

## The Early Spanish Period in the Marianas, 1668-1698: Eight Theses

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The Spanish entry into the Marianas in the late 1600s marked the beginning of one era—that of intense Western contact in the Pacific—but the end of Spanish colonial expansion and the apparatus that supported it. Perhaps this is why the period has been so poorly understood by Pacific historians. Then, too, this pivotal period has always been clouded by what is sometimes called the “Black Legend,” the attribution to Spanish colonizers of deadly deeds brought on by the worst of motives. Nearly everyone who has written about it has presented the Marianas as the classic instance of the “fatal impact” of the West upon a defenseless island society. The enormous depopulation of the islands, supposedly as a result of what have been called the “Spanish-Chamorro Wars,” and the cultural suppression that accompanied Spanish rule were seen as the natural outgrowth of the religious fanaticism of the Spanish missionaries and their supporters. The Chamorro inhabitants of the islands are represented as having lost most of their population as well as nearly the whole of their traditional culture as a consequence. Throughout this whole early period of colonization and evangelization, the Chamorro people could presumably do little more than submit to the superior force of Spanish arms.

But the Spanish documentation of the period, when carefully examined, reveals a very different picture of what happened and why. A close study of the written sources, besides helping to break down any stereotypes of Spanish and the Islanders, offers us a glimpse of just how dynamic and changing this 30-year period was. It suggests that the very use of the term “Spanish-Chamorro Wars” is to exaggerate the intermittent outbreaks of violence at this time, especially when the modest loss of life is tallied. The Spanish records reveal the sharp divisions that existed between members of the Spanish party, not to mention the polarization that developed in the Chamorro people. The documentation also suggests that these Chamorro people were not the passive victim of these depredations that they are sometimes imagined to be, nor did they forfeit their cultural legacy at the end of it all. It certainly demonstrates that the depopulation throughout the period was the result of disease rather than violence. The historical evidence, to be sure, does not absolve the Spanish of all guilt for the damage done to the island people. But it does show that the harshest of it was not wrought by the soldiers’ arquebuses so much as by administrative intrigues that allowed officials to fleece islanders and Spanish soldiers alike.

This article, an expansion of a presentation offered at the Second Marianas History Conference, is drawn from a lengthy article of the author’s that will soon be published as a monograph under the title “Mission in the Marianas.” In this work we will be making heavy use of the Spanish documentation, most of which is now available in English since the publication of Rodrigue Levesque’s History of Micronesia series. The sum of this Spanish documentation represents the only direct source, written or oral, that we possess on the period. Yet, we will also

be making inferences on Chamorro religious beliefs and cultural ways based on what we know about other cultures in the region. For the purpose of this article, we will offer eight conclusions, controversial perhaps but supported by the Spanish documents on this era. Each of the conclusions challenges one of the assumptions commonly made about the period, not just by older historians but by much of the island population today. Overall, our aim is to offer a better grounded and more nuanced understanding of this critical period of initial Western contact in the Pacific.

## 1) What Troops?

*The Jesuit missionaries brought no military troops as such with them in 1668, only mission helpers.*

Fr. Diego Luis de San Vitores arrived as the superior of a band of six Jesuits and a few lay helpers protected by a contingent of Spanish troops—or so, at least, it was supposed.<sup>1</sup> Yet, in an earlier request to be allowed to undertake the mission, San Vitores had insisted that he wanted no military protection that might compromise the purpose of his enterprise. He pleaded that he would need no more than “fifteen or twenty... God-fearing Filipinos, plus a few men who have been there before and know the language.”<sup>2</sup>

From the start San Vitores had strongly resisted the pressure to bring in soldiers for fear that they would undermine the mission of peace in which he saw himself as engaged. He had argued that there was no need for a military garrison, which would be costly and could create more problems than it solved. “Experience has shown that soldiers do not content themselves with defense of the preachers but commit depredations,” he added in what might be something of an understatement.<sup>3</sup> What was the point of bringing in troops, he argued, when the islanders were so gentle and friendly? They had no idols or temples, were free from the drunkenness and other vices that commonly afflicted native peoples, and could be easily won over to the faith.<sup>4</sup>

Instead, he chose 31 mission helpers, including 19 of his “God-fearing Filipinos” and 12 Mexican creoles whom he had recruited along the way—all of them chosen for their good lives and the skills that could be usefully employed for what a later age might term community development. These mission helpers, whose number had grown from 15 to 31 in the course of San Vitores’ voyage to the Marianas, were a mixed lot. The Filipinos ranged in age from a 60-year old farmer to two boy sopranos barely twelve (one of whom was the newly canonized Pedro Calungsod). They included a stone mason, a carpenter, an weaver and two women who could

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1. I made this mistaken assumption myself in an earlier article in which I wrongly supposed that the first mission party included a “garrison of 31 troops and their commander who accompanied the priests [and] were commissioned to protect the missionaries” (Hezel 1982: 117).

