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**Fr. Pedro Chirino, S.J. and Philippine Historiography**  
MANUEL RUIZ JURADO, S.J.

No serious historian of the Philippines can avoid frequently coming across the name and work of Fr. Pedro Chirino, S.J. For this reason some historians believe that the importance of his role and his personality have not been recognized as they deserve. On this occasion of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the Jesuits in the Philippines, this brief essay may make some small contribution. It does not pretend to fill the vacuum about Fr. Chirino but it may fill in some of the gaps.

If we have to begin with his "firsts," let us point out that Europe owes its first knowledge of the Philippines and its people to Fr. Pedro Chirino's *Relación de las Islas Filipinas i de lo que en ellas an trabañado los Padres de la Compañia de Jesús* (Rome, 1604). He is, moreover, the first missionary whose journeys to the Philippines were supported by King Philip II. With his companion, Bro. Francisco Martin, Fr. Chirino arrived in Manila on 20 June 1590. This was later than the ship of Governor Gomez Perez Dasmariñas whom he accompanied as the official delegate of the Jesuit General, Fr. Claudio Aquaviva, because a violent storm broke out just before they reached land and delayed him.<sup>1</sup> When the College of Manila was elevated to university status, Fr. Chirino was the first to occupy the senior Chair of Canon Law. Later, he lectured on Sacred Scripture. The foundation of the colleges of Manila, San José, and Arévalo is due to the work of

1. P. Pastells, "Historia general de Filipinas," *Catálogo de los documentos relativos a las islas Filipinas* (Barcelona, 1925-1936), vol. 3: LXXIX-LXXX, CV-CVI; H. de la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines 1581-1768* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 120 ff; P. Chirino, *Relación de las Islas Filipinas*, 2nd ed. (Manila, 1890), p. 30.

Fr. Chirino.<sup>2</sup> All must admit that with his vision of the future, his balanced grasp of reality animated with love and sympathy for the Philippines, and his realistic presentation of the needs of the mission, he helped to establish and consolidate on a more solid basis many of the works of the Jesuits in the Philippines.

As a result of his voyage to Rome as Procurator (1602-1606), the Philippine Vice-Province was raised to a Province and many specially chosen missionaries came to the Philippines, some with Fr. Pedro Montes (1605) and others with Fr. Chirino himself (1606).<sup>3</sup> Shortly before this, he had obtained, with the single-mindedness and zeal of an apostle, another first – the canonical erection of two sodalities of Our Lady. We are told about this in his letter dated 27 June 1601, in which he says that there was already a sodality for the natives in the College of Manila which had been established earlier than those of the students and of lay Catholics organized in that year. He had been eagerly seeking the approval of Father General Aquaviva for these three sodalities and their aggregation to the *Anunziata* (the “*prima primaria*” of sodalities in Rome).

We present the text of this letter, which is preserved in the archives of the Society of Jesus in Rome, for it is especially indicative of Fr. Chirino’s missionary spirit.

The peace of Christ:

On 25 July [25]99, Father Visitor, Diego Garcia, gave me your Paternity’s patent [naming me] Rector of this College of Manila, and immediately I sent in duplicate to your Paternity my answer [concerning] how little I was in agreement with the new notice, because I had just arrived from the Pintados [Visayan Islands]. Afterwards, in 1600, I wrote at greater length and in duplicate, as always, and since both copies [of the letters] were lost, I shall now repeat what [I wrote] then, adding what has occurred recently.

Beginning, then, with the formal aspect of this college, i.e. the people and their attitude, I have been in general greatly consoled with the good example and fervor of all, except two or three who have given some trouble; but Father Visitor has provided a suitable solution which he will describe to Your Paternity.

