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A Requiem for Cementerio Balicbalic, Sampaloc, Manila (1884-1925).

By Martin R. Gaerlan

INTRODUCTION

(1) Good Morning and Thank you. **(2)** For this researcher, trying to recapture the past and recovering whatever remains of the dead story of Cementerio Balicbalic, started as a personal and pastoral, rather than an academic or professional research endeavour. During the many pastoral planning workshops in the early 1990's, the Most Holy Trinity Parish (MHTP) pastoral council leaders often faced a blank wall, a corporate amnesia if you will, on the beginnings of the parish prior to 1925. **(3)** The parish leaders recognized that they needed to remember. They needed to remember and lay to rest the untold story of this once sacred ground for the dead. Certainly, there were the oral tales, best told during the late evening parish workshops, of the old church grounds littered with tombstones, or of finds of human skeletal remains, or of the encounter with some ghostly apparition. **(4)** One particular story links the place name Balicbalic to a peculiar funeral procession practice of the residents of San Miguel, Manila. Atong P. Reyes (1982), in an article published in the 50th Anniversary Souvenir program of MHTP, described how the funeral entourage navigated their way towards Cementerio Balicbalic in a strange reluctant manner.¹ After taking twenty steps forward, someone shouted "balic" which was repeated a number of times. At each "balic" shout, the pall-bearers would take a step backwards until ten steps were reached then a shout to step forward was heard. This forward and backward cadence played during the duration of the funeral procession from San Miguel to Balicbalic. It is said that a typical San Miguel funeral procession almost took until sunset before it finally reached the Sampaloc cemetery. Was Balicbalic indeed named after this funeral procession practice? And why would San Miguel residents bury their dead in Sampaloc? These were some of the questions that remained unanswered during the early 1990's. Even more embarrassing, the parish leaders faced more basic unanswered questions like who built the cementerio, or when was it built and completed.

(5) If the parishioners of Balicbalic have forgotten, can the institutional memory of Cementerio Balicbalic be alive somewhere else in Sampaloc? A visit by this researcher to Our Lady of Loreto Church in Sampaloc in the mid-1990's elicited a disinterested apology from the parish priest who volunteered that all pre-war Sampaloc church records were destroyed during World War II. End of story. In the Archives of the University of Santo Tomas, the archivist, a Spanish Dominican priest, categorically and pontifically stated that there was no cemetery in Sampaloc during the Spanish colonial period. End of story. With all due respect to my fellow Thomasians in the audience, of course, neither did the Royal and Pontifical University exist in Sampaloc at that time as well.

(6) After about two years of research into this unknown and suppose to be non-existent cemetery, the MHTP published in 1997 the 65th parish souvenir program with a short article written by this researcher entitled: "On Sacred Ground: Discovering the Remains of A Forgotten Cemetery (1890-1925)." ⁱⁱ History written, sacred obligation done, this researcher imagined that the long interruption finally reached a well-deserved end. Unfortunately, rest for the weary was not forthcoming. Fr. Cayetano Sanchez, OFM, then archivist of the Franciscan Archives in Spain, wrote a letter to this researcher with a gentle challenge that ten pages seem too short to give justice to the story of a Franciscan friar and the parochial cemetery of Sampaloc.

Many years later, and many pages longer, I'm deeply grateful to Dr. Churchill and Prof. De Viana in their confidence that the story of Cementerio Balicbalic deserves a much wider audience such as the attendees to this 19th Annual Manila Studies conference. This paper would not have been possible as well without the support provided by the past and previous parish priests (Msgr. Manny Gabriel and Fr. Erik Adoviso), the parish pastoral council officers, and residents of Balicbalic. I would also be amiss if I did not mention, what will become obvious during the slide show presentation, of the valuable role of various archives, particularly, the Archdiocesan Archives of Manila, the Philippine National Archives, and the Franciscan Archives.

(7) As noted by Rene B. Javella, S. J. (2008),ⁱⁱⁱ colonial architectural researches are moving away from the familiar ground, likes churches, typical of works by Regalado Jose (1991), Pedro G. Galende, O.S.A. (1996), to the

unfamiliar, like colonial fortifications (Rene B. Javella, S.J., 1997), lighthouses (Manuel Maximo del Castillo-Noche, 2006) and, of course, cemeteries.^{iv} In this decade, there's been a number of published works on Spanish colonial cemeteries in the Philippines. These pioneering studies provide an excellent guide to any researcher brave enough to enter the realm of ghosts of cemeteries past

