

Materials on Christianity and Spanish Documents in the Foronda Collection

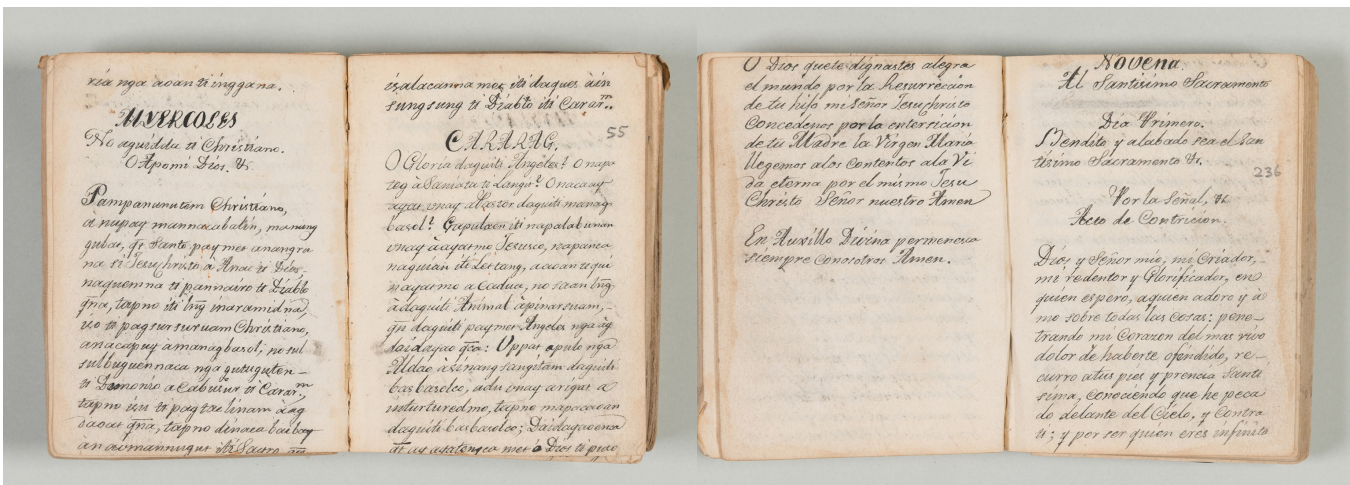
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The Foronda Collection in the library of the Center for Southeast Asian Studies (CSEAS) offers a rich assortment of invaluable material on the history, social sciences, arts, literature, religion and folklore of the Philippines amassed over four decades by Dr. Marcelino Foronda (1907–1997), a renowned Filipino historian and scholar.

I do not specialize in research on the Philippines or even on Southeast Asia. My focus is on the history of Christianity in 16th and 17th century Japan, but it just happens that I am currently conducting research on the preservation of European rare books, historical documents and manuscripts, and in relation to this the Foronda Collection is of special interest to me. I have had the good fortune to examine the 11 manuscripts included in the Collection's roughly 7,000 items. In perusing the contents of those written in Spanish or having to do with Christianity, I found two works which I introduce below to be of particular interest.