2. Pastells, *Catálogo*, vol. 7, part 2, CCXLIII.

3. P. Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, Pt. 2:1616-1716 (Manila, 1749) fol. 79 r-v, n. 199.

This college does not have enough priests and brothers needed to attend faithfully to our obligations in and out [of the college], and so both the one and the other suffer. The ministries and duties in the house are in the charge of novices who have little experience and instruction from the example of the older virtuous and diligent brothers. The harm is greater for lack of a permanent minister and a subminister, who are needed. Studies suffer, for of the two classes in Latin, the larger one is taught by a Father who is not very dedicated, and the smaller by a scholastic [*ermano*] who has learned Latin himself by teaching it. For this reason, there is a very low opinion of our studies here. This year, both classes are in the charge of the priest because the scholastic starts the Arts course which must now be inaugurated. There is need of at least two confessors [*Padre obreros*] for the Spaniards. Likewise, we are not enough to minister properly to the prisons and hospitals, nor to take care of sermons or to help our neighbor, or [attend to] the pulpit, and much worse, the confessional.

The chief reason for all of these failures has been so far our greater concern for the staffing of our missions among the Visayan [*Pintados*] with the few people we have [69v], rather than for this College; and so, it has suffered, is suffering, and will suffer if Your Paternity does not remedy the situation.

In sum, dear Father, the only need of this Vice-Province is for men. And I am sure the need is the same for the entire Vice-Province. As a remedy, since we have been thus afflicted for years, everyone agrees that it is very necessary that someone be sent expressly from here, and Fr. Vera has been designated for this purpose. But now, besides this problem there is another very important one, namely, to give Your Paternity a complete report of everything, since from what has appeared so far, Your Paternity is not yet fully informed. It is agreed that it would be very convenient that someone should go who can carry out both purposes.

It will also be good if Your Paternity orders that a Procurator should sail from here, just like the one of Japan, for in Mexico they understand very little what this [Vice-Province] is. I have even heard it said that there has been a Procurator who in the name of the Philippines negotiated in the courts of Rome and Castille everything he wanted, and obtained many things from Your Paternity, but obtained very little for the Philippines.

What has been better attended to here in Manila is the ministry to the natives [*Indios*], and it is so now. But it is in great need for lack of workers [*operarios*].

The Fathers from Japan sent one of their *Doxucus* here for the

formation of the Japanese.<sup>4</sup> He has been of great help the past year when he had a priest helping him, but for lack of that priest, the work has been discontinued this year.

For the higher studies, there are not many students, nor will there be in the near future, but, nonetheless, there is and there will be need for these studies for the few who will attend. The king, our lord, and the resident audiencia here seek to establish these studies in this college, but the Society neither bothers about their [corresponding academic] titles nor talks of a university. I however believe that it will be a prudent thing to do so, and that this ministry of the Society is very proper in these very remote places.

Fr. Ramón de Prado, Vice-Provincial, has tried to found a seminary for natives in this city, for which he spent 2,000 pesos of the foundation of this college [to pay] for a house which, due to its poor site and other inconveniences, is of no advantage to this college. The purpose of the seminary has been frustrated for lack of funds to support it. Furthermore, after the damage was done, Your Paternity's order arrived to discontinue it. All of these I mention in regard to the formal aspect of this college.

I shall now go on to treat the material aspect, which is a bit neglected [70]. Because this college is not totally supported by its foundation, this has only served to discontinue the alms which people used to give us. These alms together with those from the king and the little income we had which amounted to more than 1,000 pesos, subsidized the college much better in the past than now. We could maintain the building better. But to complete what is unfinished, which is a great deal, and to repair the church, we are in great need.

This need and the shortage of funds increases with the expenses of the Province with which this college is charged, which amount to a great sum. Your Paternity must look into the matter to see if it will be good to order that the residences contribute their share. They have the means to do so with the royal stipends assigned to them from the tributes which they annually collect from the encomenderos at the time these tributes are paid.

