History seems to continue as the profession least attractive to the young, and remains the exclusive preserve of a handful of persevering, if not stubborn minds. They earn little and receive hardly any compensation for their work. Yet they find unspeakable delight in silently discovering realities hidden in dusty, brittle documents bundled away in unfrequented archives and lonely libraries. The Spaniards have an endearing word for what they do—"natonar," that is, gnaw things to their innermost core. Did not Rizal write that one who ignores history has no soul?

Jesuit historians of the Philippines are even fewer, easily counted on one hand. There were in the Philippines some Manila-born Jesuits, for example, Domingo Esquerra and his nephew Francisco. But unlike their American counterparts, the Philippine-born Jesuits did not become historians. Fr. Francisco Esquerra (also spelled "Esguerra") died apparently a martyr at the hands of the natives of Guam on 1 February 1764, while his uncle authored the Arte de la Lengua Bisaya de la Provincia de Leyte, published in Manila in 1747. But in South America after the expulsion and subsequent suppression of the Jesuit Order, some former American Jesuits wrote about their nations' history and culture, and their work proved to be an important factor in the South American wars of independence.1

Among the Philippine Jesuit historians, we have Frs. Pablo Pastells (1846–1932), Juan José Delgado (1699–1755), Pedro Murillo Velarde (1696–1753), Francisco Combés (1620–65), Francisco Colín (1592–1660), Pedro Chirino (1558–1735). We can name two other Jesuit historians, who left unpublished manuscript histories, although this article does not discuss their worth. They are Diego de Oña, who continued Francisco Colín's history, and Francisco Ignacio Alzina (1610–74), who wrote perhaps the only detailed study of seventeenth-century Visayan society.
There is also William Repetti (1884-1924), a seismologist. In order to write about earthquakes in the Philippines, he investigated the history of the typhoons and natural calamities that had plagued the country throughout its history. In the process he gained a significant insight into general Philippine history, the fruit of which are some historical publications and a manuscript history of the Jesuits in the Philippines. Failing eyesight kept him from finishing his historical research, but the bulk of his investigations served as the point of departure for Fr. de la Costa's monumental history of the Philippines.

Horacio de la Costa

Finally, there is Horacio de la Costa who died in 1977, less than twenty years ago. He had originally decided against becoming a priest because he wanted to be a writer. An adviser convinced him the Philippines needed good writers who were also good priests. Fr. de la Costa was one of them. Fr. de la Costa is admittedly the best Filipino Jesuit historian. An historian by definition looks at facts as they are in order to find the truth and understand the meaning of life. In a letter to Fr. John F. Hurley, prewar Jesuit Superior in the Philippines, he wrote he was not sure how much teaching he was going to do:

... depends on what use [the Dean] finds for history courses. That's the trouble with this trade of mine, people keep asking what earthly good it is ... who wants to know how we got into this mess? What we want to know is how to get out of it. The stock answer is that if we found out how we got into this mess, maybe, we'll get out of this now. But my own personal answer is, I get a great kick out of finding out just how things happen to people, that's all.

Of course, what happens to people is meaningful only to the extent that it helps or hinders the good life. There are really no facts "lying out there," waiting to be picked up and woven into a tale. One has to glean them to link cause and effect, and present the total human reaction to the stimuli around, or history. The effort to understand this pattern and sequence demands an honest look at
reality as it is, if we are to rise above and not be drowned in the often anonymous tide of life.

This explains the deep human quality characteristic of Fr. de la Costa’s writings. To him there is only one truth about God and man, not several. Truth has several aspects and manifests itself variously, as there are innumerable ways that the human mind can understand and express it. Even if we may not see their inner connections, the different sciences and fields of learning have only one objective: the good life. It certainly is wasted effort and resources if our success in reaching the moon or probing the depths of the oceans does not enhance the quality of human life.

This is the key to the mind of Fr. de la Costa, a man of many talents. It is not fortuitous coincidence that his masterly history of the Jesuits in the Philippines (De la Costa 1961) closes with a unifying theme that gives meaning to the Jesuit apostolate in the country. Sent here by royal fiat to help spread the Gospel, they were expelled also by royal command for reasons they did not know, except that the king’s command, no matter how unjust, lay within the range of a temporal ruler’s authority. If the Most Catholic King saw fit to expel them from his dominions, they were prepared to obey without protest. This, then, is the last clear picture we have of them: the scene in the sala of San Ildefonso where the little community stood together before the king’s commissioners to hear the king’s decree . . . . No more fitting words can be found to close this history of a group of men who . . . tried their best to be the king’s good servants, but God’s first; God’s above all (De la Costa 1961, 595).