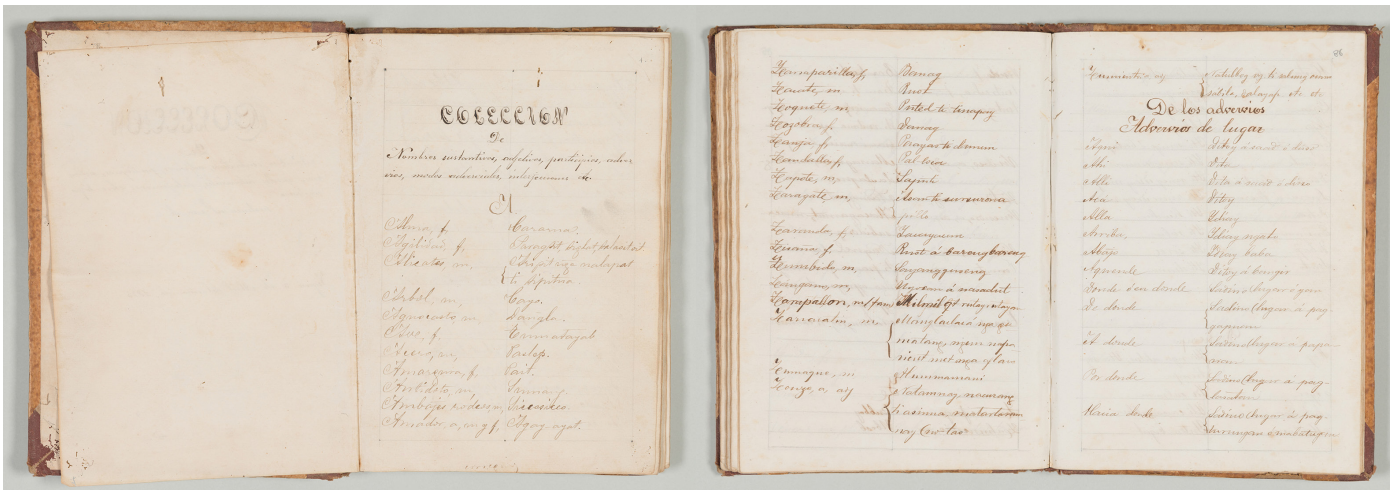
(1) [Untitled prayer book in Ilocano] (No. 6429)



This is an untitled Christian prayer book believed to date from the end of the 19th century. It appears to be missing an opening text and instead starts abruptly with text written in the Ilocano language. There are passages sprinkled throughout, however, of prayers written in Spanish (such as prayers for the first Communion and a novena – a set of prayers repeated for 9 successive days) and Latin (litanies and antiphonies). Unfortunately, I am not familiar with

the Ilocano language and so cannot determine whether the Ilocano prayers are translations of the Spanish and Latin text, or whether they are separate prayers to be used in conjunction with the Spanish and Latin prayers. In either case, this is clearly an important manuscript for understanding the place of Catholicism in the Ilocano-speaking regions at the time.

(2) Colección de nombres sustantivos, adjetivos... (No. 6427)



This is an alphabetical list of Spanish words, their parts of speech, and meanings explained in the Ilocano language; in essence a type of vocabulary book. The title page indicates it was compiled in the city of Vigan in the province of Ilocos Sur on March 5, 1898, just before the outbreak of the Spanish-American War that would eventually lead to the independence of the Philippines. It is an intriguing fact that this vocabulary book must have been used to study Spanish at a time of rising nationalism in the Philippines.

While such Japanese scholars as Ikehata Setsuho and Sugaya Nariko have carried out some outstanding research on the Philippines during its Spanish colonial period, research relating to the Ilocano language is still sparse. In this regard, the Foronda Collection offers a fascinating glimpse into the Philippines under Spanish rule and Catholicism in the Ilocano-speaking regions. We can only hope that specialists will take advantage of this rich resource to further research into the colonial period.

Collection Materials

- 1895. *Colección de Nombres sustantivos, adjetivos, participios, adverbios, modos adverbiales, interjecciones, etc., en hispano Ilocano y pertenece al uso de Vigan 3 de Abril del año de 1895* [A Collection of Substantive Names, adjectives, participles, adverbs, adverbial modes, interjections, etc., in Hispanic Ilocano pertaining to the use of Vigan, April 3, 1895] (Marcelino A. and Crescencia R. Foronda, *A Filipiniana Bibliography, 1743-1982: A classified listing of Philippine materials in the Marcelino A. And Crescencia R. Foronda Private Collection*, Manila: Philippine National Historical Society, 1981, Call No. 6427)
- n.d. Untitled Prayer book in Ilocano (Call No. 6429)