2. Garcia 2004: 138.

3. San Vitores to the Queen Regent, February 1668, in Levesque 4: 413-415.

4. San Vitores, Requirements of the Mission to the Marianas, February 1668, in Levesque 4: 396.

serve as teachers in the schools he hoped to open.<sup>5</sup> The group also included two survivors from the *Concepcion*, a galleon wrecked off Saipan years earlier, who were to serve as interpreters for the mission party.

Although only a handful of them had any military experience, they would serve as the military escort for the Jesuits—the *Escuadrón Mariano*, as San Vitores called it.<sup>6</sup> When they first arrived at Guam in 1668, this band of lay missionaries that doubled as a militia, had no more than three muskets among them, although commanders of visiting ships soon began forcing more weapons on them. In point of fact, these people had been chosen for their integrity and their exemplary lives rather than their handiness with a musket or fearlessness in battle. San Vitores had assembled his team with an eye to training a docile people to become good Christians, not to protect his party from them. The violence that he would soon face would come as a rude shock to him. It was only then that the priest, in a reversal of his original position, would realize just how vital to the success of his mission a military force was. But San Vitores was dead before he could act on this. The real troops would only begin arriving after 1675 when the pacifist Jesuit who founded the mission was no longer present to restrain them.

## 2) Why the Trouble?

*The cause of initial conflict may have been Choco's stories about baptismal water and the missionaries' resistance to the ancestral worship, but conflict soon centered on personal insults and was fueled by village rivalries.*

The missionaries were warmly welcomed by the people at their arrival. The large crowd that had gathered to welcome them on shore included a number of chiefs from nearby villages, each of them clamoring for one of the missionaries to stay in his village except for one chief from the interior of the island who wanted the missionaries out.<sup>7</sup> The new mission was off to a promising start: the reception of the missionaries with great fanfare, the obvious eagerness of the chiefs to have priests work in their villages, and the baptism of some 20 children so soon after landing.

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5. Many of the Filipinos are named and their trades mentioned in Fr. San Vitores, "Requirements of the Mission to the Marianas," February 1668, in Levesque 4: 392. More information on these individuals is provided in Viana 2004. Other names are supplied in a letter of Br. Marcelo Ansaldo, 1668, and in the editor's notes that accompany the translation of the letter in Levesque 4: 486.

The term "Spanish" throughout this article refers to the entire mission party, which included Filipinos, *criollos* born in Mexico and South America, and, for that matter, Jesuits from France, Italy and other parts of Europe, along with true Spaniards.

6. Viana (2004) makes the point quite clearly that these mission helpers did double duty in serving as the military guard. For years many of us, myself included, had assumed that the military escort and the mission helpers were separate groups, each made up of about thirty people. The documents for this period, however, suggest that the military escort was made up of all the lay mission helpers, perhaps twenty or 25 in all, filled out with a few professional soldiers or people chosen on the ship to serve in that capacity. All sources agree that the total number of men accompanying the Jesuits was 31. Serving as the captain of the militia during those early years was Juan de la Cruz Panday, a Filipino blacksmith by trade.

7. Coomans 1997: 5.

Even so, the first trouble broke out in August 1668, just two months after the arrival of the missionaries when two of the Jesuit priests were attacked and seriously wounded, while two of the lay helpers were killed off Saipan.

What had happened to change the climate so suddenly? The Jesuits attributed the sudden trouble to a Chinese castaway named Choco, a resident of the islands for twenty years and married to a Saipanese woman, who was said to be spreading the story that the priests were poisoning people with the water they poured on their heads at baptism.<sup>8</sup> The tale that the waters of baptism were killing children was widespread during the early years, according to the mission accounts. Children who were baptized did, in fact, die at a high rate because the missionaries would have chosen those in danger of death to baptize immediately; the baptism of others would have been postponed until their families could be instructed in the faith.

Choco's tales about the poison waters of baptism may have had a little more impact in the northern islands, but they really didn't have much staying power, except perhaps among people who had no real contact with the missionaries. Such stories may have been responsible for the violent attacks on two priests just months after their arrival, and for the death of the mission helper Lorenzo the following year, but the fear of being poisoned by baptismal water is not directly associated with violence after this. Thereafter, the stories are seldom mentioned in missionary letters.

