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Title: **The Nuestra Señora de la Inmaculada Concepcion of Longos, Laguna: Devotion and Miracles in the late Seventeenth-Century Spanish Philippines**

Abstract

This paper focuses on the devotion to the Virgin Mary in the seventeenth-century town of Longos, Philippines as recorded in the Mss. *Longos. Informacion de los milagros hechos por intercesión de una imagen de la Inmaculada de este pueblo. Escrito en tagalog. Longos, 6 agosto 1694.* This manuscript is a record of the inquiry conducted by the parish priest of Longos with the assistance of the local elites into the different miracles attributed to the image of the Virgin Mary that was brought to the town in the early 1600's. The different miracles narrated in this account show the continuities and discontinuities, the contestations and negotiations in worldviews and social structures for the locals of Longos. The miracles of the Virgin Mary were not only embodiments of folk devotion but were also spaces for the locals to articulate their notions of identity and belief in the context of the changes brought about by colonization and evangelization in the seventeenth-century Spanish Philippines.

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Introduction: Locating Longos

> *…dito sa Longos ytong larauan ay nang dumating at ypasok sa patio ay ang mga lucbang halaman sa tabi nang patio ay nanlagas ang mga bonga sampun dahon natatalastas, niya at mata niya ay nakaquita at dili niya dingig at nang may liban ylang arao ay nag sipagdahoy oli at namolaclac…*[1]
>
> Here in Longos when the image arrived and was brought to the patio the *lucbang* plant near the patio withered, the fruit and leaves falling. He saw it with his own eyes and after a few days the tree blossomed again.

In 1694, the *principalia* or local elites of the town of Longos attested that when the icon of the Nuestra Señora de Inmaculada Concepcion or Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception arrived in the town of Longos, the Lucban plant in the patio near the church withered and then blossomed the next day.

Longos today is part of the old center of the municipality of Kalayaan in the province of Laguna in the island of Luzon, Philippines. Longos is located at the western end of Kalayaan near the Laguna Lake. In the area of Longos stands the oldest church in Kalayaan which is the San Juan Bautista church, built by the Franciscan missionaries in 1669.[2]. Longos along with the rest of the province of Laguna was assigned to the Franciscan missionaries who started their work of evangelization as early as 1575.[3] These evangelization efforts became the catalyst for the creation of the first towns or *pueblos* in the province of Laguna. According to Dumol: "…the history of Christianity in the Philippines would not only be the history of the spread and assimilation of a new religion, but also the history of how the oldest municipal communities that we have today, the political, economic, and cultural nerve centers of the Philippines, were founded."[4] Within the space of the town or *pueblo*, the introduction and deepening of Christianity was also crucial in the forging of the communal memory and identity of both the locals and the locale. This article focuses on the devotion to the Virgin Mary in the late seventeenth-century town of Longos, Philippines, a relatively new *pueblo*. To understand the converging process of conversion and colonization, the author explores the relationship of landscape, societies, and devotion, and how that is recorded in hagiographies, missionary accounts, *novenarios* or prayer books and *averiguacion de milagros* or inquiries into the

[1] Archivo Franciscano Ibero Oriental. 1694. Mss *Longos. Informacion de los milagros hechos por intercesión de una imagen de la Inmaculada de este pueblo. Escrito en tagalog*. Longos, 6 agosto 1694. 2 fols. Mss Origins.; mal estado. Firmas. AFIO 90/20.

[2] Felix Huerta, *Estado Geografico, Topografico, Estadistico, Historico-Religioso de La Santa Apostolica Provincia de S. Gregorio Magno* Binondo: Imprenta de M. Sanchez y C., 1863, 189.

[3] Huerta, *Estado Geografico*, 101-174.

