

Passi - 1765

San Joaquin - Janiuay 1848

THE FIRST DATOS

P. Agustin Ma. Castro - O.S.A.

P. Tomas Santaren - O.S.A.

In 1858, P. Tomas Santaren, O.S.A. wrote *Historia de los primeros Datos que procedentes de Borneo poblaron estas Islas Filipinas*. Father Santaren took this history from a narrative in an old manuscript which he acquired from Janiuay, Iloilo, also in 1858.²⁴²

Father Angel Perez, O.S.A. mentions this manuscript in his article *Igorrotes*, published in Manila in 1902. An English translation of Father Santaren's work also exists with the epigraph: "Bisayan accounts of early Bornean settlements in the Philippines recorded by Father Santaren, translated from the Spanish by Enriqueta Fox, Chicago, Philippine Studies Program, 1854."²⁴³

Father Angel Perez, on page 381 of his book, transcribed the note of Fr. Santaren which is at the end of the manuscript. It says: "All that you find enclosed in parentheses are my opinions and are not in the *Historia*. I have accumulated them in my experiences of 27 years dealing with the same families over the land. Left in my possession is another manuscript very much longer and extensive but it is limited only to the genealogy of each Dato. . . The major part is about the sons of the primitive ones."

"Possibly," according to Father Isacio Rodriguez, "the manuscripts referred to in the marked text were remitted much later to the

convent in Manila by the same P. Santaren or by some other Augustinian. There is no doubt that those mss. existed in the archives of San Agustin, Manila, but of this we cannot now be sure, and it is a pity because with the examination of the manuscript one could have deduced important facts that would have fixed the authenticity, value, and importance played by the island of Panay in Philippine history."

Desiring, nevertheless, to put something concrete over the originality of the *Historia de los Primeros Datos*, it would not be too far-fetched to think that some Augustinian religious must have contributed to its making, evaluating to this end and other ancient writings,* conversations with the inhabitants of Panay and making use at the same time of the experience gained through direct contact with them.

Father Rodriguez continues: "Perhaps, the time, the unpleasant climate, the invasions which plagued diverse points of the island (of Panay) during the centuries were other factors which led to the loss of these important documents. Or, perhaps, some religious fearing the imminence of a shipwreck must have tried to save that which was luckily within his reach. One of these religious could very well have been P. Agustin Ma. Castro, O.S.A.

P. Castro embarked for Panay in 1764 bound for the important town of Araut (later Dumangas). Shortly afterwards, he passed on to Jaro as vicar and companion to P. Luis Torreblanca. In 1765 he was

*One of these ancient writings must have been derived from the Negarakertagama originally written by Prapanca in the middle of the 14th century in Indonesia.*²³³

named Minister of Panay; then he was transferred to Passi and finally to Dumalag. During the four years when he was minister and parish priest of these aforementioned places, each time he had completed to perfection his apostolic duties and responsibilities, he scrutinized the archives of those convents, read and examined the writings of the religious which he found there and put together diligently a huge copy of the materials he had in hand.

Padre Castro mentions twice in his *Historia de la Provincia de Batangas*,* the text reproduced below:

"In my book entitled *Defensorio de los Indios Filipinos*, I have treated at length with authentic documents about the Philippine nobility. . . There I placed some fourteen frames of the costume and antique figures, things which are esteemed very much today . . ."

In another place, he wrote:

"See in my little book *Defensorio de los Indios Filipinos* with many illustrations of Philippine antiquity where I placed the *caciques* who ruled in each province when the Adelantado Legazpi arrived here in 1565." ²⁴⁵

Conjectures find a foundation in the words of P. Castro in his epilogue to the *Historia de la Provincia de Batangas*: "The second, the stay of thirty years that I have in this Kingdom of the Philippines traveling, voyaging, and walking in almost all the provinces, taking

* According to the oft-repeated story of "The first datos," Dato Puti left Sumakwel and six other datos in the settlement in Hantique and took two other datos with him to Catal-an (later Taal) Batangas. Then leaving the two to settle there, Dato Puti and his wife returned to Bornay.