From Mexico, too, they charge us for the expenses of the Province above those which we now have with Father Vice-Provincial. May Your Paternity order a solution to it. A complete solution would be to remove this [Vice-Province] from subordination to Mexico for the ser-

4. The "*dōjuku*" lived with the Jesuits, wearing a religious garb, and studied to prepare themselves for their future apostolate. They also helped in preaching, in the divine service, and in the other ministries of the Society of Jesus. They are so called because they seemed to follow certain Buddhist practices. See J.F. Schutte, *Introductio ad historiam Societatis Jesu in Japonia* (Rome, 1968), p. 376.

ious reasons that suggest it, which we have discussed here in several consultors' meetings. Concerning the reasons that occurred to me I am writing to Fr. Bartolomé Pérez in duplicate. I beseech Your Paternity to please inquire from him since he is Your Paternity's Assistant.

The important properties that this college now owns are two: (1) Some orchards cultivated by Chinese worth 1,200 pesos yearly, although this is not without some danger lest they expel us from the land as undesirables, which the Spaniards are not a little fearful of; (2) a cattle ranch (for there are no sheep ranches here) which [70v] can be worth 2,000 a year. The properties I have been in charge of have not reached 500 each year, since they are not, nor have been since their establishment, properly attended to by a member of the Society who will take care of them as his own. The other properties are for the most part wooden houses, and so, not of any duration, nor is their income dependable.

While writing this, Fr. Diego García has just finished his visitation. Your Paternity has chosen a most apt person for the immense good of this Vice-Province, in which he remains as its Vice-Provincial to the universal consolation of all.

With regard to the fasts of Advent and the feast of our Lady, the question comes up whether they should be made general for the whole house on the decision of the Superior, or if only those who ask shall fast.

Previously I have suggested to Your Paternity that it would be good if the Superior of this Vice-Province has Your Paternity's faculty to approve and permit publication of the articles which the Fathers here write about the languages, considering how remote this Vice-Province is from Rome, and that no one in Rome can make any judgment about the languages here. There is no lack of printing presses here. Travel is inconvenient and even dangerous, and these people are quite capable [of printing]. Both for them and for us, and the other missionaries, it would be very helpful to have printed books.

This is our only envy of those in Europe who, because they are close to Your Paternity, frequently enjoy the consolation of Your Paternity's letters, and answers to theirs are not delayed, while here we receive them after two years. As in my case, the answer to the letters I wrote [and sent] with Fr. Vera has just now arrived. For all of the two years I have been Rector, I have not received any replies, and do not expect them until I finish [my term of] office. Despite everything, the certainty of the fatherly care and charity of Your Paternity consoles us, your sons, in these last ends of the earth. And I, though the least of all, pray the Divine Majesty to keep Your Paternity so that, as you have initiated the planting of this rather remote vineyard, you also may confirm and

strengthen it for the greater service and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ and that of His holy Church. Amen.

Manila, 27 June 1601

+ P<sup>o</sup> Chirino, S.J.

This year, two sodalities, one for the students, and another for the laity, were started in this college. They are writing to Your Paternity about their erection and [aggregation to the]<sup>5</sup> Anunziata in conformity with the *Ordinatio*. This is a petition which Your Paternity ought to favor because it is a source of great edification and fruit. Not least is the third sodality of the natives, which in length of time is the first. Their letters I send with the present letter to Your Paternity. They have continued for some years with much edification and good example, and truly they are our crown. I am very willingly in charge of them for this reason, and I therefore beg Your Paternity to expedite them [the patents], as I hope in your great charity."

Fr. Murillo Velarde tells us that Fr. Chirino also started the Jesuit residence in Silang [Cavite] where we know he had gone together with Fr. Leonardo Scelsi in that same year, 1601, to give a mission to the natives who became the charge of the Society, although they had been catechized earlier by the Franciscan Fathers.<sup>6</sup>

#### IMPORTANCE AND PROBLEMS OF HIS WRITTEN WORK

The importance of Fr. Chirino's *Relación de las Islas Filipinas* is not due mainly to its chronological primacy. Father General Aquaviva probably had an intuition when he ordered its immediate publication, and Fr. Pedro Ribadeneira, too, when he suggested to Fr. Chirino when the latter passed through Madrid, that he continue writing and finish that remarkable history of the Philippine Islands.<sup>7</sup> In that history one sees as though in the flesh the encounter between the evangelizers of that land and the

5. There is a gap in the manuscript.

6. Murillo Velarde, *Historia*, fol. 79, n. 198: See also the letter of Father Scelsi dated at Antipolo, May 1602: *Philip.* 10, fol. 90v in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Jesu (ARSI).

