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Doctrina Christiana

**The First Book Printed in the Philippines.
Manila, 1593. A Facsimile of the Copy in
the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection.
Library of Congress, Washington.**

With an Introductory Essay

By

Edwin Wolf 2nd

Acknowledgements

I want here to express my thanks and appreciation to Mr. Lessing J. Rosenwald, through whose kindness this unique *Doctrina* was presented to the Library of Congress and with whom the idea of this publication originated. His interest and enthusiasm made possible my work, and his friendly advice and encouragement have been both valuable and heart-warming.

I also wish to thank others who have given me great assistance. They are Dr. A.S.W. Rosenbach to whom I continually turned for advice, Dr. Lawrence C. Wroth of the John Carter Brown Library and Dr. Leslie W. Dunlap of the Library of Congress who very kindly read over my manuscript and gave me the benefit of their suggestions and criticisms, Mr. David C. Mearns and Miss Elsie Rackstraw of the Library of Congress and Mrs. Ruth Lapham Butler of the Ayer Collection of the Newberry Library who so freely and generously made available to me the great collections of works on the Philippines in their libraries, Dr. John H. Powell of the Free Library of Philadelphia who helped me find reference books of the utmost importance, and the many librarians who courteously answered written queries about early Philippine material. EDWIN WOLF 2ND.

[1]

Doctrina Christiana

The first book printed in the Philippines has been the object of a hunt which has extended from Manila to Berlin, and from Italy to Chile, for four hundred and fifty years. The patient research of scholars, the scraps of evidence found in books and archives, the amazingly accurate hypotheses of bibliographers who have sifted the material so painstakingly gathered together, combine to make its history a bookish detective story par excellence.

It is easy when a prisoner has been arrested and brought to the dock to give details of his complexion, height, characteristics and identifying marks, to fingerprint him and to photograph him, but how inadequate was the description before his capture, how frequently did false scents draw the pursuer off the right track! It is with this in mind that we examine the subject of this investigation, remembering that it has not been done before in detail. And, to complete the case, the book has been photographed in its entirety and its facsimile herewith published.

In studying the *Doctrina Christiana* of 1593 there are four general problems which we shall discuss. First, we shall give a physical description of the book. Secondly, we shall trace chronologically the bibliographical history of the *Doctrina*, that is, we shall record the available evidence which shows that it was the first book printed in the Philippines, and weigh the testimonies which state or imply to the contrary. Thirdly, we shall try to establish the authorship of the text, and lastly, we shall discuss the actual printing.

It hardly needs to be told why so few of the incunabula of the Philippines have survived. The paper on which they were printed was one of [2] the most destructible papers ever used in book production. The native worms and insects thrived on it, and the heat and dampness took their

slower but equally certain toll. Add to these enemies the acts of providence of which the Philippines have received more than their share—earthquake, fire and flood—and the man-made devastations of war, combined with the fact that there was no systematic attempt made in the Philippines to preserve in archives and libraries the records of the past, and it can well be understood why a scant handful of cradle-books have been preserved. The two fires of 1603 alone, which burned the Dominican convent in Manila to the ground and consumed the whole of Binondo just outside the walls, must have played untold havoc upon the records of the early missionaries. Perhaps the only copies of early Philippine books which exist today, unchronicled and forgotten, are those which were sent to Europe in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, and may now be lying uncatalogued in some library there.

One copy of this *Doctrina* was sent to Philip II by the Governor of the Philippines in 1593; and in 1785 a Jesuit philologist, Hervas y Panduro, printed Tagalog texts from a then extant copy. Yet, since that time no example is recorded as having been seen by bibliographer or historian. The provenance of the present one is but imperfectly known. In the spring of 1946 William H. Schab, a New York dealer, was in Paris, and heard through a friend of the existence of a 1593 Manila book. He expressed such incredulity at this information that his friend, feeling his integrity impugned, telephoned the owner then and there, and confirmed the unbelievable "1593." Delighted and enthused, Schab arranged to meet him, found that he was a Paris bookseller and collector who specialized in Pacific imprints and was fully aware of the importance of the volume, and induced him to sell the precious *Doctrina*. He brought it back with him to the United States and offered it to Lessing J. Rosenwald, who promptly purchased it and presented it to the Library of Congress. Where [3] the book had been before it reached Paris we do not know. Perhaps it is the very copy sent to Philip II, perhaps the copy from which Hervas got his text. Indeed, it may have been churned to the surface by the late Civil War in Spain, and sent from there to France. In the course of years from similar sources may come other books to throw more light upon the only too poorly documented history of the establishment of printing in the Philippine Islands.