From the Cavite Studies Center of De La Salle University-Dasmariñas, we have Jeffrey A. Lubang's 2007 monograph entitled "Pantyon" which, while focused on Cavite's funerary and burial beliefs and traditions, included some notes on Cavite's cemeteries.^v The University of Santo Tomas published Archt. Manuel Maximo del Castillo-Noche's (2005) article on the documentation of existing Spanish colonial cemeteries especially in three towns of Pangasinan namely, Alaminos, Manaog, and Binalonan.^{vi} Based on his preliminary field research, he offered a eulogy to Spanish colonial cemeteries noting the lamentable, sad, and forgotten state of the cemeteries he has documented. In the same year, Instituto Cervantes-Manila published Joy Rosal-Sumagaysay's article on the surviving stone cemeteries found in seven towns of Iloilo. These are Dingel, Janiuay, Sta. Barbara, Pototan, Cabatuan, Miagao, and San Joaquin.^{vii} As an art historian, she states that "... it is high time the shroud of anonymity and neglect be drawn away..." before time erodes whatever beauty is left of the remaining Spanish colonial cemeteries.

In the context of the focus of this conference on the history of Manila, Archt. Lorelei D.C. de Viana's 2004 article on public sanitation and cemeteries in 19th century Manila comes highly recommended as a primary reference for studies on the development of Spanish colonial cemeteries in Manila.^{viii} De Viana (2004) notes that parish priests played a key role in the development of town cemeteries since most were funded by the parish collections. In addition, she described how the state and the church came into conflict due to issues regarding public sanitation and priestly pastoral concern.

Around 1995, when this researcher started those first few uncertain steps doing archival and library research, the published literature on Manila's Spanish colonial cemeteries were quite rare. Although not yet available to this researcher at that time, David W. Mahoney (1987) published a brief history of the British (Protestant) cemetery of San Pedro, Makati.^{ix} A key resource from this period is Michaelangelo E. Dakudao's (1992) survey of the development of cemeteries in

Manila during the Spanish and American colonial period with the Paco cemetery and North cemetery as his exemplars.^x Architect Dakudao encouraged this researcher to get a copy of the Graphic magazine issue October 28, 1931 which contained an article entitled “The History of Manila’s Cemeteries Old and New.” Unlike researchers dealing with existing architectural remains of Spanish colonial cemeteries in Iloilo or Pangasinan, researchers interested in Manila’s Spanish colonial cemeteries dirtied their white gloves in the musty world of archival or library research instead of the dust or mud of field research. After all, most of Manila’s old cemeteries have long disappeared and have been converted either to churches (Sta. Cruz), schools (Pandacan), parks (Malate) or even a marketplace (Tondo).

(8) Certainly, the modern day visitor to the parish grounds of the Most Holy Trinity Church and Most Holy Trinity Academy will not find any architectural trace of Cementerio Balicbalic. No funerary chapel, no cemetery gate, no niches or tombstones exist to be measured, to be catalogued, or even to be photographed. Not even a memorial or historical marker. Like the doubting Thomas who needed to touch the wound of Jesus, this researcher ached to touch and to feel the actual remains of Cementerio Balicbalic before truth could be achieved. Dakudao graciously offered this researcher a taste of salvation with a tip that an old 1931 Graphic magazine article contained a photograph of Cementerio Balicbalic. Nothing prepared me for the thrill of actually seeing for the first time the visual evidence of how the cemetery looked like around 1931. Since then, this researcher has learned how to kneel in humble thanksgiving to whatever crumbs of evidence are left behind by the gods of history.

(9) From these crumbs, this paper seeks to reconstruct in some detail the unique biographical story of Cementerio Balicbalic, Sampaloc, Manila from official inception in 1884, to realization in 1890, to transformation in 1925. This case study aims to deepen our appreciation of the role of parish priests in the development of parochial cemeteries and in the pastoral care of the bereaved and the dead.

1925: Silence Broken

(10) In the year 1925, the sacred silence of a closed cemetery located in the hills of Balicbalic was broken. (11) The newly-wedded couple, Benito Roces Legarda and Trinidad Fernandez, former queen of the Manila Carnival, accepted as

a wedding gift the Legarda summer residence in Balicbalic which was just behind the closed cemetery of Sampaloc. According to Trinidad F. Legarda (1975), the couple solicited the permission of Archbishop Michael O’Doherty to celebrate Sunday Masses at the old and dilapidated funerary chapel.^{xi} Permission granted, Don Benito himself drove every Sunday and other religious holidays to the V.O.T. church in Bustillos, Sampaloc to fetch a priest who would officiate the Holy Mass. More importantly, other sacraments were soon celebrated inside the former funerary chapel. **(12)** A fragment of a page of the first baptismal book of Balicbalic showed the first two baptismal entries for Catalina Samaniego and Virginia de Los Santos administered on May 24, 1925.

(13) Thirty-four years after the Spanish Archbishop of Manila approved the 1891 petition of Fr. Ramon Caviedas for requiem masses to be celebrated inside the newly completed funerary chapel, an American Archbishop approved the celebration of the mass for the living inside the cemetery chapel. **(14)** While the “body” of the old cemetery complex still remained, the “spirit” of the place has been transformed: the once sacred ground for the dead became a sacred ground for the living. No more will only requiem masses be allowed to be heard in the hills of Balicbalic.

