

## **BIBLIOGRAPHIC SOURCES AND REGIONAL HISTORY: NEEDS AND RESOURCES**

**Marcelino A. Foronda, Jr.**

It was the late Father Horacio de la Costa who once remarked that Philippine historiography is relatively poor in regional and municipal histories, and implied that we may never achieve a fuller understanding of the Philippines if this lacunae remains unfilled.<sup>1</sup> In the past, however, regional history "has not merited the attention not to say the dedication and efforts of our more notable historians, relegated as it was by and large to souvenir programs of town fiestas and athletic meets, or to volumes commemorating the anniversaries of some city, town or province."<sup>2</sup>

That regional history, compared to general or universal history, is quite limited in scope, and is thus presumably addressed to a limited audience partially explains this sad state of Philippine historiography. In more practical terms, it did not pay, as it still does not pay, to write local or regional history, compared, for instance, to writing on Rizal, as many textbook writers will affirm.

Nevertheless, a few dedicated scholars still took it upon themselves to do research and the actual writing of regional history; a few at personal sacrifice on their part; one, the late Dr. Domingo Abella, spending his own personal funds in his researches on the Bicol region in the great archives of the world.<sup>3</sup>

It is thus that the past few years have seen the publication of books and monographs on our towns, provinces and regions some of which are distinct contributions to Philippine historiography; a few could serve as models for studies of other towns, provinces and regions.<sup>4</sup>

Actually, however, regional history is not an altogether new field in Philippine historiography. Its beginnings can be traced towards the late 1500's when records of the establishment of our towns had already existed. By the 1600's and the 1700's Spanish friars, writing reports of their missionary activities, included accounts of towns and settlements which they had founded within their jurisdiction. In a few instances, like the accounts of de la Concepción, Aduarte, Chirino and Combés,<sup>5</sup>

not only the establishment of these early towns but also pre-colonial religions, customs, and traditions are narrated. But these accounts, written as they were by non-Filipinos who had different cultural orientations and context, were not lacking in biases and prejudices.<sup>6</sup>

It would only be towards practically the end of Spanish colonial rule, however, that the first book-length work in local history written by a Filipino, the *Historia de Ilocos* by Isabelo de los Reyes was published in 1890. But de los Reyes, who had many interests other than regional history, was not always exacting in his scholarship, and therefore this book, while it definitely paved the way for Filipino scholarship in local history, must be used with caution.<sup>7</sup>

Other works on the history of our towns and provinces have been written, some of them before the second world war, and, as a result of the resurgence of nationalism, others were written during the past few years. But practically all these works were written by individuals who call themselves *aficionados* of history and this, among other reasons, might possibly be why their works never had an impact on Philippine historical scholarship.<sup>8</sup>

In any case, crucial to the research and the writing of regional history would be the use of bibliographical aids – the different indices, guides, inventories, checklists, catalogues, bibliographies in locating primary documents. While some of these aids already exist – to name a few taken at random, bibliographies on Mindanao by Retana<sup>9</sup> and Tiamson,<sup>10</sup> on Ifugao by Conklin,<sup>11</sup> on the Ilocos by Foronda,<sup>12</sup> and on the Cordillera by Scott<sup>13</sup> – similar bibliographies on other regions of the country still have to be compiled and published.

But these bibliographies, some of which are now dated, can only provide good starting points for the study of our regions. Now awaiting the selfless dedication and vigorous persistence of our bibliographers and historians are the various parish archives and recorded actions of our municipalities and towns spread throughout the whole archipelago. It need not be mentioned here, of course, that the documents which these parish and town archives contain must first be investigated and studied before bibliographical aids could be prepared.

The importance of these documents in our study of our regions can never be overemphasized. They are, in the first place, primary sources and if used in historical narratives will provide the many tiny stones that will help form the bigger mosaic that is the Philippine historical experience.