The Physical Description

Let us first examine the book as it appears before us. The title-page reads:

Doctrina Christiana, en
lengua española y tagala, co:
regida por los Religiosos de las
ordenes Impressa con licencia, en
S. Gabriel de la orden de S. Domingo
En Manila. 1593. 

The book, printed in Gothic letters and Tagalog¹ characters on paper made from the paper mulberry, now browned and brittle with age, consists of thirty-eight leaves, comprising a title-page as above, under a woodcut² of St. Dominic, with the verso originally blank, but in this copy bearing the contemporary manuscript inscription, *Tassada en dos rreales*, signed *Juan de Cuellar*; and seventy-four pages of text in Spanish, Tagalog transliterated into roman letters, and Tagalog in Tagalog characters. The size of the volume, which is unbound, is 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ by 7 inches, [4]although individual leaves vary somewhat due to chipping. Some of the leaves have become separated from their complements, but enough remain in the original stitching to indicate that the book was originally made up in four gatherings, the first of twelve leaves, the second of ten, the third of ten, and the fourth of six. Although the book is of the size called quarto, the method of printing must have been page by page, so it is doubtful that each sheet was folded twice in the usual quartomanner, but more probable that it was printed four pages to a sheet of paper approximately 9 $\frac{1}{8}$ by 14 inches, which was folded once.

The volume is printed throughout by the xylographic method, that is to say, each page of text is printed from one wood-block which was carved by hand. Along the inner margins of some pages are vertical lines which were made by the inked edge of the block, and the grain of the wood has caused striations to appear in the printed portions throughout. The unevenness of the impression indicates that the pages were printed in some primitive manner without the help of a conventional press.

The paper, which is one of the distinctive features of most old Oriental books, has been discussed at length by Pardo de Taverain in his study of early Philippine printing, and we can do no better than translate the relevant passage in full:

“I have said before that the material composition of our books is inferior. The imprints before 1830 were made on a paper called by some rice paper, by others silk paper, and by still others China paper, according to their taste. It is detestable, brittle, without consistency or resistance, and was called rice paper because it was supposed to be made from that grain. It was the only kind then used in the Philippines, not only for

printing, but for all manner of writing, letters, etc., and it is even recorded that in 1874 when tobacco was a state monopoly, cigarettes were made with this paper, and that the Indians and Chinese preferred it (and perhaps they still do) to rag paper or other kinds, because of the horrible taste it gives the tobacco.

“In China they commonly made paper of bamboo, but more principally from cotton and a plant which travellers have cited only by its common name, which they transcribe in various ways, calling it *kochu*, *kotsu*, or *kotzu*. Today it is known that this plant is an ulmacea (*Broussonetia papyrifera*) from a mash of which they [5] still make cloth in Japan. Cotton paper is superior to it, and naturally more expensive; but the paper of inferior quality which was received in Manila, where nothing was imported regularly but common articles of low price, was of *kotsu*. As all Chinese-made paper it was coated with alum, the finer [the paper] the thicker [the coating], for the purpose of whitening it and making the surface smooth, a deplorable business, for it made the paper very moisture absorbent, a condition fatal in such a humid climate as in these islands. Moreover, as the alum used is impure and contains a large proportion of iron salts, the humidity and weather oxidize it which finally darkens the paper, so that Philippine books present a coloration which runs the gamut of tones from the color of bone to that of dark cinnamon.”³

Because the *Doctrina Christiana*, which may well be translated “The Teachings of Christianity,” contains the basic elements of the religion which the missionaries were trying to spread among the unbaptized in the remote regions of the world, it was the most useful handbook they had. A summary of the contents of the present edition shows the fundamental character of the work. After a syllabary comes the Pater Noster, the primary and most popular prayer of Christianity. Then follow the Ave Maria, Credo, Salve Regina, Articles of Faith, Ten Commandments, Commandments of the Holy Church, Sacraments of the Holy Church, Seven Mortal Sins, Fourteen Works of Charity, Confession and Catechism. Here in a small compass is presented the simplest, most easily learned and most essential tenets of the Catholic Church.