Put another way, those Jesuits had a mission from God and any effort to explain them outside of the context of their religious calling would fail.

The same can be said of Fr. de la Costa’s earlier unpublished work on the modern Philippine Jesuits, Light Cavalry. It also ends with a similar observation that is both a tribute to the Jesuits themselves and an explanation of who they were:

They are going down the same road [to their new mission]; and yet, not the same. For like the Magi, they too had followed a star, and had found Bethlehem. Like the Magi, they had come bearing gifts—the gift of self, the gift of sacrifice. And like the Magi, they are “returning another way to their own country.” Empty handed, owning nothing, but bearing a message. The message of Bethlehem (Light Cavalry 626).
In other words, to Fr. de la Costa, only one thing really counted—man's welfare on earth as preparation for heaven. And history, all history is about man enroute to eternity.

Pablo Pastells

Fr. Pablo Pastells, born in Spain, came to the Philippines in 1875, and the next year was sent to the Jesuit missions along the Pacific littoral of Mindanao. He chose as his base of operations the fishing village of Caraga (in Davao Oriental today), whence he went on several mission trips. As local superior, he carried out his plan of organizing into pueblos or civil towns what had formerly been mere clusters of sheds of the fisherfolk and roving merchants familiar with the area. His strategy, later known as the "Pastells Plan," included:

(1) choosing the best site for a resettlement area;
(2) marking off future streets and the areas for a central plaza, church, municipal hall, schools, and residential lots;
(3) gathering or reducing the natives in permanent communities with the help of the tribal chiefs of local heads or caciques (see Arcilla 1971, 658–62, 679–88).

Ceaseless missionary activity affected his health and he had to rest in Manila, after which he was assigned to the missions in the present provinces of Misamis Oriental and Bukidnon. But weakened with anemia, he had to return to Spain in 1892 after a short term as Superior of the Philippine Jesuits. His health did not allow for much external apostolic work even in Spain, and he was made assistant to Antonio Astrain (1857–1928), the author of the history of Spanish provinces of the Society of Jesus (Astrain 1902–1905).

Personal experience in the Mindanao missions and research into Jesuit history qualified Fr. Pastells to write about the history of the Jesuit missions in the Philippines which he had learned to love and could not forget. The well-known Philippine bibliographer, Wenceslao E. Retana, who knew him, held him in high regard, and they collaborated on an annotated edition of Fr. Combés' Historia de Mindanao y Sulu. 5 Three years later, Pastells reedited with copious notes and documents Fr. Colín's also well known Labor evangelica, now an essential book for serious students of Philippine history. 6

Besides several volumes on the Jesuit missions in Peru, Fr. Pastells also wrote the Mision de la Compañía de Jesús de Filipinas en el Siglo XIX, three volumes of 515, 490, and 504 pages. 7 Eight or nine years later, his general history of the Philippines was published as the
introductory chapters for each of the nine volumes of the famous Catálogo de los Documentos relativos a las Islas Filipinas. Historia General de Filipinas (Barcelona: Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas, 1925–34, 9 volumes).

Fr. Pastells pored over more than 4,000 legajos or bundles of documents in the General Archives of the Indies in Sevilla, reading every manuscript, selecting, extracting or copying by himself or with a dozen paid scribes what are now the still unpublished, but constantly used "Pastells Collection"—116 folio-volumes of Philippine documents, 57 of Peru, 69 of Mexico, and 36 of indices, additions, and supplements. There are 135 volumes of extracts of documents, besides ten others, five of these identified only as A, B, C, D, E, the other five without any titles. The volumes on the Philippine documents are in the archives of the Jesuit Province of Tarragona (Sant Cugat del Valles, Barcelona). The South American documents are in the Jesuit Writers' House in Madrid.

Fr. Pastells' historical work is nearly prodigious. The more sophisticated historiography today may perhaps point out his "lack" of a more stringent critical appreciation of the documents. But despite what to a few may be an excessively chronological style, one cannot deny there is merit in a work abundantly rich in data which are hard to come by. One example suffices:

On 19 August 1896, a meritorious priest, the Augustinian friar from Burgos, Fr. Mariano Gil, discovered in the press of the Diario de Manila evidence of the plot concocted in the Philippine Archipelago, called Katipunan. It was a secret society organized in the manner of Freemasonry, whose members promised under an oath signed with their own blood, never to reveal the laws of their society, and keep the most rigorous secrecy.

