



INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED JESUIT STUDIES
BOSTON COLLEGE

JESUIT SOURCES

International Symposia on Jesuit Studies

ISSN: 2766-0664

Invisible Histories, Silenced Histories of the Philippines: The *Labor evangélica: Ministerios apostólicos de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús; Segunda parte* (c.1701) by the Jesuit Diego de Oña (1655–1721)

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Source: *Engaging Sources: The Tradition and Future of Collecting History in the Society of Jesus (Proceedings of the Symposium held at Boston College, June 11–13, 2019)*

Edited by: Cristiano Casalini, Emanuele Colombo, and Seth Meehan

ISBN: 978-1-947617-09-4

Published by: Institute of Jesuit Sources

Originally Published: March 1, 2021

<https://doi.org/10.51238/ISJS.2019.13>

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Invisible Histories, Silenced Histories of the Philippines: The
*Labor evangélica: Ministerios apostólicos de los obreros de
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Diego de Oña (1655–1721)

ALEXANDRE COELLO DE LA ROSA

From the early years of his government, Superior General Claudio Acquaviva (in office 1581–1615) favored a tendency toward verticality and centralization of the Jesuit order. In September 1598, he sent a letter to all the provincials of the Society of Jesus to send to Rome complete reports of Jesuit colleges and residences throughout the world. A constant and consistent stream of communication between the center (Rome) and the periphery (missions) fostered a sense of unity in proceeding. Historical writing among Jesuits—the *fábrica de la historia*, in the words of Martín Morales, S.J.—began to develop a number of shared characteristics.¹ As Federico Palomo has argued, writing and printing these histories and epistolary texts became another way of prolonging the apostolic mission, of perpetuating it as a service *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* (for the greater glory of God). Not only was the “body [of the Society] united with its head” kept united through its letters but the diffusion of its apostolic activities was also encouraged, becoming a defining aspect of the idiosyncrasy of the Jesuit order.²

While the “general histories” of the old Society of Jesus, such as those published by Niccolò Orlandini (1554–1606), Francesco Sacchini (1570–1625), Mikołaj Łęczycki (1574–1652), and Joseph de Jouvancy (1643–1719), ordered the facts according to the governments of the generals, the “particular histories” were commissioned by the provincials of each region, who compiled historical information that would provide the basis for the “general histories.” Following the

¹ See Martín Morales, “La fábrica de la historia,” in *Del ars historica a la Monumenta historica: La historia restaurada*, ed. Perla Chinchilla, Alfonso Mendiola, and Martín Morales (México: Universidad Iberoamericana & Pontificia Universidad Javeriana, 2014), 125–56. In Acquaviva’s letters, he describes the Society of Jesus as *fábrica* (translated as a “building” [*edificio*]), but also as a “construction” [*costruzione*]), and refers to “the art of crafting” (*arte del fabricare*); see Silvia Mostaccio, “Debating Obedience in an Early Modern Context,” in *The Acquaviva Project: Claudio Acquaviva’s Generalate (1581–1615) and the Emergence of Modern Catholicism*, ed. Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Flavio Rurale (Chestnut Hill, MA: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 2017), 59–80, here 60). I would like to thank the reviewers for their careful reading of this essay and their constructive remarks.

² Federico Palomo, “Misioneros, libros y cultura escrita,” in *Missions d’évangélisation et circulation des savoirs, XVIé–XVIIIé siècle*, ed. Charlotte de Castelneau-L’Estoile et al. (Madrid: Casa de Velázquez, 2011), 131–50, here 146–47.

instructions established in the *Chronicon Societatis Iesu* (1573–74) for the writing of the Annual Letters (*Formula scribendi* [Prescribed method for writing]) dictated by secretary Juan Alfonso de Polanco (1517–76), these histories—or ecclesiastical chronicles—collected the activities of the Jesuits in each province and were written with an apologetic and propagandistic purpose to strengthen the order’s corporate spirit, serving as a defense against the criticisms of its rivals and detractors.³

In the Philippines, the *Relación de las islas Filipinas* (Report of the Philippine islands [Rome, 1604]), and later, the *Primera parte de la historia de la provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de Jesús* (First part of the history of the Philippine province of the Society of Jesus [Rome, 1610]) by Father Pedro Chirino (1557–1635), recounted the Jesuit history from the constitution of the province in the Philippines to its consolidation as a segregated entity of the province of New Spain in 1605.⁴ Writing nearly four decades after Chirino, the Jesuit Francisco Colin (Colí) (1592–1660) wrote the *Labor evangélica, ministerios apostólicos de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús, fundación y progreso de su provincia en las islas Filipinas: Parte primera* (Evangelical work, apostolic ministries of the members of the Society of Jesus, foundation and progress of their province in the Philippine islands: Part 1 [Madrid, 1663]) to satisfy the wishes of King Philip IV (r.1621–65), who had repeatedly requested information on the Jesuits’ apostolic activities in the Philippines.⁵ Whereas the *Historia* of his predecessor lacked political information, in the *Labor evangélica* “many political and social facts related to the islands are interspersed.”⁶ In any case, the aim of both was to encourage vocations to the Philippines, certifying the Society’s widely known motto that “one world is not enough” (*unus non sufficit orbis*).⁷

The *Labor evangélica* was divided into four books, beginning with the time of Fernão de Magalhães (or Magellan [c.1480–1521]) and ending with the sudden death of Governor Juan de Silva (1616) in the expedition he led against

³ José Luis Betrán, “El bonete y la pluma: La producción impresa de los autores jesuitas españoles durante los siglos XVI y XVII,” in *La Compañía de Jesús y su proyección mediática en el mundo hispánico durante la edad moderna*, ed. José Luis Betrán (Madrid: Sílex, 2010), 23–76, here 61.