So useful was the *Doctrina* considered as a guide for those who had just been, or were about to be, converted that the missionary fathers placed it in most cases foremost among the books necessary to have in print in a strange land. It is generally accepted today, although no extant copy is known, that the first book printed in Mexico⁴ in 1539 was a *Doctrina* in Mexican and Spanish. Recent research has shown that the second book printed by the pioneer Jesuit press at Goa, in India, in 1557 was St. Francis Xavier’s *Doutrina Christão*⁵ in the Malay language, of which also no copy has yet been located. But there are copies of the first book to come from a South American press, another *Doctrina*⁶ printed in [6] the native and Spanish languages at Lima in 1584. So the choice of this book as the first to be printed at Manila follows a widespread precedent.

We have then a book, the *Doctrina Christiana*, in Spanish and Tagalog, corrected by priests of more than one order—and this is important in tracing the authorship of the work—and printed by the xylographic method with license at Manila at the Dominican Church of San Gabriel in 1593. So much we get from the title, and in itself it is a fairly complete story, but from the date of its issue until the present time that very fundamental information has not been completely recorded.

The Bibliographical History

In tracing our clues down through the years, we find at the very beginning the most valuable evidence which has been uncovered, short of the book itself. From Manila on June 20, 1593, the Governor of the Philippines, Gomez Perez Dasmariñas, wrote a letter to Philip II of Spain in which he said:

“Sire, in the name of Your Majesty, I have for this once, because of the existing great need, granted a license for the printing of the *Doctrinas Christianas*, herewith enclosed—one in the Tagalog language, which is the native and best of these islands, and the other in Chinese—from which I hope great benefits will result in the conversion and instruction of the peoples of both nations; and because the lands of the Indies are on a larger scale in everything and things more expensive, I have set the price of them at four reales a piece, until Your Majesty is pleased to decree in full what is to be done.”

This states unequivocally that two books were printed at Manila some time before June 20, 1593, one of which was the *Doctrina* in Tagalog, and the other the same work in Chinese. Although we are chiefly concerned here with the former, the fact that they were produced at about the same time and probably at the same place makes it necessary to trace the history of both in order to reconstruct the circumstances surrounding [7] the production of the one. Of the Chinese *Doctrina* no copy has yet come to light, and except for two 1593 references, there are no records of its existence.

Another document⁸ of 1593 verifies the information given in the letter of Dasmariñas, differing from it only in one detail. In the Archives of the Indies was found a manuscript account of 1593 listing books written in the Philippines, which says:

“There have been printed primers and catechisms of the faith, one in Spanish and Tagalog, which is the native language, and the other in Chinese, which are being sent to Your Majesty, the Tagalog priced at two reales and the Chinese at four, which is hoped will be of great benefit.”

The accounts of the printing of two *Doctrinas* contained in these documents confirm some of the information of the title and add a bit more. First, the letter says that the book was printed by permission given by the Governor, which agrees with the “with license” of the title, “for this once because of the existing great need.” By a royal cedula⁹ of September 21, 1556, which was promulgated again on August 14, 1560, it had been ordered that Justices “not consent to or permit to be printed or sold any book containing material concerning the Indies without having special license sent by your Royal Council of the Indies,” and on May 8, 1584 this was implemented by the further order “that when any grammar or dictionary of the language of the Indies be made it shall not be published, or printed or used unless it has first been examined by the Bishop and seen by the Royal Audiencia.” This latter portion was applied specifically to the Philippines in a letter¹⁰ from Philip II to the Audiencia of Manila, also dated May 8, 1584, to which further reference will be made. It can be gathered from Dasmariñas’ implied apology that he had never before given such a license, and, since he had arrived in the Philippines in 1590, that no books had been printed between that time and the licensing of the *Doctrinas*. It is, moreover, likely that if any similar books had been [8] printed during the administrations of his predecessors he would have mentioned the fact as a precedent for acting contrary to the cédulas.