The insurrection in the country reached serious proportions in Luzon, God's providence saving the Spaniards. The insurgents under Bonifacio's command appeared as they say ringed around Manila in numbers for many miles. To this end, Fr. Jacas wrote to the Provincial on 2 September: "It is clear that the [Masonic] lodges are carrying out their plan. The worst in this situation is that, while the army in the Philippines is increased and the guilty are penalized, the spread and existence of Freemasonry is not banned. If it is not definitely forbidden through a decree, nothing will be done. (Mision, III, 281–82)

In 1898, the newly arrived Americans asked the Jesuits to write a reference manual about the Philippines. At government expense, the
Jesuits prepared a bulky two-volume encyclopedia, *El Archipiélago Filipino*, still one of the more reliable sources of information about the Philippines today, which included the first modern *Atlas de Filipinas*. Fr. Pastells was the coordinator of this cooperative endeavor, although the printing was supervised by Fr. José Algue.

**Pedro Murillo Velarde**

Fr. Murillo Velarde, a twenty-seven-year old priest when he arrived in Manila in 1723, was a polymath. The king had just founded three professorial chairs in Law, hoping that the colony could provide its own attorneys and legal experts. Unfortunately, well financed, boasting of one of the more commodious lecture halls in the city, no students attended the lectures. And so, the professorial chairs were attached to the Jesuit College of Manila, and Fr. Murillo was made the first professor of canon and civil law. In time, he published his *Cursus iuris canonici hispani et indiani*, a two-volume classic that was reprinted several times. He published, besides a catechism, a popular guide on how to draw up a will, *Práctica de testamentos*, also reedited several times. He also wrote a ten-volume classic, *Geografía histórica* (1752), the eighth volume of which discusses the Philippines. The reader will be intrigued with this passage:

What Aristotle wrote or Pliny saw cannot compare with what I have been able to see and observe about the *tabon*. It is like a black hen, with a sharp beak, big feet, large claws. It lays an egg about twice bigger than a turkey's, strange. I liked an omelet made of it for supper once. To lay its eggs the *tabon* digs a hole about a vara and a half or two in soft or sandy soil near the sea, using its beak or claws to dig and break up the soil, leaving an opening more than a vara in diameter. It lays its eggs, covers them with the soil it had removed and the ground is left as smooth as the area around.

In 1749, Fr. Murillo published a history of the Jesuit province in the Philippines, as a continuation of Fr. Colín's earlier work. Scholars are practically unanimous in their praise of a work whose style and content they describe as one of the best of eighteenth-century writings in the Philippines. But Murillo's most enduring work is the map of the Philippines commissioned by Governor Fernandes Valdes y Tamon (1729–39). It was not only the most exact map at the time, but it included vignettes picturing various aspects of Philippine society.
Juan José Delgado

In 1751, Fr. Juan José Delgado, for many years a missionary in Borongan, Samar, completed his "no little work" or general history of the Philippines. It was, he apologized, a mere compilation of information for his own enjoyment, not for instructing others. He had been inspired, by Fr. Colin's Chronology, and, he admitted, all he did was to collect "flowers from various gardens for a bouquet" to which he added a few of his own.

Because the Jesuits were expelled a few years later the manuscript remained unpublished until 1892 when it was chosen as the first volume of a projected Philippine Historical Library. But what we have is just the first part of a presumably longer work the author did not live to complete. Divided into five books, the properly historical first book now needs to be corrected and supplemented, while the third and the fifth which is subdivided into several detailed tratados or studies of the Philippine fauna and flora, comprise the heart of the volume.

Published in the time of burning nationalism, Delgado's work was especially welcome because of his defense of the Philippine-born clergy against the notorious diatribe of the Augustinian scholar, Fray Gaspar de San Agustin:

I have personally refrained from quoting the rest of [Fray Gaspar's] letter . . . out of respect I owe to the indigenous priests of these islands. I am personally acquainted with some of them, who, although indios, can serve as an example to confound the Europeans. I shall mention only two . . . Eugenio de Santa Cruz, Provisor of the Diocese of [Cebu] . . . Bartolome Saguinsin, a Tagalog, parish priest of Quiapo . . . . Both of these are esteemed for their talents and revered for their virtue . . . . I pass over, for lack of space, many others whose names are worthy of being inscribed in this history.