⁴ Pedro Chirino, *Història de la província de Filipines de la Companyia de Jesús, 1581–1606*, ed. Jaume Górriz (Barcelona: Pòrtic, 2000 [1610]). José S. Arcilla, S.J. produced a two-volume English translation based on the critical text of Jaume Górriz that was published by the Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2009.

⁵ Eduardo Descalzo Yuste, “Las crónicas oficiales de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas (1581–1768),” *Nuevas de Indias* 1 (2016): 117–48, here 136; <http://revistes.uab.cat/nuevasdeindias/article/view/v1-descalzo-yuste/0> (accessed September 16, 2020).

⁶ Eduardo Descalzo Yuste, “Las crónicas jesuíticas de Filipinas en el siglo XVIII: Pedro Murillo Velarde,” in *De la tierra al cielo: Líneas recientes de investigación en historia moderna*, ed. Elisao Serrano (Zaragoza: Institución “Fernando el Católico,” 2013), 233–48, here 240.

⁷ Pedro F. Campa, “The *Imago primi Saeculi Societatis Iesu* (1640): Devotion, Politics, and the Emblem,” *Imago: Revista de emblemática y cultura visual* 9 (2017): 55–71.

the Dutch in the Moluccas.⁸ The work followed the classic parameters of the chronicles. Over twenty-four chapters, book 1 offered a presentation of the geographical framework of the Philippine islands, their fertility, and nature, as well as the diverse origin of their inhabitants, most of whom came from the southern islands (Sumatra, Borneo, Moluccas, Makassar). Colin's confrère, Chirino, had dealt with these same matters but in a much less orderly manner.⁹ The remaining three books were dedicated to telling the story of the Jesuits in the Philippines. The next twenty-nine chapters of book 2 recounted the deeds of the first Jesuits who arrived in the islands as a mission dependent on New Spain (1581–94). Book 3 consists of thirty-seven chapters dealing with the missionary activities of the Jesuits as a vice-province controlled directly by the Mexican province (1594–1606). The final section, book 4, is made up of thirty chapters that give an account of the Society's history during the first ten years of the independent province of the Philippines (1606–16). The following years were to constitute the content of a second part, which, although projected by Colin, was never actually published, "leaving the missing ones for another volume" (*dejando para otro volumen los [años] que faltaren*).¹⁰

The Jesuit hierarchy recommended union and conformity among the order's members. Thus Colin's *Labor evangélica*, like the *Historia* of his predecessor Chirino, was to form a seventeenth-century Jesuit episteme of the Philippines, that is, a type of knowledge of the "Jesuit body" as a single mental scheme imposed from the "center" on the "peripheries" of the empire. This article aims to present a manuscript that has gone unnoticed by most scholars: Jesuit Diego de Oña's (1655–1721) *Labor evangélica: Ministerios apostólicos de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús; Progresos de las islas Filipinas; Parte segunda* (Evangelical work, apostolic ministries of the members of the Society of Jesus, progress of the Philippine islands: Part 2 [c.1701]). While Colin's *Labor evangélica* was an 820-page work, Oña wrote an official history of the Philippines of some 1,527 numbered pages with annotations in the margins that attempted to continue the work of the same name (Madrid, 1663) of his confrère Colin. Oña's unpublished work was also divided into four parts, each of which is filled with small biographies, or lives, of the most outstanding subjects of the Society in the

⁸ Francisco Colín, S.J., *Labor evangélica, ministerios apostólicos de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús, fundación y progreso de su provincia en las islas Filipinas: Parte primera; Sacada de los manuscritos del padre Pedro Chirino, el primero de la Compañía que pasó de los reinos de España a estas islas, por orden, y a costa, de la Católica, y real majestad* (Madrid: Imprenta de Joseph Fernández de Buendía, 1663).

⁹ Descalzo Yuste, "Las crónicas oficiales de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas (1581–1768)," 133.

¹⁰ Eduardo Descalzo Yuste, "Las crónicas oficiales de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas en el siglo XVII: Pedro Chirino y Francisco Colin," in *Iglesia memorable: Crónicas, historias, escritos [...] a mayor gloria; Siglos XVI–XVIII*, ed. Ángela Atienza López (Madrid: Sílex, 2012), 275–98, here 295.

Philippines. This was typical of the historical writing of the era that sought to edify and promote Jesuit apostolic works.¹¹

Diego de Oña: A Short Biography

According to the provincial catalogs of the Society in the Philippines, Oña was born on October 26, 1655 in Peñafior del Río (Seville).¹² On May 5, 1672, he was admitted as a novice to the Society of Jesus. On May 24, 1678, he was part of a contingent of forty Jesuits, four of whom were coadjutor brothers, arriving in the Philippines in 1679.¹³ In more than forty years of service, he excelled in ministering to the natives, learning the Tagalog language. Until 1681, he was learning theology at Manila College.¹⁴ In 1686, he was in the same college doing the third probation (*in tertia probatione versantur*).¹⁵ Since he was considered a suitable man for all ministries, according to the catalogs, from 1687 we find him in various residences and colleges of the Visayas (Bisayas). In 1687, at the age of thirty-two, he was sent as a parish priest of the Indians to the residence of Silang, belonging to the village of Maragondon in the southwest of the island of Luzon.¹⁶ In 1688, he was transferred to the residence on the island of Marinduque.¹⁷ The following year, he was relocated to St. Joseph's College in Manila as a grammar teacher.¹⁸ He remained there until 1690, when he was again transferred to the col-

¹¹ Diego de Oña, S.J., *Labor evangélica: Ministerios apostólicos de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús; Progresos de las islas Filipinas* (c.1700), ARSI, Philipp. 19-I, fols. 1^r–1527^v.