According to Dasmariñas he had priced the books at four reales a piece, which followed the regular Spanish procedure, under which books were subject to price control. The Governor, it will be noted, also apologized for the high price he was forced to set, giving general high prices¹¹ as his excuse. Yet, while the appraisal of four reales for this book was high compared to the prevailing scale in Spain, it was not high compared to prices allowed in Mexico. On June 6, 1542 the Emperor had given the Casa de Cromberger, the first printing-house in Mexico, permission¹² to sell books printed there at seventeen maravedís a sheet, or exactly one half a real. If we assume that, although the *Doctrina* had been printed page by page, it was quarto in size and so appraised on the basis of eight pages to a sheet, we find that the price per sheet comes to about fourteen maravedís, or less than half a real. However, a contradiction occurs between the letter of Dasmariñas and this copy of the *Doctrina*, supported by the other 1593 document. On the verso of the title, Juan de Cuellar,¹³ the Governor's secretary and the logical person to sign the official valuation, gives the price as two reales, and the 1593 account, while agreeing with the letter as far as the Chinese *Doctrina* is concerned, also lists the price of the Tagalog *Doctrina* as two reales. It is impossible to say what caused the discrepancy; perhaps it was a decision on Dasmariñas' part to lower the cost, notwithstanding inflationary values, in order to make the book more readily available for the natives who were not economically as well off as the Chinese, or it could be that after the letter had been written it was noticed that the Chinese volume was larger than the Tagalog one, and some adjustment made. In any event, the price of this *Doctrina* was finally set at two reales, making it less than half the price allowed in Mexico fifty years before.

The evidence of the two 1593 documents would seem conclusive [9] with regard to printing in 1593, but witnesses were not long in appearing who stated something quite different. The earliest of these was Pedro Chirino,¹⁴ a Jesuit priest, who came to the Philippines with Dasmariñas in 1590. He went back to Europe in 1602, and while there had a history of the Philippines printed at Rome in 1604. In 1606 he returned to the islands, where he died in 1635. He left unpublished the manuscript of another and more detailed history, dated 1610, which contains a most significant passage, where, after speaking of various early writers in native languages, he continues:

“Those who printed first were; P. Fr. Juan de Villanueva of the Order of St. Augustine [who printed] certain little tracts, and P. Fr. Francisco de San Joseph of the Order of St. Dominic [who printed] larger things of more bulk.”¹⁵

Concerning this Juan de Villanueva¹⁶ very little indeed is known. From what has been recorded it would seem that there were two Augustinians of the same name who were in the Philippines before 1600. The first of these was a secular priest who came to Cebú about 1566, may have taken the Augustinian habit some time after his arrival, and died not long after 1569. The other Juan de Villanueva, the date of whose arrival is unknown, was in Lubao in 1590, in Hagonoy in 1593, and prior of Batangas from 1596 until his death in 1599. Of the two there can be no doubt but that Chirino referred to the second one. But, apart from Chirino's note, there is no record anywhere that works by him existed, nor do the Augustinian chroniclers themselves, except for the modern Santiago Velasco who knew of Chirino's citation, mention him as a linguist or a writer. The only possibility is that between 1593 and 1599 Villanueva had printed some small xylographic books no copies and no further record of which have appeared.