Francisco Combés

In 1667 Fr. Francisco Combés published a history of Mindanao and the Sulu islands. He had come to the Philippines in 1643 and was active almost all his life in the Mindanao and eastern Visayas missions. In May 1662, Chen Ch'en Kung (Koxinga in classroom history) threatened Manila with fire and destruction, promoting Governor
Sebastián Manrique de Lara (1653-63) to recall all the Spanish garrisons in the south. The Chinese bombast fizzled, for Chen Ch’en Kung died. But the troops did not return to the south, and the Muslims resumed the raids with vengeance. From then on, the greater portion of Mindanao, beyond effective Spanish rule, was neglected. Government inability to remove the threat forced the missionaries to put up their own defenses and watch towers by the seashore to warn the people of any incoming hostile sail.

Combés knew the situation better and, in word and writing, strenuously opposed the neglect. The result: a history of Mindanao and Sulu showing that the southern Philippine islands were important and should not be neglected. A scholar called it the “historia principis” of Mindanao and Sulu. One could add that because of interesting details on the lineage of the rulers and princes of the island, no other history of the Philippines would be as valuable as Combés’.

The same writer continues:

the strongest recommendation of the book is... the first of several tables which are added... that abundance of proper names... the military men who distinguished themselves by act or prudence; the indigenous element which shared in a greater or less degree in the episodes mentioned; the missionaries who preached the Gospel, some suffering a glorious martyrdom; all those persons, in a word who figured in something worth including as a lesson or an example for posterity—these are cited in this volume, as valuable as, by the nature of certain details, is unique in its class.

Even today, Fr. Combés remains an indispensable reference for Mindanao and Sulu, and echoes the current complaint that Mindanao has been forgotten.

Francisco Colín

Fr. Francisco Colín arrived in the Philippines in 1626. Enroute across the Pacific, he endeared himself to the incoming governor general of the colony, Juan Niño de Tabora (1626-32), who chose him for his confessor, earning the Jesuit not a few problems common to denizens of the corridors of political power. In Manila Colín taught scripture and by turns was Rector of the Jesuit Colegio Maximo de
Manila, known as the Universidad de San Ignacio, and of the College of San José. After working in Mindoro among the Mangyans, whose language he learned in two months, he was renamed Rector of the Jesuit university in Manila, and then Provincial. He is listed in 1651 as *scriptor* (writer) with residence at the Jesuit novitiate in San Pedro Makati.

Fr. Colín was rector for four terms, and provincial at least once. He was the author of an important history of the early Jesuits in the Philippines. In obedience to repeated royal mandates for a complete report since the Crown subsidized the missions, Fr. Colín wrote not just about the "natural and supernatural graces that favored the Jesuit apostolate, the Jesuits, living and dead, especially those outstanding in virtue and learning, and their houses," but also about the "conquest, progress, and actual state" of the colony and the "special qualities of the land and its inhabitants." That is why, although Colín's writing is mainly about the Jesuits' evangelical work, it contains much general Philippine history.

For example, Fr. Colín wrote about a Pampango who had lost his way in one of the Indonesian islands, told him the Sumatrans "spoke excellent Pampango, and wore the oldtime dress of the Pampangos." An old Sumatran explained that the Pampangos were "descendants of the lost people who left here in past times to settle in other lands and were never heard of again."

Fr. Chirino's *Relacion* was already a best-seller in Rome when Fr. Colín wrote his *Labor evangelica*. Publicly he acknowledged he had generously quoted from Chirino's still unpublished manuscript history of the Philippines. Readers today are grateful Colín did. We would not know certain delightful incidents the censors deleted from the Chirino manuscript, if Fr. Colín had not quoted them.

As in the other Jesuit missions, every morning in Silang, Cavite the children formed two files, waving little flags in their hands, chanting the Christian catechism. There were no movie houses then, no TV shows, no professional sports, and the unusual parade attracted the entire town. Two or three chanters at the head of the procession intoned the initial word of a lesson which the rest completed in song. Proud fathers and mothers stood by or made up the rear, with infants in their mothers' arms. Felipe, a baby hardly two years old, son of Amaondos, a leading figure in town, was one of these. He not only joined the chorus answering the leaders, but since he was already capable of pronouncing words correctly, he intoned from memory the beginning of lessons which everyone picked up. Pleas-
antly surprised but convinced it was true, the Jesuit, reported this precocious lad in his letters and Fr. Chirino included the incident in his manuscript. But the censor deleted it. No one, the latter observed, "would believe it." True, Fr. Chirino admitted, adding it was a pity not to mention it.