¹² ARSI, “Secundum catalogus personarum provincia insularum, anno 1701,” in Philipp. 3, Cat. Trien. 1701–55; 1768, fol. 8^r; ARSI, “Primus catalogus personarum anno 1707,” in Philipp. 3, Cat. Trien. 1701–55; 1768, fol. 26^v. Carlos Sommervogel gives incorrect information for his date of birth and birthplace: May 31, 1655, in Peñafior (Castile, Spain) (Carlos Sommervogel, S.J., ed., *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* [Brussels: Oscar Schepens, 1894], 5:1918).

¹³ At that time, Oña was a twenty-three-year-old student philosopher (“Petición del jesuita Francisco Salgado de aprobación de lista,” Archivo General de Indias, Filipinas 82, no. 77, fol. 1).

¹⁴ ARSI, “Catalogus brevis personarum provinciae Philippinarum anno 1680,” fol. 73^r, and “Catalogus brevis personarum provinciae Philippinarum anno 1681,” fol. 78^r, in Philipp. 4, Cat. Brev. 1618–1755 (*complures desunt*).

¹⁵ ARSI, “Catalogus brevis personarum provinciae Philippinarum anno 1686,” in Philipp. 4, Cat. Brev. 1618–1755 (*complures desunt*), fol. 80^r.

¹⁶ ARSI, “Catalogus brevis personarum provinciae Philippinarum anno 1686,” in Philipp. 4, Cat. Brev. 1618–1755 (*complures desunt*), fol. 82^v.

¹⁷ ARSI, “Catalogus brevis personarum provinciae Philippinarum anno 1686,” in Philipp. 4, Cat. Brev. 1618–1755 (*complures desunt*), fol. 84^v. In 1621, the Jesuit order took over the mission of Marinduque and went on to found three villages: Boac, Santa Cruz, and Gasang (Eduardo Descalzo Yuste, “La Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas [1581–1768]: Realidad y representación” [PhD diss., Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2015], 181).

¹⁸ ARSI, “Catalogus brevis personarum provinciae Philippinarum anno 1689,” in Philipp. 4, Cat. Brev. 1618–1755 (*complures desunt*), fol. 86^r.

lege of Manila as a worker for Spaniards and Indians.¹⁹ On September 8, 1692, he was named professed father of four vows, forming part of the select group of greater rank and prestige of the Jesuit order. The exact date on which he was commissioned to write the *Labor evangélica* remains unknown, although it could not have been before his profession of four vows. For this reason, it is very possible that it was between 1692 and 1694 when the Catalan Jesuit Magino Solá, who wrote the presentation (1660) to King Philip IV of Colín's *Labor evangélica*, entrusted him with the continuation of the work of his Catalan confrère.

A Neglected Jesuit Historian

Despite this information being available in the archives of the Roman curia, Oña's life and work has gone unnoticed by most modern and contemporary specialists. We know that the original manuscript of his *Labor evangélica* was in the library of the convent of Santo Domingo, in Manila, and that in 1862 a copy was made that is currently preserved in the Arxiu Històric Provincial de la Companyia de Jesús a Catalunya (AHCJC). Two years later, in 1864, his confrère, José Fernández Cuevas, S.J. (1816–64), whom the Venezuelan provincial José Manuel Jáuregui (1858–64) named first superior of the restored order in the archipelago (1859), left unfinished a *Historia de las islas Filipinas* (History of the Philippine islands), still unpublished, entitled *España y el Catolicismo en el Extremo Oriente, conquista y civilización de las Islas Filipinas por las armas de España, y celo de sus operarios evangélicos, históricamente narrados a la luz de la sana filosofía* (Spain and Catholicism in the Far East, the conquest and civilization of the Philippine islands by the weapons of Spain, and the zeal of its evangelical missionaries, historically narrated in the light of sound philosophy), which covered the years between 1519 and 1703. In Jáuregui's *Historia*, Oña was profusely mentioned along with other historians of the Society of Jesus, such as Colin and Pedro Murillo Velarde y Bravo (1696–1753).²⁰

Curiously, Horacio de la Costa, S.J. (1916–77), the most important Filipino Jesuit of the twentieth century and author of a reference work, *The Jesuits in the Philippines, 1581–1768* (1961), barely refers to Oña in his voluminous book of more than seven hundred pages, despite the fact that Oña had sought to continue one of the most highly reputed histories of the Society's presence in the Far

¹⁹ ARSI, "Catalogus brevis personarum provinciae Philippinarum anno 1689," in Philipp. 4, Cat. Brev. 1618–1755 (*complures desunt*), fol. 88^r.

²⁰ For a short biography of the Jesuit jurist and historian, see Descalzo Yuste, "Las crónicas jesuíticas de Filipinas en el siglo XVIII," 235–37.

East.²¹ One hypothesis could be the constitution of the archive of the Roman curia, which progressively integrated the volumes of the Philippines into its collection. Since Oña's *Labor evangélica* occupies the last volumes (19a–b) of the Philippinae section, it is possible that de la Costa would not have had time to consult them. Although we do not know the exact date of their reception in the Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu (ARSI), we know that the *Labor evangélica* was restored in October 1959.

Between October 15, 1961 and March 31, 1962, after an intense period of academic activity giving lectures and teaching at the Ateneo of Manila, de la Costa momentarily left the Philippines to consult the repositories of Taipei, Hong Kong, Rome, Barcelona, Madrid, Seville, Lisbon, London, and Cambridge, Massachusetts. As he was aiming to obtain archival documentation on the work of the Jesuits in the archipelago, it would have been difficult for him not to have seen Oña's work in the collections of the Roman curia, especially when de la Costa was expressly commissioned to microfilm the Philippines section of the ARSI, in Rome, as well as the collections of the Jesuit archives in Sant Cugat (today's AHCJC).