[4] Paul Dumol, "Reading the Foundation Dates of Spanish-era Parishes on a Different Key," in *Reexamining the History of Philippine-Spanish Relations: Selected Papers, Philippine-Spanish Friendship Day Conference (2013-2015)*. (National Historical Commission of the Philippines: Manila, 2016), 62.

miracles attributed the to the Virgin Mary. This paper focusing on Longos is part of a bigger research undertaken by the author on devotions to the Virgin Mary in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries colonial Philippines.[5]

Methodology and Similar Studies

The manuscript analyzed for this paper is called *averiguacion de milagros* or 'inquiry into miracles' which is preserved in the Franciscan Archives in Madrid, Spain. Unlike the majority of the documents from the seventeenth century which were written in Spanish, this Longos manuscript from 1694 was written in Tagalog. It contains narratives of different miracles attributed to Nuestra Señora de la Inmaculada Concepcion of Longos, narrated by the local elite, who have provided their names and signatures at the end of the document. The testimonies were collated and written by the town's parish priest.

In this paper, the Longos manuscript will be analyzed using discourse analysis with the aim of bringing out the voices of contestations and negotiations hidden[6] in the narrations of the miracles. The historian Resil Mojares asserts that hagiographical sources such as catechisms, official shrine narratives, approved liturgies and texts, sermons by priest-interpreters, rules of iconographic presentation, and systems of moral and material sanctions and rewards should be read as expressions of symbolisms and meanings negotiated between the foreign and the local during the colonial period.[7] This study expands this list by investigating miracle investigations such as the Longos manuscript which was written in the local vernacular. Miracle investigations or *averiguacion de milagros* are rich sources in aiding the understanding, the experience, and mentalities of the folk community, and in this paper they will be analyzed in the context of social production of meaning and the different structures that mediate its production, such as the "topos" or place, out of which the said text speaks.

Studies on the documentation of Marian miracles and how they have interacted with history, such as William Christian Jr.'s *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain*, Deirdre de la Cruz's *Mother Figured: Marian Apparitions and the Making of a Filipino*

[5] The other articles by this author are a) "Colonizing Sacred Spaces: Geography of Belief, Local Histories and Marian Hagiographies," *Filipinas: Journal of the Philippine Studies Association, Inc.* 3 (2020), 130 – 140; and b) "Folk Devotion in the Waterscape of the Pasig River: The 1653 and 1748 Fluvial Processions of the Nuestra Señora de la Paz y Buen Viaje" *BANWAAN: The Philippine Journal of Folklore* (College of Social Science and Philosophy, University of the Philippines, Diliman), 1.1 (2021). Link: https://journals.upd.edu.ph/index.php/Banwaan/article/view/8553

[6] This notion of "hidden" is from Christina H. Lee, *Saints of Resistance: Devotion in the Philippines under Early Spanish Rule* (Oxford University Press, 2021), where she talks about finding the "hidden script" in colonial sources to bring out the voices of resistance of the local population.

[7] Resil Mojares, *Waiting for Mariang Makiling: Essays in Philippine Cultural History*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2002, 161.

Universal, and Christina Lee's *Saints of Resistance: Devotion in the Philippines under Early Spanish Rule*, have helped shape the framework and methodology of this study. William Christian Jr.'s *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain*, analyzes the narratives of the apparitions of saints and their power to effect social change in late medieval Spain. The author uses notarized investigations prompted by Catholic Church officials and village authorities, collected from the archives of parishes and dioceses, as well as national archives.[8] These miracles of apparitions have created sacred spaces and "consecrated" these places or images as special sources of grace, energy, and consolation for the folk community. Devotion to the saints has also provided critical instructions for coping with actual or imminent disaster, such as plague and war. What people hear the saints say, or the way they see the saints, reveals their deepest preoccupations. According to Christian, the changing faces of divine figures throughout history have also led to changes in the societies that meet them.[9] This important idea, that in Catholic communities devotion to the saints through time are dynamic repositories of socio-cultural change, will be evident in the case of Longos which will be discussed in the later sections of this paper.