Eventually, as the number of parishioners attending the Sunday Masses grew, Archbishop O’Doherty commissioned Archt. Juan M. Arellano to build a bigger church. However, Arellano’s plan could not be implemented due to lack of funds. A more modest renovation of the existing funerary chapel was completed in 1932. **(15)** In the same year, the parishioners of Balicbalic chose the “*Santisima Trinidad*” as their patronal saint making it the very first parish church in the Archdiocese of Manila named after the Triune God. From the depths of sorrow of a requiem mass, the hills of Balicbalic sang hymns to the highest heights of Trinitarian thanksgiving. But the full story of this Trinitarian transformation is for another day, or another conference. This morning, we return to the event that triggered the inception of Cementerio Balicbalic.

1882. Manila’s Great Requiem

(16) The year 1882 became one of the most terrible years for the city of Manila. About a month after being appointed as the 81st parish priest of Sampaloc, the thirty-three year old Fr. Ramon Caviedas O.F.M. joined the whole population of Manila in hearing church bells sing thanksgiving for a great blessing

received by the residents of Manila. (17) Around eight o'clock on the morning of July 23, 1882, Sampaloc became the focal point for the culmination of a week-long celebration that the city of Manila has not experienced for quite some time. Excitement in Manila has been building since July 18, when the city government outlined a festive program of musical and athletic events, fireworks, theatrical performances, and grand ballroom dancing. Alms were to be distributed for hospitals, prisons, and the poor. Money was to be given to every parish priest within the municipal radius for a mass for the soul of benefactor who made Manila's thirst for cleaner water a reality. Yes, potable water.

(18) This grand event was the opening of the Carriedo water system where the Carriedo fountain, located at the famous Sampaloc rotunda, served as the distribution point for Manila's first potable water system. The morning of July 23rd started early with massed bands, a civic procession which consisted of thirteen official carriages, and a mass which was celebrated opposite the Carriedo fountain in a temporary structure erected besides the "magnificent" house of Lorenzo Rocha. We can surmise that our Fr. Ramon Caviedas, being the parish priest of Sampaloc, was a part of this whole celebration.

(19) On August 8, a solemn requiem mass was conducted in the Manila cathedral in honor of the soul of Francisco de Carriedo y Peredo (born 1690, died 1743), the patron without whose financial gift to the City of Manila, would not have made the water system of Manila possible. In his will, Carriedo requested that he be buried in the habit of a Franciscan lay brother. More importantly, he left the amount of 14,000 pesos to the city of Manila to be invested and used so the citizens could be provided with pure water. By 1880, the Carriedo fund has grown to 411,134.13 pesos. It took the focused action of another Franciscan friar, the famous Fr. Felix de Huerta (one of the ablest administrators of the San Lazaro Hospitals for lepers), to re-ignite the long delayed dream and execute the will of Carriedo. Finally, on August 28, 1878, during the birthday of King Alfonso XII, the cornerstone of the Sampaloc rotunda was inaugurated and construction commenced. On July 23, 1882, one hundred thirty nine years since Carriedo's will, and during the birthday of Marie Christine, Queen-Dowager of Spain, wife of King Alfonso XII, the Carriedo water system was officially opened.

However, a few weeks later, Manila's spirit of jubilation and thanksgiving turned into unimaginable sorrow. Tears, not of joy, but of lamentation, flooded the

streets of Manila. By the time 1882 ended, a trinity of events tested the faith of the residents of Manila and the limits of Spanish public and religious institutions. The same bells which rung in thanksgiving during the Carriedo inauguration were ordered to stop ringing for the dead during Manila's Great Requiem.

(20) On August 20, 1882, one of the most serious cholera epidemics during the Spanish period broke out. The dreaded *Cholera Morbus Asiatico* or cholera was a frequent 19th century visitor in the Philippines with estimates of eight to thirty outbreaks.^{xii} For the 1882 cholera outbreak, the official *Gazette* reported 2,108 deaths in Manila from August 29 to September 29, 1882. The Sub-delegation de Medicina listed around 5,413 deaths while others estimated around 15,000 to 20,000 deaths out of Manila's 200,000 inhabitants. By September 18, 1882, Manila's health officials issued an order prohibiting burials at Manila's parochial cemeteries. **(21)** On September 21, 1882, a new cemetery had to be opened in La Loma to accommodate burials for many of the cholera victims.

