

# CHAMORU IN MOTION: AGENCY, DISPLAY AND THE CIRCULATION OF OBJECTS, PEOPLE AND KNOWLEDGE FROM THE MARIANA ISLANDS TO SPAIN

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the circulation, agency and display of objects, people and knowledge from the Mariana Islands to Spain across 134 years. These three theoretical axes have not previously been applied in a focused way to studies of CHamoru collections in general, or to those on Pacific collections housed in Spanish institutions more specifically. Employing a multi-method approach, this study reveals overlooked narratives that have shaped the representation and interpretation of CHamoru material culture, people and knowledge within European contexts.

The thesis focuses on two case-studies in the history of these processes: the *Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas* (1887) and the *BIBA CHamoru: Cultura e Identidad en las Islas Marianas* (2021) exhibitions. Additionally, the period between these events is also examined, focusing on how objects from the Marianas were reshuffled and re-interpreted as they moved through various Spanish institutions, which themselves underwent ideological transformations. While the main focus of the thesis is on the mobility of objects, people and knowledge in both colonial and postcolonial settings, two associated processes are also highlighted: the distinct modes of display of CHamoru objects, people and knowledge in different historical and spatial contexts, and the agency of CHamoru people in the production, circulation and knowledge-making related to these objects and exhibitions.

I argue that the movement, agency and exhibition of objects, people and knowledge from the Mariana Islands in Spain constitute long-standing, multifaceted and complex processes that have evolved over time, linking diverse places, actors (both human and non-human) and knowledge traditions. In this way, this thesis will contribute to contemporary scholarly debates about mobility of objects and knowledge across time, Indigenous agency and self-representation in both colonial and postcolonial contexts, the reinterpretation of colonial museum collections and contemporary collaborations between museums and communities of origin.

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# Conventions

Throughout this thesis, I follow specific orthographic and related conventions.

First, I generally use the spelling ‘CHamoru’ to refer to the Indigenous people of the Mariana Islands, adhering to current CHamoru orthographic rules. However, when referring to the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), I use ‘Chamorro’, as this spelling is preferred in the CNMI. While, according to most current conventions the word ‘CHamoru’ is spelled with a ‘CH’, the word for the Chamoru language is spelled with a ‘Ch’, a convention I will follow in this thesis. For a longer debate, see Introduction, section titled ‘Who Are the CHamoru’ (page 25). I will also adhere to the current standard of Chamoru spelling for place names in Guam, although I acknowledge the historical changes that the words have experienced. This way, I will refer to the islands using their official names (i.e. Guam and Rota instead of Guåhan and Luta). Historical spellings (e.g. Agaña instead of Hagåtña) will be used when referring to institutions that adopt those variations. For a longer debate, see page 29.

Second, I use ‘CHamorucise’ to refer to the process whereby CHamoru people have appropriated external cultural practices and have made them uniquely theirs. Three different words are used in the literature to describe this process: Marsh-Taitano (2022) uses ‘to CHamorucize’; Flores (1999) uses ‘to Chamoritize’ and Santos Perez (2022) ‘to Chamorrocize’. Throughout the thesis, unless used in a direct quotation, I will use ‘CHamorucise’ following Marsh-Taitano, adapted to British orthography.

Third, I use the word (hi)story to highlight the intertwined nature of historical events and the narratives created about them, emphasising the inherent subjectivity in the way history is recorded and interpreted (Foucault 1974). Drawing from feminist scholarship’s use of the term ‘herstory’ instead of ‘history’, I use (hi)story to refer to the narratives CHamorus have re-constructed about their past, which often include a mix of western historiographical dominant narratives and the Indigenous subaltern histories (often categorised as ‘stories’), where the ‘story’ aspect becomes a site of resistance against the oppressive ‘history’ (Said 1993).

Fourth, I will differentiate between the ‘Micronesian region’, which will be used to refer to whole region (encompassing Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Kiribati and the Republic of Nauru)

and ‘Micronesia’, which will refer specifically to the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM). Occasionally, when referring to the political, colonial entity established by the Spaniards in the sixteenth century and which existed until 1899 and is today FSM, I will refer to the latter as the ‘Caroline Islands’.

Additionally, I use many acronyms, especially when mentioning specific museological and archival institutions. Please refer to the Glossary at the end of the thesis for reference (page 362).

Finally, all photos are mine unless stated otherwise. Whenever I have incorporated text written in Spanish, I have personally translated the documents into English, keeping in mind that much contextual content might be lost in translation.

## Preface

My journey into this PhD project started amid the COVID-19 global pandemic that dramatically affected all of our lives. I was finishing my Masters at the SRU when the lockdown started, stranded in the UK without the possibility of returning home to Spain for two months. When I eventually managed to fly back to Spain, I decided to take a hiatus year to prepare a good, coherent PhD proposal that would secure me some funding. When I applied to the PhD programme at UEA I was on a mission to investigate, classify and make sense of the Pacific collections (this is, from Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia) that are kept in different museums around Spain, which were collected mostly via scientific expeditions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. This idea was born out of the limited research previously done on these collections, aside from a few exceptions mentioned in the thesis introduction. As a Spanish researcher trained at the SRU, I believed I was a good candidate to conduct this project: I know how to navigate the Spanish museum system, had developed connections to some of the museum curators and directors during my MA and can read documents in Spanish as well as access archival and library resources.

I embarked on my PhD journey in October 2021. My first step, which took most of my first year of PhD, was reading up on the history of Spain's presence in the Pacific region, in preparation for my contextual chapter of the thesis. My first instinct was to focus my research on Polynesian collections and history, with a particular emphasis on late eighteenth-century scientific expeditions that stopped in Tahiti, Tonga and other neighbouring islands. However, I soon became increasingly interested in the history and collections coming from an often under-represented and under-researched area: Micronesia. I soon discovered that Spain and Micronesia's histories were more entangled than I had originally thought. This came as a surprise to me, as Spanish formal education barely covers this long and significant part of our history. Furthermore, the collections from Micronesia arrived in Spain for a world's fair-style exhibition, a context that deeply inspired me to explore further. Coincidentally, an exhibition on CHamoru culture and the Mariana Islands (*BIBA CHamoru*) was inaugurated at Madrid's Museo Nacional de Antropología towards the end of 2021. This was my first fieldwork experience, as I had the opportunity to travel to the opening of the exhibition, where I met some of the curators and their CHamoru

collaborators who had travelled to Madrid for the occasion. I visited the exhibition several times while it was open, conducting an ethnography of it (November 2021–March 2022). The more I learned about CHamoru and Micronesian culture, the more interested I became. My experience with *BIBA CHamoru* culminated with the visit of Judy Flores, a Guam-based artist and former SRU student and her daughter Sandy Flores, who was director of CAHA (Guam Council of the Arts) at the time.

During my Probationary Review in June 2022, my examiner Karen Jacobs rightfully pointed out that my initial project was too ambitious to complete in three and a half years, and that it in fact constituted more of a life project than a PhD project. With my supervisors' support and approval, as my first year of PhD came to an end, I decided that my thesis focus would shift and become narrower to focus exclusively on the collections from Micronesia kept in Museo Nacional de Antropología. I also decided that my fieldwork would mostly take place in Guam, where I already had some contacts thanks to *BIBA CHamoru*, but with visits to the Northern Mariana Islands and one month in Yap, Federated States of Micronesia. I planned my research trip accordingly also including a brief stop in Manila to conduct archival research at the National Archives of the Philippines. Thus, I embarked on 6 months of fieldwork, from November 2023 through April 2024.

Not long after arriving in Guam, I found that the possibilities for fieldwork research in the Marianas were much broader than I had planned. Additionally, I realised that providing quality context and analysis for the collections from the Mariana Islands and the Caroline Islands (Federated States of Micronesia) were beyond the scope of my 100,000-word limit. At that point, I decided that my thesis would focus solely on CHamoru collections in Spanish museums and that I would spend most of my six-month fieldwork period in Guam. However, I also travelled briefly to the Northern Mariana Islands, Yap, Pohnpei and the Marshall Islands to explore cultural differences across the Micronesian region. Additionally, while in Guam and encouraged by Judy Flores, I regularly attended the planning committee meetings for the Guam delegation to the Festival of Pacific Arts (FestPac), scheduled to take place in Hawai'i in June 2024. This led me to decide to complete this line of research by attending FestPac myself, which turned out to be a valuable research experience, allowing me to gather important data on CHamoru self-representation in comparison to other Pacific communities.

The thesis's angle on circulation, agency and display came while trying to make sense of my extensive fieldnotes. During my process of data analysis, mostly conducted between May and September 2024, three major cross-sectional themes kept appearing. Next came the thesis structure, guided by a chronological framework that traces the evolving relationships between Spain and the Mariana Islands over time. While this thesis marks the culmination of my research journey, it is also just one step in a much larger discussion. I hope it serves as a foundation for further exploration and engagement with these collections and their histories.

Alba Ferrández Gaudens, July 2025

This thesis has been approved by the UEA Ethics Committee (application ETH2122-0301).

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# Introduction

On the 17th of November 2021, at the height of the Omicron COVID-19 wave in Spain, about fifty people from different backgrounds gathered in the lobby of Museo Nacional de Antropología (MNA) for the opening of the *BIBA CHamoru: Cultura e Identidad en las Islas Marianas* exhibition. Masks covered people's faces as they interacted with each other in Spanish, English and Chamoru while walking over the stickers of the fifteen Mariana Islands fixed to the floor in a south-to-north orientation. Soon, everyone gathered around the stand where Fernando Sáez, Director of MNA, was situated (Fig. 1), the exhibition poster hanging behind him and a model *sakman* canoe<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 38), gifted by the Government of Guam to the Spanish Government for the commemoration of the 500-year anniversary of Magellan's landing in Guam, in front of him, an embodiment of the commitment towards continued collaborations between the two countries. Sáez welcomed the attendees, with a particular emphasis on the guests from the Mariana Islands who, despite the challenges posed by the global pandemic, continued to collaborate to see the project through and even travelled to Spain for the opening. In general, Sáez's speech talked about cultural synergies, collaboration, dialogue, re-interpretation of history and reconciliation. It also spoke about reconnecting the Spanish public with a forgotten part of their history. The speech finished with the usual 'BIBA CHamoru', which received a collective 'BIBA!' in return. BIBA is a CHamorucised derivative of the Spanish word 'viva', which alludes to feelings of life, 'long live', pride, enthusiasm and celebration. In this context, 'BIBA' served as a metaphor for the enduring connections between Spain and the Marianas that span generations, embodied in the model canoe.

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<sup>1</sup> *Sakman* canoes were the long-distance sailing canoes used by ancient CHamorus. Pigafetta, Magellan's chronist, was amazed at the canoes which he described as 'flying proas' in 1521: 'Their canoes are similar to Fusino's gondolas. The sail is made out of palm leaves sewn together in the shape of a lateen sail; it always sails sideways, and on the side opposite to the sail they tie a thick, sharp post which is used to sail safely. The rudder resembles a baker's spatula' (Pigafetta 2012: 38-40, author's translation). With the arrival of Spanish colonisers and the imposition of restrictions on interisland trips or even sailing beyond the reef, the practice of seafaring and the original *sakman* canoes associated with them almost disappeared by the 1780s (Rogers 1995: 33). However, traditional seafaring was still practiced over small distances. This was recorded by Jacques Arago, illustrator in Louis Freycinet's expedition in 1819, who travelled to Rota and Tinian in traditional canoes, some guided by CHamorus and some by Carolinians (Atienza 2019). A technical illustration of a *sakman* canoe attributed to George Anson made in 1820 during his visit to the Marianas is also an example of the continuity of *sakman*-making practices (Fig. 68). Recent years have seen a revival of this traditional sailing practice, although contemporary '*sakman*' canoes often resemble 'Micronesian' canoes in their form (particularly from around Yap State). I will take this issue up in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.



Figure 1: Opening of the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition on the 17th of November 2021 at Museo Nacional de Antropología (MNA). Around 50 people of Spanish and CHamoru background attended the opening. In the background we can see Fernando Sáez, director of MNA standing behind the model of a canoe gifted by the Government of Guam to the Naval delegation that visited Guam on the occasion of the 500th anniversary of Magellan-Elcano's circumnavigation. Sáez is giving his inaugural speech, discussing topics such as cultural collaboration, the re-interpretation of the past, reconciliation and possibilities for the future.

In the months leading up to and following the opening, MNA became a space of intercultural exchange, dialogue and collaboration that challenged traditional models of institutional governance in museum settings (Benedict 2003; Watson 2015). Many institutions and individuals from the Mariana Islands and Spain worked tirelessly to negotiate and re-negotiate the selection of materials and texts used in the exhibition, aiming to offer a critical reinterpretation of Marianas (hi)story. CHamoru objects kept at MNA, which were initially circulated for the 1887 *Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas*, were re-displayed after a long time of being ‘deactivated’ in storage. Once inaugurated, CHamoru visitors travelled to Madrid to experience the exhibition firsthand, while Spanish visitors came to learn about one of the most underrepresented legacies of Spain's colonial past. This ethnographic scene captures the essence of this thesis: a convergence of people, objects

and knowledge from Spain, the Marianas and beyond, interconnected through circulation, agency and display.

This thesis explores the different motions (flows, circulations) of objects, people and knowledge from the Mariana Islands to Spain. This intricate process of circulation has lasted for centuries, beginning with the ‘first contact’ between the Spanish and the CHamoru in 1521, and continues to persist in different ways. However, due to time and word constraints, this study will focus on two key instances in the history of these motions (and of CHamoru objects on display in Spain): the 1887 *Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas* and the 2021 *BIBA CHamoru: Cultura e Identidad en las Islas Marianas* exhibition. The interlude between these two events, where the objects were shuffled and classified differently as they moved through different Spanish institutions, will be also explored. This way, I adhere to Torrence and Clarke’s affirmation that museum collections ‘can be converted into rich sources of information about historical processes’ (2013: 172). This implies that a variety of agents, objects, artworks, documents, people, knowledge, etc., play a central role in this study. Following Jacobs (2012: 35) I will use the term ‘objects’<sup>2</sup> to encompass anything that can be objectified, whether artefacts, things, art or immaterial entities that can be included within these categories. Rather than viewing objects in isolation, the emphasis will be on their entanglement through social and material relations. Two associated processes arise from this: the distinct modes of display used in different institutions and historical instances, and the agency of CHamoru people in the production, circulation and knowledge production in and around these objects and exhibitions.

The collection of CHamoru objects under study kept at MNA is unique, as it is the only known collection from the Mariana Islands that reflects the life of CHamorus in the 19th century. Other collections of CHamoru objects exist in other museums around the world. For example, the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin holds a large collection of objects from the Northern Mariana Islands, assembled by German colonial officers during the German occupation of the islands (1899-1914). The musée du quai Branly – Jacques Chirac in Paris stores a collection of CHamoru ancient artefacts and human remains collected by French naturalist Alfred Marche in 1887 (for more details, see Chapter 2). Other ancient artefacts collected by the Japanese during

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<sup>2</sup> Due to time and word constraints, and to reduce the scope of research, this thesis will focus solely on so-called ‘ethnographic’ objects, excluding ‘natural history’ collections.

the occupation of the Northern Marianas (1914-1944) and Guam (1941-1944) are stored at the National Museum of Ethnology in Osaka. In the United States, the largest collections of CHamoru objects are at the National Museum of Natural History, the Field Museum and the Bishop Museum<sup>3</sup>, while other smaller collections exist in museums in California. Most of these are comprised of ancient artefacts and were collected by U.S. military servicemen and field-trained ethnologists during the first half of the 20th century. Additionally, the Guam Museum and the Northern Mariana Museums hold large collections of objects from different periods of time, although the period of late Spanish colonisation is only marginally represented. A study of the CHamoru collection in Madrid, therefore, makes it possible to materially explore a significant period of CHamoru history that is widely underrepresented in global collections.

Additionally, this thesis aims to fill a gap in the existing literature about Pacific collections in European museums. In the edited volume *Pacific Presences: Oceanic Art and European Museums* contributors historically ‘map Pacific presences across Europe’ (2018: 1). While the volume covers a range of contexts, it focused specifically on Britain, France, the Netherlands, Russia and Germany, with Spanish collections largely absent from the volume. *Pacific Presences* also includes several chapters that explore the formation of a range of collections, tracing how artefacts from certain places, acquired during particular expeditions and cross-cultural encounters, were brought together, exhibited and at times dispersed. While this presents a similar methodology as the one outlined in this thesis, *Pacific Presences* only includes two-case studies of collections from the Micronesian region (namely Kiribati and Nauru) and therefore leaves a significant gap in relation to the wider range of Micronesian collections represented in European museums.

Within the Spanish context, some studies of Pacific collections in Spanish museums have been conducted in the past, mainly in the form of catalogues (Mellén Blanco 1999, 2015; Mellén Blanco and Zamarrón 1993; Romero de Tejada 2007) and studies of individual objects (Corney 1920; Mellén Blanco 2000; Lythberg 2015; Mellén Blanco 2018). However, no systematic study of CHamoru collections in Spain has been conducted, with the exception of a catalogue entry by Alonso Pajuelo (2021).

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<sup>3</sup> The over 10,000 artefacts kept at the Bishop Museum, collected by the controversial Hans Hornbostel, were officially returned to the Mariana Islands in August 2025. This repatriation is the largest one of its kind.

Also, no analysis of Pacific collections in Spanish museums has looked at the intersecting themes of circulation, agency and display. Tending to these issues, in this thesis, I seek to explore the following research questions:

1. How have CHamoru objects, people and knowledge circulated to, from and within Spanish institutions in different periods of time?
2. What distinct themes were articulated each of the times objects and knowledge have been on display and how do they reflect the broader historical, political and intellectual contexts of their respective eras?
3. How is Indigenous agency revealed in the production, circulation and display of CHamoru objects kept in Spanish museums?
4. In which ways have CHamoru techniques of self-representation through material, artistic and written expressions evolved or remained consistent across time?

In tending to these research questions, I argue that the circulation, agency and display of objects, people and knowledge from the Mariana Islands in Spain are long, multifaceted and complex processes that have changed throughout history and that connect a variety of locations, actors (human and non-human) and knowledge traditions. This thesis situates itself within and contributes to contemporary discussions on the circulation of objects, people and knowledge, agency and self-representation, the reinterpretation of colonial museum collections and collaborative efforts between Western museums and communities of origin. Before exploring the theoretical roots of this project, however, some background on the Mariana Islands and their Indigenous inhabitants is necessary.

## **The Mariana Islands**

The Mariana Islands are a tropical archipelago located in the northwestern Pacific Ocean, between the 12th and 21st parallels North and along the 145th meridian East. The archipelago is comprised of fifteen islands, listed from south to north: Guam (Guåhan), Rota (Luta), Goat Island (Aguijan), Tinian, Saipan, Farallon de Medinilla (No'os), Anatåhan, Sarigan, Guguan, Alamagan (Alimågan), Pågan, Agrihan, Asuncion, Maug and Farallon de Pajaros (Uråcas). The southernmost five islands of the archipelago consist of elevated, highly permeable limestone and are encircled by a coral reef; the remaining islands are volcanic. The archipelago experiences tropical

weather throughout the year, characterised by two distinct seasons: a dry season from November to April and a wet season from May to November. The landscape of the islands is formed of different natural habitats, including limestone cliffs, sandy beaches, wetlands, valleys and deep rainforests that are populated by ancestral presences known as *taotaomo'na*. The total landmass of the entire archipelago is about 390 square miles, but only the islands of Guam, Rota, Tinian and Saipan are populated. They are located near the Marianas Trench, the deepest part of the oceanic bed and are surrounded by, to use Epeli Hau'ofa's (2008) terminology, 'a sea of islands' comprised of the 'independent'<sup>4</sup> Pacific nations of Federated States of Micronesia and Palau.

The Mariana Islands are part of the cultural subregion of Micronesia. 'Micronesia', nonetheless, is an artificially created term used to refer to a region of the Pacific which borders were invented by French explorer Dumont d'Urville in the 1830s. D'Urville artificially divided the Pacific into three distinct regions: Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia, the last acquiring its name from the Greek word for 'small', referring to the small size of its islands. This tripartite divide was consolidated into an international standard in the twentieth century (Douglas 2014: 7). The Micronesian region consists of over 2,000 tropical islands with distinct peoples, histories and cultures. Despite its history of interconnectedness, today the area is divided into different political unities: Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Kiribati and the Republic of Nauru.

Politically, the Marianas are separated into two entities. The largest island in the archipelago, Guam, has been an unincorporated United States (U.S.) territory since 1898, while the remaining islands are part of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or CNMI. The political status of the Mariana Islands is complex and for a long time has created a deep division between the CHamorus of Guam and those of the CNMI. Because of their strategic location near Asia and their respective political statuses, the Mariana Islands are an important asset for global geopolitics, especially for the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD). Two thirds of the island of Guam are owned by the DOD, and large areas of the islands of Tinian and Pagan in the CNMI

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<sup>4</sup> While these are technically 'independent nations', they are under the influence of the United States through the Compact of Free Association, an international agreement signed by the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of Palau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands after the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands was dissolved in 1986. It provides freedom of movement and financial assistance in exchange for 'full international defense authority' (Frain 2017: 8).

are under lease to the U.S. Government, with plans for a military buildup in the next few years (Frain 2022: 260-261). The relationship between CHamorus and the U.S. military is complex and multifaceted, with many members of the community serving in the Armed Forces (Na'puti 2014; Frain 2017). The military presence in the islands has also facilitated the growth of the tourism industry, the top contributor to Guam's economy, through what Teaiwa refers to as 'militourism', described as 'a phenomenon by which military or paramilitary force ensures the smooth running of a tourist industry, and that same tourist industry masks the military forces behind it' (1999: 251). At the same time, the damage caused by excessive militarisation has led to the emergence of numerous community organisations dedicated to advocating for the decolonisation and demilitarisation of the islands. Local groups such as Hita Litekyan, Tinian Women's Association, Tåno Tåsi yan Todu and Guam Green Growth, as well as region-wide organisations such as the Micronesia Climate Alliance, among others, work to protect the natural and cultural environments of the Marianas from military activities and the climate crisis (Frain 2017, 2022).

Recent archaeological findings suggest that the islands were first populated around 1,500 BCE through a series of migrations or ancestral voyages from Southeast Asia. Throughout their Deep History (Smail 2008), the islands have gone through multiple waves of migration and colonisation that have had enormous impact on island demographics and their spatial, cultural and environmental dynamics (I will explore some of these in more detail in Chapter 1). Today, the islands are a multicultural hub, home to significant migrant communities from neighbouring Micronesia, Japan, the Philippines, the U.S. and South Korea, along with a substantial presence of U.S. military personnel. Guam has around 170,000 inhabitants, with only about one-third identifying as CHamoru, even though individuals who identify as CHamoru come from diverse ethnic backgrounds themselves. The CNMI has about 45,000 inhabitants, with a larger proportion of Indigenous population.

Economically speaking, the islands largely rely on tourism and the investment brought by the U.S. military. Socioeconomic disparities are evident across the islands (particularly in Guam), as significant real estate investments by active and retired military personnel and the high demand for property persist. These contrast with the growing challenges CHamoru and other migrant communities face in securing affordable housing, often pushing them to live with family (Hernandez 2024). The situation in the islands has resulted in large-scale migration of CHamorus to the U.S.

(Bettis 1993), with those residing abroad surpassing the population in the Marianas (Bennett 2022: 241). In fact, CHamorus represent the third largest Micronesian Pacific Islander community in the U.S. (Rico et al. 2023), with the largest diasporic community found in San Diego. Although diaspora CHamorus often struggle to preserve the Chamoru language, they continue to remember their ancestors and, as famous CHamoru poet Craig Santos Perez writes, ‘carry our culture in the canoes of our bodies’ through the metaphors of navigation and voyaging (2022a: 110).

## Who are the CHamoru

The Indigenous inhabitants of the Mariana Islands self-identify as *taotao tåño*’ (people of the land), CHamoru, Chamorro or Chamoru. Several other spellings exist in archival documents, such as Tsamoru and Chamorru (Santos Perez 2022b: 11). The origin, spelling and meaning of the term reflect the complexity of CHamoru culture and identity (Ibid). On the one hand, historians have suggested that the term originates from the ancient Spanish word ‘chamorro’, which means ‘bald’ or ‘shorn’ (Rogers 1995: 6). Early Spanish missionaries noted that CHamoru men shaved their heads, leaving only a topknot (in Lévesque 1992c: 14), possibly leading to the adoption of this name. Alternatively, it is argued that the term could derive from ‘chamorri’, a word Spanish missionaries reported to have been used by CHamorus to refer to the elite class in ancient CHamoru society (Cunningham 1992: 1). Various spellings have been used across different accounts from the post-European contact period, but historically the ‘ro’ spelling became the standard (Taitano n.d.a). In 1983, a Chamorro Standard Orthography was adopted, which maintained the colonial spelling ‘Chamorro’. This was reconsidered during some public hearings in 1993, and the Chamorro Language Commission officially announced the change of ‘Chamorro’ to ‘Chamoru’. This decision was contested by conservative sectors of the local population, with opponents launching a media campaign to prevent this change. Ultimately, the debate came to an end through a 1994 law, mandating that the correct spelling was ‘Chamorro’ (Ibid). In 2018, however, the *Kumision i Fino’ CHamoru yan Fina’na’guen i Historia yan Lina’la i Taotao Tåño*’ (Commission on Chamoru Language and the Teaching of the History and Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam), established in 2016, decided that the official orthography would be ‘CHamoru’. They concluded that ‘CH’ is one sound in Chamoru and, therefore, one letter that should be capitalised in the word

‘CHamoru’ (Santos Perez 2022b: 11) and that ‘rro’ does not exist in the CHamoru alphabet, establishing that the spelling ‘ru’ should be used (Torres Souder 2021: 174).



Figure 2: A meme circulated through social media by members of the CHamoru community in the Mariana Islands and the diaspora. This meme represents how, despite the varying spellings of the name for the Indigenous peoples of the Mariana Islands, once used to create divisions within the community based on political boundaries imposed by foreign powers, CHamorus are but one people. Unknown author, uploaded by Guamfunnymemes on Instagram.

Today, various spellings of the word are used, reflecting a form of ‘self-determination and resistance to a label imposed on the Indigenous peoples by prior colonizers’ (Frain 2017: 10). Most people in the CNMI prefer ‘Chamorro’ while those in Guam tend to favour ‘CHamoru’. Advocates for the spelling ‘CHamoru’ argue that ‘Chamorro’ is linked to the status quo, symbolising a tacit acceptance of the existing political circumstances. The spelling ‘CHamoru’ is seen as a ‘practical assertion’ of the Indigenous population’s identity through an orthography that is ‘self-defined and self-adopted, and thus not imposed by any external authority’ (Taitano n.d.a). Other people, however, prefer to use ‘Chamorro’ as it is considered the historical version of the term (Madrid and Taitano 2022). To reflect Mariana Islanders’ right to self-identification, throughout this thesis I will generally use the spelling ‘CHamoru’ over ‘Chamorro’. Yet, the spelling ‘Chamorro’ will be used whenever I refer to citizens of the CNMI, reflecting their preference for this spelling. In the past, the different spellings have been used to reflect the different political statuses of Guam and the CNMI, although recently CHamorus have started to reclaim their identity as one

people, as reflected by the meme in Figure 2, circulated through social media by members of the community.

Chamoru or *Finu' Chamoru* is the Indigenous language of the Mariana Islands. Although it is an Austronesian language, Chamoru has many borrowed words, notably from Spanish and English due to the different waves of colonialism suffered by the CHamoru people, creating a ‘continuum of intermediate forms’ (Rodriguez-Ponga 2021: 146-147). Chamoru is considered an endangered language as it has suffered from colonial repression. Robert Underwood (former President of the University of Guam and the *Kumision I Fino' Chamoru*) estimates that ‘in 20 to 30 years there may not be any real first-language speakers’ (in Hofschneider 2020). In Guam, an English-only policy was implemented under the American Navy’s mandate (1898-1941). This policy, which lasted until the 1970s, discouraged the use of the CHamoru language, something that significantly contributed to the loss of native and fluent speakers (Lujan 1996: 21). Recent years, however, have seen a resurgence of *Fino' Håya*, a version of the Chamoru language that eliminates all Spanish borrowings, although its use remains contested among some segments of the population (Underwood 2018). More and more people, both in the islands and the diaspora, are learning the language through language immersion programmes and free online classes (*Ibid*). Additionally, Chamoru is increasingly being taught in schools in Guam and the CNMI (Quinata n.d.; Erediano 2024).

A movement to change Guam place names to reflect the Chamoru language orthography was initiated in the 1990s (a process that has not taken place in the CNMI), but it initially failed due to opposition from more conservative segments of the community. More recently the *Kumision i Fino' CHamoru* and *Kumision I Fino' CHamoru Yan I Fina'nå'guen* (Place Names Commission) worked individually with the mayor of each village to change the names one by one. This way, the villages of Hagåtña (before spelled Agaña), Maesso' (Merizo), Inalåhan (Inarajan), Hågat (Agat), Humåtak (Umatac) and Santa Rita-Sumai (Santa Rita) have changed the official spelling of their names, while the villages of Agana Heights and Tamuning have resisted the change due to historical reasons (Tenorio Healy 2022). In addition, discussions over the island’s official name have emerged in recent decades. In 2010, Governor Felix Camacho’s administration proposed a bill to the Guam Legislature to address the changing of the official name of Guam to its name in the Chamoru language, Guåhan. ‘Guåhan is Chamorro for Guam. Guåhan can be translated to

signify a place of resources. Guåhan represents the island, the ancient Chamorros and their way of life' the bill stated. However, this bill was never passed. While I acknowledge the political connotations encoded in place names, in this thesis I will use the official names of islands and towns, which are widely recognised, for consistency and accessibility.

CHamoru identity, much like any other identity, must be understood as a historico-cultural construct that is 'always in flux, split between two or more worlds, cultures and languages' (Spitta 2006: 8). Contemporary CHamoru identity and self-identification with the term 'CHamoru' arises from the rejection of the term 'Guamanian' which was imposed by American colonisers meant 'to identify Guam Chamorros had evolved into an increasingly inclusive and ethnically-ambiguous term' (Taitano n.d.b). While most CHamoru people acknowledge their mixed ancestry, they take great pride in their Indigenous roots and identify as Indigenous.

Given the colonial history of the islands and the submersion of Indigenous oral (hi)stories, CHamoru people have come to know their past through recent interpretations of historical documents created by colonial officers, Western explorers and churchmen, among others (Madrid and Taitano 2022: 22). CHamoru culture has been exposed to multiple cultural influences that have changed the local lifeways, and many 'cultural features from elsewhere have been, in whole or in part, woven into the tapestry of island life, many of which have been CHamorucized' (Marsh-Taitano 2022: 389). Moreover, CHamoru identity is deeply rooted in Catholic doctrines and traditions, which are often entrenched in Indigenous cultural practices, with the Church being the epicentre of community life (Paulino and Flores 2023). This has materialised in a historically unique combination of Indigenous and foreign influences, especially Spanish and Filipino Catholic values and practices, known as *kostumbren CHamoru* (Guampedia n.d.; Flores 1999: 167; Taitano DeLisle 2021: 19; Torres-Souder 2024: 11).

Despite all of this, CHamoru people have maintained features of their Indigenous pre-colonial cultural identity (Marsh-Taitano 2022: 384). Contemporary CHamoru identity is deeply rooted in several cultural pillars: *inafa'maolek* (interdependence, care for others, hospitality, community cooperation), *chenchule'* (reciprocity), *mamåhlao* (shame or embarrassment) and *respetu* (respect), among others (Camacho 2022; Santos Perez 2022a: 11; Paulino and Flores 2023). CHamoru people share a deep reverence for the *manåmko* (elders) and *saina* (elders and

ancestors). Throughout the centuries, CHamoru resistance to Spanish, German, Japanese and American colonial powers has been anchored in cultural continuity (Farrer and Sellman 2014: 127). In this sense, language and culture act as a strong vehicle for CHamoru cultural sovereignty, indigeneity and identity-building (see Part III), a process that cannot be separated from political strives for the decolonisation and demilitarisation of the archipelago (Na'puti 2014).

Language and culture are intricately connected with the recovery or revival of ancestral practices that pre-date colonialism, combined with 'neo-traditional' art forms (Flores 1999). Since the 1970s the Mariana Islands have experienced a CHamoru cultural renaissance, with ancestral practices such as slinging,<sup>5</sup> seafaring, weaving, healing, chanting and dancing being recovered (Ibid: 2002). CHamoru contemporary artists, activists and cultural practitioners who participate in the cultural revival position themselves within the larger community of Pacific peoples and cultures, highlighting shared values and traditions by 'tapping into their deep reserves of creativity, diligence, and intelligence to face the challenges before their villages and islands' (Perez Hattori 2023: 803). Yet, in the words of prominent CHamoru scholar Robert Underwood, while CHamoru people today 'proudly wear the Pacific Islander mantle and use the term Indigenous', they 'imperfectly fit the Pacific Islander world' (Underwood 2022: 14). This is most evident in planning for the Festival of the Pacific Arts (FestPac),<sup>6</sup> where the Guam planning committee has had to ask themselves 'what is Chamorro culture? And how do we represent ourselves?' (Flores 1999: 5). Since the 1980s, the Guam delegation at FestPac has worked to re-create pre-contact traditions and, in this process, articulate a uniquely CHamoru Indigenous identity (Flores 2002). Neo-traditional CHamoru art forms are often criticised by other Pacific Islanders, who claim that their cultural expressions are manufactured, raising concerns over their authenticity (Underwood 2022: 14).

Some of the main actors in the contemporary CHamoru renaissance scene, some of which will appear throughout the thesis, need to be highlighted. These include slingers such as Roman dela Cruz (professional slinger, Guam, owner of Fokkai), Ben

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<sup>5</sup> Slinging refers to the practice of throwing or hurling stones or other things using a tool known as sling.

<sup>6</sup> Every four years, members of different Pacific communities gather in the world's largest celebration of Pacific Islanders and their culture: the Festival of the Pacific Arts (FestPac). Arising from the discussions around the revival and promotion of cultures from Oceania, FestPac has been a forum for celebration of the rich cultural diversity of the islands in the Pacific, as well as a space where different artistic and cultural practices of the region converge, interact and learn from one another.

‘Guelu’ Rosario (professional slinger, Rota) and Bernard ‘BJ’ Leon Guerrero (slinger and head of the slinging non-profit organisation Åcho Marianas, Guam). Since 2016, Roman and Guelu have represented the Marianas in the yearly Slinging World Cup which takes place in the Balearic Islands, Spain. In the seafaring movement, it is worth highlighting the work of 500 Sails, a non-profit organisation from Saipan, Hilary ‘Larry’ Raigetal and Melissa Taitano who teach traditional navigation at the University of Guam, Antonio ‘Tony’ Pialug who teaches navigation and seafaring at the Career Tech High Academy Charter School in Hågat (Guam) and TASA (Traditions Affirming Our Seafaring Ancestry), a Guam-and-Micronesian-based traditional seafaring organisation. Additionally, efforts to revive traditional seafaring are underway in San Diego, where members of the diaspora such as Mario Borja are actively trying to build *sakman* canoes using precolonial materials and techniques.

Although many CHamoru weavers exist in the islands and abroad, some of the most experienced include Phillip Sablan (Master Weaver, Guam), James Bamba (Ginen Guåhan, Rota), Thomas Torres (Master Weaver, Guam), Roquin Siongco (Rockinroquin, Guam), Maria ‘Lia’ Barcina (Barcina Sisters, Guam) and Martha ‘Marty’ Tenorio. In the realm of *åmot* (traditional medicine), figures such as Rosalia ‘Mama Chai’ Mateo Fejeran (*suruhåna* or healer, Guam), Lourdes ‘Mama Lou’ Toves Manglona (*yo’åmte* or healer, Guam), Frances Meno (*yo’åmte*, Guam) and Thomas Mendiola (*suruhånu*, Saipan) are highly respected among the community. In the revival of CHamoru chanting, Leonard Iriarte (Master of CHamoru chant, Guam) is a central figure, and groups such as *I Fanalalai’an* are perpetuating this tradition. In a similar vein, CHamoru dancing, first reintroduced by Frank Gabon (Master of CHamoru dance, Guam) in 1977, is being practiced by many groups around the islands as well as the diaspora today.

This is a non-exhaustive list, as many more cultural practitioners exist in the CHamoru community. After this introduction to who the CHamoru people are, I now turn to look at the literature that has inspired this study.

## Literature Review

This thesis draws from extensive literature from different disciplines and across a wide range of topics, including universal exhibitions, biographies of objects and collections and collaborative exhibition-making, each of which is explored in parts I, II and III

respectively. Additionally, literature on the science of race, Indigenous biographies, re-assemblage of collections and Indigenous self-representation are explored individually in chapters 2, 3, 5 and 6. However, three main themes act as the theoretical spine of the thesis: (1) the circulation of objects, people and knowledge in colonial and postcolonial contexts; (2) object and Indigenous agency; (3) their display in exhibitions and museums. This section serves as a non-exhaustive review of the main theories and authors that have influenced my arguments, although other sources will be cited throughout the text.

### **Circulation**

One of the main axes of the thesis is to look at how CHamoru objects, people and knowledge have circulated to, from and within Spain. ‘Circulation’, however, is a concept which entails a range of interconnected meanings that require some definition. First, it refers to the movements, motions and flows that guide people and objects through time and space, accompanied by the transmission of the knowledge and meanings they carry. Although circulation appears to be a process imposed upon objects and individuals by external forces, both frequently function as active agents in their own circulation. Second, it refers to the interactions and encounters between individuals, between individuals and objects, between objects themselves and between people, objects and their environment through which knowledge, cultural practices and materials are actively exchanged and transmitted.

The circulation of objects and people manifests in various forms and happens in many different sites of interaction. In certain cases, circulation takes place within a colonial context, where the act of ‘collecting’ serves as a fundamental mechanism of exchange. Although a focus on ‘collecting’ is not suitable for the processes under research in this thesis, as I will explain later, it is important to highlight its dynamic nature both in and outside the colonial context. Thomas (1991, 2003; Thomas et al. 2016) explores the intricate pre-colonial encounters between peoples in the late eighteenth century, with a focus on Captain Cook’s voyages, that led to the collecting of objects and the circulation of knowledge and often people from the Pacific to Europe. Hooper has also written on the notion of encounters in Western explorations of the Pacific, arguing that they are ‘key sites of interaction’ (2006: 18) where both parties established exchanges that were satisfactory for all and that resulted in the European collecting of ‘artificial’ and ‘natural’ curiosities. Wingfield (2011) moves

beyond the focus on ‘field collecting’ and argues that other types of relational transactions, such as deals, loans and gift-giving both in the field and between dealers, institutions, families and others, need to be considered. These encounters were oftentimes far from positive, resulting in the colonisation, removal of important cultural artefacts, loss of cultural practices and death of Pacific peoples (Jolly et al. 2009). Additionally, they influenced the development of the so-called ‘science of race’ (Douglas 1999, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c), creating new taxonomies of human classification based on physical differences reinforced through the display of the objects that were collected. In Part I of the thesis, I engage with this body of literature to examine how CHamoru objects, people and knowledge were circulated to Spain during the Spanish colonial period.

Once circulated to Europe, the movement of people, knowledge and objects also happens inside the museum, as materials and knowledge are frequently reorganised and reinterpreted (see Chapter 4 for a more comprehensive review). They are also often circulated between institutions in the form of loans, travelling exhibitions (see Part III) and, sometimes, restitution. Wingfield (2013) has written about the dispersal of the LMS ‘museum’ collections, as they were circulated from multiple centres of missionary activity to London and then re-circulated to various places around England. More recently, the edited volume *Mobile Museums* (Driver et al. 2021a) has considered the importance of the circulation of objects, knowledge and people as museum collections become re-mobilised with Indigenous community engagement, proposing a ‘paradigm shift in the understanding of the history and future uses of museum collections’ (Driver et al. 2021b: 1). Museum studies have traditionally focused on accumulation, while the authors of *Mobile Museums* explore the concept of ‘mobility’, which they define as ‘the flow of ideas and practices, as well as the movement of people and things, and especially their diasporic legacies in dispersed collections of archives, objects and photographs’ that has occurred in the past, continues in the present and may persist in the future (Driver et al. 2021b: 2). Provenance research, restitution debates, re-mobilisation of historical archival and objectual materials and changes to museum practices in the era of digitalisation and co-curation are all included within the definition of mobile collections as future calls to action.

Expanding on the definition of mobility, the edited volume *Things in Motion* (Joyce and Gillespie 2015) develops the concept of ‘object itineraries’ to explore the

technologies and conditions that shape circulation, including cultural and spatial transformations, as well as the networks whereby things circulate. Itineraries extend beyond physical travel to include how things may travel via textual descriptions, drawings and photographs. Ultimately, this metaphor emphasises the continuous, multi-sited and relational nature of objects' roles in shaping and being shaped by social, spatial and temporal contexts. Another edited volume, *Material Culture in Transit* (Jallo 2023), considers how mobility and the circulation of objects, people and knowledge shape the representation, agency and understanding of artefacts. A development in this field focuses on how travelling objects can be understood as 'misplaced' (Spitta 2009), 'inbetween' (Basu 2017) or 'displaced' (Dudley 2021). While Dudley establishes a comparative frame between museum objects and displaced migrants, focusing on the processes of separation, liminality and reincorporation, Spitta argues that objects, people and knowledge shifted meanings as they were recirculated and reinterpreted while travelling from the Americas to Europe in the Modern Era. Basu's edited volume introduces the concept of the 'inbetween' (based on the definition established in Basu and Coleman 2008), which is defined as 'an understanding of the material world as being constituted by movement and mediation' (2017: 2). This literature has greatly influenced my theoretical approach, building on the idea that CHamoru objects, people and knowledge have been widely circulated between the Mariana Islands and Spain across multiple transnational networks at different points in time.

### **Agency**

Another major theme of the thesis has to do with the concept of 'agency' and its complex and multifaceted definitions. Agency has been a central focus of anthropological investigations into the theory of art. Gell's influential book *Art and Agency* (1998), which built on some of his previous work (1992; 1996), introduced the idea that artworks are not passive objects with pure aesthetic and symbolic qualities but active agents in relationships with and between people. Using examples from Pacific societies, Gell argues that 'personhood' is a distributive faculty (or social agency) that extends beyond humans to include all the objects, events and 'bounded biological entities' from which personhood can be 'abducted' (Gell 1998: 222). Artworks (distributed objects), in this way, carry parts of the persons they interact with and have an intentionality and a capability to affect others within a network of social

relationships. In the Melanesian context, Strathern (1988; 1999) has extensively engaged with the concepts of agency and personhood. Strathern has argued that in Melanesian societies personhood is relational; individuals are constituted through their relationships with others. Agency, much like in Gell's argument, is distributed across people, objects and social networks. Objects, in this context, are created 'out of persons' (Strathern 1988: 171); in other words, people project their agency and personhood into objects, intertwining them in a network of social agents where no entity has complete autonomy. Objects, in Strathern's theory, cannot perform their social function without the people who make them, view them and engage with them (1999: 250). My thesis builds on this literature, viewing objects as relational and possessing agency.

The concept of agency has been incorporated into the field of the anthropology of museums, covering multiple grounds. First, there is a focus on the ways in which museum objects and humans influence each other. Herle (2001; 2003), for example, argues that objects in museum collections have agency, enabling them to forge connections between people. Their meanings are not fixed but are shaped by the social contexts they move through, making them inherently relational (Herle 2008). According to Herle, the museum becomes a place of cross-cultural encounter where objects and people exercise mutual influence on each other. Scholars have also looked at the intersections between Actor-Network Theory (ANT), assemblage theory and museum collections. The edited volume by Byrne, Clarke, Harrison and Torrence (2011a) reflects on the idea of 'unpacking' the complex processes whereby objects were collected, problematising collections 'as material and social assemblages': this is, interrogating how objects act as agents in the development of social relationships (Byrne et al. 2011b: 4). Museums and their collections, in this sense, are a 'process' that is constantly unfolding and becoming in the present and the future (*Ibid*: 21). Another development has been the incorporation of a biographical approach to analysis of museum collections. These authors (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986; Gosden and Marshall 1999; Joy 2009) generally argue that the biography of an object is the compilation of social interactions it has experienced through time, building on the idea that objects have a social life. I will explore this literature further in Part II.

A second theoretical focus centres on examining how Indigenous peoples exercised agency within colonial encounters involving the exchange of materials and knowledge. Salmond (1991; 1997; 2003) has written about the agency of the Māori in

their ‘first encounters’ with Captain Cook, framing these interactions as a process of mutual discovery. In a similar vein, Sahlins (1985; 1995), Dening (1980; 1996) and Gaiscogne (2014) have analysed how Indigenous societies actively shape historical events and ‘perform’ and interpret each other in first contact situations and beyond. Furthermore, Thomas (1991) has explored the dialectical opposition between the European appropriation of Indigenous things and the Indigenous appropriation of European things in first encounter contexts.

In *Hunting the Gatherers*, a range of authors (2000) explore how Indigenous people were active participants in processes of collecting, enacting their own agendas and motives. Indigenous agency, which is revealed through the systematic study of museum collections and documentation, affected the types of objects that were available for collecting and how they were interpreted. O’Hanlon (2000: 12-15) distinguishes three types of ethnographic collecting: primary (main goal is to collect), secondary (collecting happened but was subordinated to some other purpose) and concomitant (collections are by-products of a different activity), which can happen in ‘stationary’ and ‘mobile’ settings. Focusing on the role of ‘Indigenous intermediaries’, Konishi et al. (2015) have also looked at how Indigenous peoples exercise their agency in colonial encounters. Douglas (2014) has written about the mutual influence that Western scientific traditions and Indigenous knowledge systems in the Pacific had in the context of scientific exploration, arguing that voyagers’ representations are full of traces or ‘countersigns’ of Indigenous agency. While many of these authors focus on Indigenous input in the process of Western collecting, previous work by O’Hanlon (1993) among the Wahgi people of the New Guinea Highlands has highlighted how local Indigenous frameworks (Wahgi frameworks in this case) often guide and structure the process of ethnographic collecting. As he explains at the beginning of his second chapter, when he travelled to Papua New Guinea to collect specifically for an exhibition at the British Museum, his collecting was ‘constrained by local processes and rules’ and the final collection ‘mirrored in its own structure local social organisation’ (O’Hanlon 1993: 55). This literature is useful in thinking through how the process of collecting is influenced by Indigenous agency in the creation and mobilisation of objects. However, in this thesis I aim to broaden it by bringing the figure of the Indigenous exhibitor and circulator into play (see Chapter 3).

Finally, some authors have explored the ways in which Indigenous agency and self-representation work within the museum. Jacobs (2012) has developed the concept

of ‘representational encounters’ which defines encounters as forms of social interaction. In any encounter, individuals or groups must engage in processes of self-identification, representation and portrayal. These interactions are inherently shaped by mutual influence, as each party’s identity and agency are informed by the other. The edited volume by Harrison et al. (2013) re-traces Indigenous agency in the contemporary museum setting. Contributors bring examples of different ways in which Indigenous peoples represent themselves through the curation and interpretation of their cultural objects in museums. Clifford (2013) poses Indigenous agency at the centre of debates about the future of museum collections, exhibitions and restitution. Drawing from this body of literature, this study adopts the perspective that people, objects and things exert agency by shaping and influencing social relationships, ultimately acting as agents of their own representation.

### **Display**

A final consideration of this thesis has to do with the display of objects, people and knowledge in Spanish exhibitions and museums. Broadly speaking, displaying can be regarded as one of the primary functions of museums. The concept of museum display is relatively recent, arising around the time of the birth of museums in the nineteenth-century European imperial context, despite the fact that many cultures have long had sophisticated methods of display (Longair and McAleer 2012: 1). Displaying, much like collecting, should not be viewed as an independent activity but rather as one deeply intertwined with the broader context and social relationships of its time (Gosden 2000: 232). It is also deeply interconnected to issues of representation (Bennett 1988). While much literature exists on display, for the purposes of this review I will focus on two major themes: universal exhibitions and collaborative exhibitions, as they are the two main contexts under analysis in this thesis. Tending to this extensive literature, this thesis looks at the many possibilities of display of objects, people and knowledge in museums and exhibitions, with a particular emphasis on how they intersect with circulation and Indigenous agency. This way, I aim to move beyond traditional definitions of display as an activity inherently tied to museums, instead exploring alternative possibilities that extend beyond conventional museological contexts.

On the one hand, objects, people and knowledge have been displayed in the complex cultural phenomena known as universal exhibitions<sup>7</sup> where the world, or selected parts of it, was portrayed through an encyclopedic display format. However, the representations of ‘others’, achieved through the display of objects and people from faraway lands, provided an imperial, Europeanised version of the world, distorted by exoticism and constructed through Western eyes and empire (Demeulenaere-Douyère 2010: 12; Said 2014[1978]: 223) that reinforced the racist and paternalistic notions of a nineteenth and early twentieth century ‘science of race’. Arising from a conjunction of economic, social and political factors such as the rise of nationalist movements, accelerating industrial development and the rise of European imperial expansion (Greenhalgh 2011), exhibitions took place mostly, although not exclusively, in Europe and the United States. Each country developed its own display, discourse-building and technical conventions and borrowed successful strategies from others.

In researching these phenomena, some authors have explored how exhibitions displayed and ultimately shaped the idea of modernity, the nation-state and the East-West power dynamics. An important contribution to this field is Bennett’s notion of the ‘exhibitionary complex’ (1988). Exhibitions, according to Bennett, acted as platforms for developing, displaying and spreading new disciplines (history, biology, art history, anthropology) along with new visual technologies. Following suit, Romero de Tejada (1995) explores how the display of ‘ethnographic’ objects links exhibitions, museums and anthropological practice in the Spanish context. Geppert (2010) examines how exhibitions in the UK and France emphasised Empire and national pride through the display of both ‘home’ and ‘foreign’ objects. Referring to the British context, Hoffenberg argues that, through the display of objects from far away, exhibitions were a ‘mechanism for the integration of such [colonial] cultures into the mid-Victorian national identity of ‘Englishness’ (2001: 208). In a similar way, Bloembergen (2006) has explored the ways in which exhibitions helped to legitimise the Dutch imperialist project and the development of a uniquely Dutch national ideology. Building on the work of these authors, Chapter 2 will argue that the 1887 Exhibition facilitated the representation of CHamoru people from a Spanish perspective. This portrayal served to justify Spain’s colonial presence in the

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<sup>7</sup> Since there are many ways to refer to these phenomena (Universal Exhibitions, Great Exhibitions, Expositions Universelles, World’s Fairs, etc.) I shall refer to them from now on simply as ‘exhibitions’.

archipelago while reinforcing the narrative that Spanish rule brought the prospect of ‘progress’.

One of the main focuses of scholarly research in the field has been on the display of human beings in the so-called ‘human zoos’, ‘ethnic shows’ or ‘native villages’, which were common features of exhibitions. This exhibitionary model, which existed since the fifteenth century but was professionalised in the second half of the nineteenth century (Qureshi 2011: 2), although the practice of exhibiting humans can be traced back to centuries before. Blanchard et al.’s volumes *Human Zoos* (2008; 2011) explore various forms embodying the concept of human zoos, closely tied to the ‘science of race’. These themes reinforced the narratives crafted by the exhibition organisers, portraying the West as ‘civilised’ in juxtaposition to the colonies, displayed as ‘savage’ yet capable of being civilised (Cross et al. 2016: 21). In this respect, De L’Estoile (2007) argues that exhibitions possess a performative dimension, where the manner in which otherness is ‘staged’ can be critically examined. In Spain, Moyano Miranda (2008) has written a historiography of human displays in Spanish exhibitions. While most of the literature has focused on the dehumanising display of human beings in colonial exhibitions, Thode-Arora (2014) highlights that Indigenous peoples had their own agendas in participating in exhibitions and could often influence the way in which they were portrayed. Trying to move away from the narrow concept of ‘human zoos’, Demski and Czarnecka (2021) have considered exhibitions as spaces of cultural encounters between European visitors and non-European peoples on display. In a similar vein, Qureshi has defined exhibitions as ‘intercultural encounters and topical debates’ (2011: 8) in which showmen, patrons, performers and the public were active actors in a profitable business of entertainment that generated public discussions about the natural history of humans. In Chapter 3 of the thesis, I will take this stance and trace the agency of CHamoru individual through their participation in the 1887 Exhibition.

Since the 1990s, traditional concepts of how objects should be displayed in exhibitions and who has the power to decide the narratives they convey have been challenged by relational models, with museum-community collaboration becoming a key focus of research. Contributors to *Exhibiting Cultures* (1991) and *Museums and Communities* (1992), for example, explored the politics of display in museums by looking at how they are influenced by cultural, political and institutional forces. This perspective led to Clifford’s famous formulation of the museum as a ‘contact zone’

(1997), defined as a productive space of dialogue, conflict and knowledge production. Similarly, in *Museums and Source Communities*, Peers and Brown (2003) argued that collaborative curation, defined as a mutual, evolving partnership between museums and communities sharing knowledge and power, includes learning how to effectively display Indigenous-made objects in museums, along with the knowledge about them shared by ‘source community’ representatives. This approach emphasises the need for museums to actively implement collaborative practices that balance power, knowledge and skills with community representatives, reversing traditional epistemological hierarchies by valuing and integrating shared knowledge into museum practices and displays.

The notions of ‘contact zone’ and ‘source communities’ have been criticised,<sup>8</sup> arguing that they inherently reproduce prior asymmetries in museum politics of power, governance and display, with Indigenous collaborators often acting more as ‘clients’ or ‘guests’ than active collaborators (Boast 2011; Lynch 2011; Peers 2019). Models of collaboration have therefore been reformulated. Challenging traditional ethnographic display methods, Silverman’s edited volume (2015), for example, has defined the museum as ‘process’, advocating for a ‘transcultural negotiation’ of display and knowledge production. More recently, exhibitions have been defined as ‘laboratories’ and generative sites, where knowledge is not just reproduced but created through the assemblage of ‘objects, images, artworks, sounds, voices, texts, but also – crucially – people, with their different positionalities and perspectives’ (Basu 2025: 78). Additionally, many museums around the world have seen an increase in co-curated permanent and temporary displays. An example of a collaborative exhibition is *Pasifika Styles* which took place in MAA in Cambridge in 2006, and which aimed to enliven the museum displays by opening their collections and archives to Indigenous artists (Raymond and Salmond 2008). When artefacts get touched, mobilised and displayed, especially in the presence of community members, they ‘awaken’, at the same time as relationships between institutions and peoples are rekindled (Veys 2008).

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<sup>8</sup> Given the critique of the term ‘source community’, which highlights the extractive dynamics often inherent in collaborative practices, this thesis deliberately opts for the term ‘community of origin’. This choice reflects a more respectful and reciprocal understanding of the relationship between communities and their cultural heritage, moving away from language that can imply one-sided extraction or appropriation. However, I also acknowledge the problematic nature of the term ‘community’, as Indigenous ‘communities’ were often not communities in the collaborative sense, but had their differences and fought each other.

Through collaborative practices, Indigenous voices are today shaping how collections are displayed, conserved and understood in a way that is respectful of Indigenous cultural and knowledge systems (Byrne et al. 2011; Harrison et al. 2013). In the Canadian context, Phillips (2011) looks at how changes taking place in museum displays are interlinked and contingent on larger processes happening at the macro-level society and politics. Her book focuses on the ‘indigenisation’ of museums, a kind of ‘hybridisation’ in the museum space where Indigenous concepts and protocols are being incorporated. In a further provocation, Soares has proposed the concept of the ‘anticolonial museum’, which he defines as ‘an invitation for discomfort to enter the museum’ (2024: 3). Through the interrelated processes of deconstructing, reconstructing and redistributing, Soares argues for a reflexive perspective on the politics of museum display based on a radical transformation and collaboration within the museum to invade it with insubordination and distress.

Drawing on this extensive literature, Chapters 5 and 6 will examine how *BIBA CHamoru* represented the history and culture of the Mariana Islands through various display methods and materials, including objects, photographs, artworks and community projects. This approach aimed to reconstruct the history and culture of the Mariana Islands from a CHamoru perspective. All in all, these theories have influenced my approach to the material I gathered by using different methods, which I now outline.

## Methodology

This thesis has employed a wide range of methods from Anthropology, History, Art History and Museum Studies, while being consistently guided by Tuhiwai Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999). In this sense, I acknowledge the intersections between academic research and imperialism and advocate for a decolonial, collaborative and participatory methodology that focuses on the ‘agenda for indigenous research’ promoted by Tuhiwai Smith: decolonisation, healing, transformation and mobilisation (1999: 132-134). However, I also want to reflect on my own positionality as a Spanish researcher doing research on Indigenous collections from an ex-Spanish colony. Being Spanish and doing part of my research ‘at home’ has proven to be an advantage in accessing Spanish museums and archives and reading

the associated documentation which is written in Spanish. This is a privilege not many people, and particularly Indigenous peoples from the Global South, possess.

My research has been multi-sited, based on short periods of museum and archival research in Spain and the Philippines, as well as a long period of fieldwork (6 months, November 2023-April 2024) in the Mariana Islands. Library-based research was also conducted in Spain and the UK. Research in the Marianas was itself multi-sited. While most of the time was spent on the island of Guam, I also had the opportunity to visit the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan, Tinian and Rota) and experience firsthand the cultural differences and nuances that distinguish them, while meeting numerous local artists and cultural practitioners. Data has been gathered through various methods, with most of it captured as rough handwritten field notes or typed directly onto my phone. These were later transcribed into a field diary on my laptop, where I applied colour-coding to streamline searches and improve data organisation. Additionally, I have used photography and video to document and record various types of data, such as museum objects, exhibitions, events, workshops and other fieldwork experiences.