The second work is Deirdre de la Cruz's *Mother Figured: Marian Apparitions and the Making of a Filipino Universal*. What makes this book interesting is that instead of looking at what makes an apparition local, the author analyzes the apparitions for their universal values and characteristics. She says in the introduction of her book: "I examine the forms of appearances, and the practices of devotion to [Mary] that reveal particularistic beliefs and local histories, transposed narratives and images, and globally circulating discourses of orthodoxy, influence, and scale as they chart a broader shift from the local to the national and the transnational, and from the material to the representational to the virtual – in short, as they formulate one tale of becoming modern."[10] Citing Wolter's critique of the local she asserts that the limitation of "localization" is that it puts the agency of the locals in relation to the "foreign materials" as largely reactive to these impositions.[11] She also highlights the centrality of devotion to the Virgin Mary in Filipino Catholicism, citing studies on the babaylan and the framework of conversion-as-translation as a possible explanation for the depth of Marian devotion in the Philippines. She asserts that the high status attributed to the shaman or *babaylan*[12] in the pre-Hispanic societies, bore very close structural resemblance to the

[8] William Christian Jr., *Apparitions in Late Medieval and Renaissance Spain*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1981, 4.
[9] Ibid.
[10] Deirdre de la Cruz, *Mother Figured: Marian Apparitions and the Making of a Filipino Universal*, University of Chicago Press, 2015, 5.
[11] Ibid, 16.
[12] *Babaylan* or *catalonan* – refers to the local priestesses of the precolonial or pre-Hispanic period. In the Tagalog-speaking regions of the Philippines, they are referred to as *catalonans*, while in the Visayan speaking regions they are referred to as *babaylan*. These babaylans or catalonans are predominantly women and they yield powerful influence in these precolonial societies as healers, source of wisdom, and direction for the community. See Zeus Salazar, "The Babaylan in Philippine History," in *Women's Role in Philippine History: Selected Essays*, trans. Proserpina Domingo Tapales, Diliman, Quezon City: University Center for Women's Studies, University of the Philippines, 1996, 209-222; and Lilia A. Cotejar "Inscribing Women Ancestors:

Virgin Mary introduced by the Spanish when they arrived in the Philippines. This work of de la Cruz brings to the fore the question of the role of the foreign and the local in the introduction and deepening of devotion to the Virgin Mary in the Philippines. The contestations and negotiations between the foreign and the local as captured in the miracle narratives in the Longos manuscript will be explored in this study.

The third, and most recently published book is Christina Lee's *Saints of Resistance: Devotion in the Philippines under Early Spanish Rule.* In this book, Lee investigates devotion to saints in the Spanish Philippines from the sixteenth through the early part of the eighteenth century, analyzing ecclesiastical investigations and official correspondence. Her close reading of the ecclesiastical investigations of the miracles brings into focus a rarely used and accessed source which proves to be an effective window into the lives and actuations of individuals and communities in the early Spanish period Philippines. Inspired by the form of critique of James Scott, William Henry Scott, and Vicente Rafael, the author closely reads these documents to find the "voices of resistance", emphasizing that for every public script there is a hidden script. In the process of unearthing these voices of resistance the author also broadens the dynamic forms and instances of resistance among the different ethnic groups of the Spanish Philippines. [13]

The Longos Manuscript

The main source for this paper is the manuscript: Mss *Longos. Informacion de los milagros hechos por intercesión de una imagen de la Inmaculada de este pueblo. Escrito en tagalog. Longos, 6 agosto 1694. 2 fols. Mss Origins; mal estado. Firmas*, from the Archivo Franciscano Ibero Oriental in Madrid. It consists of two pages with signatures in the lower portion of the second page and, as noted above, the manuscript is in a bad state.