(22) While the residents of Manila cowered inside their residences due to fear of cholera, a devastating storm visited Manila on October 20, 1882 which destroyed most of buildings made of light materials. As a consequence, flooding also affected many residents of Manila. The flooding compounded the fear experienced by Manila residents regarding water and fish contaminated by dead bodies afflicted with cholera. Around November 1882, reports of death due to another type of disease were reported. According to some of the victims, they ate only polished rice and not fish, vegetables or meat for fear of getting infected by cholera. As a consequence, beri-beri, a vitamin deficiency induced condition, resulted. With cholera, flooding, and beri-beri, the residents of Manila could only sing praises of thanksgiving when a Te Duem Mass was celebrated on December 12, 1882 declaring Manila free of cholera. **(23)**

1884: Silence Born

(24) On March 10, 1884, Fr. Caviedas, together with six other town officials, signed a petition addressed to the city of Manila for permission to build a new cemetery for Sampaloc as a pastoral response to experienced difficulties during the cholera epidemic. Fresh in the minds and hearts of Fr. Caviedas and his town officials was the anguish of realizing that the old parish cemetery was not sufficient to bury the numerous victims of the 1882 cholera epidemic. **(25)** The "Plan de Almas" of the *arrabal* of Sampaloc for 1882

listed a total of 964 deaths or almost 15% of the town's population. During the previous year, only 5.19% of the population died and only 4.73% in 1879 and 3.86% in 1878. While it is uncertain how many of these recorded deaths were due to cholera, the increased death rate was clearly significant with cholera (and possibly, the beri-beri outbreak) as the causal factors. Furthermore, the effects lingered even after. While the 1882 epidemic ended around December of the same year, the death rate for 1883 was still significantly high at 10%. Only in 1885 did the death rate go down to 5.46%. With the death rate in Sampaloc tripling during Manila's Great Requiem, Sampaloc's cemetery couldn't cope with the sheer number of bodies that needed to be buried. As early as August 28, 1882, Fr. Caviedas ordered Sampaloc cemetery closed for burial to safeguard the town from any unhealthy effusions or emissions from the decomposing corpses.

(26) However, and controversially, Fr. Caviedas received both civil and archdiocesan reprimand for alleged disobedience and disrespect of government authorities for not following the Sept 18, 1882 decree prohibiting burials in parish cemeteries. In response, Fr. Caviedas, in a letter written June 1883, protested that it was never his intention to disobey orders and circumvent mandates – either as a priest, nor as a religious, nor as a Spaniard. In addition, Fr. Ramon shared his personal anguish over the death of so many and the suffering of the living during the cholera epidemic of 1882:

“During the hours of the day and in the middle of the night, afflicted fathers and mothers who are desolate beg me on their knees to give them niches – and for the living to help with their medical expenses. Deeply moved by their tears, I cannot but disobey the orders of the authorities. More than once before I have refused, especially in critical moments, because it is distressing to see them – their desperate faces and them bursting into tears cannot be painted on paper. Please understand that this priest, the minister of the people, has also suffered in his heart bitter amount of torture, and this happens everyday. I struggle being engaged between two feelings, yet remain to fulfil what I have been ordered to do.”

However, could the grief of the parish priest and town officials have been lessened if Sampaloc had built a new cemetery in compliance with the earlier 1848 and 1857 government directives regarding cemeteries?

(27) As early as 1848, Governor General Narciso Claveria issued new rules & regulations regarding the construction of cemeteries outside of the *poblacion*. The old practice of building cemeteries within church ground or within the town center were deemed as prejudicial to public health. The decree ordered that cemeteries be relocated or transferred to isolated areas far from the town center.

(28) Fr. Camilio Barrios OFM, parish priest of Sampaloc, implored exception to the 1848 directive saying that the parish didn't have sufficient funds to build a new cemetery. Fr. Barrios, in a letter dated May 18, 1848, described the old Sampaloc cemetery as being located in a field behind the church of Sampaloc with one half behind the church and the other half cut facing north. Ramon Gonzalez Fernandez, in his book, *Anuario Filipino para 1877*, described the Sampaloc cemetery as immediately nearby the church and convent. Niches were also available inside the church as evidenced by requests for exhumations. As an example, in a letter dated December 23, 1872, Don Ricardo de Abella y Casariego, commandant captain of the artillery, requested for the exhumation and transfer of the remains of his spouse, Jacoba Martin, español European, and daughter Maria Luisa, three years old, in Sampaloc cemetery to the church.

Fr. Camilio, wrote that Sampaloc couldn't comply with the government and archdiocesan directive to build a new cemetery because the parish expenses increased to 260 pesos due to, not one, not two, but three town fiestas (plus expenses for wax, wine, oil, and laundry women) and only 290 pesos in the parish fund were left. Was 290 pesos sufficient to build a cemetery around 1848? In compliance with the same order that Fr. Barrios prayed an exemption to, Fr. Gesualdo Maria Miñano of Binondo submitted a cemetery plan with an estimated construction budget of 2,345 pesos while Fr. Segundo Cherta of Santa Ana de Sapa submitted one at a budget of 1,750 pesos. In 1855, Fr. Jose de Guevarra of Santa Cruz, Manila submitted a plan to establish a cemetery near San Lazaro Hospital at a cost of 4,839 pesos. Even if Fr. Camilio wanted to comply with the new cemetery directive, Sampaloc, the town of "*lavaderos*" as it was sometimes referred to, couldn't afford the cost of building a new cemetery.