### **Navigating the archive**

The largest part of the research conducted for this thesis involved archival research. Colombi (2023: 17) explains that one of the idiosyncrasies of the colonial archive is that records are dispersed around the world. As a consequence, most sources about the Mariana Islands are scattered globally (Hezel 2015: 214), necessitating research in several locations. On the one hand, archival research has been conducted in Spain, including visits in Madrid to Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE), Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN) and Museu Biblioteca Victor Balaguer (MBVB, Vilanova i la Geltrú, Catalonia); the last holding most of the correspondence about the 1887 Exhibition. On the other hand, I conducted research in the National Archives of the Philippines (NAP) in Manila, which keeps one of the biggest collections of documents pertaining to the colonial Governments of the Philippines and the Mariana Islands. Research was also done at the Micronesian Area Research Center at the University of Guam<sup>9</sup> (MARC), a secondary repository of documents found in archives from around the world (Driver

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<sup>9</sup> For a full mapping of where archival documents pertaining the Spanish colonial period in the Mariana Islands are, see Madrid and Taitano (2022). For more general information on the location of archival sources about the Micronesian region, see Hezel (2015).

2005: xiv), as well as an archive of some primary sources related to the Spanish administration (Madrid and Taitano 2022: 29).

Throughout this research, I have approached the archive as a fieldsite. In this sense, I have treated it not only as a space where I consulted archival documents, but where I have spent a ‘prolonged’ time, learning to ‘navigate’ it, to include a metaphor often used by CHamoru people (Perez Hattori 2022: 28), recording my experiences in a field notebook and engaging in reflective practice by noting my emotional responses and critically examining the challenges I encountered throughout the research process.

Archival research has mainly focused on tracing the provenance of CHamoru collections held in Spanish museums. This involved identifying the holdings from the Mariana Islands in Spanish museums and tracing collection histories and ‘object trajectories’ (Sculthorpe 2019), investigating the (hi)story of the Mariana Islands, reconstructing the biographies of CHamoru exhibitors and participants at the 1887 Exhibition and examining primary sources related to the exhibition. However, some issues need to be considered. First, the majority of the primary sources consulted were written in Spanish (and indeed, often in Old Spanish). When clarification of terminology or context was required, I provided additional explanations and interpretations through footnotes. Yet, I recognise that personal biases inevitably influence the interpretation of archival material.

Second, most of the sources examined were written by Spanish colonial administrators, politicians, travellers and scientists and their writings are inevitably shaped by the colonial order. In this sense, I would like to acknowledge that the archive is not neutral nor innocent, but rather always controlled by the powerful (Derrida 1995: 11). Archival sources used in this thesis have contributed to the construction of a specific historical dominant narrative about the Mariana Islands and its people; namely, that of the Spanish (Madrid and Taitano 2022: 31). However, the colonial archive can also be considered a ‘force field’ that registers ‘other reverberations, crosscurrent frictions, attractions, and aversions that worked within and against those assertions of imperial rights to property, persons, and profits that colonial regimes claimed as their own’ (Stoler 2009: 30). In this sense, I have used the archive as a site to uncover traces of Indigenous agency that might be hidden in conventional historical narratives.

Archival research has posed some challenges too. In particular, my experience at NAP was generally difficult, as I struggled to navigate their record-keeping system and their access policies (i.e. you can only consult those documents they have already digitalised). Moreover, the absence of documentation concerning the 1887 Exhibition in this archive posed a significant barrier to this study. Considering that NAP holds an estimated 13 million manuscripts from the Spanish colonial period (Punzalan 2006: 387), I had anticipated uncovering answers to all of my questions, yet I found only a limited number of relevant documents. The absence of documentation in NAP could be related to two main reasons: first, it could be that records on the 1887 Exhibitions were never kept; and second, the records may have been destroyed by Filipino insurgents, the Spanish and even American forces during the Spanish-American War (Punzalan 2006: 386).

### **Navigating the museum**

Another big part of my research has involved collections-and-exhibition-based research conducted in museum settings. Most of my research has taken place at Museo Nacional de Antropología in Madrid, where the majority<sup>10</sup> of the CHamoru collections kept in Spanish museums are held. The research has mostly involved multiple visits to MNA to document their CHamoru collections by photographing, observing, writing down descriptions and doing object condition reports. Museum research also involved provenance research, mostly done in the MNA archives and library by looking at museum catalogues (following Turner 2016). Comparative analysis with other CHamoru collections found globally has also been conducted (following Bolton 2018). Cataloguing has also been done, resulting in my own ‘database’, an Excel spreadsheet with information on the CHamoru collections kept at MNA (compiled in Appendix 1).

Museum-based research also included collaboration with MNA staff (particularly with Patricia Alonso, Curator of Americas and Oceania, María Molinero, Curator of Osteological Collections and Fernando Sáez, Director of MNA) to discuss and share research findings. Throughout my whole research period, I have also shared the knowledge I gathered about the collections with CHamoru community members, either in person (informally and through more structured presentations at heritage-related institutions in the Marianas) or online. Most notably, this culminated in an

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<sup>10</sup> Drawings of the Mariana Islands, as well as documentation pertaining to the Malaspina Expedition visit to Guam (1791) can also be found in Museo de América and Museo Naval, Madrid.

arranged visit to the collections with two CHamoru PhD researchers, Andrew Gumataotao and Samantha Barnett, in July 2024. Ultimately, I believe I was acting as an ‘intermediary’ or ‘facilitator’ between the museum and the CHamoru community, while also supporting the latter’s own initiatives and helping to foster a ‘community of practice’ between the museum and the community (Krmpotich and Peers 2011).

Additionally, I have also conducted exhibition-based analysis, particularly at the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition. This involved participant observation at the exhibition opening, documenting the exhibition display through multiple visits and visiting the exhibition with Judy and Sandy Flores from Guam which resulted in a publication (Ferrández Gaudens, Flores and Flores 2023).

During my research at MNA, I have followed Nicholas Thomas’s ‘museum as method’ (2010), a kind of activity that pays attention to the contingencies of working in a museum and that has an object-focused approach. This aims to present routine museum practices, such as the circulation, redefinition and display of collections as forms of research. In this sense, the museum has been my method, my fieldsite and my object of inquiry. Much like with the archive, I also recorded my own experiences and thoughts during my museum visits. Finally, the museum, and mainly MNA’s practices and inner working has been at the core of my research.

## Interviews

My research also involved conducting face-to-face interviews with CHamoru artists, carvers, weavers, slingers and other knowledge holders in the Marianas. In general, the interviews revolved around each interviewee’s experiences with CHamoru culture and revival, museums, colonialism, family relationships and island life. Each interview was prepared beforehand and adapted for each interviewee. The interviews were in English, used an informal and semi-structured style (Anderson and Jack 1998; Fontana and Frey, 2008) and focused on Indigenous storytelling and/or oral (hi)stories (Iseke 2013). The interviews were recorded using an audio recorder, facilitating a less intrusive and flexible environment compared to video recording. Following Peers and Brown (2003: 81-152), I prepared visual aids (Slim et al. 2006: 149) with images and information of the CHamoru objects kept in Spanish museums, as well as guiding aids with information from the exhibitors from the 1887 Exhibition (see Appendix 2). These aids were only used to spark conversation during the interview, as I let the interviewees lead the way and discuss the materials in their own terms, which often

involved moving away from the collections. The materials were made available for participants upon request and delivered via email. Upon returning to the UK, I transcribed each interview manually. Interview transcripts were circulated to each interviewee for reviewing and editing. For data protection purposes, only the transcripts of the interviews I have used in the thesis are provided in Appendixes 3 and 4.

Additionally, extracts of conversations and personal communications I have had with participants (considered as interviews for the purposes of this description) have also been included throughout the thesis, following participants' consent. These followed a casual, laid-back format. Overall, I have decided not to anonymise the individuals I interviewed, as I also reference publicly available documents, social media posts and articles authored by them.

### **Enskillment**

One of the main methods I used during my fieldwork has been referred to by some anthropologists as *enskillment*: a process in which 'learning is inseparable from doing, and in which both are embedded in the context of a practical engagement in the world' (Ingold 2000: 416). In other words, a process in which gaining hands-on experience through 'doing' facilitates the acquisition of embodied knowledge. In my own research, this involved actively engaging in the creation and use of objects similar to those I have studied in museum collections, guided by CHamoru cultural practitioners. Engaging with experienced artists and cultural practitioners to discuss the creative process while personally working with the materials and techniques fostered a profoundly different understanding of materiality and collections. Furthermore, it aligned with local methods of knowledge transmission, which are primarily oral and experiential, passed down through embodied practice across generations (Quinata 2021: 152; Raigetal 2023: 345; Torres Souder 2024: 49).

During my six-month-long fieldwork in the Mariana Islands, I attended four weaving workshops. The first workshop took place at the University of Guam (UoG) on the 21st of November 2023. It was a free class offered as part of UoG's CHamoru Studies and Practice Weaving course (CM210),<sup>11</sup> where, as part of their assessment,

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<sup>11</sup> According to the class brochure, 'this course explores CHamoru art forms and practices. It examines the ways in which such forms and practices reflect the ways of life and beliefs of the indigenous people of the Marianas. Each semester, the course will focus on a selected art form or practice. Students may repeat the course once with a different topic'. In the autumn semester of 2023, the art form taught as part of this course was weaving, taught by Martha 'Marty' Tenorio.

students were required to transmit the knowledge they had acquired throughout the course with the public. In this workshop, I wove a *gueha* (fan), a *corona* (crown) and a *saligao* (centipede) from *niyok* (coconut) leaves for the first time. The remaining workshops took place in March and were part of the cultural programme organised for Mes CHamoru (a month-long celebration of Guam's (hi)story, culture and the CHamoru people). These were held by Guam Green Growth in Chamorro Village, Hagåtña, and led by CHamoru weavers Maria 'Lia' Barcina and Roquin Siongco. In Lia's workshops, we crafted a *niyok* basket and a *gueha*, while Roquin's sessions focused on creating bracelets and earrings from *åkgak* (pandanus). Finally, I also had the opportunity to practice my weaving alongside Marty Tenorio and Thomas Torres during FestPac in Honolulu in June 2024.

From the month of February 2024, I also regularly participated in UoG's Traditional Navigation class (CM332), taught by Micronesian master navigators Larry Raigetal and Melissa Taitano. The class took place every Saturday from 12 to 3 pm at the Island Wisdom canoe house, Pedro Santos Park, Piti. Although I was not officially registered as a student, I was invited to attend, participate and 'hang out' (see below). This involved learning how to thatch a roof for the traditional canoe house, how to make rope, transport a canoe from the shore to the ocean and learn about Micronesian celestial navigation techniques, all of which are essential elements of the Micronesian navigation knowledge system (Raigetal 2023: 351).

In all of these instances, data was collected in fieldnote format and documented using photographs and videos of the practitioners and me throughout the production process. In a reflexive, autoethnographic tone, I systematically recorded my feelings and experiences throughout the enskillment process, as I became more knowledgeable, and my learning experience changed as a result (Lave 2011: 66). However, I remained aware of the gap between myself as a first-time learner who only practiced a few times and the artists who instructed me, many of whom possess a lifetime of experience. Overall, the objective of using this method was to acquire practical skills while simultaneously studying and documenting artists' and cultural practitioners' processes and lives through first-hand experience and conversation (Marchand 2010: S8). This approach has enabled me to develop a more nuanced and experiential account of some of the processes under research in the thesis, offering parallels and insights drawn from my own experience of practice.

Additionally, I attended a slinging workshop led by Roman dela Cruz at the Fokkai shop in Tumon. Although I did not participate on that occasion, I was able to document the various steps and teachings conveyed by Roman in both written and visual formats. I also recorded Bernard ‘BJ’ Leon Guerrero, head of Åcho Marianas, while he was practicing his slinging at the SKC in Tamuning.

### Online Resources

My research has also included examining online sources to collect data. For a long time, knowledge about the Mariana Islands has been constructed from the outside. Although today an increasing number of CHamoru scholars exists, most of them focus on community outreach rather than publishing through academic channels. One of the most valuable sources of online information I have relied on is Guampedia (<https://www.guampedia.com/>), an open-access resource collaboratively developed by both CHamoru scholars and other community members. Guampedia serves as both an educational tool and a repository for CHamoru knowledge, offering accessible information about past cultural practices, historical events and present-day CHamoru artists and cultural practitioners. Guampedia’s contribution to the preservation and dissemination of CHamoru knowledge is crucial for both academic researchers and community members, helping to bridge the gap between scholarship and lived experience.

To supplement archival research, I have also consulted ancestry websites (mainly <https://guamology.com>, <https://ancestry.com> and <https://myheritage.com>) and blogs (<https://paleric.blogspot.com>) to trace the biographies of CHamoru exhibitors and participants at the 1887 Exhibition. This is an attempt to reclaim the power of Indigenous genealogy as a legitimate methodology used for biographical research (Konishi et al. 2024: 7). While I acknowledge that ancestry data may carry some inherent inaccuracies or limitations, these are comparable to the uncertainties present in other sources. Additionally, the data consulted aligns closely with the broader findings of archival research.

Finally, my online research has also involved monitoring social media (Instagram and Facebook), YouTube, podcast platforms such as Podimo and Spotify and local online newspapers to stay informed about ongoing developments in the islands before, during and after fieldwork. CHamoru artists and cultural practitioners often use these platforms for sharing their knowledge and work. Similarly to

Guampedia, social media facilitates public engagement and provides alternative avenues for documenting and circulating CHamoru histories, voices and perspectives beyond traditional academic publishing (Lindgren and Cocq 2016). In order to comply with privacy and ethical standards, I have only consulted open accounts and mostly used media accounts rather than personal ones (Buck and Ralston 2021). I have tried to limit my social media-sourced data to direct quotations to minimise potential bias in my analysis of participants' statements.

### **'Hanging out'**

In addition to the more formal field techniques I used during my fieldwork, I followed Geertz's method of 'deep hanging out' (1988), which he describes as 'localised, long-term, close-in, vernacular field research'. For me, a key aspect of this was positioning myself and reflecting on how an anthropologist can contribute to community efforts effectively during fieldwork and throughout the research process. This involved spending time with locals, immersing myself in CHamoru culture and island life, engaging in more informal conversations and being readily available to 'help out'. My 'hanging out' took me across Guam, whether it was engaging in informal conversations over coffee, relaxing at the beach, attending events, or helping people out with workshops and in their shops.

Part of this 'hang out' also involved attending several Festival of Pacific Arts (FestPac) Planning Committee meetings, which are public, and recording details about the preparation process. This experience led me to the decision to complete my research on FestPac by attending the festival in person, which was held in Honolulu, Hawai'i between the 6th and the 16th of June 2024.<sup>12</sup> At the festival, I spent most of my time 'hanging out' with the Guam and CNMI delegates at their assigned *hale* (huts), located at the Honolulu Convention Center and being readily available to talk to, participate in and help out in different activities. I also 'hung out' with the CNMI navigation delegates when I visited Kualoa Regional Park in Oahu, Hawai'i.

Inevitably, some of the people I have 'hung out with' have become my 'friends' (Schepers-Hughes 1995: 415), although maintaining a professional distance (Owton

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<sup>12</sup> The 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture was set to take place in Hawai'i in 2020. However, in light of the COVID-19 outbreak and the impact it had on the lives of Pacific peoples, it was postponed until 2024. FestPac 2024 served as a celebration of the 50th anniversary of the first festival, which allowed the organisers to conceive the biggest event seen to date. Under the theme Ho'oulu Lāhui/Regenerating Oceania, the festival organisers wanted to 'honor traditions that FestPac has perpetuated for the last fifty years, with an eye towards the future'.

and Allen-Collinson 2013). This has provided me with a more profound understanding of what it means to be CHamoru in contemporary Guam and how CHamoru people navigate daily life. Moreover, it has enabled me to engage more deeply with my participants, granting me access to knowledge that might not have been attainable through other means. I consider building relationships and partnerships with Indigenous collaborators a valid method that, as Anderson and Atalay point out, is often overlooked in academic analysis (2023: 670). However, this approach has certain limitations. My fieldwork spanned six months, a substantial period, yet not long enough to engage with the entire community of artists and cultural practitioners in the Marianas and the CHamoru diaspora. As a result, my study is mostly shaped by the perspectives of the individuals I interacted with, who will be featured throughout the various chapters.

## Thesis Structure

This thesis is structured chronologically, mainly covering the period from 1887 to the present, although the period prior to 1887 will be briefly outlined in Chapter 1. In this context, it examines historical processes of transformation at multiple time scales. The thesis is structured into three parts.

Part I, called Imperial Motions, explores the circulation of CHamoru objects, people and knowledge from the Marianas to Spain during the Spanish colonial period. Part I is divided into three chapters. Chapter 1: *The Joint History of Spain and the Mariana Islands* offers essential historical context on their colonial interactions. Chapter 2: *The Science of Race: Materialising Written Sources through the Display of CHamoru Objects and People* looks at how nineteenth-century Spanish representations of CHamoru people and their culture materialised in the *Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas* (1887) through the display of objects, ancestral remains and CHamoru participants in Madrid. Chapter 3: *Counternarratives: Tracing Indigenous Agency in the CHamoru Representation at the 1887 Exhibition* explores Indigenous agency in the 1887 Exhibition through a microhistorical biographical approach, focusing on the production and circulation of objects and participants between the Marianas, the Philippines and Spain.

Part II: Museum Motions, works as an interlude between the nineteenth and twenty-first century exhibitions analysed in this thesis. It is composed of one single

(and shorter) chapter, Chapter 4: *From Display to Storage: The Journey of CHamoru Objects from the 1887 Exhibition to Museo Nacional de Antropología*, which focuses on a biographical account of the journey of CHamoru objects and their transformations through time and space as they have travelled and been displayed in distinct ways in different Spanish institutions. Throughout their journey, the objects' meanings and values have been re-interpreted, translated and re-translated through a complex interplay of shifting scientific and political traditions.

Part III is titled Collaborative Motions and explores the *BIBA CHamoru: Cultura e Identidad en las Islas Marianas* exhibition that took place in MNA in 2021. It is comprised of two chapters. Chapter 5: *Cultural Dialogue, Collaboration and the Eternal Return in the Re-Assemblage of Knowledge* analyses how exhibition curators strategically assembled materials and knowledge to shape *BIBA CHamoru*'s narratives, negotiating their circulation through transnational, multilateral and multi-actor networks. Chapter 6: *Navigating Self-Representation in Displaying CHamoru* focuses on various ways CHamoru collaborators, including visual artists, filmmakers and cultural practitioners, represented themselves in the exhibition, articulating their agency through their preferred medium.

While Chapters 2 and 5 primarily examine the perspectives and processes of the Spanish organisers and writers, Chapters 3 and 6 delve into Indigenous agency and self-representation, functioning in parallel to one another. Ethnographic vignettes from my fieldwork in the Mariana Islands and FestPac will be interwoven throughout the chapters in a transversal manner. As the thesis progresses, I will gradually move away from the use of the term 'agency' to the term 'self-representation' as the involvement of CHamoru people in the production and display of their own heritage in Spain has transformed with time.

# PART I:

## IMPERIAL MOTIONS



Figure 3: Photograph of section 2 of the 1887 *Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas*. This section titled 'Población' showcased the lifestyle of the population of the islands. As seen in the photograph, it focused mostly on clothing styles, local architecture and household items, weaponry and local religions, among others. Photograph by J. Laurent and Cía. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología.

‘In 1668 silence sailed from Spain  
and invaded the shores of Guam  
The Spanish hushed the Chamorro culture with rifles  
and the sounds of extinction were deafening  
They justified genocide with bibles  
Burnt down huts, destroyed villages,  
and called it... Catholicism  
they forced us to our knees to praise a foreign GOD  
as if chanting to our ancestors was anything less than spiritual  
The Spanish brought disease, soldiers, and missionaries to our island  
colonization was their mission  
silence was an order  
and fighting back, meant us clinging to our culture  
They stripped us of our true identity  
and banned our language,  
snatching our native tongues out of our mouths  
and forcing Spanish down our throats  
until we choked on their clumsy syllables’  
(Leon Guerrero and Wai 2016).

## Prologue

The initial part of this thesis explores the movements of CHamoru objects, people and knowledge during the Spanish colonial period (1521-1898). After a necessary historical background on the joint history of Spain and the Marianas, the chapters in this part will analyse the circulation, agency and display of people, objects and knowledge from the Mariana Islands in the context of the 1887 *Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas*. More specifically, this part will examine the materialisation of textual sources written about the Marianas from a Eurocentric perspective within the exhibition (Chapter 2), while emphasising the agency exercised by CHamoru individuals in the production, dissemination and representation of these elements (Chapter 3). By tending to archival materials of diverse nature, I will develop a concept that sketches out the colonial networks of production, circulation and display, as well as the ways in which these practices were connected to the intellectual and cultural realities of the time. Before proceeding with this analysis, it is necessary to provide background context on the 1887 Exhibition and its place within the broader network of universal exhibitions.

### **Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas (1887)**

1887 saw ‘one of the most exceptional events in all of Spain’s colonial history’ according to Sánchez Gómez (2003: 17): the *Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas*.<sup>13</sup> Universal exhibitions taking place in other Western countries at the time inspired Spain’s Enlightenment-era elite to organise this exhibition to showcase Spain’s Pacific colonies.<sup>14</sup> The political context of Spain at the time significantly shaped the framework of the exhibition. By then, Spain had few remaining colonies, namely Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Spanish Micronesia. Weak colonial ties and imperialist threats, like the Carolines Conflict, greatly influenced the decision to host the Philippines exhibition, as contemporary sources highlight (Balaguer 1886a; Tavel de Andrade 1887). The 1887 Exhibition organisers modelled their approach, especially the ‘native village’, on the 1883 Amsterdam Colonial Exhibition<sup>15</sup> (Romero de Tejada 1995: 16-23; Sánchez Avendaño 1998: 272), though the influence was more in design than in ideological framework (Sánchez Gómez 2002a: 89).

Fradera has classified the 1887 Exhibition as the ‘most material evidence of the modernisation of Spanish colonialism at the end of the nineteenth century’ (1998: 183, author’s translation). The brain behind the Exhibition was the Spanish Ministro de Ultramar (Minister for Overseas) Víctor Balaguer. A Liberal Reformist<sup>16</sup> from Catalonia, Balaguer carried out numerous important administrative and legislative reforms in the Philippines.<sup>17</sup> However, he was aware that the reforms would not have a real impact unless the economy of the Philippines was boosted through trade with the metropolis (Sánchez Gómez 2003: 353). In this sense, the main purpose of the exhibition was to ‘strengthen all sorts of relationships between the colony and the metropolis’ (Gamazo 1887: 3, author’s translation): to demonstrate to European

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<sup>13</sup> Although a few articles, cited in this thesis, have been published about this exhibition, the most comprehensive study about it is Luis Ángel Sánchez Gómez’s *Un imperio en la vitrina* (2003).

<sup>14</sup> By 1887, Spain had already showcased Filipino cultural materials at international exhibitions, notably in Philadelphia (1876) and Amsterdam (1883).

<sup>15</sup> For an analysis of this exhibition see Bloembergen, *Colonial Spectacles* (2006).

<sup>16</sup> Spain had a progressive government between 1885 and 1890 under President Práxedes Mateo Sagasta. During Regent Queen María Cristina’s regency (1885-1902), Spain had a two-party system known as *turnismo* (the Conservative Party under the leadership of Antonio Cánovas del Castillo and the Liberal Party under the leadership of Sagasta). The two parties would alternate periods of power every five years.

<sup>17</sup> In *Memoria que precede a los dos volúmenes...* (1888) Balaguer recounts some of the policies he enacted while he was Ministro de Ultramar, related to property, taxes, public works, communications and transports in the Philippines, among others.

powers that the colonies in the Philippines were strong, though further efforts to strengthen relationships were necessary to preserve the colonial status quo (*El Globo*, 1887: 215) and to persuade others that Spain had, to varying degrees of success, carried out its mission of ‘civilising’ the Indigenous populations within its colonies. The exhibition also sought to encourage industrial development in Spain’s Pacific colonies as a response to the nation’s delayed industrialisation (Sánchez Avedaño 1998: 272-274). The colonial exhibition format provided an ideal platform to strengthen imperial ties by highlighting the colonies’ potential to attract prospective investors.

Regent Queen Maria Cristina played a key role in the exhibition’s development, offering consistent financial and political support for Balaguer’s project, ratified by the Spanish Parliament. The exhibition’s organisation included the establishment of a *Comisaría Regia* in Madrid, chaired by Minister Balaguer and a *Comisión Central de Manila*, led by Pedro Payo, Archbishop of Manila, subdivided into multiple local sub-commissions. The latter encouraged the participation of exhibitors from the colonial provinces and selected and circulated items to Spain (Balaguer 1886a: 5-6). The former oversaw the construction of the exhibition site, drafted the exhibition catalogue (*Catálogo* 1887) and received, classified and assembled the display of the objects sent from the Philippines. All these committees, however, were composed of Spanish members from the national and colonial elite, reinforcing a hierarchical structure that marginalised Indigenous participation in the conceptualisation process (but not in the production and circulation of objects, as we shall see later). The costs of the exhibition were shared equally by the two Commissions (Balaguer 1886a: 10), a provocative decision given that the colony of the Philippines was nearly bankrupt and in constant need of financial support from the metropolis (Barrantes 1886; Payo 1886b; 1887).

The *Comisaría Regia* selected Parque del Retiro in central Madrid as the exhibition site due to its open-ground space. The main exhibition hall was Palacio de la Minería (nowadays Palacio de Velázquez; Fig. 3), where most of the natural history specimens and objects were on display. Yet, the most iconic building was Palacio de Cristal (Fig. 4), which, inspired by London’s Crystal Palace, was built *ex profeso* for the Philippines Exhibition and held the opening and closing ceremonies, as well as acted as a greenhouse. Both buildings still exist and are material, durable records of the 1887 Exhibition. The *exhibitionscape* also included ephemeral glimpses of nineteenth-century colonial Philippines: a newly constructed lake at Palacio de Cristal,

a floating cafe, two ‘native villages’ and a cigar-rolling exhibit pavilion were also built. Around forty to fifty<sup>18</sup> Indigenous men and women from various parts of the Philippines, Guam and Yap (FSM) travelled to Madrid as ‘participants’ in the exhibition, performing traditional activities and conducting their daily routines for the Spanish public. To make the experience more ‘real’, deer and carabaos (water buffalos) were left to wander the enclosed native villages (Blanco 2012: 53).<sup>19</sup>

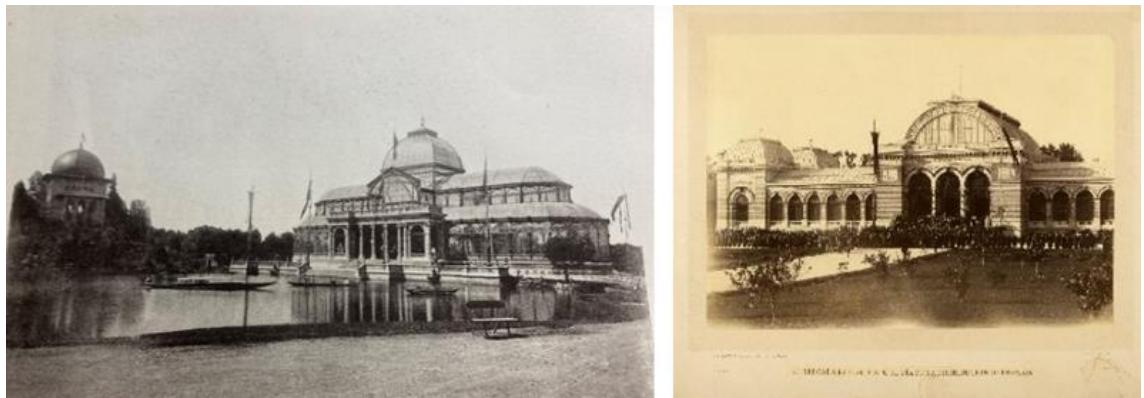


Figure 4: Palacio de Cristal on the left and Palacio de la Minería on the right, the event’s durable *exhibitionscape*. While Palacio de la Minería was originally built for the 1883 Exposición de Minería, Palacio de Cristal was built *ex profeso* for the 1887 Philippines Exhibition. Photographs by J. Laurent and Cía. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología.

Thousands of objects, natural specimens and crop samples<sup>20</sup> from every Pacific Spanish territory, contributed by Spanish and Indigenous exhibitors, were showcased in the exhibition (Appendix 5 lists the number of exhibitors and an estimate of items exhibited by colonial province). The display of the 1887 Exhibition was spatially and conceptually arranged into eight sections. Section 1, called *Naturaleza de los territorios españoles en la Oceanía/Nature of the Spanish territories in Oceania*, dealt with the physical environment and anthropology of the Philippines and Spanish Micronesia. The section featured maps, charts, geological samples and minerals, while the anthropology section highlighted physical anthropology and racial studies, displaying skulls, human remains and precolonial tools from the region. Section 2, titled *Población/Population*, featured statistics on colonial inhabitants, maps, city

<sup>18</sup> Although this is a very vague number, it is true that there is no general consensus in the sources about the number of people who came from the colonies for the exhibition. Romero de Tejada (1995) claims they were forty-five, whereas Miyagi (1975) argues that they were forty-one. Blanco (2012) claims they were fifty-five. Sánchez Gómez (2003), on the other hand, points to forty-three participants.

<sup>19</sup> In *Crónica de la Exposición de Filipinas*, Flórez and Piquer (1887) also note the presence of other wildlife, including a crocodile, two bulls and a six-meter-long python housed in a cage.

<sup>20</sup> While many ethnographic and archaeological objects were circulated from every colonial province in the Pacific and displayed in the 1887 Exhibition, most of the items were natural history specimens.

drawings, as well as examples of Indigenous and colonial material culture. Sections 3 and 4 were entirely dedicated to the Spanish Army and Navy, including displays of weapons and military uniforms (*Catálogo* 1887: 25-32).

Section 5, *Geografía botánica del archipiélago, su flora, la forestal y su fauna/Botanical Geography of the Archipelago, its Flora, Forests and Fauna*, showcased thousands of botanical specimens, highlighting the region's rich plant diversity. Section 6, *Agricultura, horticultura y riqueza pecuaria/Agriculture, Horticulture and Livestock Wealth*, featured a variety of crop samples preserved in glass jars, alongside drawings and miniature models of farming tools (*Ibid*: 33-35). Section 7, *Industria, movimiento comercial y tráfico/Industry and Commercial Trade*, was the largest one, its display comprised of products and materials used in manufacture, trade and craftsmanship, as well as examples of material culture that reflected the local population's 'development'. Section 8, titled *Cultura general, instrucción pública, ciencias y artes/Culture, Public Education, Arts and Sciences*, mostly included examples of so-called 'high arts': artworks that followed western aesthetic canons. In this sense, this section highlighted the Filipino indigenous population's 'development', attributed to the civilising role of religious orders and Spanish colonial policy (Sánchez Gómez 2002b: 284). Finally, additional contributions, displayed across various sections, included loans from Spanish museums like Museo de Artillería (Museo del Ejército today), Museo Naval and Museo Arqueológico<sup>21</sup> (*Catálogo* 1887: 603-665), as well as Juan Álvarez Guerra's private collection.

The 1887 Philippines Exhibition served as a scientific, political, intellectual, and economic enterprise to reaffirm Spain's presence in the northwest Pacific and integrate its neglected territories into the country's imperial vision (Buschmann and Manzano Cosano 2023: 654). Organised by the colonial politico-intellectual elite, it was the most visited event in the decade, applauded by most Spanish critics and public. However, parts of it, and particularly the display of humans and the distorted hegemonic discourse of the exhibition, were severely criticised by some parts of the

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<sup>21</sup> All these collections are still held by the same institutions, except those of Museo Arqueológico. Due to the shuffling of state institutions and collections, these are now in Museo Nacional de Antropología. Additionally, the displays at Museo de Artillería and Museo Naval featured weapons from other Pacific archipelagos collected by Spanish naval officers in the Philippines, including Hawai'i, Fiji, Kiribati and Papua New Guinea. For a catalogue record of these collections see Mellén Blanco (1999) and Mellén Blanco and Zamarrón (1993).

Filipino Enlightened society. The exhibition produced and reproduced images of alterity, portraying the Pacific colonies as both ‘idyllic’ and ‘primitive’: the ideal dichotomy to reinforce Spain’s sovereignty over the islands. Although Section 8 of the exhibition showcased Filipino ‘high art’, most of the exhibition portrayed the region and its Indigenous peoples as ‘backwards’, ‘childish’, ‘exotic’ and ‘primitive’ (see Chapter 2). Yet, many exhibitors, and particularly those from the Marianas, were Indigenous and exercised their agency in the circulation, and in some cases creation, of objects, as I sought to argue in Chapter 3.

# Chapter 1: The Joint History of Spain and the Mariana Islands

This chapter will explore the shared history of Spain and the Mariana Islands across different time periods. This provides a necessary background to understand the dynamics that have influenced the representation and circulation of objects, people and knowledge between the Mariana Islands and Spain. The shared history of these two places must be understood within the broader context of Spain's expansion and 'discovery' of the Pacific, which soon became known in European imagination as the 'Spanish Lake' (Spate 2004; Higueras Rodríguez 2007; Manzano 2020). In this context, the 'first encounter' between Spaniards and CHamorus occurred on the 6th of March 1521 during the Magellan-Elcano Expedition (1519-22), which has been described by CHamoru scholar Torres Souder as 'the beginning of the end of an arcadian way of life for the indigenous inhabitants of Guam and the islands to the north' (2021: 168). Although the Marianas would not be effectively occupied by Spanish missionaries until 1668, this event marked the beginning of a history of encounters, both expeditionary and colonial, between the two. In this chapter, I emphasise that these encounters were not always positive and productive, but often painful and destructive for the CHamoru, as Torres Souder's quote illustrates. Furthermore, I want to point out how colonial encounters, in the words of Greg Dvorak (2020), '*always* entail resistance, nuance, and peril'. The term 'discovery' is also problematic because, as Jacobs argues, Europeans did not discover these places and peoples; they existed long before (2012: 41).

Iberian imperial expansion in Oceania, as in other regions, was driven by a combination of spiritual, imperial and material ambitions: converting souls in the name of God, claiming land for the king and seeking personal wealth (Douglas 2014: 49). It is important to acknowledge, however, that the Spanish colonial presence in Oceania was small compared to the larger colonial developments happening simultaneously in the Americas, with the Mariana Islands and the Philippines being the only colonial settlements for almost three centuries. While thousands of Spaniards settled in the Americas, Guam only had a handful of Jesuit priests and very few Spanish soldiers at any given time (Madrid 2021: 105). In general, missionary and governor reports repeatedly pointed out the lack of resources made available by the metropolis for

colonising enterprises. Manzano (2020: 18), in this respect, argues the Spanish empire in the Pacific, rather than a ‘lake’, comprised only ‘a few puddles of power’. Yet, Spanish presence in the Pacific, through the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade, led to the establishment of significant and meaningful exchange networks between Spain, the Americas, the Philippines, China and the Mariana Islands. These networks physically and metaphorically favoured the circulation of plants, animals and spices, but also artefacts, cultural practices, languages and peoples. Furthermore, Spanish colonialism in the Marianas impacted the lives of CHamoru people in numerous ways, involving cultural and social transformation, as well as assimilation into Spanish political, social and cultural practices, forceful relocation, sickness and death, among others.

## **CHamoru people’s origins**

Although this chapter mostly focuses on the joint history between Spain and the Mariana Islands (1521-1899), I want to acknowledge that CHamoru people, like many other Indigenous communities across the Pacific, settled and thrived in the Marianas archipelago through significant migrations that occurred centuries prior to the onset of European exploration. As Dvorak argues, ‘in contrast to this deep-time history, the history of colonial contact... is relatively short and recent’ (2018: 4). The exact timeline of the first migrations to the Mariana Islands remains a topic of debate. However, archaeological evidence, including radiocarbon dating, suggests that humans arrived at the southernmost islands of the archipelago around 1500 BCE (Carson 2017; 2020; 2021). These migrations are believed to have been driven by population pressures in Southeast Asia, as evidenced by the early presence of rice in the Mariana Islands (Cunningham 1992: 48; Rainbird 2004: 100). A recent study by Carson et al. (2025) employed radiocarbon dating to identify a substantial presence of rice husks in northern Guam, dating to approximately 3,500-3,100 years ago, suggesting they were likely brought by early settlers and linked to significant ritual sites in the Marianas.

Early migrations circulated a distinctive style of pottery known as ‘red ware’ (see Chapter 5 for details), which represents the oldest archaeological evidence from the Marianas (Carson 2021: 31). This predates human expansion into Polynesia, therefore reframing region-wide archaeological chronology (Carson 2020). Carson

argues that the Marianas' regional chronology reveals six major periods<sup>22</sup> of natural-cultural history, characterised by features such as landscape configurations, habitat ecologies, site locations, structural remains, artifact inventories, and food middens (2021: 29). Over time, as these conditions evolved, settlements shifted, material culture transformed, and significant changes occurred, coming to an end by the beginning of the eighteenth century (Ibid: 31-32).

Archaeological evidence reveals early artefacts in caves and burial sites (1,100 BCE – 500 CE) along with larger settlements indicating population growth from 500 CE onward (Carson 2017, 2021). Around 1,000 CE, the Mariana Islands entered the so-called *latte* period. Large examples of monumental architecture known as *latte*<sup>23</sup> were erected by CHamorus all over the archipelago in the configuration of large houses (*guma' latte*) and villages (Carson 2012, 2017, 2021). *Guma' latte* likely served residential, communal, funerary and ceremonial purposes, as suggested by the slingstones, pottery sherds, and other artefacts found nearby (Carson 2012). The construction of these villages was associated with a set of cultural and societal practices described by early voyage and missionary accounts (i.e. Cunningham 1992; Lévesque 1992a, 1992b), as well as through the knowledge transmitted via oral tradition.

*Latte* society, also referred to as 'ancient CHamoru society' (Cunningham 1992), has been described as having a complex hierarchical structure, with two distinct and ranked social classes or 'castes' (*chamorri* and *manachang*) divided into matrilineal clans led by the oldest male (*maga'låhi*) or female (*maga'håga*) in the family (Ibid: 11). Society was sustained through a mixed economy of gathering, farming, and both reef and deep-ocean fishing (Ibid: 30). Historical accounts suggest CHamoru men often went unclothed, some wearing loincloths and pandanus hats (*batya*), reflecting different perceptions of nudity (Montón-Subías and Moral de Eusebio 2021), while women used a corded leaf (*tifi*) or thin bark (*gunot*) to cover their pubic area (Flores 1999: 58). Both men and women carried different types of

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<sup>22</sup> For a full archaeological account of the changes occurring in the Mariana Islands between 1500 BCE and 1700 CE see Carson's work.

<sup>23</sup> *Latte* are, according to Carson, 'sets of megalithic pillars (*haligi*) and caps (*tasa*) that at one time presumably supported wooden superstructures' (2012: 1). Over generations of social disruption and populations loss from disease and warfare, knowledge about *latte* and the skills of *latte* construction were largely lost. Today, *latte* are considered vibrant symbols of the CHamoru culture and its resiliency. Representations of *latte* appear all over the Mariana Islands: in official buildings and symbols (e.g. the flag of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands), artistic expressions and memorabilia, among others.

*kottot* (pandanus woven baskets), each used for different purposes (Montón-Subías and Hernando Gonzalo 2021). Early missionaries (e.g. García 2004[1683]) were particularly struck by the CHamoru practice of using woven baskets to hold ancestral skulls, a tradition interpreted as a powerful symbol of ancestral reverence (Farrer and Sellman 2014). Ancient CHamoru also used adzes made from shell, stone and bone to produce weapons, fishing and farming tools, *latte*, oceangoing canoes called *sakman* and body ornaments (Cunningham 1992: 62-71). There is little evidence to suggest that the CHamoru people lived in isolation (Rainbird 2004: 245). Instead, they were likely part of a broader network of trade and interaction in the Micronesian region, connecting the islands within the Marianas archipelago as well as reaching beyond to the Caroline Islands, Palau and possibly even further.



Figure 5: Sketch of an ancient CHamoru village illustrated by JA Pellion during the Freycinet Expedition in 1819. Published in *Voyage Autour de Monde*. Ancient CHamoru society was a highly stratified and organised society whose material culture reflected their deep connection to the land. ©Guam Public Library Collection and Guampedia (<https://www.guampedia.com/ancient-chamorro-kinship-and-land-tenure/>).

Prior to their first encounter with European explorers, CHamoru people experienced a prolonged period of relative stability and cultural development, characterised by a complex social structure and subsistence economy, occasionally punctuated by intercommunal warfare and interisland trade. These interactions facilitated the circulation of goods, knowledge and cultural practices, fostering a dynamic and interconnected way of life. *Latte* society, nonetheless, is regarded as the last Indigenous CHamoru historical era, lasting until the 1700s when Spanish

occupation introduced profound social, cultural and political changes that fundamentally altered CHamoru society.

## **Spanish exploration (1521-1606): The beginning of joint history**

The first time that Spaniards and CHamoru, and, for that matter, Pacific Islanders, encountered each other was during Magellan-Elcano's circumnavigation around the globe (1519-22). At the close of the fifteenth century, Spain and Portugal competed for dominance in establishing new trade routes to Asia. The Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) established a demarcation line, granting Spain the rights to lands west of 370 leagues from Cape Verde, while Portugal controlled the eastern territories (Spate 2004: 28-29). This division spurred Spain to seek alternative trade routes. Vasco Núñez de Balboa's sighting of the Pacific Ocean in 1513 made it feasible for Spain to navigate the Pacific. Magellan-Elcano's expedition, which left from Spain on the 20th of September 1519, sailed around South America through the strait separating it from Antarctica, later named after Magellan, and into the Pacific Ocean, where they sighted a few faraway islands without touching at any of them (Lévesque 1992a: 181). Dvorak argues that 'it was really only Magellan's bad luck, ignorance, and the sheer enormity of the Great Ocean that enabled him to cross southeast to northwest without making landfall' (2020). Although much speculation as to which Pacific islands were sighted by Magellan has happened in the past, according to Fernandez-Armesto 'the unknowables are too many' to justify any assertions (2022: 221). Finally, it was on the 6th of March 1521 that the expedition sighted the southernmost Mariana Islands.

Antonio Pigafetta, the expedition's chronicler, recorded this initial encounter off the coast of Guam. His account reflects a Eurocentric perspective, often portraying CHamorus through a contrast of civility and barbarity, while simultaneously highlighting their creative and technical capabilities (Douglas 2014: 47). Upon approach to Guam, Magellan's ships were approached by CHamoru *sakman* canoes, greatly praised by Pigafetta:

Their canoes are similar to Fusino's gondolas. The sail is made out of palm leaves sewn together in the shape of a lateen sail; it always sails sideways, and on the side opposite to the sail they tie a thick, sharp post which is used to sail safely. The rudder resembles a baker's spatula (2012[1536]: 38-40, author's translation).

According to early missionary accounts and oral tradition, this first encounter took place in Humåtak Bay, located in the southwest of Guam (Quinata and Prados

Torreira 2021: 156). Some historians, nonetheless, have suggested that Magellan's crew likely approached Guam from the north via the Rota-Guam channel, stopping at Tumon Bay before reaching Humåtak Bay. Pigafetta's account of seeing another island in the distance supports this theory, as the island was likely Rota, indicating a northern approach (Lévesque 1992a; Madrid n.d.a). Soon after this sighting, some CHamoru boarded the Spanish ships and, according to Pigafetta, stole many things from the ships, including one of flagship *Trinidad*'s skiffs (in Lévesque 1992a: 196). This episode led Magellan to name the islands *Islas de los Ladrones* (Islands of Thieves), a denomination that remains deeply traumatic for contemporary CHamoru people (e.g. Bevacqua 2022). In retaliation, Magellan and forty armed sailors went ashore, burned several houses and canoes and killed seven CHamoru men. Overall, Magellan is interpreted as having been ruthless and destructive in his raids, often driven by misinterpretations of local reactions (Fernandez-Armento 2022: 229); Guam was no exception. The legacies of the expedition continue to profoundly shape CHamoru society's social, political, and cultural identity (Montón-Subías and Hernando Gonzalo 2021). Today, CHamoru people reinterpret Magellan's encounter with the CHamoru in 1521 as a 'misunderstanding' where Spaniards did not comprehend, or did not try to comprehend, CHamoru rules of reciprocity.

Although a permanent colonial settlement in the Marianas did not emerge until 1668, Magellan's circumnavigation inaugurated a period of subsequent interactions with the CHamoru. According to Gómez de Espinosa, whose ship was part of Magellan-Elcano's expedition, three sailors from Magellan's fleet deserted in the Northern Marianas during their visit when a CHamoru man was taken captive (in Lévesque 1992a: 324). Hernando de la Torre later reported to have encountered one of these deserters on Guam during the Loáisa expedition (1525-27), who revealed that the other two deserters had been killed by islanders (Ibid: 438). In retaliation, eleven CHamoru men were kidnapped to work the water pumps of Loáisa's ship (Rogers 1995: 11). These early deserters paved the way for others, including beachcombers, missionaries and other Europeans seeking prolonged stays to replenish their resources in the Marianas (Rainbird 2004: 126).

Furthermore, Magellan-Elcano's successful circumnavigation using the westward route opened the possibility of imperial expansion in the Pacific. To assert

dominion over the vast ocean, subsequent Spanish expeditions<sup>24</sup> visited, described and documented its islands and peoples, often with catastrophic consequences for the latter. Spate has described the method used by early Spanish expeditions as ‘the sickening cycle of friendly welcome, misunderstandings, sullen retreats, occasional reconciliations, robberies and killings’ that would be continuously repeated (2004: 129). This process was driven by the Crown’s expansionist ambitions, the desire to spread the Gospel, and the search for new trade routes with China (Ibid: 98), with little regard paid to the outcome for the Indigenous populations they encountered. This large-scale exploration would lead Western powers to perceive the Pacific as a ‘lake’ dominated by the Spanish empire, although the Spaniards always had a ‘precarious presence’ (Higueras Rodríguez 2007: 22) in the area, having to constantly battle other European nations’ incursions into Spanish demarcations.

Early on, clashes between the Spanish and Portuguese empires were common. Portugal controlled the East Indies until King Philip II, who wanted to enlarge the huge empire he inherited from his father, ordered in 1556 the ‘discovery of the westward islands in the direction of the Moluccas’ (Mellén Blanco et al. 2006: 23, author’s translation) and eventually assumed control of the Portuguese empire in 1578 (Subrahmanyam 2006: 68). Spanish efforts turned to the conquest of the Southeast Asian *Felipinas* (Philippines), free of Portuguese influence but which were an important enclave in the trade with China (Spate 2004: 98). In 1564, four ships commanded by Miguel López Legazpi sailed under royal orders towards the *Felipinas*. On their way to the Philippines, Legazpi’s expedition reached Guam, of which he took possession in the name of the King of Spain. While the Spanish occupation of the Philippines began shortly after Legazpi’s declaration of possession in 1564, the Mariana Islands would remain unoccupied for another century, with only sporadic contact between Spaniards and the local CHamoru population taking place.

Once the Philippines became a colonial enclave, Spanish ships would continue to navigate the waters in the north Pacific in search of the desired return route (*tornaviaje*) to New Spain. In 1566, Urdaneta discovered a route that fulfilled the Spaniards’ primary objective of achieving the *tornaviaje*. This enabled the creation of the renowned Manila-Acapulco Galleon trade, linking the Philippines to New Spain as well as to China and Japan (Buschmann and Manzano Cosano 2023: 638), but

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<sup>24</sup> For a full account of these expeditions, which cannot be dealt with at length in this thesis, see Spate (2004) or Manzano Cosano (2020).

somehow missing all the Polynesian islands to the south and the Hawaiian archipelago to the north (Hooper 2006: 12). At 13° North, the Marianas became a crucial Spanish stop on the Manila-Acapulco route where galleons annually traded iron for provisions from CHamoru canoes (Rogers 1995: 16). According to Spanish accounts of the time, sailors primarily remained aboard their galleons due to the perceived aggressiveness of the CHamoru people during their intermittent visits (Ibid: 20). However, small interactions with Spanish galleons likely impacted CHamorus, possibly intensifying ‘indigenous dynamics, including social differentiation’ (Quimby in Montón-Subías and Hernando Gonzalo 2021) and the exchange of products, knowledge, cultural practices and peoples, as well as pathogens.



Figure 6: *Chamorros trading with a Spanish galleon, 1590* that appears in the Boxer Codex (free domain). This drawing shows how early encounters between Spaniards and CHamoru took place. Three canoes and a galleon ship full of people are depicted. The CHamoru are seen making signs towards the galleon, some even showing fresh produce they wanted to exchange. Scared of the perceived aggressiveness of CHamorus, Spaniards often remained in their ships.

At the end of the sixteenth century, the era of Spanish hegemony in the Pacific was coming to a close. Despite the establishment of the Galleon route, some Spanish ships persisted in exploring the Pacific, seeking the mythical *Islas Salomón*, believed to be home to a wealthy king with vast riches, and *Terra Australis*, a supposed southern continent imagined by Europeans to balance the northern landmasses (Spate 2004: 121). Álvaro de Mendaña and Pedro Fernandes de Queirós, for example, led several expeditions through Polynesia and Melanesia aiming to expand Spanish influence and locate new territories. These voyages resulted in the ‘discoveries’ of various islands, including the Solomon Islands and Espiritu Santo in Vanuatu, though they often led to conflict with local populations (Ibid: 121-128). Additionally, one of Queirós’s expeditions made stops in the Marianas, where interactions with the CHamoru turned violent (Rogers 1995: 16).

Following these expeditions, Pacific exploration was deemed ‘not urgent’ in Iberian perceptions (Buschmann and Manzano Cosano 2023: 639). Even though Spaniards had declared their possession over many islands at the turn of the seventeenth century, it is important to clarify that only the Philippines were effectively occupied (Manzano 2020: 72). Furthermore, most historians agree that Spaniards made a very poor attempt at identifying and describing Pacific Islands, which has made it challenging to determine with certainty what exactly occurred and which islands they visited, resulting in many different historiographic interpretations about the expeditions’ routes and the islands they sighted and visited (Hezel 1983; Spate 2004; Mellén Blanco et al. 2006; Higueras Rodríguez 2007; Manzano 2020; Fernandez-Armesto 2022). However, the Indigenous peoples of the Pacific, including the CHamoru, faced profound disruption during this century of encounters, enduring violence, displacement and devastating epidemics brought by Spanish ships (Fernandez-Armesto 2022).

### **Evangelisation, *reducciones* and Missionary colonialism (1668-1700)**

Although Legazpi claimed the Mariana Islands for Spain in 1565, no permanent colony was established there due to various factors. First, compared to the wealthy American colonies, the lack of valuable metals in the archipelago deterred colonial officers from attempting to conquer the islands in the sixteenth century (Coello de la Rosa 2020: 14). Second, since the Manila-Acapulco galleons made an annual stop in Guam primarily for resupply, Spaniards saw little need to establish a permanent colony, as they could extract resources without committing to long-term settlement (Hezel 1983: 48). In 1664, almost a century after the establishment of a colony in the Philippines, Jesuit missionary Diego Luis de San Vitores applied for permission from the King of Spain to start a Mission in the *Ladrones* (Lévesque 1992b: 175). San Vitores saw this as his personal mission, aiming to spread the Gospel among the islands’ Indigenous inhabitants. In 1662, he had already travelled to the archipelago to study the Chamoru language and customs, preparing for the eventual establishment of a mission (Ibid: 278). King Philip IV signed a Royal Decree on the 24th of June 1665 authorising the Jesuit to establish a Mission in the islands, thereafter the Marianas, in honour of Queen Maria Ana de Austria (Ibid: 277-278). This was the first Catholic Mission to be established in Oceania, and its tragic legacy led anthropologist Douglas

Oliver to make his well-known yet controversial statement: ‘the rape of Oceania began with Guam’ (1951: 234).

In 1668, San Vitores sailed from Acapulco to Guam on the annual galleon, reaching the island in June. He was not accompanied by the military troops that were usually assigned to new missionary enterprises by the Spanish crown; instead, he only took five Jesuit priests and thirty-one laymen (a mix of Filipinos and Mexican *criollos*) with him (Hezel 2021: 67). Upon their arrival, the missionaries began preaching and baptising adults and children alike, extending their efforts to the northern islands as well. San Vitores spread the Gospel using a method he had successfully employed in the Americas and the Philippines: entering each village while singing religious songs in the local language and compelling the residents to undergo baptism (Ibid: 68). In the first two years of the Mission, missionary reports state that over 30,000 people were baptised and five churches were built across the islands (Ledesma in Barrett 1975: 29). These numbers need to be approached critically, as it is very likely the missionaries exaggerated them to attract more Spanish and Church investment for their evangelical enterprises.

Although initially successful in their enterprises, the evangelisation process caused pushback from certain parts of the CHamoru society, especially the *chamorri*, who soon started fighting forced conversion to Christianity (Hezel 1983: 48). Several of San Vitores’ companions were injured or murdered during their trip to Saipan and Tinian in 1668 (Farrell 2016: 13). On the 2nd of April 1672, Father San Vitores was travelling to Hagåtña when he stopped in the village of Tumon to baptise Mata’pang’s (the village’s *maga’låhi*) newborn daughter against her father’s wishes. Consequently, the chief killed San Vitores and threw his body into the sea.<sup>25</sup> In contrast, the *manachang* generally welcomed the elevation in status that Catholicism gave them and cooperated with the missionaries from the beginning (Cunningham 1992: 97). Spaniards soon took revenge for San Vitores’ murder, initiating the so-called Spanish-CHamoru Wars, a period of back-and-forth fighting which lasted until 1695. The Spaniards consistently emerged victorious in these clashes due to their disciplined

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<sup>25</sup> In the early 1980s the Archdiocese of Agaña asked for San Vitores to be canonized, a process which culminated in his beatification in 1985. The effort to canonise a colonial figure like San Vitores in Guam, although controversial, has been described by Diaz (2010: 23) as ‘an arduous indigenous journey to reconsolidate Chamorro culture and identity through Spanish Catholic doctrine and rituals’. Today, a statue commemorating San Vitores’s martyrdom stands at the presumed site of his death in Tumon Bay (see Chapter 5).

military organisation and superior technology in metallurgy, weaponry and ships, claiming the lives of many CHamoru (Rogers 1995: 9). They were aided by several segments of the local population who, after converting to Catholicism, became allies of the Spanish (Clement 2022: 169). While the wars were taking place, Spaniards were working towards building the colonial infrastructure that would support Spanish rule in the long term. In 1680 they established a Spanish politico-military government, for example (Ibid: 173).

However, the Spaniards did not always maintain the upper hand during the conflict. In 1684, for example, the CHamoru mounted a sudden and coordinated assault on the Spaniards, killing Spanish Governor Esplana and laying siege to the fort in Hagåtña, where the Jesuits were trapped for months (Cunningham 1992: 67-68). Missionary accounts report that the CHamoru rebellion was greatly supported by Choco, a Chinese man who resided in Guam when the missionaries arrived (Lévesque 1992b: 528). To control the insurrections which were taking place across all the Marianas, the Spaniards used a method known as *reducción*, which had been successfully applied in the American and Filipino colonies in previous years (Herzog 2018).<sup>26</sup> This homogenous model is unique to the Spanish empire, in contrast to other early empires where institutions diverged regionally (Subrahmanyam 2006). The Marianas *reducciones*, the methods of which varied depending on the island (Clement 2022: 169), involved forcibly relocating the Indigenous population previously scattered across various villages into fewer towns or villages primarily on the islands of Guam and Rota. These areas were equipped with a church, a religious school and agricultural *haciendas* (Coello de la Rosa 2020: 15). Overall, the Spanish-CHamoru wars and the *reducciones* significantly contributed to the decline of the CHamoru population from the estimated 12,000 on Guam in 1668 to fewer than 2,000 people by the turn of the century (Rogers 1995: 70), though other factors, such as reduced birth rates, regular natural disasters and the introduction of epidemics, also played a role (D'Arcy 2021: 332).

The *reducciones* also had a major impact in most ancestral CHamoru lifeways, resulting in widespread changes and disruptions: social stratification disappeared; the

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<sup>26</sup> In general, the same colonial model, with common techniques such as *reducciones* or concentration of the population and *repartimiento* or the imposed colonial cyclical labour system, the presence of Jesuits and Franciscans forcefully implementing Catholicism, and of institutions like *gobernadores* or colonial governors, was used across all Spanish overseas territories.

matrilineal organisation was replaced by a highly patriarchal society; the keeping of ancestor's skulls in baskets in their homes disappeared (Farrer and Sellman 2014); the seafaring tradition was reduced to coastal fishing (De Viana 2004: 161); new corporeal disciplines related to clothing, eating practices, sexuality and health were imposed (Montón-Subías and Hernando Gonzalo 2021); the land tenure system and methods of farming changed (D'Arcy 2021: 332); and many foreign imports like corn, pineapples and carabaos (a water buffalo native to the Philippines) were gradually introduced from other parts of the Spanish Empire (Hezel 2021: 71). However, some CHamoru practices, such as Indigenous weaving techniques or the Chamoru language, survived the *reducción* and three hundred years of colonial history and are examples of the resilience of CHamoru cultural values and practices today (Montón-Subías and Hernando Gonzalo 2021).

### **A Spanish colony in the Marianas: Stability (1700-1800)**

By 1700, most CHamoru had been relocated to the islands of Guam and Rota, leaving other islands uninhabited. The *reducciones* continued, with Saipan's last inhabitants forcibly moved by 1730 (Hezel 2021: 70). After the unsuccessful attempt by two Jesuit missionaries to establish a mission on Ulithi Atoll (Caroline Islands) in 1730 (see Lessa 1966 and Lévesque 1992d), missionaries refrained from making further efforts to control other Micronesian islands. The replacement of Jesuit missionaries with Augustinian Recollect friars in 1769 (Rogers 1995: 83) and the strengthening of the religious-colonial government in the Marianas brought stability to the archipelago. Intermarriage increasingly diversified the islands' population, leading to the emergence of new racial categories, such as the *mestizo* (I discuss the origins and implications of this term in Chapter 2), although the number of Indigenous and *mestizos* varied from island to island and even from village to village, with the population of Rota and of the villages in Guam remaining largely Indigenous, and the majority of the *mestizos* residing in the capital city of Hagåtña (Atienza 2019: 13; Clement 2022). The daily life of the CHamoru revolved around three basic institutions: the extended family, the church and a subsistence economy based on farming family *lanchos* (Rogers 1995: 127).

