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## Simbahan, by Jose

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women. Devotion to this image spread and many chapels were built in honor of the Virgin. In 1639, a Chinese stonecutter, Juan Im Bim, built a shrine to the Virgin. Juan was unfortunately killed in a pogrom by the Spaniards against the Chinese during the revolt of 1639–40. Juan's body, dismembered, was hurled into the river, where a beautiful Lady (the Virgin of Caysasay) fished it out and resurrected it. It seems that in the course of time, Juan was identified as Indio, and in the telling of the tale the image of the Virgin rather than Juan, was fished out from the river. As to the origin of Caysasay from the name of the bird *casaycasay*, one must take into account the other names of the town *Casaysay*, found for instance in the Murillo map and other documents.

On the word *sapao*, both Hargrove and Medina fail to mention the earlier dictionary of San Buenaventura (1603), in which aside from giving *sapao* the meaning "a swelling of water . . . covering the land," both authorities define *sapao* as "placing one thing on top of the other, as plates or baskets on top of each other." That same meaning is found in the Noceda and Sanlucar dictionary (1760). This other meaning comes closer to the meaning popularly ascribed: "stacked stones." Has *sapao* disappeared from contemporary Tagalog? Not at all, except that the root often appears in its verb form "nasapawan," (a more archaic spelling would be "nasapaoan"), and is used metaphorically, "to upstage," rather than literally "to cover over," as in "water . . . covering the land."

The comments above do not detract from the book, which makes for a good read, nor do the typos—an obvious slip is page 142, which repeats the text on page 141—in fact, one forgets these and asks "What's next?"—a classic response to a good tale of sleuthing, which is what the book is all about.

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**Simbahan: Church Art in Colonial Philippines 1565–1898.** By Regalado Trota Jose. Makati: Ayala Museum 1991. 251 pages, illus.

*Simbahan* is a *must* reading for lovers of Philippine history, art, architecture; for curators, antique collectors, art educators; but especially for bishops, parish priests, seminarians, pastoral councils and the many custodians of our rich and opulent colonial heritage. Carefully researched and copiously illustrated, this book on colonial church architecture and art comes after three decades of abstinence, during which no national survey of colonial churches was done.

Methodologically, the book departs from the stylistic approach popularized by Coseteng's 1970s book on colonial churches, and Zobel's 1960s book on *santos*. Such a stylistic approach, not founded on careful research in archives and libraries, has created such chimera as Philippine *tequitqui* and *churriqueresque*, or such unhealthy marriages as neoclassical with renaissance in churches built during the early eighteenth century. (Any handbook on architecture will show that revivalist styles, of which neoclassical is one, do not appear in Europe until the 1780s.) The earlier works' pedantic creation of such stylistic terms as the popular style or the classic style to describe Philippine *santos*, shows an ignorance of archival inventories with their own classifications which Jose posits as the more accurate—a classification based on construction: *de bastidor, de gozne, de bulto o cuerpo entero*.

Jose has combed the archives of Manila, which he describes as "a City of Museums and Archives . . . still largely undiscovered" (p. 247). Besides he has also passed a fine-toothed comb through the archives of San Fernando, Pampanga, and other provincial cities and towns, most especially those in Cavite. The result, aside from the chapters of the book, is an illustrated Glossary of Archival Terms (Appendix 1, pp. 189–219). To read it is an education by itself, as parts of churches, ornaments, and appurtenances are listed under their proper names. Reading Appendix 2, "A List of Lumber-Bearing Trees and Forest Products from Archival Sources," is no less an education. Again, fine-combing archival sources and comparing these with printed sources demonstrate how church building was no less technical than building today, since the builder, be he priest, soldier or principal, had to know which woods went where.

In his nine chapters, four appendices, and folio of vintage photographs of church interiors, Jose takes us on a journey of exploration into the often-seen but not well-examined church complex. Chapter 1 sets the stage as it lays out the areas of jurisdiction assigned to the different religious groups. Chapter 2 speaks of the materials used for buildings; 3 of the parts of a church; 4 of the church interior; 5 of the priest's convento; 6 of the *santo*; 7 of engraving; 8 of painting; 9 of the vessels, vestments and appurtenances used in church.

Jose's research has corroborated oral tradition's claim that unlikely ingredients such as egg, molasses, goat's milk and sap were mixed with mortar. Citing the well-documented work of Diaz-Trechuelo, he points to the use of "lime, powdered brick, duck eggs, and bamboo sap" to seal the dome of the Manila cathedral in 1870. Citing the *cargo y data* of 1824 written by Fr. Mariano Gomes, he shows that eggs were included in a list of ingredients for building repairs.