(29) How big was the old Sampaloc cemetery? Around 1857, or about two years before the Manila city government decreed Sampaloc (together with Binondo., Trozo, Santa Cruz, Quiapo, San Miguel, and Tondo) as arrabales (suburbs) and parts of the capital city of Manila, the parish priest of Sampaloc wrote a letter to the Archdiocese of Manila regarding enlargement of the cemetery. Fr. Joaquin Coria, O.F.M., an expert linguist on Tagalog who became more known as a critic of Filipino clergy and tangled with Fr. Jose Burgos during the late 1860's, wrote about the status of the plans for the cemetery enlargement and requested authority for the blessing of said cemetery. Fr. Coria indicated a total of 63 niches (6 niches for the Religious of the Holy Province of San Gregorio, 9 for secular priests, 24 for adults, and another 24 for children) from the existing 14 niches (11 niches for the priests and add 3 smaller ones) as mandated by the architectural order to keep symmetry. On June 20, 1857, the Archbishop of Manila authorized the parish priest of Sampaloc to conduct rites & rituals at the Sampaloc cemetery and to charge funeral services at 10 pesos for adults and at 5 pesos for children. A few months later, on November 26, 1857, another decree was issued by the government which, in addition to the Claveria conditions, stipulated that new cemeteries should be elevated, ventilated and that a special section should be reserved for priests, presbyters, Spaniards, and their descendents. Thus, even if Sampaloc completed the planned enlargement to 64 niches, the town of Sampaloc still failed to comply with the both the 1848 and 1857 decrees directive to relocate cemeteries outside of the town proper or poblacion.

(30) On April 24, 1884, the *Ayuntamiento de Ciudad de Manila* granted favorably the petition of Fr. Ramon and his six parishioners to build a new cemetery in Sampaloc. It is not surprising that the city authorities approved the Sampaloc petition as Fr. Caviedas and the town officials chose wisely the site of the new Sampaloc cemetery. **(31)** Sampaloc consisted mostly of swampy ground, surrounded by streams and canals which overflowed their banks during the rainy season and flooded the territory. However, the hills of barrio Balicbalic, roughly ten meters above sea-level, provided the ideal sacred high ground. Of course, there were other highly elevated barrios of Sampaloc, which included, at that time, San Francisco del Monte and Diliman. However, while elevated, these barrios were simply too far from the poblacion being five to eight kilometres away. The further distance would have increased the funeral expenses of the bereaved. Barrio Balicbalic was just about two kilometres away from the town center. Around 1884,

there were less than 400 people living in Balicbalic as against the 4,000 in the poblacion. The living and the dead were not a threat to each other.

(32) If there is one holy grail for research on Spanish colonial cemeteries, it would include the planos or architectural drawings and proposed budget for the cemetery project. **(33)** Unfortunately, in the case of cementerio Balicbalic, no such plans have yet been found. We can only look with envy at the surviving architectural plans of other Spanish colonial cemeteries. Nevertheless, there are some historical crumbs which can help us paint a picture of Cementerio Balicbalic.

(34) We can imagine how the funeral entourage slowly made its way along the 1.3 kilometer distance from Loreto Church to the hills of Balicbalic, Sampaloc. As they turned left from Calle Balicbalic, the mourners saw the cemetery gate that stood imposingly at what is now known as Calabash Road facing towards where the sun rises. **(35)** As they entered the cemetery gate, the mourners will be greeted by the sight of a **(36)** small 11 by 17 sq. meter chapel facing east (in other words, facing the mourners as they entered the main gate) at the rear center. **(37)** As they glanced to either side, they would have seen two tiers of “nichos” at the left and right walls and three tiers at the back.

(38) The more than one hectare size (approximately 15,000 sq meters) of the cemetery grounds would have impressed the mourners assured that there is enough space to bury their dearly beloved. **(39)** In fact, Fr. Caviedas, in a letter dated November 22, 1888, guaranteed space for 40 “nichos” for his fellow religious of the Philippine Province of San Gregorio. By this period, Fr. Caviedas was already the Provincial Definer and Secretary of their congregation. **(40)** If the architect of Cementerio Balicbalic followed the architectural dimensions of the niches of Paco cemetery, then approximately 9 ft. & 3 inches in length would be needed to house three tiers of niches. We can then estimate that the rear section of the cemetery could have housed 400 niches (that is, 409 feet divided by 9 ft. = 45 sections x 9 niches per section). In practical terms, the three tier niches of Cementerio Balicbalic would have been sufficient in bury at least 44% of the total number of deaths in Sampaloc during the 1882 cholera epidemic.