My personal study of some of our parish records in the Ilocos has yielded knowledge on the movements of individuals from one town to another, from one province to another, indeed from the Ilocos region to Pangasinan, the Cagayan Valley and Zambales. They also contain the genealogy (birth, marriage and death) of families, records of pestilences, draughts and invasion of fields by locusts and other such calamities, and local revolts. I am certain that a study of documents found in parish and municipal archives in other parts of the country will yield similar information on these regions. To my knowledge, however, bibliographies of documents found in parish and municipal archives have still to be published so that one who ventures into this field has to engage in a lot of spade-work which, come to think of it, will even be more interesting and challenging.

Equally important — more so, inasmuch as they relate to our Spanish colonial past — are the different archives of the Dominican, Franciscan, Augustinian, Recollect and Jesuit missionaries. These missionaries established most of our early towns, many of which started as *visitas*. Records of these towns are, therefore, found in reports of the early missionaries which are presumably to be found in these orders' archives. To my knowledge, there is no single bibliography of the holdings of these religious archives relating to regional history exist.

In fact, aside from the rich Dominican collection of original documents housed in their provincial archives in Quezon City, and the microfilm collection of original documents — some of which had been edited before they were microfilmed — in the University of Santo Tomás Library Microfilm Collection, most original documents from the Augustinian, Franciscan, Jesuit and Recollect archives are no longer found in the country. It is reported that most of these documents have been irretrievably lost during the war, others, one is told, had been transferred before the Second World War, if they had not been sent originally to these orders' archives "for safekeeping" in Spain. Lately, there has been the persistent rumor, although unverified by me, that many of the documents originally deposited in the Dominican provincial and the U.S.T. archives have been sent to Spain not too long ago.

To my knowledge, except for Father Isacio R. Rodríguez's monumental multi-volumed bibliography of the Augustinians in the Philippines,<sup>14</sup> which contains many items on the regional history of the areas where the Augustinians used to labor, items which are found in the Augustinian motherhouse in Valladolid, Spain, no bibliography has

been published of the holdings of the Franciscan, Jesuit and Recollect archives here, if they still exist, and in Spain, where these documents do exist.<sup>15</sup>

But the Filipino historian has to go to Spain if he is to avail himself of the rich primary sources that the Spanish archives contain. Doing research in Spain is, of course, quite appealing, but for most of us it will unfortunately remain a somewhat impossible dream. Fortunately, however, we can always avail ourselves of the more readily accessible Philippine National Archives, which still remains the richest single repository of primary documents on our regional history.<sup>16</sup>

Of the estimated 11 million documents found in our National Archives many refer to the various regions of the country. None of these documents were used by Blair and Robertson in their monumental work, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898*; neither, for that matter, are they found in any other published collection of documents.<sup>17</sup>

While these documents encompass the entire Spanish period of 1565-1898, the overwhelming emphasis in terms of quantity is the nineteenth century and the late eighteenth century.<sup>18</sup>

As might be expected, considering the vast magnitude of its holdings and, furthermore, considering the fact that it has only been, in more recent years, during the incumbency of the late Dr. Domingo Abella as director, that the Philippine National Archives has been better housed and better organized than it used to be, no bibliography of its holdings exist. Only a small portion of this vast collection has been catalogued, and a card index has been prepared. This, the interested scholar can use as a preliminary finding guide, but he will still have to literally wade through hundreds of uncatalogued, although tentatively identified, bundles relating to the region he is interested in.

Initially, the historian shall be awed by the magnitude of materials available to him. The *protócolos* (i.e., the deeds of sale of land in the various regions) that relate to the Ilocos, for instance, are contained in 163 bundles, each bundle having an average of 1,500 pages, and these refer to the provinces of Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte alone!

The interested scholar in Philippine regional history may also want to go over the bundles of *terrenos* (i.e., titles to hereditary lands, des-

criptions of land ownership and boundaries), the *padrón general de Chinos* (yearly census taken noting for each Chinese his name, age, religion, place of origin in China, place of residence in the Philippines, and occupation); the *quintas* (compulsory military service in the Spanish army of Filipinos and mestizos); the bundles of *cabezas de barangay* (administrative heads of different localities of every town in the provinces who held their offices by appointment); the bundles on *instituciones docentes* (partial records of teachers, their reappointment, tenure, administration and curriculum of schools, students and scholarships given); the bundles of *erecciones de pueblos* (foundation of towns, barrios and sitios by royal decree); the bundles on the *elección de gobernadorcillos* (elections of town mayors and municipal officials in charge of peace and order, of rice, fields, and local police); the bundles of *estadística* (i.e. which contains census of landholdings, also who was born, who married whom, deaths and even a census of animals); and the bundles on the *Sangleyas de provincias* (which involve circulars, passports, voluminous correspondences among government agencies and the lists of arrivals and departure of the Chinese in the various regions).