Colin's work is divided into four books covering the century from Magellan's landing in Samar to the sudden death of Gov. Juan de Silva (1609-16) enroute to the Moluccas to drive off the Dutch. We read in the first book about God's gentle providence in creating the "wonderful" Philippine islands, strategically located, lavishly furnished by nature with rice for bread, wine from palm trees, textiles for clothing, materials for housing, abundant minerals, and talented people with their own style of greeting and calling one another. Using Chirino, Colin wrote about the mothers who gave their babies their names, similar to the Hebrew tradition.

. . . Maliwag, which means "difficult," because it was a difficult birth; Malakas, which means strong, for the baby appears to be so . . . At other times, with no hidden meaning, they gave the name of the first thing that comes to mind, "Daan," road, "Damo," grass.

Surnames came after the child married. Then the parents were called "Ama ni Maliwag," or "Ina ni Damo." They also used nicknames, e. g., "Kailog," for someone who shared an egg with a friend. An during parties or family gatherings, one ordinarily known as "Bayani," or hero, was affectionately dubbed "Dimalapitan," or unchallenged.

Colin's last three books form a chronicle of the Jesuit apostolate in the Philippines until 1616. Lists of governors general, archbishops, bishops, brief descriptions of the galleon trade, the Dutch or Moro wars, earthquakes and conflagrations, and others introduce us to the general history of the colony.

First published in the middle of the seventeenth century, the work is more popularly known through Fr. Pastells's reedition in three volumes at the turn of the century. As mentioned, the latter enriched the original text with important notes and documents now hard to locate. Philippine historians still have to study the Philippine equivalent of what we call the "struggle for justice" in the conquest of the Americans. But the documents added by Fr. Pastells provide an initial statement justifying the conquest of the Philippines. Examples are some writings of Fr. Alonso Sanchez (1565-93), one of the first three
Jesuits who arrived in Manila in 1581 and secretary of the Manila Synod of 1582-86 that wrestled with the problem of relieving the painful dislocations during the conquest.27

Pedro Chirino

Fr. Chirino died in Manila on 16 September 1635. He was seventy-eight years old, and had been fifty-five years a Jesuit. Probably the first Jesuit missionary whose travel expenses had been paid by the royal treasury, he worked in the Philippines for forty-five years, founding missions and schools, besides being Rector, Mission Procurator, and historian. Because of his outstanding talents, powerful friends in Spain had tried to hold him back, but Fr. Chirino told them he was determined to go to the Philippines. They were unaware he had vowed his life to the missions.

Most do not know him as a person or Jesuit, but only as the author of the first mission history of the Philippines, the Relacion de las Islas Filipinas.28 Actually he wrote it as the report, which is what the word “relacion” means, that Jesuit Procurators normally submit in Rome. Chirino described the Jesuits and their work for the first twenty years in the Philippines, with digressions about the people, their characteristics and customs, in order, he confessed, to make his report less tedious to read. Antonio de Morga’s, Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas (Mexico, 1604), had just been finished, he added, a “carefully, truthfully, and expressively” written history, although at the time not yet printed. Yet, more than Morga’s or Fray Juan de Plasencia’s pioneering Costumbres de los tagalos, Chirino’s, a rather thin volume, is our first full picture of Philippine prehispanic society.29

Chirino’s report was first published in 1604 and republished in Manila almost 200 years later. In 1904, Blair and Robertson published an English version in volumes 12 and 13 of their collection of documents.

Stopping in Spain in 1602 on his way to Rome, people kept asking Fr. Chirino about the Philippines they knew only by name. Marveling at his replies, they urged him to write a “methodical history.” In Rome, his report provoked the same reaction from Jesuits whom he was “obliged to obey.” This obedience gave birth to the brief book we are discussing, hurriedly printed, he wrote, for the press waited while he was finishing the later sections.

The work contains eighty-two chapters, with errors due to the rush. Based on the author’s experience and knowledge, the book
introduced the Philippines to European readers. The description of the indigenous prehispanic script in Chapter 17, for example, was especially intriguing.