The missionary campaign aimed at smashing the skulls of ancestors and destroying the shrines to the *aniti*, or spirits, created more serious problems for the missionaries. This was a crucial point of conflict between the Jesuits and the local people because the destruction of these shrines: 1) seemed to oppose the respect paid to ancestors; 2) attacked deeply held religious beliefs in the efficacy of the ancestors in providing assistance to the living in time of need; and 3) threatened the social status of the *makanas*, who often spoke for the ancestors (as they did in other Micronesian cultures). The *makanas*, or sorcerers, would have been strong forces in resisting Christianity. It's worth noting that the trouble which broke out on Guam in 1671 was attributed by Garcia to the destruction of the shrines to *aniti* rather than to poison water stories.<sup>9</sup>

To ascribe clear motives for the outbreaks of violence that occurred subsequently is all but impossible. For the most part, however, the main cause of conflict was retaliation for injuries suffered—always a powerful motive to take up arms in Chamorro culture. The retaliation might be prompted by personal insults, but it could also take the form of revenge for relatives killed by the Spanish or for property destroyed by the troops. Other people with kin or other ties to those with grievances against the Spanish were drawn into the conflict. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the violent reprisal on Guam following the death of a Mexican mission helper in July 1671. The killing of the Mexican boy, which the Spanish presumed was motivated by greed for the knife and machete he had, led to the Spanish arresting several men from Hagatña to face trial while killing another accidentally. This, in turn, gave rise to the island-wide attack on the Spanish presidium in Hagatña, a month-long siege by an estimated 2,000 islanders.<sup>10</sup>

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8. For a fuller account of the Choco stories see Garcia 2004: 192-195.

9. Garcia 2004: 188.

10. The account of these events is best captured in Garcia 2004: 235-236.

The injury suffered might have been a single personal offense, or it might have been an accumulation of grievances over a period of time. The three different assaults made on the stockade in Hagatña, for instance, seem to have stemmed from the simmering resentment of key Chamorro leaders at their continual mistreatment at the hands of the Spanish. Such accumulated grievances almost certainly gave rise to the stirring speeches of Hurao and Aguarin, wrapped though they are in a nationalistic rhetoric that is the invention of European authors.

In later years, as the composition of the militia changed, offenses given along with the reasons for conflict would have multiplied as the Spanish began to recruit troops to replace San Vitores' early militia. Spanish sources openly record their misconduct, which included extorting food or material possessions from island people and or making sexual advances toward the island women. All this incitement to violence would be compounded by the inter-village rivalries in the islands, of course, since the old saying "The enemy of my friend is my enemy" has always been as true in the Pacific as anywhere in the world.

### **3) Spanish on the Attack**

*The policy of Spanish retaliation escalated through the 1670s, only easing up in 1680 and afterwards.*

During the first years of the mission, San Vitores tried to carry out his work without military protection, as we have seen. The sporadic outbreaks of violence that occurred nearly from the start soon led the priest to change his stance, for within a year of his arrival he wrote to ask for Spanish troops in the hope that a strong military presence would have a deterrent effect on the local population. Meanwhile, he insisted that members of his "militia" accompany priests to the villages, even though he would not allow his militia to do any more than defend themselves if they were attacked. They were under strict orders not to retaliate for deaths suffered by his mission party; San Vitores seemed ready to pardon the wrongdoers rather than exact justice. During San Vitores' four-year stay in the Marianas prior to his death in 1672, a total of eight Chamorros were killed by the Spanish—three accidentally on Tinian in an attempt to stop a local war and another five during the siege of the Hagatña stockade.

The outburst of violence in 1672 leading to the death of San Vitores and the slaying of several other missionaries and their helpers triggered a much stronger response from the Spanish. Only then did the Spanish begin punishing local people for crimes—at first for killing missionaries and their helpers, and then for rallying people to attack the Spanish. The Jesuits, who at first had accepted the extreme pacifism of their leader, reluctantly assented to this escalation of force for fear that the mission would be shut down if local resistance were successful.

In 1674, with the arrival of Damian Esplana as new commander, the Spanish took the position that matters would only get worse unless they sought out the wrongdoers and punished them.<sup>11</sup> At first, the Spanish would retaliate whenever one of their number was killed, lest the

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11. Hezel 1982: 126.

local people think that they can kill with impunity. Then, the retaliation occurred whenever there was an outbreak of violence in a village, regardless whether lives were lost. Soon, the Spanish began marching on villages that were thought to be resisting Spanish claims to authority, especially those villages harboring criminals. With Esplana at their head, Spanish troops descended on villages in the interior of Guam that served as refuges for the anti-Spanish element of the local population. The villages were spared if people were willing to allow missionaries free access without impeding them in any way; otherwise, they were burned to the ground and any who resisted might be killed. This Spanish offensive of marching on villages and demanding submission to Spanish rule would continue under Esplana's successors until 1680.<sup>12</sup>

