**TITLE/TOPIC**

**Title: Annotation of Antonio Morga’s Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas**

**Names of Contributors: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**PRAYER**

**OVERVIEW**

Stories are powerful. They can present a complex situation in an engaging human way. Sometimes they are too simple and a particular story becomes the only way something is understood.

Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas is the book written by Antonio de Morga that describes the conditions of the Philippines during Spanish conquest.

At the end of this lesson, you are expected to:

1. Discuss the content of Antonio Morga’s Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas; and
2. Explain the significance of Rizal’s annotation of Morga’s book.

**INTRODUCTION**

In this presentation, you will know Rizal as a historian by learning his annotations of Antonio de Morga’s Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas. In this annotation, Rizal criticized what the Spanish missionaries and official held and disseminated that were little fewer savages when Spaniard established themselves in the country and presented his historical project of reconstructing the history of the Philippines.

**CONTENTS**

**The Author**

**Antonio de Morga Sánchez Garay**

* Born in Seville in a Biscayan father and a Sevillian mother.
* Was a Spanish soldier, lawyer and high-ranking colonial official for 43 years in the Philippines, New Spain and Peru.
* He was baptized on 29th November 1559
* He graduated from the University of Salamanca in 1574 received a doctorate in canon law.
* He published the book “Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas” in 1609, of the most important works on the early history of the Spanish colonization of the Philippines.
* He also led the Spanish in one naval battle against Dutch corsairs in the Philippines, in 1600.

**Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas**

* Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas or the “Events in the Philippines Islands) was a historical account which described the scenarios in the Philippines from 1493 to 1603 under the colonial rules of Spain.
* Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas was published in Mexico in 1609.
* Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas perhaps the best account of Spanish Colonialism in the Philippines and it was nearly based partly on documentary research, partly keen observation, and partly on Morga’s personal involvement and knowledge.
* It is also the first history of the Spanish Philippines to be written by a layman, as opposed to the religious chronicles.
* The book was published in two volumes, in both in 1609 by Casa de Geronymo Balli, in Maxico City.
* 1609 (April 17)-Viceroy Luis de Velasco authorized the publication and granted Morga the sole right to publish it for 10 years.
* 1609- Fray Garcia Guerra, archbishop of Mexico, approved the publication of the work.

**The First Philippine History Book**

* By publishing his annotated version of Morga’s Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas (Events of the Philippine Islands), Rizal’s intent was not only to provide the Filipino people their early history, a pre-Spanish history, but to present to them their own authentic culture and identity.
* He selected Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas to annotate because he “considered it necessary to invoke the testimony of an illustrious Spaniard who governed the destinies of the Philippines in the beginning of her new era and witnessed the last moments of our ancient nationality”.
* The annotations included clarifications and amplifications.
* Rizal offered the annotated Sucesos to the Filipinos with the wise counsel that “to fortel the destiny of a nation, it is necessary to open the books that tell of her past”.

**Rizal’s Annotation: Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas**

* In January 1890, Rizal published his annotation:

“Sucesos de las Filipinas por el Doctor Antonio de Morga. Obra publicada en mejico en el alto de 1609, nummente sacada a luz y anotada po Jose Rizal, y precedida de un prologo del prof. Fernando Blumentritt (Events in the Philippine Islands by Dr. Antonio de Morga. A work published in Mexico in the year 1609, reprinted and annotated by Jose Rizal and preceded by an introduction by professor Ferdinand Blumentritt)” (Ocampo, 1998).

* In the study conducted by Tina S. Clemente (2011), she classified Rizal’s annotations of Morga’s Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas into four categories such as:
* The Notion of Confederation of Chiefs and the Complexity of Polities;
* The Character of Precolonial Law and Enforcement;
* The Engagement of Pre-Hispanic Polities in International Trade; and
* The Role of Indigenous Produced Goods in the Dynamics of Chiefly Rulership and Foreign Trade.
* Similarly, in the conclusion of the study, Clemente (2011) generated three major themes:
* First, Rizal emphasized certain aspects of precolonial culture that were methodologically important even by current standards.
* Second, the significance of the aspects he noted has only grown in the light of what is now being elucidated in contemporary scholarship various fields of study (e.g., institutional economics, anthropology, and archeology).
* Third, the knowledge and appreciation by today’s public toward Philippine precolonial history is inadequate and often faulty based in Rizal’s standard especially in relation to what he thought it signifies for national identity.