Other documents referring to the different aspects of the history of the various regions are the bundles of *administración central de impuestos* (taxes paid by inhabitants), — bundles of *prestación personal* (personal loans), bundles of *contribución industrial* (assessment of taxes imposed on merchants), bundles of *registradores de la propiedad* (register of property), and bundles of *fincas urbanas* (real estate in urban areas).

Other areas of regional history may be gleaned from the bundles containing the *roales órdenes* (appointments of government officials, and resignations of officials, the creation of agricultural stations, grant of loyal honors to leading citizens); the *presidios* (criminal cases against citizens and the nature of their crime, and prison terms imposed on them); the *tributos* and the *mapas generales de tributos* (the number of taxpayers and amount paid in taxes), the *padrones de polistas* (summaries of personal taxes paid by provinces); the *alcaldia mayor* (establishment of new towns, application for minor provincial government posts as, for instance, that of the *vacunador*, investigation of cases against citizens (i.e., like the sale of contraband tobacco), the appointment of temporary teachers in the schools and towns; *tribunal de cuentos* (immigration to other places); *guardia civiles* (reports of arrests of

citizens; of events of calamities, like fire, and census of certain localities); the *expediente gubernativo* (cases presented against local officials, judicial proceedings, and the auctioning of the right to labor in the local projects like construction of roads and public building).

The *patronatos* refer to the provisions for the education of youth in towns by provinces, circulars from ecclesiastical officials for the appointment of temporary parish priests, reports of *cabezas de barangay* regarding the state of their towns, the local church and the inhabitants; the establishment of new missions and new schools, cases presented by one guild against another (i.e., the guild of natives against the guild of Chinese mestizos, for instance). Earlier aspects of regional history might be gleaned from the *cedularios* which, as in the case of the Ilocos, date back to late 16th century. Documents contained in bundles on *rebelliones*, *sublevaciones* and *sediciones* refer to the various uprisings and revolts in the various regions, their causes, their leaders, and the outcomes of these uprisings.

No less interesting for the varied data that they contain are the periodic *memorias* of the provincial governors of the various provinces. Among others, these *memorias* refer to the geographical description of the province, its ports, rivers, its outstanding ecological characteristics, a brief description of each town, including the population, the main products and local events of each; agricultural statistics, and suggestions for the cultivation of certain products; the price of prime commodities for each given year; the state of public buildings, statistics on education, including the statistics of pupils in attendance in the schools, social practices like the fiestas, and the administrative organization of the province.

To be sure, much more work in Philippine regional and local history awaits the dedication of our serious historians, much more than say, for instance, writing endless articles and books on Rizal. This is not to minimize the importance of efforts of our scholarly and devoted Rizalists but to say that there are other important aspects of Philippine historiography which should also merit the dedication of equally scholarly and devoted Philippine historians.

Even with the appalling lack of bibliographies, indices, guides, inventories, checklists, catalogues and other such finding guides to documents, either in the archives of religious orders, in parish and municipal archives or in the Philippine National Archives, the local or regional historian will still have to go to the original sources in search of

the somewhat elusive primary documents which he will need.

As is true with any historical writing, the seriousness of the historian's work in local or regional history, its validity as meaningful and scholarly research will depend greatly upon the discovery, use and interpretation of these primary documents. And his peers in the profession will judge the historian's achievement as historian, not upon the number of textbooks he has written, but upon his original contribution to historical knowledge.