During their sorties into the villages, the Spanish explained the new rules they intended to enforce. It was expected that a person who was known to have participated in a killing or incited rebellion would be apprehended and turned over to the Spanish. Anyone who concealed a killer or rebel in his house would be hanged, and a village that provided refuge for such a person would be punished severely. The promulgation of these new rules was surprisingly well received by the local population, one of the Jesuit priests reports. He explains that the motives for ready acceptance of these rules were mixed: some hoped "to ingratiate themselves with the Spanish, others to achieve pardon for their crimes, and all of them hoping for a reward."<sup>13</sup>

As this retaliatory policy was carried out, Chamorro resistance seems to have broken down. By the late 1670s, villages had begun freely handing over "criminals" to the Spanish, sometimes killing these men themselves before handing over their heads to the Spanish. In 1679, Ignacio Hinete, one of the closest Chamorro allies of the missionaries, took the lives of three men involved in some of the earlier unrest and offered the heads of these men to the Spanish governor so they could be impaled on the wall of the fort as a warning to others. Shortly afterwards, the people of a southern village presented the Spanish with the head of a man who murdered one of the priests. The Spanish governor shot someone implicated in the death of another priest, while a prominent woman from southern Guam delivered the heads of a few others responsible for the slaying of yet another priest and his military escort. Even the body of Matapang, the man who killed San Vitores, turned up in April 1680, after the people of Rota sent it to Guam in the hope of avoiding punishment from the Spanish.<sup>14</sup>

The loss of life had been more dramatic than heavy during this period, with each death a staged event followed by a public display. The years of the Spanish offensive, 1674-1680, claimed fewer lives than the narrative might suggest: the records suggest that a total of 50 or 60 Chamorros lost their lives during those seven years. Yet, the effect of the Spanish offensive was pronounced. As this retaliatory policy was carried out and those dissatisfied with the Spanish program went into deep hiding, Chamorro resistance seemed to have broken down.

#### **4) The Attraction of Towns**

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12. The escalation of the Spanish counter-offensive during the period 1674-1680 accounts for the increased number of Chamorro deaths, estimated at 50 or 60, during those years.

13. Fr. Xaramillo, annual report for 1679-1680, in Levesque 7: 309ff.

14. Garcia 2004: 498.

*By 1680, after only twelve years of Spanish presence, the reduction of the Guam population into seven towns was achieved. This was as much due to the cultural attraction of town life as it was to Spanish force.*

Many of the old centers of resistance on Guam had undergone a change of heart—not just out of fear of Spanish retaliation (although this was an undeniable concern), but because so much of the island had come to accept the missionaries and what they stood for. Key village chiefs were now tightly allied with the Spanish, and the foreigners seemingly had friends everywhere on the island. Even the children—and not just the boarding students in the mission schools—had become followers of the missionaries.<sup>15</sup> The Spanish troops still met with resistance in the villages of Hanum and Chochogo, situated well in the interior of the island, but such places had become rare by this time.<sup>16</sup>

The Spanish certainly encouraged the people from small hamlets to move into the larger villages, if only to be closer to the church. At first, those who lived in smaller settlements outside the village resisted. Residents of seven rural homesteads within a mile or two of Hagatña were strongly opposed to resettling in the town at first. In the end, they were persuaded by the argument that in relocating they could have their cake and eat it. They would retain rights to their land and could continue to work it even as they enjoyed the advantages of town life.

The transformation that had occurred in Hagatña was happening in other parts of the island as well. By 1680 the reduction of Guam had advanced to the point that there were now seven towns, each with several hundred people. They included Hagatña, Pago, Agat, Inarajan, Umatac, Inapsan (located on the northern tip of island) and Mapupun (located inland from Apra).<sup>17</sup> The populations of the tiny hamlets surrounding each of these towns were consolidated into the town with the understanding that people could retain their land in the interior and use it for farming. Thus was introduced the split settlement system that would be a standard feature of life in the Marianas for the next two centuries or longer: people resided in the town but spent lengthy periods of time on their own ranch to grow crops. People divided their time between their home and their *lanchu*, or farmstead.

The Spanish exercised a certain push, as they rounded up people and moved them into town, but there was also a draw for local people. The attractions included titled positions of authority bestowed on Chamorro leaders, and land in town as well as the right to continue farming their land outside. But another inducement for the residents of Guam at that time, most of whom had already been baptized, was the ease of access to the church and all that it represented even at that early day. The Jesuit superior of the mission could report in 1680 that most of the people attended mass regularly and that Christian marriage before a priest and witnesses had all but completely replaced the traditional ceremonies.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, those who attended mass were now

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15. By way of an example, after a man from Orote had been hanged for leading an insurrection, small children dragged the body along the shore, pelting it with stones as they shouted their taunts: “Die, dog, die. You refused to be a Christian” ( Garcia 2004: 456).