With the consolidation of the Spanish colony in the Mariana Islands at the beginning of the seventeenth century, missionary practice sustained Spanish colonial

rule in the archipelago, with only a few colonial officials living in Guam at any given time (Spate 2004: 157). Administratively, the islands were part of the *Virreinato de Nueva España* (today Mexico), although contact happened mostly via the Galleon (Lévesque 1992b). According to Hezel, most of the population lived in relative peace, with the ‘most interesting event taking place in Guam in the second half of the eighteenth century’ being the arrival of the yearly galleon fleet, with numerous cultural interactions taking place (2021: 75). However, natural disasters, including typhoons and epidemics, were recurring events that caused significant distress to the island’s population (Madrid 2021). The Catholic Church became the epicentre of life (Coello de la Rosa 2020), an institution that controlled virtually all aspects of education like moral habits and corporeal practices (Montón Subías and Moral de Eusebio 2021), especially through the founding of the San Juan de Letrán seminar in Hagåtña (Lujan 1996: 19). To sustain this, the Spanish Inquisition was established in the islands in 1695 (Coello de la Rosa 2016: 223). The Church’s presence in the Marianas resulted in dramatic changes to Indigenous lifeways, with an increasing Hispanisation of the population that altered gender roles (Torres Souder 1992), language (Lujan 1996) and cultural practices. However, it also allowed for the ‘multiplication of indigenous notions of personhood and community’ (Diaz 2010: 23) and resulted in approximately 80% of the Marianas population being literate by the 1880s (Carlos Madrid in Fanachu! Podcast 2024a, 20:00).

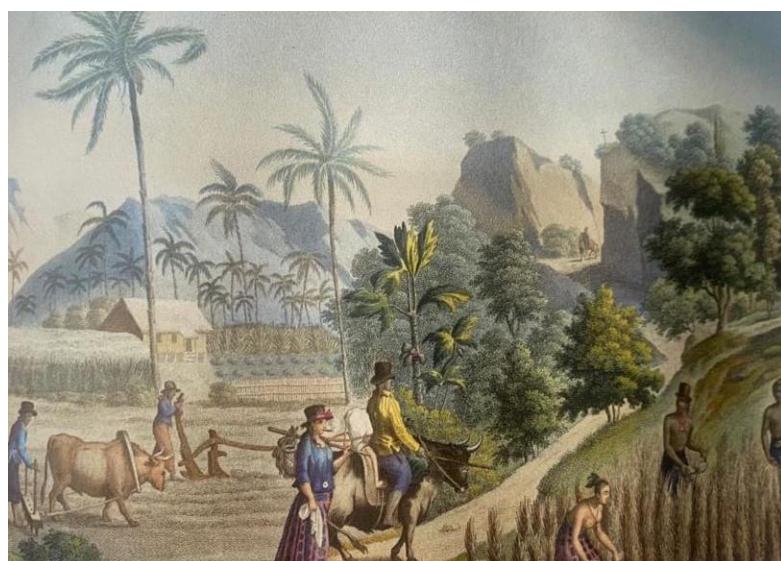


Figure 7: View of colonial Guam, from *Voyage autour du monde* by M. Louis Freycinet (1819). In this sketch we can see what life in the Marianas during the Spanish colonial period (1668-1898) would have looked like. The drawing shows men and women wearing Spanish-style clothing. They appear farming with the help of carabaos and agricultural tools imported by Spaniards. ©Guam Public Library Collection and Guampedia.

Despite the Church's significant influence over colonial life in the Marianas, the CHamoru people managed to preserve elements of their Indigenous practices by adapting and CHamorucising Spanish imports (see Chapter 3). Over time, they seamlessly integrated their culture and language into their Christian faith (Paulino and Flores 2023: 17). At the same time, they managed to retain a degree of control over local politics and economies, exercising their agency in daily and communal life. CHamoru chiefs continued to be the local authorities in Guam villages through the figure of the *gobernadorcillo*, an Indigenous chief or member of the local elite (Madrid 2006: 11), although supervised by Spanish colonial administrators.<sup>27</sup> With limited industry on the islands (Hezel 1983: 75), most CHamoru retained the right to work their own *lanchos* (family farm estates), despite these being owned by the Spanish Crown, in what former Guam Senator Richard F. Taitano has called the 'Crown-landization' of CHamoru lands (Phillips 1996: 5), and survived on a subsistence economy (Madrid 2021: 110). *Lanchos* were primarily used to cultivate foreign crops and raise livestock to support Spanish missionaries and supply the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade, a practice referred to as a 'global imperial ecology' by Wiecko (2013).

The absence of private *encomiendas*<sup>28</sup> in Guam shielded the remaining CHamoru population from the widespread land dispossession experienced by Indigenous peoples elsewhere in the Spanish Empire. In addition to preserving much of their ancestral land, CHamorus were largely exempt from tributes, taxes and church tithes during Spanish rule (Rogers 1995: 75) and actively made use of the Spanish legal systems (Madrid in Fanachu! Podcast 2024a, 44:30). This tax exemption, granted exclusively to 'pure CHamorus', was often exploited by *mestizos*, as well as Spanish and Filipino residents, who self-identified as CHamoru in a pretext to avoid paying taxes (Underwood 2021: 15). This system would prevail until the beginning of the twentieth century (Rogers 1995: 127). Overall, the Spanish overseas colonies were unproductive and expensive. Historians have argued in the past that the nature of Spanish colonialism, which took the form of homogenising settler colonies, neither benefited the colonies nor the metropolis (Subrahmanyam 2006: 86).

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<sup>27</sup> This system would not be imposed in Rota or Saipan, where the figure of authority was the *alcalde* or Mayor.

<sup>28</sup> The *encomienda* was a Spanish colonial system that granted settlers the right to collect tribute and labour from Indigenous peoples in exchange for providing protection and religious instruction.

### The Malaspina Expedition (1789-1794)

The second half of the eighteenth century was ‘a period of unprecedented voyaging in the Pacific’ (Hooper 2006: 49). The Enlightenment and liberal revolutions spurred European imperial expansion in the Pacific, driven by the Industrial Revolution and demands for new markets. In this context, countries such as France and Britain sent out large-scale scientific expeditions to the Pacific, such as those of Bougainville (1766-1769), Cook’s (1768-1780), La Pérouse (1785-1788) and Vancouver (1791-1795) among others. These voyages produced accurate maps, systematic sketches of places, things and people (Douglas 2014: 23) and collected ‘artificial’ and ‘natural’ curiosities (Hooper 2006: 49), blending science and imperialism (Sponsel 2023: 175). In this context, Spain also organised several expeditions, the biggest being the round-the-world voyage known as the Malaspina Expedition (1789-1794). Malaspina was instructed to gather information on the geographies and economies of American and Pacific colonies, suggest infrastructural improvements, and monitor other European nations’ activities in the region (Ibid: xxix). The expedition carried on board several astronomers, cartographers, botanists and artists. While the scale and magnitude of this enterprise has been compared to Cook’s and La Pérouse’s voyages in English-speaking literature (David et al. 2001), in Spanish-language literature the expedition is viewed as the culmination of a comprehensive reform programme initiated by the Crown to re-assert its right by discovery (*derecho por descubrimiento*<sup>29</sup>) in the Pacific and to further connect the Pacific Ocean with the Spanish colonies in the Americas (Buschmann and Manzano Cosano 2023: 642).

The corvettes *Descubierta* and *Atrevida* sailed on the 30th of July 1789, their first two years spent exploring the coasts of the Americas. On the 20th of December 1791, the expedition sailed across the Pacific following the Manila Galleon route. On the 11th of February 1792, after surveying the islands of Tinian and Saipan, the Malaspina expedition landed on Humåtak Bay (Guam) where they spent thirteen days (Ibid: 251). The naval officers were greeted by the Governor of the Marianas, José Arleguí, and the convalescent men who had contracted an epidemic in Acapulco were taken care of. Meanwhile, the scientists conducted surveys of the land, took

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<sup>29</sup> *Derecho por descubrimiento* refers to Spain’s right to possess the lands that had been discovered in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. This was complemented by the *derecho por posesión* (right by possession), referring to Spain’s continuous colonial possession of the Americas and Micronesia (Tavel de Andrade 1886).

astronomical measurements and gathered rocks, plants and zoological specimens from various locations across the island, making the first thorough botanical and zoological collections in the Marianas (Rogers 1995: 86) and anthropological observations gathered in written (González Montero de Espinosa 1990) and pictorial (Sotos Serrano 1982) form, though it seems that no cultural objects were collected (David et al. 2003: 256-268).

While the crew had originally intended to spend only a short time in Guam, their stay was extended until the 24th of February due to illness among crew members. This delay gave them the opportunity to complete their planned scientific observations, but unfortunately, the disease they carried spread across the island, leading to many fatalities (Rogers 1995: 86). From Guam, the expedition sailed to the Philippines, Port Jackson (New South Wales, Australia) and Vava'u (Tonga), recording – both in written and pictorial form – details about Indigenous peoples' everyday life, language, political change and genealogy (David et al. 2001: lxxiii), as well as collecting cultural artefacts (see Lythberg 2015; Mellén Blanco 2018). After further explorations along the American coast, the expedition returned to Spain, arriving back on the 21st of September 1794.

Despite the success of the Malaspina Expedition in surveying the Spanish colonies in the Americas and the Pacific, its material, pictorial and written legacy were contested for at least a century after Malaspina became embroiled in a royal scandal and was imprisoned (González Montero de Espinosa 1990: 9). Overall, due to the rationale behind the expedition, they spent more time surveying the American and Filipino colonies than engaging in the island world of the Pacific (Buschmann and Manzano Cosano 2023: 642). The Marianas were merely another stop for the Malaspina Expedition, proving that the islands played a secondary role in the larger context of imperial and scientific significance.

## **Decline of the Spanish Empire (1800-1899)**

In Spain, the nineteenth century was marked by political instability. Amid the already turbulent situation in the metropolis, characterised by numerous military coups d'état, between 1809 and 1829 most of the American colonies revolted against Spain and achieved independence. By the end of this process of independence only the colonies of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Spanish Micronesia (Marianas, Carolines

and Palau) remained a part of the Empire, which further weakened its already fragile situation. Even though Spain claimed *derecho de descubrimiento* over the islands west of the Americas and east of the Philippines, it is important to point out that, by the nineteenth century, it was a minor colonial power in the Pacific. Spain had only effectively occupied the Philippines and the Mariana Islands: the rest of Spanish Micronesia was considered Spanish but lacked direct control, as seen in Figure 8.



Figure 8: Map of the Spanish presence in Micronesia before 1885. The areas marked in blue represent regions where a Spanish colony was established, while the area marked in pink indicates a recognised part of the Spanish Empire that was not effectively occupied. Edited by author.

As a consequence of the Mexican War of Independence (1810-1821), in 1811 the Manila Galleon fleet sailed for the last time (Rainbird 2004: 129) and from 1817 the Marianas started depending on the *Capitanía General de Filipinas* instead of the *Virreinato de Nueva España* (Madrid 2021: 106). This administrative switch brought about many changes in the Micronesian colony. For instance, the local economy started to depend greatly on that of the Philippines. From the 1820s, it also depended on American whaler ships that regularly stopped for supplies (Rainbird 2004: 129). Most of the Spanish and *mestizo* population lived in the capital city of Hagåtña, which has been defined as ‘proto-urban and rural at the same time’ (Madrid 2006: 9) and actively engaged in colonial daily life. In the villages, where most of the population was Indigenous (Clement 2022: 179), colonial officers only interacted with them to collect taxes (Madrid 2021: 110). Two or three Augustinian Recollect priests remained on the island and took care of the population’s religious needs (Hezel 1983: 104). Small disturbances rarely arose, and when they did, they were usually resolved by CHamoru village officials appointed by the Spanish authorities, and as punishment, the perpetrators would be sent to Tinian or to one of the deserted Northern Mariana Islands

(Manzano 2020: 75). Communication with the northern islands was precarious, relying on a small number of private boat owners who made the trips only at the governor's request. Similarly, communication with Guam's southern villages was limited due to the poor condition of the roads (Madrid 2006: 5).

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, regular trade voyages were established between the Mariana and Caroline Islands. From 1815 some Carolinians permanently settled in Maria Cristina barrio in Guam (Madrid 2006: 59) and Saipan, its first inhabitants since the forceful removal of the Indigenous population in the seventeenth century (Spoehr 1954: 26). Soon, CHamoru started to populate Saipan too, although both Indigenous groups lived, effectively speaking, in the margins of colonial society until 1860, when a government officer was established there (Madrid 2006: 2). From 1865, over 1,000 Carolinians were recruited by Spanish officers or taken by blackbirders<sup>30</sup> to work the copra plantations in the Northern Marianas (Cunningham 1992: 194). Yet, life in the Carolines remained little affected for the first part of the century. After Father Cantova's had failed to establish a mission in 1731, Spain made no further attempts to colonise the Carolinian archipelago. Around the 1850s, Europeans started to establish trade posts in the Caroline Islands, mostly to trade for copra (Lingenfelter 1986: 196). At the same time, American missionaries arrived in the Carolines (Hezel 1983: 306).

In 1861, Guam officially became a Spanish penal colony, compared by the Spanish governors of the Marianas to England's New Holland colony, and a *presidio* was established (De Viana 2004: 116). Between 1870 and 1875, a policy of deportation was enacted by the Spanish government,<sup>31</sup> whereby hundreds of political dissidents and convicts from the Iberian Peninsula, such as those of the 1868 Cartagena Cantón Revolt, and the Philippines, such as those of the 1872 Cavite Mutiny, were sent to Guam, Saipan, Tinian or Rota as punishment.<sup>32</sup> The deportees were forced to fend for themselves, and many worked in agriculture, infrastructure and public works development (De Viana 2004: 118). With the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy in

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<sup>30</sup> During the 1860s, blackbirding caused devastating demographic and traumatic effects. Thousands of Pacific Islanders were forcibly taken to serve as labourers on plantations, in mines, or as servants. European colonists in Australia, Fiji and Hawai'i, as well as independent nations like Peru, enacted this practice. Epidemics on board, like dysentery, claimed hundreds of lives, and kidnapped men left islands depopulated. For more information, see Maude (1981).

<sup>31</sup> Prisoners from the Philippines and New Spain had already been transported to Guam as early as 1667 (De Viana 2004: 112).

<sup>32</sup> For more on this see De Viana (2004) and Madrid (2006).

Spain, amnesty was granted to the deportees, most of them returning to Spain in 1877 (Madrid 2006: 111). During their time in the Marianas, the local population coexisted with the deportees as best they could, enduring their greed, abuses and quarrels (Ibid; De Viana 2004: 118). The most devastating event of the nineteenth century, however, was the smallpox epidemic (1856) that claimed the lives of many CHamoru, probably brought by the numerous ships that regularly stopped in Guam (Madrid 2021: 109). Additionally, several leprosy outbreaks throughout the century impacted the population, prompting successive colonial governments to establish a specialised hospital in Hagåtña (1831) and designate leper colonies in Saipan and Tinian (De Viana 2004: 123). Other than that, by the 1800s the Marianas was, as described by Hezel, a ‘sleepy little colony of about two or three thousand souls, a lonely outpost in the vestigial Spanish empire’ (1983: 104). This relative stability and peace in the region, however, would soon be disrupted by the arrival of other Western powers, actively seeking to seize Spain’s colonies.

### **Carolines Conflict<sup>33</sup> (1885)**

In the later part of the nineteenth century, Britain, France, Russia, the U.S., Japan and Germany fought for control of the Pacific. The Caroline Islands, although recognised as Spanish territory, lacked direct governance, becoming a key target for these powers. To secure the islands, Spain issued a Royal Order in January 1885 to formally occupy the Caroline Islands and Palau. By June, Manila announced the creation of a Spanish government there. In August, Germany, under Chancellor Bismarck, declared intentions to claim the islands, arguing Spain’s lack of effective occupation. The Spanish ships carrying the newly elected Governor Enrique Capriles arrived in Yap on the 21st of August, with the Spanish flag-raising postponed due to chief Bodot’s illness. The evening of the 25th, under Bismarck’s orders, the German ship *Iltis* arrived in Yap and claimed the island by raising the German flag. In response, Capriles raised the Spanish flag to challenge Germany’s action but later lowered it to avoid conflict. News of the German move sparked protests in Spain, with crowds attacking the German Embassy in Madrid (Fig. 9). Spanish newspapers highlighted Spain’s historical claims, citing Magellan’s 1521 *derecho de descubrimiento* and Legazpi’s 1565 *derecho de posesión* (Tavel de Andrade 1886). In September 1885, Germany forced local kings in Palau to recognise its protectorate over the archipelago and

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<sup>33</sup> For a full account of the conflict see Tavel de Andrade (1886).

officially annexed the Marshall Islands. European nations began aligning with either Spain or Germany in case of an imminent war (Manzano Cosano and Delgado Sánchez 2015: 343-352).

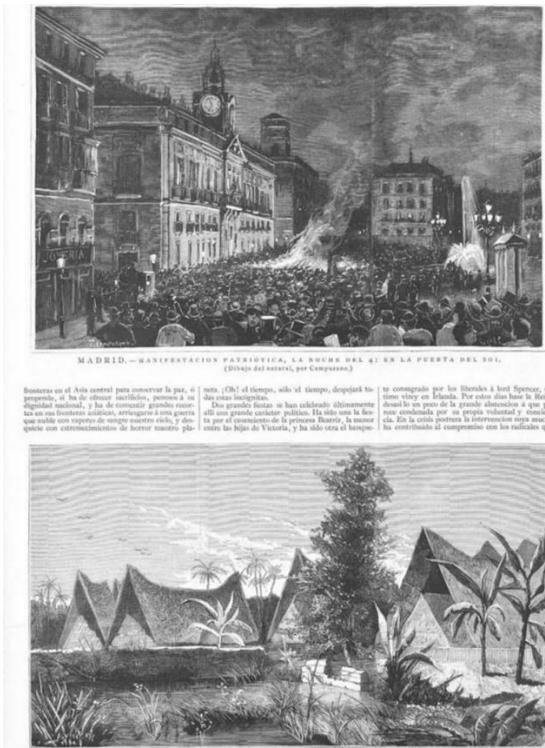


Figure 9: Page from the Spanish newspaper *La Ilustración Española y Americana*, 4 September 1885, depicting the burning of the German shield in Madrid during the conflict, juxtaposed by a bucolic depiction of Yap. ©Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, open access.

By September's end, Bismarck proposed the Pope mediate to resolve the conflict peacefully. The Pope agreed and on the 17th of December 1885, the Protocol of Rome ended the dispute, favouring Spain (Tavel de Andrade 1886: 277-329). Germany recognised Spain's sovereignty over the Caroline Islands and Palau in exchange for a colonial government and a free trade agreement. A Royal Decree signed in February 1886 created two Spanish governments in the Carolines, with capitals in Pohnpei and Yap. Official annexation occurred in May 1886 (Manzano Cosano and Delgado Sánchez 2015: 348). The Spanish conquest of the Carolines, however, was considered a failure due to local resistance to Christianity and insufficient military presence (Manzano 2020: Chapter 8). Although relatively short, the Carolines Conflict, however, had a significant impact on the geopolitical landscape of the entire Micronesian region and directly influenced Spain's perception of its Micronesian colonies.

### Spanish-American War (1898)

By the 1890s, Spain only preserved the territories of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, the Marianas and the Carolines. The lack of autonomy, the economic crisis caused by Spanish bankruptcy, and the strict colonial rule in the colonies was met with ‘violent nationalist revolts for independence’ (Berner 2014: 9), especially in the Philippines and Cuba, backed up by the United States (Ibid: 4). Strong hostilities between the U.S. and Spain started after the controversial explosion and sinking of the *USS Maine* off Havana Harbour on the 15th of February 1898. Americans claimed that Spain was responsible for the destruction of the ship, although the cause of the sinking remains a matter of debate. Tensions escalated as the U.S. proposed mediation between Cuban independence fighters, demanding full independence, and Spain, viewing Cuba as a province. But when it became clear that a mediated solution was impossible, U.S. President McKinley delivered a War Message to the U.S. Congress on the 11th of April. Within days, both countries had declared war (Ibid: 5).

On the 1st of May, an American squadron quickly defeated the Spanish fleet at Manila Bay. From May to August, the squadron waited for reinforcements. One of the ships sent to the Philippines, the *City of Sydney*, diverted its course to capture Guam, arriving on the 20th of June (Walker 1945: 5). The American crew informed the Spanish colonial officers, to their astonishment, of the war between the U.S. and Spain (Rogers 1995: 110). An ultimatum was delivered to the Spanish Governor of Guam, and on the morning of the 21st of June the latter handed a letter of surrender to the *City of Sydney* (Walker 1945: 10). The Spanish officers were taken prisoners, and the American flag was raised in Guam that evening, marking the end of the three-hundred-year Spanish rule on the island and the start of a new colonial period for the CHamoru (Rogers, 1995: 110). The *City of Sydney* proceeded to the Philippines on 22nd of June, which the Americans seized by mid-August (Berner 2014: 155).

The war in the Americas was brief. Cuba was surrendered to the U.S. on the 17th of July after intense battles, while Spanish resistance in Puerto Rico was weak. Following Cuba’s defeat, Spain began negotiating terms, leading to the armistice signed on the 12th of August. The Treaty of Paris, signed on the 10th of December, gave the U.S. control over Cuba, Puerto Rico and Guam (Berner 2014: 201). After the war, Spain, facing bankruptcy, sold the Carolines, Palau and the northern Marianas to Germany in September 1899, separating the Mariana Islands into two distinct colonial territories. Spain was consequently left out of the new international colonial and

geopolitical scenario that was developing at the turn of the twentieth century.<sup>34</sup> This way, the joint history of the Mariana Islands as a unified archipelago and people came to an end. The legacy of Spanish colonialism, however, would have a long-lasting impact for the CHamoru.

### **New colonialisms in the Northern Pacific (1898-onwards)**

Although Spain lost its remaining colonies after the Spanish-American War in 1898, the twentieth century saw the continuation of colonialism in the Mariana Islands in particular, and the islands of the Micronesian region in general. In the Mariana Islands, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands would follow different historical trajectories, with the former being under U.S. colonial rule from 1898 to the present<sup>35</sup> – with a brief Japanese occupation during World War II (1941-1944) – while the latter was first a German colony (1899-1918), a Japanese overseas territory (1919-1944), a part of the UN Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands under U.S. mandate (1945-1975) and finally a Commonwealth with the U.S. (1975-present) (Farrell 2016). Guam's Organic Act of 1950 ended Naval control, transforming Guam into an unincorporated territory of the U.S. granting civil rights and self-government, but denying full constitutional protections to its citizens (Na'puti 2014: 301). In 1980, the Government of Guam established the Commission on Self-Determination, but internal divisions failed to secure a majority vote in 1982. Today, the Commission on Decolonization has become key to advancing Guam's efforts for self-determination (*Ibid*: 303).

The effects of twentieth-century colonialism in the Mariana Islands remain deeply significant. The intense Battle of the Pacific during World War II was fought over the islands,<sup>36</sup> with the local population being affected in traumatic ways that are still remembered by the local community (Farrell 2016: 53). Due to the archipelago's strategic geopolitical location, the U.S. continues to use the islands as a military stronghold (Na'puti 2014), with active U.S. Airforce, Navy and, more recently, Marines presence in Guam, Tinian and Pagan (Frain 2022). The Northern Marianas,

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<sup>34</sup> Yet, Spain would continue to have imperial aspirations and between 1902 and 1956 would establish a protectorate in the Rif area (northern Morocco). The Rif War, with the famous Disaster of Annual (1921), where atrocities including the use of chemical weapons were committed by the Spanish army, was one of the bloodiest episodes of this late colonial period.

<sup>35</sup> For more information on the policies enacted by the U.S. Naval Administration (1898-1950) see Perez-Hattori (2004).

<sup>36</sup> For more information on how World War II affected the Mariana Islands see Rogers (1995), Farrell (2016) and Camacho (2011).

today Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI), negotiated their commonwealth status and the free circulation of people and goods with the U.S. by leasing two-thirds of the island of Tinian to the U.S. military, to be exploited and used at their own leisure (Frain 2017). Resistance to this process, both in the CNMI and in Guam, is complex, intertwining various perspectives on local involvement in the military and the military's influence on the local community (*Ibid*).

## Conclusion

2021 marked the 500th anniversary of Magellan's landing in Guam and the first time CHamoru encountered Spaniards. Magellan's three-day stay in Guam in 1521 marked the beginning of a three-century forceful assimilation of the CHamoru people into the Spanish empire. This legacy continues to shape CHamoru social, political and cultural life. The impact of Spanish colonisation remains strong and will likely persist in the future. However, the history of the CHamoru people extends far beyond their interaction with Spain, prompting reflection on the broader scope and significance of this encounter. As Bevacqua observes, 'the ongoing period of colonization spans around 350 years. In this long history, Magellan's presence in Guam amounts to only three days, during which he killed several CHamorus and burned a village. It is easy to forget that CHamorus have inhabited Guam and the Marianas for nearly 4,000 years, while Magellan's arrival occurred just under 500 years ago' (2022: 316).<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Although archaeological evidence supports the theory of the settlement of humans in the Mariana Islands around 3,500 years ago, the genetic origins and patterns of gene flow among the CHamoru people continue to be subjects of debate.

## Chapter 2: The Science of Race: Materialising Written Sources Through the Display of CHamoru Objects and People

On the 30th of June 1887, in the newly built Palacio de Cristal, the city of Madrid witnessed the opening of the *Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas*. Although it was originally scheduled for the 1st of April, multiple delays in the arrival of material from the Philippines (Payo 1887a), as well as the difficulties encountered while building the central pavilion (Romero de Tejada 1995: 28) postponed its official inauguration. Newspapers from the time greatly praised the opening ceremony, branding it as ‘spectacular’ (Sánchez Avendaño 1998: 275). Sánchez Gómez estimates that about half a million people may have visited the exhibition, ‘a very remarkable number for such a specialised event’ (2003: 145, author’s translation).

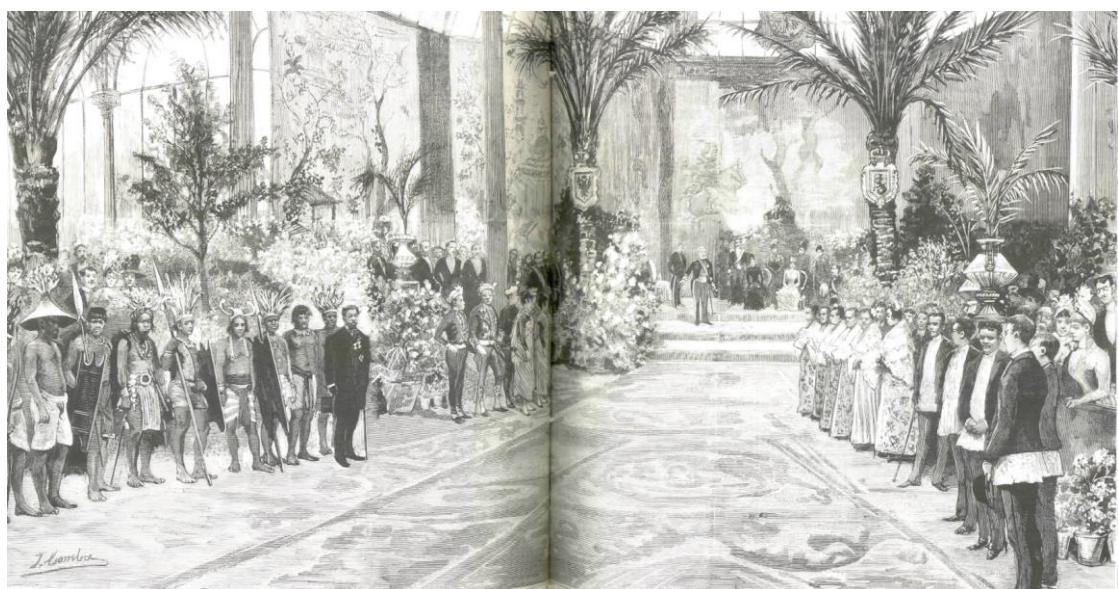


Figure 10: ‘Sketch of the opening ceremony of the 1887 Philippines Exhibition by Comba’. *La Ilustración Española y Americana* 1887a: 8-9. This illustration captures the event’s spatial and social dynamics. Indigenous participants from the colonies are divided into two groups: those on the left wear ‘traditional’ Indigenous Filipino attire, while those on the right follow Hispanic urban dress codes. This physical separation reinforces distinctions between the ‘savage’ and the ‘civilised’ participants. In the background, Regent Queen, President Sagasta and key ministers, are positioned on an elevated platform, symbolising their dominance over colonial subjects. ©Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes, open access.

Figure 10 is one of the only sketches of the opening ceremony recorded at the time, offering a rare glimpse into the event as it unfolded. Most of the people depicted correspond with some, but not all, of the Indigenous men and women who travelled

from the colonies to participate in the exhibition.<sup>38</sup> They are separated into two groups, each standing on both sides of an elegant, flower-patterned rug. Those on the left-hand side are depicted wearing ‘traditional’ Indigenous Filipino attire: they appear bare-chested, most of them with Igorot *suklang* (feathered headdress), *bahag* (garment or loincloth) and *kalasag* (rectangular wooden shield). On the right-hand side, au contraire, men appear wearing white shirts and black suits, while women are depicted in long dresses, *mantones de Manila* (lace or silk shawls worn over the shoulder) and large *peinetas* (combs), following Hispanic dressing protocols observed in urban Filipino environments at the time. According to Miyagi, the two CHamoru participants in the exhibition, José Flores Aflague and Antonia de los Santos Leon Guerrero,<sup>39</sup> appear ‘lined up rank-and-file with the Filipino participants’ (1975: 31), although this cannot be corroborated.

The physical separation between the two groups, as depicted in the sketch, echoed the social Darwinist ideas and cultural hierarchies of ‘savage’ and ‘civilised’, widely accepted during that period. In fact, the whole exhibition was intellectually legitimised by anthropological discourses of alterity (Nanta 2007: 7), which were physically and spatially reproduced in the opening ceremony. In the back of the sketch, in smaller size, we can see the Regent Queen, President Sagasta and his Ministers, including Victor Balaguer, as well as some other Members of Parliament – the core of the Spanish imperial power structure (Romero de Tejada 1995: 28) – standing or sitting down in their respective chairs. A set of steps elevates and separates them from the rest of the Indigenous guests, materialising the dividing hierarchy between the imperial elite and its colonial subjects, a common practice in similar exhibitions (Demeulenaere-Douyère 2010: 180).

This chapter examines how Spanish representations of CHamoru people, individual and collective, and their material culture, on display at the exhibition or observed directly in the islands, written by nineteenth-century Spanish travellers, colonial government officials, journalists and scientists were materialised in the 1887 Exhibition through the display of CHamoru objects, ancestral remains and the living

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<sup>38</sup> Dolores Nessern, the Carolinian woman, for example, did not partake in the opening ceremony due to her severe illness.

<sup>39</sup> Historical documents produced during the time of the exhibition identify the CHamoru participants as ‘José Flores’ and ‘Antonia de los Santos’. However, an article by Miyagi (1975), based on his research in Guam into the biographies of these individuals, refers to them as ‘José Aflague Flores’ and ‘Antonia de los Santos Leon Guerrero’. In this thesis, I have chosen to use their full names, as reported by Miyagi, to align with the CHamoru naming conventions.

people that travelled to Madrid to take part in the exhibition. These representations were framed within the context of the science of race (Douglas 2008a), which acted as a general discursive framework in which the writers of these texts and the exhibition organisers operated. In this way, this chapter will simultaneously critically construct and deconstruct the discourses of alterity and racial difference produced and reproduced in the texts (Douglas 1999: 162), given material form in the 1887 Exhibition (Geppert 2010: 203). Additionally, the chapter emphasises Spain's crucial role in the emergence of modern western science and its contribution to the development of the science of race, which continues to be overlooked (Spitta 2009: 46).

To achieve this, I have categorised the discourses within the texts into four distinct themes: (1) discussions about the existence of an ancient CHamoru 'race', genetically and technologically more advanced than the modern-day<sup>40</sup> CHamoru 'race', represented in the exhibition through the display of ancestral remains and ancient objects found in burial sites; (2) discussions on modern-day CHamorus' racial makeup, engrained in concepts of *mestizaje* and blood purity, constructed through the observations and anthropometric studies conducted on the two CHamoru individuals who travelled to Madrid; (3) the perceived homogeneity or heterogeneity of the CHamoru population, rooted in wider concepts applied across the Spanish colonies, represented in the exhibition through the display of CHamoru household items; and (4) examinations of how CHamoru people's moral and psychological characteristics reflect on the perceived 'development' of their technological and economic systems, exemplified in the display of weavings, canoe models and agricultural tools. These categories, however, are not isolated but rather function as interconnected components within the broader framework of the science of race.

## **The science of race and universal exhibitions**

In this thesis, I employ Douglas's concept of 'the science of race' as a theoretical framework (2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2014). Douglas defines this term as:

systematic efforts made in various branches of natural history – particularly comparative anatomy, physiology and zoology – to theorize physical differences

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<sup>40</sup> In this chapter, when I refer to 'modern' or 'modern-day', I am specifically talking about the Late Modern Period, which spans from 1800 to around 1945. However, due to the timeline of the Spanish Empire in the Pacific, my reference is limited to 1898.

between human groups as innate, morally and intellectually determinant, and possibly original (2008a: 5).

Initially serving as a tangible marker for unilinear development of different human groups in the Enlightenment era, the term ‘race’ eventually evolved into an abstract concept embodying an entire theoretical framework: the science of race. The disciplines that applied this new hierarchical classification, namely biology and anthropology, were greatly influenced by the familiarisation of Western scientists and the general public with ‘others’ through the systematic collecting and display of their material culture, first in cabinets of curiosities, then in universal exhibitions and world fairs, as well as in ethnographic museums (Bennett 1988: 73; Douglas 2008a: 5). This process of mass display and knowledge dissemination presented, in the words of Blanchard et al., a transition from ‘scientific racism’ to ‘popular racism’ (2011: 50). Artefacts, however, were ‘one among a battery of technologies of knowledge’ deployed in the nineteenth-century typologising of humanity through the hierarchical analysis of race and culture, which also included the systematic study of people through anthropometric methods, among others (Coombes in Ballard 2001: 127).

Exhibitions and their derivatives acted as places where the assembly of objects and people, within a particular architectural frame, ‘could enable a systematization of knowledge unimaginable and unrealizable until that time’ (Buchli 2013: 29), sustained by communities of experts (Hoffenberg 2001: 32). By the mid-nineteenth century, displayed peoples were increasingly drawn into ethnological debates, as scholars and lay observers alike treated them as living specimens to define human variety, test developing scientific methods and claim authority over ethnic authenticity (Qureshi 2011: 279). The textual forms that arise from exhibitions can be considered new forms of knowledge (Bennett 1995: 5) that spawn from the ‘picturesque encounters’ (Blanchard et al. 2011: 162), observation and, in some cases, anthropological study of cultural others and their material culture. However, the new knowledge created cannot be separated from previous knowledge constructed through a historicised tradition of travel and scientific voyage writing that reinforced images that already existed in the minds of Europeans, and the subsequent encounters with ‘others’ that were so constitutive of them (Thomas 1991; Douglas 2008b: 43; Thode-Arora 2014: 85).

## The texts

This thesis focuses on a select group of texts among the many writings about the 1887 Exhibition as well as the numerous texts submitted for display, specifically those that provide detailed descriptions of the Mariana Islands, which constitute a smaller group. This is because most travellers of the time did not reach the Mariana Islands, instead staying in the Philippines and its surroundings. Additionally, most visitors paid little attention to Mariana Islanders and their material culture, focusing instead on the Filipino ‘colony’<sup>41</sup> composed of Igorots,<sup>42</sup> the *Negrito*<sup>43</sup> Tek and *moros*<sup>44</sup> of Joló and Mindanao, perceived as ‘more exotic’ (Sánchez Gómez 2003: 192). While the Filipino elite in Madrid heavily criticised the exhibition – particularly the portrayal of the Igorots, which they believed undermined perceptions of ‘civilised’ Filipinos – they scarcely mentioned the CHamoru participants. Due to the perceived higher acculturation of the two CHamoru participants, they were considered ‘less interesting’, resulting in limited documentation about them in exhibition reports. Additionally, Filipino criticisms of the exhibition’s object displays were minimal and, when present, largely neutral (Sánchez Gómez 2003: 238). Yet, both the texts and objects expose inconsistencies and contradictions, highlighting the complex reality lying beyond the reductive narratives promoted by Western science.

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<sup>41</sup> In Spanish, *colonia* has multiple definitions, one of them being ‘group of natives from a country, region, or province who live in another territory’ (<https://dle.rae.es/colonia>), which is how it is referred to in this context.

<sup>42</sup> Although Igorots are one of the Indigenous peoples of the Philippines, Aguilar Jr says that ‘In colonial society, the Spanish-era word Igorrotes was applied to all sorts of mountain dwellers and became synonymous with primitivity and savagery’ (2005: 614).

<sup>43</sup> The term *negrito*, the Spanish diminutive of *negro* [black] was used to refer to several ethnic groups, mostly hunter-gatherers, from the Philippines and Southeast Asia, alluding to their dark(er) skin and short stature (Manickham 2009). The term was coined in the sixteenth century by Spanish missionaries in the Philippines and was used to describe ethnically different communities based on perceived physical and cultural similarities (*Ibid*). During the nineteenth century, their darker skin was associated with their perceived social and psychological backwardness (Aguilar Jr 2005: 613). Although there are many problematic connotations associated with the use of this term today, some communities in the Philippines still self-identify as *negrito*.

<sup>44</sup> *Moro* is a term used to describe several Muslim peoples of Mindanao, Palawan, the Sulu Archipelago and other areas of Southeast Philippines. *Moro* is a Spanish term for ‘Moors’, referring to the Muslims who ruled the Iberian Peninsula (711-1492). In the Philippines, they comprise about 5% of the total population, although they have never constituted a distinct identity. Due to their Islamic faith, introduced from Borneo and Malaya in the 14th century, the Moro people have historically remained outside mainstream Filipino society and have faced widespread prejudice and national neglect. From the 16th to the 19th centuries, they opposed Spanish colonisers who considered them a threat and worked to suppress the expansion of their beliefs; in the early 20th century, they fought against U.S. occupation forces in an effort to establish an independent sovereignty; and, from the late 1960s onward, they have been at the forefront of insurgencies against the independent Philippines government (University of Michigan n.d.).

In this chapter, I use two sets of texts: the first group I call ‘field journals’, and the second ‘exhibition reports’. Both corpuses subjectively but consistently address similar topics concerning CHamoru people and the Mariana Islands. These themes were materialised in the exhibition through the display of CHamoru objects and the presence of two Indigenous individuals, Antonia and José, both used by the writers to reinforce discourses on human biological, cultural, moral and technological evolutionism. All the texts are narrated in first person, bringing the personal perspectives, biases and even fantasies of the writers and editors to the pages.

The writers under analysis here had no scientific training, except for Manuel Antón<sup>45</sup> who wrote for *El Globo*, but they bought into the scientific tradition of the science of race, widely circulated in Spanish scientific circles by that time (Douglas 2008a: 100). They often use the ‘generalising tone of ethnographic reflections’, with hints of ‘racist, primitivist and sexist tropes’ (Douglas 1999: 170). An example of this is the emphasis placed primarily on post-contact events, although they deal with pre-colonial CHamoru society sometimes which, consistent with prevailing perspectives at the time, were considered the primary domain of ‘history’. This framing places Indigenous histories as beginning with European contact, marginalising the extensive cultural and historical legacy of pre-contact CHamoru society (Trouillot 2015: 101). Additionally, the described objects, whether from the Mariana Islands or the Exhibition, were not seen as ‘ethnographic’ but rather as ‘exotic curiosities’ (Thomas 1991; Hooper 2006). Furthermore, the authority with which writers were able to speak about the islands varied enormously and it cannot be assumed that they understood clearly the names and lives of the people they interacted with (Ewins 2007: 32). This reflects a tension between scientific inquiry and unregulated curiosity, driven by passion rather than method or theory (Thomas 1991: 128).

The texts often draw from and reproduce information and stereotypes found in earlier Spanish sources,<sup>46</sup> missionary and governmental reports and travel accounts, for example (Douglas 2014: 8), in an exercise of intertextuality that spans all the way

<sup>45</sup> Manuel Antón y Ferrández was the first director of Museo Nacional de Antropología in 1910. Antón was trained in anthropometric methods at the Muséum national d’histoire naturelle in Paris under Jean Louis Armand de Quatrefages and René Verneau. He also financed the Anthropology section in Museo de Ciencias Naturales in Madrid. At the 1887 Exhibition he carried out different studies on the Indigenous people who had been brought for the exhibition, including measuring their skulls and making casts of their heads (Romero de Tejada 1995: 28). His studies were used as a way to prove Spanish people’s superiority over colonised peoples.

<sup>46</sup> Today, some of these texts and the discourses they reproduced are used by CHamorus to reconstruct images of their past and as ‘proof’ of local ways (Madrid and Taitano 2022: 22).

back to the 1750s<sup>47</sup> (Douglas 2008c: 100-101). In the ‘promiscuous interplay between popular travelogues, fiction and scientific writing’, new ‘narrative tropes’ were developed and rendered ‘respectable in academic publications’ (Ballard 2001: 128) and regarded as ‘absolute scientific rational truths’ (Sánchez Arteaga 2007: 394). These tropes became models that structured subsequent writings.

### ‘Field’ journals

The first set of texts analysed in this chapter can be classified as ‘field’<sup>48</sup> journals: either written directly in the Mariana Islands or derived from first-hand observations and interactions with the local population of the islands. These texts include the accounts of travellers and Spanish governors of the Mariana Islands. Although they somewhat attempted to reproduce an ‘ethnographic survey’ (Hoffenberg 2001: 219) of the archipelago, they never truly became knowledgeable about Indigenous lifestyles, regardless of the amount of time they spent on the islands. Their data collection methods, though deemed scientific at the time, supported biased, Eurocentric views on CHamoru people and can be considered one-sided, ‘proto-ethnographic’, or ‘pseudo-scientific’ (Sánchez Arteaga 2007: 394). In fact, Antón critiques ‘the numerous and varied reports [included in the exhibition], often lacking adherence to scientific methods, about the anthropology of those regions provided to us in the writings and books of Spanish, English and Dutch captains and missionaries’ (*El Globo* 1887: 84).

*Memoria Descriptiva e Histórica de las Islas Marianas* (1875) was written in 1865 by Felipe de la Corte y Ruano, Governor of the Mariana Islands between 1855 and 1866, although not published until 1875. His memoir examines the history of the Mariana Islands and its impact on the archipelago’s present circumstances. His report is based on personal observations he collected over his eleven years as governor, a method he describes as ‘to let time pass in order to strongly reinforce convictions, support them with personal and extensive experience, and gather and organise a sufficient amount of data to provide a complete picture of what these islands were and what they are today’ (De La Corte 1875: 3, author’s translation). Contrary to what his

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<sup>47</sup> French naturalist Buffon, for example, relied on travel accounts for his work on human variability (Douglas 2008c: 100-101).

<sup>48</sup> Although the writers discussed here had no anthropological training and certainly did not conduct ethnographic fieldwork during their time in the Marianas, I would argue that they saw the islands as ‘the field’, understood as a faraway, ‘other’ location.

memoir says, however, his writings were not only based on personal ‘objective’ or ‘scientific’ observations but rather were significantly influenced by prior reports.

*Un Viaje por Oriente de Manila a Marianas* (1883) was written by Juan Álvarez Guerra, a traveller and chronicler who spent several months in the Spanish colonies in the Pacific in the early 1870s as part of a ‘scientific mission’ commissioned by the Governor of the Philippines, Rafael Izquierdo (Álvarez Guerra 1883). The precise nature of this scientific commission remains unclear, but the text suggests that it was primarily an observational mission aimed at assessing and reporting on the current state of the colonies. While the author asserts that his work is a ‘product of truth, not the emanation of ridiculous fables, typical of a novel rather than a journey’ (Ibid: 183, author’s translation), it is likely the focus of the project was on gathering empirical data rather than engaging in rigorous scientific research, with the findings ultimately presented as a travel report rather than a scientific study. However, he legitimises his perceived objectivity by declaring that it is the result of ‘many hours of study of letters, books and manuscripts’ (Ibid: 206). Although he did observe the CHamorus during his time in the Marianas, it is likely that his interactions were limited to members of the Spanish government and colonial elite such as Father Ibañez<sup>49</sup> (Álvarez Guerra 1875: 190-191), who likely influenced his views. Upon his return to Spain, Álvarez Guerra donated part of his large ethnographic and natural history collections to the 1887 Exhibition, which were displayed in a special Additional Section (*Catálogo* 1887: 603-604).

*Islas Marianas: Lijeros apuntes acerca de las mismas* (2006[1887<sup>50</sup>]) is a report authored by Francisco Olive y García, who served as the governor of the Mariana Islands from 1884 to 1887. His text is an end-of-term report of his activity as governor, including a description of the current situation of the islands and recommendations to improve it in the near future (Driver in Olive 2006[1887]: xv). The text, although not directly influencing the development of the 1887 Exhibition (since it was sent to Spain while the exhibition was underway), reflects many of the discourses present in the event and was directly requested by the Spanish authorities

<sup>49</sup> In fact, Álvarez Guerra repeatedly mentions Father Aniceto Ibañez, calling him ‘his good friend’ and praising his work in the islands, highlighting how after 20 years of living there he ‘might as well be the most trustworthy source of information about the Marianas’ (1875: 226, author’s translation).

<sup>50</sup> While the original text is available through Google Books, for this thesis I have mostly used the English translation, edited by Marjorie G. Driver and published by the Richard F Taitano Micronesian Area Research Center.

in the Philippines to feature in the exhibition. Additionally, Olive contributed numerous objects to the exhibition, which makes him one of the principal exhibitors from the Marianas. Olive's report greatly feeds off De la Corte's memoir and often engages with and criticises some of his predecessor's arguments. However, he shares similar methodological guidelines, describing his report as a 'constant, thorough and meticulous study of this lost archipelago' (Olive 2006[1887]: 5, author's translation).

### **Exhibition reports**

The second corpus of texts analysed in this chapter corresponds to the reports written about the 1887 Exhibition, authored by members of the Spanish Enlightened elite. These texts represent a distinct form of textuality, as they were written either during or after the exhibition and are largely based on direct observations of the objects displayed and the Indigenous people brought to participate in the event. Nonetheless, these reports draw heavily on the 'field' journals described above, using them to interpret the past and present of the Mariana Islands, and reinforce the stereotypes they read in those.

The main exhibition report I look at is the *Catálogo de la Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas* (1887). This 700-page document is a multi-author, but single perspective text; writers include the designers of the different sections and the presidents of the subcommissions. The Catalogue provides, on one hand, an overview of the colonies' past and current context, describing the various islands and 'races' of each of the subgroups of Spain's Pacific colonies, including the Mariana Islands. Their descriptions can be considered a secondary repository, a compilation that reproduces other people's ideas. On the other hand, it lists all displayed objects, offering brief descriptions along with the names of the exhibitors (discussed in Chapter 3). The descriptions of the objects are simple and lack ethnographic detail, reflecting the prevailing belief at the time that objects were 'self-sufficient scientific experiments, which required no commentary as to the political and economic circumstances in which they had been gathered' or produced (O'Hanlon 2000: 2).

*El Globo: diario ilustrado* (1887) also offered a comprehensive report of the exhibition. *El Globo* was a daily newspaper published from 1875 to 1932, combining written entries with drawings and sketches. It was founded by Emilio Castelar, a politician, member of the Conservative Republican Party and President of the First

Spanish Republic (1873-1874), though its ownership and agenda evolved over time. The paper's political stance aligned with the interests of the Spanish bourgeois elite, represented by the conservative party (Aubert and Desvois 2001: 76). The special issue on the 1887 Exhibition welcomed remarkable contributions from founder Emilio Castelar and renowned anthropologist Manuel Antón, among others. The issue highly praises the exhibition's ethos, human specimens, colonial displays and its impressive location and 'native villages', promotes scientific racism based on human evolutionary theories and asserts the moral and racial superiority of the Spanish people.

Another comprehensive report of the 1887 Exhibition was *Historia de la Exposición de las Islas Filipinas en Madrid en el año de 1887* written by Enrique Tavel de Andrade.<sup>51</sup> Much like *El Globo*, this text compiled a history of the Spanish presence in the Pacific area. However, in contrast to *El Globo*, Tavel de Andrade's report includes a specific section on the Mariana Islands. His description of the islands and their inhabitants is a secondary account of information gathered from other sources and travel accounts, mixing it with his personal observation of Antonia and José in Retiro Park during the Exhibition.

*Crónica de la Exposición de Filipinas* was written by Antonio Flórez Hernández and Rafael de Piquer, two journalists writing for newspapers *El Correo* and *La Época* respectively (Sánchez Gómez 2003: 200). This chronicle describes each of the sections of the exhibition, highlighting some of the 'curious' items displayed in each of them. Second, it suggests that the exhibition offers a comprehensive view of the Spanish Pacific colonies. Yet, these depictions were neither 'authentic' nor complete; instead, they conveyed an imperial, Eurocentric version of the colonies (Demeulenaere-Douyère 2010: 12).

Finally, *La Ilustración Española y Americana* did an extensive coverage of the Exhibition, describing different aspects of it in different issues published between the months of July and November. *La Ilustración* was an illustrated magazine published four times a month from 1869 to 1921 which was rooted in *costumbrismo* and the principles of 'La Restauración'<sup>52</sup> (Trenc 1996: 212). Their illustrations used a realist

<sup>51</sup> Although his identity cannot be confirmed, Sánchez Gómez (2003: 198) believes he was José Tavel de Andrade's brother. José was a Civil Guard lieutenant who served in the Philippines. He watched over Filipino national hero and dissident José Rizal upon his return to Manila in 1887.

<sup>52</sup> *La Restauración* refers to the period in Spanish historiography spanning from 1874 to 1931, characterised by the stable restoration of the monarchy. This era was founded on the principles of the 1876 Constitution, which provided institutional stability through a framework that included the monarchy, parliament, constitution, and the practice of *turnismo*. *Costumbrismo* refers to the social,

style, as seen in Figure 10, creating compositions designed to capture significant moments in the political landscape of the time. The magazine, catering to the Spanish Enlightened bourgeoisie, illustrated everyday life and covered scientific and literary developments from a positivist perspective. This perspective, dominant in Western scholarship, influenced historians and philosophers' views of history, even those not identifying as positivists (Trouillot 2015: 19).

Overall, all texts stress how the exhibition serves as an homage to Spanish imperialism, aimed at celebrating the glory of the Spanish Empire. Displaying the nation and empire as 'total, participatory pictures' was a common feature of universal and colonial exhibitions in Europe (Hoffenberg 2001: 18). In the texts, the discourse on the legitimacy of the Spanish Empire is framed around past 'discoveries' and conquests, particularly the exploration of the Pacific Ocean, which is presented as indisputable evidence of Spain's right to conquer and possess the Pacific territories through the *derecho de descubrimiento* and *derecho de posesión* [right of discovery and right of possession]. This theme will be overarchingly emphasised in the subsequent sections, which cover four different discourses about CHamoru people that were reproduced in the texts.

### **An ancient CHamoru 'race'**

One of the issues these texts cover is their belief that an ancient CHamoru 'race', different to that which lives in the islands now, existed, and had been 'lost in the darkness of the impenetrable night of time' (Álvarez Guerra 1883: 144, author's translation) by the time of the arrival of the first Spanish missionaries. The idea that a 'pure' Indigenous 'race' with a distinct culture once was and now is no more can be found in Western representations of Indigenous peoples all over the Pacific (Turnbull 2008: 206; Jacobs 2012: 16). Even some Indigenous groups – such as the Filipino Enlightened mostly belonging to the Tagalog ethnic group – interpreting their past through the lens of European scientific modernism, claimed that an ancient lost 'civilisation' once existed which surpassed both contemporary Filipinos and even Europeans in advancement (Aguilar Jr 2005: 608). Theories about the origins and social form of an ancient 'race' in the Mariana Islands were mostly based on first-hand

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literary and artistic movement that emerged in Spain in the 1850s, at the height of Romanticism and Realism, and focused on depicting the 'real' everyday customs and manners of Spanish society. It marked a return to an ethnographic approach, seen as an internal process of uncovering the essence of traditional Spanish life.

observations, and reproductions of those, of the *casas de los antiguos* [houses of the ancient people], today known as *latte* sites. The concept of *casas de los antiguos*, which many writers at the time presume to be the Indigenous place denomination, was likely the Spanish interpretation of local understandings of time and place. Using Spanish terminology, which had become widely spoken among the CHamoru population by the nineteenth century, reflects a Spanish framing of a CHamoru ontological concept, which was in turn used by the Indigenous population.

The analysis of architecture and monumental remains became, in the nineteenth century, an analytical category foundational to anthropological studies of human universalism and evolution, as ‘architectural forms assume the status of the artifact par excellence for understanding the nature and structure of human society’ (Buchli 2013: 19). The study of architectural remnants was, in turn, intrinsically linked to broader inquiries into the physical, social and moral origins and ‘development’ of humanity and different human groups (*Ibid*: 21). De la Corte, for example, bases his theories on his observations of the ruins of the House of Taga (Fig. 11), one of the largest *latte* sites located on the island of Tinian:

From them [*latte*], the true origin of these natives could be deduced, and it can be affirmed that they did not come solely from savages in a primitive state... I have also seen in the interior of Tinian other pyramids of five or six feet, larger than all those I have found in Guajan [sic], which suggests that the inhabitants of Tinian were, according to what these monuments represent, superior to those of Guajan. It has occurred to me that this may be connected to people from Japan... and that perhaps Tinian is the oldest point of their residence (1875: 84, author’s translation).

In this passage, De la Corte seeks to reconstruct the islands’ past with a focus on both material, architectural and social dimensions, and their relation to human physical and social evolution. He believes there is an ‘ancient, more developed race’ of CHamorus that engaged in the construction of monumental architecture, who are regarded as technologically more advanced than modern-day CHamorus and are now extinct. The superiority of Tinian’s *casas de los antiguos* is largely attributed to their form and size, one of the main preoccupations of archaeological engagements with architecture in the nineteenth century (Buchli 2013: 48), surpassing those found on other sites in Guam. Supported by this argument, De la Corte divides ancient CHamorus into two different peoples: those of Japanese descent in Tinian, on the one hand, and those of Indigenous descent in Guam on the other, the former being ‘more developed’ (or ‘less primitive’) than the latter. Ancient CHamorus from Tinian must,

consequently, descend from a ‘superior race’ like the Japanese.<sup>53</sup> In Western conceptions influenced by unilinear cultural evolution and diffusionism, Japanese were generally placed in a position that reflected a more ‘advanced’ stage compared to other East Asian or Pacific populations, based on their ‘racial middle ground’, but still below Europeans in terms of perceived development (Merida 2023).



Figure 11: Photograph of the House of Taga on the island of Tinian, CNMI, taken on the 8th of January 2024. The House of Taga is the largest *latte* site in the Mariana Islands, with stones measuring about 15 feet (4.6m). Only one stone remains standing today. House of Taga is associated with an ancient CHamoru legend that claims that the daughter of the great chief Taga was buried in a cavity in one of the *latte*. During Felipe de la Corte’s visit in the 1870s, he reported finding human remains among the ruins of the *latte* site.

Like De la Corte – and probably influenced by him – Álvarez Guerra believed the *casas de los antiguos* are the material evidence of the existence of a ‘privileged race that would stand out from the others in enlightenment and power’, descending

<sup>53</sup> At the time, Japanese anthropologists themselves were having discussions about the ‘racial’ origin of Japanese people, with different postures being defended by different schools of thought, reproducing European discourses of vertical human hierarchy. These notions were materialised in the exhibition of peoples of different backgrounds during the 1903 Osaka National Industrial Exhibition. See Nanta (2003, 2007).

from the Malay<sup>54</sup> and Japanese, adding another layer of interpretation to De la Corte's analysis, who had mysteriously disappeared by the time of the early Spanish occupation of the Mariana Islands. In contrast, he describes modern-day CHamorus as a more 'primitive race', evidenced by the 'savage houses made from coconut leaves that the first missions mention' (Álvarez Guerra 1883: 141-142, author's translation). In his historical account of the islands, Álvarez Guerra notes that there is limited information available for the analytical study of pre-contact society, apart from oral histories, superstitions and legends (Álvarez Guerra 1883: 137). He dismisses these sources as myths with little empirical value and adopts the perspective that history begins with the arrival of the first Europeans while, ironically, simultaneously recognising the significance of an Indigenous oral history tradition. In contrast, De la Corte integrates oral histories, including the CHamoru legend of a cavity in a House of Taga *latte* as Taga's daughter's sepulchre to his text. During his visit to Tinian, De la Corte examined this cavity, reporting the discovery of ancestral remains but without detailing any further actions taken with them:

On one of those pillars, tradition holds that Taga buried his daughter, covering her with rice flour. When I visited that monument in 1855... I had a ladder brought and climbed the column that was mentioned. Although it was covered with shrubs, I indeed found a cavity filled with soil... After clearing and excavating it, I found a fragment of a human lower jaw and two bones that appeared to be phalanges of a finger (1875: 83, author's translation).