Exploring the uncharted seas of our uncatalogued and unclassified documents in the various archives in a relentless search of primary sources will mean more sweat, patience, persistence and tears. To the serious historian, however, this will mean much more than conveniently harping on, and continuously reworking the same historical theme, with nothing but secondary sources as basis, to threadbare proportions.

## NOTES

1. Marcelino A. Foronda, Jr., *Some Notes on Philippine Historiography*. (Manila: United Publishing Co.), p. 12.

2. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

3. Abella's *Bikol Annals a Collection of Vignettes of Philippine History*, Vol. I (Manila, 1954) is the result of many years of patient and painstaking research in Philippine, Spanish and Roman archives.

4. See also, aside from Abella's book, Marcelino A. Foronda, Jr. and Juan A. Foronda, *Samtoy Essays on Iloko History and Culture*. (Manila: United Publishing Co., Inc., 1972); Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1973); John A. Larkin, *The Pampangans* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1972); Rosario Mendoza Cortes, *Pangasinan, 1572-1800* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1974) and William Henry Scott, *The Discovery of the Igorots; Spanish Contacts with the Pagans of Northern Luzon* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, c1974), among others. These books, could serve as models for writing the history of the other regions.

5. See Franciscan Juan de la Concepcion's, *Historia General de Filipinas, etc.* (Manila, 1788-92), 14 vols.; the Dominican Diego Aduarte's *Historia de la Provincia del Sancto Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, etc.* (Manila, 1640) and the Jesuit Pedro Chirino's *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas y de lo que han trabajado los Padres de la Campania de Jesus* (Roma, 1604). See also Jesuit Francisco Combes's *Historia de las Islas de Mindanao, lolo y sus adyacentes, progressos de la religion, y armas catolicas* (Madrid, 1667).

6. Foronda, *Some Notes on Philippine Historiography*, p. 13.
7. *Loc. cit.*
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.
9. See Wenceslao E. Retana, *Bibliografía de Mindanao (Epítome)*. (Madrid: Viuda de M. Minuesa de los Ríos, 1894).
10. See Alfredo T. Tiamson, *Mindanao-Sulu Bibliography; a Preliminary Survey* (Davao City: Ateneo de Davao, 1970). This bibliography also contains Retana's bibliography, cited above.
11. See Harold C. Conklin, *Ifugao Bibliography* (New Haven: Yale University, 1968).
12. See Marcelino A. Foronda, Jr., *An Iloko Bibliography (A Listing of Iloko Materials in the Foronda Private Collection)*. (Manila: De La Salle College Library, 1972).
13. See William Henry Scott, *Cordillero Bibliography* (Sagada, Mountain Province: Igorot Study Center, 1970).
14. See Isacio R. Rodriguez, *Historia de la Provincial Agustiniiana del Smo. Nombre de Jesus de Filipinas*, a multi-volumed work published in the Philippines and Spain. The first volume was published in Manila in 1965, the ninth volume published in Valladolid, Spain in 1974. The first four volumes constitute the "bibliografía" of the series.
15. The archive and library collections of the Augustinians in Valladolid and that of the Franciscans in Pastrana are described, and those of the Recollects in Zaragoza, of the Dominicans in Ocaña and Avila, and of the Jesuits in San Cugat, are mentioned in passing by Abella in his article, "*Filipiniana Treasures in Repositories Abroad*" in *Preliminary Inventory of Primary Sources on the History of the Philippines in Archives and Libraries Abroad, published by the National Archives (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1972), See pp. 8-10.*  
Abella believes that the Pastrana and Valladolid manuscript collections of the Franciscans and the Augustinians would rate second only to that of the Archive General de Indias in Sevilla, which is the richest single repository in Spain of Philippine documents, including thousands on regional history. For a description of the holdings of the Sevilla archives, see Abella's work just cited, pp. 2-4.
16. For a description of the holdings of the Philippine National Archives on regional history, specifically on the history of the Ilocos, see my article, "Sources of Philippine Local History in the Philippine National Archives," *Philippine Historical Review*, Vol. VII, (1974), pp-234-239.
17. This and the subsequent paragraphs are a somewhat revised version of portions of my article, cited in note 16. *Ibid.*, p. 237.
18. *Loc. cit.*