7. "This great man," writes Fr. Chirino in the prologue of his corrected manuscript *Relación*, "liked what I wrote, after I talked with him in Madrid and showed him some of my writings, for they were *a propos*, and he urged me to continue, assuring me that it would be of great value for the future," H. Bernard, S.J., "Deux trouvailles bibliographiques en Extrême Orient," *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu* 5 (1936): 300.

natives, their adventures, their problems and solutions, the growth of the Faith and the planting of the Church, the meeting of two cultures and their mutual interaction, with the transformation of one of them through a growing process of adaptation and assimilation. Fr. Chirino shows, besides, keen observation and an impressive cultural breadth. His comments on the geography and the inhabitants of the islands, their languages and customs, are priceless. From him we learn of their frequent use of baths, their manner of preparing and burying the dead, the extent of [the practice] of slavery and usury, how they received their names, and their marriage practices, the giving of dowries, the separation of married couples, their crops and their products, etc. All are explained in detail and with warm sympathy, in language that is exact, proper, flexible, and adaptable. Let us see an example of his writing, in a passage chosen almost at random:

At this time, the town of Taytay was along an inlet of water, on the bank of a creek or brook flowing down the slopes of the mountains of Antipolo, and entering into a nearby river right at the point where it leaves the lake, in a very beautiful, spacious valley between the lake itself and the mountains. The land is so low that every year, the lake overflows because of several flooded rivers that feed into it, and bathes and drowns the land like the Nile in the land of Egypt. The land is under water from about August to October or November. Thus, at this time, the entire valley is a lake more than a furlong deep, and one cannot cross it except in canoes. This fertilizes the rice lands and the crops, of which the valley is full. In this way, the people reap great and rich harvests. . . .<sup>8</sup>

The *Relación* was reedited in Manila in 1890. In 1904, it was translated into English by Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson [and included in] *The Philippine Islands: 1493-1898*.<sup>9</sup> It has recently been translated into English by Ramón Echevarria, *The Philippines in 1600* (Manila, 1969). The translator indicates in his introduction how he came to understand the value of Fr. Chirino's work and admits that many of the elements described by Chirino are considered as part of the racial and cultural heritage of the Filipinos. He believes it is "of primary value for whoever wishes to reconstruct the culture of our Filipino ancestors."<sup>10</sup> He reports that

8. Chirino, *Relación*, p. 32.

9. Vol. 12: 169-221; vol. 13: 29-217.

10. Echevarria, *The Philippines in 1600*, p. ix.



the conquest of the Philippines was essentially spiritual, not military, and the conversion to Christianity was the leaven that acted as the ferment of the cultural change. Although the spiritual fruit and the wonders then accomplished declined with the fall of Spain, institutions have survived saturated with that spirit, integrated into the ordinary life of the Filipino and rooted in his being.

In spite of its importance, we know today that the *Relación* was written "with so much speed that it was being printed as it was being written; lest with all the business that occupied me and my return to Spain, I be forced to leave [unfinished] what I had begun."<sup>11</sup> Back in Spain during the summer of 1604, and with more freedom and leisure from his occupations, Chirino took care of correcting his work:

And with the help of my original manuscript, which contains my personal knowledge and experience, I was able not only to correct some errors, but also to add and extend my history with matter that I remembered anew. I continued to add recent incidents that I learned from the letters sent to me and to others after I had left [the Philippines].<sup>12</sup>

Fr. Chirino wanted to publish the *Relación* in Valladolid after he had corrected it, but could not. Was it for lack of time, since he had to be ready to return to the Philippines? Did he leave it incomplete because he planned to write a more complete work following a different plan, as he did after reaching the Philippines?