All these islanders are much given to reading and writing. Hardly is there a man, much less a woman who does not read or write in the letters used in the island of Manila, quite different from those of China, Japan, and India. This will be seen from its alphabet . . . three vowels serve as five . . . the consonants are only twelve . . . strangely, they understand and make themselves understood, the reader easily and skillfully supplies the omitted consonants. . . . formerly they used to write from top to bottom putting the first vertical line on the left hand side . . . and continuing on to the right, quite differently from the Chinese and Japanese . . . on bamboos or on palm leaves, using an iron point for a pen.30

Chapter ten includes a delightful scene we all know:

From the very day they are born these islanders are raised in the water. Men and women since childhood swim like fish and are in no need of a bridge to cross rivers. They bathe at all hours at will for pleasure and cleanliness. Not even women who had just given birth stop bathing or fail to immerse a newly born infant in the river or in the cold springs. On coming out of their bath they anoint their head with sesame oil mixed with civet . . . or on other occasions, too, women and children especially, they are much given to anointing their heads for comfort and beauty. Out of modesty, they bathe crouching and almost sitting down, with the water up to their neck and with such extreme care lest they expose themselves, even if no one is around to see them. The usual hour for bathing is sunset. When they stop work they take to the river for a restful and cooling bath. On their way home, they take along for their daily needs a vessel of water.

How well did Fr. Chirino know the things he wrote about? Immediately upon arrival in 1590, he was sent to Balayan, Batangas to substitute for a secular priest during Lent. There he found a plague-stricken village. At that time, both people and missionaries knew little about smallpox and all they did was to make the patient less uncomfortable, serve him what he could eat, and hope for the best or help him die. Chirino's day then began with the Holy Eucharistic sacrifice, followed by catechetical instructions in the church, and then visits to the houses morning and afternoon. This was his apprenticeship in strictly missionary work, as well as an important introduction to the indigenous life of the people.31
He was assigned next in Taytay, Antipolo, to take over from the Franciscans who had been forced to give it up for lack of men. Taytay was on the bank of a tributary flowing down the mountain of Antipolo into Bai Lake. Like the Nile, it regularly overflowed every year, submerging the region from about August to November. People harvested their palay while seated on their banca. The yearly flood forced the people to raise the floor of the chapel, but it was not high enough, for the water reached the altar itself.

In one of these floody mornings, unable to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, Chirino called my four datus and from the choir above showed them the altar, so that they could see . . . that I could not say Mass. "And without celebrating Mass," I told them, "even though unworthy, I cannot live without it, for it is my sustenance giving me strength to serve you for the sake of Christ. I have to go where I can celebrate it, that is, Antipolo. If you want me to return and see you, build for me on the knoll where the dead are now buried, a chapel where I can celebrate Mass for you, with a small room where I can recollect myself."  

It was a challenge and a measure of the man. For the people were scared of the new site, since it was burial ground. But they had learned to love both the Mass and the Jesuit. Lest they lose both, they built a chapel on the hill which had served as a cemetery.

Initially only a few hesitated to build their huts around the new chapel. All of a sudden people rushed to Antipolo, ten or twelve families crowding in one house until their own was finished. Fr. Chirino soon learned the reason. At night, they told him that after they had transferred the cross and the chapel to the hill, the devil kept tormenting them in the old place.

Chirino was assigned next in the place of reeds, Tigbauan, Panay, part of the encomienda of Esteban Rodriguez de Figueroa, whose donation enabled the Jesuits to open Colegio de San José. There Chirino had to improvise for he had no helpers. He opened a school for the sons of the chiefs. Trained in oral and written Spanish, vocal and instrumental music, the rudiments of the liturgy, and Christian doctrine, the young lads soon became his helpers and catechists who taught in their own tongue. The Spaniards in nearby Arévalo (now part of Iloilo City) heard of the school and asked Chirino to open another for their boys. Chirino demurred, inviting them instead to send their sons to Tigbauan.
But the Jesuit missionary could not stay. An unusually large contingent of Jesuit missionaries arrived in Manila, and Superiors had no longer any reason for continuing to refuse the encomenderos' requests for missionaries. Fr. Chirino was assigned to Cebu and Leyte. Then in 1599, after nine years of active missionary work, he was appointed Rector of the Colegio de Manila—to the horror of many Jesuits, for the new appointee was known for his terrible temper. But Chirino was aware of his limitations and strove all his life to overcome his weaknesses. It was during this time that he was elected Procurator of the Philippine Jesuit Mission and had to go to Spain and Rome.