note of whatever was worth taking note of. The third, the sufficient instruction I had in 8 languages (dialects) which enabled me to deal intimately and familiarly with the natives and discover the mysteries, secrets, a token which other travelers lack. The fourth, by having myself instructed very well in all the histories, chronicles, letters and maps of the said kingdom, the printed as well as the manuscripts, advantage which I do not see in others, those who do nothing more than repeat in the passive that which has already been printed in the active. The fifth, those voyages were not done hurriedly and running like the others have done; instead, I detained myself two or three years in each province, walking through many towns and registering all those particularities with much care and diligence so that I would not deceive myself or deceive others." ²⁴⁶

TOMAS SANTAREN, O.S.A. ²⁴⁷

Father Tomas Santaren, O.S.A. was born in Valladolid the 19th of January, 1828. He professed in the Augustinian college of the said city on the 25th of November, 1849. He arrived in the Philippines with the mission of 1853; administered in San Joaquin the province of Iloilo from 1855 to the 4th of February 1886, the date of his death; aside from the material work he had brought into completion in the said town, he had, personally, and in collaboration with his brother P. Hilarion Santaren, also an Augustinian, dedicated himself with great zeal in the research for manuscripts, old books, and objects of importance, a collection of which he remitted to the Augustinian Museum in Valladolid.

sia) tells of the nobility of its — 37 — many parts of its realm. The ten datos must have belonged to the same sovereignty but some strong social and the "boat people" to our shores, must be centuries earlier to Panay.

The Story of the Ten Datos: Legend, Myth or History?

Diego de Artieda Chirino, soldier-engineer and member of the Legazpi expedition, writing in 1573, mentions the following in his *Relation of the Western Islands*:²⁴⁸

"There are no lords in these islands. Each man is master of his own house and slaves and the more slaves one owns, the greater and more influential is he reckoned. The people are divided into three classes. The Datos who correspond to knights are the most important. The Tigamas (S. Timaguas) are the freemen and the Orispes are the slaves. The *Datos* boast of their old lineage."

In 1599, Augustinian missionaries coming to Batan (northern Panay, at the entrance to Dumaguait Bay) wrote about its inhabitants as "the most noble in the archipelago, a highly-cultured group with well-built beautiful houses and many well-organized villages."²⁴⁹ This is conjecture: but if in 1599 they still retained their culture, their ancestors could not have come with the first datos of the 14th century, A.D. Rather, they must have been descendants of the highly-civilized Badjaos who dispersed from Johore shortly before Legazpi landed in Cebu in 1565, as this was the last recorded pre-Spanish migration from that region to these islands.

It is a well-known fact that displaced people may leave everything behind them but they carry their accent wherever they go. The

dialect of the people from Batan which spread throughout all of present-day Aklan province had a peculiarity all its own, different from either the Kinaray-a of the Panay interior or the Hiligaynon of the city; proof enough that those of Batan belonged to quite another culture than that of the people who came to Panay with the earlier migrations. That they had nobility was demonstrated by the fact that they were not wild or refractory. They were easy to convert and they collaborated with the Augustinian missionaries in the conversion of people living in wild territory.

As with "the boat people" of our own nineteen seventies (1970's), only the rich could afford to leave, and in those times only the nobility was rich. The timaguas and orispes could not have made the journey by themselves alone except as retainers to the wealthy.

As to the descendants of "the first datos" by the mid-16th century their culture had been very much eroded by the ravages of time and the demands of a harsh and primitive environment; but *they had a story to tell** and this lived in their memories handed down to them by word of mouth from generation to generation. The fact that they had a social hierarchy presupposes that their origin must have been an organized and educated society and that their forbears had nobility.

The flight of the ten datos from Bornay was contemporary with the Majapahit empire under King Rajasanegara (1350-1389). The *Negarakertagama*²⁵⁰ a manuscript preserved from the past and originally written by Prapanca (cf. Harsja Bactiar, University of Indone-

sia) tells of the nobility of its court and many parts of its realm. The ten datos must have belonged to the same sovereignty but some strong social and political upheaval which sent the "boat people" to our shores, must also have driven the datos six centuries earlier to Panay.

In 1765, almost two hundred years after the Relation by Artieda, Father Agustin Ma. Castro, O.S.A., wrote about these datos also. He tells us in his introduction how diligently he collected these stories over a period of 25 years. Almost a century later in 1858, P. Tomas Santaren, O.S.A. also wrote about the first datos. He took his data from a manuscript he discovered in Janiuay, Iloilo that same year.