16. Garcia 2004: 490

17. Fr. Besco to Fr. Espinar, June 1680, in Levesque 7: 259. See also Fr Solorzano, annual report 1681-1682, in Levesque 7: 545-457.

18. Fr. Morales to Rome, 1680, cited in Barrett 1975: 54

wearing clothes, even if they had to borrow them. Families were even learning to grow and spin cotton and make clothes so that they could appear modestly dressed in public.<sup>19</sup>

Cotton was just one of the innovations becoming accepted at about this time. Some local people had already begun planting corn besides the traditional root crops, and many more were receiving instruction on how to grow it and use it for food. In addition to the pigs being raised on the island, the Spanish had introduced other animals—sheep and goats, chickens, pigeons, geese and ducks. There were also an estimated thirty head of cattle on the island; as their number increased in the future, they would become an important farm animal and an occasional item on the menu for feasts. There were even seven horses on Guam, more for the use of the military than the farmers.<sup>20</sup> European farm animals and crops were then just beginning to become an integral part of life in the Marianas as altered by the Spanish.

Tobacco had also become a favorite crop by this time and was quickly becoming the usual medium of exchange. As one Jesuit put it, “People have become so addicted to tobacco that men and women, boys and girls, walk around with pipes. In the past their only substitute for money was iron..., but now they value tobacco above all else, and tobacco has become the common currency with which one can buy and obtain anything.”<sup>21</sup>

Barely more than a decade after the founding of the mission, the people of Guam were beginning to find adequate compensation for the move from a small settlement into one of the larger villages. Close access to the church, which even then had begun to play a sizeable role in community life, was one attraction. But the cultural innovations at the hands of the Spanish, from crops and farm animals to clothing, added to the appeal.

## 5) The Changing Military

*The composition of the military changed for the worse even as poverty of troops increased, leading to morale problems and abuses on the local population.*

The military force that was to accompany and protect the missionaries had always been an uncertain factor. The 31 member of the original “militia” who arrived with San Vitores in 1668 had been vetted by him and chosen for their exemplary Christian lives rather than for their soldierly skills. Until 1674 these men remained under the direct authority of the Jesuits, who monitored their personal behavior and issued instructions not to fire upon the islanders except in self-defense. Serious misdeeds, if any, would have been rare.

With the unexpected arrival of Esplana and his assumption of command over the garrison in 1674, the military began to operate independently of the Jesuits. Moreover, the soldiers who were sent to reinforce the garrison after this time were of a radically different type from the initial group selected by San Vitores. Of the more than 80 troops who arrived in the Marianas

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19. Fr. Morales to Rome, 1680, cited in Barrett 1975: 54

20. Fr. Francisco de Borja, 8 July 1680, in Levesque 7: 501.

21. Fr. Strobach, Report on the Mariana Island Mission, 1682, in Levesque 7: 605.



between 1675 and 1680, it is probably safe to say that few would have been held up as exemplars of Christian virtue. Few enough, for that matter, would have even qualified as well trained soldiers. The Jesuits, who at first were happy to have these reinforcements to protect their vulnerable new mission, soon began complaining about the excesses of the troops. They blamed the soldiers for unnecessary violence and giving bad example, especially for taking sexual liberties with the girls in the mission school.

The conduct of the troops remained a problem throughout the late 1670s. Indeed, it worsened in time. If we are to believe the missionary letters, the soldiers were no longer content with seducing girls in the mission school but had begun to rape village women. By 1680, many of the troops were using their position to take what they wanted from the local people. "The thefts that the soldiers have carried out among the Indians, and the other extortions, have been endless," one Jesuit wrote.<sup>22</sup> This priest was not alone in excoriating the troops, whose latest recruits were, in his view, no better than "criminals from Mexico," men who were "Spaniard in name only" but in fact "cowardly, spoiled, and good for very little."<sup>23</sup> By this time, the missionaries, who had once counted on the militia for the survival of the mission, regarded the troops as "unspeakable" and their long list of crimes as the greatest obstacle to their work of christianizing the local people.

Much of the explanation for this turnabout might lie in the way soldiers were selected for the Marianas. Many of the soldiers seem to have been recruited on shipboard from among the passengers on the galleon who were seeking their fortunes overseas. Captains paid to recruit and train troops for the Marianas and the Philippines often pocketed the money and stayed at home, appointing substitutes to muster whomever they could from the ship's complement to fill the requisite positions.<sup>24</sup> In the worst cases, the men selected might be convicts en route to prison in the Philippines who had been offered the option of serving in the Marianas garrison rather than completing their prison sentence. Almost universally, the men signing on for the positions were young adventurers, untrained and with no strong sense of duty, looking for anything that might advance their own interests. As the years went on, the balance in numbers tilted from Filipinos, who made up most of the corps that accompanied San Vitores, toward Mexicans.