(41) The cemetery must have opened for burial around 1890. First, since exhumations were normally allowed after five years from date of burial, a

request for exhumation dated November, 1895 for the remains of Doña Aleja Atayde Aillon and Doña Maria Teresa Garrido in Sampaloc cemetery means that the deceased were buried around October/November 1890. Secondly, in 1931, a caretaker mentioned that the oldest grave marker in the cemetery was dated 1890. However, the cemetery chapel was completed a year later than the “nichos” since Fr. Caviedas, only informed the Archbishop of Manila of the completion of the construction of the chapel in a letter dated September 29, 1891. In the said letter, he also requested authorization for the blessing of said chapel and celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The chapel itself would have accommodated some burials as a request for exhumation by Clemeter Caballero, dated November 6, 1902, referred to the remains of Dona Felipa Goyenechea as being deposited in the chapel of Balic balic cemetery.

1897: The Franciscan Split

(42) By 1897, Sampaloc doubled its population from 6,505 inhabitants, when Fr. Caviedas first arrived in 1882, to 11,880 when he left in 1894 for his new assignment in San Pablo, Laguna. He would not see anymore the subsequent partitioning of Balicbalic cemetery under two parochial jurisdictions cared for by the Franciscans.

Approved by the Archbishop of Manila on March 22, of 1897, Fr. Antonio Martin de Vidales, parish priest of Sampaloc, and Fr. Emilio Gago, parish priest of the town of San Miguel, signed an agreement whereby half of the cemetery ground (situated to the right as one enters the cemetery gate) would be sold to San Miguel for \$4,658.87. Payment was on an installment basis and guaranteed by ceding to Sampaloc of the parish priest of San Miguel the “Sanctorum” or alms of the parishioners given to sustain parish liturgical acts and services. This same agreement vested on the parish of San Miguel the right to the use of the chapel except that the parish priest of Sampaloc took priority should conflicts in schedule occur since it was the church of Sampaloc that founded the cemetery. Both parishes shared equally in the maintenance expenses as well as payment of the salaries of the cemetery personnel. Lastly, because of this contract, Sampaloc cemetery became divided into two independent jurisdictions (especially in terms of taxes, duties, fees, etc.) although topographically still united. In short, the parish priest of Sampaloc could not enter the right side of the Sampaloc cemetery without permission from the parish priest of San Miguel.

Unfortunately, the parish of San Miguel experienced difficulty in meeting her financial obligations to the parish of Sampaloc. On August 1, 1900 Fr. Francisco Ortiz, one of the first Filipino diocesan parish priests of Sampaloc, and Fr. Hipolito Arceo of San Miguel, signed an agreement for the extension of the debt payment schedule of the parish of San Miguel since only \$478.30 out of \$4,658.87 contract price have been paid.

(43) As a footnote, we can go back to the story mentioned at the beginning of this paper regarding the origin of the place name of Balicbalic being the strange funeral procession practice of the residents of San Miguel. In this case, the existence of Barrio Balicbalic clearly predated the erection of cementerio Balicbalic and the purchase of half of the cemetery by the parish of San Miguel. For the curious, Balicbalic is a tree that grows to a height of 15 meters and a diameter of 45 centimeters with purplish flowers.

1889: War Requiem

(44) The uncertain atmosphere sparked by the 1896 revolution against Spain provided impetus to increased military offensive and defensive actions by the Spanish government especially in towns surrounding the city of Manila. Sampaloc, being on the outskirts of Manila, became one of the focal points for building a protective ring for Manila. Around March 1897, newspapers in Spain carried the news that every night, valiant and loyal Spanish volunteers with twelve horses patrolled the area of Balicbalic and Santa Mesa in Sampaloc. (45) The August 6, 1898 edition of the Graphic, a British newspaper, published an illustration of a Filipino insurgent wounded during an encounter with the Spanish troops but who died near the English Club in Nagtahan, Sampaloc.

(46) In 1898, aside from the mobile horseback patrols, Governor General Primo de Rivera ordered the construction of a protective and defensive ring of 15 military blockhouses in the extreme barrios of Manila called the Primo de Rivera Line. The central sector of this defensive line from blockhouses numbers 5 to 8 traverses the area under the town of Sampaloc. Key defensive positions of the Spaniards included the Sampaloc Rotunda, the Balicbalic bridge that leads to the long winding and upward trek to the Sampaloc cemetery. Block-house no. 5 was built five hundred yards away from Sampaloc cemetery with housing space for 25 soldiers. This defensive military ring caused devastation for the cemetery.

(47) On the 4th of August, 1898, Fr. Pedro Flores, OFM parish priest of Sampaloc, wrote how it was impossible to bury the dead at the new Sampaloc cemetery in Balicbalic because Spanish troops occupied the cemetery and insurgents troops frequented the place as well. Consequently, the old Sampaloc cemetery near the parish church had to be rehabilitated and the dead buried inside church grounds until the situation returned to normal. Well, the situation did not return to normal as another emerging colonial power came into the picture.