Sobered by the complexity of history that stuns anyone who has worked with archival documents, Jose corrects some misconceptions. Noteworthy among these is the belief that almost all churches in the Philippines were built through "forced labor," or the system known as *polo y servicio*. He

points out that church building was subject to bureaucratic checks, and that *encomenderos* and the King of Spain shared the cost of church building. While there are cases of forced labor as in the re-enforcing of Majayjay church, Jose comments: "It seems, however, that for the majority of churches, towns wholeheartedly contributed labor and material for what they perceived as essentially spiritual service" (p. 29). Besides, he says, "records in a number of parishes show that laborers were paid for their efforts, even from the priest's own pocket." Jose also corrects the simplification that all churches were built by friars. In fact, the Filipino seculars "much maligned by the chroniclers," built such churches as Quiapo, and San Rafael, Bulacan; General Trias and Ternate, Cavite; Rosario, Batangas; Bangued and Tayum, Abra; Paracale, Camarines Norte; Ginatilan and other churches in Western Cebu; Molo, Iloilo; Baybay, Leyte; Cabalian, Southern Leyte (p. 27). He might also add that the bell tower of Hilongos was built by a secular, Fr. Celis-Diaz.

While Jose does much correcting, he does make an occasional slip. The Jesuits arrived in Manila in September 1581, not 1580 as he claims (p. 23); Bacnotan is not in Iloilo. There is no such thing as a community rail; a communion rail, yes! But such errors, possibly typos, might be attributed to editorial oversight.

The postage-size pictures of churches, especially the fortification-church complex of Cuyo, leave the reader wondering if the editors had such a plethora of pictures, that for fear of missing one, they published them to complement Jose's information-filled text, never mind if the reader has to use a lens to appreciate the photograph.

Jose cautions that the book "does not seek to answer questions regarding style . . . To tackle the variety and development of style, a comprehensive survey will have to be undertaken, preceded by a virtual one-to-one linking of archival data with existing structures and objects." I believe that Jose is too cautious in this matter. In his other essays on Rococo, he did make some tentative dating of the emergence of the style in the Islands. And in his essay on the Cavite *retablo* he points to the absence of *arbotantes* (flanges) in the Maragondon side altars as marks of antiquity, i.e., seventeenth century. Art research operates in a hermeneutic circle: the artifact interprets the document and the document the artifact. In the absence of documentation (and this is surely the case in Philippines) the artifact itself is a document. It is quite valid then to make generalizations based on well-documented pieces, benchmarks as it were, and from such pieces create generalizations regarding stylistic development. This is certainly done in archaeology—why not in art studies? The virtual one-on-one linking of data and structure might be an impossibility, and probably needless erudition.

Strange as it may seem, this review begins with the end of the book, but then to understand the book's import one must study the appendices carefully especially 3 and 4. Here it is revealed that the book is written from the perspective of the museologist, who carefully documents each artifact.

Here it is revealed that the book shall come to full fruition when, armed with the book, its glossary and Appendix 3 "A Church Documentation Checklist" and 4 "A Church Art Description Form" someone other than the author shall match his skill and painstaking work and carefully document the church where he worships. Then and only then shall we stem the hemorrhaging of our cultural heritage which can so easily be obliterated by natural calamities and which "many of us (almost always with good intentions) are destroying" (p. 9).

As I write this review I am saddened to hear that the museum of the Pan-ay church, the most exquisite Augustinian church in Capiz, was robbed of its ivory images and jewelry. Sad to say, the museum's acquisitions were not adequately documented. Some of its art pieces may now be in private hands, with some rich folk taking solitary delight in the heritage of a people. If Jose's book can help stop this plague, then the countless journeys he has made would be well rewarded. But then to stop such a plague many more need to match the love that the author has shown for our colonial heritage.

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**The Father and the Maid: Essays on Filipino Life and Letters.** By N.V.M. Gonzalez. Quezon City. University of the Philippines Press, 1990.

N.V.M. Gonzalez's niche in Philippine Literature in English is assured. Edilberto de Jesus says that "the stages of his development as a writer coincide with the stages in the development of the literature itself . . . to trace his growth as an artist . . . is to trace the growth of Philippine Literature in English." Three novels (*The Winds of April*, 1941, *A Season of Grace*, 1956, and *The Bamboo Dancers*, 1957) and five collections of short stories (*Seven Hills Away*, 1947, *Children of the Ash Covered Loam*, 1951, *Look Stranger On This Island Now*, 1963, *Selected Stories*, 1964, and *Mindoro and Beyond*, 1979) have given ample evidence of his human perception, his skill and craftsmanship as a writer, and earned him recognition as the recipient of the *Gawad Pam-bansang Alagad ni Balagtas* (Balagtas National Award) and the Cultural Center of the Philippines 1990 *Gawad Para sa Sining* (Award for Arts) for Literature. Leonard Casper says that "not even in Hemingway has the ritual of everyday detail, the skill of living, been resorted to with greater devotion . . . It has a movement nearly unique . . . De Jesus writes that "The problem is that of understanding one's self; and self knowledge, at least in Gonzalez's fiction, is something every man must strive for."

*The Father and the Maid* is the other side of Gonzalez, the writer—the critic and the man of letters. These six essays on Filipino life and letters were