The Jesuits in their estancias (1600-1695) must have heard these stories even ahead of P. Maria Castro, O.S.A. They must have helped to preserve them orally. What is significant is that the setting of the barter of Panay²⁵¹ was in the Jesuit estancia in Suaragan, (San Joaquin, Iloilo) and that of Sumakwel²⁵² and the first Malay settlement was in Malandog, Hamtik, adjacent to Bongol another estancia also managed by the Jesuits. Both estancias were in Southwestern Panay.

Even the topography of the land lends geographic and economic validity to the stories. But let us recapitulate a bit:

According to the legend, sometime in the 14th century A.D. ten Malayan datos, their families and retainers fleeing from the persecution of Rajah Makatunaw escaped from Bornay in ten large sailboats called *barangays*. They were blown northeastward to the southwestern coast of Panay at the mouth of the Suaragan river. Here the barter

took place: on one side Polpolan, the headman of the aetas with his son Marikudo; on the other side the ten datos led by Dato Puti. By this contract, the hills and mountains of Panay were to belong to the aetas; for the price of a necklace and one gold *salakot* (actually, perhaps, a shield placed on the head when not in use) the plains and rivers were to belong to the Malays.

The datos soon saw, however, that there was no place to farm in Suaragan. The foot of the mountain came down close to the water's edge, and the shore was reefed. (The present narrow plain on the banks of the Suaragan from Mat-i to the seashore is the result of centuries of silting and sedimentation. When the datos first came it must have been a river bed.) After taking stock of the situation the ten datos decided to sail westward in the hope of finding a harbor with a wide open plain close by it.

Sailing towards the sunset they saw a tiny island after which they rounded the southwestern tip of Panay. They sailed northward but saw no plain, just mountains at the sea's edge.

A day and a night later they entered a bay and saw like an answer to a prayer a wide natural harbor opening from a plain on both sides of a river. Dato Puti sent men to swim towards it and take soundings. It was deep, calm and unimpeded by reefs. This was the place!

"In the morning wind which hugged the hills

In that distant naked dawn'

They were exiles no longer -

Malandog was their sanctuary,

Their biniyaran, their home!"²⁵³

Shortly after the landing, Dato Puti, his wife, and two other datos proceeded to Katal-an (Taal) Batangas. Sumakwel was left in charge of Panay and the 6 other datos with him.

Topography: The harbor of Malandog was wide and deep. The channel of the river which fed it cut southwestward across the present plaza of the town of Sibalom. Then between Catunggan and Odiong it widened to form a harbor and near Supa it curved to flow directly south to Malandog.

That harbor of long ago was the estuary of the Sibalom River until the force of its water surging downward from its mountain source (ga siba sa idalom) broke down Bari Hill and altered its course diverting it from the southward to the westward on the unprotected beach near Sinaja. Up to the present the contour of the old waterway can still be traced by the brooks and streams, bridged at Odiong and Supa, which meander on both banks of the once-upon-a-time harbor.

[Kaufmann's Visayan-English dictionary ²⁵⁴ gives Odiong as a derivative of *budyong* (a shell horn). This coincides with oral tradition. It was told that Odiong at the head of the harbor was where the horn was sounded to signal every arrival of a ship under sail. The residents were for generations skilled in the use of iron, a trade inherited from their ancestors who welded anchors into shape and who made bolos from iron brought them by sailors and merchants who docked there].

The valley where the river basin used to be is shaped like a huge bowl rimmed by mountains which are highest at the east, north and

south, and by foothills which slope westward to the very narrow coastal plain. Behind what is now San Jose de Buenavista is a ridge of hills (where Tuburan and Cansadan are located). These hills provided the harbor of long ago with a natural barrier against the sea, and staved off the direct blast of the west and southwest gales.