Before the outbreak of the Philippine-American War, Michael Meyers Shoemaker, visited the Sampaloc Cemetery in Balicbalic, and described the poor state of the cemetery.

“We visit also the Campo Santo of Sampaloc, the burial-place of the native poor: a vast, neglected square where both Spaniards and insurgents have camped time and again. The chapel is wrecked, and hundreds of graves and catacombs have been rifled and desecrated. One corner of the wall is broken down and transformed into an earthwork, just outside of which stands some of our pickets, and, as we chat with them, our eyes rove afar inland, over a lovely landscape of green fields and waving trees stretching away to where the foothills rise to a union with the higher mountains, spreading off range after range - a peaceful scene save where our soldiers show forth, and where the insurgent lines stand out in the underbush.”^{xiii}

The outbreak of the Philippine-American war brought further destruction to the cemetery. Dr. Benito Legarda, the son of the Legarda couple who petitioned for the opening of the closed funerary chapel in 1925, has written extensively on the opening actions of the Philippine-American War in his book, *The Hills of Sampaloc*.^{xiv} For this morning, we will focus on the role of Cementerio Balicbalic after that fateful evening of Feb 4 when Pvt. Grayson fired the shots in Barrio Santol, Sampaloc that triggered the Philippine-American War.

(48) Among the more than 2,000 American troops mobilized the evening of Feb 4th were Captain Edgar A. Wedgewood, and about thirty seven men of Battery A of the Utah Light Battery, who proceeded to Sampaloc cemetery with their two 3.2 inch guns. Captain Wedgewood, an attorney-at-law and former sheriff, submitted a report on what happened that first Saturday and Sunday of

February as they used the Sampaloc cemetery as their point of attack. Specifically, the Utah artillery gun no. 1 was placed at the northeast corner of the cemetery and within the wall while gun no. 2 was placed in front of the cemetery gate. Later on, portions of the cemetery wall were knocked down as gun no. 2 was moved again and placed inside the cemetery. From these positions, the Utah guns fired with terrible efficiency that Sunday morning. (49) The artillery bombardment and the first ground assault of American troops during the Philippine-American War, resulted not just in the capture of Blockhouse no. 5, but in the destruction and annihilation of another sacred site. The Utah guns stationed in Balic Balic cemetery gates destroyed the visita, or chapel without a priest, of San Isidro located about 300 yards away from the cemetery. (50) Sgt. Charles R. Mabey, one of the non-commissioned officers of the Utah Artillery unit, wrote that a "... a few more accurately trained shots annihilated the little church." The dictates of war had chosen to use the sacred ground of a cemetery as the point of attack to destroy another sacred ground. Indeed, a very tragic Sunday. The more than fifty Filipinos killed during the Battle of Balicbalic were buried, ironically, not inside the cementerio Balicbalic, but along ditches dug along Calle Balicbalic.

(51) As if to affirm the strategic role of cementerio Balicbalic, the Americans chose the cemetery as the headquarters of the 2nd Brigade during the duration of the opening battles of the Philippine American War. Brig. Gen. Irving Hale, who graduated from West Point Military Academy in 1884 with 2070.4 points out of a possible 2075, can be seen in a victory photograph together with his brigade officers. Ironically, this triumphant pose provided the future inhabitants of Balicbalic with the only known image of the facade of the funerary chapel albeit taken from some distance.

1900: The American Requiem

(52) With the American occupation of the Philippines and takeover of colonial administration in 1899, the end of church administered cemeteries was soon to come. It should be noted that while the Bureau of Health ordered the closing of church cemeteries in 1913, many of the church cemeteries, like Balicbalic, Santa Ana, Pandacan, and Singalong, recorded burials even up to 1919. (53) The last officially recorded number of burials done in Balicbalic was in 1918 with 595 burials. An examination of the annual reports of the Bureau of Health of the Philippine Islands recorded a total of 20,294 burials (with six months missing)

in Balicbalic cemetery from 1900 to 1918. On a yearly basis, this would average to about 1,234 burials per year. For the same 18 year period, the American period built North cemetery recorded the highest total burials at 68,497, followed by La Loma with 25,133, and Binondo with 20,090 burials. Overall, Balicbalic cemetery came fourth out of the 13 cemeteries located in Manila. Among the Franciscan built cemeteries in Manila, Santa Ana recorded a total of 3,328 burials while Pandacan reached 1,117 burials. In terms of dis-internments, the same annual reports record only about 280 instances of the removal of bones from Balicbalic cemetery in the same 18 year period. One wonders what happened to the bones of the other remains buried at Balicbalic.