In the same way, other Jesuit historians, such as Charles O'Neill, S.J. and Joaquín M^a Domínguez, S.J., responsible for the *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús* (Historical dictionary of the Society of Jesus [2001]), also fail to mention this illustrious character. Even historians specialized in the history of the Philippines, such as the Jesuit José Arcilla Solero, member of the Philippine Academy of the Spanish Language and professor at the Ateneo de Manila, have never reported on Oña's existence, despite the fact that in the nineteenth century, the Jesuit Carlos Sommervogel, in his monumental *Bibliothèque de la Compagnie de Jésus* (Library of the Society of Jesus), provided a brief biographical review of the Jesuit priest, noting that he “wrote a Novena [March 4–12] of St. Xavier in Tagalog with a compendium of his life”—it is unclear if it was ever published—as well as a history of the Philippines (presumably the *Labor evangélica*). Oña also wrote the *Life of Doña María Oray*, wife of Don Pedro Manoooc, principal of the island of Bohol, who helped the Spaniards in the conquest of Manila (1571).

In his book *Colonial Counterpoints* (2010), historian David R. M. Irving cited Oña's manuscript to reconstruct intercultural exchanges in Manila through music.²² More recently, Eduardo Descalzo Yuste, author of a doctoral dissertation

²¹ In the sources and references section, de la Costa wrote that “volumes 15–19 [of ARSI Philipp] consists of manuscript copies of Colin's *Labor evangelica* and a continuation of it by Diego de Oña which remains unpublished” (de la Costa, *Jesuits in the Philippines*, 630).

²² David R. M. Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint: Music in Early Modern Manila* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 124.

(Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, 2015), identified Oña's work but dedicated only a footnote to him.²³

What, then, is the importance of this unpublished and largely neglected history for the historiography of the Society of Jesus in the Philippines? And why has the Jesuit Diego de Oña, professed father of four vows and author of one of the least known histories of the Jesuits in the Philippines, fallen into oblivion?

I am of the opinion that Oña's *Historia* was censored due to the political character of his work. This can be seen in the prologue he wrote to the reader in which he claimed to be continuing the *Labor evangélica* of his predecessor, Colin, declaring that he did not want to violate the (moral) truth of what had happened or deviate from Colin's style. However, he dispensed with his predecessors' (Chirino, Colin) geographical and ethnographic descriptions to focus on the confrontations with the Dutch and Chinese, as well as with the Muslim "pirates" who devastated the Visayas Islands from Mindanao and Sulu. This is what Descalzo Yuste—referring to Jesuit priest Murillo Velarde's *Historia de la provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de Jesús: Segunda parte que comprehende los progresos de esta provincia desde el año de 1616 hasta el 1716* (History of the Philippine province of the Society of Jesus: Part 2, which covers the progress of this province from 1616 to 1716 [Manila: Nicolás de la Cruz Bagay, 1749])—has called a "foreign policy" account.²⁴

Officially, Oña's work was rejected by his superiors, so on December 30, 1701 it was decided to relieve him of his duties and postpone the publication *sine die* until a new historian was appointed. Among the reasons given were the work's excessive length, its vague and imprecise style, and poorly developed structure and content. Certainly, the work was not very edifying, despite the number of pages Oña dedicated to presenting the heroic lives of the most distinguished Jesuits. The inclusion of martyrs in chronicles or histories was not only the "collective expression of the history of the order"²⁵ but a political strategy to avoid any suspicion of veneration before their official recognition of holiness.²⁶ Other historiographical texts produced by Jesuits, such as Andrés Pé-

²³ In his doctoral dissertation, Descalzo Yuste dedicates only one footnote to Oña (Descalzo Yuste, "La Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas [1581–1768]," 35). In a more recent article on jurist and historian Pedro Murillo Velarde, Descalzo Yuste fails to mention that the *Segunda parte de la historia de la provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de Jesús* (Manila, 1749) was not the first version that was written to continue the work of Colin but the second, the first being Oña's (Descalzo Yuste, "Las crónicas jesuíticas de Filipinas en el siglo XVIII," 233–48).

²⁴ Descalzo Yuste, "Las crónicas oficiales de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas," 140–41.

²⁵ Descalzo Yuste, "Las crónicas oficiales de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas," 143.

²⁶ The inclusion of the martyrdom of the Augustinian Diego Ortiz (d.1572) in the *Crónica moralizada* (1638) of Father Antonio de la Calancha, O.S.A., recently edited by Andrew Redden, was also intended to avoid the express prohibition of Pope Urban VIII on the publication of the lives of saints or martyrs (Andrew Redden, *The Collapse of Time: The Martyrdom of Diego Ortiz (1571) by Antonio de la Calancha (1638)* [Warsaw: De Gruyter Open, 2016], 77).

rez de Ribas's (1576–1655) *Historia de los triunfos de nuestra santa fe entre gentes las más bárbaras y fieras del orbe* (History of the triumphs of our holy faith amongst the most barbarous and fierce peoples of the New World [Madrid, 1645]), Antonio Ruiz de Montoya's (1585–1652) *Conquista espiritual del Paraguay* (Spiritual conquest of Paraguay [Madrid, 1939]), and Alonso de Ovalle's (1603–51) *Histórica relación del reino de Chile* (A historical relation of the kingdom of Chile [Rome, 1646]), also included the heroic lives of Jesuit missionaries who died on the northern borders of New Spain, southern Chile, and Paraguay.

