987 book not having

left any trace. The last surviving copy of the eighteenth century was that made for the Oidor, D. Francisco Henríquez de Villacorta in 1761, received in Spain by the Consejo de Indias in 1764, and giving occasion to the royal cedula of that year ordering the archbishop to alter the Constitutions. As far as datable subsequent copies are concerned, the next would be the Tagalog manuscript one of 1871, and the printed Spanish one of 1888, both extant in RVMA.<sup>26</sup>

However, in all this discussion, it should not be forgotten that the "Constituciones y Reglas" remained intact and unchanged. Whichever may be the original, the continuity among them is assured by the fact that the copies made subsequent to 1726 were notarized, and in fact can be compared today. The identification of a different original manuscript, which we have done here, in no way impairs the continuity of the work of Ignacia but only makes it more intelligible. Only after the end of the Spanish regime was the Beaterio reorganized, returned to the spiritual direction of the Jesuits, and new Constitutions written in 1902, to be submitted to the Holy See. In the new Constitutions all the elements proper to a religious congregation, most especially the vow of poverty, to which the Patronato Real had so adamantly opposed itself, were now free to be included (Ferraris 1975, 49–54). In 1907, the new religious congregation received the *Decretum Laudis* (Decree of Praise), from the Holy See, by which it was canonically erected as a pontifical congregation (Ferraris 1975, 54).

[4] " '[N]othing is known about the early Beatas who were followers of Mother Ignacia,' apart from their names and respective age preserved in a list of 1748."<sup>27</sup> Though this is true of the very first companions of Ignacia from 1685 to 1703, whom Foronda and

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been yet located at that time. For she speaks of what would later be called the 1795 edition as: "Ms. copiado del original de 1747," an error evidently depending on the erroneous transcription of Foronda.

26. It is possible, even highly probable, that other copies were made, which were eventually worn out and discarded, since the rules were to be read to the beatas every month, as well as being explained in detail to every new beata ([Ignacia del Espíritu Santo] 1726, ch. I, no. 49). Those extant today, apart from the ones copied into official ecclesiastical or civil visitation reports must have been preserved in an archive or similar repository in the Beaterio.

27. Foronda has made a number of egregious errors preliminary to this statement, and though Villarreal does not repeat them, his quotation from Foronda partially depends on them. Foronda states that Christina González "is listed as having been 74," but the list of Selga's he cites says "sesenta y cuatro," that is, 64. Hence she was born in 1684, as we have said above, not 1674, as Foronda states. Nor is it accurate that Murillo implied that Theodora de Jesus and Ana Margarita were with Christina



Villarroel are apparently unaware of, why should we know them, and what difference does it make to our knowledge of Ignacia?<sup>28</sup> As for those living in 1748 and listed by the notary, there seems to be no compelling reason why additional information besides the name, age, years of membership should have been recorded in the document referred to.<sup>29</sup> The occasion of the notary's list was a simple visitation, conducted under the orders of Archbishop Pedro de la Santissima Trinidad Arizala, to know the state of pious institutions in his diocese for the ordinary exercise of his office. The Notario Mayor's report gives this information concerning the life and procedures of the institution, which is what the archbishop was interested in, not the life of individual beatas. Of course nothing is known of the very earliest companions (eight, if Murillo's "nine" included Ignacia's niece Christina González), who joined her between 1685 and 1703 because they were no longer in the beaterio, for reasons of death or departure. (Given what Murillo says about the extreme penances and severe poverty of the beatas in the beginning, because of which he says many became sick, it would not be surprising that all the original beatas should have died by 1748. Mother Ignacia herself was to die within two months, and her age was certainly extraordinary for the Philippines of the time). Most probably we will never know more about them. But we

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González as "Ignacia's earliest followers," though admittedly Murillo is less clear than one would wish in saying that these two joined Ignacia "in the same way" [*del mismo modo*], but without asserting that they were among the first. If the Theodora de Jesus in the notary's list is the same person (something not at all certain, given the 18th century Filipino custom of appending a religious name rather than a family surname), she was not eighty-one but fifty-one ["cincuenta y uno"] and was born in 1697, not 1667). She is probably said to have joined "in the same way" because she did so at the age of nineteen, like Christina (and possibly was also either a niece or one who came to visit and stayed, or both). Finally, though he is correct in saying Father Selga failed to say from what archive he got the documents, and failed to make photocopies, we have explained the first, and the R.V.M. Sisters have both found from where he got the documents and gotten photocopies not only of that repository, but of the originals in the AGI. All of which indicates why I have said that Villarroel is mostly led astray by his use of an out-of-date and frequently erroneous account like Foronda's.

28. Murillo probably knew there were companions from 1685 onwards, since Ignacia very likely showed him the letter she addressed to the vicar-general of the archdiocese together with the Constitutions they had worked together on. But he would undoubtedly have forgotten their names if he ever knew them, unless there was something special to be said about them.

29. In fact any extensive information concerning a native Filipino is most rare in the records prior to the 19th century. With the exception of Felipe Sonson, who being a Jesuit donado, formally received into the Order and hence subject of a lengthy obituary

know from the letter of Ignacia seeking approbation for her statutes, that there *were* such original companions. Whether they were exactly nine, we can only accept from Murillo, but there is no plausible reason why he should have made up such a specific number if he had not heard it from Ignacia.

In conclusion we may say that though Murillo must be used with care as to the early days of Ignacia and her beaterio, his information is not to be discarded simply because he was not present in the Philippines during those years, or because he never came to talk to Father Clain. Nor is the length of time before he wrote down his account of major significance for the period of which he had personal experience. There were other Jesuits who spanned the gap in years between Clain and Murillo who he most likely would have questioned when he began to deal with Ignacia. More important, much of this information must have come from Ignacia herself. Though he did not have a clear memory of all the details, he did have enough to determine key facts. Finally, there is every reason to think that he would have been in frequent contact with Ignacia, perhaps not as a spiritual director—from what we know of him he would not seem to have been the kind of man one would choose as a spiritual director, but rather as a canonical and practical adviser. But who can say what a woman of advanced spiritual progress herself might have required or wished in a spiritual director?

Most important of all, however, is the information that he gives not only of his personal estimate of her sanctity, but also that of the Spanish community of her last years, clergy as well as laity, secular priests as well as Jesuits. To one cognizant of the social climate of the period, this is the most extraordinary. His personal estimate of her is all the more valuable for the fact that everything else we know of his personal attitudes show him to be contemptuous of women, more so of Filipinos in general, and crotchety, disagreeable, even antagonistic to the Philippines in general. Though these qualities stand out in the very conclusion of his eulogy in which he distinguishes Ignacia from all those he detested,<sup>30</sup> even more convincing is the totally contemptuous

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which I have published elsewhere, no one except Ignacia del Espíritu Santo, and up to a point, Diego Silang, has such extensive personal information, to my knowledge. That is even true of the canonized or beatified martyrs, St. Lorenzo Ruiz and Bl. Pedro Calungsod.

30. "She overcame with extraordinary constancy three kinds of indolence very difficult to overcome—that natural to the country, that connatural to her sex, and that which is so deeply inborn in the race" (In Schumacher 1987, 167).

and insulting attitude he shows in a writing, perhaps done only for private consumption, toward Filipinos.<sup>31</sup>

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31. See the letter, already implicitly criticized by his Jesuit colleague, Fr. Juan José Delgado in 1754 (1892, 270–71; 297–302) and infuriating to Rizal and his companions, in a document reproduced in Blair and Robertson 1903–1909, 40: 280–82.

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