This account is subsequently referenced in both the Catalogue (1887: 142) and Olive's report (2006[1887]: 86), who reproduce and support De la Corte's theory of the existence of an ancient CHamoru civilisation. In this context, the association of burial sites with the *latte* was used as evidence to argue that ancient CHamorus represented a 'superior race' with sophisticated burial practices and cultural traditions. This idea contrasts with what Olive perceives as a loss of cultural identity and infrastructure among modern CHamorus, whom he, in opposition to De la Corte, considers to be descendants of ancient CHamorus. For the writers of the Catalogue, nevertheless, referring to the *latte* as the remnants of the 'houses of the ancient people'

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<sup>54</sup> The idea that CHamorus originally descended from the Malay or 'Malaya', a 'race' that had later disappeared was perpetuated well into the twentieth century. A U.S. Military report about Guam compiled during World War II states that 'the origin of the ancient Chamorros is obscure, but it is probable that they were a group that became detached and isolated in the MARIANA ISLANDS from MALAYA during their migration eastward from the Asiatic mainland. During the Spanish conquest (1670-1696), nearly all of the native men were killed' (US Military 1944: 6).

supported the generally believed theory that the ancient CHamoru were indeed a long-lost, more evolved ‘race’ with a larger technological capability, although they claim that ‘it is unknown who constructed them and how they did it’ (1887: 142, author’s translation). This framing emphasises the structures’ mysterious origins, attributing them to an extinct ‘more advanced’ group of people. Today, assumptions about CHamoru ‘racial’ purity persist, fueling claims that ‘real’ CHamoru died in the seventeenth century (Underwood 2021: 15). In *Fanachu!* podcast, Michael Bevacqua, curator of the Guam Museum, talks about how he still gets people tell him ‘CHamoru don’t even exist anymore. You’re all just Filipinos having an identity crisis, or you are all wannabe-Hawaiians, or you’re all Mexicans that have beachfront property in Guam’ (*Fanachu!* Podcast 2023).

To support the arguments reproduced in these texts, the 1887 Exhibition showcased ancestral remains removed from ancient burial sites around the Mariana Islands, alongside other remains collected in the Philippines (Fig. 12). Most of the former were unburied and collected by French naturalist Alfred Marche<sup>55</sup> during his trip to Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands with Governor Olive, where they excavated and unburied hundreds of ancestral remains and ancient objects, some of which were then circulated to the exhibition by Olive and Mariano Borja Fausto<sup>56</sup> (for

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<sup>55</sup> Alfred Marche was a French ‘travel naturalist’ who did multiple expeditions around the world and collected thousands of objects and human remains. Marche went to the Mariana Islands from April 1887 to sometime in 1888 as part of a scientific mission funded by the French Ministère de l’Instruction Publique, des Beaux-Arts et des Cultures. He did two trips to the Northern Mariana Islands (Saipan, Tinian, Rota, Pagan) with a 4-month break in Guam in between. During his first trip to Saipan, Tinian and Rota, he was accompanied by Governor Francisco Olive, Mariano Fausto and several unidentified Indigenous persons (both CHamoru and Micronesian). In Saipan he also recruited the help of Father Palomo, the first CHamoru priest appointed in the islands and the only Indigenous person that is mentioned by name in Marche’s reports. Marche was the first recorded person to excavate ancestral burial sites, where he collected hundreds of ancestral remains and ancient artefacts, most of which are in Musée du quai Branly. Although he often mentions specific locations for his excavations in his reports (Marche 1894; 1898), it is difficult to establish the provenance of the artefacts and remains associated with Marche due to the large quantity of objects and the little information available on museum accession records. Some of the remains are not CHamoru but Refaluwasch (Carolinian, originally from the FSM) as he also excavated some of the villages of the Carolinian diaspora in Saipan. While he was clearly on a quest for anthropological remains and accompanying ancestral artefacts, he also collected natural history specimens and recorded anthropological notes about the Indigenous peoples of the Mariana Islands. Marche was the first to photograph the House of Taga and took some of the earliest portraits of CHamoru, Filipino and Micronesian people. For more details see Dotte-Sarout (2021).

<sup>56</sup> Mariano Borja Fausto was a Chamolinian (CHamoru-Carolinian mixed ‘race’), and teacher at the Carolinian school in Tamuning (Madrid 2006: 59). Father Ibañez’s chronicle of his time in the Marianas reports the following episode that took place on the 4th of May 1887: ‘the governor, the administrator of the Hacienda, the government secretary and the French naturalist went aboard to visit the islands to the north. Don Mariano Fausto and his family also boarded, on their way to Tinian’ (Driver and Brunal-Perry 1998: 88). This quote evidences that Mariano Fausto travelled with Marche to the Northern Mariana Islands, although it does not provide any reasons for Fausto’s trip. According to Carlos Madrid

more details on the lives of both see Appendix 2); other remains were donated by Dr Hipólito Fernández,<sup>57</sup> under the Comisión Central de Manila (CCM). Some of the remains submitted by Fausto included:

Four human skulls found in a cave (the second one in Saipan), a human jaw, a human femur found in the ruins of an ancient monument in Saipan, a CHamoru skull found in Hagåtña, a Carolinian skull and vertebrae, ribs, a sternum and a sacrum, all found under skull number two in Saipan<sup>58</sup> (*Catálogo* 1887: 216, author's translation).



Figure 12: Photograph of the display of anthropological specimens in Section 1 of the 1887 Exhibition, by J. Laurent and Cía. This section focused on physical anthropology and the study of racial differences in the Spanish colonies in the Pacific. The display featured several skulls and other human remains, which were analysed using anthropometric methods to rank the 'races' of the region according to a perceived hierarchy of 'less' and 'more' developed groups. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología.

(2025), Fausto was officially commissioned as a collector for the 1887 Exhibition by the Marianas colonial administration.

<sup>57</sup> Hipólito Fernández was a doctor who, in the second half of the nineteenth century, owned a Zoologic Cabinet in Manila (MNA 2017). Fernández had collected extensively in Mindanao, Luzon, the Marianas and other islands, and for the exhibition he contributed many specimens of animals found in the islands, as well as ethnographic objects and ancestral remains. Most of the items he contributed to the 1887 Exhibition were exhibited under the Comisión Central de Manila, who acted as a general umbrella for various exhibitors from the region. Fernández's museum was later incorporated into Museo Nacional de Ciencias Naturales in Madrid.

<sup>58</sup> Some of them have survived and are now in MNA: CE9564, CE6934, CE6944, CE6947, CE6950, CE6955, CE6982, CE9820 and CE9828. See Appendix 1 for more details. For an anthropometric description of the remains see Barras de Aragón (1939).

The minimal attention given to details about specific collection sites and identities of the remains in the Catalogue description stands in stark contrast to the detailed emphasis on the racial origins of each skeleton, reflecting the prevailing priorities and interests of the time. In fact, Marche was very familiar with the use of skeletal remains and objects recovered in archaeological contexts in studies of comparative anatomy and human categorisation, which he had learned under Ernest Hamy. In his submission letter to the Ministère de l'Instruction Publique, he outlined his plan to conduct a series of original anthropometric measurements on the Indigenous population of the islands, as well as to collect skulls and human remains (Dotte-Sarout 2021: 77). The inclusion of human remains in Section 1 of the exhibition was also linked to the development of the discipline of anthropology in Spain during that period. This concept is gathered by the writers of *La Ilustración Española y Americana*, who argue that 'men of science will greatly appreciate the display of skulls in Section 1, since the specimens on display offer significant opportunities for the study of the nature of the Oceanic territories' (1887b: 26, author's translation). In this way, the human remains and ancient objects displayed in the exhibition, in contrast to the 'ethnographic' collections displayed in other sections, were used as part of the science of race to compare and measure, both physically and figuratively, the perceived 'development' or 'backwardness' of ancient and modern-day Indigenous populations. A particularly striking case for visitors to the Exhibition was the skull of Igueleta,<sup>59</sup> described as a Carolinian king and donated by CCM (*Catálogo* 1887: 109–110):

the skull of Igueleta [sic], King of the Carolinians, is a very curious specimen of the Kanaka race. Igueleta was a native of the island of Yenaurek<sup>60</sup> [sic] (Central Carolines) and passed away in the Marianas Islands (Flórez and Piquer, 1887: 40, author's translation).

Flórez and Piquer appear more invested in providing details about Igueleta's biography than the Catalogue does for the other remains on display, likely because he is a specifically identified individual who died close to the time of the exhibition, in

<sup>59</sup> This individual's name appears written in several ways: Igueleta, Igueleta, Iguatata, Egueteta, Eugeleta, etc. In *El Globo*, Antón argues that his name means 'trembling fish' (*pescado tembloroso*), and also describes him as a 'Carolinian king' (1887: 109–110, author's translation). This information probably arises from Father Aniceto Ibañez's journal, where he identifies 'Egueteta' as the 'king of the Carolinians in Guam' who died in Tamuning on 6 March 1874 (in Driver 2005: 122). O'Connor (2021: 423) identifies him as the chief of the Carolinian village of Tamuning and reports how during his life he was involved in asserting the sovereignty and autonomy of the Carolinians in Guam.

<sup>60</sup> While I cannot definitively determine which island this refers to, I believe it is likely Lamotrek, an island located within Yap State.

contrast to the ‘anonymous’ ancestral remains unearthed from ancient burial sites. It is noteworthy, however, that Flórez and Piquer choose to describe Igueteta’s skull using the word *Kanaka*. This term, introduced by American sailors and whalers in the 1840s to refer to Native Hawaiians, originates from the Native Hawaiian denomination *kānaka maoli*, meaning ‘man’. The term’s use expanded over time, eventually being applied to Pacific Islander labourers and indentured and enslaved individuals employed in British colonies, California and Rapa Nui during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, as well as in Australia (Rosenthal 2018). In this text, the term distinguishes Carolinians from CHamorus, reflecting racial classifications of the time. Reports used by Flórez and Piquer to support this argument placed Micronesians within the broader Pacific Islander group, while CHamorus were seen as having Asian origins. This way, whether implicitly or not, Flórez and Piquer contributed to the narrative that ancient CHamorus represented a ‘more developed’ race, not only in relation to modern-day CHamorus, but also in contrast to other Pacific and Micronesian peoples.

The ancient CHamorus’ racial, moral and technical ‘superiority’ is not only exemplified in the large megalithic structures that they built and their sophisticated burial practices, but also by the ‘regularly wrought stones that could be used as throwing weapons [slingstones] and adzes... as well as bone spearheads’ (Olive 2006[1887]: 95, author’s translation). In addition to the unearthing and collecting of human remains, hundreds of ancient CHamoru objects were collected by Marche, accompanied by Olive, during his trip to the Northern Mariana Islands. While some were collected and sent to France by Marche, a few were submitted to the 1887 Exhibition and subsequently displayed in Section 1: an ‘ancient’<sup>61</sup> sling [CE6973] and eleven slingstones [CE273-CE275 and CE679-CE986], three shell adzes (described as ‘coins’ in the Catalogue) [CE270, CE271 and CE6984], two bone spear tips<sup>62</sup> [CE6976] and a fragment of the column from the ruins of Tinian<sup>63</sup> (Fig. 13).

<sup>61</sup> The 1887 Catalogue describes the sling as a ‘honda antigua’ or ‘ancient sling’, however, it was likely produced around the time of the Exhibition. Constructed from natural materials, it would not have been so well-preserved had it originated from the pre-colonial period. Furthermore, no slings or other implements made of plant fiber have been recovered in excavations of *latte* sites (Alonso Pajuelo 2021: 118). However, it may as well still be the oldest surviving example of a CHamoru sling (Patricia Alonso Pajuelo and Roman dela Cruz, personal communication).

<sup>62</sup> One is missing from the MNA collections.

<sup>63</sup> The 1887 Catalogue includes a listing for a ‘fragment of a column from the ruins of Tinian’, donated by Mariano Fausto, as one of the objects exhibited in Section 1 of the Exhibition. While it is not clear who collected this fragment, Olive’s report corroborates its inclusion, noting: ‘a 0.40 cubic chunk was sent to us to be forwarded to the Exhibition’ (2006[1887]: 86, author’s translation). While the Catalogue



Figure 13: Studio photographs of the *åcho' atupat* (slingstones) [CE273-CE275 and CE679-CE986], *atupat* (sling) [CE6973] and *higam* (shell adzes) [CE270, CE271 and CE6984] that were displayed in Section 1 of the 1887 Exhibition, donated by either Mariano Borja Fausto or the Governor of the Marianas (provenance unclear). These objects were displayed in the exhibition to showcase the technical skills of ancient CHamorus, which were perceived to be a distinct, 'more developed' race. They are now part of the collections of MNA. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photographs by Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

While Ballard argues that objects served as 'tokens or poor substitutes' for skeletal remains in studies of human evolution (2001: 150), the 1887 Exhibition and the writers discussed here, rather, prove that they were used to illustrate the technological 'superiority' of ancient CHamorus. While the inclusion of these objects in Section 1 of the Exhibition does not explicitly refer to the racial hierarchy between ancient CHamorus, modern-day CHamorus and other Micronesian and Filipino communities, it is implicit in the way in which the objects were regarded and referred to. This is the case of the *atupat* (sling), *åcho' atupat* (slingstones) and the spear tips made from human tibia (Farrer and Selman 2014: 133). To the writers, the intricate elliptical shapes and polish of the slingstones, the complex carving of human bone, as

does not explicitly state that this fragment originates from the monumental remains at the House of Taga, it is highly probable given that Olive's statement is situated within his description of the House of Taga remains. The fragment is not inventoried in the Spanish collections, leaving its current location uncertain, whether it remains in Spain but unidentified [potentially CE6977], has been displaced over time, or resides elsewhere remains unknown.

well as the detailed weaving of the sling, reflect ancient CHamorus' complex material culture production. This view of the technical skills of ancient CHamorus originated from early Jesuit missionary accounts, which emphasised the dexterity and sophistication of CHamoru warfare (e.g., García 2004[1683]), and was later echoed in most 'field' journals. The *higam* (shell adzes), on the other hand, were included as examples of the carving tools used by ancient CHamorus to produce the other objects, including the highly fetishized *latte*, which, as we have seen, were central to the debates surrounding the existence of this ancient 'more advanced' race. All in all, these objects and remains were used in the exhibition to reconstruct the notion of a 'race' or 'civilisation' that was more advanced technologically, but also physically, culturally and morally.

## **Discussions about the racial make-up of modern CHamoru people**

The texts also address the racial composition of modern-day CHamoru people, which, according to most sources and as highlighted above, contrasts with that of the ancient CHamoru population. Discussions about the genetic makeup of CHamoru people and whether they represent a distinct 'race' existed since the sixteenth century and were widely circulated and debated in scientific circles around the western world. Buffon, for instance, claimed that the inhabitants of Formosa and the Mariana Islands appeared to be a separate 'race' different from all those nearby, exhibiting various physical 'nuances' (in Douglas 2008c: 101-102). In the Spanish context, these discussions were often framed within the context of *mestizaje*. This term has been defined by Martinez-Echazabal (1998: 21) as 'the process of interracial and/or intercultural mixing' that acted as a racialist discursive practice used to categorise the Indigenous populations of the Spanish colonies based on their level of racial purity. The concept originated as early as the sixteenth century, when a complex and highly porous caste taxonomy was established in the Spanish colonies.<sup>64</sup> Thus, *mestizaje* was the result of the mixture of different 'pure' *castas*, which in turn reproduced new *mestizo castas* (Douglas 2014: 45), with each *casta*, both 'pure' and *mestizo*, constituting its own separate entity. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, these ideas, which were still in

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<sup>64</sup> Taxonomies of human differentiation were often expressed through textual and pictorial media, notably in the famous *cuadros de castas* (paintings representing different 'castes' based on people's perceived blood purity and skin colour), wax figurines and poetry, among others (Spitta 2009: 11; Vinson III 2017: 33).

circulation, were greatly influenced by the principles of social Darwinism and the tension between polygenism and monogenism (Douglas 2008c: 125), which advanced the idea that all human races could be placed in a linear hierarchy of racial, technological and moral development, with some races being ‘naturally’ inferior to others. In this way, *mestizaje* also encompassed ‘cultural forms of miscegenation’ that cannot be represented other than through the cultural practices and material culture that are used to construct *mestizo* identities (Spitta 2009: ix; 14).

While *mestizaje* was a discourse rooted in the depths of the Spanish colonial project and permeated all corners of the Spanish empire, although it has mostly been discussed in the Latin American context, it expressed itself locally, with each region of the empire having its own distinct categories (Vinson III 2017: 16). In the Mariana Islands, the term *mestizo* was used as an ethnic category within the Spanish administrative system, existing in contrast to classifications such as ‘pure’ CHamorus, ‘pure’ Spaniards and ‘pure’ Filipinos, among other recognised racial categories.<sup>65</sup> Historian Alexandre Coello de la Rosa explains that the Spanish administration initially forbade Spaniards from living in the southern, more Indigenous villages to ‘discourage the proliferation of so-called *castas* considered to be pernicious to the social order’ (2016: 85). From 1676 on, however, marriages between Spaniards and CHamoru became increasingly common, resulting in the development of the new racial category of *mestizo* (Clement 2022: 174). Spanish priests often classified babies by the father’s ethnicity, labelling the children of Spanish fathers and Indigenous mothers as ‘Spanish’, further complicating the social structure (Ibid: 175). However, Madrid (n.d.b) suggests that in some official Spanish documents, these terms functioned primarily as descriptive labels for social contexts rather than as strictly racial categories, evidencing their porosity, as shown by nineteenth century *mestizo* and Spanish men who identified as CHamoru to evade higher taxes (Underwood 1977).

Both the ‘field’ journals and exhibition reports reinforced and debated perceived racial distinctions among modern CHamorus. While most texts concur with the binary distinction between ‘pure’ and ‘mixed’ locals, they differ in their

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<sup>65</sup> Besides *mestizo*, other terms such as *mulatto*, *malayo* and *moreno* were used as ethnic categories in the Mariana Islands (Underwood 1977).

interpretations of the racial composition of the Marianas *mestizo* population.<sup>66</sup> The Catalogue, for example, describes the Indigenous inhabitants of Guam in the following terms: ‘The population is predominantly of mixed Spanish and Filipino race [raza *mestiza*], especially in Agaña, while the rest (referred to as Chamorros) are considered to be of Malay and Mongolian descent’ (1887: 138, author’s translation). ‘Pure’ CHamorus, in this context, are regarded as a distinct ‘race’ with Asian roots, but whereas these authors traced ancient CHamorus to Japan, they linked modern CHamorus to Mongolia, implying their perceived ‘backwardness’ by comparison. They argue that the ‘pure CHamoru race’ is now a minority, with only about ‘600 poor souls left in miserable *ranchos*’ (*Catálogo* 1887: 191, author’s translation) and in long-term decline. However, a growing *mestizo* ‘race’, originating from the union of ‘local women with Spanish and Filipino men’, is ‘thankfully but slowly’ replacing the declining ‘pure’ CHamoru population (*Ibid*). This two-category classification attributed CHamorus fixed identities that erased the fluidity created by the many influences that shaped the genetic makeup of the local population at the time. Underwood’s (1977) analysis of several nineteenth-century population censuses combined with biological evidence, for example, concluded that a significant portion of the population categorised as ‘*Yndios*’ (see below), as well as those classified as ‘Filipino’ shared CHamoru ancestry, with frequent overlaps observed between the two groups.

Similarly to the Catalogue, De la Corte describes the local population as ‘of mixed Spanish and Filipino race with the original inhabitants of the land, which should be considered Malay with little Mongolic influence’ (1875: 64, author’s translation). Álvarez Guerra describes the local population as ‘an ensemble of castes and races’, evidencing that the system of *castas* was still in operation, with the ‘pure’ CHamoru race in decadence and the majority of the population being a mix of ‘CHamoru and American’ or ‘CHamoru and Spanish’ (1883: 215, author’s translation) instead of the more common association with a Filipino ‘race’. Olive classifies modern-day CHamorus into ‘a small number of pure-blooded natives of Malay and Mongolic ancestry’ on the one hand, just like Álvarez Guerra, and those of ‘mixed Spanish,

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<sup>66</sup> Much like in the previous case, these debates continued to exist into the twentieth century. The same report mentioned in footnote 53 states that as a result of the Spanish-CHamoru wars ‘the present Chamorros are descendants of the Spanish, Mexican and Philippine soldiery who were brought to GUAM for conquest and garrison, and of the Americans, British, Japanese and Chinese who came later’ (U.S. Military 1944: 6).

Filipino, English and American descent', on the other (1887: 35, author's translation). In this way, we see that while most of the texts agree on the existence of an ancient CHamoru 'race' and its 'Malay and Mongolic' origin, there are several interpretations on the perceived ancestry of modern-day CHamorus, with new perspectives emerging over time to reflect the arrival of new external influences. These connections to the discourse of *mestizaje* reveal the significant fluidity within the system, where so-called *mestizo* 'races' were never fixed categories but rather dynamic and constantly shifting, depending on the perspective (Vinson III 2017: 2).

During the nineteenth century, live exhibits of humans were increasingly contextualised within the frameworks of science, particularly physical anthropology and the science of race. Findings from anthropometric studies were widely circulated through journals and newspapers. The exhibition reports emphasised these debates by including extensive discussions on the various 'races of Pacific peoples', their conclusions based on analysis of the physical traits of the Indigenous participants at the 1887 Exhibition. *El Globo*, for example, included an anthropological review of the different 'races' of the Spanish colonies in Oceania by Manuel Antón, rooted in the 'classification most accepted by current anthropologists' which he learned through his training in Paris: *Austral*,<sup>67</sup> *Negrito*,<sup>68</sup> Papuan,<sup>69</sup> Indonesian, Micronesian and Malay. According to Antón's classification, these races are considered *native* because they pre-date the arrival of 'Mahometan [Muslim] and Portuguese colonists' (*El Globo* 1887: 85, author's translation), reducing their Indigenousness to their genetic makeup. The first three were considered 'physically and socially less evolved' than the others (*Ibid*), a view linked to their skin colour and its interconnection with physical and social 'degeneration' (Douglas 1999: 173), which were associated by the press with all sorts of atrocities (Moyano Miranda 2008: 356). The essentialised features reinforced

<sup>67</sup> *Austral* probably refers to what French biologist Bory de Saint-Vincent called 'Australasians' (Douglas 2008a: 9), one of his eight 'species' of humans, which he theorised in 1825. Bory considered 'Australasians' as 'the most brutish of Men', 'totally foreign to the social state', 'misshapen' and with the 'most deplorable facial resemblance' to mandrills (*Ibid*).

<sup>68</sup> Although the term *Negrito* is applied to some Filipino communities as highlighted above, it is likely that in this case it is used to refer to Melanesian people, which were considered the 'specie Negroes of Oceanica' by Bory (Douglas 2008a: 9).

<sup>69</sup> The *Papuan* 'race' was one of the 'races' of humans theorised by Bory. It was a hybrid product of the alliance of 'Neptunians' and 'Negroes of Oceanica'. They were the 'most truly savage of all Men', alongside 'Australasians' (*Ibid*). The term 'Papus/Papous' was also used by Blumenbach and Cuvier, who popularised it to refer to the 'black people of the Pacific' (Douglas 2008b: 116). The term 'Papua', used to refer to the southwestern area of the Pacific, had been introduced by Spanish and Portuguese explorers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, alluding to the dark(er) skin of its local population, and comparing it to the people of African Guinea (*Ibid*).

by these categorisations are, in the words of Douglas, nevertheless not expressions of ‘innate, collective physical differences’, but rather ‘historical residues of centuries of encounters, colonial experience and classification informed...by hardening, though not fixed or unchallenged racial fantasies, camouflaged as science’ (2014: 16).

To build a profile of the Micronesian ‘race’, seen as one unifying category with shared physical and social characteristics, Antón meticulously describes the ‘typical physical features’ and personalities of the four Micronesians who travelled to Madrid for the Exhibition: Luis Pearipis and Dolores Nessern of Carolinian origin<sup>70</sup> and Antonia de los Santos Leon Guerrero and José Flores Aflague from Guam,<sup>71</sup> supplemented with the use of anthropometric measurements.<sup>72</sup> While the Carolinians are described as ‘typical specimens of their race’ (*El Globo* 1887: 109, author’s translation), though the exact meaning of this is unclear, the CHamoru are regarded as being of ‘mixed race’, exhibiting only ‘some of the typical Micronesian’ racial characteristics. José is described as having a ‘pleasant appearance’ and ‘a small mouth with strong, large molars, protruding canines with a yellowish-white colour’, which suggests that he is of mixed white and Micronesian descent (*Ibid*). Antonia is described as a beautiful and robust young woman, with a mix of Micronesian, Malay and possibly European blood. This notion of ‘robustness’ for modern-day CHamoru people is also emphasised in De la Corte’s writing (1875: 64) and is seen as a common physical feature of the people from the Marianas, portraying them as biologically suited for labour but intellectually and culturally ‘less developed’.

Two things need to be unpacked from these descriptions. First, they echo the scientific debates of the time, which struggled to determine whether Micronesians constituted a distinct racial category or if they were a subgroup of Indonesians, Malays, or Polynesians, or possibly even related to Native American or other Asian populations. These flexible and hybrid notions of CHamoru people’s DNA highlight the great fluidity of Indigenous identities in the Spanish colonies, that involved a complex mix of physical and cultural influences. Second, the inclusion of Indigenous

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<sup>70</sup> For biographies of Dolores Nessern and Luis Pearipis, the two Carolinians who participated in the 1887 Exhibition, see Madrid (2025).

<sup>71</sup> It is not possible to determine if José and Antonia appear in any of the group photographs from the 1887 Exhibition, as no photographs or drawings of them were done during their time in Madrid. Only one photograph of José Flores, taken in the 1930s, exists as far as I am aware, reproduced in Miyagi (1975).

<sup>72</sup> In the case of Dolores Nessern, who died in the early days of the 1887 Exhibition, Manuel Antón produced a plaster mortuary cast of her. This cast was used to extract details about the ‘Micronesian race’ and establish comparisons with other represented ‘races’.

participants in the exhibition appears intentional, allowing scientists to engage in debates on racial differentiation (Blanchard et al. 2008: 21). Sánchez Gómez argues that the organisers of the exhibition did not intend to display the Filipinos and Micronesians as ‘savages’ with the sole intent of transforming them into objects of scientific study (2003: 214). However, the studies conducted on them involved invasive methods such as skull measurements and the creation of head casts (Romero de Tejada 1995: 28), ultimately objectivising participants. Manuel Antón in particular capitalised this situation by applying anthropometric methods to study of Pacific ‘races’, effectively turning the Indigenous participants into objects of scientific study. The studies, shaped by modern-day racial biases, reinforced hierarchies between Spaniards and colonised peoples, as well as among colonised peoples themselves, which were then widely accepted and perpetuated by the public.

## **Homogeneity and variability**

By the close of the eighteenth century, the concept of ‘race’ began to penetrate disputed ideas of variability within the unity of a single humanity, gradually solidifying into its scientifically validated, modernist doctrine of fixed, hereditary physical differences among distinct human groups (Douglas 1999: 162). Following this trend, several texts present the Marianas, the Caroline Islands and the Philippines as uniform entities, disregarding their physical, cultural and material diversity. Tavel de Andrade, for instance, describes Spain’s Pacific colonies as ‘a single piece of Oceania that cannot be divided’ (1887: 13, author’s translation), thereby offering a homogenised perspective of the three archipelagoes. This is further emphasised by Tavel de Andrade’s and Flórez and Piquer’s use of the term *indio*,<sup>73</sup> a denomination that was fabricated by Spanish colonial administrators to categorise diverse Indigenous populations in the New World into a single, more manageable social category (Jackson 1999: 28-29). While in some areas of the Empire *indio* came to be used more generally to refer to native populations who had adopted aspects of Hispanic culture (Vinson III 2017: 8), in this case, *indio* is used as a term that homogenises Oceanic peoples. In fact, Tavel de Andrade’s and Flórez and Piquer’s texts lack dedicated sections for each region, merging them instead into a single object of analysis. Contradictorily, however,

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<sup>73</sup> The term *indio* arose from the early misconception that Columbus had landed in the Indies when he first arrived in the Americas.

they establish internal hierarchies within their broad use of the term *indio*, which Douglas refers to as ‘the conundrum of diversity in unity’ (2008b: 44).

Tavel de Andrade, on the one hand, creates a double-edged discourse about the peoples of Spanish Pacific colonies and places the Indigenous people from the Marianas both as *indios* and as racially differentiable people. This is exemplified by his description of Antonia de los Santos, whom he describes as a ‘representative of that [CHamoru] race’ but having a ‘pleasant appearance, not different from that of Tagalog women’ (Tavel de Andrade 1887: 51, author’s translation). While he recognises some level of variability between CHamoru and Filipino people, he also identifies similarities in their physical traits. Flórez and Piquer, on the other hand, establish a hierarchical framework within the category of *indio*, distinguishing between two interrelated stages:

In the display cases of this section [Section 2], there is a true variety of highly original objects, all the more impressive considering that most were made by the native people of those islands, who until now have lacked higher education. This lack is compensated by the proven patience of the *indios*, who, through this quality, are able to produce meticulous and perfect works. Thus, carefully examining the variety of objects housed here is enough for any member of the public to get a complete idea about the most salient customs of both the civilised and savage *indio* (1887: 9. author’s translation).

This artificial distinction between ‘savage’ and ‘civilised’ *indios* placed colonised peoples within a hierarchical ladder, where Indigenous individuals who had assimilated more closely to Spanish culture, such as Antonia de los Santos and Dolores Nessern, were described as ‘professing a certain distinction over their other companions’ (Flórez and Piquer 1887: 153, author’s translation). Rooted in scientific racism, these classifications aimed to ‘improve’ the human ‘race’ through ‘better breeding’, supporting and encouraging Western racial supremacy (Martinez-Echazabal 1998: 25).

O’Hanlon (2000: 6) suggests that material culture was implicated in attempts to define the Oceanic region in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the 1887 Exhibition this, expressed through the variability within the homogeneity of the *indio* category, was materially explored mostly in Section 2, as the passage by Flórez and Piquer highlights above. This section’s depiction of modern-day CHamoru people reflects the juxtaposition emphasised by Tavel de Andrade: they were categorised as *indios* – a term often synonymous with ‘native’ – perceived as indistinguishable both

in phenotype and cultural practices from other colonised peoples within the Spanish empire; yet, they were simultaneously recognised as a distinct ‘CHamoru’ group with unique physical, moral and cultural characteristics. This is exemplified in the 1887 Exhibition through, for example, the display of an ‘ordinary Chamorrita dress,<sup>74</sup> composed of a *saya*,<sup>75</sup> shirt and a shawl’ (*Catálogo* 1887: 249, author’s translation). Álvarez Guerra, for instance, suggests in his report that Chamorrita dresses resemble the clothing of Indigenous Filipinos but lack the typical *tapis*,<sup>76</sup> which makes them ‘less luxurious’ (1875: 224, author’s translation).



Figure 14: From top to bottom: three *tabo*, coconut drink containers [CE2167-CE2169] and a *quichala*, serving spoon [CE2158] from the Mariana Islands, exhibited by José Muñoz. These were displayed in Section 2 of the 1887 Exhibition and used to portray how CHamoru people were culturally – and also biologically – not that different to other colonised peoples, although a certain degree of cultural variation was acknowledged. They are now part of the collections of MNA. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photographs by Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

<sup>74</sup> Chamorrita dresses were the female attire during the Spanish colonial period. This particular Chamorrita dress was donated by Manuel Aflague but does not appear in the MNA records, leaving its current location uncertain, although it is likely classified as Filipino instead of CHamoru.

<sup>75</sup> *Saya* is an old Spanish word for skirt but is usually used to refer to traditional attire from the Philippines.

<sup>76</sup> In the Philippines, *tapis* refers to a rectangular, single wraparound piece of cloth that pre-dates the Spanish occupation and is somewhat related to the Indian *sari*. Even though the Spanish colonial regime imposed a more conservative style of clothing, Filipino women, particularly in northern Luzon, continued to wear it in intimate settings. Today, *tapis*-like garments are still worn by some Filipino women.

Section 2 of the exhibition also featured household items such as *tabo* (drink containers) [CE2167–CE2169] and a *quichala* (ladle) [CE2158], which reflect the integration of CHamoru practices into a more homogeneous transnational colonial society, while simultaneously expressing their cultural specificity (Fig. 14). These objects, introduced from the Philippines (Alonso Pajuelo 2021: 119), were used for serving drinks such as atole and water. This function is explicitly inscribed onto the objects themselves through written markings, as seen in Fig. 14. Atole, a beverage of Mesoamerican origin was introduced to the Marianas by Spanish conquistadores (Salas and Tolentino, n.d.). However, the CHamoru version was adapted locally by replacing corn, the traditional Mesoamerican ingredient, with coconut and rice,<sup>77</sup> crops that were a staple of CHamoru diet. The introduction of a reconfigured atole to the local diet in turn entailed the creation of new containers for its consumption. However, the materials used to produce the tools used to make and consume atole were also locally adapted: from Mexican clay to tropical coconut husks and fibers. Collectively, these variations reveal the dynamic reconfiguration of CHamoru society under colonial influence, even as some of the texts continued to portray Spanish Oceania as a singular entity.

Although most of the texts consciously or unconsciously reproduce the idea of a regional homogeneity, *La Ilustración Española y Americana* brings a different point of view to the debate:

We will not attempt to give even the slightest idea of the geographical unity of Micronesia here, whose whole includes the Marianas, as well as the Carolinas and Palau. Our aim is to show that even the Caroline subgroup does not form a single unit, as it is further subdivided into others (1885: 123, author's translation).

In contrast to other writers, *La Ilustración* echoed the emerging scientific discourse on human diversity, which was still in its early stages of development at the time. This discourse was actively promoted by the organisers of the exhibition, who sought to familiarise Spanish audiences with the diverse peoples and cultures that constituted the empire. The exhibition's juxtaposition of contradictory perspectives highlights dynamic debates on the fluidity of racial and cultural diversity happening in scientific circles at the time, a view acknowledged to varying degrees by all texts discussed in this section. The texts, in any case, emphasise an 'Enlightenment

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<sup>77</sup> Recent archaeological studies suggest that rice (*fa'i*) was likely introduced to the Marianas by its first settlers, serving as evidence of their origins in Southeast Asia (Rainbird 2004; Dixon et al. 2010).

humanist ideal of ‘mankind’ as a variegated, variously civilized, ambiguously differentiated human unity’ (Douglas 1999: 175). Objects in the 1887 Exhibition were used to reflect on these issues and debates, showcasing racial and cultural variability while simultaneously establishing a homogenised hierarchy of the ‘other’ versus ‘us’.

## **Moral and technological ‘progress’**

Finally, as mentioned before, the exhibition highlights how popular travelogues, fiction, and scientific writing created and refined ‘narrative tropes’, linking material attributes of cultural others to non-material qualities like intelligence or morality (Ballard 2001: 128). Most of the texts directly connect the racial composition of CHamoru people to their social organisation, attitudes, moral characteristics and perceived level of technological ‘progress’ or lack thereof. De la Corte, for example, attributes CHamoru people’s ‘simple characteristics’ to their inherent ‘nature’, which he criticises as the cause of their ‘bad morals’. He brands them as ‘lazy, whimsical, fickle, self-centred and lacking ambition’ (1875: 37-38, author’s translation), implying that their lack of ‘progress’ is not just reflected on their material production but, more fundamentally, engrained in their biological makeup. Olive describes CHamorus in general as ‘lazy and negligent’ (2006[1887]: 38, author’s translation), noting a tendency toward what he called ‘proverbial laziness’ and ‘lack of aspirations, patience, care and intelligence’ (Ibid: 47). He argues that the traits of Spanish and Filipino deportees and prisoners, who intermarried with the Indigenous population of the Marianas, have exacerbated the issue by genetically transmitting their ‘undesirable qualities’.<sup>78</sup>

Several authors concur with the fact that there is a link between these behavioural traits and the economic practices CHamoru people engage in. De la Corte, for example, links the characteristics mentioned above to CHamoru people’s focus on subsistence economy and reciprocal exchanges, deeply connected to Indigenous lifeways, which according to him makes them ‘not a real civilised society’ (1875: 37, author’s translation). A similar issue is brought up in Olive’s report, where he implies that many CHamorus lack incentives for commercial farming, structured labour or export, partly because they only work to meet their immediate needs, like clothing and

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<sup>78</sup> In fact, two of the exhibitors for the 1887 Exhibition, José Muñoz and Francisco Cobo, were Spanish deportees who married local women in Guam (Madrid 2006). See Chapter 3 for more information.

tax payments, arguing that this practice contributes to widespread poverty and lack of quality in their material productions (2006[1887]: 38). Similarly, according to Álvarez Guerra, all locals ‘except for a very few exceptions’, are small-scale merchants ‘selling off their surplus goods and provisions, taking advantage of others’ shortages’ and not even remotely interested in the economic development of their islands (1883: 216, author’s translation). These descriptions, however, say more about the obsessions of the colonial apparatus with consumption and sociability than about the Indigenous people’s lifestyle (Gosden 2000: 244).

Despite the obvious criticism, Olive also recognises that modern-day CHamorus can be smart, albeit not intelligent (2006[1887]: 38), which is evidenced by their innate capacity to carry out all sorts of jobs and artistic productions: ‘everything they produced is for self-consumption, and they even produce themselves the things that they need instead of buying them’ he argues (Ibid: 75, author’s translation). Álvarez Guerra also mentions a ‘simple’ lifestyle closely connected to the natural environment. Yet, he positively highlights the creative use of coconut in various aspects of daily life, from food to tools and building materials (1875: 217), thus establishing a relationship between material and social forms, promulgated at the time by anthropologists like Pitt Rivers and Lewis Henry Morgan (Buchli 2013: 29). These texts’ statements about CHamoru people’s moral and intellectual faculties, which they thought, based on scientific theories of race, were engrained in their DNA (Douglas 2008b: 45), are homogenising and contradictory. They often portray CHamoru individuals negatively while also acknowledging some positive personality traits.

In nineteenth-century debates of evolutionism and diffusionism, the perceived ‘stage of development’ of a particular culture was defined by whether it possessed particular categories of objects in its material culture (O’Hanlon 2000: 5). Coconut-and-pandanus-made woven products, such as two woven *gueha* (fans) [CE2136 and CE2137] in Section 2 and several *kottot* and *kostat tengguat* (two types of baskets) in Section 7 [CE2138, CE2139, CE6993 and CE6996] (Figs. 15 and 21), were featured in the 1887 Exhibition to represent the subsistence-based lifestyle of nineteenth-century CHamoru communities, particularly in family-owned *lanchos*. Although many Spaniards of the time were familiar with basketry and rural life, crafting objects from pandanus and coconut introduced an element of exoticism to their perception. In this respect, the exhibition emphasises Olive, De la Corte and Álvarez Guerra’s discourse about CHamorus’ lack of ambition while simultaneously celebrating their creative

skills. As noted by Flórez and Piquer, objects like these are ‘original’, even more so considering that ‘most were made by the native people of those islands, who until now lacked higher education’ (1887: 49, author’s translation). While this description highlights that these items were crafted by individuals lacking formal education by European standards, it nonetheless acknowledges that they exhibit exceptional skill and patience, highlighting the ‘unique’ and ‘surprising’ creative capabilities of CHamoru people. This perspective, though paternalistic and contradictory, reveals a complex blend of condescension and admiration for the quality of the works presented in the exhibition. Furthermore, these ambiguous descriptions of CHamoru people’s production only for self-consumption can be interpreted as a form of Indigenous resistance to the imposed imperial transactional and monetary system, simultaneously signaling behavioural traits that highlight Indigenous creativity and agency (Flores 1999: 127; Douglas 2014: 27).

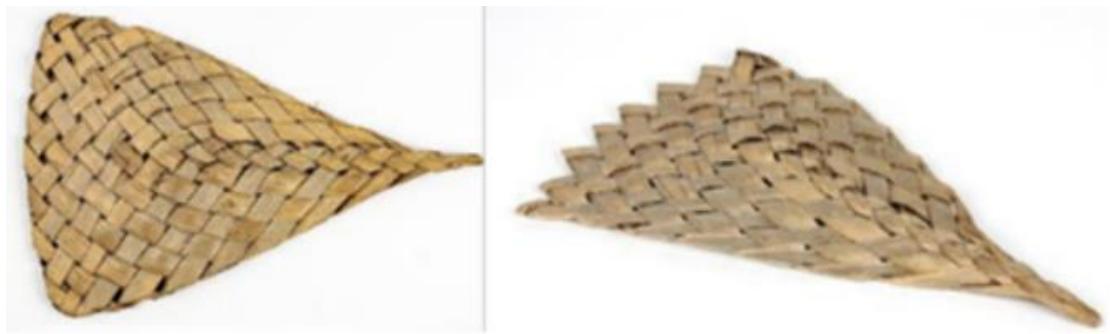


Figure 15: *Gueha* (fans) [CE2136 and CE2137] displayed in Section 2 of the 1887 Exhibition, exhibited by José Muñoz. These items were featured in the exhibition to show examples of household objects crafted by CHamorus in the 19th century. They were simultaneously used to highlight the creative abilities of the CHamoru people while also reflecting perceived negative character traits attributed to them, such as the lack of ambition because of their focus on subsistence economy. They are now part of the collections of MNA. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photographs by Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

*La Ilustración* also commends the ‘collection of beautiful objects, which industrially belong to another civilisation and, in terms of nature, almost to another planet’ (1887a: 2, author’s translation). This highlights the perceived exoticism of the exhibited objects and their creators, portraying them as entirely foreign to the European experience (Said 2014[1978]: 26). The assertion that the industry may belong to a different civilisation, furthermore, exemplifies a kind of materialisation of

the other, representing a radical form of alterity that is closely tied to the scientific racism and hierarchy of ‘civilised’ and ‘savage’, evident in other descriptions:<sup>79</sup>

The types of various races and mixtures, the clothes, the weapons, the dwellings, the boats, the tombs and even the shape of the skulls, everything is curious and different from ours...the exquisite fabrics and embroidery, which contrast with the sturdy abaca ropes, the samples of cotton and tobacco, the whimsical and elegant furniture meant for a soft and hedonistic race, seem out of place next to the humble mat of another, which serves as the only bed for a people with no needs (*La Ilustración Española y Americana*, 1887a: 2, author’s translation).

This description traces a hierarchy of technological development and innovation where Indigenous creations are placed at the bottom, labelled as ‘humble’ in contrast to the ‘exquisite’, ‘whimsical’ and ‘elegant’ Western products. In this sense, the history of colonised peoples in the Pacific, and of humanity as a whole, was depicted in the exhibition primarily as a teleological progression toward the natural and ultimate aim of the ‘philosophy of progress’: sascent liberal beliefs in inevitable progress and a linear path of societal evolution (Buchli 2013: 30). Other ‘races’, including *mestizos*, were seen as following the same trajectory, yet still culturally and physically lagging. The Exhibition featured examples of CHamoru material culture, such as the *galaide* canoe models [CE2848 and CE4720], which were viewed as technologically ‘backward’ compared to Western vessels (Fig. 16). However, Rogers (1995: 34) notes that by the 1780s, most canoes in Guam had adopted features of the Filipino *galaide* or *baroto*. Ironically, *La Ilustración* criticised the very cultural syncretism that defined the Mariana Islands in the nineteenth century, a syncretism shaped by Spanish presence (a topic I will explore further in Chapter 3).

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<sup>79</sup> Some of the texts written by members of the Filipino Enlightened diaspora in Madrid reflect and reproduce these discourses, constructing a hierarchical framework in which *Igorots* and *Moros* are categorised as ‘savages’ based on their perceived lack of acculturation, even arguing that their display in the Exhibition would have a negative impact in the ‘cultured’ Filipinos, who would be associated with ‘primitiveness’ (Sánchez Gómez 2003: 224-272). These concepts, based on the ‘science of race’, would later be used by Filipino Ilustrados to support their nationalistic claims (Aguilar Jr 2005).



Figure 16: Two *galaide* (canoe) models [CE2848 and CE4720] displayed in Section 7 of the 1887 Exhibition, exhibited by Vicente Leon Guerrero. These were included in the exhibition to demonstrate CHamoru people's current technological 'development', associated with the arrival of the Spanish in the islands. They are now part of the collections of MNA. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photographs by Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

In *El Globo*, they describe Antonia and José as 'having a simple nature' and 'friendly', emphasising qualities tied to their 'nature' and echoing the concept of the 'noble savage'.<sup>80</sup> This terminology infantilised and primitivised José and Antonia, but also strived to portray the CHamoru as salvageable, suggesting the possibility of their redemption through colonial education (1887: 109).<sup>81</sup> In this respect, Tavel de Andrade places the CHamoru from his time as 'having already embarked on the path of progress' (1887: 19, author's translation), thus arguing that they are in an 'intermediate stage' in the hierarchical ladder of 'progress'. To justify this statement, he refers to Antonia as 'an intelligent person, capable of speaking Spanish' (*Ibid*: 51). To Tavel de Andrade, this ability highlights the degree of acculturation and education that the CHamoru participants, and thus, the CHamoru people in general, had received from the Spaniards. Furthermore, it reproduces the nineteenth-century rendition of Buffon's notion that 'inferior races' could improve through 'mixing with whites' (Douglas 2008b: 61). This is highlighted in De la Corte's text, which argues that CHamorus have achieved a level of cultural development greater than that of other communities in the Spanish colonies of the Pacific through interracial mixing and the

<sup>80</sup> The concept of 'noble savage' refers to an idealised representation of Indigenous peoples as uncorrupted by civilisation, living in a state of natural simplicity and virtue. Behavioural traits such as friendliness, honesty and innocence were associated with these representations. This idea emerged in Europe during the Enlightenment and was popularised by philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau. However, the concept is deeply problematic, as it essentialises Indigenous peoples, ignoring the complexities that constitute their societies and cultures.

<sup>81</sup> In a similar vein, the report compiled by the U.S. Military in 1944, right before the 'liberation' of Guam from the Japanese occupation, describes CHamorus as 'peaceful, good-natured, law-abiding... docile people' that abide by the law, 'display the greatest respect for its humblest officer' and therefore will 'definitely welcome the American reoccupation of the island' (U.S. Military 1944: 7).

influence of Spanish education on their customs (1875: 64). However, José and Antonia are also presented as living in a sort of ethnographic present, suggesting that there has been virtually no ‘progress’ or ‘evolution’ since the 1700s, and that they would have never known ‘progress’ were it not for colonisation (De L’Estoile 2007: 49).

‘Hybrid objects’, in this respect, demonstrated that islanders were intelligent and open to integrating European concepts into their lives, highlighting their agency in adapting to external imposed conditions (Gardner 2001: 48; I will expand on this in Chapter 3). As mentioned above, the ‘intermediate stage of development’ of modern-day CHamoru people was shaped by imported Hispanicised-colonial lifestyle (Flores 1999: 113) and, to some extent, by Filipino traditions, in turn deeply influenced by Hispanic culture (San Pablo 2013), expressed in the adaptation of material culture. The 1887 Exhibition showcased this cultural syncretism through the display of farming tools from the Marianas, similar to those from the Philippines and Spain, to highlight the ‘progress’ attributed to the hands of the Spanish colonial administration. Items such as a rake [CE2869] and a model of a plough [CE2872] (Fig. 17) were displayed in Sections 6 and 7 as examples of the desired advancements in agricultural techniques introduced to the Marianas following Spanish colonisation.



Figure 17: Rake [CE2869] exhibited by Juan Castro or Henry Millinchamp and model of plough pulled by a carabao [CE2872] exhibited by Antonio Martinez Pangelinan, displayed in Section 6 of the 1887 Exhibition. They were included in the exhibition to showcase Hispanic influences on CHamoru culture and lifestyle, which were associated with the physical, moral and economic ‘progress’ of the local population in the Marianas. They are now part of the collections of MNA. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photograph by Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

The texts and objects from the 1887 Exhibition offered a glimpse into nineteenth-century society in the Mariana Islands, reflecting a complex blend of Indigenous and external cultural influences. While the texts often described the CHamoru lifestyle and character as ‘simple’ and unambitious, they also highlighted CHamoru people’s creativity and wit, evident in their material culture. They all reflect the relationship between the physical, the social and the material as mutually constitutive of each other (Douglas 1999: 158).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, concepts of social Darwinism and hierarchies between different ‘races’, englobed under the umbrella of the science of race, were reproduced in the texts, which in turn were materialised in the exhibition through the display of objects, living people and ancestral remains. The writers of the ‘field’ journals and exhibition reports discussed in this chapter classified ancient and modern CHamorus into three artificial and porous categories, which placed CHamorus in teleological stages of physical, moral and technological ‘development:’ 1) an ancient ‘race’ considered ‘more civilised’ but now extinct, although different authors differ on their origin; 2) a ‘pure race’ deemed ‘primitive’ and ‘naturally’ uncivilised, which today constitutes a minority; and 3) a *mestizo* ‘race’ viewed as slightly more advanced than the ‘pure race’ due to their mixed Spanish, Filipino and American heritage. Each of these classifications reflected different levels of technological development, which were materially represented in the 1887 Exhibition through the display of different objects, arranged into different sections: 1) ancient CHamorus were represented through the ancestral remains and archaeological objects displayed in Section 1 as proof of their ‘superior physical and technological advancement’; 2) the ‘pure’ CHamoru ‘race’ was represented in Sections 2 and 7 through Indigenous-made objects that emphasised their perceived ‘backwardness’ while simultaneously highlighting their creativity; and 3) the *mestizo* ‘race’ was depicted in Sections 6 and 7, where CHamoru people’s ‘intermediate stage of progress’ was demonstrated through the display of ‘hybrid objects’ and the cultural interactions brought about by the circulation of peoples through Spanish imperial networks.

As a meta-medium, exhibitions gathered a wide array of individuals, objects and environments within a compact, enclosed space. As a result, the various displays

of ‘exoticism’, artefactual, textual and human, showcased at these events were in fact characterised by a broad range of diversity (Blanchard et al. 2011: 180). The writers’ positions were never straightforward or consistent, revealing the state-of-affairs of debates on the science of race and human variability at the time. While the texts tend to oversimplify complex issues about the genetics, psychological traits and ancestry of CHamoru people, they also reveal, albeit sometimes unconsciously, Indigenous creativity, agency and variability. The traits they highlight, however, are enigmatically encoded in the ‘details, asides and ambivalences’ found in the texts (*Ibid*: 190), a point I will revisit in Chapter 3.

# **Chapter 3: Counternarratives: Tracing Indigenous Agency in the CHamoru Representation at the 1887 Exhibition**

How can we challenge the stereotypes embedded in the written and material representations of CHamoru people at the 1887 Exhibition? How can we reveal the agency of the exhibitors and participants at the exhibition, many of whom were CHamoru, when their biographies often remain undocumented? This chapter will examine the forms of Indigenous agency that emerge through an analysis of the objects and flows of the 1887 Exhibition, reconstructed through a microhistorical biographical approach that traces, in archival documents, individuals' reasons and motivations for participating in the exhibition. It will focus on two key aspects: production and circulation, with the latter encompassing both the movement of objects and the travels of Indigenous participants from the Marianas to Madrid via the Philippines, as well as during the time they spent in Madrid. This analysis demonstrates that cultural influences do not flow in a single direction (Spitta 2006: 2) but instead operate as networks of exchange and mutual constitution that reveal the complexities of social relations in colonial societies (Torrence and Clarke 2013: 172). Ultimately, like Hoffenberg, I argue that the 1887 Exhibition, much like other universal and colonial exhibitions 'circulated and linked people, ideas and cultural capital throughout the empire' (2001: 31).

While much of the existing literature cited in this thesis uses the word 'collector' to refer to a person, usually from the West, who 'collects' and circulates ethnographic objects, this definition is too narrow and does not accurately reflect the context analysed in this chapter. Instead, and following Alonso Pajuelo (2021) I will refer to the men and women who exhibited items at the 1887 Exhibition but did not travel to it as 'exhibitors', which encompasses the nuances I explore in this chapter. In the same vein, I will refer to the men and women who travelled to Madrid for the 1887 Exhibition as 'participants'. Of course, the word 'participant', much like 'representative', 'delegate' or 'ambassador', is contentious and does not account for the complex situation that resulted in their trip to the capital. In this chapter I refer to them as participants to highlight their active participation in the exhibition without diminishing the complexities of their journey.

## Indigenous biographies and agency

In this chapter, I follow a method that has been described by O'Hanlon as the 'ethnography of collecting', defined as a process that 'has the potential to throw light upon unconsidered aspects of local agency, without losing sight of either broader colonial processes or the effect of collectors' own agendas' (2001: 4). Following this definition, I focus on tracing Indigenous agency in the production and circulation of objects for the 1887 Exhibition, and the agency of José and Antonia in travelling to Madrid. This will be done with an eye on exhibitors' and participants' biographies as a way of uncovering their motivations in creating and circulating artefacts in the first case and participating in the exhibition in the second. Assembling these biographies is often a tedious and long task that requires multi-situated, multi-source research (Waterfield and King 2009: 6). Historical agency of Indigenous people in the formation of these collections is essentially hidden in the edges of the archive (Allen and Hamby 2011: 223). As Nicholas Thomas writes, 'it is striking just how difficult it is to recover and characterise Indigenous agency, in any specificity, from the historical record' (2000: 274).

Writing about the recovery of CHamoru biographies, Madrid and Taitano (2022: 32) argue that the scrutiny of archival documents can provide details about names and lives of those individuals who have fallen to the 'borders of the archive', which in turn can be used to re-construct the wider picture of the time in which they lived, the intentions behind their actions and their exercise of individual and collective agency in shaping the conditions under which they lived. Countering the 'silence of the archive' (Thomas et al. 2017) to trace 'Indigenous countersigns' (Douglas 2014) requires systematic analysis, as these signs are often not uniformly disseminated in archival documentation; their 'presence and salience differ widely depending on contingencies of authorship, local agendas and the relative immediate genre and medium of texts' (Ibid: 22). To overcome this, Konishi et al. (2024: 8) propose writing 'short lives' or 'partial biographies' that cover the periods of time in which individuals appear in the archive, advocating for the need to reconceive biographies as 'fragments, a surviving shard or two of a lifetime of experience' (Lindsay and Sweet 2014: 3), used as 'signs and scraps of evidence' that 'build up arguments and connections to yield productive results' (Bell 2013: 119). I have followed this method in this chapter, focusing on the 'details, asides and ambivalences' (Douglas 1999: 190) of archival

documentation, as mentioned in Chapter 2. Although the partial biographies of each exhibitor could not be included within the main body of this thesis, they have been compiled in Appendix 3. Nevertheless, biographical details about them are referenced throughout the chapter, used to conceptualise and speculate on their motivations for creating, exhibiting and participating in the 1887 Exhibition.

Research for this chapter involved the systematic and critical examination of archival records, books, newspaper articles, journals and ancestry websites, among others gathered in three different countries (Spain, Guam, Philippines). Registries of the properties in and around Hagåtña, along with records detailing the journey of Indigenous participants to the 1887 Exhibition, have been consulted at the National Archives of the Philippines. Additionally, some documents containing information about the types of businesses conducted by the exhibitors were reviewed at the Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam. The journal of Lieutenant William Safford (Leon-Guerrero 2016), aide to Guam's first U.S. Naval Governor and Interim Governor (1899-1900),<sup>82</sup> has also been extremely useful, as it describes the quotidian life in the island of Guam at the turn of the twentieth century and names many individual CHamorus who, coincidentally, participated as exhibitors in the 1887 Exhibition. Moreover, I have consulted ancestry websites to reclaim the power of genealogy as a form of community research (Tuhiwai Smith 1999: 148) that counters the silences of the archive. Finally, to contextualise the exhibited objects' production, I supplemented existing literature with fieldnotes, interview excerpts and conversations with CHamoru cultural practitioners, providing conceptual insights derived from contemporary lived experiences in the Mariana Islands.

However, I acknowledge that there will be gaps and inconsistencies in this study. First, an issue I have encountered is the lack of traceability, or the inability to trace, certain individuals, such as Agapito Leon Guerrero. This is likely due to their limited influence or connection to the colonial system, rendering them largely invisible to record keepers. This suggests that hierarchies of indigeneity affect inclusion in documents, highlighting the need to critically examine archival representation when

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<sup>82</sup> Besides his role in the political administration of the island, William Safford, who was an avid naturalist mostly interested in botany, made a collection of plants and some ethnographic objects during his year in Guam. In 1908, he gifted them to the Smithsonian Institution and are today looked after at the National Museum of Natural History in Washington DC. Interestingly, some of the machetes gifted by Safford to the Smithsonian were made by Joaquin Leon Guerrero, who was also an exhibitor of a machete at the 1887 Exhibition.

researching Indigenous individuals. Second, Madrid and Taitano report that most of the archives and records kept by CHamoru families ‘have not survived the passage of time and the devastation caused by World War II’ (2022: 29). This means that much of the documentation that once existed may no longer be available.

Third, in the Mariana Islands certain names are consistently repeated across time and space. Names, as Konishi et al. write, ‘can obscure as well as define’ (2024: 10). In the Marianas, certain last names like Leon, Leon Guerrero, Castro or Cruz are very common and branch out to different sections of the same family. In this respect, it is possible that two José Leon Guerreros, for example, lived in Guam during the same time period, but are not directly related. Moreover, due to four centuries of colonialism in the Marianas, variations in the spelling of a single name can be observed across different periods and locations (Punzalan 2014: 6). Additionally, siblings from the same mother were sometimes given different surnames if one was not declared (Torres Souder 2024: 48), further complicating genealogical research. Finally, a major challenge in researching lineage and biographies in the Marianas is the inversion of family name order with the arrival of the U.S. administration. Under Spanish colonial rule, inhabitants used two last names, with the father’s first, followed by the mother’s (e.g., Manuel Aflague Camacho). Oftentimes, including the mother’s last name in the names of CHamoru individuals has facilitated genealogical tracing. However, the Americans reversed this order, placing the mother’s surname first (e.g., Manuel Camacho Aflague) (Taitano 1996: 46). This has caused confusion in records, making genealogical tracing and access to oral histories challenging. In this thesis, I align with the order of last names used at the time of the 1887 Exhibition: father’s name followed by mother’s name.