In 1625 and 1634, Pope Urban VIII (r.1623–44) had issued various decrees explicitly prohibiting the propagation of cults through the publication of the lives (and deaths) of martyrs, or of those men who died in the smell of holiness.²⁷ The Society of Jesus was aware of the decrees and apostolic bulls of Urban VIII, dated between March 13 and October 10, 1625 (and ratified in June 1631, July 1634, and August 1640), in which it was explicitly forbidden to venerate portraits or images of unblessed saints within convents and churches without the permission of the ordinary.²⁸ However, all that was needed to avoid any suspicion was to add a note, or final protest, which in Oña's case warned that the great number of virtuous lives, miracles, and martyrdoms of his confrères who appeared in his work were not intended to influence the judgment of the church or of the supreme pontiff but to give credit to "subjects adorned with superior virtues and favored by God with special cases to encourage this new Christianity."²⁹

Yet Oña's history did not meet the expectations placed upon the Jesuits' evangelical work in the Philippines. More than a glorious history of the heroic activities of the Society of Jesus, the *Labor evangélica* seemed like a story of misfortunes. It was an allegory of failure that attested, on the one hand, to the retreat of Christianity in the Philippines at the hands of the evil forces and enemies of Christ, led by Muslim heretics, Dutch and Japanese tyrants, and, on the other, to the excesses of authority, greed, and disrespect of their Spanish compatriots toward God.

Oña's work contained harsh criticisms of Spanish politics in the Philippines, but the underlying problem may have been that it prioritized the work of the Jesuits in Visayas to the detriment of the mission on the Mariana Islands. Although Oña justified himself on numerous occasions, alluding to his willingness to write a third part that would include the oceanic missions, there is no doubt that this must have upset the new provincial, Luis de Morales (1641–1716). Let us not

²⁷ André Vauchez, *La sainteté en Occident aux dernières siècles du Moyen Âge d'après les procès de canonisation et les documents historiques* (Rome: Ecole Française de Rome, 1988 [1981]), 15–120.

²⁸ Miguel Gotor, *I beati del papa: Santità, Inquisizione e obbedienza in età moderna*, Biblioteca della Rivista di Storia e Letteratura Religiosa 16 (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2002), 285–334.

²⁹ Oña, *Labor evangélica*, fols. 2^r–2^v.

forget that he was one of the first missionaries in the Mariana archipelago.³⁰ He later served as procurator in the court of Madrid and Rome, where he promoted not only the beatification of Father Diego Luis de San Vitores (1627–72), the founder of the Marianas mission and one of the first martyrs of the archipelago, but also the publication of the *Histoire des isles Marianes* (History of the Mariana Islands [Paris, 1700]), of which he may have been the author.³¹ After his appointment as provincial (1699), he continued to look after his beloved Mariana Islands. It is not surprising, then, that Oña's failure to accord the martyrs of the archipelago (1670–84) a major role in the evangelization of the Philippines worked against the publication of his manuscript.

We do not know what Oña's reaction was after Morales refused to publish his work.³² Be that as it may, the truth is that every Jesuit had to accept the superior's final decision as if it were a corpse (*perinde ac cadaver*, in Ignatius of Loyola's words), according to the principle of obedience in thought, will, and action.³³ In 1703, Oña was in the college of Manila as a worker for Spaniards and Indians. Between 1713 and 1717, we find him in the college of Cavite, of which he was named rector on February 2, 1717. He died in Manila on April 6, 1721 after more than forty years of service in the Philippines.

To a great extent, the history of the Society of Jesus has been the history of the image of itself.³⁴ Since its foundation, it has been difficult to divorce "Jesuit" ecclesiastical history from its methodological tradition and exemplary purpose. This is evident in some of the stereotyped paratexts (prologues, proems, protests to the reader) that accompany Oña's *Labor evangelica*. For example, the work was dedicated to "Mary Most Holy [...], King of all mankind, Empress of the Angelic Spirits, Mostly Beloved Wife of the Holy Spirit, Most Pure Mother of the Incarnate Word, and most faithful daughter of the Eternal Father."³⁵ Devotion to the Virgin Mary, inspirer and protector of the Society of Jesus founded by Loyola in the context of the Tridentine reform, became one of the main weapons of combat wielded by the Catholics of Trent against the Lutherans, who were deeply hostile to the worship or supreme veneration—hyperdulia—of Mary. With the

³⁰ Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, *Jesuits at the Margins: Missions and Missionaries in the Marianas (1668–1769)* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 21–80.

³¹ Luis de Morales, S.J., and Charles Le Gobien, S.J., *History of the Marianas*, ed. Alexandre Coello de la Rosa (Mangilao, Guam: Guam University Press, 2016).

³² ARSI, Philipp. Catal. Trien. 3, "Primus catalogus personarum anno 1707," fol. 24^v. The *Catalogus brevis personarum provinciae Philippinarum Societatis Iesu*, dated October 9, 1699, was signed by Father Luis de Morales (ARSI, "Catalogus brevis personarum provinciae Philippinarum anno 1699," Philipp. Catal. Trien. tomo 4, fols. 98^r–100^v).

³³ Mostaccio, "Debating Obedience in an Early Modern Context," 72.

³⁴ Ricardo García Cárcel, "Introducción: Los jesuitas y la memoria histórica," in Betrán, *La Compañía de Jesús*, 15–21, here 17; Descalzo Yuste, "Las crónicas oficiales de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas," 118.