The most notable detail in this document is that it was written in Tagalog which is one of the major local vernaculars in the Luzon Island of the Philippines[14]. The early modern period documents in the Philippines are dominated by missionary accounts and reports written in Spanish. It is rare to find a document written in the vernacular that also has signatures identifying the locals who participated in the creation of this document. Tagalog is a central Philippine language within the Austronesian language family. The Austronesian languages are a language family, widely spoken throughout Maritime Southeast Asia, Madagascar, the islands of the Pacific Ocean and Taiwan. The use of Tagalog for this document could be interpreted as a conscious effort of the writer to strengthen the voice of the local population,

Reclaiming Women's Pre-colonial Identity in Ninotchka Rosca's State of War," *Kinaadman: Journal of Southern Philippines*, 39 (2016), 38 – 73. https://www.xu.edu.ph/cm/101-kinaadman-journal-archives-article/kinaadmanjournal-archives/3196-volume-38 .

[13] Lee, *Saints of Resistance*, 166.

[14] Today Tagalog is one of the most widely spoken local vernaculars in the Philippines.

to bring the focus to them rather than the writer. On the other hand, it also shows the outsiders' depth of familiarity with the local vernacular and how with that familiarity they can also manipulate it for their own purposes.

This Longos manuscript is a record of the inquiry conducted by the parish priest of Longos with the assistance of the local elite of the town into the different miracles attributed to the image of the Virgin Mary that was brought to the town in the early 1600's. The inquiry was prompted by Fray Francisco de San Jose who, from 1661, was the parish priest of several *pueblos* of Laguna. According to the *Catalogo*, he also served as the provincial of the Franciscans in 1684, and in 1691 he was appointed parish priest of the town of Longos in Laguna.[15] In 1694 Fray Francisco de San Jose conducted an inquiry into the miracles attributed to the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, asking the town elders to recall the time when Longos was not yet a *pueblo*[16] with its own priest. The inquiry probed into the memories of the native elite and from these shared narratives the account reconstructs the town's memory of its devotion to Nuestra Señora de la Inmaculada Concepcion in the church of Longos.

The Testimonies

There are five testimonies in the account and each of the narrators is identified, and in most cases their background and standing in the community is also mentioned. The first narrator is Capitan Don Manuel Uica who is listed as the *gobernadorcillo* of Longos for the year of 1694.[17] *Gobernadorcillo* is the title given to the town chieftain, more or less equivalent to today's town mayor. It was the highest position a local Filipino could have in the colonial society. Though he was a young boy when the image arrived in the town of Longos, Don Manuel narrates that when the image was brought to the town, the *lucban*[18] plants in the patio of the town withered but then they all miraculously blossomed the next day. The people of the town started praying to the image and many people were healed from grave sicknesses.

The next narrator is Lorenzo Mendez. His background and standing are not identified in the document. He begins by confirming the earlier narrative shared by Don Manuel Uica and then says that although he has not personally witnessed any miracle, he has heard of the story of Don Ventura Padilla. Lorenzo Mendez narrates:

[15] Eusebio Gomez Platero, *Catalogo Biográfico de los Religiosos Franciscanos de la Provincia de San Gregorio Magno de Filipinas*, Manila: Imprenta de la Real Colegio de Sto. Tomas, 1880, 291-292.
[16] During the colonial period, when a settlement did not yet have its own parish priest, it was called a *visita* because instead of having its own parish priest, a priest or a missionary regularly visits the town.
[17] Grace Concepcion, *Conflict, Negotiation and Collaboration in Colonial Spaces: The Pueblos of Laguna in the Early Spanish Period, 1571 – 1700*. PhD Dissertation, University of the Philippines, August 2017.
[18] The *Lucban* is a local variant of the pomelo tree, the largest citrus fruit and is native to Southeast Asia.

> *… macaylan siyang ylabas sa dagat ay ang na qui quita niya ay taas isang dalaga na ca mucha nitong mahal na Virgen Concepcion ay siya na may ypinaguili at saca siya ypinalagay saualan tubig nang Buaya, ito ang sinabi ni Lorenzo Mendez…*[19]
>
> When he was dragged out to the sea he looked up and saw a lady who looked like the Blessed Virgin of the Conception, he was then released by the crocodile, this was told by Lorenzo Mendez.