## **Exhibitors from the Marianas**

In this section, I explore the motivations behind the participation of exhibitors from the Mariana Islands in the 1887 Exhibition, who did not travel to Madrid but sent objects and botanical specimens. Drawing on biographical information about each exhibitor, as far as possible given the challenges mentioned above, I examine their socioeconomic status and their role within the nineteenth-century Spanish colonial system in the Marianas, emphasising that ‘we can only understand the individual collector within the overall network of colonial relations’ (Gosden 2000: 234). A full

list of the exhibitors and the number of items they exhibited can be found in Figure 18. For the purposes of this chapter, however, I have divided the exhibitors into three categories that depend on their sociocultural status and level of relationship with the Spanish colonial administration. Overall, the motivations include a ‘variety of personal, career-tactical and intellectual agendas’ (O’Hanlon 2000: 13), with the possibility of having as many reasons to exhibit items as exhibitors.

The first category comprises a small group of Spaniards who actively participated in the circulation of objects to the 1887 Exhibition. One of them was Francisco Olive, Governor of the Mariana Islands at the time. Olive’s collecting and exhibiting efforts were driven by an institutional requirement that aligned with his role as Governor of the Marianas and President of the Subcommission (Miyagi 1975: 31), aiming to place the Marianas within the circuits of the Spanish imperial vision (Buschmann and Manzano Cosano 2023: 654). Additionally, his concerns about the islands’ underdevelopment and Spanish sovereignty, threatened by recent regional conflicts such as the Carolines Conflict (1885), as expressed in his report (Olive 2006[1887]), likely motivated his participation. He also worked to encourage submissions from others by leading through example, including accompanying Alfred Marche in his excavations, as mentioned in Chapter 2. In this way, he became the largest exhibitor of objects from the Mariana Islands.

Two of the exhibitors, Francisco Cobo and José Muñoz, were Spanish deportees who arrived in Guam between 1870 and 1876 as part of a Spanish policy of mass deportation of convicts and political dissidents (Madrid 2006). While most of the deportees returned to Spain after a royal pardon was granted in 1876, others, like Francisco and José, decided to stay in Guam, where they had built new lives and even married CHamoru women. Muñoz was one of the only non-Americans present at the 1899 ceremony marking the raising of the American flag following the American takeover of Guam. Although Madrid (2006: 204) suggests that this may indicate his detachment from the Spanish authorities, as one of the primary contributors of objects to the 1887 Exhibition, Muñoz appears to have been connected to the Spanish administration. Both deportees adapted to the Hagåtña lifestyle and became part of the community, actively deciding to stay on the island after the other deportees left. Their social status and involvement in colonial lifeways were probably motivators to their participation as exhibitors in the 1887 Exhibition.

Second, according to Alonso Pajuelo (2021: 117), most of the exhibitors from the Marianas were Indigenous CHamoru. The last names of most of them, such as Aflague, Cruz, Flores, Leon Guerrero and Torres, are common among the CHamoru population of the Marianas even today. However, other exhibitors' last names, like Dungca, Sablan or Pangelinan, are distinctly Filipino and arrived in Guam through different waves of migration (De Viana 2004: 166). Furthermore, some of the last names, such as Milinchamp, were brought into the Marianas by European and American whalers and traders, who greatly contributed to the genetic pool (Atienza 2019: 142). The labels of 'Spaniard' and 'CHamoru' in the nineteenth-century colonial Marianas were not fixed or rigid, but rather heterogeneous, permeable and dynamic, leading Atienza to ask 'who were the Spaniards and who were the CHamorus' (2019: 5). At the time, CHamorus had been granted Spanish citizenships and legal equality with other Spanish citizens (Torres Souder 2024: 94). Categories such as 'colonial officials' and 'Spanish soldiers' often referred to 'CHamoru' men (Clement 2022: 171-172). Additionally, new settlers of varying origins, European, Filipino, American, etc., rapidly integrated into the local community and took on most of the entrepreneurial roles (Ibid: 189). Those categorised as 'Spaniards' not only included *peninsular* Spaniards, this is, the Spaniards who were born in the Iberian Peninsula, but also missionaries from all over Europe, Indigenous soldiers from the Americas and the Philippines, whalers and traders from all over the world, and even some CHamoru and *mestizos* who supported the 'Spaniards' and often were part of or collaborated with the colonial structure (Ibid). The category of 'CHamoru', on the other hand, included people from different villages, islands and status, as well as some Carolinians and Filipinos who had married CHamoru women. In this chapter, I consider all the exhibitors who were not born in Spain as 'CHamoru', acknowledging their Indigenous origin, while keeping in mind that they possessed varying degrees of Spanish, Mexican or Filipino ancestry and were often members of the privileged Indigenous elite.

Name of Exhibitor	Number of Objects Exhibited
Agapito Leon Guerrero	1
Ana [Cruz <sup>83</sup> ] Herrero	1
Andres de Castro	16
Antonio Martinez [Pangelinan]	8
Antonio Rodes	20 [crops]
Comandante del Presidio de Agaña	3
Comisión Central de Manila	2
Dolores Cruz	5
Enrique [Henry] Millchamp [Millinchamp]	3
Ezequiel/Ezekial/Esiquiel/Exequiel Castro	1
Felipe Cruz	10
Felix Torres	4 [crops]
Francisco Cobo	35
Gobernador of the Marianas [Francisco Olive]	34
Joaquin Diaz [Flores]	3
Joaquin Leon Guerrero <sup>84</sup>	2
José de Salas	1
José Muñoz	29
José Pérez	2
José Portutusach	5
José Tudela	1 [crops]
Juan [Wilson] Castro	10
Juan Torres [Diaz]	4
Juan Martínez y Crisóstomo	2 [crops]
Justo Dungca	16
Lorenzo Leon Guerrero	2
Manuel Aflague [Camacho]	2
Manuel Flores	1 [crops]
Manuel Pangelian	6
Mariano [Borja] Fausto	33
Mariano Sablan	24 [crops]
Vicente Leon Guerrero	7

Figure 18: Table listing all the exhibitors from the Mariana Islands at the 1887 Exhibition, along with the number of objects exhibited by each of them. The author compiled this table using information from the exhibition catalogue (*Catálogo 1887*). Those exhibitors who only exhibited crops have been included in this table and marked with brackets, although due to the scope of this research, which focuses on material culture rather than natural history collections, they have not been considered in the argument of the chapter. Exhibitors did not travel to Madrid.

<sup>83</sup> In this table, I have added brackets to include the second last name of exhibitors when possible, completing their full names, which is absent from the 1887 Catalogue but has been retrieved through archival research. This effort aims to restore their full identities and align with Indigenous naming conventions.

<sup>84</sup> The authors of the 1887 Catalogue and related documents often switch between using only the first surname or both surnames when referring to the same individual. This practice is common in Spanish administrative systems. Accordingly, I have treated 'Joaquin Leon' and 'Joaquin Leon Guerrero' as referring to the same person as the standalone surname 'Leon' is likely an abridged transcription of 'Leon Guerrero'.

Most of the CHamoru exhibitors (except for two) were men, something to be expected of a highly Catholic, patriarchal, colonial society (Allen and Hamby 2011: 224). A feature that most of the exhibitors from the Marianas seem to have in common is that they, to varying degrees, had some connection to the Spanish colonial administration. Atienza recounts how, in 1681, the Spanish Governor granted some Indigenous chiefs political titles built upon existing pre-colonial political structures, a system that would prevail until the late nineteenth century (2021: 92). Torres Souder argues that ‘in time, CHamoru men held all but the very top local government positions’; they mostly governed over local affairs (2024: 94). Most of the CHamoru exhibitors, like Justo Dungca, Manuel Aflague Camacho, Joaquin Leon Guerrero, José Portusach, Antonio Martinez Pangelinan, Manuel Pangelinan and Juan Torres Diaz, owned houses and properties in the capital city of Hagåtña (Vallejo n.d.; *Carpeta de Cédulas* 1890). Some of them also owned large plantations, such as Justo Dungca and Antonio Martinez Pangelinan (Leon-Guerrero 2016; paleric 2020), and even entire islands. This is the case of Antonio Martinez Pangelinan, who became the owner of Apapa or Cabras Island (Northern Mariana Islands) during the Spanish administration, and was involved in the copra trade, having employees dedicated to it in some the northern islands (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 108; 243). Likewise, José Portusach received from the colonial government the rights to exploit the islands of Agrigan and Pagan in the Northern Mariana Islands for four years (*Ibid*: 45).

In nineteenth-century colonial Marianas, there were no clear socioeconomic divisions or specialised professions, except for certain skilled craftsmen who nonetheless still tended to their land. As De la Corte observed in 1875, ‘in Marianas, there is not a single shop, carpenter, blacksmith, tailor, or shoemaker who solely practices that trade and makes a living from it; everyone is a little of everything and nothing at all’ (1875: 37, author’s translation). This was still the case when the American Administration took over the island in 1898, as evidenced by William Safford’s following statement:

None of the natives depends for his livelihood on his handiwork or on trade alone. There are men who can make shoes, tan leather, and cut stone for building purposes; but such a thing as a Chamorro shoemaker, tanner, stone mason, or merchant, who supports his family by his trade is unknown (Safford 1905: 131).

As part of the process of modernisation of the islands in the 1860s, the Spanish colonial ruling system ‘granted a high degree of autonomy to the native elite in the

capital' (Madrid 2021: 110). This included reforms to promote a private sector in commercial agriculture and trade (Clement 2022: 188), which some men in Hagåtña embraced. Carlos Madrid recounts how, in the late 1860s and early 1870s, there existed a 'group of Chamorros who were economically better off than the rest of the population, due to trading or other lucrative activities' (2006: 14).

As a result, men of the elite enjoyed a relative degree of economic and social independence, along with greater opportunities, compared to the CHamoru living in rural areas (Madrid 2021: 108). This gave them a capacity to exercise their agency in the construction of their own identity and way of life (Atienza 2021: 93), which they exploited at every opportunity (Madrid 2006: 8). Most of the exhibitors pursued multiple professions, engaging in a diverse range of activities throughout their lives, as demonstrated by the various business licenses they acquired over the years. Some of these include (1) retail, like in the case of Manuel Aflague Camacho (1897), Justo Dungca (1897) and Andrés de Castro (1891); (2) import, like Justo Dungca (1891a; 1891b; 1897), Andrés de Castro (1891) and José Portusach (1891); (3) transport, like Henry Millinchamp (Leon-Guerrero, 2016); (4) security, like José Pérez<sup>85</sup> and Andrés de Castro (paleric, 2024); (5) education, like Mariano Borja Fausto (Madrid, 2006: 59) and Manuel Aflague Camacho (paleric, 2019) or (6) agriculture like in the case of Antonio Martinez Pangelinan (paleric, 2020), reminding us of the 'mobility of Indigenous men and women in colonial times' (Konishi et al. 2024: 13).

Others, like Manuel Aflague Camacho, who was a *Gobernadorcillo* or *Teniente Primero* (First Deputy Mayor) of Hagåtña,<sup>86</sup> Justo Dungca, who served as the first Justice of Peace of Guam (de Viana 2004: 113-14) and Henry Millinchamp, who was the official pilot for the port of Hagåtña for many years (Leon-Guerrero, 2016: 21; Guamology n.d.), played significant roles in the colonial political administration. Additionally, some of them may not have been directly part of the Spanish colonial administration but would later become associated with the first American administration. This is the case of Joaquin Diaz Flores, for example, who became the Auditor of the Treasury and island treasurer in 1900 (Guamology n.d.). Similarly, José

<sup>85</sup> Three individuals named José Pérez are mentioned in the literature: one is the brother of Susana Pérez, Safford's cook (Leon-Guerrero 2016), José Pérez Cruz, a CHamoru lieutenant and Gobernadorcillo of Hagåtña in the 1870s (Madrid 2006: 142; 170) and José Pérez Rivera, who was a 'Sergeant in the local military police' (paleric 2024). The *Relación de Objetos* (1908?) identifies the exhibitor as 'José Pérez y Rivera', so I have taken him to be this last person.

<sup>86</sup> While Miyagi identified him as a *Gobernadorcillo* of Guam (1975: 32), Madrid records that in 1886 he was he was the *Teniente Primero* (First Deputy Mayor) of the Hagåtña City Hall (2023:13).

Portusach and his brother, Frank Portusach, who would briefly become Governor of the Marianas in 1898, took part in the negotiations between the U.S. and Spain during the American capture of Guam, José acting as interpreter (Portusach 1917).

Although CHamoru women are often ‘virtually invisible in formal historical accounts’ (Torres Souder, 2024: 39), particularly in archival records (Colombi 2023: 23), the exhibition featured two women exhibitors from the Marianas, who make up the third group analysed here: Ana Cruz Herrero and Dolores Cruz.<sup>87</sup> Although the imposition of Catholic dogmas of patriarchy and purity radically redefined the role of CHamoru women in society, they continued to exercise a great degree of influence. Torres Souder (2024) has summarised how several Spanish colonial sources highlight CHamoru women’s role in preserving language, culture, education and Indigenous values central to CHamoru identity and societal obligations. Additionally, numerous sources indicate that, up until the American Naval Administration, CHamoru women led active social lives, held legal rights, owned property, as in the case of Dolores Cruz who was reportedly a landowner in the Pigo area (Puzalan 2013; Appendix 2), and exercised agency, primarily within the household and Church (Clement 2022; Torres Souder 2024). Furthermore, CHamoru women also advanced socially through marriage, often to Spanish officers and Filipino labourers (Clement 2022: 183); in doing so, they helped CHamorucise these newcomers (Flores 1999: 111) and were granted indirect access to the colonial system in which their husbands were enmeshed (Torres Souder 2024: 82). The participation of two CHamoru women in the Exhibition highlights the persistence of matrilineal traditions and women’s continued significance. Ana and Dolores’s participation was likely influenced by their desire to reaffirm their role within society.

A final driving factor in the participation of exhibitors in the 1887 Exhibition is the role of kinship ties in CHamoru society. In Guam, former Senator Pilar Lujan observes that ‘in a small and close-knit community, an individual’s identity is framed by his or her relationships with others’ (1996: 18). Kinship networks, both the household unit and the extended family, are central to CHamoru identity (Torres Souder 2024: 48-49), with everyone viewed as an uncle, auntie, cousin (*primo* or

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<sup>87</sup> Dolores Cruz is likely to be Dolores Crisostomo Cruz, daughter of José Reyes de la Cruz and María Crisostomo de la Cruz. Yet, another Dolores Cruz lived at the same time: Dolores Muna dela Cruz, born in 1844 and married to Juan dela Cruz with whom she had nine children (dela Cruz family tree). Which one of them is the exhibitor cannot be ascertained (see Appendix 2).

*prima*), or other close kin. Within this context, it is likely that some of the exhibitors were related through familial ties of varying proximity. For example, the two Castros (Ezekial and Juan) may have been father and son; both female exhibitors, Ana Cruz Herrero and Dolores Cruz, are possibly mother and daughter. Manuel Aflague Camacho and the man who travelled to Madrid, José Flores Aflague, are also reportedly uncle and nephew (Miyagi 1975). Four of the exhibitors from the Marianas are called Leon Guerrero: Agapito, Joaquín, Lorenzo and Vicente, possibly indicating consanguinity, although, as mentioned above, having the same names does not always mean being a relation.

Going back to the initial question, it is not surprising that men and women entrenched in the colonial society of the time, described as ‘notable citizens’ or ‘reliable and intelligent natives’ by Sanford (Leon-Guerrero 2016), contributed to the 1887 Exhibition. As Sahlins (in Torrence and Clarke 2013: 174) argues, the exchange of objects serves as a key means of creating, shaping, maintaining and even dissolving social relationships both within and across groups. Participating in the exhibition, thus, can be seen as an exercise of Indigenous agency to promote their personal agendas: an opportunity to represent their own society, cultural productions and people in the colonial metropolis on their own terms. They were perhaps also looking to advance or reaffirm their position in society, thus fulfilling some personal agendas. Moreover, their familial ties and obligations likely functioned as mechanisms of mutual influence, operated within a broader network of familial and colonial relationships. Yet, we cannot forget that these CHamoru lived within the constraints of an imposed Spanish colonial order, and to an extend benefited from it, and therefore their agency cannot be fully separated from colonial logics.

## Production

Materially speaking, Indigenous agency is best traced through the production of the objects that were submitted to the exhibition. This section will examine the production of woven objects and the transculturation processes involved in creating some of the items exhibited. I will focus on four types of objects that were produced for the 1887 Exhibition: weavings, objects that incorporate metal, objects related to eating practices and canoe models. In this section I will bring in ethnographic experiences from my time in the Marianas, including weaving workshops I attended and interviews I

conducted. The names, biographies and motivations of exhibitors come into play to reconstruct the possible reasons behind the production and eventual circulation of these items to the 1887 Exhibition. Considering the above discussion, the exhibited objects reflect the lived experiences of nineteenth-century CHamorus, who were, to varying extents, connected to the Spanish administration.

### The art of weaving

The art of weaving or *tinifok CHamoru*, as it is referred to in the contemporary Mariana Islands, can take many different shapes. Although the Pacific region lacks a strong tradition of loom weaving (Rubinstein 1986: 45), the practice has been documented in Micronesia, Palau, as well as some island groups in Melanesia and Polynesia. In the Marianas, however, ‘weaving’ specifically refers to the art of plaiting, a technique commonly used in basketry, fan-making, mat production and other crafts, which is also prevalent throughout the Micronesian region (Kaepler 2008: 22-23; Wavell 2010: 87). Weaving in the Mariana Islands was, and to some extent still is, a practical, everyday activity essential for the community’s survival (Anderson-Taft n.d.). CHamoru weaver James Bamba has described it as an interdisciplinary practice that integrates botanical, meteorological, technical, mathematical and cultural knowledge (Ologies with Alie Ward podcast 2024, 39:00).

CHamoru weavers use materials such as *niyok* (coconut, *Cocos nucifera*), *åkgak*<sup>88</sup> (pandanus, *Pandanus tectorius*) and *nipa* (*Nypa fruticans*), as well as *pokse'* (hibiscus bark, *Hibiscus tiliaceus*), with the choice of material depending on the specific object being crafted. Nipa is generally used for roof thatching (Flores 1999: 64); *niyok* is used to make *gueha* (fans), *corona* (crowns), some types of baskets and *tali'i* (rope), among others, while *åkgak* is used to produce *kottot* (woven baskets), *guafak* (mats), *layak* (canoe sails) and hats, for example. Weavers use their own hands to follow an *over-under-over-under* technique (described as such by several weavers in the workshops I participated in during my fieldwork; Fig. 19), with alternating

<sup>88</sup> In my interview with weaver Roquin Siongco, they explained to me, in the following words, that ‘there are three different types of pandanus in the Mariana Islands: *påhong*, *kaffo*’ and *åkgak*. *Kaffo*’s leaves are dark green, pretty wide, but they’re just really brittle when they dry out and just not very good to work with. *Påhong* is the one that would bear fruit. We’d actually process that fruit, it’s kind of like a starchy fruit that we would eat, but it’s not too common today. *Åkgak* is actually the male to *påhong*, but it only produces flowers, it doesn’t produce seeds. The only way you can actually have *åkgak* is if you have a cubby. You never find it in the wild, you always find it in someone else’s garden’ (26 March 2024). In his study of native plants in the Marianas, Safford identifies four species of pandanus: ‘pahong’, ‘kafo’, ‘aggag’ and an unnamed one (1905: 150). The uses and descriptions he provides for each of the species correlate with Roquin’s account.

patterns of leaves being superimposed onto each other. While several common techniques and structured steps exist in CHamoru weaving, which have been perpetuated through time, weaving is a very innovative practice,<sup>89</sup> with as many possible variations as there are weavers (Lia Barcina, weaving workshop, 7 March 2024). In the words of CHamoru weaver Roquin Siongco: innovation is the tradition in itself (Interview, 26 March 2024).



Figure 19: Photograph of an unfinished *niyok* (coconut) basket. I wove this basket during one of the weaving workshops I attended during my fieldwork, led by Lia Barcina. The ‘over-under-over-under’ pattern followed by CHamoru weavers is evident.

Similar to Ingold’s description of the weaving of a basket as emergent from the ‘mutual involvement of people and material in an environment’ (2000: 347), CHamoru weavings are created through the engagement of the weaver with the specific material being used. In this way, *niyok* and *åkgak* weaving differ both in technique and preparation. ‘You need to work with coconut as soon as you pick it, and the weaving is a little bit quicker’ Roquin explained when I interviewed them. *Åkgak*, on the other hand, ‘is a bit more intimidating’, requiring extensive preparation and precise measuring before weaving, along with ‘some guidance from other community members’ needed to master the practice. Overall, weaving is a highly technical craft that embodies knowledge through practice, where the repetition of techniques gradually builds skill and expertise. In a conversation about weaving I had at FestPac, CHamoru weaver Thomas Torres explained to me that one learns through replicating

<sup>89</sup> During the 2024 FestPac, Roquin, with Marty’s assistance, wove a giant *niyok* hat, which was showcased at the festival’s Fashion Show. This highlights the adaptability of weaving in the contemporary Marianas, where the practice has even found a place in the Pacific fashion industry. CHamoru weaver James Bamba has also woven all sorts of miniature toys and animals from *åkgak* (Ologies with Alie Ward podcast 2024, 23:58).

the motions over and over until one gets ‘muscle memory’ (personal conversation, 10 June 2024). This is reflected in a fieldnote I wrote following a weaving workshop I attended in Guam:

Though this weaving was more challenging and I struggled with the start and finish, the middle part felt easy once I got the hang of it. Because I had already done another pandanus weaving workshop I was also familiar with the fact that I had to go and tighten the fibers as I went on (21 March 2024).

Weaving was a fundamental aspect of pre-colonial CHamoru society (Cunningham 1992: 139; Flores 1999: 122) but was significantly impacted by the arrival of Spanish missionaries. However, Atienza argues that the CHamoru people practiced ‘adaptive resistance’ to settler colonialism, which he defines as ‘the cybernetic activity of peoples that manifest political/cultural agency under asymmetric (neo)colonial conditions’ (2019: 4). In the nineteenth century, this agency was evident in many aspects of daily life but was particularly pronounced in CHamoru creative and ‘maintenance’ activities: ‘routine, recurrent, and quotidian practices that are essential to social continuity, stability, and well-being’ (Montón-Subías and Hernando Gonzalo: 2021). These activities transmitted intergenerationally, predominantly by women, were frequently overlooked by the colonial apparatus and thus became important avenues for protesting colonialism (Cunningham 1992: 139; Flores 1999: 124; Montón-Subías and Hernando Gonzalo 2021; Taitano DeLisle 2021: 34; Torres Souder 2024: 64-65). However, Clement (2022: 170) reminds us that this mostly occurred in the capital city of Hagåtña; in the villages where the population was more homogeneously Indigenous and the influence of Spanish culture was less pervasive, both men and women engaged in and passed down cultural knowledge, including weaving. Additionally, as James Bamba contends, the knowledge continued to be transmitted, but the ‘traditionally tied millennium-old meanings’ were lost (Ologies with Alie Ward podcast 2024, 37:00).

The intergenerational transmission of weaving is still an integral aspect of contemporary CHamoru society. During my fieldwork, I met Maesso-born weaver Maria ‘Lia’ Barcina, who was first introduced to weaving by her great-grandmother Rita T. Barcina and her grandmother Dolores R. Barcina (weaving workshop, 7 March 2024). Part of her training involved helping her elders weave the roof for the family *Belen* (nativity scene). Lia’s experience reflects how CHamoru weaving has been passed down through generations within the household setting. In line with this,

it is likely that Dolores Cruz, one of the female exhibitors at the 1887 Exhibition, personally crafted the items she showcased, a pair of *doga* (sandals) and two ‘bojas’ (*gueha*, fans; Fig. 15) woven from *åkgak* and *niyok* leaves respectively. Similar to Lia, she probably learned the weaving technique from her mother or grandmother and later passed it down to her own children when the time came. In today’s increasingly globalised and modernised world, the art of CHamoru weaving is being passed down less frequently within households. As a result, weaving is being reintroduced in more formal settings, such as the University of Guam, which offers a weaving class as part of its Chamorro Studies programme. Taught by Martha ‘Marty’ Tenorio, the class is an opportunity for students ‘to learn, practice and master the art of weaving within the CHamoru culture’ (course syllabus of 2023). Weaving workshops organised by local weavers are becoming more prominent too, especially around the time of Mes CHamoru, a month dedicated to celebrating CHamoru arts, culture and heritage in Guam that usually takes place in March. More increasingly, Primary and Middle Schools are incorporating weaving into their CHamoru Studies curriculum: ‘The technique is being lost, it’s being forgotten. It’s crucial to teach the younger generations how to weave’ Marty told me in this respect (weaving workshop, 21 November 2023).

While CHamoru weaving is known for its innovation and adaptability, some ‘traditional’ techniques have largely remained unchanged over time. Notably, several of the woven objects displayed at the 1887 Exhibition, such as *kostat tengguat* and *kottot* (two types of basket) and *layak* (sails), closely resemble descriptions of similar items recorded in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century sources (Montón Subías 2021: 81). When describing CHamoru sailing canoes, Pigafetta wrote that ‘their sails are made of palm mats sewn together and shaped like lateen sails’ (1992a: 202, author’s translation).<sup>90</sup> Pigafetta’s description of *layak* matches two of the examples displayed at the 1887 Exhibition: CE6988 and CE6989<sup>91</sup> (Fig. 20), demonstrating that the ancestral sail-making technique was preserved and reproduced into the nineteenth century. These examples would have perhaps originally been attached to the canoe models<sup>92</sup> displayed in the exhibition (Alonso Pajuelo 2021: 125-126). While the

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<sup>90</sup> It was the shape of the sails that led Magellan to, in the first instance, name the archipelago *Islas de las Velas Latinas*.

<sup>91</sup> The third example, CE6987, resembles a Filipino sail.

<sup>92</sup> According to Alonso Pajuelo (2021: 125-126), the three *layak* were probably originally attached to CE2848 because of their size. However, I believe that CE6987, which looks different to the other two, was attached to CE2848, while CE6988 and CE6989 were attached to CE4720. The latter has two

weaving of *layak* is rarely practiced in the Mariana Islands today, examples from the broader Micronesian region, where sail weaving continues to be done following traditional methods, provide insight into the processes that were likely employed in the Marianas (Kaeppeler 2008: 138). In the Outer Islands of Yap State, women prepare the pandanus needed to weave the sails. ‘The preparation of the raw materials takes some time as the leaves have to be harvested, soaked in salt water and then dried. The fibres are stripped and ready for weaving’ Micronesian navigator Larry Raigetal recounts (2023: 363). The actual weaving of a canoe sail is a community activity, involving women from across different generations that work collaboratively. Typically, it takes two weeks to finalise a large handwoven sail. Throughout the weaving process, knowledge is passed down intergenerationally, with younger women learning ancestral techniques from older generations through hands-on practice (Ibid).



Figure 20: CE6988 and CE6989, two *layak* (sail) models displayed in the 1887 exhibition. Sail weaving is not practiced today in the Marianas, but similar weaving techniques are used in other places of the Micronesian region. They were probably attached to CE4720, exhibited by Vicente Leon Guerrero. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photographs by Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

During the weaving workshops I attended, I often imagined how the weavers that produced the *gueha* (fans) and *kostat tengguang* for the 1887 Exhibition would have worked. Weaving a *gueha* with *niyok* leaves, for example, requires concentration and visualisation. ‘What is it that my final item is to look like and how does one get there from a mere bunch of leaves?’, I wrote while practicing (fieldnotes, 28 March 2024). Before one even begins to weave, one needs to think about some practical mathematical aspects: how many strands of material you will need, what the size of your basket is going to be and how many folds you will need to complete the basket.

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perforations for two sails, each in the wooden board closer to the ends of the canoe, whereas the former only has one perforation next to the outrigger where a sail could potentially be attached.

James Bamba explains that visualising the finished product is essential to the process of weaving: ‘when I sit there staring at the wall or with my eyes closed, it’s not me wasting time, I am constantly weaving in my mind, or running the numbers, trying to see the most effective way without wasting material’ (Ologies with Alie Ward podcast 2024, 25:20). However, as Tim Ingold reminds us, how the final woven product will look gradually unfolds through the process of making (2000: 342). During our interview Roquin said that ‘it’s just a matter of even having more patience and just having a little bit of foresight and understanding the process of it’.



Figure 21: *Kottot* and *kostat tengguat* (baskets) (CE2138, CE6996, CE6993 and CE2139) displayed in Section 7 of the 1887 Exhibition, contributed to the exhibition by Andrés de Castro. CE2138 and CE2139 use a single-ridge weaving technique, while CE6993 and CE6996 use a double-ridge technique. These techniques were largely lost through time. Contemporary CHamoru weavers are using examples from the 1887 Exhibition to recover these ancestral weaving techniques. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photograph by Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

Different techniques exist to weave *åkgak* baskets like *kottot* and *kostat tengguat*: for example, single-rim weaving, like the one seen on CE2138 and CE2139 and double-rim weaving, like the one used on CE6993 and CE6996 (Fig. 21; Anderson-Taft n.d.). James Bamba explained to me that these techniques are no longer traditionally taught. However, after visiting MNA in 2022 to examine the examples from the 1887 Exhibition and referencing sketches from the Freycinet Expedition, he rediscovered how to replicate these methods through trial and error, an example of which is shown on Figure 22. These techniques are now being passed on to his apprentices (personal conversation, 11 January 2024). These nineteenth century

examples, in this way, are actively helping the CHamoru community in the recovery of ancestral knowledge. The examples submitted to the 1887 Exhibition (CE2138, CE2139, CE6993, CE6996), exhibited by Andrés de Castro, likely required the expertise of a highly skilled weaver. In fact, de Castro received an honorary mention from the Comisaría Regia of the Exhibition for exhibiting the baskets (Comisión Central de Manila 1888). It is likely the baskets were woven by de Castro or his wife, Maria Cruz Anderson.



Figure 22: *Kostat tengguang* woven by CHamoru weaver James Bamba and displayed at the Galerian ÅtteYan Kuttura in Luta (Rota), CNMI. After a trip to Madrid where he got to see the baskets woven for the 1887 Exhibition and explored some techniques no CHamoru weaver today knows; he practiced the patterns many times and, through trial and error, and managed to replicate the style used in the examples from the 1887 Exhibition.

In the nineteenth century, woven objects of everyday use fostered an ability to silently and creatively adapt, resist and transmit Indigenous cultural practices. The production of the woven objects displayed at the 1887 Exhibition was likely done by the exhibitors themselves, thus including a realm of Indigenous agency to the exhibition, which was inherently embedded in the materiality of the objects. Woven items also embodied personal and community relations, and even relations with the metropolis through their circulation. In this sense, the practice of weaving is a form of social interaction and cultural preservation, of exchanging knowledge through

embodied practice. Weaving is not merely a process of creation; it serves as a means of weaving relationships and sharing knowledge and stories through the act of making. As Roquin Siongeo said during our interview: ‘I want us all to be in a circle, just doing our thing, talking... that’s what it was. It was a way for us to gather and commune. The tradition doesn’t lie within the item itself that we make, but in the practice of making it’.

### **Transculturation: Indigenising foreign influences**

All cultures inevitably evolve over time, driven both by internal transformations and external influences. Intercultural interactions are inherently complex and reciprocal, involving shaping and reshaping of the cultures involved. This ongoing process is often referred to as the ‘indigenisation’ of foreign cultural influences, or as ‘transculturation’. In this thesis, I adopt Silvia Spitta’s definition of transculturation as ‘the complex processes of adjustment and re-creation – cultural, literary, linguistic and personal – that allow for new, vital, and viable configurations to arise out of the clash of cultures and violence of colonial and neocolonial appropriations’ (2006: 2). The notion of transculturation is born in opposition to the term acculturation, which Spitta defines as ‘the sheer and irredeemable loss of one’s culture, language, history, tradition – even the body and its own rhythms’ through colonialism (2006: 1-2). The process of transculturation is inherently linked to *mestizaje*, a reconfiguration that fosters the necessary conditions for the emergence of new cultural practices (Spitta 2009: 13) whereby Indigenous peoples ‘take what they can use’ from western influences ‘in order to save what they can from the traditional, rural and oral cultures of their countries’ (Spitta 2006: 9).

While the Indigenous appropriation of European things has been discussed by several authors (i.e. Nicholas Thomas 1991, Chapter 3) in this thesis I focus on the process of transculturation. Although the concept arises from and is generally utilised in the Latin American context, I argue that it can be applied, although necessarily redefined and adapted, to the Marianas context. Although daily life in the nineteenth century resembled a Hispanicised lifestyle (Flores 1999: 113) and most of these influences have been perpetuated to the present, CHamoru culture continued to exist as an independent entity, with ancient cultures and traditions being adapted and reformulated (Kasperbauer 1996: 26). In the context of Guam, this blend of cultural

traditions – mainly CHamoru, Spanish, Filipino<sup>93</sup> and American – is commonly referred to as *Kostumbren Chamorro* (Guampedia n.d.; Flores 1999: 167; Torres-Souder 2024: 11) In this way, and going back to Spitta’s definition of transculturation, I argue that the CHamorus that produced certain objects exhibited at the 1887 Exhibition appropriated Spanish, Filipino and Mexican cultural practices, and CHamorucised them in ways that improved their lives and were useful to save and preserve the traditions of pre-Hispanic CHamoru culture.

### ***Metal***

The first example of transculturation showcased in the 1887 Exhibition can be seen in the incorporation of metal to some of the objects exhibited. The introduction of metal in Oceania revolutionised Pacific communities, enhancing efficiency in tasks and production as they integrated it into their own creations, valuing its advantages for specific tools and techniques (Thomas 1991: Chapter 3; 1999: 19; Hooper 2006). Metal was introduced to the Mariana Islands by Galleon traders, Jesuit missionaries and blacksmiths from Mexico, Spain and the Philippines and was quickly adopted by CHamorus to produce *ramentas*<sup>94</sup> (tools) (Bevacqua n.d.a). This was especially evident in family *lanchos*, with CHamoru farmers creating their own tools for personal use (Ibid). A prime example of how metal was incorporated into CHamoru culture is the *kåmyo* (CE2105) or coconut grater exhibited by José Perez at the 1887 Exhibition (Fig. 23).

Although Paleric (2024) notes that José Perez served as a ‘Sergeant in the local military police’, he likely crafted this *kåmyo* in his family *lancho*. *Kåmyo* are usually formed of a wooden structure with three legs, a curved area to sit on and a blade. In the Marianas, *kåmyo* would be used to grate mature coconuts (Alonso Pajuelo 2021: 121), one of the staples prior to colonisation and which has remained an integral part of the CHamoru diet (Aguon n.d.). In pre-colonial times, the blade of a *kåmyo* was made of carved shell (Flores 1999: 64). The *kåmyo* exhibited in the 1887 Exhibition,

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<sup>93</sup> It is important to point out that, by the nineteenth century, urban Filipino culture was in itself heavily influenced by Hispanic culture (San Pablo 2013). Spanish influence is still evident in the Philippines today, with traits of Spanish culture, law, religion, education, language, family names, architecture, the arts, music, cuisine and customs preserved in contemporary society (Reyes Jr. 2021).

<sup>94</sup> Even though many of the *ramentas* are not made anymore, substituted by cheaper imported goods from China and the U.S., they still play an important role in contemporary CHamoru society as family heirlooms and gifts (Bevacqua n.d.a).

however, has a metal blade. By replacing shell with metal, the *kåmyo*'s efficiency would have improved, resulting in a reduction in the time required to grate coconut. This adaptation enabled the continued use of this ancestral tool, revealing how major social and cultural transformations can be reflected in material substitutions (Thomas 1999: 7).



Figure 23: CE2105, *kåmyo* (coconut grater) from the Mariana Islands exhibited at the 1887 Exhibition. This *kåmyo* was exhibited by José Perez, who likely produced the object in his *lancho* himself. The introduction of metal to the Mariana Islands resulted in the replacement of carved shell with metal for producing blades, as evident in this example. Through a process of transculturation, CHamoru people creatively and locally adopted and adapted this introduced material. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photograph by Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

Introduction of foreign influences also resulted in the appropriation of completely foreign metal tools and weapons by the Indigenous population of the islands. This way, the profession of *herreron CHamoru* (blacksmith) became an integral part of the CHamoru lifestyle.<sup>95</sup> *Fosiños*<sup>96</sup> (a tool similar to a hoe) and machetes (like CE5803 and CE5804, Fig. 24), tools introduced early on by the Spanish, emerged as the primary tools used for agricultural labour in the *lanchos*. Additionally, machetes also became the weapon of choice for CHamorus (Farrer and Selman 2014: 133). These tools were not merely utilitarian; as Bevaqua (n.d.) suggests, nineteenth-century machetes also symbolised status and responsibility. A man with a reliable machete, which CHamoru men always carried, was seen as capable of caring

<sup>95</sup> Even though working the metal only started after the arrival of the Spanish, Bevaqua (n.d.) argues that the origins of CHamoru blacksmithing lie in pre-colonial Indigenous practices, like the molding of shell and turtle shell, the carving of human bone and stone.

<sup>96</sup> The Exhibition Catalogue records three *fosiños* (under *fusiño*, *fusino* and *fosino*) from the Marianas among the objects displayed in Section 7. However, I have not been able to locate these items in Spanish collections. It is possible they are catalogued under 'Philippines'.

for his family and was even considered by families when looking for potential suitors for their daughters.



Figure 24: CE5803 and CE5804, machetes and a sheath [middle] exhibited by the Presidio (Garrison) of Guam and Joaquin Leon Guerrero. Machetes were introduced by Spanish colonisers but were soon appropriated by CHamorus as their preferred weapon and tool. CE5803 is made from iron and carabao bone, whereas CE5804 is made from iron, copper and wood. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photographs by Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

It is highly likely that one of the two machetes from the Mariana Islands displayed at the 1887 Exhibition was crafted by its exhibitor Joaquin Leon Guerrero, who was Hagåtña's primary blacksmith and the official armourer of the 'native guard' (Leon-Guerrero 2016: 125).<sup>97</sup> His expertise in metalwork makes it plausible that he created the machete he exhibited (CE5803). CE5804, exhibited by the Commander of the Presidio of Agaña, however, was likely made by the prisoners at the Presidio, many of whom were of Filipino or Spanish origin (De Viana 2004: 112; Madrid 2006: 133). The convicts were often commanded to work in 'whatever projects arise, whether they are for the benefit of the government or private individuals' (Olive 2006[1887]: 112, author's translation), including the fabrication of clay products (De Viana 2004: 115) and potentially metal objects. These objects, thus, are examples of how CHamorus

<sup>97</sup> Joaquin Leon Guerrero seems to have also produced the nine cutlasses that William Safford collected and later gifted to the Smithsonian Institution. Research ongoing.

adapted an introduced metal to serve their own needs, reconfiguring these influences in a process of transculturation.

### ***Eating Practices***

Although the Manila-Acapulco galleon trade had ceased by the 1880s, the introduction of new plants and animals through it and Missionary activity led to changes in cooking and eating practices in the Marianas (Dixon et al. 2010: 292), where they were assimilated and Indigenised in ways that suited the CHamoru population. Species like horses, pigs, chickens, carabaos and maize were introduced by the Spaniards (Salas and Tolentino n.d.). Other species like sweet potato, cassava, cacao and tobacco were also introduced, prompting CHamorus to adopt new cultivation, processing and consumption methods (Dixon et al. 2010).



Figure 25: CE19170, *mitåte* made from coral, from the Mariana Islands, exhibited by Justo Dunca at the 1887 Exhibition. Originally a pre-Hispanic tool in central America, *mitåte* were imported to the Marianas from Mexico as part of the cultural exchange produced via Manila-Acapulco galleon route. This example shows how CHamorus substituted stone for coral, a local material. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photograph by Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

In the Marianas corn, for example, was prepared in various ways, with *titiyas* (tortillas) and *tamales* being amongst the most common (Flores n.d.a; Tolentino n.d.). These dishes, clearly of Mexican origin, were popular among Hagåtña dwellers and became a staple of their diet, while native foods remained preferred in the villages (Clement 2022: 181). Tolentino (n.d.) notes that the similarities between tamales in Mexico and the Marianas suggest shared influences in ‘flavoring, preparation and presentation’ facilitated by the Galleon trade route and the relocation of Mexican convicts to the archipelago in the 1810s (De Viana 2004: 114). During the Spanish colonial period, the planting and preparation of corn was a community event (Tolentino n.d.). Once harvested, husking the corn would be done collectively; CHamoru elders still recall how extended families would gather in *bodegas* (cellars)

to husk corn while sharing stories, jokes and songs (Flores n.d.a). The corn was then spread on *guafak* (pandanus mats) to dry before being ground using a *mitåte* (metate), a CHamoru version of the Mesoamerican stone grinder to process the product.

De Viana notes how during the Spanish colonial period, nearly every CHamoru household owned a three-legged *mitåte* (2004: 159). While foreign influences clearly transformed CHamoru daily life, CHamorus acted as innovators, creatively reimagining these elements to fit their way of life, blending the external with the familiar to make it uniquely their own. An example of this can be found in the *mitåte* exhibited by Justo Dungca at the 1887 Exhibition (Fig. 25). While most Mexican metates are generally made from volcanic rock (basalt and others), Dungca's *mitåte* is carved from white coral (*cho'cho'*). Coral is an integral part of Micronesian cultures and histories. In Kwajalein Atoll (Marshall Islands) and Pohnpei (FSM), coral holds deep cultural significance, as several origin stories recount how the islands emerged from coral, and coralheads serve both as vital sites for food-gathering and as places of sacred importance for the local population (Ashby 1989; Dvorak 2018). Likewise, coral has helped the CHamoru sustain their cultural ways of life for thousands of years, providing a unique ecosystem where essential activities such as fishing can be conducted. Several species of *cho'cho'* native to Guam thrive on two distinct types of coral reefs (*mattingan*) that encircle the island (Division of Aquatic & Wildlife Resources 2002: 9). Using a uniquely Micronesian material, the creator of the *mitåte*, who may have been Justo Dungca himself, transformed an imported technology into a uniquely CHamoru one. In this sense, the *mitåte* can be seen as a product of transculturation, embodying the complex processes of adaptation and re-creation that emerged from the assemblage of Indigenous traditions and foreign influences, giving rise to a new and meaningful configuration shaped by colonial interactions.

### ***Sailing***

Long-distance navigation was a key element of ancient CHamoru society. Prior to colonisation, the CHamoru constructed large outrigger canoes known as *sakman*, designed for journeys across great distances. In fact, evidence shows that the people of the Mariana Islands frequently engaged in trade with neighbouring islands in the Carolines archipelago (Cunningham 1992: 193). *Sakman* canoes and the skills associated with long-distance navigation had, however, largely disappeared by the 1780s due to prohibitions imposed on the Indigenous population by colonial

administrators<sup>98</sup> (Rogers 1995: 34). Around that time, Rogers argues (Ibid), most canoes in Guam already resembled Filipino *galaide* or *baroto*: dugout canoes with arched bottoms that connected outriggers to hulls, if they even had outriggers, and often had no sails (Fig. 26). Two model canoes from the Marianas were exhibited at the 1887 Exhibition by Vicente Leon Guerrero (CE2848 and CE4720, Fig. 26). It is likely Vicente created the wooden items he displayed, as he obtained a license to be a carpenter in 1891 (Leon Guerrero 1891) and was probably well-versed in the art of woodcarving before that date.



Figure 26: Top: CE2847, model canoe from the Philippines, exhibited at the 1887 Philippines Exhibition. Bottom: CE4720, canoe model (*galaide* or *baroto*) from the Mariana Islands exhibited at the 1887 Exhibition by Vicente Leon Guerrero. The latter has two sections with nails where an outrigger, and perhaps a sail, would have been attached. By the nineteenth century, CHamoru canoes resembled Filipino canoes more than they resembled the local *sakman*. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photographs by Miguel Ángel Otero and Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

When comparing the canoe models exhibited by Leon Guerrero to other examples of *galaide* and *sakman*, CE2848 and CE4720 bear a closer resemblance to Filipino canoes than to Indigenous CHamoru ones. However, it is likely the model *layak* (sails) mentioned above were attached to these examples. In this way, Leon Guerrero integrated CHamoru weaving into an introduced boat design, blending external influences with local traditions. Overall, these examples produced for the 1887 Exhibition reflect how CHamoru exhibitors reconfigured their culture to adapt

<sup>98</sup> Although it is generally believed that many CHamoru traditions were discontinued during the Spanish colonial period in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, leading to a significant loss of traditional knowledge, evidence suggests that, despite colonialism's profound impact on CHamoru cultural practices, most traditions were not entirely lost (Atienza 2019). In the case of seafaring, Anson's sketch of a *sakman* canoe (see Chapter 6), done in the eighteenth century, is evidence that despite the Spaniards' restrictions on traditional long-distance voyaging, there was some continuity to the practice of building *sakman*. Other forms of traditional knowledge such as weaving were also preserved by women through maintenance activities (Montón Subías and Hernando Gonzalo 2021).

to newly incorporated cultural influences, providing a snapshot of what life in the Marianas, and most particularly in the capital, looked like in the nineteenth century.

## **Circulation**

Having examined the production of some of the CHamoru objects displayed at the exhibition, I now shift to investigate the processes of collecting, classifying and transporting objects from the Marianas to Spain, without losing sight of the broader contextual processes happening at the time (O'Hanlon 2000: 3-4; Gosden 2000: 232). Additionally, I aim to reconstruct the motivations and experiences, in other words, the agency, of the two CHamorus who travelled to Madrid to participate in the exhibition, both in their journey and while they stayed in Madrid. While little information is available on the former, and this absence of documentation has been one of the major challenges posed in the conception of this section, the latter is well-documented in archival records. In a way, the circulation of objects and people to Madrid for the 1887 Exhibition contributed to the reconfiguration of the social and material realities known to the Spanish public.

### **Object Collecting and Circulating**

Prior to their circulation and display at the 1887 Exhibition, a large object collecting campaign had to be organised, coordinated by the Comisión Central de Manila and the local subcommissions. In exploring these practices, traces of Indigenous agency are revealed. However, an issue I have faced while carrying out this research has been that only a limited number of archival documents provide insights into the collecting processes used for the 1887 Exhibition, which has been previously highlighted by Sánchez Gómez in his monographic study of the exhibition (2003: 51). While the Minister's cabinet prepared general questionnaires in late 1885 with notes on the types of items to be submitted to the Comisión Central de Manila for each section of the exhibition (*Moción* 1885), it remains unclear whether these were ever followed by the subcommissions. I located only one document containing explicit guidelines that were circulated to provinces in the Philippines, although we cannot know for certain if they were ever sent to the Marianas, and it pertains exclusively to Section 8 (President of the 8th Commission 1886). Additionally, it is unclear whether similar guidelines were provided for other sections. After extensive archival research at the NAP and the Biblioteca Victor Balaguer, and despite the limitations encountered in the process, the

collection strategies and circulation of objects, at least from the Philippines to Madrid, can be summarised as follows:

Individuals in the Philippines sent objects directly to the Comisión Central without requesting reimbursement. Two letters evidence this: one from Alfredo de Castro detailing the paintings he submitted to the exhibition and another from Eduardo Neosarne regarding the submission of a table (Various authors 1886). They also specify that they want the items to remain in Spain as gifts to the Prime Minister after the exhibition closes. In a letter written by Pedro Payo to Victor Balaguer, the former explains the difficulties encountered by the leaders of the Comisión Central to engage Indigenous exhibitors: 'if left to their own device and initiative, a large turnout of Indigenous exhibitors cannot be expected...only a few Europeans and Enlightened Filipinos will participate' he writes (Payo 1886a, author's translation). Several factors may explain the reluctance of Indigenous peoples to partake in the collection of objects for the 1887 Exhibition. Payo suggests that one reason is the 'lack of knowledge of the advantages the Exhibition will bring' (Ibid). However, this claim could also be seen as an Indigenous form of resistance to the official collection and distribution channels imposed by the Comisión Central. Alternatively, it may reflect a generalised lack of involvement in the dominant colonial society, making the exhibition less engaging to the Indigenous population, as local forms and channels of exchange were likely ignored.

To spark individual participation as well as to recognise the participants' initiative, the organisers decided to present the exhibition as a competition, with medals and diplomas being granted after closure.<sup>99</sup> Yet, this initiative was not enough, as expressed in Payo's letter: 'necessarily, the Comisión Central and subcomissions must fill in the gap left by the lack of private initiative among the object producers' (1886a, author's translation). In this respect, the Comisión Central organised unsystematic collecting expeditions all around the Philippines archipelago, often led by naturalists (Sánchez Gómez 2003: 51). Furthermore, the subcomissions, led by the governors of various colonial provinces, purchased many objects for the exhibition and, in cases such as Zamboanga, requested refunds for their expenditures (*Expediente administrativo* 1887). This was likely similar to the case of Governor Olive who, in

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<sup>99</sup> Several of the exhibitors from the Marianas received medals and honorary mentions from the Exhibition Organisation for the items and products they exhibited (Comisión Central de Manila 1888). The medals and diplomas were sent back to the Pacific on the 2nd of June 1888 (Balaguer 1888a).

addition to gathering and sending the largest number of objects from the Marianas, also acted as a ‘situationally local’ intermediary (O’Hanlon 2000: 16) between exhibitors from the Marianas and the Comisión Central.

Objects made in the Mariana Islands were circulated to the Philippines, where they were systematically classified, inscribed, labelled and catalogued (Payo 1887a) before continuing their journey to Madrid. While the Marianas were connected to the Philippines by a steamboat network (Tavel de Andrade 1887: 19), communications between the two archipelagoes were slow and irregular, with mail being carried only every three months (Barrantes 1886; Madrid 2021: 112). Moreover, the mail took a month to return to Manila (Macarrón 2017: 22), a situation that likely significantly hindered the flow of information and object exchange, although no specific letters from the Mariana Islands regarding the 1887 Exhibition have been found that confirm this. However, object collection and circulation likely followed similar patterns to those in the Philippines. From Manila, objects were packed into boxes and shipped to Spain in a span of several months, with at least five steamboats transporting objects for the Exhibition (Payo 1886b; 1887a; Balaguer 1887a). Communication between the Philippines and Spain was also inadequate, leading to various issues in the transportation of the objects. In fact, the final shipment only arrived in Madrid at the end of July 1887, just days before the Exhibition’s opening (Sánchez Avendaño 1998: 275).

### **Micronesians in Madrid**

In addition to the objects created and circulated by CHamorus, two CHamorus, José Flores Aflague and Antonia de los Santos Leon Guerrero, journeyed to Madrid to participate in the exhibition.<sup>100</sup> Although the exact circumstances of their involvement in the event and whether they were selected by a specific set of characteristics remains unknown, evidence gathered from Spanish newspapers and Miyagi’s account (1975) suggests that José and Antonia likely played a role in deciding to travel to Madrid. In this sense, it is important to acknowledge the agency of the Indigenous peoples who travelled to exhibitions, with one or many factors that could have simultaneously influenced the motivation of any individual participant (Thode-Arora 2014). Te Punga Somerville argues that mobility and worldliness were empowering actions for Indigenous peoples (in Konishi et al. 2024: 11). For many, the chance to travel to

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<sup>100</sup> Why only two CHamorus travelled to Madrid, when dozens of Filipinos did too, is unknown.

faraway lands and meet important people, often in the colonial metropolis, was a powerful motivator for temporarily playing the part (Thode-Arora 2014: 208). In fact, Miyagi claims that all the participants travelled willingly to Spain motivated by their desire to meet the Regent Queen in person (1975: 31). Some individuals may have been driven by the offer of payment (Thode-Arora 2014: 88), as all the delegates were under contract (Miyagi 1975: 32) and received a salary before departure, during the journey and while they remained in Spain (Sánchez Gómez 2003: 63). In other words, they may have been moved by the idea of getting compensated for representing their island nation and way of life, essentially playing an ambassadorial role (Greenhalgh 2011: 147). Additionally, some may have only agreed to travel pushed by the political urge to please the Spanish authorities in their islands. This seems to have happened in the case of the Carolinian participants, as reported by Serrano Gómez (1887).

According to Miyagi (1975: 32), who conducted research on José and Antonia in Guam during the 1970s, José Flores Aflague, alias *Chubito*<sup>101</sup> (Punzalan 2014: 53), was ‘an accomplished musician’ from Hagåtña. Exhibition reports describe him as an *anloague*, a Tagalog term used to refer to ‘carpenter’ or, more precisely, builder of ‘structures made from lightweight materials’ (Sanchez Gomez 2003: 62, author’s translation), although this descriptor most likely refers to his occupation within the exhibition rather than that in Guam. José was educated in the Spanish schooling system according to Miyagi (1975: 32). His uncle was Manuel Aflague Camacho, who reportedly was directly involved in getting his nephew the opportunity to travel to Spain. Perhaps José, in this context, travelled in order to boost his family’s political favour and status, much like the Samoans who travelled to Germany to participate in exhibitions between 1895 and 1911 did (Thode-Arora 2014). Antonia de los Santos Leon Guerrero, better known as Antonia Ada (Miyagi 1975: 32), on the other hand, was a twenty-two-year-old CHamoru woman, also from Hagåtña (Tavel de Andrade 1887: 59) and is reported to have also willingly decided to travel to Madrid to participate in the exhibition (Sánchez Gómez 2003: 195).

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<sup>101</sup> *Chubito* is a family nickname or clan name associated with the Flores last name (Miyagi 1975; Punzalan 2014). In CHamoru culture, clan names are used to differentiate families that have the same last name. According to Ramirez (n.d.a), family nicknames tend to be derived from diverse references to first names, family names, place names, animals, descriptive actions or qualities, objects, food, status and body parts, among others.



Figure 27: Some of the Indigenous participants photographed wearing European-style clothes in front of Palacio de Cristal before attending the 1887 Exhibition opening. Despite being exhibited performing ‘exotic’ activities, participants were also invited by the Spanish Regent Queen to accompany her at the opening and several of her palaces. This evidences that, in a way, they were regarded as citizens of the Spanish state with similar, if not more, rights than some peninsular Spaniards. Photograph by J. Laurent & Cía. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología.

José and Antonia left Manila on the *Ysla de Panay* steamboat, along with a party of other Filipino and Micronesian participants (*Relación de los pasajeros 1887*). Upon arrival in the port of Barcelona, they were officially welcomed by Juan Álvarez Guerra and promptly taken to the capital. In Madrid, members of the party were invited by the Queen to visit the Royal Palace and other royal venues, meeting most of the Royal Entourage several times. As seen in the beginning of the previous chapter, the Queen also invited them to attend the opening of the exhibition alongside the members of the Spanish colonial government (Sánchez Gómez 2003: 145-147). In return, some individuals were asked to perform before her. This can be analysed from two perspectives: on one hand, it may be interpreted as a manifestation of paternalistic colonialism; on the other, the Queen could be seen as acknowledging their agency as human and political subjects of the Spanish Crown, treating them as guests and/or ambassadors within the imperial metropolis (Sánchez Gómez 2002; Fig. 27). In fact, Madrid recounts how CHamorus and Filipinos at that time were considered Spanish nationals and attempts were made to include them within the idea of the nation-state (Fanachu! Podcast 2024a, 39:40), probably motivated by political and imperial interests, as well as a desire to consolidate power and promote a unified national identity.

According to Blanco, the 1887 Exhibition employed two modes of display to showcase Indigenous participants: the human zoo and the ‘handicraft workshop’ (2012: 57). Participants were organised and displayed in two ‘colonies’ or ‘native villages’ based on a classification that differentiated between ‘savage’ individuals, that is, CHamoru, Igorots, Carolinians and *moros*, who were at the Igorot *Ranchería*, a replica of indigenous villages from the Cordillera region of the Philippines; and those deemed ‘civilised’ due to their Christian faith, showcased in the Indian village of Santiago, which included a replica of a rural church and a town hall from the province of Luzón (Ibid: 58). Additionally, two pavilions were constructed, one to house the Filipino weavers who were weaving in front of an audience (Moyano Miranda 2008: 355) and another one built by the General Tobacco Company of the Philippines, where women were showcased rolling cigars (Blanco 2012: 58). Some of the men worked as rowers at the lake, offering free rides to the visitors in their Filipino-style canoes (Ibid). Although the organisers of the exhibition aimed to produce ‘a living illusion of reality’ (Greenhalgh 2011: 128), these representations were never truly real; rather, they presented an imperial and idealised version of the colonies (Demeulenaere-Douyère, 2010: 12) that effectively mapped the organisers’ ideas about racial hierarchies into the exhibitionscape.

The day-to-day programmes at the 1887 Exhibition revolved around a series of activities that varied according to each participants’ classification as ‘civilised’ or ‘savage’, which was made explicit in several ways; even the clothing they used – or lack thereof – was directly linked to their perceived degree of civilisation (Moyano Miranda 2008: 355). ‘Civilised’ participants were actively performing practical artisanal activities such as loom weaving and rolling tobacco, while ‘savage’ participants, likely including Antonia and José, were simply performing ‘authentic everyday life’ (Blanchard et al. 2011: 301) by conducting their everyday activities such as cleaning and eating (Sánchez Gómez 2002: 83). Reports indicate that, for instance, Antonia cared for Dolores Nessern at the exhibition grounds throughout her illness (Miyagi 1975: 32; Sánchez Gómez 2003: 151). Participants took part in various staged performances, including combat, music and dance, both inside and outside the exhibitionscape (Blanco 2012: 59). In this sense, they also assumed the role of ‘actors’, performing culture for public entertainment. The ‘culture’ they (re)presented was often one that exhibition organisers believed necessary to perform in order to appear ‘real Filipino’, regardless of their actual ethnicity or origin. While it may be tempting to

view them as ‘passive actors in the spectacles of national and imperial entertainment’ (Hoffenberg 2001: 220), performing can also be considered a strategic and culturally significant act of self-representation (Thode-Arora 2014: 117), presenting themselves in ways that highlighted their accomplishments (Blanchard et al. 2011: 20). Participants, furthermore, also adopted the role of observers, learning not only how to perform the routines expected of them but also other skills, along with forming relationships among themselves, and at times with the men who organised the exhibition and even with the public (Qureshi 2011: 153).