Lured by the prospect of making a fortune abroad, the soldiers were bound to be dissatisfied with what they found in the Marianas. As the size of the garrison in the colony expanded to 115 troops, the number of salaried positions allotted in the annual subsidy had only increased to 40.<sup>25</sup> This meant that the troops received only about a third of the salary they should have been receiving. The response of the troops, of course, was to find support wherever they could. That might explain the growing tendency of the soldiers to begin preying on local people just as it could account for the increasing number of marriages to local women. An island wife would provide, besides sexual satisfaction, an alternative to the barracks table when the subsidy failed to arrive and rations were reduced.

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22. Fr. Solorzano to Fr. Francisco Garcia, 20 May 1681, in Levesque 7: 443.

23. Fr. Solorzano to Fr. Francisco Garcia, 20 May 1681, in Levesque 7: 440.

24. Hezel 2000: 34

25. Fr. Solorzano to Fr. Francisco Garcia, 20 May 1681, in Levesque 7: 442.

The slow impoverishment of the troops was bound to diminish the effectiveness of the garrison even as it took a toll on the men themselves. Frustrated in their search for the bounty they expected to find overseas, denied what they needed even to support themselves, and bereft of the high ideals of service to God and king that saw others through bad times, the troops were understandably demoralized in the Marianas. Still, the problem of the military was one that would remain unresolved during this period; the troops would continue to be exploiters even as they were exploited by their own authorities.

## 6) Which Chamorros?

*The local population was divided from the beginning over support for the Spanish missionaries, but by the late 1670s, as the Spanish troops went on the offensive, the majority of those on Guam swung to the side of the Spanish.*

As early as 1670, two years after the founding of the mission, the Chamorro people were increasingly divided in their feelings toward the Spanish and what they represented. There were pockets of strong opposition. The Jesuit superior who succeeded San Vitores two years later would soon forbid his men to visit the northern part of Guam because he regarded it as too dangerous. Even in the south, which was believed to be much safer, villages were split on whether they would welcome the missionaries. Meanwhile, Hagatña continued to show mixed feelings toward the Spaniards. Reaction to the missionaries on Guam as on other islands was a matter that polarized the local population and divided the villages, just as other issues had long before the coming of the Spanish.

As intermittent violence occurred during the early years of the mission, Chamorro leaders emerged, often at the head of a group of men recruited from their village, to assist the Spanish. Antonio de Ayhi, one of the most celebrated supporters of the missionaries, led his troops into the village of Sagua on Guam in 1675 with the intention of destroying it because its people killed one of the Jesuits some months earlier.<sup>26</sup> A year later, as anti-Spanish sentiment was growing during the months before the siege in Hagatña, Ayhi did what he could to keep the village loyal to the missionaries even as he prevented hostile Chamorros from passing through the village on their way to battle. Together with other allies, he attempted to bring food supplies to the Spanish when they were under attack.<sup>27</sup> Ayhi was not alone in his support of the mission. Ignacio Hineti, of nearby Sinajana, and Alonso So'on, from Agat, led battalions to assist the Spanish in their retaliatory strikes against villages.

There were villages on Guam, as there were even on Tinian and Saipan, known to be friendly to the missionaries. The students in the mission schools—by 1680 there were at least four villages on Guam with such schools—would have been committed to the Spanish and undoubtedly exerted influence on their families to take their side in altercations. In some cases, the students resisted strong family pressure and the tug of close kin ties to retain their loyalty to

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26. Garcia 2004: 431.

27. Garcia 2004: 470-471.

the missionaries. We are told of one young man whose father was killed in a skirmish with the Spanish and whose older brother had been sentenced to execution, but still the young man, a mission student, remained a committed Christian.<sup>28</sup> Meanwhile, the militia was establishing ties of its own with local families as more of its number married local women. By 1680, ten of the militia were married to island women, many of them girls who attended the schools. The links of the Spanish to the island people—even apart from those they had baptized—had greatly multiplied over the years, and so had the number of Chamorros who for one reason or another were obligated to the Spanish. As one of the priests observed, “If the Spanish should leave the Marianas, there would certainly be many wars among the Indians because so many of them have now switched to our side.”<sup>29</sup>