The mouth of the harbor was inclined towards the unreefed western bank. The village of Malandog was opposite it on the eastern shore and defended from the easy access of marauders by a wide tidal reef. It was an ideal trading post and stop-over for vessels sailing from Luzon to Mindanao and back. Its people were prosper-

After its course was deviated, the basin filled up with mud and detritus. The harbor was reduced as it is now to a narrow inlet of the sea. Ships and other sailboats stopped calling regularly and commerce which was maritime also stopped. The settlement deteriorated. Gradually trees grew and soon there was a wide forest. (Well-diggers report that their suction pipes bring up rotted pieces of wood and twigs from less than 50 ft. underground). Then maybe the trees were cut down to make way for farmlands. What used to be a wide river bed some 600 years ago is now a wide plain planted to rice. It is called the Sibalom River Valley.

By the early 1700's the mouth of the harbor had become a nipa swamp. It was called Tubigon. On its former western bank the silt had hardened and it was here on the flat brown beach that the Augustinian fathers built their first church fortress in Antique from "silleria" or stone slabs from the quarries of Mexico brought here by ships which used them as ballasts. Don Balthazar de Sanchez-Cuenca records his visit here when he came to inspect the fortifica-

tions of Panay in 1754.²⁵⁵ The place was called Maybato short for *Maybato nga simbahan*. (It has a stone church.)

The church building from its earliest years always came under the attack of the Moros but the people with the leadership of their parish priest managed to drive them away. In 1756, however, they were not as lucky. The Moros came in full force, captured the parish priest, Fr. Jose Valis,²⁵⁶ O.S.A. (later ransomed) and burned the whole church edifice. The sad remnant of the church ruins still stands on the shore about a kilometer from the present river bank.

The Malandog River is referred to by Charles Wilkes in his *Narrative of the United States Exploring Expedition in 1842*.²⁵⁷ (Philadelphia 1844), shown below in italics:

"In the morning of the 28th after breakfast we opened the bay of San Jose de Buenavista, the capital of Antique . . . The bay is in latitude 10°40' N; longitude 127°59'30" . . . In the fine season the bay is secure but we were informed that in westerly and southwesterly gales, heavy seas set in, and vessels are not able to lie at anchor. Several vessels were lying in a small river about one and half miles to the southward of the point on which the fort is situated. The entrance to this river is very narrow and tortuous."

How about the story of "The Ten Datos"? It has come down through the centuries by oral tradition. Perhaps, some highly imaginative and poetic missionary must have embellished the stories somewhat so that what was once history became myth – e.g.: of Kapinañgan, Sumakwel's wife being rescued from banishment by a crocodile on whose back she rode from an island off the coast of Antique to Dipolog, Zamboanga; or of the beautiful Alayon about to be hacked in half by a warrior but saved by a poet's instant decision . . .²⁵⁸

In *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*, Homer set down in powerful poetry the oral traditions of his people. Sight unseen he described many wonderful palaces. Only centuries later after many excavations did archeologists discover the real remains of what he wrote about, which, stripped of myth, gave truth to his stories.

I can imagine the expression of amused tolerance on the faces of Maragtas skeptics, but, perhaps, if they dug a man-made harbor on the site of one of legend, they would see some 60 ft. or more below the ground the debris of shipwrecked Arab dhows, Chinese junks, Moro kumpits, and Malayan barangays, relics of an active maritime past. They should not dig on Malandog where the marker is. The soil there is also several feet of sedimentation. Artesian well-drillers cannot get water there. They always hit bedrock, the reefs of what the present Malandog really was before it was silted – a rugged, rocky sea coast.

But if they dug farther inland some two or more kilometers eastward near Alayon's ²⁵⁹ spring with its constant flow of strong clear water even at the height of the dry season, they might still find many artifacts left there by that vanished civilization which can support the Sumakwelan legend and restore it to what it was in the first place: history! (all rights reserved.)

The Augustinian Fathers in Sibalom, Antique ²⁶⁰

(1732-1906)

Sibalom was founded as a parish in 1732. At that time Sibalom was a flourishing little settlement of about two thousand inhabitants at the site on the northwestern part of the present town which was then called Barabanua. The following were the mission appointments:

Mission XLIX - 1737

1740 - Fr. Jose Celfa: A native of Alcira, province of Valencia, he was born in 1710. He made his religious profession in the convent of Alcira in the year 1727. He was head of the ministry of Sibalom and Bugasong in 1740 and Minister of Batan in 1744. He died in 1746.