Although it is important to acknowledge the agency of the Indigenous peoples who travelled to exhibitions, we cannot forget that many were transported and displayed in ways marked by ‘rhetorics of imperialism’ (Bennett 1988: 80). While their participation was not inherently alienating, their display often was, and it frequently dehumanised them. For example, the living conditions in Retiro Park were harsh, as portrayed in the local press (Sánchez Avendaño 1998: 274). At night, participants would sleep in basic barracks within the exhibition grounds divided by race and sex (Blanco 2012: 59). Health standards in the dwellings were deplorable; infectious diseases were constantly being passed around (Ibid). Although many of them surely travelled to Spain willingly, they probably were unaware of the material conditions and culture-shock awaiting them. This became a central point of critique for Enlightened Filipinos:

I wish all Spaniards could fall ill and die the same way poor Basilia [one of the Filipino ladies from Joló] did. I wish Philippines could forget the way her children have been treated, exhibited and mocked (Rizal 1961: 174, author’s translation).

Rizal’s words capture the despair felt by those Filipinos who suffered on behalf of the Indigenous participants, mirroring the way that Spain treated the Filipino colony (Aguilar Jr 2005: 614). Additionally, Graciano López Jaena, a Filipino publicist, wrote that

Upon their departure, the individuals who came to be exhibited at the exhibition will carry lasting and painful memories of the mistreatment they endured (in Sánchez Gómez 2003: 245, author’s translation).

Ironically, the same *Ilustrado* Filipinos would often leave the Igorots, *Negritos* and *Moros*, the Indigenous communities represented in the exhibition, outside of the category of ‘civilised Filipinos’, yet their ‘humiliating treatment’ at the exhibition led them to side with them as ‘brothers or countrymen’ (Aguilar Jr 2005: 610). As Aguilar

Jr writes, ‘in their humanism, the *Ilustrados* felt a fraternal bond with the individuals whom they believed were demeaned and exploited by the exposition’ (2005: 616).

In contrast to this, the organisers of the exhibition shielded themselves by asserting that the conditions at Retiro Park were not as bad as portrayed by Filipinos. In a letter to Víctor Balaguer, Ricardo Velázquez, the architect who built Palacio de Cristal and Palacio de la Minería, wrote the following words:

The [living] space dedicated to each Filipino [participant] has 26 cubic metres of pure, breathable air. Many neighbourhoods in Madrid have no more than 6 or 7 cubic metres of stale air (1887, author’s translation).

The evidence given by the organisers of the exhibition, although accurate, cannot hide the abusive work hours, the constant performances in front of thousands of people and the insalubrious living arrangements that resulted in the death of three people during their stay in Madrid. However, this did not necessarily imply that they were entirely at the mercy of their exhibition organisers, incapable of resisting abuse, unable to negotiate the betterment of their living conditions or to represent themselves in the way that they wanted (Thode-Arora 2014: 79). A newspaper entry in *El Noticiero* reported rumours of the Igorots’ dissatisfaction with conditions. As mentioned earlier, all participants received a salary for their involvement. Yet, the official accounting books show that payments differed depending on the ‘evolutionary’ status of the delegates: ‘civilised’ participants were paid sixty pesetas every month, whereas ‘savage’ participants only received twenty-five (*Ibid*). An intermediary, Ismael Alzate, had to negotiate with them, promising rewards and recognition for their service to resolve the situation (Instancia 1887; Sánchez Gómez 2003: 150). In this way, they exercised their agency by negotiating the betterment of their contract. Indeed, as Qureshi reminds us, human displays were the result of complex interactions between exhibition organisers, traders, government agents and foreign peoples that ‘cannot be reduced to polarized models of control and passivity, victim and aggressor’ (2011: 152).

José and Antonia departed from Barcelona on the 21st of October 1887 (Balaguer 1887b) en route to their homeland. Upon their return to Guam, they presumably resumed their lives, although ultimately their experience in Madrid likely had a lasting impact. Miyagi reports that, in 1938, records showed that ‘Mr. Flores was still living in Guam. At the time, he had seven children living, one dead. He also had 17 grandchildren, all living’ (1975: 32). While their participation in the 1887

Exhibition was shaped by various factors, they actively exercised their agency, both in their decision to travel to Madrid and throughout their time in Spain. This agency is evident in their presence across many archival documents.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to uncover the CHamoru agency that exists in the process of production and circulation of objects and participants at the 1887 Exhibition. I have attempted to counter the general assumption that CHamoru men and women are untraceable in archival and material records, while acknowledging the epistemological and methodological limitations the exercise of recovering Indigenous partial biographies poses. Despite the distinct biographies and diverse social statuses of each individual, examining them collectively allows for the identification of some general conclusions.

With a few exceptions, the men and women who exhibited items, as well as those who participated in the exhibition, were, to varying degrees, Indigenous and, to different levels, associated with the Spanish administration in the Marianas. Most of them owned at least one house in Hagåtña and several of them owned large tracts of land for farming outside the capital. They carried out all sorts of enterprises and several of them may have even fabricated the objects they submitted themselves. In *Paradise*, O'Hanlon asserts that the artefacts he collected reflected the 'realpolitik of field collecting', in which local conditions and social structures exert greater influence on the collecting process than they are often given credit for (1993: 60). In a similar vein, participation in the 1887 Exhibition, whether through the creation and exchange of objects or direct involvement in Madrid, was likely motivated by a range of Indigenous-led factors, including familial and relational ties, representation, personal benefit, exploration and economic considerations. The objects displayed at the exhibition reflect their agency, often blending Indigenous and transculturated items that embody the colonial Marianas lifestyle of the nineteenth century. The material traces of that agency remain preserved in Spanish museums today, having been incorporated into their collections. The next part will explore the musealisation of CHamoru objects within Spanish institutions following the closure of the 1887 Exhibition.

# PART II:

## INTERLUDE: MUSEUM MOTIONS



Figure 28: Façade of Museo Nacional de Antropología in Madrid, August 2020. MNA is the primary institution in Spain that holds CHamoru objects today.

## Prologue

With the passage of time, objects in museums live complex lives. As objects are circulated across institutions, and as discourses around and within museums evolve in relation to the scientific and popular narratives of each period of time, they are interpreted in different ways. Using the framework of object biographies (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986; Gosden and Marshall 1999) and itineraries (Joyce and Gillespie 2015), Part II will navigate through the period between the two main exhibitions under research in this thesis: the 1887 *Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas* and *BIBA CHamoru: Cultura e Identidad en las Islas Marinas* (2021). In those 134 years, CHamoru objects have been circulated across different museological institutions and loaned for exhibitions, hence the title ‘museum motions’, inspired by the edited volume *Mobile Museums* (Driver et al. 2021). In this process, they have been resignified several times, according to the scientific museological discourses prevalent at the time.

Since 1910, the objects have been kept at Museo Nacional de Antropología (MNA), which itself has undergone several transformations. A trajectory of the changes experienced by this institution from its conception to the present, has been previously written by Romero de Tejada (1992) and more recently discussed in Suárez-Navad et al. (2024). Part II’s point of view, nonetheless, incorporates the display of CHamoru objects, a perspective that has not been explored before, including their biographies and their interpretations through history, and not just the tracing of changing discourses within the institution. Additionally, I frame my discussion around the idea that museums and exhibitions are not neutral spaces; rather, they reflect the social, political and ideological frameworks of those who create and curate their displays (Karp and Lavine 1991), an innovative approach to previous analyses of the history of MNA.

## **Chapter 4: From Display to Storage: The Journey of CHamoru Objects from the 1887 Exhibition to Museo Nacional de Antropología**

How have CHamoru objects been circulated and re-circulated through Spanish institutions following the closure of the 1887 Exhibition? How did the sociopolitical changes that Spain has undergone impact the institutions where CHamoru objects have been housed? And how did these institutional changes affect the way in which the objects were regarded and understood? In considering these questions, the purpose of this chapter is to gain access to the changing meanings that CHamoru objects have acquired over time, following Driver, Nesbitt and Cornish's statement that it was 'often through the circulation of objects that new meanings and values were created' (2021: 6). These meanings are not static; as they have travelled and been displayed in different ways, they have been re-interpreted, translated and re-translated through a complex interplay of shifting institutional, scientific and political traditions (Wingfield 2013: 80; Dudley 2021: 61). This exploration will be done through an analysis of the ways in which CHamoru objects have been represented – textually, visually and materially – in accordance with the museological discourses and the political and scientific tradition in which they were framed (Karp and Lavine 1991). In general, the development of museums, science and museological practices in Spanish institutions during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries was slower than in the rest of Western Europe (Schammah Gesser 2014). However, Western discourses of object circulation, which according to Driver et al. are designed into the structure of the museum system itself (2021: 4), have impacted the complex ways in which CHamoru objects have been interpreted by Spanish institutions throughout their lives, shaped by the ideologies and curation of individuals in positions of institutional authority (Harrison 2013: 20).

In the past, scholars have focused on the biographies and social lives of individual objects (Appadurai 1986; Kopytoff 1986; Gosden and Marshall 1999), displaced things (Dudley 2021) and entire collections (Friberg and Huvila 2019). Building on the idea that things have a social life (Appadurai 1986), Kopytoff developed the concept of the 'cultural biographies' of objects, which looks at the biography of an object as a 'culturally constructed entity, endowed with culturally

specific meanings, and classified and reclassified into culturally constituted categories' (1986: 68). This approach allows, on the one hand, to look at the whole life of an object in which cycles of production, consumption and exchange occur periodically; and on the other hand, examine an object's shifting social lives, which grant it agency by embedding it within lived experiences. Gosden and Marshall (1999) focus on how the transformations that 'archaeological object histories', stories and experiences accumulated over time, reveal their relationships with people. They argue that the biographical approach views objects as individuals whose changes influence one another. Joy (2009) has further elaborated on 'relational biographies' that reveal social relationships in the making of objects through the *chaîne opératoire*, creatively piecing together evidence of their changing social roles and meanings over time. Following these authors, I approach the concept of 'object biographies' as the compilation of social, spatial and historical interactions an object has experienced through time (Driver et al. 2021: 13). Following Friberg and Huvila (2019), who apply the framework of object biographies to entire collections rather than to individual objects, in this chapter CHamoru objects will not be analysed individually, but rather as clusters of objects, and will be categorised based on the flow, the sociopolitical wave contingent to a historical moment through which objects are circulated, in which they were collected. Additionally, given the similar life trajectories experienced by other Micronesian objects in Spanish museums, these items will, at times, be analysed in conjunction with CHamoru objects. However, I also acknowledge that the metaphor of biography is flawed. Joyce and Gillespie, for example, argue that this concept is a narrow, life-cycle-based and human-centric approach and they develop the concept of 'object itineraries' to incorporate how objects are disassembled, modified, the routes through which they are circulated and the ways in which they repeatedly reenter social contexts.

The first part of the chapter will focus on their first interpretation as colonial *curios*, as they may have been exhibited in Museo-Biblioteca de Ultramar (MB-U), the Barcelona Universal Exhibition (1888) and the Exposición Histórico-Natural y Etnográfica (1893). Structural changes in Spain's museum system at the turn of the century led to the closure of MB-U. CHamoru collections were then circulated to Dr. Velasco's old museum (today MNA), where they have remained since 1908. The institution itself, nonetheless, has undergone numerous transformations due to changes in sociopolitical and scientific 'regimes of truth', constantly reshaped by shifting

political and economic ideologies (Foucault in Rabinow 1991). Consequently, CHamoru objects have been re-interpreted over time in networks of relational understandings: first as anthropological specimens, then as trophies of Spanish imperialism and more recently as deactivated objects in storage, with the potential for future re-activation.

### **Colonial *curios* (1888-1908)**

The immediate period after the closure of the 1887 Exhibition saw the transfer of CHamoru objects, alongside Filipino and Micronesian collections, to MB-U, where they remained until 1908. However, during this period they may have been displayed in temporary exhibitions, such as the 1888 Universal Exhibition in Barcelona and the 1893 *Exposición Histórico-Natural y Etnográfica*.<sup>102</sup> This section analyses these three phenomena and looks at how CHamoru objects were interpreted and displayed as colonial ‘curios’ within each context, adhering to a similar approach as that employed in their display during the 1887 Exhibition. CHamoru objects, on the one hand, were perceived as the materialisation of otherness, filtered through a lens of exoticism (Clifford 1988; Said 2014[1978]). On the other hand, and much like in the 1887 Exhibition, objects were classified according to the view that the Spanish Pacific colonies were a singular, complex yet homogeneous entity encapsulating the Philippines, the Marianas and the Caroline Islands.

*Curio*, an abbreviation of curiosity, entered the English language in the nineteenth century. It soon started to be used to describe natural and artificial Indigenous-manufactured objects that were collected by explorers, enthusiasts and others, often displayed in exhibitions and institutions for their scientific or ‘curious’ qualities (Hooper 2006: 24-27). Thomas (1991: 126-131) argues that the term was a neutral way of referring to the ‘striking’ or ‘peculiar’, and that it also included certain antiquities and natural specimens. Curiosities, however, did not represent rare objects inasmuch as they represented the ‘seeing your way out of your place’ (Benedict 2001), an act of exploring remote places and cultures (Thomas 1991: 141). According to Jacobs and Wingfield, it refers to things that were ‘unusual, strange, or peculiar and therefore generated a form of curiosity and wonder from those who encountered them’.

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<sup>102</sup> There is no definitive evidence that they were displayed, as the catalogues from these exhibitions and institutions are often vague.

(2014: 17). While the word ‘curiosity’ is associated with marvel and wonder, the associated word *curio* often included pejorative connotations (*Ibid*). However, they argue for a reinterpretation of the word by using a question mark (*curios?*), understanding them as interesting objects that deserve real engagement and that arise from complex interactions. In this chapter, the negative connotation of the term *curio* is presented as a result of the Spanish colonial perspective on CHamoru objects.

### **Museo-Biblioteca de Ultramar (1888-1908)**

The Philippines Exhibition closed its doors after a large ceremony on the 30th of October 1887 (Sánchez Gómez 2003: 73). By the end of November, a newly created institution, Museo-Biblioteca de Ultramar, also the personal project of Victor Balaguer, had been established in the same building where the exhibition had taken place. While it is recorded that some exhibitors donated their objects to Victor Balaguer for his private museum in Vilanova i la Geltrú, Catalonia<sup>103</sup> (Boletín 1887; Sánchez Gómez 2003: 156), most of the collections remained in Palacio de la Minería and were displayed in MB-U until its closure in 1908 (Romero de Tejada 1995: 31). This museum was to hold and collect ‘every object, product, books, brochures, manuscripts and publications, old and new, of all of the overseas provinces, as well as anything that might safeguard the historical memory of the overseas countries discovered by Spain, or that belonged to Spain at some point’ (Balaguer 1888a: 1, author’s translation). This, as stated in a different letter (Balaguer 1887), served the double purpose of preserving and displaying the Spanish state’s collections from its overseas colonies, while also acquiring new material related to them. In a different document, the museum is referred to as Spain’s ‘much needed colonial museum’ (Balaguer 1890s?, author’s translation). These accounts clearly indicate that the purpose of MB-U was rooted in colonial aspirations, while also reflecting Spain’s perceived need to showcase its colonies to increase their global visibility.

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<sup>103</sup> Luis Cirera, the main donor of Micronesian artefacts, donated most of his collections to Victor Balaguer’s Museum (Boletín 1887: 4). Cirera was a naval doctor and had travelled across the Pacific in 1885, stopping in Yap, when he likely acquired the objects he displayed in the Philippines Exhibition. Coincidentally, Luis Cirera was Victor Balaguer’s first cousin, a relationship that probably prompted him to donate his collection of Yapese artefacts to Balaguer’s museum. However, given the volume of Micronesian artefacts at Museo-Biblioteca Victor Balaguer (MBVB) and MNA, it is likely that Balaguer decided to keep some of the objects for his private museum and leave the rest for his other ambitious project: MB-U.

The conceptual idea behind MB-U appears in Balaguer's correspondence as early as April 1887. In this excerpt of a letter from Pedro Payo (1887b), President of Comisión Central de Manila, he supports Balaguer's plan of keeping most of the collections brought for the Philippines Exhibition for MB-U:

All the objects presented by the Official Corporations [subcommissions, local boards, religious and military institutions] and the Central Commission [of Manila] will definitely be submitted to the museum, since most of them have been acquired with State funds. Those submitted by individuals will need explicit permission from the exhibitors (author's translation).

This letter highlights two key points: first, objects acquired by 'official corporations' were submitted directly to MB-U; second, the State had to seek individual exhibitors' consent to retain their collections. In some instances, an exhibitor's note accompanied the objects when first circulated to Spain, presenting them as gifts to the Spanish government (Various authors 1886; Castro 1887) or to Balaguer's museum (Balaguer 1886b). The collection brought from Dr Hipólito Fernández's museum (presented by Comisión Central de Manila) was also meant to stay in Madrid from the very beginning (Payo 1887b). It is also documented that some of the exhibitors requested their objects back (Payo 1888) and those were returned in early 1888 (Balaguer 1888a), although Balaguer believes that if they had known that MB-U was going to be opened, exhibitors would not have requested the return of the objects they exhibited (Balaguer 1887c). Another letter from Balaguer to Payo, however, claims that those objects that were not officially requested back would be accessioned to the newly created MB-U (*Ibid*). In this sense, MB-U was mostly<sup>104</sup> formed of the 'unrequested'<sup>105</sup> state-sponsored and gifted collections from the 1887 Exhibition.

Only one document describing MB-U exists (García Llansó<sup>106</sup> 1897). In this text, the purpose of the museum is defined as follows:

The museum has the double purpose of holding a series of special and periodic exhibitions of products from our overseas colonies, that would serve as a medium to promote the relationship between them and the metropolis, as well as to encourage the trade of their products, learning to know and value each other, something suitable for

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<sup>104</sup> Later additions from the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Cuba were displayed too.

<sup>105</sup> I use inverted commas here because no documentation shows whether some collections were requested and not returned, or even if some of the letters requesting objects back may have not reached Spain.

<sup>106</sup> Antonio García Llansó (1854-1914) was a Spanish art critic and writer. He was Secretary of the Spanish consulate in the Dominican Republic in 1878 and collaborated with many magazines and newspapers throughout his life. He was part of the jury of the 1888 Universal Exhibition and also published a monograph about it.

those peoples that live under the same flag, express their ideas in the same language, and live by the same ideals and aspirations (1897: 7, author's translation).

The condescending tone of García Llansó's writing, which contributes to the othering of the colonial subjects of the Spanish state, is supplemented with the longing for mutual respect, a last resort that could hopefully prevent the independence of the colonies. Yet, paradoxically, his message shows no intention of actively incorporating the peoples of the colonies into political and state affairs (Harrison 2013: 48). In this way, the objects on display acted as testaments to the colonial relationships established between Spain and its colonies. MB-U included a vast array of books that recounted 'the stories of the countries conquered by those courageous captains of the past'<sup>107</sup> (García Llansó 1897: 15, author's translation). García Llansó's statement points out how, by being on display at MB-U, the books were themselves regarded as national 'trophies' that praised the greatness of the Spanish conquests.



Figure 29: Sketch (ca. 1897) of the industry and clothing display at Museo-Biblioteca de Ultramar. Museo-Biblioteca de Ultramar was formed with the majority of the collections from the 1887 Exhibition. Model naval ships and canoes can be seen on the right-hand side table, followed by what appear to be model houses. The cases on the left-hand side seem to display costumes. What appear to be wall displays of weapons can be seen on either side of a large bed canopy. ©Biblioteca Nacional de España.

<sup>107</sup> Many of these were transferred from the 1887 Exhibition. Some of them have been discussed in Chapter 2.

Objects and natural specimens were displayed in the rooms adjacent to the library. According to García Llansó they were displayed in a miscellaneous style of display, in similar sections to those existing in the Philippines Exhibition: geology, forestry, mineralogy, weapons, industry, clothing, anthropology, flora and fauna (Berkowitz and Lightman 2017: 33; see Fig. 29). This classification, separating the natural world from the human world, responds to nineteenth-century scientific and societal developments in taxonomy and the distinction between nature and culture (Hooper-Greenhill 1992; Bennett 1995). Moreover, the distinction between so-called ‘ethnographic’ and ‘anthropological’ collections, which emerged as early as the 1887 Exhibition, mirrored the perceived division between ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ peoples in constructions of otherness. The objects and agricultural products were displayed with labels that provided some information regarding their production and circulation (Balaguer 1888b: 2). This emphasises that, besides its intrinsically colonial nature, MB-U also aimed to have a didactical role. In this way, objects on display became tools of education, built on ‘expert’ knowledge to educate lay people.

García Llansó (1897: 55) puts special emphasis on some of the objects on display, such as ‘protohistoric slingstones’, the only explicit mention to CHamoru artefacts, which once more alludes to the distinction between ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ CHamorus described in Chapter 2. When describing the ethnographic collections (*Ibid*), he uses the words ‘*en extremo curioso*’ (extremely curious, odd, original). This appeals to the perceived exotic nature of the objects on display that he regarded as *curios*. The circulation and display of CHamoru, Micronesian and Filipino objects from a colonial exhibition into this state-sponsored (and thus) colonial museum, in this sense, kept their status as colonial curiosities and symbols of imperialism (Longair and McAleer 2012).

### **Exposición Universal de Barcelona (1888)**

It is possible that, while they were part of MB-U, some of the CHamoru objects travelled to the 1888 *Exposición Universal*<sup>108</sup> which took place in Barcelona. This exhibition was an ambitious project and symbol of the developing relationship between the Spanish monarchy and the Catalonian bourgeoisie. The latter sought to showcase their wealth and promote their enterprises on a global stage, as well as to advance Catalonia’s industrial, infrastructural and economic development (Garrut

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<sup>108</sup> For a lengthy account of the exhibition (in Catalan) see Molet i Petit 2023.

1976: 13), while the former sought to position Spain as a modern international European nation. This was Spain's first universal exhibition, and its conceptual idea was a universal ambition to classify and showcase 'all human physical and intellectual activity' (Molet i Petit 2023: 93, author's translation). It included around 12,000 international exhibitors from different nationalities, including the Spanish government, which was granted a whole section titled 'Official Section' (Molet i Petit 2023: 87).

To further engage the Spanish government and monarchy, who had significantly contributed financially to the project, Victor Balaguer was asked to submit everything that was displayed at the Philippines Exhibition to the Official Section (Molet i Petit 2023: 87). The exhibition's catalogue, in fact, lists several objects loaned from MB-U, including a 'model of a loom with a piece of fabric', a 'model of an ordinary house made from cane and nipa fibres' and a 'collection of hats from the Philippines', all of which could be of Micronesian and/or CHamoru origin (Comisaría Regia 1888: 356-362, author's translation). Furthermore, the Universal Exhibition featured a Filipino village similar, although smaller, to the one built in Madrid the previous year, with eleven Filipino men traveling to Barcelona to construct and inhabit it (Molet i Petit 2023: 213).

The items showcased by the Spanish government at the 1888 Universal Exhibition in Barcelona testified to recent Spanish colonial efforts and associated colonial exhibits, like those of the 1887 Philippines Exhibition and MB-U. Following an encyclopedic format where the entire Spanish colonial world was put on display, Micronesian artefacts in this exhibition acted as complex colonial *curios*, reinforcing ideas of the 'other' from the perspective of Western empire (Clifford 1988; Said 2014[1978]), to be the subjects of international observation, analysis and public knowledge development.

### **Exposición Histórico-Natural y Etnográfica (1893)**

1892 marked the 400th anniversary of the 'discovery' of America (1492). Although Spain's colonies in the Americas were greatly decimated (only Cuba and Puerto Rico remained under Spanish sovereignty in 1892), the metropolis wanted to commemorate this event, conceived by the Spanish popular ethos as the nations' greatest achievement in history (Bernabéu Albert 2017: 75). Unlike the 1887 and 1888 exhibitions which were standalone events, this exhibition was just one of many events (conferences,

exhibitions, etc.) marking the quattro-centenary (Rodrigo del Blanco 2017a: 53-54). It took place in the months of May and June 1893 at the site of Museos and Bibliotecas Nacionales in Paseo de Recoletos, Madrid. Much like the two previous displays analysed, the emphasis on natural history and ethnography reflected an approach that universalised the imaginary of the colonies, particularly through the concepts of the ‘exotic’ and the ‘other’ which were still prevalent in Spanish discourses (Rodrigo del Blanco 2017b).

The concurrent World’s Fair in Chicago attracted most of the international attention, leaving Madrid with few materials from the Americas to display in the 1893 Exhibition (Martínez Riaza and Cagiao Vila 2017: 93). To compensate for the shortage and fill the exhibition space, Spain had to request contributions from its overseas territories in the Pacific. Several CHamoru human remains, as well as ancient stone, shell and bone tools were collected in the Mariana Islands and sent to this exhibition. It seems like the rationale behind acquiring new objects from the Pacific colonies for this exhibition was that they did not want to empty the recently opened Museo de Ultramar<sup>109</sup> (Rodrigo del Blanco 2017a: 67). The collecting focus was on ‘ancient’ artefacts, as evidenced in a letter from the *Gobierno de Carolinas* (1892) requesting these types of objects.



Figure 30: Objects DE275-79 displayed in the 1893 Exhibition, contributed by Luis de los Santos Fontordera. These were submitted alongside ancestral remains who arrived in Spain very deteriorated. They are now part of the MNA collections. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photographs by Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

<sup>109</sup> Ironically, most of the objects displayed in the 1893 Exhibition would end up at Museo de Ultramar after the exhibition closed.

The CHamoru items at the 1893 Exhibition were contributed by Luis de los Santos Fontordera, Governor of the Marianas in 1891 (Driver 2005). Unfortunately, according to the exhibition catalogue, most of the human remains arrived in a terrible state, broken into pieces (Puig y Larraz 1893: 4). Their trajectory after the exhibition is not documented. The artefacts, on the other hand, eventually became part of the Santa-Olalla collection at Museo Arqueológico Nacional (MAN)<sup>110</sup> (Alonso Pajuelo, personal communication). Parts of the Santa-Olalla archaeological collection were transferred to MNA in 2015, including several CHamoru artefacts (DE270-71 and DE275-79; Fig. 30). At the 1893 Exhibition, they were exhibited in the Philippines section (Puig y Larraz 1893; Rodrigo del Blanco 2017b: 66), reinforcing the notion that the Mariana Islands were subsumed within the broader conceptualisation of *Filipinas* as a complex politico-cultural entity. The exhibition, which commemorated the ‘discovery’ and conquest of the Americas – events that marked the beginning of centuries of Spanish colonialism in both the Americas and the Pacific – framed these objects as colonial *curios* acting as tributes to the achievements and conquests of the Spanish Empire.

## **Shifting meanings at Museo Nacional de Antropología (1908-onwards)**

At a later point in time, CHamoru objects were circulated to MNA either from MB-U, MAN or a different location. MNA was founded as Museo Anatómico in 1875 by Pedro González Velasco.<sup>111</sup> After Velasco’s death in 1882 the museum and its

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<sup>110</sup> Julio Martínez Santa-Olalla was a Spanish archaeologist. As a fascist, he managed to secure high positions during the Francoist dictatorship (1939-1975) thanks to his influential contacts. His writing praised a Spanish-Celtic-Arian racial origin. For years, he directed the Municipal Archeological Institute in Madrid (Schammah Gesser 2014), where he amassed a large private collection of archaeological artefacts. In the 1950s, Santa-Olalla’s differences with the regime, that had moderated its discourse in an attempt to open up to the Western world, meant that he lost his position. Some of his collections were acquired by the Archaeological Institute, which then became Museo San Isidro (Quero Castro 2015) while others were sold to MAN by his relatives after his death in 1973 (MAN, n.d.).

<sup>111</sup> Pedro González Velasco (1815-1882), popularly known as Dr Velasco, was a Spanish surgeon, physician and anthropologist. For a few years he worked as a surgeon, with a particular interest in human anatomy. He used the money he amassed as a famous doctor to travel and gather anatomical and ethnographic collections from around the world (Sánchez Gómez 2020). In 1864 he founded the Sociedad Antropológica de Madrid, and in 1875 he founded Museo Anatómico (now MNA) as his personal project to hold his collections. Given Dr Velasco’s profession and his ‘obsession with anatomy and necrophilia’ (Sánchez Gómez 2014, author’s translation) the museum’s founding collections consisted mainly of anatomical specimens, including the dry skin and skeleton of Agustín Luengo Capilla, the famous *gigante extremeño* (giant from Extremadura), alongside minerals, plants, animals, antiquities and numerous ethnographic objects.

collections were sold to the state. In 1890, to adjust to European standards of museological practice, state collections were reorganised (Martín Albaladejo et al. 2021: 34): ethnographic objects coming from Dr Velasco's Museum were accessioned by Museo de Ciencias Naturales. In 1908, these were transferred to MNA, except for those objects considered 'antiquities' which were circulated to MAN, where they have remained (Romero de Tejada 1992: 15-16). Throughout the years, MNA has undergone many transformations, several of which have been reflected in the change of institutional name. This section explores the intersections between institutional transformations and the different interpretations that have been attributed to CHamoru objects at MNA.

### **Arrival and establishment of Museo de Antropología, Etnografía y Prehistoria (1908-1939)**

The period from 1908 to 1910 was a time of significant administrative restructuring within the Spanish museological system (Schammah Guesser 2014). Around 1908, MB-U closed and the Directors of the National Library and the archaeological, science and anthropological museums distributed its collections between their institutions (Ramírez Martín and Domínguez Ortega 2013: 20). Most of the objects from the 1887 Exhibition were transferred to Dr Velasco's Museum (at the time, as mentioned before, administratively a section of Museo de Ciencias Naturales). In 1910, however, by Royal Decree, the Anthropology section of MCN became independent and was transformed into Museo de Antropología, Etnografía y Prehistoria. The museum's priorities and understanding of the collections (which between 1890 and 1910 had been considered under the lens of natural history) shifted quickly with this change, with ethnographic objects deemed less important due to the lack a defined scientific discipline for interpretation (Kaepller 2011: 1). Manuel Antón y Ferrández, became the first director of the newly formed museum (Romero de Tejada 1992: 17; Carretero Pérez 1994). In this context, the museum followed the doctrines of early twentieth century anthropology, without fully abandoning the ideas of 'exoticism' and 'otherness'.

While conducting research in 2022, a previously unknown catalogue of objects, transferred presumably in 1908<sup>112</sup> from MB-U to the anthropological museum, was

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<sup>112</sup> Although the final number on the date that appears in the document is blurry, it is reasonable to assume that it would be from 1908 as that is the year when, according to other documentation, MB-U

found in MNA's library by Patricia Alonso, curator of Americas and Oceania at MNA (*Relación de objetos* 1908?). This important piece of archival evidence sheds light on how CHamoru objects were interpreted during this period. The catalogue is organised by geographic area and type of material, although only the former has been consulted for this thesis. One section lists the objects from the Mariana Islands and another one lists those from the Caroline Islands and Palau (Ibid). Most, but not all, of the Micronesian objects in today's MNA collection can be matched to those on the lists.

Of particular interest, however, are the errors found in the document, which provide insight into the difficulties encountered during the transfer of objects between institutions. The 'sling' exhibited by the Governor of the Mariana Islands, for example, appears under the 'Caroline Islands' list. So do some of the ancient CHamoru artefacts (*higam, acho' atupat* and shell spoons). The first, furthermore, are said to have been donated by José Sainz de Baranda, who was a Colonial Secretary of the Philippines government at the time (Sawyer 2011: 50). The 1887 Catalogue, however, lists the donation of these artefacts to Mariano Fausto and Francisco Olive. This suggests that some objects may have been wrongly catalogued when accessioned by MNA, and that these mistakes may have been perpetuated into the present. Moreover, some of the objects listed in the entry catalogue (*Relación de objetos* 1908?) are 'missing' or miscatalogued in MNA. For instance, the 'braid of a CHamoru woman', which is documented as having been added to the permanent collection on that date, is not listed among the anatomical or artefactual collections today and is perhaps 'lost' within the museum. Cataloguing discrepancies, including misclassification and loss, significantly complicate efforts to reconstruct these objects' origins and acquisition contexts. The difficulties in tracing these objects not only limit historical and scholarly inquiry but also impact the contemporary CHamoru community seeking to engage with their cultural heritage in different ways (e.g. the case of the Hornbostel collection at the Bishop Museum, see Bevacqua 2024).

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closed and its collections were transferred to MNA. However, as there is no definite evidence of it, I have decided to cite the date with an interrogation mark.



Figure 31: Main gallery at Museo de Antropología, Etnografía y Prehistoria in the 1920s. We can observe that the collections were arranged typologically, following museological trends popular in other European countries at the time. Using this display method, museums wanted to establish hierarchies between cultures grounded on perceived ‘stages of development’. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología.

During this period (1910s-1940s), CHamoru, Filipino and Micronesian objects may have been displayed. A photograph from the 1920s shows a view of the museum’s permanent exhibit from the first floor (Fig. 31). While it is difficult to pinpoint any CHamoru objects in the display cases, it is noticeable that the museum followed a typological display mode: objects were arranged by type with weapons, hats and baskets visible in the photograph. Following a Social Darwinist approach, this display established a simplistic hierarchy of human societies (‘savagery’, ‘barbarism’ and ‘civilisation’) according to the perceived ‘phases of evolution’ of their material culture. During this period, the museum, directed by Manuel Antón, became a snapshot of the discipline of anthropology at the time, heavily informed by Antón’s evolutionist and monogenist vision and his relationship with French institutions. The objects displayed were used by the curators to reproduce the racial hierarchies proclaimed by

anthropologists of the time, culturally redefining them (Kopytoff 1986: 67) as objects of complex anthropological enquiry. As Harrison notes, ‘museums... had a function of providing an ordered model of culture that reinforced revolutionary notions of social and technological progress’ (2013: 9).

### **Museo Nacional de Etnología (1939-1975)**

In 1936, General Francisco Franco, alongside other high-ranking military officers, carried out a military coup against the democratically elected left-wing government coalition. Three years of cruel Civil War resulted in the victory of Franco’s forces, with the support of the German and Italian fascist regimes, and the start of thirty-six years of military dictatorship in Spain (1939-1975). The dictatorship would, in many respects, entail a setback in Spanish sociocultural, political and scientific policies (Sánchez Gómez 1992; Schammah Gesser 2014). The last were encapsulated in the creation of the Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC, Spanish National Research Council) in November 1939.<sup>113</sup> The Francoist scientific imaginary that would govern CSIC during the dictatorship, and particularly during the first few years, would be a fascist national ideology that promulgated the greatness of the Spanish nation (Urquijo Goitia 2007: 259). Science, in this sense, was at the service of the state, as highlighted in the following official document:

In the most important of times and circumstances, *Hispanidad* put its spiritual strength into creating a universal culture. This should be, thus, the noblest of ambitions of contemporary Spain that, against the poverty and paralysis of recent years, feels the need to renew its glorious scientific tradition (Jefatura del Estado, 1939, author’s translation).

The text carries on by explaining how science is to be restored to its former glory with the restoration of the ‘Christian classical unity of science of the eighteenth century’ (*Ibid*): a very different, and in many respects backward-looking, conception of science inspired by Enlightenment Doctrines. Simultaneously, scientific racism became prominent again in Spanish scientific discourses. Under this ideological umbrella, racial and colonial hierarchies were emphasised by those scientists writing under the regime. The concept of *Hispanidad* highlighted in the text would be crucial in the treatment of ethnographic collections from the Spanish colonies during the military regime (see below).

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<sup>113</sup> For a better understanding of CSIC’s creation process, see Puig-Samper Mulero 2007.

With this new organisation of scientific institutions, national museums suddenly fell under CSIC's administration and were compelled to follow its ideological guidelines. Museo de Antropología, Etnografía y Prehistoria changed its name to Museo Nacional de Etnología (Sánchez Gómez 2020: 256) and until 1952 became part of the newly established anthropological Instituto Bernardino Sahagún (IBS) (see Sánchez Gómez 1992). This change of name followed a change in dogma. Francoist Anthropology focused particularly on Spanish 'regional ethnology' or folklorism (Brandes 2011), in search of a 'national being, expressed in the rural landscape and ancestral cultural production' (Rodríguez Mediano 2007: 349, author's translation). This idea was contingent on studies of physical anthropology, eugenics and the search for a 'better Spanish race' which, in turn, emerged from nazi and fascist discourses (Sánchez Gómez 1992: 34, 41). This resignification of Spanish anthropology was led by José Pérez de Barradas, who directed the IBS and the museum between 1939 and 1952. Pérez de Barradas argued for the civilising nature of Spanish National-Catholicism and the inferiority of colonised peoples (Schammah Gesser 2014). He understood ethnography as 'the study of the whole of the human culture' and, in a revisionist fashion, argued for Spain's need to promote and remember the 'glory of the Spanish empire and praise its colonising and missionary work all around the world' (Pérez de Barradas 1947: 24, author's translation).

The museum also followed this new dogma, catalysed under the term *Hispanidad*. This concept instrumentalised the Spanish colonial past and its peoples as a testimony of Spain's greatness and its universal mission of exploration and Catholic evangelisation (Marcilahy 2014; Schammah Gesser 2014). Furthermore, the concept revolved around a neocolonial ideology, born of the loss of the Spanish colonial empire and rooted in Catholic religion and racial, sexual and colonial hierarchies (Suárez-Navad et al. 2024: 2). The purpose of the museum, in this way, became to praise the Spanish Empire and past grandeur.<sup>114</sup> The following passage by Pérez de Barradas suggests this:

This Spanish Museum, as a testimony of our explorers, missionaries and colonial officers... must underline the Spanish colonising enterprise, whose glory has been clouded by the black legend (*leyenda negra*<sup>115</sup>) (1947: 5-6, author's translation).

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<sup>114</sup> The use of museums for the spread of fascist propaganda was a tool used by other fascist regimes, such as in Italy (Dyson 2019).

<sup>115</sup> *Leyenda negra* is an alleged historiographical tendency consisting of anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic propaganda. It originated in the sixteenth century as a political weapon used by Spain's European rivals

During the military dictatorship, the museum's collections were distributed on its three floors into three sections: 'savagery', 'barbarism' and 'civilisation' (MNA n.d., author's translation), which, to some extent, continued the legacy of the previous permanent display. Museo de Etnología, alongside the newly founded Museo de América and Museo del Pueblo Español (Museum of the Spanish People), however, served as ideological and propagandistic tools of the Spanish dictatorship, aimed to emphasise the glory of Spanish conquest and folkloric traditions vis-à-vis the 'savage and barbaric peoples they had colonised' (Ibid). Colonial collections, then, were regarded as trophies of conquest,<sup>116</sup> meant to be displayed as a celebration of the nation's colonial history.



Figure 32: Vitrines of the Marianas and Caroline Islands at Museo Nacional de Etnología (ca. 1940–1979). CHamoru and Micronesian objects are displayed mixed together, with no labels to identify or contextualise them. This suggests that Micronesian and CHamoru cultures were essentially understood as a unit. Curiously, a malangan bird figure is displayed in the vitrines dedicated to 'Micronesia'. This confusion could arise from the object being wrongly catalogued as a 'Carolinian bird figure' (Miyagi 1975). ©Museo Nacional de Antropología.

(particularly the English and the Dutch) in an attempt to demonise the Spanish Empire and its people. Although the existence of the sixteenth and seventeenth Spanish black legend is generally accepted in academia, aspects of it are still debated. Roca Barea's recent best-seller *Imperiofobia y leyenda negra* (2016) supports the existence of the Spanish *leyenda negra* by trying to refute the bases of the most negative theories about the past of the Spanish Empire. This ideology is replicated by right wing supporters who use it as an argument against the 'woke ideology' that is 'cancelling' them (Suárez-Navad 2024: 2). However, *Imperiofilia y el populismo nacionalcatólico* (Villacañas 2019) challenges Roca Barea's book. By analysing the darkest parts of the history of Spain and its most controversial figures, Villacañas argued that Roca Barea's book is full of historical errors and that it is supporting the Spanish National-Catholic ideology, widely disseminated by Franco and the Spanish right.

<sup>116</sup> In this section I use the word trophies to refer to the symbols of military and colonial success.

Figure 32 shows two of Museo Nacional de Etnología's cases (53 and 54) displayed on the first floor, which was dedicated to 'savagery' (Pérez de Barradas 1947: 109-110). These were photographed sometime between 1940 and 1979.<sup>117</sup> In them, CHamoru and Micronesian objects from the 1887 Exhibition are shown mixed together; no text accompanies the cases, showcasing the director's lack of interest in the objects' context. Furthermore, Pérez de Barradas fails to distinguish between Yapese and CHamoru cultural practices, suggesting that his museological focus was on the objects' aesthetic qualities (see Pérez de Barradas 1947: 109-110). This is evident in the arrangement of the objects seen in the photographs: ancient CHamoru tools, a *quichala* (ladle), *tabos* (coconut containers), *guehas* (fans) and a *kostat tengguat* (basket) are displayed over Yapese cloths, for example. Similarly, the CHamoru *kåmyo* (coconut grater) can be spotted between the parts of a Micronesian loom. To showcase Micronesian people's 'backward' society living in a permanent ethnographic present, the museum guide only included information on Yapese culture, regarded as ethnographically more 'authentic' than CHamoru society at the time. This display presents another way of exhibiting otherness and reinforcing hierarchies based purely on the material characteristics of the objects, framing them as trophies of colonial supremacy.

Through a complex reconstruction of the past and the present, CHamoru artefacts displayed during the Francoist era were presented as examples of a 'primitive', homogeneous and static Micronesian culture, frozen in time and place. Furthermore, they were transformed into symbols of nostalgia for the military regime, essentially serving as neocolonial trophies to legitimise the 'heroic' acts of Spanish imperialism.

### **Museo Nacional de Antropología (1975-onwards)**

Franco died in November 1975 with no clear successor to continue his totalitarian project. The years after his death saw a transition to democracy where not only the political system and structures of the state changed, but all of the associated state institutions underwent significant transformations. In this context, and following changes happening in museums worldwide, MNA gradually abandoned its colonialist bias. Under the direction of Pilar Romero de Tejada (1983-2013), the permanent

<sup>117</sup> The original caption does not specify when the photo was taken, only that it belongs to the period between 1940 and 1979. Pérez de Barradas' guide of the museum (1947: 109-110), however, already places these artefacts on display in 1947, two years after its re-inauguration as Museo de Etnología.

exhibition was re-arranged: the collections were distributed into geographic regions that aimed to let the public ‘appreciate some of the cultural similarities between peoples so far away in space and time’ (Romero de Tejada 1992: 28, author’s translation). As a result, in 1993, Museo de Etnología became the current Museo Nacional de Antropología (MNA). This transformation wanted to overcome the ‘dichotomy between us and them (*nos/otros*)... and to spread the values of pluralism and intercultural understanding’ (Carretero Pérez, 1994: 209, author’s translation). This new museum paradigm, which revisited, albeit still reproduced, earlier conceptions of human divisions in favour of a humanistic conception of all cultures being equal but different, also included the re-numbering of the collections (Real Decreto 694/1993, del 7 de mayo), inscribing new object numbers onto them and giving them a new identity (Wingfield 2013: 75-76). Furthermore, six CHamoru objects were accessioned by MNA in the 1980s. They were collected and donated by Maria Teresa Arias,<sup>118</sup> a Spanish missionary belonging to the Mercenarias Misioneras de Berriz order. Arias travelled around the Pacific and collected contemporary adornments and decorations, which she in turn donated to MNA (Fig. 33).

The new organisation of the permanent display into regional sections, specifically Asia, Africa and America, and the museum’s new overarching concept, did not give space to Pacific objects to be on display, relegating them to the stores and accumulating yet another life stage<sup>119</sup> (Gosden and Marshall 1999). Although this curatorial decision could be explained by the constraints of available space, it is more likely a matter of practical priorities: with three floors, each assigned to a single continent, the museological plan could only accommodate the representation of the three largest continents. CHamoru weaver Roquin Siongco believes that ‘they only put out certain things that they deem worthy’ (interview, 26 March 2024), establishing hierarchies of priorities and importance.

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<sup>118</sup> Maria Teresa Arias was a Spanish missionary, journalist and researcher who worked mostly in Japan and Guam. She became an avid collaborator of the Micronesian Area Research Center (MARC) and the University of Guam, where she helped with the location and translation of Spanish documents pertaining to Micronesia (aep 2019). She also founded the Spanish Islas del Pacífico Cultural Association in 1986. She passed away in 2019.

<sup>119</sup> For a long time (difficult to establish for how long), CHamoru and Pacific objects have been in storage. They have only been on display for temporary exhibitions, e.g. CHamoru objects were displayed at the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition (see Chapters 5 and 6). Other Pacific objects were on display at the *Paraisos Perdidos* exhibition in 2007.

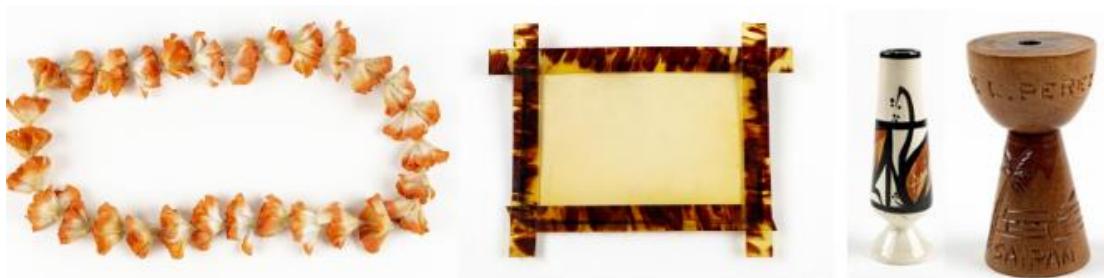


Figure 33: From left to right: fake flower necklace [CE7353], turtle shell frame [CE7360], ceramic vase [CE7359] and *latte*-shaped incense burner [CE7358]. These objects were collected by Spanish missionary Maria Teresa Arias in the 1980s in the Mariana Islands and donated to MNA. ©Museo Nacional de Antropología. Photographs by Javier Rodríguez Barrera.

CHamoru objects kept in MNA are stored in two main areas of the museum, separated from one another and scattered in storage cabinets amongst Filipino and other Pacific collections. Some of the objects are stored under the main display cases of floor 1 of the museum (the section dedicated to Asia). This location (chosen for the lack of space in other storage areas) does not facilitate access: collection visits can only happen on Mondays, when the museum is closed to the public, and the dim lighting in the room complicates proper interaction with the objects. The rest are kept in the basement of the building where the storage room dedicated to Asian collections is located. To get to this room, one must venture into the depths of the museum's structure and descend through a spiral staircase. The Asia storage room is a cold, white, large room full of rows and rows of compressed storage cabinets. This seemingly aseptic, timeless environment, a 'technology of containment', favours the feeling that the objects are 'frozen' and anchored to the date when they were created (Dominguez Rubio 2020: 149, 157). However, the room is not hermetically sealed against dampness and other atmospheric forces that accelerate the decay of the objects it contains.

While they are in storage, CHamoru objects are in a deactivated, sort of 'inbetween' (Basu 2017) phase and space. Domínguez Rubio argues that museum storages are 'not simply a negative space of memory whose only value resides in offering a vision of the forgotten, the excluded and the unvalued', but rather 'in-between spaces containing all those artworks caught between presence and absence' (2020: 149). While there are some conservation benefits to caring for objects in storage units (Dudley 2010: 11), some representatives of Indigenous communities have repeatedly argued against this practice, claiming that when cultural objects are stored in cold storage units, they become deactivated (Isaac 2011; Phillips 2011) or preserved

in ways that conflict with their sacred importance or their intended life cycle (Küchler 2002), often violating important cultural rules. Museum regimes of access are also a problem, making it extremely difficult for descendants of makers to visit them (Isaac 2011: 96). In this context, the storage of CHamoru objects in MNA places them in a ‘comatose’, ‘new normal’ state (Dudley 2021: 88-89). Occasional disruptions, such as being viewed by a researcher or community member (Adams and Thomas 2022: 18) and being cared for or prepared for exhibition, briefly interrupt this static life (Dudley 2017: 47).

For CHamoru slinger Roman dela Cruz it is deeply traumatic to see his heritage moved ‘from box to box’ within storage facilities, he advocates for the display of CHamoru objects kept at MNA (personal communication, 30 November 2023). Dudley, however, argues that to be liminal does not mean to be frozen and unchanging; it means to be in a potentially transformative state, in between two other conditions in which one can participate fully in ‘normal’ life (2021: 54). Recent shifts in Spanish cultural policy have led to the formation of commissions for the decolonisation of both the MNA and Museo de América (Ministerio de Cultura 2024), aligning with global debates on restitution and decolonisation. The MNA commission, with expert input, aims to redevelop its permanent exhibition space, as outlined by Patricia Alonso Pajuelo, Curator for the Americas and Oceania (2018). Although it is not possible to analyse this proposal at length, suffice it to say that it strives to eliminate the current regional divisions and to substitute them with thematic ones where objects from different cultural groups, including those in Oceania and Europe, are exhibited together in more dynamic entanglements, incorporating Indigenous points of view on different themes and objects.

MNA’s contingency plan to reform the permanent exhibition will hopefully be materialised in late 2025 or early 2026 if everything goes according to plan (Ministerio de Cultura 2024). When it happens, it will be a new chapter in the life of CHamoru objects, as some of them will be put on display again (Patricia Alonso, personal communication, 9 July 2024), this time as agents that tell the (hi)stories of the people who created them. Moreover, the museum’s policy on collaboration with communities plans to enhance access to and support Indigenous research on the CHamoru collections, fostering reconnection. However, the extent of engagement and transformation of the museum into a more democratic, participatory institution will depend on available funding from both the museum, the state and the community.

## Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the different narratives attached to CHamoru objects kept in Spain as they have been circulated, displayed and interpreted in different ways between 1887 and 2021. The itineraries of this group of objects through institutions reveals how museum practices and scientific discourses in Spain have evolved, shaping the narratives attached to the objects they house. Their journeys, shaped by Spain's museum system, historical shifts and evolving governmental and scientific discourses, redefined their meanings and roles. Initially displayed as colonial *curios*, these objects were framed by late-nineteenth-century ideologies and scientific understandings. Over the years, the objects have been variously interpreted as objects of anthropological enquiry, trophies of Spanish imperialism and, more recently, as stored liminal objects with the potential for re-activation. In 2021, some of these objects were re-displayed at MNA at the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition. Part III of this thesis focuses on the re-assemblage of materials, people and knowledge for this exhibition, as well as on how it served as a forum of self-representation for contemporary CHamoru people.

# PART III:

## COLLABORATIVE MOTIONS



Figure 34: View of the *Inafa' Maolek* section of the *BIBA CHamoru: Cultura e Identidad en las Islas Marianas* collaborative exhibition, Museo Nacional de Antropología, November 2021.

‘Indigenous wisdom tells us that the soul of a people lives on through the survival of its language and culture and surpasses the most testing of times. These inheritances underpin the intangible heritage of many communities, including ours, and preserves the unique character of our clan. It is our spiritual endowment to each generation’ Lourdes A. Leon Guerrero (Governor) & Joshua F. Tenorio (Lieut Gov) in Paulino and Flores 2023: xvi

## Prologue

The concluding part of this thesis explores the *BIBA CHamoru: Cultura e Identidad en las Islas Marianas* exhibition, organised by Museo Nacional de Antropología (MNA) in Madrid in 2021. The general focus of Part III is on collaboration, as emphasised in the title ‘collaborative motions’. In particular, it examines how collaboration involves a variety of multi-localised actors, and how collaborative processes influence the circulation, representation and display of objects, people and knowledge in the contemporary world. By recognising the political agency of museums, Part III further argues that museums can serve as platforms for amplifying underrepresented narratives, such as the CHamoru and Micronesian, expressed in their own terms. In addition, collaborative exhibits shape the public sphere, influencing broader societal discussions on issues such as representation, governance, co-curation and decolonisation.

Part III includes two chapters that analyse the *BIBA CHamoru* collaborative exhibition from two points of view. Chapter 5 explores the strategies employed by the curators of *BIBA CHamoru* to re-assemble (Byrne et al. 2011; Harrison et al. 2013) materials and knowledge from all over the world to craft the multiple interconnected narratives about the past and present of the Mariana Islands that composed the exhibition. Chapter 6 looks at how *BIBA CHamoru* has served as a platform for self-representation (Jacobs 2012; Lonetree 2012; Clifford 2013) in Spain, offering CHamoru artists, cultural practitioners and community members a space to explore issues of identity-building and showcase their island heritage within a European context. While Chapter 5 focuses on the circulation AND display of objects, people and knowledge from the Mariana Islands to Spain, Chapter 6 explores their agency AND display within MNA.

### **BIBA CHamoru: Cultura e Identidad en las Islas Marianas (2021)**

Two parallel processes led to the conception of *BIBA CHamoru*. On the one hand, around 2019 the Government of Guam created the *I Estoria-ta Inetnon Estudion I Umali'e' yan Umafana' I Taotao Hiyong Yan Taotao Tano* commission to

commemorate the 500th anniversary of Magellan's landing in the island. The commission, presided by Adrian Cruz (former senior policy adviser at the Government of Guam), was led by the Department of CHamoru Affairs, and included representatives from the University of Guam (UoG): Carlos Madrid (Director of the Micronesian Area Research Center) and David Atienza (anthropologist), the Guam Preservation Trust, the *Kumision i Fino CHamoru'*, the Guam Museum, the Young Men League of Guam and a representative from the civil society (Roman de la Cruz, slinger) and of the seafarers (Sandra Okada of TASA). As part of the commission's process of re-writing the history of this encounter from a CHamoru perspective, the Government of Guam officially invited the King of Spain to attend the commemoration. In response, Spain sent a naval delegation in the training ship *Juan Sebastián de Elcano* (Carlos Madrid, personal communication, 24 February 2025). Aside from being one of the most representative ships of the Spanish Navy, *Juan Sebastián de Elcano* is named after Magellan's second in command, making it the perfect vessel to represent Spain in the commemorations of the voyage. Although the celebrations took place in a socially distanced and modified way due to the COVID-19 outbreak, Spanish delegates expressed Spain's regret for the damages and pain caused by the Spanish during Magellan's voyage (Underwood 2022: 15). All in all, this event was a catalyst for the establishment of a bicultural dialogue that addressed the interpretation of Magellan's circumnavigation from different vantage points. This was expressed by the President of the Department of CHamoru Affairs, Melvin Won Pat-Borja, in the following terms:

The historical and educational side of the conversation is absolutely relevant, but I think also embedded in all of this is the opportunity for healing. It definitely is our intention to not only address the gaps in the history and the way that it's told, but also to correct some of the things that rob us of our dignity (in Leon Guerrero 2021).

On the other hand, Spanish archaeologists Sandra Montón-Subías and Almudena Hernando Gonzalo, who had conducted some research on the woven items from the 1887 Exhibition kept at MNA, proposed to the director of MNA (Fernando Sáez Lara) holding an exhibition in Spain to showcase CHamoru history and culture. Upon accepting the idea and suggesting that it could be included in the *Démosle la vuelta al mundo* cycle of exhibitions, which critically commemorated the 500th

anniversary of Magellan's circumnavigation,<sup>120</sup> it was agreed that the Spanish Ministry of Culture would fund the project. MNA then contacted Carlos Madrid and David Atienza (the two Spanish researchers at UoG) to join the curatorial team alongside Montón-Subías and Hernando Gonzalo. Aside from the conceptual development of the exhibition, Madrid and Atienza were tasked with contacting and bringing CHamoru partners on board. Their long-term presence as Spaniards working and living in the Marianas enabled them to serve as the main points of contact in the Marianas, having already created networks with local institutions, artists, cultural practitioners and key community figures. Thus, in a way they functioned as intermediaries between the museum and Indigenous collaborators. Moreover, given their involvement in the *I Estoria-ta* commission, both initiatives linked up as part of the general commemorations of Magellan's circumnavigation. While the core curatorial team was formed by Spanish researchers, working in collaboration with MNA staff, CHamoru partners were invited to participate through the selection and submission of artworks, videos, objects, texts and testimonies, among others, as well as to provide input on the exhibition content (Carlos Madrid, informal conversation, 24 February 2025). This enabled them to represent themselves through their chosen media in a manner of their own determination.

The exhibition was divided into six sections that followed the linear history of the Marianas archipelago (see Fig. 35 for exhibition plan). However, following the CHamoru concept of *mo'na* (circular time or eternal return), visitors to the exhibition could choose to start from the 'beginning' of history: the first migrations, or the 'end': the present. The 'first' section was called *Agad'na: Humanity arrived to the Marianas* and introduced the population of the islands from the 'scientific' and the 'Indigenous' points of view. The next section, titled *Latte: A culture on solid pillars*, introduced CHamoru pre-colonial society (also referred to as *latte* society and ancient CHamoru society). Objects from the 1887 Exhibition alongside contemporary 'versions' of themselves were showcased. *Matao: First Contact with the West* and *Mestisu: Islander*,

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<sup>120</sup> The exhibition series began with *Rio Somos Nós!* exploring Indigeneity and decolonisation through community museums in Rio de Janeiro. It was followed by *Estrecho de Magallanes. La frontera del agua*, focusing on Indigenous communities in the Strait of Magellan and their relationship with the environment. The exhibition that followed focused on the climate crisis and the Pacific's 'plastic island.' This chapter's focus, *BIBA CHamoru*, was followed by *Philipinas Ngayon. Filipinas Ahora*, a photographic installation by Xyza Cruz Bacani reflecting the impact of COVID-19 on Filipino identity. *Destino Molucas* explored the spice trade and its historical significance, while *¡Somos Afro!* highlighted the experiences of Afro-descendants in Spain. The cycle concluded with an exhibition on Cape Verdean migrants in northern Spain's mining communities.