³⁵ Diego de Oña, *Labor evangelicus in Philippinis*, ARSI, Philipp. 19-I.

conquest and evangelization of the Indies, the Marian cult spread considerably among the native populations, adopting different forms depending on the different social and political contexts.³⁶

Oña's *Labor evangélica* is the prototype of an "internal" political history of the Philippine archipelago that the Society of Jesus, associated with the head or political "body" of the Hispanic empire, decided not to make public. The work details, for example, the arrival in 1625 of a Sulu embassy in Manila, headed by the redoubtable Datu Aché.³⁷ According to the text, when he sailed back for Sulu aboard a cargo-loaded vessel in the following year, an armada of *camucones* (Moro pirates who were subject to the king of Burney)³⁸ in twenty-four *joangas* (galleons) was sighted that had just raided and left the villages of Catbalogan and Paranas on the island of Samar (Visayas). The governor ordered a squadron against them, but as Oña points out, the result was not as expected, because

they were so cowardly, both the corporal of the aforementioned squadron as well as the soldiers, who had hardly caught sight of the *camucones* yet turned their backs on them, and so that the cowardice would not be alone, they entered stealing our friendly towns, and loaded with their estates they returned to Manila.³⁹

These accusations were very serious. If it was not lawful, according to the proposals of Francisco de Vitoria (c.1483–1546), to kill the innocent gentiles who lived among the infidel barbarian peoples "directly and intentionally," what would the punishment be for those Christians who plundered their brothers of religion—were they not obliged to give them satisfaction or return their goods according to the damage done?⁴⁰ For the renowned prior of the convent of St. Dominic in the Philippines, Fr. Juan de Paz, O.P. (1622–99), there was no doubt: as the Spaniards were responsible for having started an unjust war, they had to retribute what had been stolen and pay for the damages caused by being against all

³⁶ Jaroslav Pelikan, *Mary through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 199.

³⁷ *Datu*, or *dato*, was a title of high dignity of the sovereign princes and monarchs of the Visayas Islands (*Diccionario de la lengua Española*, Real Academia Española; <https://dle.rae.es/?id=Bs-kzsq5|BsnXzV1> [accessed September 16, 2020]).

³⁸ Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas*, fol. 29^v.

³⁹ "Anduvieron tan cobardes, así el cabo de ella como los soldados, que apenas le dieron vista le volvieron las espaldas, y para que la cobardía no fuese sola, entraron robando nuestros pueblos amigos, y cargados de sus haciendas se volvían a Manila." Oña, *Labor evangélica*, fol. 234^f. My translation.

⁴⁰ Francisco de Vitoria, *Relecciones teológicas*, ed. Jaime Torrubiano Ripoll (Madrid: Librería Religiosa Hernández, 1917), 117–18. See also Francisco Suárez, *De bello*, §4, cited in Luciano Pereña Vicente, *Teoría de la guerra en Francisco Suárez* (Madrid: CSIC, 1954 [1621]), 2:139; Alonso de la Peña Montenegro, *Itinerario para párrocos de indios* (Madrid: CSIC, 1995 [1668]), 1:book 2, 592–96.

justice, even if they were unfaithful peoples.⁴¹ But there was more. On their return to their homeland, those “brave soldiers,” as Oña ironically defined them without bothering to distinguish them from the *camucones*, intercepted the Sulus who were returning “with what they had asked for and a lot of property from the things they had sold. They were not ready to fight, and therefore unsuspecting.”⁴² Not only did the Spanish squadron confiscate the vessel and cargo but they also made prisoners of the Sulus, including Datu Ache, bringing all of them to Manila.⁴³

There is no need to dwell too much on the explosive content of these statements. For Paz, the actions of the Spanish could not be called “just war” (*ius belli*) as they amounted to nothing more than robbery and murder. Christians had to seek peace and could only resort to offensive or invasive war in cases of extreme need. Likewise, no “alcalde mayor” (mayors) had the authority to declare a just war, because only the sovereign, or the governor, could do so.⁴⁴ Fighting for justice, as a universal principle of Christian philosophy, should be the leitmotif of the Christian king. The “just war” was to be interpreted as the instrument to achieve a just and honest end, which would be nothing other than the defense of the public good.⁴⁵ As Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) stated: “No war can be just if there is no legitimate and necessary cause. The conclusion is certain and evident. Now, this just cause and sufficient reason for war is a serious offense already accomplished that cannot be avenged, nor repaired in any other way.”⁴⁶

If according to the most reputable theologians and canonists, such as the Dominicans Vitoria, Paz, or the Jesuit Suárez, public insult or affront against the reputation or honor of a prince or Christian republic was a motive for “just war,” the Spaniards had given more than enough motives to the natives of Mindanao and Sulu to declare one, thus disrupting the evangelical work of the church in the southern Philippines.⁴⁷ It was not only the Spaniards who could justify their conquests by appealing to the common good but also the Muslims, whose ambassadors had been vexed, outraged, and robbed by those with whom they had come to parliament. According to Suárez, the war could not be just for the two

⁴¹ Juan de Paz, O.P., *Consultas y resoluciones varias teológicas y jurídicas, regulares y morales* (Seville: Thomas López de Haro, 1687), cited in Oscar Cruz Barney, *Una visión indiana de la justicia de la guerra* (México City: UNAM, 2014), 87.

⁴² Oña, *Labor evangélica*, fol. 234^r.

⁴³ Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Philippines University Press, 1999), 140–41.

⁴⁴ Paz, *Consultas y resoluciones varias*, cited in Cruz Barney, *Una visión indiana de la justicia de la guerra*, 80.

⁴⁵ Paz, *Consultas y resoluciones varias*, cited in Cruz Barney, *Una visión indiana de la justicia de la guerra*, 85.

⁴⁶ “Ninguna guerra puede ser justa si no hay una causa legítima y necesaria. La conclusión es cierta y evidente. Ahora, esta causa justa y suficiente razón de guerra es una grave injuria ya consumada que no puede ser vengada, ni reparada de otra manera.” Suárez, *De bello*, §4, 2:127. My translation.