What is sure is that the manuscript of the *Relación*, with corrections made in Madrid, was found in the old library of the Jesuits in Peking, China, by Fr. Henri Bernard, S.J., who announced his discovery in the *Archivum Historicum Societatis Jesu* 5 (1936): 296-305. There one finds erased the passage referring to Philip [II], a child of two years of age, carried in someone's arms and hardly able to speak, "and yet, . . . singing the Our Father and even the articles of the Faith, while others were singing with him: certainly, a cause of admiration to those who saw him" during the traditional procession of the catechetical instructions. "Fr. Luis de la Puente, censor of the book, did not let this point go, and he erased it from the text saying that no one would believe it."

11. See the prologue to the corrected *Relación* in Bernard's article, cited in note 7 above.

12. Ibid.

Fr. Chirino himself writes in another manuscript, also unpublished, the *Historia de la provincia de Filipinas*,<sup>13</sup> about a "more complete work following a different plan." He worked on this from 1607 to 1608 in Manila and used the material he had collected to reedit the *Relación*. It covers twenty-five years, 1581-1606, divided into five books and 183 chapters. There exists a copy, corrected by the author himself in 1618. This history was not published "due to ill health and the many occupations of the author."<sup>14</sup> The manuscript was kept after his death, together with the other writings of Fr. Chirino, in the library of the College of Manila. Fr. Colín used it, for his work *Labor evangélica de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús en las Islas Filipinas*,<sup>15</sup> as he acknowledges in the title. But we do not know how, from the library in Manila, it came into the hands of a dealer in old books who brought it to Paris. There in the nineteenth century, Ramón Martínez Vigil, Bishop of Oviedo (Spain) bought it. It was "written on rice paper by an *Indio* scribe, bound in carabao hide." Menéndez Pelayo sought to obtain it in vain. On the other hand, it was Fr. Fruto who suggested to the Bishop of Oviedo that it would be good if Fr. Pablo Pastells could make use of it in the second edition of Colín's *Labor evangélica*. The bishop gave his approval and it was thus that the manuscript came to rest in Barcelona.<sup>16</sup> It would be of interest if some day that *Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas (1581-1606)* of Fr. Chirino were published.

Fr. Murillo Velarde assures us that in the library in Manila there were several books and treatises by Fr. Chirino, among them a *Historia de la Sagrada Pasión*, with sayings and very pious meditations by the Greek and Latin doctors of the Church.<sup>17</sup> There was in the library of San Pedro Makati, a rather thick volume in folio entitled *Sacrum Decachordum, hoc est, historiae sacrae veteris novique Testamenti duplex selectus pentateuchus*. These books, like his other manuscripts on canon law, he must have written when he was teaching in [the College of San Ignacio] Manila before he returned to Spain. In the library of San Gregorio in Mexico, accord-

13. Bernard, "Deux trouvailles," p. 303; Colin-Pastells, *Labor evangélica de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús*, new ed. (Barcelona, 1900-1902), II: 366.

14. Colin-Pastells, *Labor evangelica*, 1:xiii; Bernard, "Deux trouvailles," pp. 304-5.

15. *Primera parte, from the manuscripts of Fr. Pedro Chirino* (Madrid, 1663).

16. Pastells, "Historia general," *Catálogo*, vol. 7 Pt. 1, CCXLIV.

17. Velarde, *Historia*, fol. 80, n. 200.

ing to Sommervogel,<sup>18</sup> there is preserved a literal explanation of the Song of Songs written by Chirino between 1593-95, when he was in Panay Island at the Tigbauan mission. It is a collection of pious reflections with which he nourished his soul in his solitude, written partly in Spanish and partly in Latin.