1744 - Fr. Antonio Lopez: He was from Arcos of the province of Cadiz. He was born in 1701 and pronounced his vows in the convent of Sevilla in 1718. Upon his arrival in the Philippines, he was assigned to the Visayas, where he became parish priest of Cabatuan in 1740 and again in 1756. He administered from 1744 to 1745 the parishes of Bugasong and Sibalom; from 1745 to 1750 Sibalom again jointly with Hamtik. Then he was transferred to Oton. He was assigned to Pan-ay (Capiz) in 1753 and to Maasin in 1762, where he also became Visitador of the Augustinian province. He died in Maasin in 1767.

Mission LII - 1747

1753- The 52nd mission brought only one priest to Sibalom. This was Fr. Santiago Rodriguez who came to this parish in 1753. Fr. Rodriguez was born in Padilla de Arriba, Burgos, in 1720. He professed in 1739 and upon arrival in Manila he was sent as minister to Bugasong in 1750, to Sibalom in 1753, to Miag-ao in 1754, to Cabatuan first in 1762 and again in 1779. He served in Sta. Barbara first in 1769 and in Jaro in 1777. He returned to Santa Barbara in 1790 and died there in 1792. Fr. Santiago Rodriguez was twice honored with the position of Prior Vocal.

Mission LIII - 1752

1754- Fr. Jose Valis or Valles: He was born in Arenys del Mar, province of Barcelona in 1721, and professed in that convent in 1737. He was Minister of Sibalom in 1754, of Hantique ²⁶¹ in 1756 and of Igaras from 1759 to 1765. Afterwards his stay in the Visayas became one misfortune after another. First, he was captured by the Moros. Later, he was ransomed. Then in the company of P. Callazo he left for Leyte and there he died in the hands of Hilongos insurgents in 1772.

1756 - One other member of the 54th mission served in Sibalom. He was Fr. Manuel Rodriguez, a Portuguese, who was born in Chaynos in 1723. He professed in the college at Valladolid in 1749. He was minister of Boljoon in 1753, of Sibalom in 1756, and of Dumalag in 1759. Aside from Hantique in 1765, he served in 4 towns of Central Iloilo, viz., Dumangas in 1762, Maasin in 1769, and Pototan in

1773. Lastly, he was parish priest in Santa Barbara where he died in 1781.

Mission LIV - 1759

1759 - Fr. Jose Balaquier was born in Castellon de la Plana. He made his vows in Valencia in 1735. From 1751, he was *cura* in Dumangas and Lambunao until 1759 to 1763 when he was assigned to Sibalom. He died in Dumangas in 1765.

1760 - Fr. Alipio Avenia

Mission LV - 1754

1763 - Fr. Jose Ameros was born in Viar, of the province of Valencia in 1733. He entered the College of Valladolid in 1750 at the age of 17 years. In 1754 he came with the Augustinian Mission to the Philippines where he was assigned as interim parish priest in Dumarao in 1759. He was in Sibalom in 1763. He was assigned to Bugason in 1765. After four years he was sent back to Sibalom in 1769. He returned to Bugason in 1773 and died there in 1774.

1765 - Fr. Tomas Ruiz: The birthplace of this religious is the town of Muro in the province of Alicante. He studied at the convent of Alcoy in 1751. He came to the Philippines in 1754 and he was in Hantique again in 1769. He was one of the few Spanish Augustinian fathers who was very fluent in Visayan. He ministered in Tigbauan from 1774 up to the time of his death in 1782.

1769 - Fr. Jose Ameros. (Also in 1763).

1773 - Fr. Nicolas Aniceto de la Concepcion: He was the son of the town of Benacigos in the province of Castellon de la Plana, where he was born in 1734. He made his religious vows in the College of Valladolid in 1751. He came to the Philippines in 1754 and administered with great credit to the habit he wore the ministries of Boljoon in 1759, Cagayancillo, the tiny island southwest of Panay on the Sulu Sea, in 1769. He was three times assigned to Sibalom; first in 1774 together with Hantique to 1781; to Sibalom again in 1781 but no longer with Hantique up to 1789 and reappointed again to Sibalom from 1789 to 1791. He served in Janiuay in 1797 and died in Alimodian in 1808.