⁴⁷ Vitoria, *Relecciones teológicas*, 99–100.

belligerents, from which it follows that if one of them (in this case, the Muslims) felt insulted by the Christians, they could legitimately declare a “just war” against the Christians.⁴⁸ For this reason, it was legitimate to suppose that in 1627, when a Sulu fleet composed of more than thirty *caracoas* and about two thousand men led by Rajah Bongsu attacked the new Spanish shipyard in the province of Camarines, he was not interested in demanding fair compensation but rather in punishing the Spanish aggressors and avenging the robbery and humiliation previously caused.⁴⁹

In contrast to Oña, Murillo Velarde’s *Historia* provided a different reading. In his opinion:

Among many others, who saw with pity the destruction of the barbarians in Catbalogan, there were five Spaniards, who, not being able to suffer the sacrilegious horrible destruction of the sacred images, burning in zeal for the honor of God, embarked on a small boat to follow the enemy, offering to God the spoils they took. A few days later, they found the army, and the *camucones* thought that these Spaniards were spies for some army, which was following them, and leaving three *joangas*, for the bait of the army, the rest of the twenty-one left in a hurry: the Spaniards attacked the three *joangas*, killed several Moors, and took rich spoils—but seeing that the Moors returned to them, they withdrew in time, and in fulfillment of their promise, and in recognition of their triumph, they made a rich crown to the Blessed Virgin.⁵⁰

Indeed, according to Murillo Velarde, the Spaniards did not flee in terror but bravely confronted the *camucones*. Not only did they do their duty but the captured spoils were offered to God and the Virgin Mary. There was no assault on Christian populations or on any embassy from Sulu. On the contrary, it was a “strategic retreat” that allowed them to return to Manila alive. It is clear that, unlike the official histories, Oña’s work reflected Jesuits’ uneasiness at the behavior

⁴⁸ Pereña Vicente, *Teoría de la guerra en Francisco Suárez*, 2:271.

⁴⁹ Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 141.

⁵⁰ “Entre otros muchos, que veían con lástima el destrozo de los bárbaros en Catbalogan, había cinco españoles, que no pudiendo sufrir el sacrilego horrible destrozo de las sagradas imágenes, encendidos en celo de la honra de Dios, se embarcaron en un pequeño baroto, para seguir al enemigo, ofreciendo a Dios los despojos que cogiesen. A pocos días encontraron la armada, los camucones discurrieron que aquellos españoles eran espías de alguna armada, que los iba siguiendo, y dejando tres joangas [galeotas, o galeras], para cebo de la armada, se fue el resto de las veintiuna a todo trapo: acometieron a las tres joangas los españoles, mataron varios moros, y cogieron ricos despojos: pero viendo que los moros volvían sobre ellos, se retiraron con tiempo, y en cumplimiento de la promesa, y en reconocimiento del triunfo hicieron una rica corona a la Santísima Virgen.” Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas*, fol. 30^v. My translation.

of some Spaniards, whose “mistakes have destroyed [...] what so many have done in the promulgation and fertilization of our Santa Fe.”⁵¹

Notwithstanding the above, it is more than likely that the provincial of the Society of Jesus censored Oña’s work for reasons that go beyond the strictly formal ones. Murillo Velarde, who fifty years later would publish the *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús* (History of the Philippine province of the Society of Jesus [Manila, 1749]), did not forget to include timely information about the conquest and evangelization of the Marianas.

Conclusion

In recent years, the so-called “confessional paradigm,” coined by German historians Ernst Walter Zeeden, Heinz Schilling, and Wolfgang Reinhard, made it possible to situate phenomena of a religious nature beyond their strictly ecclesiastical or spiritual logics, and to analyze and interpret them according to the political, social, and cultural contexts in which they took place.⁵² In this renewal, historiographic sources have played a fundamental role in (re)shaping the counter-reformist universe. But it is not only those considered as “official histories,” that is, the published histories, but those others that were “silenced, censored or discarded,” like Oña’s *Labor evangélica*, that provide us with a complementary, and sometimes contradictory, picture of the implementation of confessional policies in the Americas and the Philippines. In this sense, there are treasure troves of information such as Colin’s *India sacra*, or Francisco Combés’s (1620–65) works, notably his *Relación de las islas Filipinas* (Report of the Philippine islands), the *Circunstancias de la buena fortuna destas islas* (Circumstances of the good fortune of these islands), and the *Gobernador deseado* (Desired governor), devoted to Governor Sabiniano Manrique de Lara (1603–83), that have been undervalued (or completely marginalized) in existing work on the Jesuits in the Philippines.

As John W. O’Malley points out, “the Jesuits were compulsive and intelligent record keepers.”⁵³ Thanks to this bureaucratic impetus, the writing of a new

⁵¹ Oña, *Labor evangélica*, fol. 235^r.

⁵² Cited in Federico Palomo, “Confesionalización,” in *Identidades y fronteras culturales en el mundo ibérico en la Edad Moderna*, ed. José Luis Betrán, Bernat Hernández, and Doris Moreno (Bellaterra: Publicacions de la UAB, 2016), 69–90, here 71. For a critical analysis of the concept of confessionalization, see Ute Lotz-Heumann, “Confessionalization,” in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research*, ed. David M. Whitford (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University, 2008), 136–59.