**Rizal’s Annotations to Inspire Young Filipinos of Today**

* “Governor Morga was not only the first to write but also the first to publish a Philippine History”.
* Morga shows that the ancient Filipinos had army and navy with artillery and other implements of warfare. Their prized krises and kampilans for their magnificent temper are worthy of admiration and some of them are richly damascened.
* In Morga’s time, the Philippines exported silk to Japan hence now comes the best quality of that merchandise.
* Morga’s view upon the failure of Governor Pedro de Acuña ambitious expedition against the Moros unhappily still apply for the same conditions yet exist.
* Filipinos has minstrels (one of a class of medieval musical entertainers) who has memorized songs telling their genealogies and of the deeds ascribed to their deities.

**Blumetritt’s Friendly Critique to Rizal’s Annotations**

* By the end of September in 1889, Rizal brought the manuscript in Paris for printing and set letter to Ferdinand Blumentritt requesting him to write an introduction.
* The importance of Rizal’s annotations to Morga was that he tried to use history and historical revision not just to express his personal views on the historiography, but to create a sense of national consciousness or identity.
* Blumentritt’s cites two defects of Rizal’s scholarship which have been condemned, and rightly so, by later historians; a historical use of hindsight, and a strong anti-clerical bias.
* Blumentritt, in his glowing introduction, did not forget to state that:

**“**My great esteem for your notes does not impede me from confessing that, more than once, I have observed that you participate in the error of many modern historians who censure the events of past according to the concepts that correspond to contemporary ideas. This should not be so. The historian should not impute to the men of the sixteenth century the broad horizon of ideas that moves the nineteenth century. The second point with which I do not agree is some vented against Catholicism. I believe that you cannot find the origin of numerous events regrettable for Spain and for the good name of the European race in religion but in the hard behavior and abuses of many priests.

Hindsight and anti-clericalism are fatal defects in a purely scholarly work, but as mentioned earlier, Rizal used history as a propaganda weapon against the abuses of the colonial Spaniards. Rizal's Morga should be seen and excused in this context. The problem with Rizal is his constant ambiguity: is he trying to be a scholar or a propagandist? Hence, the Morga was deemed too historical, too scholarly for propagandists, while historians and scholars found the work too biased, too much a work of propaganda to be taken seriously.”

**DISCUSSION FORUM**

**Question and Answer:**

1. Do you think that Rizal used history as a propaganda weapon against the abuses of the Colonial Spaniards?

**Answer:** The Spaniards who colonized the Philippines for nearly 300 years saw Rizal's works as a threat to their regime, even his annotation in Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas. They saw it as propaganda because his works and annotations revealed the truth concerning Spanish rule in the Philippines.

1. Why did Rizal choose Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas to annotate, instead of other books written about the Philippines?

**Answer:** Because he “considered it necessary to invoke the testimony of an illustrious Spaniard who governed the destinies of the Philippines in the beginning of her new era and witnessed the last moments of our ancient nationality”.

1. Why Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas perhaps the best account of Spanish Colonialism in the Philippines?

**Answer:** Because it was nearly based partly on documentary research, partly keen observation, and partly on Morga’s personal involvement and knowledge.

**GENERALIZATION (REFLECTION/REALIZATION IN THE TOPIC)**

* Rizal’s annotation of Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas was part of his project to reconstruct the history of the Philippines and correct the views that Filipinos were little fewer savages when the Spaniard established themselves in the country.
* The different treatment between Filipinos and Spaniard in Rizal’s time induced Rizal to study his country’s past.
* Antonio de Morga has written this book, to tell the truth about the conditions of the Philippines and of its native inhabitants at the time of conquest.
* Morga’s Sucesos is perhaps the most impartial history of the first years of the conquest because it was written without any bias or prejudice, which was the characteristic of the majority of the sources at the time.
* De Morga described the excellence in weaving, metalwork, agriculture, government, domestic arts, commers, navigation, how native lived and worked, what good ships they built, what busy marts they had erected.
* For Rizal, it was an excellent book, and Morga was a modern man of learning.
* Rizal desired to reconstruct the history of his country and hoped and planned to present his people as a nation despised and misunderstood because of the fallacy and misinterpretation of historical narrations.
* According to Quibuyen (2008), Rizal’s annotation of the Morga “constitute a sustained interrogation of colonial power”. From it, we can see Rizal’s historical project for his country. The author also added that “Rizal was the first Filipino to construct a national history by deconstructing colonial history”.

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