According to this narration, Don Padilla was bitten by the crocodile in the rice fields near the church and was dragged all the way to the sea or, in the vernacular, "dagat", which is actually a lake.[20] While he was being dragged by the crocodile, he prayed to God and the Virgin Mary and he saw a lady that he claimed to look like the Nuestra Señora da la Inmaculada in their parish church and at that moment he was released by the crocodile.

This fantastical tale of Don Ventura Padilla surviving a crocodile attack is also corroborated by the third narrator, Don Juan Tobo, who reveals that he is not a native of Longos, but a migrant from the neighboring town of Pangil within the province of Laguna. He does not reveal when he moved to Longos, but remembers that he was only about twelve years old at the time. He says he had not personally witnessed any miracle by the Nuestra Señora but had definitely heard about the story of Don Ventura Padilla and the crocodile attack. He also mentions that the people of Longos were already praying novenas to Nuestra Señora de la Inmaculada Concepion when he moved to Longos.

The fourth narrator is Doña Juana Diamante who corroborated the story of Don Manuel Uica regarding the withering and blossoming of the *lucban* plants in the patio of the plaza when the image of the Virgin Mary arrived. She also mentions that she saw someone who was gravely sick and was cured after the community prayed to the Virgin Mary. She also mentions that there were many devotees of the Virgin Mary and that there were many devotees who came from other towns.

The fifth and last narrator is Doña Maria Concepcion, the wife of Don Andres Gallera. She narrates the story of her father, one of the respected elders of the town, who also served as one of the former leaders of Longos. She says that, according to her father, on the eve of the feast of the Immaculate Conception, a great wind blew the curtains of the church and that, looking inside the church, he did not see the image of Nuestra Señora on the altar. She recounts how her father went home distraught over the supposed disappearance of the

[19] Archivo Franciscano Ibero Oriental. 1694. Mss. *Longos.*

[20] According to the study of Luciano P.R. Santiago, the Laguna lake was referred to by the locals as Dagatan de Bae before the arrival of the Spanish ("Ancient Pila: From Pailah in Pinagbayanan to Pagalangan," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture & Society*, 38.1 (2010), 1-36). This practice of referring to the lake as *dagat*, or sea, continues to the present day for the locals of this province.

image. However, the next day when the church opened for the early morning prayers and Mass, the image of the Virgin Mary was back on the altar.

Analysis of the Manuscript

Except for the two narrators who claim to have personally witnessed the blossoming of the *lucban* plants in the patio of the church, the three other narrators, Don Manuel Uica, Lorenzo Mendez and Don Juan Tobo, did not witness the miracles that they narrated, and admitted to the possibility of unreliability in their accounts. Whether or not this was the case, we can see that their unreliability as witness or narrators was hidden behind their titles and standing in the community. Of the five testimonies, two were often repeated and corroborated, and these are the supposedly miraculous blossoming of the *lucban* plant and the crocodile attack. These two narratives seem to be the most notable for the narrators and the locals of Longos whom they represent. These two narratives are seen in this paper as the of the clashing of two cultures in the space of the *pueblo*: the foreign and the local, the Christian and the non-Christian belief system. The narration of the miracles became the means for the locals to articulate and reimagine their own belief systems into the new religion being introduced to them. The "hidden script" in these miracle narratives is the articulation of continuities and discontinuities from the pre-Hispanic culture and society of the early Tagalogs.

The testimonies also give us an indication of how devotion and faith to the Virgin Mary was introduced in the *pueblos* of Luzon. In the miracle narratives of the Longos manuscript we see how relating to the Virgin Mary for the locals was not restricted within the enclosure of the church. It is through the different miracles that the devotion was localized, evidenced by the Virgin Mary's power over the local ecology like the plants and animals. The geography of the narratives was also important because it shows the power of Nuestra Señora de la Inmaculada Concepcion going beyond the church, extending to the rest of the town, the rice fields surrounding the town, and even the lake beyond the town.