*Indian... the Marianas become colonies* followed the *Latte* section. These two sections critically reflected on the three centuries of Spanish colonialism in the Marianas and the influences brought about through cultural contact. Objects from the 1887 Exhibition were displayed in these sections to portray the daily lives of nineteenth-century CHamorus. *Fanhasso: The Marianas amongst the Pacific powers* included a timeline of the recent history of the Marianas as they continued to be subject to colonial rule. Finally, *Inafa' Maolek: The Marianas as a Cultural Crossroad*, presented the contemporary Marianas as a multicultural hub where local artists and cultural practitioners integrate ancestral practices with modern techniques.<sup>121</sup>

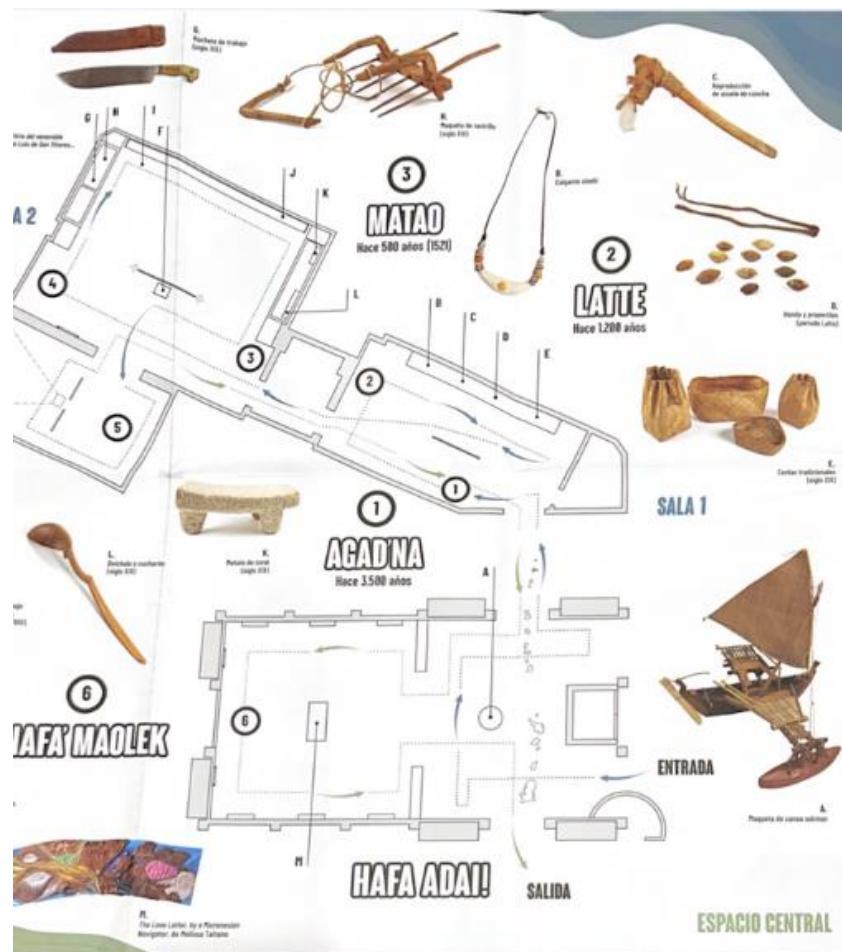


Figure 35: Section of the plan of the exhibition space found in the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition brochure. Individual objects and drawings are numbered and located in the floor space.

*BIBA CHamoru* followed in the steps of a previous exhibition organised by Spain, although taking a very different approach. In 1998, the Spanish Ministerio de

<sup>121</sup> For an extended description of the different sections of *BIBA CHamoru* see Ferrández Gaudens, Flores and Flores 2023. The content of these sections will also be analysed in more depth in Chapters 5 and 6.

Educación y Cultura organised the *Islas del Pacífico: El legado español* exhibition, curated by Javier Galván Guijo and held at MNA. In a similar way to *BIBA CHamoru*, this exhibition was framed as part of the 100th year anniversary of 1898 when Spain lost its last colonies (Ministerio de Educación y Cultura 1998). *Islas del Pacífico* focused on the whole Micronesian region that was once a Spanish territory and focused on its joint history and the Spanish legacies left from the Spanish period, namely archaeological remains and language borrowings. Aside from being showcased in Madrid, the exhibition also travelled to Palau, Guam, Saipan, Yap and Pohnpei (Ibid).

*BIBA CHamoru* was a collaborative project that brought together 16 institutions from Spain, Guam and the CNMI (see Figure 37 for a full list of contributors). Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which delayed the exhibition's initial March 2021 opening, it eventually opened on the 18th of November 2021, with adjustments made to the original plan. Around 25,000 people visited the exhibition while it was open (Carlos Madrid, personal communication, 24 February 2025), a good number considering MNA is one of the most under-visited national Spanish museums. However, *BIBA CHamoru* was a marginal event in the context of the 500th anniversary commemorations. Despite being publicised in local newspapers, news of the exhibition did not reach many people in the Marianas or the diaspora, preventing many CHamorus from attending. Yet, it ultimately served as a catalyst for strengthening future Spanish-CHamoru relations (Herle 2008; Allen and Hamby 2011).

## Chapter 5: Cultural Dialogue, Collaboration and the Eternal Return in the Re-Assemblage of Knowledge

The period between 2019 and 2022 marked the 500th anniversary of Magellan's voyage around the world. During those years, the legacies of the expedition were challenged through the *Démosle la vuelta al mundo* cycle of exhibitions organised by Museo Nacional de Antropología (MNA) in Madrid. The purpose behind *Démosle la vuelta al mundo* was not the exaltation of Magellan's journey; rather, earth's first circumnavigation was used as an excuse to 'showcase the different sociocultural realities of the world we currently live in, with its imbalances, conflicts and opportunities for the future' (Jiménez Díaz and Sáez Lara 2021: 18). It is in this context that *BIBA CHamoru: Cultura e Identidad en las Islas Marianas* was organised. The exhibition commemorated the 500th anniversary through a collaboration between Spanish and CHamoru institutions, artists and cultural practitioners that discursively and inherently aimed to move beyond the colonial asymmetries of the Spanish period in the Marianas.

Recent years have seen the re-assemblage or re-articulation of archival, artefactual, artistic, sonorous, multimedia and other creative materials in both temporary and permanent exhibitions. These have been used as 'laboratories' of knowledge production (Basu 2025: 78) that give rise to future possibilities to engage with museum affordances (Basu 2021: 50). For example, the *[Re:]Entanglements: Colonial Collections in Decolonial Times* project at the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology experimented with bringing together different 'objects, images, artworks, sounds, voices, texts, but also – crucially – people' to 'explore together a difficult history and a challenging problem' to reconstruct the collecting context of Britain's first anthropological surveys of early 20th-century West Africa (Ibid: 78). Following this approach, this chapter examines the various strategies used by the exhibition curators (Sandra Montón Subías, Almudena Hernando Gonzalo, Carlos Madrid and David Atienza) for re-assembling materials and knowledge to construct specific narratives about the Marianas' past and present they sought to present to the public. It also explores how, to construct these assemblages, curators had to carefully negotiate the circulation of selected materials through transnational, multilateral and multiactor networks of social relations. In particular, the curatorial team's established

relationships with specific CHamoru collaborators significantly shaped the selection of contributors for the exhibition, representing a nexus of personal and joint interests (Harrison 2013: 5). A central question spanning from this is: how is collaboration revealed in the ways in which different historical processes are explained through the display of material assemblages in *BIBA CHamoru*, and how did the process of collaboration facilitate access to these materials?

The chapter will *navigate* the exhibition's organisation and interpretation of the 500th anniversary, moving through its various sections to comparatively examine how each re-assembled objects, documents, artworks and the knowledge surrounding them through a collaborative process. However, I also want to emphasise that the collaborative practice was, to some extent, asymmetrical (Boast 2011; Lynch 2011). It was Spanish curators that ultimately selected and contacted CHamoru collaborators, although the latter had the freedom to choose which materials they wanted to contribute, and constructed the exhibition narrative by writing all the texts, with the intellectual control staying in the hands of Spaniards. Yet, input from CHamoru collaborators was requested, provided and negotiated.

The director of MNA, Fernando Sáez, described *BIBA CHamoru* as a 'journey into the past to look towards the future' (in Jiménez Díaz and Sáez Lara 2021: 23). Although the exhibition seemingly followed a historical linear structure, it reflected upon the CHamoru polychronic concept of *mo'na*. *Mo'na* alludes to the idea of the eternal return, where the past continually resurfaces and replays itself in the present and the future. Bevacqua refers to it as 'the time and that which is before us (or in front of us) in time, that which lies ahead of us, but also that which is behind us, that which came before we did' (n.d.b.). This chapter seeks to emphasise how the exhibition integrated this cosmological concept to reinterpret the past and the present in a circular rather than linear fashion. This way, the visitor could choose to start from the 'beginning', the first human settlements 3,500 years ago, or the 'end', the contemporary Marianas. Much like *BIBA CHamoru* used the concept of *mo'na* to disrupt the exhibition's spatiotemporal framework, in this chapter I will use *mo'na* as a metaphor for the process of re-assemblage, where dispersed elements, be they materials, people or knowledge, acted as interconnected points that are destined to reconnect over time.

## Re-assembling knowledge

This chapter considers *BIBA CHamoru* as a social and material re-assemblage (Byrne et al. 2011b: 4), in which documents, objects, artworks, photographs, drawings, knowledge and people from various locations were circulated into MNA to construct a situational narrative that conveyed the (hi)story of the CHamoru people. To engage with the various intersecting topics discussed here, it is essential to establish certain definitions.

Here, I adhere to Harrison's definition of an assemblage as a 'heterogeneous jumble of things that have come together in complicated ways that are difficult to understand' (2013: 21). Building on the work of Latour (1987; 2005), I regard *BIBA CHamoru* as a multiactor relational network where human and non-human agents interacted to constitute the exhibition assemblage. While Harrison argues that assemblages are created 'as part of the engagement of an archaeologist's contemporary classificatory gaze with a series of material remains from the past' (2013: 19), I argue that *BIBA CHamoru* incorporated the curatorial team's contemporary gaze, accompanied by the feedback they got from CHamoru collaborators, and executed through the re-assemblage of material, visual and textual remains from the past AND the present, alluding to the concept of *mo'na*. Thus, this chapter will distinguish between the use of assemblage and re-assemblage. While the former will refer to a *heterogeneous jumble of things* that come together, the latter will be used to emphasise the *process* whereby these things converged in the exhibition, perpetuating and reproducing themselves across time and space. The use of the hyphen stresses circular replication: things that may have been or were previously 'assembled, disassembled, circulated and displayed many times in their histories' were again re-assembled within the exhibition setting (Basu 2021: 47).

The materials re-assembled in *BIBA CHamoru* can be considered, using Latour's terminology, as 'immutable and combinable mobiles'. Latour defines these as objects and texts that, no matter how old they are or the distance from the locations where they were collected, are 'conveniently at hand and combinable at will' (1987: 227). It is their flexible 'combinability' that allows these materials to be re-assembled into new assemblages and 'always have the potential to do new things, not simply to acquire new meanings' (Driver et al. 2021: 9). Despite being created at a distance, both spatially and temporally, from their original sources, these materials can still facilitate

various forms of action in those original locations and beyond. In this sense, exhibition curators selected the documents, objects, artworks and other pieces of documentary evidence most pertinent for the construction of the desired exhibition narrative(s), with a particular focus, although not exclusively, on the joint history of the Mariana Islands and Spain.

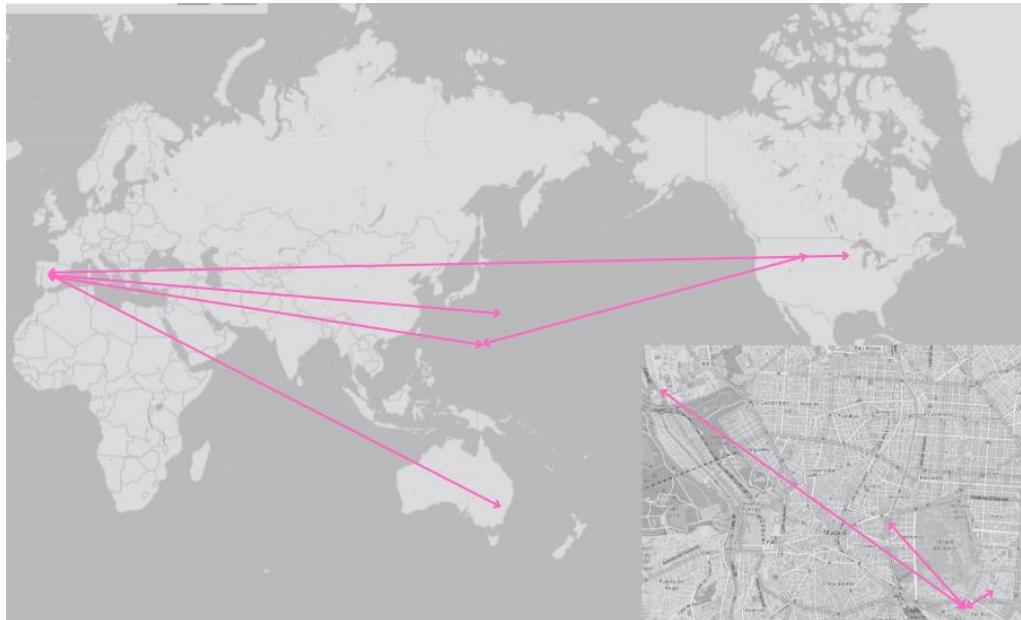


Figure 36: Map of the flows of circulation of objects, people and knowledge internationally re-assembled for the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition. On the bottom right corner is a map of the centre of Madrid to signal the national re-assemblage of documents and objects. Edited by author.

Due to historico-spatial processes of dispersal or disassemblage (Wingfield 2013: 81), textual, visual and artefactual materials pertaining to the history of Spanish colonialism in the Marianas have occasionally been transferred or relocated to different locations (Fig. 36). The ‘legacies of this dispersal’ (Driver et al. 2021: 2) prompted their re-assemblage for *BIBA CHamoru*, acknowledging that not all the necessary components may have survived (Wingfield 2013: 79). In this sense, processes of assemblage need to be examined alongside processes of dispersal (or disassemblage) as they operate together (*Ibid*: 81). This chapter will argue that much like the exchange and trade of objects in historical colonial encounters (Wingfield 2011), contemporary networks of loans and re-assemblage operate through complex ‘meshworks’ (Ingold 2011) of established and evolving social relations between institutions and individuals. However, collaborative exhibitions, just like collecting, are never neutral (Boast 2011; Lynch 2011; Longair and McAleer 2012: 1-2). Rather,

the neocolonial apparatus of ‘collaboration’, often defined in museological analysis as the contact zone, is always dependent on the power-knowledge-money structures that shape the discourses around them (Foucault 1974; Boast 2011; Bennett 2017). This process poses the following question: Who controlled the regimes of access to the materials re-assembled for *BIBA Chamoru*, and how was this access negotiated between the keepers and the exhibition’s curatorial team?

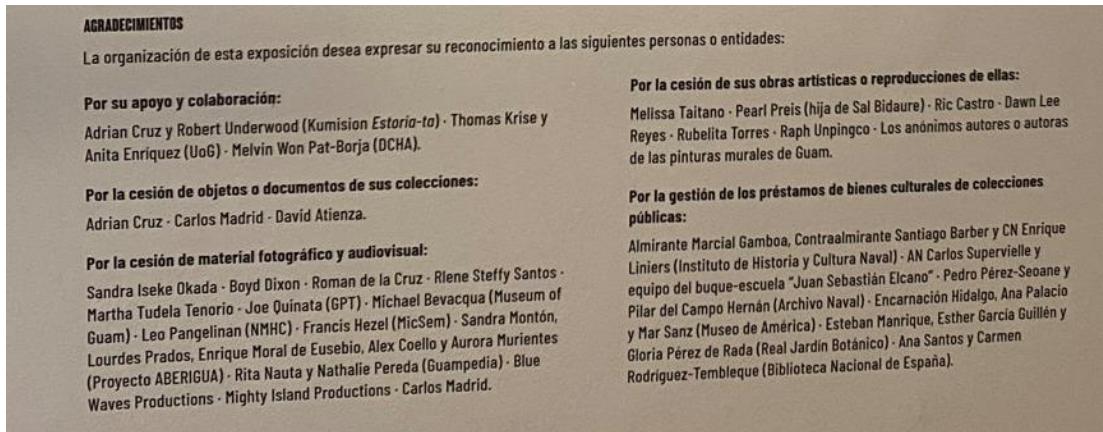


Figure 37: Panel of acknowledgments to every person and/or institution that loaned material for *BIBA Chamoru*. They are grouped in five categories: for their support and collaboration; for the loan of objects and/or documents from their private collections; for the loan of audiovisual and photographic material; for the loan of their artworks or reproductions of their work; and for the loan of cultural artefacts from Spanish public institutions.

Basu argues that ‘dispersed collections create relationships between communities (between museum professionals, different audiences and source communities, for example); they generate networks of exchange that entail obligations and responsibilities’ (2011: 37). In this respect, MNA and the curators of the exhibition had to work around the politics of access and loans to materials. These politics of re-assemblage operated at multi-scalar levels, incorporating people and institutions in and outside of Spain that acted as negotiators, donors, lenders and mediators, among other intermediate forms (Wingfield 2011; Zarobell 2017; Driver et al. 2021). Figure 37 lists the relational assemblage (Herle 2008) of all the collaborators that, through different levels of involvement, worked to construct the exhibition assemblage. This chapter will emphasise the role of the ‘intermediary’ (different people at different points in time, as will be outlined below) who played a significant part in the exhibition-making process, while still acknowledging the importance of the individuals and institutions involved in negotiating these transactions on a personal level.

## Framing the exhibition: 500th year anniversary

As part of the *Demosle la vuelta al mundo* cycle, *BIBA CHamoru* critically commemorated the 500th anniversary of Magellan's landing in Guam, framing the exhibition development process as a moment of re-encounter between the two peoples. This was embodied in the display of a model '*sakman*' canoe in the centre of the exhibition space (Fig. 38). The model was a gift from the Government of Guam to the Spanish Navy given as part of the 500th anniversary commemorations in 2021. It was produced using the materials described by Pigafetta, Magellan's chronicler, during their visit to Guam in 1521: wood, bamboo, pandanus leaves and vegetable fibres, polished with a layer of varnish. The shape of the model canoe, with its distinctive raised ends that finish in a V-shape, is more similar to the style of canoe made in Micronesia, particularly in some of the outer islands of Yap such as Satawal, Puluwat, or Ulithi (for descriptions of Micronesian canoes, see Gladwin 1970: 67 and Haddon and Hornell 1936: 412ff). This contrasts with the ancient *sakman* canoe described by Pigafetta during the Magellan-Elcano Expedition (1521) and illustrated by Anson in 1820, which does not have raised ends (Cunningham 1992: 17). It is possible that this may be a different type of canoe such as a *leklek*, *duding*, *duduli* or *panga*, which were for shorter voyages (Bevacqua n.d.c; Cunningham 1992: 149-151). Another option is that it was interpreted as a *sakman* canoe by the curators of the exhibition, who are not canoe experts. Additionally, this could be a result of the complex history of navigational loss in the Marianas and the subsequent efforts to reconstruct traditional vessels in the absence of extensive precolonial examples. In contemporary times, most CHamoru canoe carvers and navigators rely on the knowledge and practices of their Micronesian counterparts, as nearly every navigation group in the Marianas includes at least two or three Micronesian navigators, predominantly from Yap. This reliance represents a practical adaptation to present-day realities, allowing CHamoru communities to sustain and revitalise seafaring traditions through available means.



Figure 38: Model of a ‘*sakman*’ canoe gifted by the Government of Guam to the Spanish Navy to commemorate the 500th year anniversary of the first encounter between the Spanish and the CHamoru people in 1521 during the Magellan Expedition. On display at the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition at Museo Nacional de Antropología, Madrid.

The model was loaned to MNA by Fundación Museo Naval for the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition, following negotiations between the exhibition curators and key stakeholders within the Spanish Navy. The canoe’s central location in the exhibition itinerary physically and symbolically embodied the main idea of the exhibition: the 1521 encounter of two worlds and its cross-cultural re-interpretation 500 years later, through the re-assemblage of historical and contemporary materials. In his inaugural speech, Fernando Sáez, Director of MNA, referred to the canoe model as the ‘totem’ of the exhibition,<sup>122</sup> as it simultaneously traced the (hi)story of CHamorus and acted as a legacy of who they are as a people. In this sense, Herle argues that a central premise of relational models of understanding is that ‘entities (both objects and people) emerge from (and thus acquire substance, meaning and value through) the relations in which they are enmeshed’ (2008: 58). Thus, the symbolic meaning of the model canoe

<sup>122</sup> Sáez uses the term ‘totem’ to describe the *sakman* canoe in Durkheimian terms, framing it as a symbol or token of a specific community that plays a functional role in the maintenance of social solidarity and collective identity (1915). In Durkheim’s original concept, totems were primarily animal or plant species, a definition that was adopted and further developed by classical anthropologists such as Lévi-Strauss, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, and Franz Boas. Sáez extends the concept to an inanimate object, aligning with Radcliffe-Brown’s broader interpretation of a totem as ‘any object or event which has important effects on the material or spiritual well-being of a society, or anything that represents such an object or event’ (1952: 129).

arose from the relationships established between CHamoru and Spanish peoples and institutions in the process of co-curating *BIBA CHamoru*. The canoe model, furthermore, symbolised how the commemoration of this important event in *BIBA CHamoru* was two-sided, with Spanish and CHamoru peoples bringing their own interpretations to the table.

### Spanish re-interpretation: *Démosle la vuelta al mundo*

*BIBA CHamoru* was one of eight temporary exhibitions presented as part of the *Démosle la vuelta al mundo* series. The cycle was structured around Magellan's voyage, with each exhibition focusing on a specific location where Magellan stopped during his journey. All of them were collaborative exhibitions, or relational multiactor networks (Latour 2005), in which MNA assembled artists, community members and institutions to actively contribute to the exhibition-making process, although the intellectual control remained in the hands of the Spanish curators. The cycle logo featured an upside-down *mapamundi* with a paper boat navigating over it (Fig. 39), symbolising the reversal of Eurocentric narratives surrounding Magellan's circumnavigation of the globe. Moreover, the black colour used in the logo of the 500th year anniversary project (Fig. 39), I would argue, points towards the negative impacts that the voyage had on the local populations of the places it visited.



Figure 39: Logos of the *Démosle la vuelta al mundo* and 500th anniversary of the first voyage around the world projects done by the Spanish Ministry of Culture between November 2019 and January 2023. *Démosle la vuelta al mundo* was a cycle of eight exhibitions done at Museo Nacional de Antropología which aimed to address the legacies of the Magellan Expedition on the local populations of the places the expedition passed through.

This approach to the 500th year anniversary, not as a commemoration of European exploration but as a celebration of the resilience of the people they

encountered, was MNA's way of rewriting the existing narrative. The exhibitions incorporated Indigenous epistemic and ontological points of view, focusing on the potential of local histories to enact alternative discourses (Tuhwai-Smith 1999; Escobar 2008: 23). This perspective contrasted with that of other temporary exhibitions that were organised by other Spanish institutions during that time. While *BIBA CHamoru* was on at MNA, a major exhibition titled *Return Journey (Tornaviaje). Iberoamerican Art in Spain*<sup>123</sup> took place at Museo del Prado. Although it centered on art from the Americas created during the colonial period, the exhibition made no reference to colonialism at any point and the word 'Indigenous' only appeared once. By focusing on artworks by the Spanish and *mestizo* elites, Indigenous forms of art were made invisible, subjugated to foreign colonial artistic expressions. In contrast to *Tornaviaje*, *BIBA CHamoru* and other exhibitions of the *Demosle la vuelta al mundo* cycle addressed the theme of Spanish colonialism and incorporated Indigenous points of view to the exhibition narrative.

### **CHamoru re-interpretation: Culture and Heritage Day**

As part of *BIBA CHamoru*'s commitment to include both sides of the story, the exhibition also incorporated the official Guam-based critical re-interpretation of Magellan's landing. As mentioned before, around 2019, the Government of Guam created a commission to 'ensure that CHamoru perspectives are given respectful place in the recognition of the voyage' in the events commemorating the anniversary (in Limtiaco 2019). As part of the official agenda, Governor Leon Guerrero welcomed the *Juan Sebastián de Elcano* Spanish Navy ship to the coast of Guam, emphasising that 'participating in the commemoration of the circumnavigation and telling our story of the encounter with Magellan will ensure our people's place in history as agents of our own political destiny' (in Office of the Governor 2021). It was in this context that the Guam governmental commission and institutions from the Mariana Islands participated in *BIBA CHamoru*, supporting the re-assemblage of materials from around the world and contributing culturally specific narratives about their past.

However, the commemoration sparked debate within the community, with many questioning whether the event should be celebrated (Bevacqua 2022). For some, the event should never have happened, as it can be interpreted as a celebration of

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<sup>123</sup> More information available from: <https://www.museodelprado.es/actualidad/exposicion/tornaviaje-arte-iberoamericano-en-espaa/5c0fe35b-44d3-56fb-a4ba-c192aab9266c>. Accessed 31/12/2025.

colonialism (Underwood 2022: 12). For others, it allowed for the re-writing of the narrative from a CHamoru point of view (*Ibid*: 13), preventing another ‘ladrones moment’ from happening again (Bevacqua 2022). It is also important to acknowledge that the Government of Guam’s perspective differs from that of the CNMI, where Columbus Day is still recognised as a holiday, coinciding with CNMI Cultural Day. While it may appear that the CNMI continues to celebrate Spain’s conquest, I would suggest that holding their cultural day on the same date represents an Indigenous strategy to reclaim and reframe the holiday.

The curators of *BIBA CHamoru* chose to narrate this first encounter experience by featuring a video of the re-enactment of Magellan’s landing in Guam which was continuously looped in the exhibition; thus, perhaps unintentionally, marginalising the CNMI perspective (Fig. 40). The video, recorded by Carlos Madrid in Guam, was circulated by the author to MNA specifically for the exhibition. Every year around the 6th of March a re-enactment of this event, reinterpreted by members of the CHamoru community, takes place in the southern village of Humåtak. It is organised by the village’s Mayor’s Office, in collaboration with the Guam Preservation Trust. It takes place within the context of Mes CHamoru, a month dedicated to celebrating CHamoru arts, culture and heritage. This commemoration was formerly known as Discovery Day first, then Magellan Day, and has now been re-branded as Culture and Heritage Day. Today, as the discourses around what is commemorated have shifted, the celebration focuses on honouring the culture and people whom Magellan encountered rather than celebrating the ‘discovery’ itself. It is a day that celebrates what it means to be CHamoru and it is, therefore, an event for the community, hosted, organised and performed by them.

During my fieldwork, I attended the 2024 Culture and Heritage Day in Humåtak (Fig. 40). The village, filled with the aromas of barbecue and red rice for the customary fiesta, welcomed community members, visitors and authorities. Huts made from wood and palm leaves were constructed along Humåtak Bay, believed to be where Magellan landed in 1521 according to oral tradition. At one o’clock, the performance began, featuring a narrator who recounted the CHamoru perspective on this canonical event, drawing on and re-writing Western historical accounts. The re-enactment began by depicting ancient CHamoru’s peaceful, self-sustaining lifestyle, characterised by harmony with nature and one another. This tranquility was disrupted when the CHamoru saw a large, unfamiliar vessel approaching their island. Unaware

of the future implications, they extended their customary hospitality, welcoming the pale-skinned visitors with dances and chants, as they had done for previous travellers. When the CHamoru offered gifts but received nothing in return – violating their cultural principle of reciprocity – they took nails from the Spanish ships. In retaliation, Magellan’s men burned the village and killed seven CHamoru men before departing, an incomprehensible act to the CHamoru.



Figure 40: On the left is a photograph of a video of the re-enactment of Culture and Heritage Day recorded by Carlos Madrid and displayed in the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition. On the right, members of the Humåtak community perform at the 2024 Culture and Heritage Day, 4th March 2024. The performance includes a re-enactment of Magellan’s landing on the island of Guam on the 6th of March 1521, told from the CHamoru point of view.

The performance shown in the video follows the same structure that I observed during the 2024 Culture and Heritage Day. In this sense, the video tells the story of how this reinterpretation, a re-assemblage of orally transmitted Indigenous (hi)stories and information from written historical sources, has reshaped the commemoration, turning it from a colonial-inspired holiday into a celebration of CHamoru heritage. Although the facts remain the same ‘where attention is paid and who is given the texture and depth of history shifts. The CHamoru voice and presence is more prominent, as it should be’ Michael Bevacqua writes (2022: 320). The narrative, furthermore, emphasises how, while changed forever by that historical moment, CHamoru people ‘existed and continue to exist, not solely defined by this “discovery”’ (Ibid: 321). By including this multimedia assemblage where different people, voices and movement were brought together, the curators wanted to incorporate the Guam perspective on the 500th anniversary, the one they know best since they live and work there, into the exhibition narrative. Nevertheless, this represents only one of many narratives surrounding this profoundly traumatic historical event, as its

reinterpretations continue to be contested among various islands and social groups within the Mariana Islands.

## Origins

Contemporary CHamoru society is one in which scientific theories of migration and cosmological stories about the creation of the world co-exist rather than exist in opposition.<sup>124</sup> Putting these two perspectives into conversation is one way in which CHamorus are reclaiming their ancestral (hi)stories. To showcase this process, *BIBA CHamoru* included a drawing of the ancestral connections between red ware and CHamoru *saina* (ancestors) by CHamoru artist and director of Sagan Kotturan Chamoru Cultural Center Raph Unpingo (Fig. 41). This contemporary artwork was circulated via Guampedia (community-based encyclopedia), which acted as an intermediary between the artist and the exhibition's curatorial team. The drawing represents a CHamoru *saina* who is presenting a bowl made from red ware pottery full of breadfruit to whoever is in front or to the left of the drawing. In the background, a *sakman* canoe can be seen sailing on the ocean, and fragments of red ware are depicted in the sky. This painting alludes to the connection between ancestral migrations, as explained by modern science (symbolised by the canoe), the physical remnants of those voyages (the archaeological remains of red ware) and the sacred and ritualistic use of pottery by the ancestors. This drawing, I argue, was featured in the exhibition to illustrate the relationship between scientific evidence of migrations and the recognition of these findings as ancestral journeys by the CHamoru people, contributing to the hybridisation of epistemic regimes.

In this section, I will reflect on how the segment of the exhibition called *Agad'na: Humanity arrived to the Marianas* placed Indigenous and Western knowledge systems at the same epistemic level. This process, in a sense, disrupted established hierarchies of epistemological power within the museum, while also reflecting the power imbalance between Spaniards and CHamoru during the exhibition-making process.

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<sup>124</sup> Clifford (2013: 33) reminds us that this happens in many Indigenous societies, where autochthonous origin stories coexist with historical narratives of the past. In particular, many Pacific societies preserve both the origin stories of emerging from the land and being created by mythical beings, as well as the ancestral migration narratives.

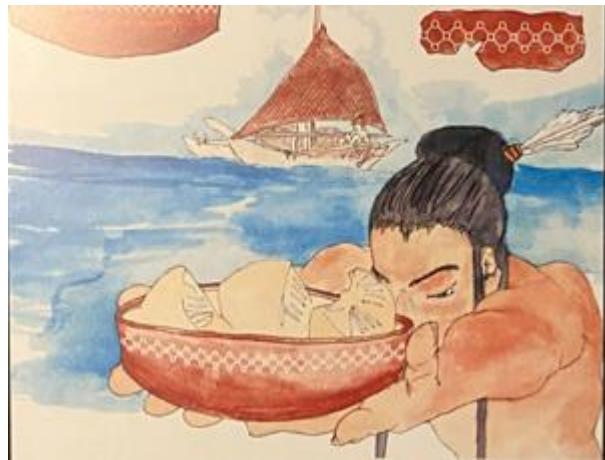


Figure 41: Reproduction of an artwork by Raph Unpingo on display at *BIBA CHamoru*. The drawing represents the ancestral connections between redware pottery and historical migrations, as well as how these connections are interpreted within the contemporary popular imagination in the Marianas.

### Scientific theories of population dispersal

The exhibition included a map showing the different, often contested, waves of migration and settlement of the Pacific and the patterns of culture dispersal from 5,000 to 1,000 years ago (Fig. 42). Techniques such as radiocarbon dating and DNA analysis, amongst many others, have influenced recent archaeological understandings about the dispersal of population in the Pacific (Spriggs and Howes 2022). In the exhibition's map, different waves of migration to different regions of the Pacific were shown through numbered arrows that mark different waves of voyaging, alluding to contested theories of multiple simultaneous and sequential dispersals. The knowledge required to create this graphic assemblage was drawn from various academic sources, reflecting current debates.



Figure 42: Map of the 'scientific' migration history of the Pacific, from 5,000 to 1,000 years ago. It was displayed in *BIBA CHamoru* to showcase the various scientific theories of population dispersals to the Mariana Islands.

Archaeological evidence dates the arrival of humans to the Mariana Islands around 1500 BCE (Carson 2020; 2021). One of the forms of material evidence from this period, made by the first settlers of the Marianas, is the decorated pottery known as red ware.<sup>125</sup> Red ware pottery consists of ‘small, very thin-walled bowls and jars with a red-slipped or painted exterior finish’ (Moore n.d.), with designs similar to those of Lapita pottery. Today, red ware is a symbol and inspiration to many CHamoru artists.<sup>126</sup> In *BIBA CHamoru*, examples of original pieces of red ware ceramics were displayed on a small box. A text panel explained red ware’s significance as the material evidence of CHamoru society’s technological skills and seafaring ability. It also talked about why red ware is important for scientific models of settlement in the Archipelago; they are proof that the movement of people also entailed the circulation of material culture. In this way, *BIBA CHamoru* echoed western epistemologies, mediated through a written tradition. This epistemic regime, in turn, has become widely circulated and is often placed first within the established hierarchy of knowledge systems (Bennett 2013).

### **CHamoru origin story**

Alternatively, or rather, complementarily to the scientific migration theories, the CHamoru origin story of Pontan and Fo’na<sup>127</sup> was told in a video in CHamoru with English subtitles displayed next to the map, providing the exhibition with an additional layer of meaning. The origin story, which historically has been and still is transmitted orally, has been gathered in written format by Anne Perez Hattori (n.d.):

Puntan instructed his sister to take apart his body and create the parts of the world. One of his eyes would become the sun, and the other would be transformed into the moon. Puntan’s [sic] eyebrows would become rainbows. His back would become the earth. Fu’una [sic] had supernatural powers of her own. She used her energy and spirit

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<sup>125</sup> While both ‘red ware’ and ‘redware’ are accepted spellings, this work adopts the former, as it is the spelling used in *BIBA CHamoru*.

<sup>126</sup> CNMI-based fashion designer Shannon Tudela Sasamoto, for example, recently represented the Marianas at the 2024 Pacific Fusion Fashion Show in New Zealand with a red ware-inspired collection, using red-ochre tones and white patterns resembling those on ancient CHamoru pottery. ‘This is a tradition that is no longer practiced today anymore, so I wanted to use fashion as a way to revive that tradition’ she commented on her designs (26 December 2024, via Marianas Press Facebook and Instagram accounts).

<sup>127</sup> While the spellings ‘Fu’una’ and ‘Puntan’ is often used to refer to the figures of the CHamoru origin story, I use ‘Fo’na’ and ‘Pontan’ in the thesis following some CHamoru scholars. Cruz highlights the importance of using culturally and historically accurate names for legendary CHamoru figures, such as Fo’na and Pontan, rather than their more commonly used forms, Fu’una and Puntan. Cruz emphasises that each CHamoru name carries significant meaning and cultural symbolism, which is often tied to the character’s role or personality in CHamoru (hi)story. He advocates for the correction of historical inaccuracies and misinterpretations that have been perpetuated, stressing that history evolves as new research and understandings emerge (Losinio 2016).

to bring to life the parts of her brother's body that now formed the world. With her power, she made the sun shine and the earth blossom. After she completed her task of bringing new life to Puntan's body parts, Fu'una decided to create life out of her body, as she had her brother's. She threw her body into the earth and created Fouha [sic.; Fu'a] Rock, sometimes called Creation Point. Out of Fouha Rock, the first human beings emerged. This rock can be found close to Humåtak Bay in the southern part of Guam.<sup>128</sup>

The story of Fo'na and Pontan reinforces the importance of storytelling as a means of interpreting CHamoru understandings of place and the ancestral presences that inhabit those spaces. Storytelling, in this way, is not just a method of knowledge transmission, but an epistemology in itself (Iseke 2013; Temper et al. 2015) and can act as an empowering tool within the museum setting (Follin in Plankensteiner 2018: 126). For generations, Fu'a Rock has been a site of sacred reverence. However, approaches to the rock have shifted with time, creating new layers of cultural interpretation. On the 24th of November 2023 I was invited by Joe Quinata, Chief Program Officer at the Guam Preservation Trust to visit Fu'a rock, just north of the village of Humåtak, alongside CHamoru multidisciplinary artist Dakota Camacho (Fig. 43). Before we began our hike through the dense jungle to Humåtak's coral coastline, Joe resorted to storytelling to reflect on his own positionality around the evolving meanings of Fu'a. When he was a child, his mother would warn him to stay away from Fu'a, a sacred site, and to not even look at the rock unless he wanted bad things to happen to him, he told us. As an adult, Joe visited the Mayan pyramids in Mexico and realised that his mother's warnings were a local technique meant to protect Fu'a from the mass urbanisation that was taking place in other parts of the island, just as the Mayas had hidden their pyramids from the Spanish colonisers. Today, a renewed appreciation for Indigenous notions in Guam is prompting cultural and environmental advocates to organise respectful pilgrimages to Fu'a, observing CHamoru protocols.

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<sup>128</sup> For more details visit: <https://www.guampedia.com/puntan-and-fuuna-gods-of-creation/>. Accessed 31/12/2025.



Figure 43: Joe Quinata and Dakota Camacho during our hike to Fu'a Rock (seen at the end of the tree line) in the southern village of Humåtak, Guam, on the 24th of November 2023. CHamoru origin stories place the origin of the world at Fu'a, and the rock has become a site of great cosmological importance, reverence and pilgrimage for the CHamoru community.

Our journey to Fu'a began in Humåtak, where Joe asked us to individually seek the ancestors' permission before entering their sacred realm. A gust of wind signaled we had been granted entry. Before approaching Fu'a, it is customary to bathe in the nearby river that separates the cape where the rock is located from the rest of the beach for purification (Fig. 43). As we neared Fu'a, Joe advised us to sit quietly, meditate and observe. CHamoru people believe that, if observed closely, the rock reveals the faces of ancestors. Fu'a, in this sense, embodies CHamoru epistemologies and ontologies, where ancestral presences are felt deeply in its landscape. All these complex and evolving Indigenous understandings around their creation story, orally transmitted, were encapsulated in the video showcased at *BIBA CHamoru*.

### Dual epistemologies

Through a process of collaboration between exhibition curators, Guam-based scientists and CHamoru partners, *BIBA CHamoru* re-assembled materials from across the world to suggest that, rather than oppose each other, both the scientific and the Indigenous perspectives are equally legitimate and can coexist within the same exhibition space, just as they coexist in the contemporary Mariana Islands. As Viveiros de Castro said, 'the point is to show that the 'thesis' as well as the 'antithesis' are true (both correspond to solid ethnographic institutions) but that they apprehend the same

phenomena from different angles' (1998: 476). As an anthropology Museum, MNA is working towards this idea of *taking the other seriously* (Viveiros de Castro 1998, original emphasis). By juxtaposing and putting two worldviews, two points of view or perspectives, to use Viveiros de Castro's terminology, into conversation, the exhibition curators aimed to start a reflective dialogue between the content of the exhibition and visitors. *BIBA CHamoru* brought these understandings to the forefront of epistemological debates.

### ***Latte* period**

On the opposite side of the room, the section *Latte: A culture on solid pillars* showcased the pre-colonial society of the Marianas. This section broadly traced the continuity of CHamoru culture from precolonial times to the present. By connecting the past and the present following the concept of *mo'na*, represented through different cultural 'pillars', it showcased the adaptive and creative capabilities of CHamorus (Atienza 2019) by re-assembling different visual, textual and artefactual materials.

### **Historical materials**

Each of the text panels showcased in this section was accompanied by illustrations of ancient CHamoru culture and objects from the 1887 Exhibition (Fig. 44). Most of the former were done during the Freycinet Expedition when it visited Guam in 1819 and thus were not strictly from 'pre-contact' Marianas but from the period of Spanish control. The ones selected for display provided the most comprehensive and 'uncontaminated' pictorial account of the daily life of pre-contact CHamoru people, as imagined by the expedition's illustrators. Other drawings such as George Anson's technical sketch of a *sakman* canoe done in 1742 (Fig. 44) were included to add nuance to the narrative. These illustrations were reproduced from Carlos Madrid's personal collection. In this sense, Carlos acted as both the curator and circulator of these materials. Yet, the inclusion of these reproductions involved multilateral circulation and re-circulation, encapsulating the eternal return of *mo'na*: from the Marianas where they were originally drawn in past centuries, to European institutions, back to Guam as items in a private collection and finally to Madrid as loans for *BIBA CHamoru*.



Figure 44: An example of one of the illustrations from the Freycinet Expedition which was displayed with objects from the 1887 Exhibition. This assemblage was used to illustrate daily life during the *latte* society, which involved canoe building, seafaring and fishing, among other activities.

These materials appeared alongside some of the objects from the 1887 Exhibition, which were re-circulated from storage into the exhibition space for this temporary exhibition. Each group of objects represented one of the themes highlighted by this section of the exhibition: *maga'låhi* and *maga'håga*, leaders of a structured society; *agad'na*, a seafaring tradition; *atupat* and spears, the culture of warfare and weaponry; and *akgak* and *niyok*, the art of basketmaking. Selection and access to these materials involved internal negotiations within the curatorial team and the museum. While some of these objects were from the *latte* period (i.e. slingstones), as seen earlier, the majority were probably created for the 1887 Exhibition and acted as 'proxies' of precolonial CHamoru society in this section, evoking ancient islanders' activities and skills.

### Contemporary objects

Besides re-assembling historical materials, the *Latte* section included contemporary art reproductions and cultural objects, all circulated from Guam to MNA as donations. Three contemporary *sinahi* (Fig. 45), for example, were sent by Carlos Madrid, David Atienza and Adrian Cruz. *Sinahi* or *senahi* are fossilised *hima* (giant clamshell) pendants believed to be shaped in the shape of a crescent moon, usually worn by men. Ancient *sinahi* have been found in archaeological sites. Considering their carefully

worked shape and highly polished finish they were undoubtedly very valuable in ancient CHamoru society and could have been displayed by *chamorri* as an indication of wealth and status or used in payment or tribute to a victorious clan or as an exchange valuable to form alliances between clans (Flores 1999). Recent proposals by the U.S. Federal Government look into limiting CHamoru people's access to fossilised *hima* and their ability to wear *sinahi* (Fanachu! podcast 2024b). Today, members of the CHamoru community, who are actively protesting against this proposal, are advocating for the significance of *hima* and *sinahi* as a symbol of Indigenous identity and sustainable sourcing of the clamshell.

While the first two donors of *sinahi* were directly involved in the curation of the exhibition, Cruz (President of the *I Estoria-ta* commission) had a personal relationship with the first two through their involvement in the commission, which likely played a role in his decision to collaborate in the circulation of objects to the exhibition. Similarly, Guam slinger Roman dela Cruz, who has also worked with Madrid and Atienza, contributed a sling and slingstone made from synthetic materials to *BIBA CHamoru*. Other contemporary CHamoru objects, such as a *kulu* (conch wind musical instrument) and a modern *higam* (adze), displayed in this section were circulated to Spain as gifts for the Spanish Navy during the 500th year anniversary. These elements helped shape the exhibition's narrative, showcasing that despite centuries of cultural loss from colonialism and assimilation, CHamoru people are actively reviving ancestral practices and the objects produced through their use.



Figure 45: A *kulu* (musical instrument) and *higam* (adze) and three *sinahi* (half-moon shaped necklaces) on display at the *Latte* section of *BIBA CHamoru*. These were gifted by the Government of Guam to the Spanish Navy in 2021. They were displayed alongside historical drawings done during scientific expeditions in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to trace the continuity of CHamoru ancestral practices.

### Contemporary artworks

Next to the four text panels, the reproductions of three paintings by Guam-based artist Dawn Lee Reyes were placed against a blue background (Fig. 46). Each of them deals with genealogy, as well as with important figures, animals and activities associated

with *latte* society. *Maga'håga* depicts a woman with long, white hair being hugged from behind by a man. Both appear inside a *guma latte*, an ancestral house supported by *latte*. In *latte* society, *maga'håga* were the women in chiefly positions who, according to CHamoru oral (hi)stories, founded the different CHamoru lineages in ancestral times. Ancient CHamoru societies were matrilineal, a system that allowed some Indigenous practices to endure despite Spanish missionaries' efforts to change them (Cunningham 1992; Montón-Subías and Hernando Gonzalo 2021). The exhibition curators wanted to re-affirm the important role of women as pillars of cultural transmission. In a way, the white hair of the *maga'håga* can also be interpreted as a symbol of wisdom.



Figure 46: Reproduction of three paintings by Dawn Lee Reyes, photographed by Michael Bevacqua and displayed at *BIBA CHamoru*. The paintings are titled (left to right): *Maga'håga*, *Mañåhak fish* and *Turtle hunting*. They were circulated by Michael Bevacqua who acted as an intermediary between the artist and the Spanish museum. Together, these works of art were included to provide a contemporary visual interpretation of the pre-contact CHamoru society.

The second painting, *Mañåhak fish*, shows a woman holding a *guagua'* (fishing basket) full of fish. *Mañåhak* has been a staple in the diet of Mariana Islanders since pre-contact times. In ancient CHamoru society, reef and shore fishing was done by women (Cunningham 1992: 30). This painting, again, embodies the active function that women and the feminine, particularly *manåmko* (elderly) women, played in *latte* society. The third painting, titled *Turtle hunting*, portrays an underwater scenario where a man is hunting a turtle with his own hands. This turtle hunting technique was used during the *latte* society to obtain tortoiseshell, very valuable as a symbol of prestige and exchange (Cunningham 1992: 45; Flores 1999: 229). Together, the three paintings reflect the importance that the ancient social structures and practices still

have in contemporary CHamoru society. Their reproductions were circulated by the curator of the Guam Museum, Michael Bevacqua, who works closely with Madrid and Atienza, acting as intermediary between the artist and the curators, and whose significant collaboration played a pivotal role in shaping the content of *BIBA CHamoru*. The display of Lee Reyes' artworks, furthermore, had to be negotiated with the artist on the one hand, and with the Guam Museum, which acts as a repository for the artworks, on the other. This way, the exhibition created an assemblage of contemporary and ancient materials displayed next to each other, which was translated into a narrative that conveyed the continuity of CHamoru cultural practices, while highlighting the community's past and present creative efforts.

### ***Latte* stones: the pillars of CHamoru society**

This section also included a wall dedicated solely to the *latte* (Fig. 47). *BIBA CHamoru* wanted to celebrate these symbols of CHamoru culture, emphasising their role as enduring 'pillars' of CHamoru society throughout history. The *Latte* section brought together a range of diverse materials: documents, drawings, objects, artworks and videos carefully re-assembled from different sources by the curatorial team, contributing to their *mo'na* or eternal return. Through these assemblages, curators crafted a narrative that emphasised the creative resilience of the CHamoru people and the transmission of ancestral cultural traditions, tracing their endurance from pre-contact times to the present. The exhibition did this by displaying a range of different items from the MNA collection, some collected in the 1980s by missionary Maria Teresa Arias and others donated by David Atienza. A slideshow by Michael Bevacqua of photographs of *latte* representations found around the island of Guam was also included. All of these were displayed against another background Freycinet voyage illustration: one of the House of Taga in Tinian as it would have looked in 1819. This is another example of how *BIBA CHamoru* re-assembled historical and contemporary materials and knowledge to convey the idea that the *latte* are essential for the CHamoru community today as a pervasive symbol. In a sense, the *latte* have become the trademark of Mariana Islands culture; the symbol itself has become an agent of social activity (Gell 1998).

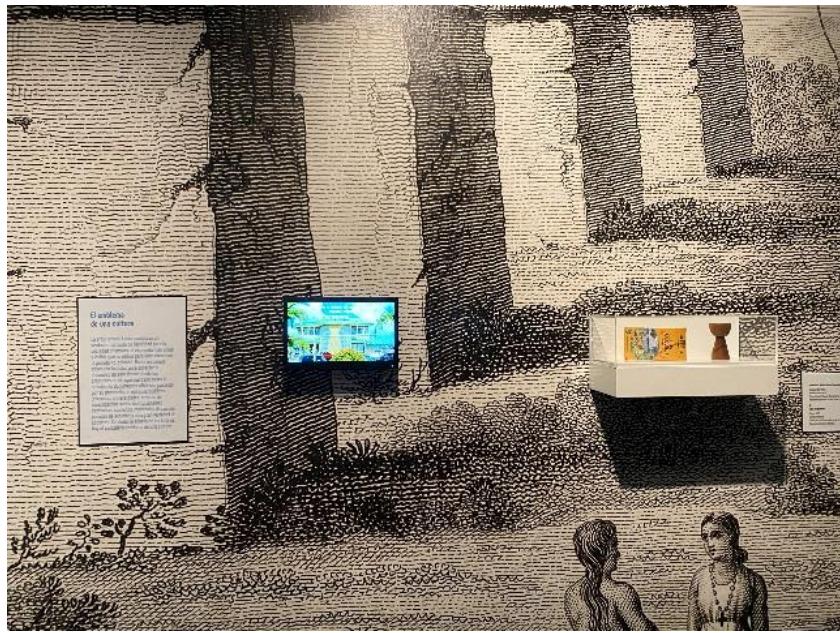


Figure 47: Wall dedicated to the *latte* at *BIBA CHamoru*. A Freycinet illustration is seen in the background of the picture acting as wallpaper. Multimedia content and latte-shaped objects accompanied this historical drawing. This wall wanted to convey how *latte* are today vibrant symbols of the CHamoru culture and its resilience.

## Empire and Science

Following the path established in *BIBA CHamoru* from the *Latte* section onwards, one would find the *Matao: First Contact with the West* section. This section encompassed the period from Magellan's initial contact in 1521 to the Malaspina Expedition's visit in 1792, reconstructing a narrative framed around encounters between the CHamoru and Western worlds. It incorporated an array of differently sourced historical and contemporary documents, objects, illustrations and photographs, re-assembled from different institutions around the world.

## Cross-cultural influences

In this section, a display case was filled with objects from the 1887 Exhibition. On the wall behind the objects, a series of historical photographs, a map and a video were on display (Fig. 48). The video, furthermore, reflected on the (hi)story of Guam's patron virgin Saint Mary Kamalen, transmitted orally across generations. While the statue of the virgin was likely brought by a Spanish ship sometime in the seventeenth century as part of the Manila-Acapulco galleon route, today, it has come to symbolise the syncretism of Indigenous and Catholic sacred practices in the Mariana Islands (Diaz 2010). This panel also included three photographs of the 1887 Exhibition and a

reproduction of Hendrick of Leth's map (1720) of the routes followed by the vessels that were part of the Nao de China route.

These objects and photographs, kept in storage for a long time, were re-circulated into MNA's galleries. As in the previous case, access to them had to be negotiated internally within the museum setting. While the photographs and objects were sourced locally, the reproduction of the map and video had to travel from the Pacific. The map, on the one hand, is currently under the care of the National Library of Australia. The video, on the other hand, was produced by Guampedia. Curators of *BIBA CHamoru* had to carefully negotiate access to these materials. Obtaining the video from Guampedia may have been relatively straightforward, given the close connections some Guam-based curators have with the organisation. Securing the reproduction from the National Library of Australia, however, likely required more effort due to potential copyright, access and reproduction restrictions, and even possibly requiring the payment of a fee. Each institution has its own loan policy, and its terms and conditions had to be fulfilled by MNA and *BIBA CHamoru*'s curatorial team.



Figure 48: Display case of the section *Matao: First Contact with the West*. Objects from the 1887 Exhibition can be seen at the front of the glass case. To accompany them, photographs from the exhibition, a map of the galleon trade route and a video about St Mary Kamalen (Guam's patron virgin) were used. This case emphasised the intersections between nineteenth century science, imperial trade and cultural syncretism.

### Between Empire and Science

Similarly, a re-assemblage of historical and contemporary materials from Spain and beyond could be found next to the case analysed above. Illustrations and sketches from the Malaspina Expedition, which stopped in Guam for twelve days in 1792, were

reproduced against green walls. The original illustrations, alongside most of the objects collected during the expedition, are mostly housed at Museo de América in Madrid.<sup>129</sup> The drawings selected by the curators for *BIBA CHamoru* offered a European perspective on everyday life in the Marianas during the late eighteenth century. Figure 49, for example, depicts a man and a woman wearing traditional working outfits used by CHamorus in the *lanchos*, reflecting the new dressing habits or ‘colonial dress-scapes’ (Montón-Subías and Moral de Eusebio 2021) imposed by the Jesuits in the Marianas that deeply changed CHamoru society and bodily practices. Complementarily, one of the sketches from the Malaspina Expedition displayed in *BIBA CHamoru* illustrates a *Scaevola plumeria cassarina*, a type of tropical plant found in the islands. Like many of the botanical samples collected during the Malaspina Expedition, this sketch is housed at Real Jardín Botánico. As seen in Chapter 4, processes of documentation dispersal related to institutional re-alignments and reshufflings occurred in Spain during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. In this respect, even documents and objects that were circulated to Spain together have ended up dispersed in different institutions and have to be re-assembled to re-construct the processes and operations of the expedition. Malaspina’s sketches at *BIBA CHamoru* appeared next to another map by Hendrick of Leth (loaned by the National Library of Australia too) and a map of the city of Hagåtña drawn by members of the Freycinet Expedition (1819). This map is kept at Archivo Naval, and therefore access to it needed to be negotiated with the pertinent naval authorities, like in some of the cases mentioned above.

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<sup>129</sup> Most of the materials collected during the Malaspina Expedition, as well as the journals written by its members, were destroyed after Malaspina became involved in a royal scandal, which resulted in his incarceration. As such, the remaining documentation associated with the Expedition was dispersed across Spanish institutions and beyond.



Figure 49: 'Man from the Ladrones' and 'Woman from Humatak Bay', illustrations in laid paper, done during the Malaspina Expedition, author unknown but attributed to Felipe Bauzá. The expedition stayed in Guam between the 11th and the 20th of February 1792. These were included in *BIBA CHamoru* to illustrate the late eighteenth century CHamoru society. ©Museo de América. Photographs by Joaquín Otero Úbeda.

### Reappropriating the narrative

Serving as a discursive counterpoint, these materials produced during scientific expeditions appeared alongside photographs of community projects that are being conducted in the Marianas today to recover and reconstruct the archipelago's past, circulated by members of the CHamoru community, such as Rlene Steffy Santos and Joe Quinata, as well as members of the ABERIGUA project (see Chapter 6 for context). This section also included three reproductions of paintings by Filipino-born but Guam-based artist Sal Bidaure (Fig. 50), photographed and circulated by Pearl Preis Bidaure, daughter of the artist. While the inclusion of the photographs in the exhibition required coordination with their authors, the circulation of Bidaure's artworks introduced another layer of complexity to the process of re-assemblage, involving multiple familial ties and networks. All the loans coming from Guam, besides, were likely negotiated by the Guam-based curators of *BIBA CHamoru*, who utilised their local connections to coordinate efforts with the owners of the materials.



Figure 50: Three reproductions of paintings by Sal Bidaure on display at the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition. These were loaned by Pearl Preis Bidaure, daughter of the artist.

Much like the case of the *Agad'na* section, the illustrations from the Malaspina Expedition, the contemporary drawings by Sal Bidaure and the photographs provided by members of the CHamoru community were all consciously re-assembled by the exhibition curators to construct a narrative about the past in the Mariana Islands from two opposing but complementary points of view: the Indigenous and the European.

## Colonial History

The section titled *Mestisu: Islander, Indian... the Marianas become colonies* directly dealt with the uncomfortable topics of colonialism, forced assimilation and Indigenous resistance. It offered a contemporary critical perspective on the Spanish colonial period in the Marianas, grounded in a complex negotiated interpretation of the events and deeply informed by Indigenous perspectives on the colonial past. In this way, Judy and Sandy Flores consider that the sections dealing with colonial history in *BIBA CHamoru* involved ‘the viewer in this complicated history through a variety of media’ and provided a ‘well-balanced approach to their [CHamorus] history’ (in Ferrández Gaudens, Flores and Flores 2023: 187). Although the exhibition incorporated the ‘official’ and ‘most common’ CHamoru reinterpretation of Spanish colonialism, which highlights its negative legacies, this view is not universally shared in the Mariana Islands. During the opening of *BIBA CHamoru*, I met Clark Limtiaco, a Chamoru language specialist who promotes a reinterpretation of the shared history between

Spain and the Marianas, focusing on the extensive heritage CHamoru culture has inherited from Spanish language and traditions, and advocates for recognising CHamoru people as ‘Hispanic’. Like in the case of the 500th anniversary commemoration, the curators of BIBA CHamoru incorporated the majoritarian, Guam-based interpretation of CHamoru (hi)story.

### Life under Spanish colonial rule

The nineteenth century in the Marianas has been described as a period of stagnation by Spoehr (1954: 60). The CHamoru lifeway mainly relied on three fundamental pillars: the extended family, the Church and a subsistence economy of family-owned *lanchos* (Hezel 2021: 75). *BIBA CHamoru* wanted to showcase day-to-day ‘mundane’ activities of CHamorus in the colonial Marianas, which are often not represented in exhibitions. This section hence included many of the objects from the 1887 Exhibition (Fig. 51), stored at MNA and re-circulated as part of their eternal return to the main galleries of the museum. The text panels accompanying the objects on display expanded on everyday life experiences both in Hagåtña and the countryside farms. Furthermore, *BIBA CHamoru* successfully covered the theme of Spanish colonialism, reinterpreting the past in a manner that was truthful and respectful towards the people that endured it, highlighting how, rather than being passive to the processes of colonisation, they were active agents in the shaping of the new world order they were subjected to (as highlighted in Chapter 3).