1775 - Fr. Andres Ontiveros. He was a native of Gaia, Caceres province, where he was born in 1740. He made his profession in Salamanca in 1761. Like Father Tomas Ruiz he spoke Visayan like a native. He was named minister of Dumarao in 1769, of Dumangas in 1773, of Sibalom in 1775 and of Lambunao and Calinog in 1779. He returned to Dumarao in 1780 and stayed there till his death in 1795.

1781 - Fr. Nicolas Aniceto de la Concepcion.

1789 - Fr. Nicolas Aniceto de la Concepcion.

1791 - Fr. Jose Abollo. He stayed in Sibalom 15 years. He was born in Roa (Burgos) in 1765 and was in the College of

Valladolid in 1784. He was parish priest of Sibalom in 1791 up to 1806. From 1806 to 1818, the year of his death, he was rector of the College of Valladolid.

1806 - Fr. Francisco Perez. He was parish priest of Sibalom in 1806, and of San Joaquin in 1807. He administered the towns of Dumalag and Dumangas in 1816 and 1820 respectively and that of Miag-ao from 1829 to 1864. (More about him on the chapter "El Viejo de Miag-ao.")

1806 - 1831 - No Spanish Augustinian priest was assigned to Sibalom. It was the height of secularization and a native priest of Filipino-Chinese-Spanish descent from Ibajay named Hermogenes Magallanes was assigned to Sibalom in 1813. He stayed till 1831. His parents and a younger sister Tomasa came with him to Sibalom. She married a man from Central Luzon who was at that time a merchant in Miag-ao. His name was Gregorio Morales. This Gregorio Morales became a gobernadorcillo and founding father of the prominent families of Sibalom. (cf. Arbol Cronologico of the Morales family).

1831 - Fr. Blas Fernandez: Sta. Maria de Ordes (Orense) was the birthplace of this religious in 1802. He professed in the College of Valladolid in 1821. He arrived in the Philippines in 1827. Four years later in 1831, he took charge of the parish of Sibalom. In 1832, he was named parish priest of San Joaquin. In 1835 he came to the convent of San Pablo as vice-prior, and in 1837 he became Prior Vocal. He was parish priest of Oton when he died there on November 23, 1843.

- 1832 - **Salustiano Fernandez Montes:** He was born in the town of Alcazar de Don Juan in the province of Ciudad Real. He became a religious in the Convent of Manila where he pronounced his monastic vows on December 24, 1826. By order of his Superior he was sent to the Island of Panay where he successively administered the parishes first of Sibonga in 1831 and of Sibalom in 1832. He died in the town of San Jose de Buenavista in 1838.
- 1839 - **Fr. Julian Nuñez:** He was a professed son of the Convent of Santiago (Galicia) since 1825, when on his own personal petition he was admitted in 1827 to the province of Santo Nombre de Jesus de Filipinas. He was parish priest in 1831 of the towns of San Jose and San Pedro in the province of Antique; then of Lambunao in 1832. In 1839 he was transferred to Sibalom. At this time the town's population had grown to 7,126. Father Nuñez stayed in Sibalom for 12 years, until 1851 when he was assigned to Dingle until 1856. Then he was sent to Barotac Viejo. In 1861 he was vice-prior of the Convent of San Pablo where he died on the 13th of October 1866.
- 1845 - **Father Felipe Garcia.** This erudite religious was born in the Ferrol in the year 1818. He arrived in Manila on November 28, 1836. When he finished his studies he was appointed to the Visayas, where he first managed the parish of San Pedro, Antique and of Sibalom and Egaña in 1840. The town and its arrabal had by 1848 a combined population of 12,922. He served in San Joaquin in 1851 and in Dao (Capiz) from 1855-1862. Wherever he went he pur-

sued with great zeal a research on the early and contemporary history of the towns where he stayed. He was a poet, a painter and a historian. His books full of historical data and interspersed with poetic compositions bore the exquisite drawings and illustrations done by this talented author-priest.