#### HIS LIFE, CHARACTER, AND PERSONALITY

Pedro Chirino was born in the province of Sevilla, in Osuna which was a university town before, but is now nothing much. Located between Sevilla and Granada, it is a typical Andalusian region, rich in grain, olives, grapevines, and other vegetables. Its history goes back to the Iberian age. Within its walls, Viriatus defeated the Romans commanded by Quintus Octavius Maximus. Osuna was the last Roman city which remained faithful to Pompey after the battle of Munda. It is a city of wide streets, plazas and walks, beautiful churches and noblemen's residences. The university was founded by the Count of Ureña in 1549 and lasted until 1820. In honor of the Count's mother, it was under the patronage of the Immaculate Conception, and it offered a full program of studies at that time. Philip II raised Osuna to the rank of a duchy. The city still enjoys the title of "Most Noble."

Fr. Chirino saw the light of day in that city in 1557. During the years of his studies, the dukes of Osuna negotiated to have the Society of Jesus take charge of the university, of which they were the patrons, to improve its academic standing. But the Society was able to establish a foundation in Osuna only in 1602, during the generalate of Aquaviva.<sup>19</sup> Meantime, setting aside the possible honors he could have obtained through the favor of the dukes who esteemed and honored him as a learned man, Pedro Chirino entered the Society in 1580, at the age of twenty-three, with a degree of Bachelor in Canon Law. He must have entered the novitiate of Montilla, just a few years before the famous Fr. Alfonso

18. Carlos Sommervogel, ed., *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jesus* (Bruxelles, 1890-92), 2: col. 1148, A; 38-39. We know that in the Angelica library there is a manuscript given by Fr. Chirino himself to a Roman prelate on 31 March 1604, entitled *Dictionarium Sino-Hispanicum*, which he had used to learn the Chinese language in order to convert the Chinese in the Philippines. See Sommervogel, 12: col. 1006.

19. A. Astrain, *Historia de la Compagnie de Jesus en la Asistencia de España* (Madrid, 1909), 3: 230-31. The foundation was made possible through the generosity of the canon of Sevilla, Celedonio Arpea, prescinding completely from the university.

Rodríguez began his term as Rector and master of novices there.<sup>20</sup> In 1585, Fr. Chirino was in Sevilla, having already finished three years of philosophy and two of theology. At thirty years of age in 1587, he was already a priest.<sup>21</sup> We do not know where he made the third probation. But, according to Murillo Velarde, he spent two years giving missions.<sup>22</sup> He was giving missions in the duchies of Medina and Véjar when Father General Aquaviva assigned him to the Philippines in answer to his offer to be sent to any land where the General might think it most conducive to the glory of God and the good of souls. At the end of July, his mission ended, Chirino was in Jerez, where he received from the Provincial the news of his assignment: he was to accompany, in place of Fr. Alonso Sánchez, Governor Pérez Dasmariñas who was on his way to the Philippines.<sup>23</sup>

The servant of God recollected himself in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, and he went out with such eagerness to undertake the journey that he made it the object of a vow. Within twenty-four hours, he was prepared to start. Although, Gedeón de Hinojosa, the President of the [*Casa de la*] Contratación in Sevilla, wanted to stop him because of his great esteem for the Father, he did not succeed because of the firm determination with which our missionary guided himself with such constancy and prudence. He succeeded in so resolving the situation that the President was not only not offended but was edified by his refusal to change his mind.<sup>24</sup>

They left Sanlucar on 18 September 1589 for Mexico, where they arrived on 12 December. He arrived in Manila with his companion, Bro. Francisco Martín, on 20 June 1590. He quickly learned the language and by August-September that same year, he was acting as parish priest of Balayan [Batangas]. He also gave missions in Lian and Maniswa. Later, he was summoned by the Bishop to minister to four towns: Taytay, Antipolo, Santa Cruz, and San Pablo, where the majority were pagans. From there he left to evangelize the natives of Tigbauan [Panay] and preach to the Spaniards in Iloilo. In 1595, he left Iloilo under the command of obedience to go to Leyte, where he began to work with two priests

20. ARSI, *Baet.*, 8, fol. 7r, 21v, and *passim*.

21. *Ibid.*, 17v, 27v.

22. *Hist. de la prov.* already cited, fol. 78, n. 197.