An examination of the request for exhumations found in the Archdiocesan Archives of Manila unearthed the names of thirty seven individuals buried in Cementerio Balicbalic. The profile of these former residents of the cemetery belie Michael Meyers Shoemaker's assertion that Sampaloc cemetery was the "burial place of the native poor."

Jose Diaz Aguilar Fablada, in a letter to the Archbishop of Manila dated January 18, 1901, requested for the exhumation of a victim of the 1882 cholera epidemic in Laguna, Maria del Carmen Barco y Diaz Aguilar, who was also identified as an "*hija de padres españoles*" and buried June 23, 1895. (54) Esperanza Tuazon, with residence at No. 117 Calle de Bustillos. Sampaloc, in a letter dated November 7, 1905, requested for the transfer of the remains of Arturo Tuazon, a Spanish Filipino, native of Binondo, who died in November 13, 1895 at the age of forty and buried at "nicho 8 primero tramo" at Balicbalic cemetery. (55) Alfonso Ramos, first governor of Tarlac, in a letter dated January 5, 1918, requested for the transfer of the remains of his wife, Elena Espinosa from Balicbalic cemetery to the parish church of Tarlac. Don Clemente Caballero, resident of Sampaloc, in a letter dated Nov 8, 1902, requested for the exhumation of Dna. Felipa Goyenechea who died in 1895. Her remains were deposited at the funerary chapel of Balicbalic Cemetery. This is evidence that shows that bones were interred inside the funerary chapel.

(56) There were quite a number of religious buried in Cementerio Balicbalic. On the 28th of July, 1894, Father Felix Huerta, OFM, died and buried with impressive ceremonies. From the Augustinians, we have Fr. Bernardo Gonzalez OSA, former prior of the Augustinian convent, who died Sept 9, 1917. A solemn

requiem mass was held for Fr. Bernardo at Intramuros which, given the stature of Fr. Bernardo, was attended by dignitaries from both religious and government institutions. The requiem mass ended with a long funeral march from Intramuros to cementerio Balicbalic.

Eulogy:

As we take note of the various religious buried at Cementerio Balicbalic, there is one friar whose death and burial would be important to take note of as we come close to the end of today's paper on the cemetery that he had built. **(58)** Fr. Ramon, like many of the Spanish Franciscans, left the Philippines and returned to Spain during the early period of American colonial period. By the year 1900, only 15% or 70 Franciscan friars remained out of the 481 who ministered to 207 towns in the Philippines.^{xv} In the case of Fr. Caviedas, he went back to Spain in 1898 after his stint as parish priest of Sariaya, Quezon. However, he returned to Manila on May 25, 1907 or thirty years after his first arrival in Manila as a young Franciscan "*corista*" or seminarian. We are not sure of Fr. Ramon's reason for returning to the Philippines as even the seat of the government of the Province of Saint Gregory the Great was transferred back to Spain in 1905. On October 19, 1918, Fr. Ramon Caviedas died in the convent of San Francisco del Monte at the age of 69. In the same year of the death of Fr. Ramon, the last official burial statistic for his beloved cemetery was reported at 594 burials. The subsequent government reports would only include dis-internment statistics. Ironically, for the friar who built Cementerio Balicbalic and who promised 40 niches for his fellow Franciscan friars, there would be none for him at the sacred ground of Balicbalic. **(59)** Fr. Caviedas was buried on October 20, 1918 at La Loma Cemetery in a niche reserved for the Franciscan friars. We have no further accounts if the former parishioners of Fr. Caviedas from Sampaloc attended his funeral that day **(60)** However, we, of the present generation, hope that we honor his memory by sharing this requiem of the cemetery on the hills of Balicbalic not just to parishioners of Sampaloc, but also to a much wider audience. Our prayer being that others will be inspired to recover the buried stories of their parochial or municipal cemeteries. Thank you.

NOTES:

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ⁱⁱⁱ Javellana, Rene B. S.J. (2008). Colonial Fortifications. In Camagay, Ma. Luisa (Ed.) Encuentro:Philippine Philippine Spanish Friendship Day. Pp. 49-65.

^{iv} Jose, Regaldo Trota (1991). Simbahan: Church Art in Colonial Philippines 1565-1898. Ayala Museum. Galende, Pedro G. O.S.A. (1996). Angels in Stone. Augustinian Churches in the Philippines. San Agustin Museum. Javellana, Rene, B. (1997). Fortress of Empire. Spanish Colonial Fortifications of the Philippines 1565-1898. Bookmark.

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^{xiv} Legarda, Jr., Benito J (2001). The Hills of Sampaloc. The Opening Actions of the Philippine-American War, February 4-5, 1899. Bookmark.

^{xv} Guntay, Long, O.F.M. (2008). The Franciscans in the Colonial Philippines (1578-1989). In Camagay, Ma. Luisa (Ed.) Encuentro:Philippine Philippine Spanish Friendship Day. pp.132-142

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