His task in Rome done, Chirino was back in Spain by the end of 1600. With time to spare, he expanded his report for a wider public, adding new information from his own memories and the letters subsequently received after leaving the Philippines. He added new chapters: Chapter 13, about a fire that gutted Manila; Chapter 14, about hunting with fire; Chapter 16, about using fire to cure maladies; and Chapter 25, about catechizing the dumb in Dulag, Leyte. The title was shortened to "Report on the Philippines, the Fathers of the Society of Jesus," instead of the longer "Report on the Philippine Islands and What the Fathers of the Society of Jesus Have Accomplished There," signing it with only his name. The revised manuscript was never printed, and strangely found its way to the Jesuit library in Beijing. One wonders whether it has survived the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

More important than this unpublished manuscript is a much longer work finished in the Philippines in 1610. Purposely Chirino titled it History of the Philippine Province of the Society of Jesus, First Part. His superiors in Rome were hoping to see it published, but it has remained in manuscript form. A copy today is in the Royal Academy of History in Madrid and another in the archives of the Jesuit Province of Tarragona housed in Sant Cugat, Barcelona.

For his Labor evangélica, as indicated, Fr. Colin probably used the autograph text kept in the Jesuit library in Manila. This found its way to the shelves of a second-hand book dealer in Paris, where the Dominican Bishop Martinez Vigil of Oviedo, Spain spotted it. He bought it, and used it for many magazine articles on Philippine indigenous society. The good bishop finally donated the book to Fr. Pablo Pastells.

Fr. Chirino wrote in Chapter 34 that at banquets during funerals, marriages, religious sacrifices, etc., the people drank and ate to excess, "though there was more drinking than eating . . . . On all such
occasions, the door was closed to no one who might want to drink with them—for so they call it, to drink, not to eat."

An intriguing paragraph that will make an ethnologist take note: About 1885, Fr. Francisco Javier Martín Luengo, the Jesuit missionary in Surigao, was marooned by the monsoons on the shore of Lauigan, close to Pujjga Bay in southeastern Mindanao. Three men in loin cloth came down, one with a spear, the other two with their sundang. They proudly identified themselves as Tagacaolos, or “People of the Headwaters.” They were familiar with the “Visayans” anchoring their boats there, which was why they had hiked down to the shore. But they would have no truck with Moros, nor be browbeaten and pay any tribute to them. Instead they would gladly chop off the latter’s heads to avenge any insult inflicted on them. During this friendly exchange, without waiting to be invited, the three joined Fr. Luengo’s crew in their meal and, after finishing, left just as nonchalantly.

Does this have anything to do with the world-famous hospitality of the Filipinos today who will risk running into debt to accommodate guests? In primitive society, when food was uncertain, sharing one’s resources was taken for granted. Neither Chirino nor Martin Luengo were scientists but they now help us to understand our ancestors.

People in Dulag, Fr. Chirino wrote in chapter 62:

... are squeamish to a fault ... offended and horrified by anything unpleasant ... to the sight and smell especially ... they are offended by any foul odor, and are repelled by wounded or mangled bodies. Hence these suffer extreme need of corporal and spiritual help. One day each week was reserved for all the aged and the wounded sick to assemble for instructions. Not all came, since some did not have anyone to bring them ... Once, when a great number of these unfortunates were brought together and the cream of the village was present, the priest took hold of the badly ulcerated feet of a poor slave and kissed them, putting his lips on the wounds. He approached another man, an object of derision, who had not dared to uncover himself for his whole mouth and much of his nose were one big sore, and patted him, conversing with him face to face. The example left such a deep impression on them that, since then, they have showed their sympathy for such unfortunates, helping them in their needs, and shouldering them, if they could not walk to church.

Translating Fr. Chirino’s work in 1969, Ramon Echevarria wrote that the Report was not just a mere reconstruction of our ancestors’
"unsophisticated but by no means primitive society." It is more than that, he added. In the book, we “see the beginnings of an historical transformation” of an indigenous society by a “new faith and a different culture . . . into something we unhesitatingly recognize as Filipino . . . we are in the presence of the beginning of our history.”