23. Pastells, "Historia general," *Catálogo*, vol. 3: LXXX, CIII-CIV.

24. Velarde, *Historia*, fol. 78v, n. 197.

and a brother. But he had to move on to Cebu, where he was rector for three years. From 1599 to 1602, he was the rector of the College of Manila until he was elected to sail to Madrid and Rome as the procurator of the Vice-Province.<sup>25</sup>

Arriving from the Philippines in Spain in the middle of the year 1603, almost everyone wanted to see me, asking me for information about the new world, about which they declared they knew only its name. They were surprised at my answers and they expressed the desire to see a well written history of what that land was. In the Spanish court, some friends asked me to write it.<sup>26</sup>

Thus Fr. Chirino recounts the origin of his *Relación* which he finally wrote only in Rome at the command of his superiors.

We have seen that it was on his return to Madrid in the summer of 1604 that he was encouraged by Fr. Ribadeneira to finish writing a *History*, his first work, which was rushed into print. On his return to Manila, he was busy with apostolic ministries among the natives and the Spaniards in the city and its surroundings. He taught canon law and Sacred Scripture, besides writing the works we have already mentioned above.<sup>27</sup>

From what we know of his style of life during these years until his death, he practiced what he taught and preached (for which he always proved himself eminently suited). He spent many hours in the confessional, "and when it was [to hear the confessions] of the poor or the *Indios*, he went with great delight due to the special love he felt for them, a clear sign of his true vocation."<sup>28</sup> All the time in which he was free from his spiritual ministries or his personal prayer he gave to the books. When he was obliged to keep to bed, exhausted by his labors and his age, and when he could no longer say mass, he reconciled himself daily to God through the sacrament of penance. He spoke with joy about death. He was able to speak until an hour before he died. It is said that on receiving the news of his approaching death, he asked all those who came to see him to recite the *Te Deum* in thanksgiving to-

25. Ibid., fol. 78v-79; Pastells, "Historia general," *Catálogo*, vol. 3: CCX-CCXVII; ARSI, *Philip*, 2, I, fol. 6, 29; see 178. On 7 June 1592, Fr. Sedeño was writing to Father General Aquaviva from Manila: "Frs. Francisco Almerique and Pedro Chirino who are the spokesmen of these natives are doing much good among them and each day we hope for even more." ARSI, *Philip*, 9, 276v. See Chirino *Relación*, pp. 38 ff.

26. In the prologue of the corrected *Relación*; Bernard, "Deux trouvailles," p. 300.

27. Velarde, *Historia*, fol. 79v, n. 200.

28. Ibid.

gether with him. He received Extreme Unction fully conscious, and died in holy peace on 16 September 1635, seventy-eight years of age, fifty-five in the Society of Jesus, and forty years as a professed Jesuit.<sup>29</sup>

One could say, looking at this panorama of his life, that all his life had been a triumph, even his innumerable labors, especially in the circumstances of the missions in that period which Murillo Velarde enumerates: "Teaching those unschooled people, learning their tongue, uprooting their barbaric customs, passing through brambles and impenetrable forests, crossing swamps, mud holes or precipitous cliffs, hiking through dangerous risks."<sup>30</sup> Yet, when we glance over the letters between Rome and the Philippines, we find that Fr. Pedro Chirino, zealous missionary, dedicated and with vision, was one who valued the labor of others and was much edified by them, and carried on a personal fight against himself to soften his own choleric and strong character.

In 1597 it was written:

He was known, after he came to this land about seven or eight years ago, to be of a rough character, irascible beyond measure with those outside the house as well as those inside. But for more than a year now, there have been no complaints against him from one or the other. Rather, he edifies the externs in Cebu and it seems that he has curbed himself. But by nature he is really terrible, and treats the natives very harshly when he is with them, and so he was not very effective even if he knew their languages. But he has now worked hard on this point for he is well gifted, and is a learned man with a great talent for preaching.<sup>31</sup>

On 4 July 1599 the patent from Rome arrived naming Fr. Chirino Rector of Manila. The Visitor, Fr. Diego García, a man greatly respected by Fr. Chirino, tried to write Father General Aquaviva that he had been informed about his qualities and that they were very good but that everyone feared his hot temper. The Vice-Provincial thought that if the General were present in the Philippines and knew him well, he would not appoint him Rector.<sup>32</sup> Not that Fr. Garcia had nothing against Fr. Chirino.