The Chamorro group that supported the missionaries grew in strength and numbers over time, even if for cultural reasons its members were not always able to side openly with the Spanish. Their leaders included such men as Antonio Ayhi, one of the most loyal allies of the Spanish; Ignacio Hineti, who came to the aid of the Spanish during the attack on the garrison in Hagatña in 1684 and prevented the destruction of the garrison; Alonso So'on, dispatched by Quiroga in 1690 to find an island south of the Marianas that had been discovered four years earlier; Juan Hohot, who fought with the Spanish in 1684 and took part in the reduction of the northern islands; and Ignacio Nu'un, who played such a key role in the resettlement of the Gani people in 1698. Many of these men and their forces marched into villages that resisted missionary influence, took the heads of those responsible for some of the early killings of missionaries, fought at the side of the Spanish during the final assault on the fort in Hagatña in 1684, and sailed north to assist the Spanish in the reduction of Saipan and Tinian. Indeed, by this time the size of the local militia under the four Chamorro officers who were partisans of the Spanish was larger than the colony's own Spanish garrison.

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28. Garcia 2004: 477

29. Fr. Xaramillo, annual report for 1679-1680, in Levesque 7: 310.

## 7) Loss of Life in the “Wars”

*The loss of Chamorro life in hostilities throughout the course of the “Chamorro-Spanish Wars” was less than the deaths suffered in a single epidemic.*

Violent deaths in the so-called “Spanish-Chamorro Wars” are often greatly overstated. Hence, in the preparation of this paper, we carefully reviewed all the Spanish documents of the period to compile a body count. During the initial three years of the mission, 1668-1671—a period that included a month-long siege of the Spanish encampment in Hagatña—the total recorded loss of Chamorro life was just eight, while the Spanish suffered six losses of their own during the same period.<sup>30</sup> The typhoon that brought an end to the siege reportedly did more damage to the island than the battle had. The following year (1672), one that saw the death of San Vitores and several mission helpers, three Chamorro lives were lost to violence while the Spanish party lost eight.

During the remainder of the decade, 1673-1680, violent outbursts were more frequent and more intense than previously and, with the exception of 1684-1685, throughout the remainder of the entire 30-year period. According to Spanish reports, as many as 50 or 60 Chamorros were killed in fighting during those years—a large number by the standard of traditional island losses in war, but far fewer than the old historical accounts suggest.

The military engagements in 1684, the last and strongest display of resistance to the Spanish, included two long sieges—one of the stockade in Hagatña and the other of the unfinished fort on Saipan—as well as Quiroga’s march through Saipan against hostile villages and his retaliatory expeditions on Guam after the siege there was lifted. Casualties on both sides were heavy when compared with previous outbreaks of violence. Six Jesuits—half of all who lost their lives during the entire period of the establishment of the mission—were killed that year. Jose Quiroga, the Spanish commander, lost about 40 of the 75 soldiers he had brought north with him; while on Guam, Spanish losses were fewer: four soldiers in the initial attack on the stockade and perhaps one or two after that. Total losses among the Spanish troops would have been between 45 and 50, or roughly one-third of the total garrison of 140 men. Chamorro losses seem to have been comparable. In all, there may have been 30 or 35 casualties among the Chamorro insurgents.

In all, the number of verified Chamorro deaths in hostilities over the entire 30-year period, as recorded in the Spanish reports, is 57. But there are additional casualties as well: instances in which the number of Chamorro deaths in battle is vaguely described as “some” or “a few” or “several.” From my reading of the source material, I would estimate the total Chamorro loss of life in battle and by execution during this period at 110 to 120 in all. This would average out to about four Chamorros a year killed by the Spanish throughout the entire 30-year period. The Spanish, on the other hand, incurred losses of their own: twelve Jesuits along with 26 mission

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30. The eight Chamorros killed during this period included two on Saipan (Garcia 2004: 222-223); a man from Hagatña killed accidentally while protecting an accomplice in murder (Garcia 2004: 236); and five men during the attack on the Hagatña stockade (Garcia 2004: 242). The Spanish killed included two of the militia in August 1668 (Garcia 2004: 198), a mission helper from Malabar in 1669 (Garcia 2004: 214); Fr. Medina and a mission helper in 1670 (Garcia 2004: 368); and a Mexican mission helper in 1671 (Garcia 2004: 235).

helpers and a few soldiers were slain during the same period, for a loss rate that averaged about two men a year.<sup>31</sup>

The death toll for the entire period might seem surprisingly low for those steeped in the exaggerated accounts of the “Spanish-Chamorro Wars” as they have been presented so often in the past, but this modest number is understandable when viewed in the light of traditional island warfare and the constraints imposed on the Spanish by their own goals. Battle casualties always seem to have been few in island warfare as fought in the Marianas, and Spanish records for the late Seventeenth Century suggest that the encounters between Spanish and Chamorros reflect this same conservative pattern. Deaths were rarer than might be expected, since rival forces usually disengaged after the first few casualties. The restraint with which Chamorro battle was practiced is described in a Jesuit source:

They rarely come to hand-to-hand fighting, and when they do, it is only because they can not avoid it. They are afraid of being hurt and are afraid to shed blood in battle. When two or three men are killed or seriously wounded on one side, the victory is established.<sup>32</sup>

The lethal effects of the illnesses that the Spanish brought far outweighed the damage done by their muskets and swords. A single epidemic in 1689, with colds, stomach aches, fever and diarrhea, claimed more than twenty people on Guam alone within a single week. By the end of three months 80 had died—as many deaths, Spanish and Chamorro, as had occurred during the great uprising of 1684-1685. By the end of the year, 166 people had died—more than the number of Chamorro lives claimed during the hostilities with the Spanish throughout the entire 30-year period.<sup>33</sup>

## 8) The Worst Was Still to Come

*The worst indignities suffered by Chamorros may have occurred after warfare ended as the governor gained control of the economy and turned it to his personal benefit.*

The real sins of the Spanish during their early mission initiative in the Marianas were not the spectacular sort that have so often been attributed to them—massive bloodletting, Inquisition-like torments to force islanders to accept the faith, and cruel punishments for refusal to submit to the Spanish yoke. The most serious damage was effected in less shocking ways, as the governors began to gain a choke-hold on the economy and turn the subsidy intended to support the colony into a personal investment fund. As violence subsided after 1684, Spanish officials began to exercise an authority that often reduced local villagers and Spanish troops alike to the status of

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31. Villalobos, “Victimas sacrificadas por los indigenas de Islas,” in Levesque 8: 184-5.

32. Quoted from Gobien 1701: 54

33. Fr. Bustillo, annual report 1689-90, in Levesque 9: 412, 425.

household servants.<sup>34</sup> Ironically, the worst of the indignities suffered by the Chamorro people may have occurred only after the warfare ended.

Damian Esplana, who returned to the Marianas in 1683 to assume the position of governor, had learned during his stay in Manila that there was money to be made in the galleon trade and had established the contacts there to assist him in doing so. The governor's strategy, even by this time, was to attempt to capture as much of the entire yearly subsidy as possible so that it could be carried on the return voyage of the supply ship to Manila where it would be invested in that year's galleon run. The governor's salary of 1,650 pesos a year was just a fraction of the annual subsidy of 20,000 pesos; the trick was to get hold of the rest so that a year later it could bring lucrative returns of three or four times the amount invested.<sup>35</sup>

Esplana's attempts to maximize his investment in the galleon trade did nothing to improve the deteriorating condition of the troops in the garrison. They were already being underpaid, since their number continued to increase much more rapidly than the annual allotment for their salaries. To make matters worse, the troops were shortchanged on even their reduced salaries. Rather than pay his men in currency from the annual subsidy that was sent on the galleon, Esplana offered them goods from the supply ship at heavily inflated prices. Now that the governor had the small ship, he could purchase the items need for the colony from Manila rather than from Mexico. The goods were purchased at much cheaper Manila prices but sold to the troops at Mexico prices.<sup>36</sup>

For two years in succession, 1686 and 1687, there were no ships putting in at Guam; neither the galleon nor the smaller ship from Manila brought supplies during that time. The Jesuits were suspicious that Esplana was somehow to blame for the desperate need in the colony.<sup>37</sup> When, in 1688, Esplana suddenly departed for Manila in the *patache*, the missionaries assumed that he intended "to put away the money he had amassed."<sup>38</sup> Soon after reaching Manila, Esplana was arrested for deserting his post but was finally acquitted of all charges.

Esplana was merely the first in a line of governors to skim the colony's subsidy for his own gain.

The penury that was imposed on the Spanish troops as a result had a ripple effect on the local people, who were squeezed by the soldiers in an effort to make up for what they had lost. The islanders, who were in theory tax-exempt, were constantly coerced by the governor to provide food for his own table and for visitors that should have been covered by the governor's official expense account.

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34. This subject is dealt with at some length in "The Burden of Colonization," a chapter from a previous publication, "From Conquest to Colonization." See Hezel 2000: 31-44.

35. Hezel 2000: 36-37.

36. See Fr. Bouwens, 12 May 1689, in Levesque 9: 262-263. This interesting letter, which was written to make recommendations for improving the government of the Marianas, offers a fascinating look at the social realities of the day.

37. Driver 1987: 28-29

38. Gobien 1701: 164.

At the end of the violence, some Spanish officials began to exercise an authority that often reduced local villagers and Spanish troops alike to the status of household servants. This had a debilitating effect on the colony and its people for years.

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