- 1854 - **Fr. Eusebio Deza.** He was born in Valladolid in 1825, and took the habit of the Augustinian Order in the college of the same city on the 7th of March, 1841. He was parish priest of San Jose de Buenavista in 1847. He was parish priest of Sibalom for 16 years, from 1854 up to the time of his death on the 28th of November 1870. He was the first Augustinian priest to die in Sibalom.
- 1872 - **Fr. Amando Hierro:** He was a Galician from Villarino. He was born in 1831 and he professed in the college at Valladolid in 1854. After finishing his studies, he received the holy orders in Manila after which he was ordered by his superiors to the Visayas. As soon as he became very fluent in the dialect he administered the curacy of Ivisan in 1859, of Panitan in 1861 and of Sibalom in 1872. He was the conventual in Manila in 1874, in Guadalupe in 1875 and in Pototan in 1876. He returned to Spain in 1877 where not much later he obtained from Rome permission for his secularization.
- 1874 - **Fr. Lucas Moral:** He was a native of the town of Mucientes of the province of Valladolid where he was born in 1834. He professed in the college of the same city on July

26, 1853. Assigned to the Visayas he administered the parishes of San Jose de Buenvista in 1859 and that of Sibalom from 1874 to October 21, 1882 when he died. He was vicar provincial of the province of Antique.

- 1884 - **Fr. Alipio Azpitarte:** Durango (Vizcaya) is the birthplace of this virtuous Augustinian in the year 1847. He took the Augustinian habit in Valladolid in 1864, and without finishing a literary career, he arrived in these islands in 1868 where he continued his studies and was ordained priest in Manila in 1870. Much later he was assigned to the province of Antique where he managed with admirable expertise the parishes of Dao (1872), San Jose de Buenavista in 1874 and that of Sibalom from 1884 to 1889.

He was an eloquent preacher, and well-known for his assiduity in bringing his parishioners to confession. He was very zealous in the saving of souls. He had the distinction of baptizing babies in Sibalom who as young men held responsible offices in the government, one of whom rose to national prominence. He was prior Vocal in 1885, Definitor of the Province in 1889, Examiner (of young priests) in the Visayan dialect, and Vicar Provincial. Lastly, he was Director of the Home of the Orphans in Mandaluyong in 1893. His death on March 25, 1900 was deeply mourned by his fellow Augustinians.

- 1887 - **Fr. Canuto Baceta:** He was from Villa de Durango (Vizcaya). He took his vows in the college at Valladolid in the month of February 1852. In 1859 he was ordered to

Maasin. He administered the parish of San Pedro (in Antique) in 1866, until 1884, a period of 18 years. He died in Sibalom on the 26th of August, 1887.

1889 - **Fr. Castro Bringas:** He was born in the town of Berguenda (Alava) on July 1, 1861. He took the Augustinian habit in the college at Valladolid in 1880 and began his ecclesiastical studies which he completed at the Escorial and from where he sailed to the Philippines. In 1889, he was named *interino* in Sibalom, regent of the parish of Dao (Antique) and in the following years, he was successively parish priest of San Jose de Buenavista (1892), of Bugasong in 1895, and of San Pedro in 1894 and in 1898. He was conventual in Macao from 1898 to 1900. No mention is made of the date of his death.

1889 - 1899 - **Fr. Lorenzo Diaz:** His memory up to World War II was revered by the old people of Sibalom. He was born in Tolivia (Asturias) in 1845. He professed in Valladolid in 1865, and was ordained sub-deacon in 1869 in Manila. He was very fluent in the dialect. He served as curate in Passi in 1878 and later took charge of the parishes of Patnongon and Sibalom in 1881 and 1889. He was also examiner of the dialect proficiency of new priests. When the revolution broke out in 1898, he had completed the construction of a beautiful convent in Sibalom which was unfortunately burned down during World War II.

1893 - On the instance of the Augustinian Provincial Juan Zallo, O.S.A., San Remigio was separated from Sibalom and declared an independent parish on December 12, 1893.²⁶²

Its parish priest in 1894 was P. Felipe Carranza. In 1895 it was P. Jose Giraldez, O.S.A.

1905 - Fr. Joaquin Geijo: ²⁶³ Sibalom was not completely abandoned after the revolution. In 1905, a few years after peace was declared, Fr. Joaquin Geijo took charge of the parish until it was turned over to secular clergy after the second decade of the twentieth century.