The miraculous survival of Don Ventura Padilla from a crocodile attack and the popularity of this story among the locals of Longos, can be understood in the context of the pre-Hispanic worship of the *buaya* or the crocodile among the lake and riverine Tagalog towns. This was recorded by the first missionaries who came to the Philippines. Fray Juan de Plasencia, a Franciscan missionary who wrote the account *Customs of the Tagalogs* in 1590, recorded his observation of the Tagalogs' reverence and fear of the *buaya*, or crocodile.[21] Another record of this practice is from the Jesuit missionary Pedro Chirino who wrote the *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas* which is considered to be one of the earliest works on Tagalog culture and society. He says that "the early Tagalogs held the cayman in utmost veneration

[21] Juan de Plasencia OFM, "Customs of the Tagalogs," (1590) in Emma Blair and James Alexander Robertson (eds.), *The Philippine Islands*, Manila: Bank of the Philippine Islands, 2000 [1903], vol. 7, 189. 9.

and that whenever they saw it in the water, they called it Nono or grandfather. They would ask it not to harm them and for this purpose offered it a part of whatever they carried."[22] Another practice related to the high regard in which the *cayman* were held is that among the precolonial warrior classes locally called *pintados*, a tattoo that resembles the crocodile jaw in the face of a man is given only to the bravest warriors, and among them the highest prestige is given to the warrior who survives a crocodile attack. According to William Henry Scott, "*Bangut* (a muzzle or halter) were the [tattoos] that made the face such a frightening mask, also called *langi*, "gaping" like a crocodile's jaws or the beak of a bird of prey."[23] This is probably why the narrative of Don Ventura Padilla and his miraculous survival of the crocodile attack seems to dominate the document even though he was technically absent from the whole proceeding. The power of the Virgin Mary over the feared crocodile of the pre-colonial and pre-Christian Tagalog society is not just a testimony of faith, but also an articulation of the continuities and changes of a community in transition.

The articulation of the community's connection and disconnection with water and its value in the context of the evangelization of the community can also be gleaned from the narrative of Don Ventura Padilla's miraculous survival from the crocodile. The waterscape which became the setting for the miracle was located in the farmland near the church, the testimony says: … *dito sa tapat ng simabahan sa palayan at lalim ng tubig* ("here in front of the church in the fields and depth of water").[24] The water here refers to the nearby Laguna Lake which provides the irrigation for the rice fields of the town of Longos. The movement in the narrative begins with connecting the sacred to the locale which in this case are the rice fields where Don Padilla was bitten and then dragged by the crocodile to the depths of lake. At this juncture, the narrative moves further away from the church and the town, deeper into the rice fields and then finally out into the lake. In the testimony it says ... *sa calalaliman nang tubig sa palayan ay macaylan siyang ylabas sa dagat* ("from the waters in the rice fields until he was brought to the lake").[25] Threatened by that movement away from the *pueblo* or town and towards the lake, Don Ventura Padilla implores the heavens and in seeming response to his plea, he saw a young girl who looked like the Our Lady of Immaculate Conception in their church and it was at that moment that he was released by the crocodile.[26] Although the movement in the narrative appears to be a movement away from the *pueblo,* or the town, both literally and figuratively, it can also be interpreted as the widening reach of Christianity. The movement within this narrative teaches the devotee that the power of Christianity is not limited within the structure of the church or the boundaries of the town.

[22] Pedro Chirino, S.J., "Relacion de las Islas Filipinas" (1604), in Blair and Robertson, 2000 [1903], vol.12, 265 - 266.
[23] William Henry Scott. *Barangay Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society*, Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991, 21.
[24] Archivo Franciscano Ibero Oriental. 1694. Mss *Longos.*
[25] Ibid.
[26] Archivo Franciscano Ibero Oriental. 1694. Mss. *Longos.* Original text in Tagalog: "… isang dalaga na ca mucha nitong mahal na Virgen Concepcion ay siya na may ypinaguili at saca siya ypinalagay saualan tubig nang Buaya."