29. Ibid.; E. de Guilhermy, *Ménologe de la Compagnie de Jésus* III. Assistance d'Espagne (Paris, 1902), pp. 84-85; ARSI, *Philip.*, 2, 1, 178.

30. Velarde, *Historia*, fol. 79, n. 198.

31. Ramón de Prado, ARSI, *Philip.*, 2, 1, fol. 4.

32. ARSI, *Philip.*, 9, fol. 358v-359.

Besides giving some external impression of haughtiness and a certain unrestrained freedom in his words, and an inconsistency in his dealing with others, the real drawback was Fr. Chirino's temperament. But since he was on good terms with his superiors and was a good man, he accepted corrections. The Visitor, after thinking the matter over, decided to make him rector, trusting in obedience and in the providence of God who would help him to overcome himself, while advising him of his faults.<sup>33</sup>

Nevertheless, the following year, the Vice-Provincial, Raimundo de Prado, noted that his subjects still did not confide in Fr. Chirino. They did not dare to reveal to him their faults, nor those of the others. They did not understand the sudden changeableness of his mood, and they suffered from it. When reporting this to Fr. Aquaviva, Fr. de Prado wrote that he in no wise considered Fr. Chirino suitable to be the superior of the province. That would entail serious wrong and "the ruin of many." He was not good for government, even if he was good for the pulpit and the confessional.<sup>34</sup>

Fr. Chirino, on the other hand, wrote as rector, to the General of the edification he gained from the community and his confidence [that all would be well]. Having taken on

the charge in virtue of holy obedience, and out of my tender love for the Society and with the help of the holy intercession of Your Paternity and that of Father Visitor in whom I have found the love of a true father, I hope to bear it better than what my pettiness and weakness make me fear.<sup>35</sup>

None of what has just been mentioned prevented him from being elected the procurator of the Philippines. But let us not think that Fr. Chirino was unaware of his defect and that he did not fight to overcome it. In June 1614, many years after his return from Rome, Fr. Valerio Ledesma, the Provincial, wrote to the General:

Fr. Pedro Chirino was in San Pedro [Makati] and is now in Manila, although his condition has made him rather a burden for his companions and for the others, to the detriment of unity and charity. But now he has begun to take to heart the advice that he has to conquer

33. ARSI, *Philip.*, 10, fol. 19v-21v.

34. *Ibid.*

35. ARSI, *Philip.*, 9, fol. 399-400.

even more his natural temperament. If he continues his way, it is clear that he is going to be of great help.<sup>36</sup>

In July the following year, he wrote:

Fr. Pedro Chirino preaches and sometimes hears confession. With his strong character, his good talents are buried, and so he is given many tasks and just as often relieved of them, since the result is not what one hopes. He was seriously admonished in secret, and he publicly acknowledged [his fault] to the edification of many, and has changed to a great extent.<sup>37</sup>

And so this missionary continued to fight against himself. Perhaps in another person such a defect would not have been noticed and would have caused less trouble. But none of this diminishes the extent of the work achieved by Fr. Chirino out of love for God, for the Society and for the Filipino people, nor of the greatness of his life and of his death. It only gives a more realistic and human nuance to his personality, and adds to it a new dimension. His efforts were those of a religious man who knows how to persevere in carrying out the great task confided to him without discouragement or despair, while fighting against his own admitted defects of temperament which so often made him suffer because of their effect on those around him, whom he sincerely loved and for whom he constantly sacrificed himself.

36. ARSI, *Philip.*, 2,1, fol. 100.

37. ARSI, *Philip.*, 2,1, fol. 104.





Fr. Pedro Murillo Velarde's map of the Philippines, 1744