Notes

1. A simple list of these American ex-Jesuits would include: Juan Pablo Viscardo y Guzman (1748-98); Andrs Cavo (1759-1802), Mexican; Juan Ignacio Molina (1740-1829) Chilean; Rafael Landivar (1731-93) for Guatemalan; Juan de Velasco (1721-92) Ecuadorian; Francisco Javier Clavijero (1731-87) who wrote Storia antica del Messico (Cesena, 1780-81) 4 volumes, to answer the anti-American bias of such writers as Pauw, Robertson, and Raynal; Francisco Javier Alegre (1729-88), author of Historia de la Provincia de la Compañía de Jesús de Nueva España, finished in 1771, and reedited by Félix Zubilla in 4 volumes 1956-60. For more information, see Miguel Batliorl, S.J., La Cultura Hispano-Italiana de los Jesuitas expulsos. Españoles, Hispanoamericanos, Filipinos, 1767-1848 (Madrid, 1966).—After the restoration of the Jesuit Order in 1814, the Jesuits returned to the Philippines in 1859, and there were plans to write a history of the Jesuits in the Philippines. Fr. José Fernandez Cuevas (1816-64), Mission Superior, started one, but he died after gathering some notes. In 1866, Fr. Pedro Bertran (1822-88), his third successor as Mission Superior, also began writing a history, but he likewise died before finishing it. Fr. Pablo Pastells finally finished a three-volume summary of the work of the Jesuits in the Philippines from 1859-1900. See note 7 below.

2. Jesuit Education in the Philippines. The University of San Ignacio, 1623-1768 (Manila: Manila Observatory, 1940); Jesuit Education in the Philippines. The College of San José of Manila Established August 25, 1601 (Manila: Manila Observatory, 1941); History of the Society of Jesus in the Philippines (Manila: Manila Observatory, 1938) 2 volumes; Pictorial Records and Traces of the Society of Jesus in the Philippine Islands and Guam Prior to 1768 (Manila: Manila Observatory, 1938).

3. De la Costa papers, Philippine Jesuit Province Archives (Loyola House of Studies, Quezon City).

4. Finished in 1941, it remained unpublished because of the Pacific war.

5. Originally published in Madrid in 1667, the Pastells-Retana-Combés edition was published also in Madrid in 1897.

6. Labor evangélica de los Obreros de la Compañía de Jesús en las Islas Filipinas (Madrid, 1663; Barcelona: Imprenta y Litografía de Heinrich y Compañía, 1900-1902), 3 volumes.


8. Hermenegildo Jacas, S.J. (1837-77) was the Director of the Normal School. For a few details, see Pastells, Misión de la Compañía III, 287-88.

9. El Archipiélago Filipino. Colección de datos geográficos, estadísticos, cronológicos y científicos, relativos al mismo, entresacados de anteriores obras u obtenidos con la propia observación y estudio por algunos padres de la misión de la Compañía de Jesús en estas islas.
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10. Director of the Manila Observatory. Literature is sufficient on his career, but to start, see Angel Hidalgo, S.J., El P. José Alguez, S.J., Científico, Inventor y Pacifista (private mimeographed monograph: Manila Observatory, 1974).

11. First printed in folio size in Madrid by the printing establishment of Manuel Fernandez, 1743, it was reedited in 1761 and 1793.

12. First published by the Jesuit printing press in Manila, it was reprinted several times in Mexico, 1765, 1790, 1852; Paris, 1869. Fr. de la Costa writes that the Mexican edition of 1852 was the seventh.


14. Ibid., VIII, ch. 3.

15. Historia de la provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de Jesús; segunda parte, que comprende los progresos de esta provincia desde el año 1616 hasta el de 1716 (Manila: Imprenta de la Compañía de Jesús por D. Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay, 1749).


17. In 1891, José Gutierrez de la Vega, Director of the Civil Administration of the Philippines, founded a society to finance the publication in book form of manuscript sources of Philippine history. The project was similar to an earlier one he had initiated while Governor of Granada and later of Madrid, the fruit of which were the Biblioteca de Escritores Granadinos desde la civilización árabe hasta nuestros días and Biblioteca de Dramáticos Griegos respectively. In the Philippines, he hoped to start a Biblioteca Histórica Filipina which would include all the letters and chronicles of the Christian missions starting from the sixteenth century. Because of the revolution of 1896, the work was stopped and only a few mission histories were published, but not the planned series of royal cédulas, ordinances for good government, geography, etc.


22. See for a brief history of these two institutions, note 2 above.

23. See note 6 above.

24. Colín-Pastells, Labor evangélica I, cap. IV, No.27.


27. See De la Costa, Jesuits, ch. 1–5; Colín-Pastells, Lib. 2, capítulos II–XXI.

28. Pedro Chirino, Relación de las islas Filipinas i de lo que en ellas han trabajado los padres de la Compañía de Jesús (Rome: Esteban Paulino, 1604); reedited in Manila as part of the “Biblioteca de la ‘Revista Católica de Filipinas’” (Manila: Imprenta de Esteban Balbas, 1890).

References