Another change evidenced by the document being analyzed is the expanding role of the local elite or the *principalia* class in the Christianized space of the *pueblo*. The *principalia* class were the former nobles, or *maginoo* in Tagalog, and chieftains, or *datus* in Tagalog.[27] According to Luciano P.R. Santiago's *The Houses of Lakandula, Matanda, and Soliman*: "As in the New World, the Spanish conquistadores in the Philippines gave preferential treatment to the major nobilities of the Islands, who were the closest to a royalty that the natives ever had."[28] The testimonies from the manuscript analyzed in this paper privileges the voice of the elite in representing the community memory in relation to its devotion to the Nuestra Señora de la Inmaculada Concepcion. We see in their being selected to participate in this inquiry how the local ruling class transitioned into the Spanish colonization, serving as intermediaries between the Spanish officials and missionaries and the rest of the local population.

In the pre-Hispanic society, the ruling class would not have had any influence in spiritual matters. This was a power solely controlled by the *babaylan* or *catalonans*, a position principally given to women who act as the community shamans and healers. Due to their ability to communicate with the supernatural they were regarded with reverence within the pre-Hispanic community.[29] With the coming of Christianity, these female shamans lost their position and prestige in the community. However, the local ruling class or the *principalia* who served as the main collaborators of the missionaries in the Christianized *pueblos* found their influence expanding as they also received authority and prestige as enablers for this new religion for the community. This is a new identity for the elites, an expansion of their influence which will now also include religious influence, a form of leadership among the local population. In the Christianized space of the *pueblo* the local elite were expected to collaborate not only with the colonial government, but also with the missionaries in spreading and ensuring not just the Christian faith but also the Christian way of life for the new *pueblo* or town to be truly a Christian society.

Conclusion

The miracles and the voices which remembered these miracles recorded not only the introduction and deepening of devotion to the Virgin Mary, but also continuities from the pre-Hispanic past and changes happening within the town of Longos, particularly in terms of belief systems and social structures. The miracles became spaces for the local community to articulate their own changing notions of identity and belief in the context of the changes

[27] Luciano P.R. Santiago, "The Houses of Lakandula, Matanda, and Soliman (1571-1898): Genealogy and Group Identity," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 18.1 (1990), 130 – 131; and Scott, 219 – 221.
[28] Santiago, "The Houses of Lakandula, Matanda, and Soliman (1571-1898)," 131.
[29] Salazar, "The Babaylan in Philippine History."

brought about by colonization and evangelization in the late seventeenth-century Spanish Philippines.

The document *Mss Longos. Informacion de los milagros hechos por intercesión de una imagen de la Inmaculada de este pueblo*, shows the introduction of the image of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception into the relatively new town of Longos in the province of Laguna, Philippines. The introduction of the devotion to the Our Lady, based on these documents, necessitates the active acceptance as articulated in the remembering and recording of the power of the Virgin Mary over the local ecology by the locals. Lastly, privileging the voice of the local elite to narrate the community's memory of its devotion to the Virgin Mary is evidence of the expanding role and identity of the *principalia* as they were made to act as enablers and guardians of the faith in the creation of a Christian society within the *pueblo*.

In Philippine historiography, there are few studies that focus on these early periods and very few which focus on miracle narratives like this study. As shown in this paper, miracles recorded as testimonies from the local community are very rich sources of data, not only about the practice of religion, but also of the folk way of life and perceptions in the context of their changing society in the seventeenth century. These miracles would continue to live in the community memory and would eventually find their way not just in prayerbooks that will be published in the later centuries but also into the folk traditions that would define the culture and identity of the town.

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