As for Francisco de San Joseph, or Blancas de San José as he is more frequently called, there are other references to his part in the establishment of printing in the islands. From information doubtless obtained from [10] Diego Aduarte, then in Spain, Alonso Fernandez wrote in his ecclesiastical history, printed at Toledo in 1611:

“Father Fr. Francisco Blancas printed in the Tagalog language and characters a book of Our Lady of the Rosary in the year 1602, which was the first book that was printed there of that or any other material. After this he printed another of the sacraments in the language of the Philippines, in both characters, theirs and ours, from which the greatest results have been achieved.”¹⁷

Two years later the same author published at Madrid an account¹⁸ of the miracles performed by the Rosary of the Virgin, in which he included a list of “Of some writers of the Order of St. Dominic who were living in this year 1612,” and gave the same information as above, adding only that the printing took place in Bataan.

Diego Aduarte,¹⁹ whose history of the Dominican province of the Philippines is one of the best contemporary ones written, bears out these statements of which he was most probably the source. Aduarte came to the islands in company with his close friend Blancas de San José in 1595, went back to Spain as procurator of his order in 1607, and returned to Manila in 1628, staying in the Orient until his death in 1636. His history was continued and edited after his death by a fellow Dominican, Domingo Gonçalez, who had it printed in 1640. Summarizing the life and accomplishments of Blancas de San José, Aduarte wrote:

“So he was sent to Bataan, which is near there [Manila], where he learned the language of the Indians, called Tagalog, which is the most common in this country and is used among the Indians for many leagues around the city. So rapid was his study of the language that he began to preach in it within three months, and could teach it to others in six.... And believing that he was the instrument needed to bring the holy gospel to the Indians, he spared no pains to investigate the fitness of their words, the way to use them, and all the rest so that he could succeed in mastering it.... He wrote many books of devotion for them, and since there was no printing in these islands, and no one who understood it or who was a journeyman printer, he planned to have it done through a Chinaman, a good Christian, who, seeing that the books of P. Fr. Francisco were sure to be of great use, bestowed so much care upon this undertaking that he finally succeeded, aided by those who told him whatever they knew about it, in learning everything necessary to do printing; and he printed [11] these books. . . . He [Blancas de San José] printed a grammar to learn the Tagalog language, a memorial of the Christian life, a book on the four last things, another on the preparation for the communion, a confessionary, another on the mysteries of the Rosary of Our Lady, and another to teach the Tagalog Indians the Spanish language, and he left many very pious and curious works in the language of these Indians.”²⁰

Blancas de San José,²¹ as we have noted, came to the Philippines in 1595. He was at Abucay in Bataan from 1598 until 1602, and then spent several years in and about Manila, preaching to the Indians and the Chinese, whose language he also mastered. In 1614 he set out for Spain, but died on the voyage before reaching Mexico. Of the books which he is said to have had printed, only two are known to be extant, the *Arte y Reglas de la Lengva Tagala*²² and the *Librong Pagaaralan*

*nang manga Tagalog nang uicang Castilla*²³ (or *Libro en que aprendan los Tagalos, la lengua Castellana*), both printed at Bataan in 1610, and until the discovery of the present *Doctrina* and the *Ordinationes* of 1604 the earliest surviving Philippine imprints known.

We have not cited here in detail the account of Juan Lopez²⁴ in the fifth part of his history of the Dominicans, because, although it was printed nineteen years before the appearance of Aduarte's work, the information therein contained regarding the Philippines was acknowledgedly obtained from the unfinished manuscript which Aduarte had with him in Spain. The pertinent passages add nothing to Aduarte's information, and even the wording is reminiscent of his.

The first suggestion that early Philippine books may have been printed from wood-blocks occurred in Quétif and Echard's bibliography of Dominican writers printed at Paris in 1719. There, after listing eight works by Blancas de San José, they add:

"He published all these in the Philippines with the help of a Chinese Christian using Chinese blocks, for in his day European typographers had not yet arrived in those islands, nor did they have types for their language."²⁵

[12]

This was an amazing suggestion, for as far as we know the bibliographers who made it had not actually seen the books; nor is it entirely true. The first two works listed are two books we know were printed typographically in 1610. The sixth is *De los misterios del Rosario de nuestra Señora Tagalice*, the book referred to by Fernández as having been printed in 1602, and generally accepted as being from movable type, although no copy has been discovered to prove it. And yet, it is not at all impossible that some time before 1602 Blancas de San José had some of his writings printed from blocks. In any event, the idea, later developed by Medina and Retana, that xylography was used before a real printing-press was established, may have come from this not wholly accurate note.