⁵³ John W. O’Malley, S.J., “Past, Present, and Future of Jesuit Studies: Historiographical Thoughts,” *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 5, no. 4 (2018): 501–10, here 508. See also O’Malley, “The Historiography of the Society of Jesus: Where Does It Stand Today?,” in *The Jesuits Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O’Malley et al. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1999), 1:3–36.

history of the Jesuits in the Philippines should be based on the existence of new sources that do not necessarily require exhaustiveness, but first and foremost the editing and analysis of those sources. Oña's unpublished work, the *Labor evangélica*, the original of which is located in the central archives in Rome, with a handwritten copy in the provincial repository in Barcelona, obliges us to rethink the role that official histories have played in the creation of the collective memory of the Ignatian order in general, and in particular, of its role—socio-political, religious—in the Philippine islands. To build the institutional identity of the Society of Jesus, Superior General Acquaviva imposed an official narrative with an apologetic and propagandistic purpose that would strengthen the order's corporate spirit.⁵⁴ The archive that was organized in the Roman curia contains many histories that never saw the light of day. In the words of Morales:

[That body of the repository] is the place of that first gesture in the writing of history, that of “setting aside,” separating, classifying, giving voice to something and someone but at the same time surrendering to oblivion and silence. A place of secrecy and manifestation, a place where it is given and denied.⁵⁵

Ultimately, there were several reasons for Oña's censorship, the first of which was his excessive pessimism at the reality in which he had to live. In the third book of his *Labor evangélica*, for example, Oña described with excessive drama the “field of misfortunes” that characterized the evangelizing activity of the Society of Jesus in the Philippines.⁵⁶ The second reason concerns the style in which it was written and the way it was structured. It was too “baroque” for the readers of the new century. The organization of the contents should have followed the guidelines of *Historia Societatis Iesu* (1614–1750), especially the fifth volume, written by Joseph de Jouvancy (1643–1719), which calls for “synopses, summaries, and glosses so that one can quickly see ‘all the things’ that are narrated.”⁵⁷

For these reasons, the continuation of Colin's *Labor evangélica* was entrusted to his confrère, Murillo Velarde, in order to temper the tone of his predecessor.⁵⁸ Murillo Velarde's *Historia* faithfully followed the official guide-

⁵⁴ Pierre-Antoine Fabre and Flavio Rurale, “How to Write the History of a Generalate? Preliminary Considerations concerning Method,” in Fabre and Rurale, *Acquaviva Project*, 1–10, here 1–8.

⁵⁵ “Ese cuerpo del repositorio] es lugar de aquel gesto primero de la escritura de la historia, el de “apartar”, separar, clasificar, dar voz a algo y a alguien pero a la vez entregar al olvido y al silencio. Lugar del secreto y de la manifestación, sitio en el que se da y en el que se niega.” Morales, “La fábrica de la historia,” 150. My translation.

⁵⁶ Oña, *Labor evangélica*, fol. 1142^r.

⁵⁷ Morales, “La fábrica de la historia,” 138.

⁵⁸ During the first third of the twentieth century, Father William Charles Repetti (1884–96) wrote a history of the early years of the Society of Jesus in the Philippines, *The History of the Society of*

lines, putting the narrative at the service of the construction of the identity that the Society wanted to elaborate for itself. According to contemporary Jesuit historians, his work represented “by its style and content, one of the best works in the Philippines of the eighteenth century.”⁵⁹ Unlike Oña, Murillo Velarde was much less rhetorical and more concise, avoiding involving the Society of Jesus in the many conflicts and disagreements that existed between civil and ecclesiastical power.

However, the structure and content of his *Historia*, published in Manila in 1749, was a corrected and amended synthesis of Oña’s work. Therefore, it cannot be affirmed, as Descalzo Yuste maintains, that the official history of the Society of Jesus in the Philippines did not have a chronicler “as Pedro Chirino and Francisco Colin had been until almost a century later, in the figure of Pedro Murillo Velarde.”⁶⁰

At the end of the seventeenth century, the Jesuits’ disillusionment with the Spanish authorities was more than evident. Oña could not help but denounce the inability of Manila’s rulers to control the raids (*razzias*) of the Moors, who became the real threat to Christian expansionism in the Philippines. Nor could he help but extol the role of the Virgin Mary as savior and redeemer. On the other hand, Murillo Velarde, aware of the doctrinal confusion to which the iconography of the “Most Holy Mother of Light” alluded, avoided making any reference to her cult.⁶¹ What they both agreed on was that the islands of Mindanao, Sulu, and the Marianas (included by Murillo Velarde in book 4) should be contemplated as a space for the present and future missionary projection of the Society of Jesus; a perception that lasted until the nineteenth century, when the Society of Jesus, dissolved in 1773 by Pope Clement XIV (r.1769–74) and restored in 1859 in the Philippines, once again dealt with the postponed project of evangelizing Mindanao.⁶²

Jesus in the Philippines (1581–1605) (Manila, 1938), which was never published. De la Costa received the original for the elaboration of his work (María Aguilera Fernández, “La reimplantación de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas: De la restauración a la Revolución filipina [1815–1898]” [PhD diss., UAB, 2018], 12).

⁵⁹ José Arcilla Solero, S.J., “Los cronistas jesuitas de Filipinas,” in *España y el Pacífico: Legazpi*, ed. Leoncio Cabrero Fernández (Madrid: AECI–AEPP, 1989), 2:389.

⁶⁰ Descalzo Yuste, “Las crónicas oficiales de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas,” 136. See also the forthcoming first Spanish edition of Diego de Oña, S.J., *Labor evangélica: Segunda parte* (Manila, c.1701), ed. Alexandre Coello and Verónica Peña (Madrid: Sílex, 2020).

⁶¹ For an analysis of the cult of the Virgin of the Light, see Enrique Giménez, “La devoción a la Madre Santísima de la Luz: Un aspecto de la represión del jesuitismo en la España de Carlos III,” *Revista de historia moderna* 15 (1996): 213–31.

⁶² Fernández, “La reimplantación de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas.”