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Villaroel: Father Jose Burgos

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The format is very plain, the style and expression are frequently awkward, with quite a number of misprints. The dilemma is that no publisher thinks he can publish anything more expensive than ₱7.50, and that only a new publisher would take that risk.

The book would be more exactly named as a manual for Philippine Public School libraries, for regulatory provisions and frame-work are exclusively from the Bureau of Public Schools. The terms "Secondary" and "Elementary" might be more precisely distinguished. Still, there is much in the book that is useful for private school libraries on all school levels.

ROBERT J. SUCHAN

FATHER JOSE BURGOS UNIVERSITY STUDENT, by Fidel Villarroel, O.P.
Manila: University of Santo Tomas, 1971. xvii + 121, (127) pp.
Illustrations, Appendix.

There are indications that we are perhaps on the threshold of a new era in Philippine historical writing. New titles continue to appear with some regularity, and happily these for the most part are serious attempts at scholarly research.

One such effort is the present monograph on Father Burgos who was one of the three Roman Catholic priests executed for alleged complicity in the Cavite mutiny of 1872. Originally a doctoral dissertation submitted to the Graduate School of Social Sciences of the University of Santo Tomas, it is a study of Burgos when he was a student at Letran and the University of Santo Tomas.

Based on the academic records preserved in the university archives, Father Villarroel analyzes university life in Manila during the latter half of the nineteenth century—the class schedules, the curriculum, the textbooks, the system of examinations, the teachers, the doctoral investiture, etc. It was a world of intense book learning and mental discipline, where the student came to grips with the method and the content of scholastic philosophy and theology, and canon law. Father Burgos, as the author emphasizes, was at home there, winning academic honors and growing up to be an erudite and respected priest, with a bright future ahead, had death not cut him short within a year after he had won the doctor's degree in canon law—his third, the first two being doctorates in philosophy and in theology. In the absence of authentic information about him, this well documented study can serve as some kind of a biography, especially since Father Burgos never had the opportunity to exercise his priestly ministry as his life did not last beyond his career in the university.

Father Villarroel deserves credit for valuable work well done. He has made accessible the main sources of the life of Burgos, besides allowing us through these documents an insight into the beginnings of the national consciousness of the Filipino people. Unlike the negative picture of the University of Santo Tomas drawn in Rizal's *El filibusterismo*, the "formalistic, dry and repetitions documents" (p. x) present an academic community quite occupied in developing a studentry in the best scholastic traditions. One also begins to realize that what had been a moot question in the earlier colonial history of the Philippines, namely, whether a native-born candidate would be able to develop into a good priest, was, already at that period, a thing of the past. The class lists in which the name of José Burgos appears clearly attest to this.

It is regrettable therefore that several slips should spoil this otherwise important book. One wonders whether the main text of 121 pages should be divided into 22 chapters, the longest of which is 14 pages; would it have been, for example, better to rewrite the first four chapters into just one introductory chapter? Numerous typographical errors distract the reader; for example, on page 12, one reads that the "school-year started on July 2, 1952." Was it not rather 1852? On page 52, we also find a serious printing error: "...the records says..." There are many others and one hopes that these errors will be corrected in a second printing. The bibliography is impressive, but this reviewer thinks an index should have been provided. Perhaps, too, the Hispanicisms that burden the English style could be revised.

Despite all these, however, Father Villarroel has written a much-needed book, and students of Philippine history cannot afford to bypass this work.

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