For almost a hundred and fifty years no historian or bibliographer wrote anything to challenge the basic affirmations of Chirino, Fernández and Aduarte. In the middle of the 18th century, Lorenzo Hervas y Panduro,²⁶ a Jesuit, was forced by the expulsion of the Jesuits from Spain to seek refuge in the Papal States, and took up residence at Cesena. There he began work on a tremendous universal history of the spiritual development of man, into which he wove the results of his philosophical, social and linguistic studies. These last were of particular importance, and Hervas is regarded as the true founder of the science of linguistics and comparative philology. In 1785 he published the eighteenth volume of his massive work, the *Origine, formazione, meccanismo, ed armonia degl' idiomi*, in which he printed a Tagalog Ave Maria as written in 1593, with the note:

"The Ave Maria in the Tagalog of 1593 is to be read in the Tagalog-Spanish *Doctrina Christiana* which was printed in Tagalog and roman characters by the Dominican fathers in their printing-house at Manila in the year 1593."²⁷

In 1787 he finished his twenty-first volume, *Saggio pratico*,²⁸ which was another philological study, including the Pater Noster in over three hundred languages and dialects, among them Tagalog, again from the 1593 *Doctrina*. Here, then, is ample proof that a copy of this book was known [13] to Hervas in 1785, and the only information which his loose transcription of the title failed to give was that the volume was “corrected by members of the orders,” that it was printed with license, and that it was printed at San Gabriel.

At the beginning of the following century two German scholars, familiar with Hervas’ writings, noted the 1593 *Doctrina*. Franz Carl Alter,²⁹ in his monograph on the Tagalog language, printed the Ave Maria from the text which had appeared in 1785, and Johann Christoph Adelung,³⁰ in his *Mithridates*, a comprehensive study of languages, included the Tagalog Pater Noster from the *Saggio pratico* of 1787. The latter also listed in a short bibliography of the Tagalog language the *Doctrina* of 1593, giving exactly the same information about it that Hervas had. Neither of these men apparently saw a copy of the book, limiting themselves to extracts from Hervas, but they perpetuated an earlier reference of the utmost importance.

Shortly after the two Germans published their notices of the 1593 *Doctrina* an entry appeared of a book printed at Manila in 1581. José Mariano Beristain y Sousa, a learned Mexican writer, issued in 1819–21 a bibliography of Spanish-American books, in which he listed alphabetically the authors, giving a short biography of each and adding a list of his works. Under Juande Quiñones we find:

“‘Arte y Vocabulario de la Lengua Tagala,’ Imp. en Manila, 1581.”³¹

No specific authority is given for this entry, but in his sketch of the life of Quiñones Beristain cited as sources, Juande Grijalva, Nicolás Antonio, Gaspar de San Agustín, and José Sicardo. It would seem logical that one of these must have mentioned such a work as printed in Manila in 1581, but in tracing down the sources no such precise notice is found.

Grijalva simply said that Quiñones “concerned himself with Tagalog and made a vocabulary and grammar of it.”³² Antonio³³ referred to [14] Grijalva, and carried the matter no further. San Agustín, describing the Franciscan chapter of 1578, wrote:

“It was determined moreover in this chapter that P. Fr. Juan de Quiñones, prior of the Convent of Taal in Tagalos, and Fr. Diego de Ochoa, prior of Bacolor in Pampanga, should compose and fashion grammars, dictionaries, and confessionaries in the two languages [respectively Tagalog and Pampanga] in which they had ventured; which they executed very promptly and well, and these were of great use to those who came to these islands, for they had these by which they could study the languages.”³⁴

Later, San Agustín, again mentioning Quiñones, referred to Grijalva, and added as an additional source for his information Tomás de Herrera. Sicardo³⁵ added nothing new. Herrera, not cited directly by Beristain, may however have been the source from which the “Imp.” of his entry came. Herrera wrote:

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