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## Angels in Stone, by Galende

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But there is a disconcerting note to the whole book. It opens like a dyptich of contrasts. When Guillermo presents social realism elsewhere one gets a sense that here, indeed, are artists working within a movement. Here is Courbet living out his dictum *faire de l'art vivant* or Daumier his motto *Il faut etre de son temps*; there are Rivera, Siqueiros, and Orozco fired by zeal for the Mexican Revolution. But when Guillermo presents the Philippine side of the dyptich, and lapses into formal and thematic considerations, one does not get a sense that the social realists of the Philippines are fired with one all-encompassing vision such that they speak with one voice when they "expose or lay bare the true conditions of Philippine society as well as point out solutions by which these conditions are changed and transcended to achieve a truly human order" (p. 50). Could it be a deliberate oversight of the author that she does not discuss the political underpinnings of the social realists' art, or is this in fact the state of the art: visionaries who see clearly what's wrong, who each have their solution, but have yet to gel social realism as a movement?

The book's last paragraph dates it or will date it. The original referent seems to have been the Marcos regime, the before-EDSA era; but social realities are quickly changing as the Philippines continues to bubble in ferment. Thus the book's last paragraph takes on new meanings: is it prophecy about the future, hence, indictment that the present is not much different from the past? The book concludes: "art, in its social and political dimensions, is a vital part of the historic moment, of lived life in the present struggle, at the same time it projects a vision of a new human order that has inspired our hearts and minds" (p. 110)

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ANGELS IN STONE: THE ARCHITECTURE OF AUGUSTINIAN CHURCHES IN THE PHILIPPINES. By Pedro G. Galende, O.S.A. Manila: Gabriel Formoso Publishing, 1987. 526 pages. illus.

Those who feed on glossy, colorful, if at times vacuous coffee-table books will find Fr. Pedro G. Galende's hefty volume disappointing. The book's pictures are all in uninspiring black and white, many repetitious—facades, buttresses, elevations, and long shots of naves—some poorly taken, betraying the hand of the amateur.

But Fr. Galende has no pretensions to being a professional photographer or an art historian. If anything, his book is the record of an idyll, of a love for the numberless churches which the *gigantones agustinianos*, his predecessors, built in the Philippines. There were some three hundred towns under the tutelage of the Augustinians, Fr. Galende points out, and his book is both town history and art history by way of notes about two hundred or so places where today there stand records of the Augustinians' monument-making and monumental achievement.

Fr. Galende's work is no less monumental.

It took the author a dozen years or so to gather the material for his book, which began as a hobby and became a consuming passion that led him to travel twice through the Philippines at great risks to life and limb. (His chronicle of his travels to Cagayancillo is worthy of the *Crónicas* of old.)

During lulls in his work as principal of the Colegio de San Agustin High School in Dasmariñas Village, Fr. Galende would pack his bags and camera and hie himself off to some obscure Philippine town in search of more pictorial records of Augustinian architecture.

Historical research took him to Spain where he scoured the Archivo General de Indias in Seville and the Augustinians' own archives at Valladolid.

The result of all these exertions is an original contribution to local history and art historiography.

The text itself is divided geographically into sixteen regions or provinces where the Augustinians worked and built. Each region is subdivided into towns, and each subsection is further divided into a brief note on the town's location, a short town history, a history of the construction of the town church, and a description and appreciation of the style of the church. Photographs accompany the text and are not in separate sections as in some books of art history. All these tell us that Fr. Galende's work falls under the rubric of catalogue raisonné, i.e., a definitive catalogue of a particular art subject.

But catalogues, in general, eschew interpretation and herein lies the reason for a feeling of incompleteness about the work. Fr. Galende does not argue forcibly as some art historians do for a particular position vis-a-vis pressing questions concerning local art historiography. V.g. Is there or is there not a regional style to Philippine colonial churches? To what extent was "forced labor" used to build the churches? people were the church builders, were they unschooled as oral tradition and traditional writing suggest? What of craftsmen, were they indios or Chinese or what?

This is not to say that the author does not give a hint as to where his answers may lie, but being argumentative seems not to be his burden. Instead we find a steady stream of data—data that needs to be analyzed. Data that leaves the critic and art historian feeling more and more stymied in his task. If Fr. Galende's historical research is correct, and there seems to be no reason to think otherwise, then we have very little left of structures from the 18th, much less the seventeenth or sixteenth centuries, and so much of the arguments of previous writers should be qualified by the sobering realization that we have been talking about the past 150 years or so and no more!

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