Figure 51: Display case of the *Mestisu: Islander, Indian... the Marianas become colonies* section. Some of the objects from the 1887 Exhibition were displayed to reflect the lifestyle of CHamoru people in the nineteenth century. The creative capabilities of CHamoru people as agents of hybridisation were highlighted through this display.

A text panel presented the case of Father San Vitores' commemorative monument in Guam (Fig. 52). The photograph was taken and circulated by Alexander Coello de la Rosa, American historian of CHamoru history and colleague of the curatorial team. Father San Vitores was canonised in the 1980s at the request of the Archdiocese of Agaña. The text in Figure 52 reflects on how Indigenous resistance to the colonisers in the 1700s is expressed in the present through the canonisation, memorialisation and patrimonialisation of religious-colonial figures, articulated through a 'conspicuous articulation between Catholicism and Chamorro culture' (Diaz 2010: 23). Diaz has described this process as 'an arduous indigenous journey to reconsolidate Chamorro culture and identity through Spanish Catholic doctrine and rituals' (2010: 23). At the same time, the text reflects on the double memorialisation of the Spanish conquest that is taking place in the Marianas, with important Indigenous leaders of the time, such as Kepuha, Hurao and Matå'pang, being also memorialised as statues. In this sense, the exhibition showcases the influence that CHamoru reinterpretations of their own past, albeit mediated through the words of Spanish curators, negotiated through written, visual and material media, have on the narratives constructed around Indigenous agency and resistance, in a process of hybridisation common to collaborative exhibition-making (Phillips 2011).



Figure 52: Text panel of the *Mestisu: Islander, Indian... the Marianas become colonies* section talking about Indigenous resistance, Martyrdom and colonialism. It also reflects on the dichotomic memorialisation of some of the leaders of the Indigenous resistance and of the martyrs of the Catholic church. These issues were reflected upon in *BIBA CHamoru*.

## Recent colonialism

Another section of the exhibition, *Fanhasso: The Marianas amongst the Pacific powers*, provided a timeline of the recent history of the islands as they continued to be subject to the colonial rule of the U.S., Germany and Japan. This was achieved through the display of a timeline of key events of the twentieth century (Fig. 53). The photographs used to illustrate the timeline were mostly loaned by the Micronesian Seminar, a Catholic organisation dedicated to enhancing public education in the Micronesian region, although one came from Rlene Santos Steffy's personal collection, one from the Harry S. Truman Presidential Library and Museum in the U.S. and one was loaned by Mighty Island, a film production company based in the Mariana Islands with a history of collaboration with Carlos Madrid. This timeline is evidence that, even to construct a narrative about recent history, materials that have been subjected to processes of dispersal need to be gathered and re-assembled from across the world.

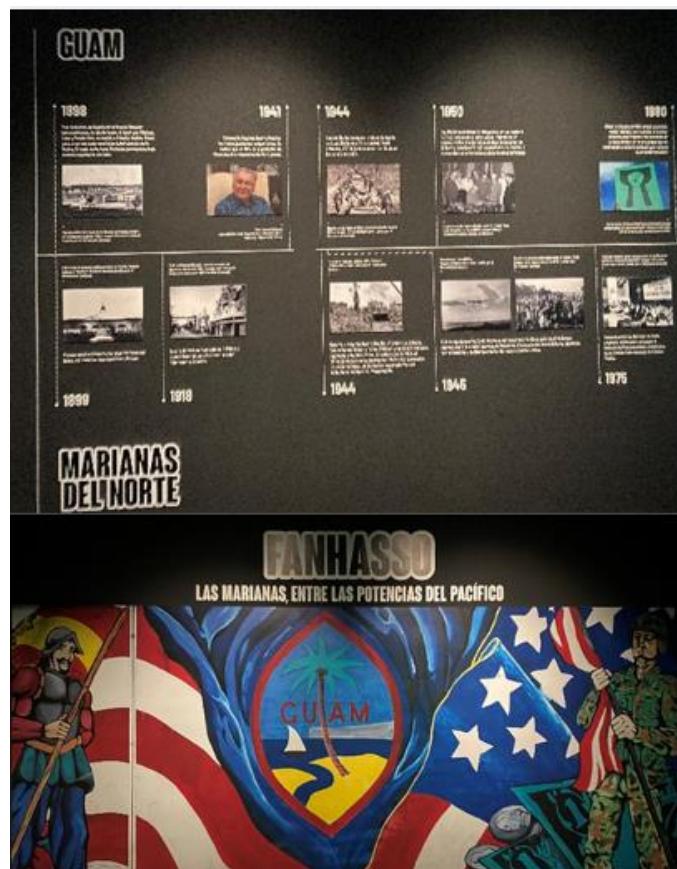


Figure 53: Photographs of part of the display of the final section: *Fanhasso: The Marianas amongst the Pacific Powers*. The image above includes a double timeline of key recent historical events in Guam (at the top) and the CNMI (at the bottom). The image below shows the reproduction of a mural at the University of Guam, by Gil Veloria and Francisco Fabiano, that reflects on the impact of the different waves of colonisation that Guam has endured.

The narrative that *BIBA CHamoru* wanted to deconstruct, reconstruct and redistribute (Soares 2024: 3) through this re-assemblage was a critical re-interpretation of the recent past. The Mariana Islands and their Indigenous people have been subjected to continuous colonialism since 1668 (see Chapter 1). This is the timeline that the *Fanhasso* section traced: it narrated the events that took place after 1898, World War I, the periods of Japanese and German control and the traumatic War in the Pacific during World War II. It juxtaposes the events that took place in Guam with those that happened in the Northern Marianas, highlighting their very different but equally difficult histories.

The wall next to the timeline showcased a reproduction of the mural by Gil Veloria and Francisco Fabiano at the University of Guam which symbolically depicts the legacy and continuation of colonialism in the Marianas (Fig. 53). As with the previous cases, access to this material probably required double negotiation: with the artists on the one hand, and the University of Guam on the other. However, the latter may be considered an ‘in-house’ negotiation, given Madrid’s and Atienza’s affiliation with the institution. The mural portrays, on the right, a Spanish Conquistador and, on the left, an American soldier, both holding the flag of their countries. U.S. dollars appear behind the latter. In the middle, the Guam seal is surrounded by blue paint representing the Ocean, which is in turn wrapped in the American flag. With the shield of Guam in the centre, creating space for itself between its two colonisers through its connections to the Pacific Ocean, this mural reflects upon the resilience of the people of Guam through ongoing settler-colonialism. This provides a critical re-interpretation, or ‘archipelagic rhetoric’ (Na’puti 2019) of the recent past in which CHamoru agency in resisting colonisation is highlighted.

## The Present

The final section of the exhibition, or introductory if we follow the principle of *mo’na*, was titled *Inafa’ Maolek: The Marianas as a Cultural Crossroad* and portrayed the Marianas as a multicultural and global society that remains deeply connected to its ancestral cultural traditions. Since the pandemic prevented MNA from bringing many contemporary artworks from the Marianas, curators had to creatively negotiate to find material that would support the desired narrative they were trying to convey. Text panels highlighted the importance of language as a vehicle for cultural preservation.

Some reflections about what it means to be CHamoru in the present by important figures from the Marianas such as Anne Perez Hattori (Historian, UoG) and Leo Pangelinan (director of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council) were included too. This reflected the constant tension between traditional values or *kostumbren CHamoru* and Westernisation (Flores 1999: 208). The statements from these cultural advocates were obtained through interviews organised by the curatorial team in Guam, who led the negotiations and curated the sections of the conversations included in the exhibition. In this sense, this section was re-assembled primarily through contemporary materials and quotes, circulated through pre-existing networks of relationships from the Marianas specifically for the exhibition, each reflecting different regimes of collaboration.

### ***Mo'na or the eternal return***

The *Inafa' Maolek* section specifically addressed the eternal return or *mo'na* of CHamoru ancestral practices, some of which have been described and reinterpreted in other sections of the exhibition. This concept was illustrated through the reproduction of a painting titled *Guam Today* by artist Rubelita S. Torres (Fig. 54). The artwork, on display at Guam Museum, was photographed and circulated by Michael Bevacqua, who again acted as intermediary. Three confident figures appear in the painting: *maga'låhi* Kepuha at the top wearing a *sinahi*, a CHamoru man blowing the *kulu* with a tattooed arm and a leaf crown and a young CHamoru woman wearing a shell necklace and earrings, holding a golden sceptre. The *tasa* (capstone) of a *latte* is depicted behind them, and the recognisable façades of Dulce Nombre de Maria Cathedral-Basilica and the Guam Congress Building transversed by a plane can be seen to their right. In front of the three people, native plants, a golden coconut and three *kalachuchan amariyu* (yellow plumeria) are depicted, as they are important natural and cultural symbols of the CHamoru people. Together, they encapsulate CHamoru notions of circular time, where the past reproduces itself in the present and the present in the past.

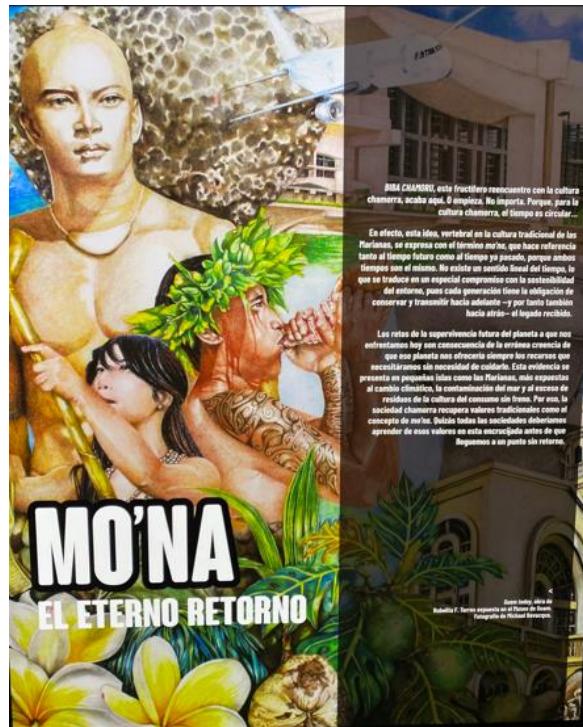


Figure 54: *Guam Today* by artist Rubelita S. Torres reproduced in the *Inafa'maolek* section of *BIBA CHAMORU*. It encapsulates CHamoru notions of circular time, where the past reproduces itself in the present and the present in the past. It was reproduced and circulated by Michael Bevacqua, curator of the Guam Museum, where this artwork is usually displayed.

### CHamoru contemporary art

The assemblage constructed in this section of the exhibition included different types of multimedia content and works of art from influential contemporary CHamoru artists.<sup>130</sup> In the centre of the space, three storyboards by artist, navigator and UoG professor Melissa Taitano, which were loaned for the exhibition, were displayed (Fig. 55). As a UoG professor, Melissa is a long-term colleague of Madrid and Atienza. She was invited by them to contribute to the exhibition and ultimately determined the selection of her pieces for the exhibition (Carlos Madrid, personal communication, 24 February 2024). Reproductions of murals found in the streets of Guam were included in this section too. Michael Bevacqua traversed different parts of the city of Hagåtña and photographed some of the murals that reflect on culture and identity issues in the contemporary Marianas (Guam PDN 2021), creating a visual re-assemblage. Multimedia content included a short documentary, *Navigating Cultures* by Saipan filmmaker Sophia Perez. The video was loaned by Northern Marianas Humanities Council, also a longtime collaborator of Carlos Madrid as evidenced by the publication

<sup>130</sup> Most of these artworks mentioned here will be explained and analysed in Chapter 6, so in this chapter they will only be mentioned.

of his book *Beyond Distances* (2006) with them. This video showed the revival of the ancient sailing tradition in the CNMI (Fig. 55). In this sense, the Marianas were portrayed by exhibition makers as an ‘effervescent cultural crossroad’ (from an exhibition text panel).

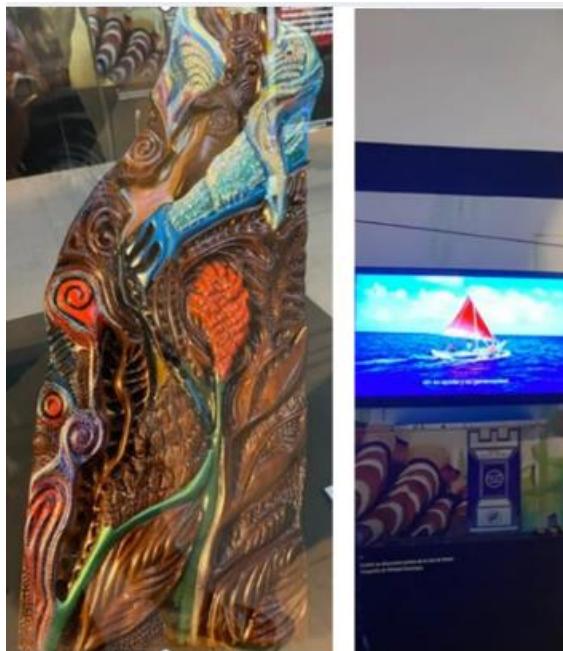


Figure 55: Contemporary artworks and documentaries that were circulated to and included in *BIBA CHamoru* to portray the Marianas as a vibrant cultural place at the crossroads of tradition and modernity. Melissa Taitano's *The Unburdening* (2020) is on the left. On the right, Sophia Perez's documentary *Navigating Cultures*.

### **Knowledge dissemination or the re-circulation of knowledge**

The knowledge re-assembled through the reconstruction of multi-material and multi-vocal assemblages for *BIBA CHamoru* was not only presented in the shape of a temporary exhibition; it was also broadly circulated to multiple audiences through different textual media. A brochure (Figs. 56 and 57) and map of the exhibition (Fig. 35), as well a CHamoru-Spanish-English dictionary (Fig. 58) were also produced. These items could be taken for free by visitors during their visit to the museum, thus enhancing the museum's quality as a ‘distributive institution’ dedicated to making heritage available in new and accessible forms (Harris 2013). Additionally, an edited volume focusing on the history and culture of the Mariana Islands was developed with Indigenous and Spanish collaborators. On the one hand, this was produced to disseminate knowledge about the Mariana Islands in Spain. On the other hand, it was

an opportunity to collaborate and widely distribute new areas of research in and about the archipelago.

### Exhibition brochure

One of the ways in which *BIBA CHamoru* re-circulated the knowledge that was re-assembled through the exhibition-making process was with an exhibition brochure. This three-part document included an introduction to the project and the process of collaboration. As seen on Fig. 56, the brochure included an engraving of *latte* from the Freycinet Expedition. It also included a circular blue bubble of information that provided context about the rationale followed to organise the exhibition. It also contextualised the exhibition within the frame of the *Démosle la vuelta la mundo* cycle of exhibitions. Finally, it briefly reflected on the process of collaboration between Spanish and CHamoru institutions, claiming that ‘the goal of *BIBA CHamoru* is to offer a new look about the history of the Marianas, especially about the ‘joint history’, and be a space of dialogue where contemporary CHamoru voices can be heard’ (brochure; Fig. 56, author’s translation).

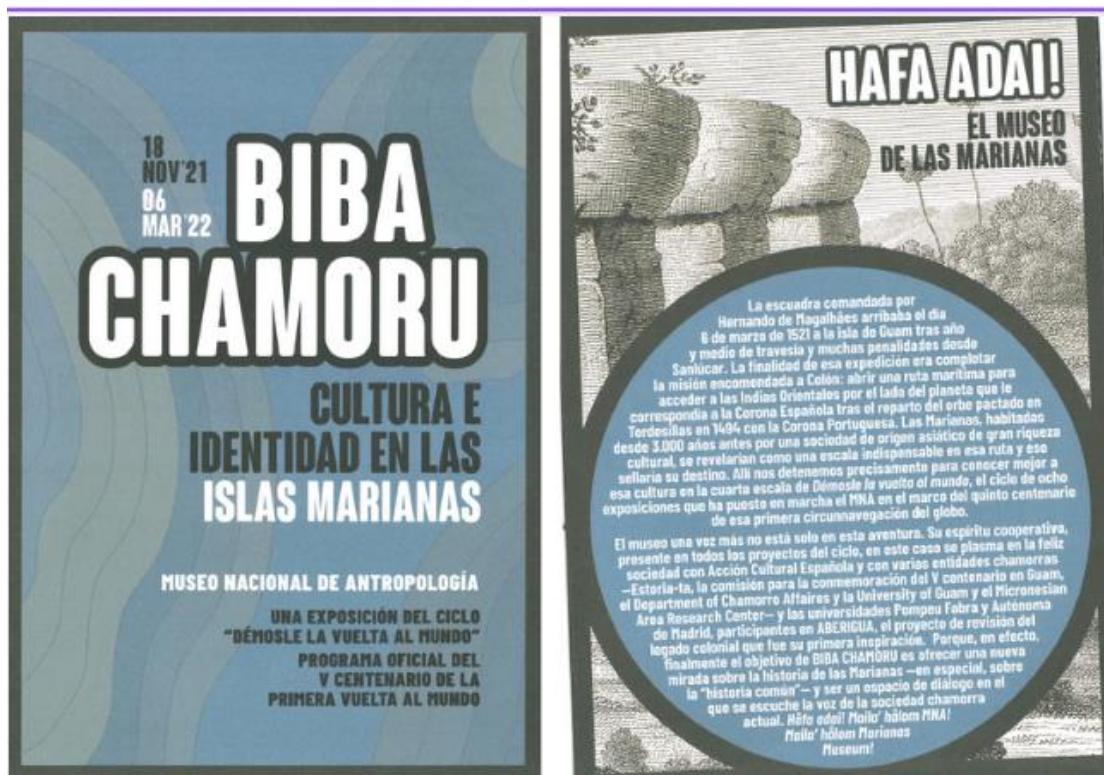


Figure 56: Cover and first page of the exhibition brochure. It provides an overview of the exhibition-making process, and the narratives conveyed through its different sections. These brochures were available to get at MNA by visitors to the exhibition.

The knowledge re-assembled for the exhibition, including drawings, historical documents, maps, contemporary artworks and museum objects, was summarised in the brochure, as shown in Figure 57. Below, an example includes written information from various exhibition text panels, alongside a reproduction of a nineteenth-century illustrated vista of the city of Hagåtña, displayed in the *Mestisu* section. In this way, the knowledge and visual material re-assembled for the exhibition were made portable and accessible to a wider audience through the brochure, facilitating broader dissemination of the insights produced during the exhibition-making process.

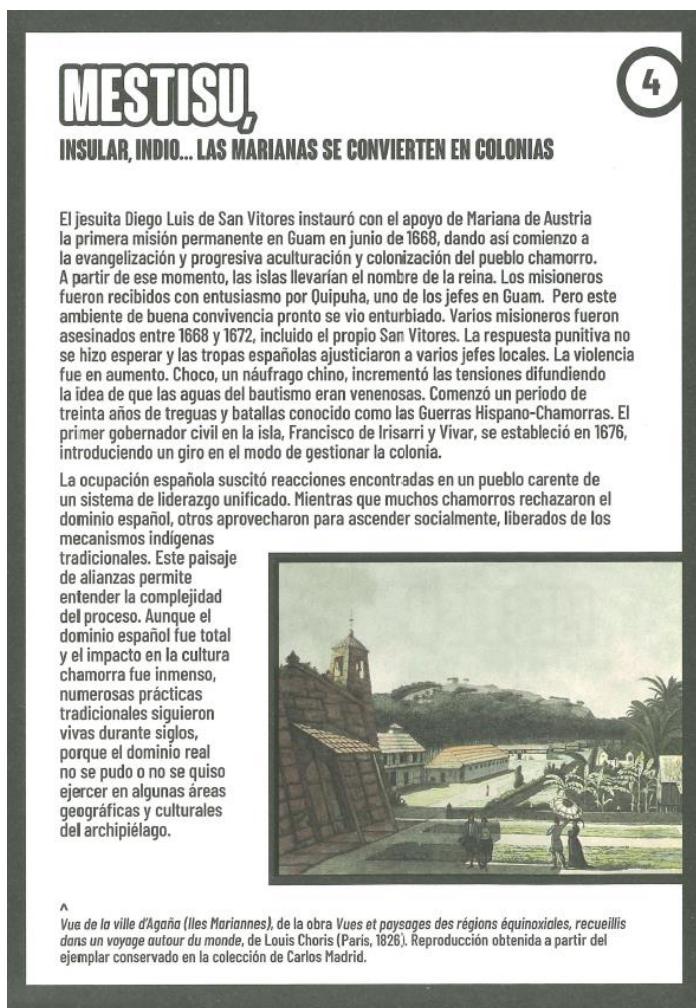


Figure 57: Example of how the exhibition brochure presented section 4 of the exhibition, titled *Mestisu*. The knowledge and visual material re-assembled for the exhibition were reproduced in the brochure, which was in turn circulated to the wider public.

The brochure included a map of the floor plan, offering an overview of the general configuration of the space in the exhibitionscape (Fig. 35). Several of the objects, contemporary artworks and sketches included in the exhibition appear surrounding the floor plan. These are broadly organised around the sections they were

displayed in, which are in turn labelled with numbers (sections of the exhibition) and letters (objects and visual material) respectively and spatially superimposed over the floor plan. A pattern of blue and green arrows marks the paths that visitors could take as they navigated the exhibition space. The map, in this sense, re-assembled the exhibition layout by spatially mapping motions, objects and drawings onto the museum space. It was then circulated to visitors for practical use during their visit.

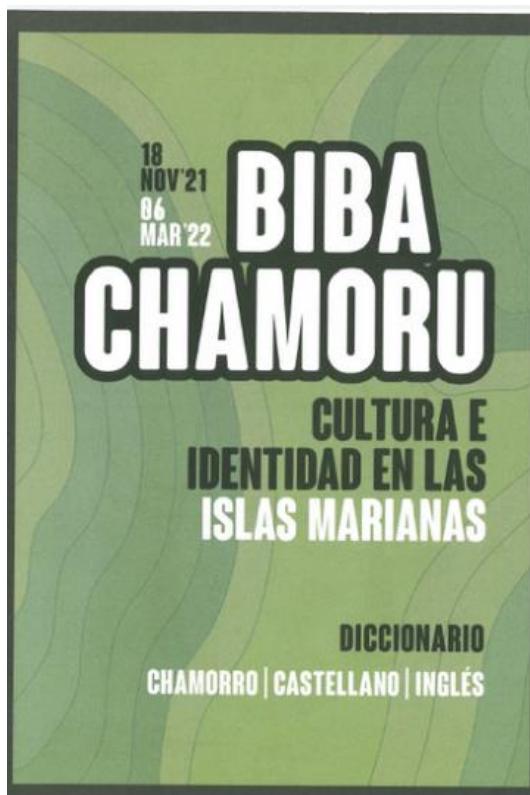
### Dictionary

Another resource available for exhibition visitors was a trilingual dictionary<sup>131</sup> compiled specifically for the event. Figure 58 shows an example of how the curators presented this assemblage of languages. Three columns are found in each of the pages: the first one alphabetically lists CHamoru words; the second and the third column include the translations of those words, in Spanish and English respectively. On the one hand, although Chamoru is the Indigenous language of the people of the Mariana Islands, English was included because it is the first language of many CHamorus today, as well as the lingua franca spoken in the islands.<sup>132</sup> On the other hand, Spanish was included in the dictionary not only due to the practicalities of hosting the exhibition in Spain but also to highlight the Spanish-CHamoru collaboration that produced *BIBA CHamoru*. Moreover, the influence of the Spanish language, introduced during the Spanish colonial era, has greatly impacted the Chamoru language (Rodríguez-Ponga 2021). Similarities between Spanish and CHamoru were highlighted in the dictionary. Figure 58, for example, includes the CHamoru words ‘mestisu’ and ‘nobio/a’, which in Spanish are translated as ‘mestizo’ and ‘novio/a’. Many of these similar words relate to concepts associated with race and family, among others, that were re-defined through Spanish colonial influence. In contrast, words and expressions that refer to the natural world and Indigenous cosmological concepts, such as ‘mo’na’ (translated as ‘historia circular’ or circular history) and ‘pokse’ (‘fibra de hibisco’ or hibiscus fibre) are completely different from their Spanish translations, their root coming from CHamoru.

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<sup>131</sup> Even though the creators call it a ‘dictionary’, it is more of a list of words, as it is only eight pages long.

<sup>132</sup> During the American Navy government mandate (1898-1941) an English-only policy was established, which discouraged the use of the Chamoru and Spanish languages (Lujan 1996: 21).



CHAMORRO	CASTELLANO	INGLÉS
Mañahak	Pez conejo	Rabbitfish
Mattina	Madrina	Godmother
Mestisu	Mestizo	Halfblood
Mitati	Metate (molino de mano)	Hand mill
Mo'na	Historia circular	Circular history
Niyok	Coco	Cocoeut
Noblio/a	Novio/a	Boy/girlfriend
Paluma	Paloma	Pidgeon
Patgon	Niños/as	Children
Pokse'	Fibra de hibisco	Hibiscus fiber
Pot fabot	Por favor	Please
Pot fin	Por fin	Finally
Quichala	Cuchara	Spoon
Rajao	Soltera	Bachelor girl
Rámas	Apodo con el que se asocian los miembros de grupos familiares	

Figure 58: CHamoru-Spanish-English dictionary produced as an output of the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition. Each word is written in each of the three languages mentioned. Words are ordered alphabetically. The dictionary includes words that are socially or culturally relevant to the people of the Marianas. Words that are used to refer to some of the objects on display in the exhibition are also included. Words that are similar in Spanish and CHamoru are included to highlight the influences of the former on the latter.

This dictionary was created for people to learn a few words in CHamoru, establish comparisons between languages and to learn about the influences of different languages on each other. This assemblage of linguistic knowledge, too, aimed to highlight the CHamoru language as a vehicle for cultural transmission in the Mariana Islands. Despite historical difficulties in the preservation of language, an effort to revitalise CHamoru is being made by many cultural practitioners today. Na'puti (2014: 307) argues that the CHamoru language embodies a culturally grounded discourse that plays a key role in their resistance at the United Nations, serving as a tool for asserting their right to self-determination, something the exhibition wanted to highlight.

The curatorial team selected blue as the exhibition's representative colour for the brochure and green for the dictionary. The selection of these colours, I suggest, was deliberate rather than arbitrary. Blue represents the *tåsi* (the ocean), the vast body of water encircling the islands and connecting CHamoru people to others physically, spiritually and culturally. In contrast, green symbolises the *tåno'* (the land), the

physical space that grounds the people, reflected in the term *taotao tåno'*, meaning 'people of the land', which refers to the CHamoru people. Thus, blue was used to convey broader knowledge about the people of the Marianas to exhibition visitors via the brochure, while green represented the language, deeply rooted in CHamoru concepts of place and land. Both covers depicted flowing, semi-curved lines in two shades of green and blue. I would argue that this symbolises the motions discussed in this chapter, whereby people, objects and knowledge, in whatever shape or format, have been circulated and re-circulated for this exhibition. Moreover, they point towards the dynamic nature of the collaborative process, the eternal return, the ever-changing environments that the CHamoru inhabit and the fluidity of CHamoru cultural practices. Overall, these brochures acted as portable means of negotiated knowledge dissemination and interaction with the public.

### *I Estoria-ta*

Another output of the exhibition, meant to disseminate the new forms of knowledge assembled through this collaboration to a wider academic community was the edited volume titled *I estoria-ta: Guam, las Marianas y la cultura chamorra* (2021).<sup>133</sup> While the volume was edited by Acción Cultural Española and Ministerio de Cultura, contributions from influential researchers working in, from and about the Mariana Islands, as well as contributions from important CHamoru cultural practitioners were included. The content of the volume followed, in an expanded manner, the temporal organisation of *BIBA CHamoru*: from the first settlement of the islands to the present. Multidisciplinary contributions range from (1) archaeological insights (Carson 2021; Dixon et al. 2021; Hunter-Anderson 2021; Montón Subías 2021) to (2) historical accounts (Coello de la Rosa 2021; Hezel 2021; Madrid 2021; Perez Hattori 2021), as well as (3) ethnographic (Atienza 2021; Peña Filiu and Moral de Eusebio 2021), (4) documental (Jiménez Díaz and Sáez Lara 2021; Alonso Pajuelo 2021; Brunal Perry 2021; Rodriguez-Ponga 2021) and (5) community-based and personal reflections (Underwood 2021; Quinata and Prados Torreira 2021; Steffy 2021; Torres Souder 2021). These provided a multi-approach vision of the (hi)story of the Marianas archipelago. The knowledge and people assembled for this publication were also negotiated through the personal networks of the Spanish curators.

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<sup>133</sup> In English, *I estoria-ta: The Mariana Islands and Chamorro Culture*.

In contrast to the brochures which were produced for a broad and diverse exhibition audience, the edited volume followed a format mostly meant for the academic reader. This knowledge assemblage was distributed bilingually through two media: a printed version in Spanish and an online version in English. This two-format system allowed for different levels of dissemination. On the one hand, the print text was meant for Spanish academics and scientific institutions. The print version can be purchased online but it is only shipped within mainland Spain. On the other hand, the online version was conceived in English to make it available for a broader academic audience, as well as members of the CHamoru community who may be interested. The online version is fully accessible and free to download as a pdf from the ACE website.<sup>134</sup> Overall, I would argue this edited volume was created for two interrelated purposes: to provide an opportunity for collaboration and the presentation of new research areas related to the Mariana Islands and to make knowledge about the Mariana Islands more accessible in Spain as well as worldwide.

Through collaborative efforts, knowledge about the history and present of the Mariana Islands was re-assembled from various locations, both within and outside of Spain, contributing to the development of the negotiated discourse of *BIBA CHamoru*. This assemblage of knowledge, manifested through textual, visual, objectual and multimedia content in the exhibition space, was in turn circulated by the exhibition makers through different textual formats. An exhibition brochure and a trilingual dictionary were made available to visitors as portable tools of cross-cultural knowledge dissemination. In parallel, an edited volume was produced with collaborators from Spain, the Marianas and beyond, and circulated in print and online formats to reach a wider academic and subject-based audience. In short, *BIBA CHamoru* not only gathered materials for the exhibition but also re-circulated them across global networks in multiple formats.

## **Conclusion: beyond the museum**

This chapter explored the different assemblages constructed by the curators of *BIBA CHamoru* to convey the complementary narratives that exist about the Mariana Islands and its past in each of the sections of the exhibition. In this way, I have demonstrated

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<sup>134</sup> English version available through: <https://www.accioncultural.es/en/i-estoria-ta-guam-the-mariana-islands-and-chamorro-culture-ebook>. Accessed 31/12/2025.

that *BIBA CHamoru* went beyond a critique of Spanish colonialism; it was a collaborative, cross-cultural gathering of peoples with a shared history. Together, through a thoughtfully crafted and displayed blend of intellectual traditions, they sought to honor the resilience and creativity of CHamoru people. Using the CHamoru concept of *mo'na* or eternal return, I have explored how different materials have been circulated and re-circulated through complex relational ‘meshworks’ of pre-existing relationships that involved the curatorial team, CHamoru collaborators and international institutions.<sup>135</sup> These collaborative networks were transnational, multilateral and involved multiple actors. However, the process of collaboration remained uneven, with CHamoru participants often engaging more as guests than as active contributors (Lynch 2011: 147) and Spanish curators deciding the content and narrative of the exhibition. Additionally, the objects from the 1887 Exhibition, as well as some contemporary artworks, were deployed across most sections of the exhibition to represent different, sometimes ‘out of their time’, cultural practices such as the cases of precolonial weaving and sailing. This further emphasises the idea of *mo'na* and the capacity of CHamoru objects to act as ‘proxies’ of a specific historical time in the past or the future, and the importance of material culture in the reconstruction of CHamoru precolonial (hi)stories.

Yet, assemblages extend beyond the confines of the museum. They function within multiple interconnected networks that span across time and space, demanding nuanced and multifaceted approaches to their study and engagement. During the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture, members of the 500 Sails<sup>136</sup> crew served as seafaring delegates for the CNMI delegation. *Auntie Oba*, a *sakman* canoe captained by Andrea Carr and crewed entirely by women, was selected to give rides to the public at Kualoa Regional Park in Oahu, Hawai'i, on the 8th of June 2024. When I approached the vessel, I recognised the symbol on its prow: a portrait of a CHamoru woman (Fig. 59). To my amazement, the canoe captain explained that Auntie Oba was a pioneering female navigator from Saipan who had recently passed away. In her honour, they named the canoe after her and used this drawing, one of the earliest

<sup>135</sup> Most of the materials circulated to the exhibition were then returned to their owners, except for a few which were donated to MNA (such as the *sinahi* and the sling and slingstone from Roman dela Cruz).

<sup>136</sup> 500 Sails is a CNMI-based non-profit organisation, in partnership with multiple U.S. governmental and other CNMI non-profit organisations. Their goal is to ‘revive, promote and preserve the maritime cultural traditions of the Mariana Islands through community engagement in canoe culture and activities’ (500 Sails). To do this, they reconstruct *sakman* canoes following Anson’s (1742) plans and using innovative materials like fibreglass. More information on: <https://500sails.org/ver2/index.php>

known depictions of a CHamoru woman. I realised that this sketch was by Juan Ravenet, done during the Malaspina Expedition in 1792 and displayed at *BIBA CHamoru* (Fig. 59). This encounter exemplifies how the relational connections between the Marianas and Spain extend well beyond the museum.



Figure 59: Sketch of a CHamoru woman done in 1792 by Juan Ravenet during the Malaspina Expedition (1789-1794) from three angles. The Malaspina Expedition stopped in Guam for 12 days. The painters of the expedition drew several portraits of CHamoru men and women. The image on the top left is the original sketch, while the one on the top right is a print of the sketch in the prow of the *Auntie Oba sakman* canoe sailed by 500 Sails. To honour female navigators, *Auntie Oba* has an all-female crew, challenging the long-standing tradition of all-male navigation. The bottom image shows Ravenet's illustration on display at *BIBA CHamoru*.

## Chapter 6: Navigating Self-Representation in Displaying CHamoru

In recent years, the drive for decolonisation in the Mariana Islands has sparked numerous movements focused on reclaiming Indigenous identities rooted in an ancient past, largely overshadowed by colonialism. As part of this effort to assert a distinct identity from their colonisers, CHamoru artists and cultural practitioners are engaging in a creative renaissance (Flores 1999: 4-5; Clifford 2013: 35). Today, Indigenous artforms in the Marianas are complex, and encompass a diverse array of forms, employing various local, ‘neo-traditional’ and ‘foreign’ materials (Flores 1999: 8), traditions and techniques, rooted in ‘borrowed’ Western and Eastern artistic traditions (Kaeppeler 2023: 312). Discussions on how and who should represent (Clifford 1998, 2013) the CHamoru people have taken place on the islands since the 1980s (Flores 1999; Camacho 2022). Art in all its forms,<sup>137</sup> in this sense, has become a means and forum for CHamoru people to build a new sense of identity in which they can represent their past, present and future on their own terms (Karp et al. 1992).

In this chapter, I argue that *BIBA CHamoru* acted as a platform for CHamoru self-representation<sup>138</sup> in Europe.<sup>139</sup> I examine three examples that enabled CHamoru people to assert agency in their self-representation, challenging traditional forms of museum representation: visual arts, audiovisual contributions and heritage initiatives. These are supplemented with vignettes from my fieldwork, which give me an opportunity to share more on local initiatives for the reaffirmation of CHamoru identity that exist in the Mariana Islands. In this way, I aim to demonstrate that CHamoru self-representation extends beyond the confines of MNA; it is an act that is actively unfolding in the islands as we speak. While I aim to cover several forms of self-representation in *BIBA CHamoru*, I will focus only on some selected examples of

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<sup>137</sup> Here, the term ‘art in all its forms’ is used to encapsulate the objects, artefacts, visual artworks, performances, literary and oral arts, multimedia productions, installations, intangible cultural practices, etc. that operate within processes of CHamoru identity-building in the contemporary world. This reflects the adaptability of CHamoru art, where ‘traditional arts’, rather than existing as distinct, separate disciplines, are deeply integrated in daily life and ‘modern’ artforms and mediums (Kaeppeler 2023: 287).

<sup>138</sup> I use self-representation in this chapter to refer to the process whereby CHamoru people and the objects they produce act as agents of their own representation.

<sup>139</sup> Even though the 1998 exhibition *Islas del Pacífico: El legado español* organised by the Spanish Ministerio de Educación y Cultura was exhibited both in Spain and the Micronesian region, *BIBA CHamoru* is the only exhibition focused solely on CHamoru people in Spain, and as far as I know, in Europe.

contemporary art and heritage revival included in the exhibition. This allows for a more exhaustive and deeper analysis of each case and its underlying themes.

Carlos Madrid, one of the curators of the exhibition, explained that one of the intentions behind the exhibition was to ‘give international exposure to contemporary CHamoru artistic expressions’ (Guam PDN 2021). Although the core curatorial team of *BIBA CHamoru* consisted of Spanish scholars, they collaborated closely with CHamoru partners who played a central role in producing, selecting and circulating the materials for the exhibition. Through this process, CHamoru collaborators exercised their agency, actively shaping both the selection of artworks and the interpretation of these materials, as reflected in the exhibition’s text panels. This way, I explore how *BIBA CHamoru* tries to solve the continuities and ruptures that ridge between the politics of Indigenous and foreign representations (Bennett 1988; Clifford 1988; Karp and Levine 1991; Karp et al. 1992) and self-representation in museums and their exhibitions, which comes in many forms and involves multiple agendas (Jacobs 2012; Lonetree 2012; Clifford 2013). Following Jacobs, I consider representation as ‘a process that not merely depicts and communicates, it also *does*’ (2012: 18). In this way, this chapter understands the museum as a political, dynamic space with the capacity for activation (Escobar 2008), that engages with diverse actors, fosters cross-cultural collaboration, offers visibility to underrepresented narratives<sup>140</sup> and poses critical questions. It is important to note, however, that the exhibition only represents a selection of perspectives as seen in Chapter 5: those of the CHamoru collaborators who were previously associated with the curatorial team. Yet, the Mariana Islands encompass a multitude of viewpoints, often with divergent interpretations of their (hi)story and varying insights on CHamoru identity politics.

## Visual art

Indigenous contemporary art plays an important role in processes of intergenerational cultural identity formation and transmission (Herle 2008: 59). For CHamoru people, moreover, visual art has acted as a symbol and vehicle for cultural revitalisation and self-representation in recent years. These artforms often draw inspiration from an ancient CHamoru heritage, incorporating its cultural codes and principles and

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<sup>140</sup> The CHamoru contemporary art scene, although vibrant, is not widely discussed in scholarly literature. Exceptions include Flores (1999, 2004); Gumataotao (2023).

expressing them through media and representational models that are meaningful in today's world. This section focuses on three examples displayed in the exhibition, each highlighting different aspects of CHamoru culture, history and heritage through distinct material media. First, it will look at Melissa Taitano's artworks, which reinterpret CHamoru mythological stories and bring in her personal experience as a Pwo navigator,<sup>141</sup> presented in wooden storyboards, a pan-Micronesian art form. Next, I will explore Ric Castro's *Hilaan Latte*, a painting depicting the natural landscape where *latte* are found, which encodes cultural practices such as *åmot* (traditional medicine) and weaving, the relationship between CHamoru people and their *tåno'* (land), and between people and their *saina* (ancestors, those who came before). Finally, I will analyse some examples of street art which were displayed in the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition, which express community multiculturalism and the political reclamation of space, with art serving as a vehicle for activism.<sup>142</sup>

### ***The Love Letter, by a Micronesian Navigator, Fo'na Dreaming and The Unburdening* by Melissa Taitano**

Behind the *sakman* model, in the central space of MNA, crowned by two of the big Filipino canoes from the 1887 Exhibition, one could find the section titled *Inafa' Maolek: The Marianas as a cultural crossroad*. The section creatively portrayed the Marianas as a multicultural and global society (see Chapter 5). This diversity was showcased through the display of multiple contemporary artworks. In the centre of the space, one could find three storyboards (Fig. 60) by artist Melissa Taitano, a CHamoru scholar, artist, Taan Gech traditional canoe carver<sup>143</sup> and Pwo navigator. She describes her art as *gå'om*, a CHamoru word loosely translated as 'that which moves and is inspired by spirit' (Taitano 2021). Her work, in this way, reflects on the peoples and

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<sup>141</sup> In the words of Raigetal, *pwo* is the 'traditional ritual ceremony for navigators' (2023: 346) that all Micronesian navigators need to get initiated into to become traditional navigators. Two schools of navigation exist in the islands today: Werieng and Geshi. While in the past Micronesian navigation was a male-only activity, current concerns with gender equality (particularly in the Mariana Islands) have contributed to a transformation in CHamoru practices, challenging traditional distribution of labour. Increasingly, more and more women are joining navigation training programmes.

<sup>142</sup> Although this is mostly an urban phenomenon, many recent community initiatives in the villages of Guam and Saipan are decorating their public spaces and roads with murals, often led by local contemporary artists. This phenomenon is less prominent in Tinian and Rota.

<sup>143</sup> In Micronesian societies, carving schools where young boys were introduced to the art of canoe carving existed across the archipelagoes. Raigetal reports that 'prior to the twenty-first century it was said there were more than ten schools of traditional navigation and canoe carving throughout Micronesia' (2023: 346). Today, only four remain in the outer islands of Yap and have extended to teach women too. Taan Gech refers to the traditional Micronesian carving school in which Melissa was initiated, following in the steps of her mentor Larry Raigetal.

ecologies of the Micronesian region and often focuses on themes and forms from seafaring and local cosmologies. Furthermore, Taitano's artworks are inspired by CHamoru cosmologies, deeply rooted in their relationship with the *tåsi* (ocean). Mixing local materials such as shell or ifit wood harvested from her own village of Yigo in northern Guam, with imported ones like acrylic paint and epoxy resin, Taitano's art is a 'contemporary expression of the traditional arts of the region with the purpose of bridging time, places, spaces and communities' (Taitano 2021). Moreover, her chosen medium, the storyboard, is an art form unique to Palau, an archipelago that neighbours the Marianas. Traditionally, the art of the storyboard could be found in the horizontal beams of the Palauan *bai* (meeting house) and were used to visually teach ancestral stories to young men. From the 1930s onwards, Palauan storyboards were commodified and today circulate in the art market under the art-artefact-commodity framework (Yamashita 2018). Taitano's use of the storyboard, in this way, evokes an unique pan-Micronesian identity, grounded in Indigenous cultural frameworks.

The first of Taitano's artworks on display in *BIBA CHamoru, The Unburdening*, portrays an abstract landscape of the Marianas. The *tåno'* (land) is depicted through the representation of red ginger (*Alpinia purpurata*), an endemic Pacific plant. The spirals and the sea creature drawn at the top, which symbolise Fo'na, represent the ocean, uniting elements of the landscape with cosmological concepts of life and time (Taitano 2021). The second one, *The Love Letter, by a Micronesian Navigator*, draws inspiration from the underwater world, featuring shells, vibrant coral and marine life, scenes well-known to Micronesian navigators like the artist. This painting reflects on the importance of Indigenous wayfinding and maritime practices in the sustainable preservation of their oceans (Nuttall et al. 2023; Raigetal 2023). The third one, *Fo'na Dreaming* is a reinterpretation of the legend<sup>144</sup> of Fo'na (see Chapter 5 for a written version), depicted here as a *sirena*.<sup>145</sup> Flores (2004: 128) reports that

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<sup>144</sup> The word 'legend' is used here to comply with the artist's description of the artwork as outlined in her website, which contrasts to Guampedia's description as 'folktale' (Perez Hattori n.d.) and 'myth' (Perez n.d.).

<sup>145</sup> *Sirena* (the Spanish version of the word siren) is a mythological creature that appears in CHamoru proverbs and tales. Although the figure *sirena* or mermaid arises from the Greek epic *The Odyssey*, the CHamoru version, told by Malia Ramirez (n.d.b) tells the tale of a young CHamoru woman called Sirena who preferred swimming in the river to doing her chores. Tired of her behaviour, her *nana* (mother) curses her to become a fish, but her *matlina* (godmother) interjects and asks that part of her remain human. This way Sirena's lower body turns into a tail, and she disappears into the ocean. Many sailors have since reported catching a glimpse of Sirena. The CHamoru legend recounts that she can only be caught with a net made from human hair. This story is an example of the indigenisation of external mythic forms, combined with local accounts of sea spirits.

various artefacts, stories and figures serve as recurring symbols in the works of CHamoru artists. *Sirena*, for instance, frequently appears in CHamoru tales and artistic expressions, including paintings, murals and even fashion designs.<sup>146</sup>



Figure 60: *The Unburdening*, *The Love Letter, by a Micronesian Navigator* and *Fo'na Dreaming*, three storyboards by Melissa Taitano (2020). These three artworks explore themes centred on Indigenous cosmologies, the CHamoru people's connection to the land and ocean and the intersection of these elements. Taitano's storyboards also draw from Palauan traditions, referencing a broader pan-Micronesian identity formation.

The three artworks Taitano contributed to *BIBA CHamoru* (Figure 60) encapsulate a modern interpretation of CHamoru ancestral cosmological concepts, stories and traditions. While *Fo'na Dreaming* and *The Unburdening* include the figure of Fo'na, the first CHamoru woman, as a *sirena* in the former, and immersed in Micronesian ecologies in the latter, *The Love Letter, by a Micronesian Navigator*, is inspired by the symbolism of Micronesian navigation and its relationship with Indigenous ecologies that the artist is very familiar with. In a way, the shape of the artworks follows the well-known wooden storyboards from Palau, appealing to a pan-Micronesian concept of visual material storytelling. Taitano's own positionality as a CHamoru woman, artist and navigator, along with the narratives embedded in her storyboards, provides uniquely CHamoru contemporary interpretations of ancestral values, stories and practices. Furthermore, her work embodies the ways in which CHamoru women are challenging traditional gender roles in seafaring, drawing upon iconic representations of powerful CHamoru women, such as Fo'na and *Sirena*, to embody this feminist narrative. By positioning Taitano's works of art in the centre of

<sup>146</sup> The motif of *sirena* was reinterpreted in fashion during the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture in Honolulu, for example. As part of the Pacific fashion show, CHamoru weaver and multidisciplinary artist Roquin Siongco presented one of their designs inspired by *sirena*. Roquin's design included a complex, spider-web-like pattern of grey shiny beads to mimic the scales of *sirena*'s tail. The outfit was complemented with a beautiful ensemble of blue earrings and a necklace.

MNA's main gallery, the curators of the exhibition emphasised the importance of art as a vehicle for cultural transmission and self-representation in the contemporary Mariana Islands.

### ***Hilaan Latte* by Ric Castro**

Another contemporary artwork included in the *Inafa' Maolek* section was *Hilaan Latte* (2021), a painting by CHamoru artist Richard 'Ric' Castro. Originally from the area of Jinapsan in northern Guam, Castro is a Professor of Art at the University of Guam. Born to a family of artists, Castro believes his family bloodline 'must track back to a clan of Chamorro craftsmen or to an artistic family from Spain' (Murphy n.d.); in other words, an artistic tradition runs through his veins. He describes his artworks as 'contemporary landscapes and abstract expressionist works' (Guamvideos 2024). His art is inspired by the work of abstract expressionists like Willem de Kooning, Jackson Pollock, Joan Mitchell, Susan Rothenberg and Mark Rothko (Murphy n.d.). Castro is also well-known for his non-objective abstraction technique, which he pulls out from his memories of the island (the ocean, the jungle, coconut trees, etc.) that, although not recognisable objectively, are depicted through colour and abstraction in a non-objective manner (guamvideos 2024). Other times, he depicts Guam's recognisable landscapes through an expressionist exploration of colour, form and texture. Castro participated as a Guam visual arts delegate in the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture, some of his more abstract paintings featuring in the *Ho'oulu Lāhui: Reenerating Oceania* exhibition (Honolulu, 6-16<sup>th</sup> June 2024) (Fig. 61). This asserted his position as a highly respected artist in the world of Pacific Arts.

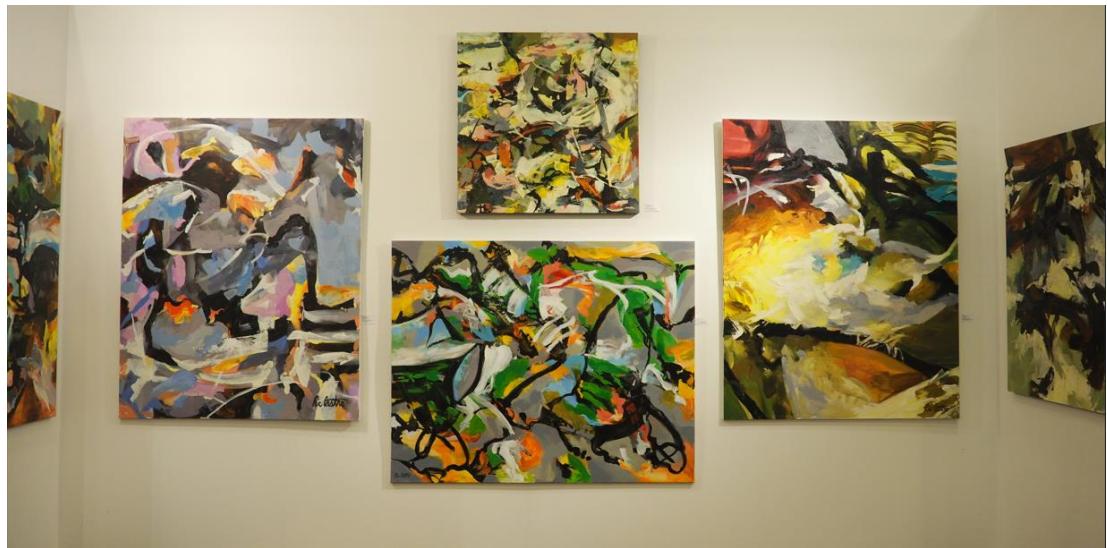


Figure 61: Some of Richard 'Ric' Castro's non-objective abstract paintings on display during the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture in Honolulu, Hawai'i, June 2024. Through a use of colour, texture and shape inspired by abstract expressionism, Castro depicts memories from his homeland in a non-objective manner. He was selected as a delegate for the Guam visual arts delegation for FestPac and his art was part of the *Ho'oulu Lāhui: Regenerating Oceania* exhibition, showcased at the Honolulu Convention Center.

Out of the many works done by Ric Castro, *Hilaan Latte* (2021) was displayed at *BIBA CHamoru*. *Hilaan Latte* (Fig. 62) depicts a set of *latte* found in their 'natural habitat', as they can be found in most jungle sites today: some standing and some fallen, covered in bright green moss. Only one *latte* remains in its original form, with the *haligi* (pillar) and *tasa* (capstone) forming a T-shaped structure. The jungle is highlighted by a dense backdrop of palm trees and ferns, as well as by pandanus trees, identifiable because of their intricate sets of overground trunks and roots, that are depicted in the front right corner of the painting and behind the *latte*. Some other plants are depicted in the forefront of the painting and growing next to the *latte*, such as *katson* (*Stachytarpheta jamaicensis*), an important medicinal plant. The bright colours of the tropical rainforest contrast with the rich humid soil depicted in brown and purple-like tones.



Figure 62: *Hilaan Latte* (2021) by CHamoru artist Ric Castro, displayed in *BIBA CHamoru*. Castro's expressionist depiction of a *latte* site includes one full standing *latte*, several standing *haligi* (pillars) and several fallen *tasa* (capstones). The *latte* site is found in the middle of the jungle and recognisable trees such as pandanus (front right) and palm trees (in the background) are depicted in the painting.

While some *latte* are found in urban environments, such as the House of Taga in the island of Tinian or the *latte* that have been relocated to the Senator Angel Leon Guerrero Santos Latte Stone Memorial Park in Hagåtña, Guam, most *latte* are found deep in the jungle. Castro's depiction of a *latte* site in *Hilaan Latte*, therefore, is familiar to anyone who has inhabited the Mariana Islands. It is a pictorial representation of the natural and cultural landscape of the *latte*. In *Placental Politics*, Christine Taitano DeLisle (2021: xii) notes that there is a deep connection between CHamorus and the *tåno'*, where the land becomes a visceral, multisensory presence, communicating with CHamorus in ways that both literally and figuratively ground them in the soil and bind them to the land. Castro's artwork can be framed within a developing body of Pacific artists who are working to change existing perspectives on climate justice, arguing for the importance of landscape and heritage for Indigenous Oceanic peoples (Dvorak 2020; Jacobs and Nuku 2022; Hamilton Faris 2022). *Latte* sites, in this respect, are places of sacred reverence and respect that must be protected from extractive militarism and the erosion caused by the climate crisis. CHamoru storyteller Malia Ramirez speaks about them in the following terms:

The *latte* sites were revered as sacred spatial markers. They were the dwelling places of the *taotaomo'na* [the spirits of the ancestors]. In CHamoru, dwellings assume sacredness through time, containing the spirits of those who once dwelled in these sites. Their spirit lives! (in Marsh Taitano and Liston 2021: 11).

Furthermore, *latte* sites are associated with many other aspects of CHamoru cultural and natural heritage, which help them connect to the lifeways of the *saina* (Quinata in Marsh Taitano and Liston 2021: 5). Castro's painting features native plants like the coconut tree, vital for CHamoru dietary traditions, the pandanus tree, whose leaves play a key role in weaving and the *katson* plant, which is essential in the production of *åmot* or traditional medicine. Castro's painting, heavily informed by his own memories of growing up around *latte* sites, encapsulated both the cultural and natural landscape that these places embody. In this sense, *Hilaan Latte* reflects, from a CHamoru point of view, the relationship between CHamoru people and their *tåno'*, the importance of the *latte* as a symbol of tradition and cultural resilience, its use as a 'metaphor for strength, support, foundations, and the strength borne of unification' (Perez Hattori 2022: 27) and the embodied sacredness of lived landscapes in the Mariana Islands.

### Street art

'The contemporary Marianas are living through a moment of great cultural effervescence, very attractive, creative... and full of contradictions, such as the productive "tensions" between the need to reclaim their roots and open up to new global and multicultural expressions' the introductory text to the *Inafa'Maolek* section of *BIBA CHamoru* started. One of the ways in which this is happening in Guam, the text continued, is through the 'eclectic graffiti, a tradition inaugurated by muralist Sal Bidaure and that attracts global artists from all over the world to decorate Guam's buildings yearly'. This artform, which has often been highlighted for its hybridity (Stevenson 2002), incorporates multiple artistic traditions and artists of varied backgrounds to offer a dynamic perspective on the social landscape of Guam. Murals by global artists are not the only works that appear on the streets of Guam; local artists also embrace the challenge of decorating their urban landscape, engaging in a political re-appropriation of space. Street art in the Marianas, furthermore, is rooted in a tradition of Pasifika contemporary art, which is often expressed in the urban environment it originates from (Cochrane 1996: 175). In this way, and in contrast to

the individually recognised artists discussed above, *BIBA CHamoru* also functioned as a platform for the self-representation of more collective, anonymised forms of artistic expression.

Four photographs of anonymous murals found in the streets of Hagåtña were reproduced in *BIBA CHamoru* (Fig. 63). Anonymous art can be understood as an anti-establishment collective form of resistance (Bonadio 2023) where the agency of the individual is blurred into the collective practice. The first mural, on the left of Figure 63, depicts a young girl of Japanese origin (as per the description of the photograph included in the exhibition). Japanese migration, beginning in the 1970s, was primarily driven by the tourism industry and has grown with the passage of time (Flores 2004: 123). Another mural, on the right of Figure 63, includes a carabao, colourful mandala-like patterns and shapes as well as a *latte* inside its face. Imported artistic traditions such as drawing mandala have also been incorporated into Guam's urban art movement, which are used alongside local symbols and motifs. These two reflect the perspective of Guam as a cosmopolitan place where people with different cultural backgrounds co-exist. In the words of Marsh-Taitano, a 'variety of cultural features from elsewhere have been, in whole or in part, woven into the tapestry of island life, many of which have been CHamorucized' (2022: 389).

In parallel, two other murals were reproduced in *BIBA CHamoru*. One of them, in the top centre of Figure 63, depicts a young Indigenous CHamoru woman. She is wearing a necklace of Spondylus shell beads and a *sinahi*-shaped pendant. She is surrounded by yellow Hibiscus flowers, very prominent in the Mariana Islands. The last mural reproduced in the exhibition, on the lower part of Figure 63, shows an old CHamoru man, perhaps a farmer, sitting down on the street with a carabao behind him and a rooster on his lap, a depiction of the quotidian countryside lifestyle of rural Guam. These murals represent efforts to reaffirm Indigenous CHamoru identity and reclaim public spaces for the community. Street art acts as a visual phenomenon with the capacity to enact political change that imagines a new future in many urban spaces around the world (Mansfield et al. 2024). Baudrillard draws attention to instances where street art can 'burst into reality like a scream, an interjection, an anti-discourse' (2016, 99). Today, street art is a tool used by many CHamoru artists to 're-conquer' their space. In an island where colonial occupation is ongoing and where access to many ancestral spaces (such as the ancestral villages of Ritidian and Sumai) is restricted to members of the U.S. military, the re-appropriation or reconquest of public

spaces is a powerful tool of anti-discursive self-determination and an expression of Indigenous sovereignty in their own island. While the relationship of Indigenous residents with the U.S. military is complex and multifaceted, with many CHamorus proudly serving in the Armed Forces, they also want to protect their land from the effects of military exploitation and environmental degradation (Frain 2022: 262). Community resistance efforts, supported by matriarchal principles and female leaders, take many creative shapes, and use a number of different media: from street art to digital platforms, from ‘being in community’ at a spiritual level to legal responses (Ibid: 277).



Figure 63: Photographs, by Michael Bevacqua, of different graffiti (anonymous) found around different locations in Guam. These were reproduced in *BIBA CHamoru* to showcase the rich culture of street art in the Mariana Islands as an expression of what it means to, on the one hand, be CHamoru today, and on the other hand, live in multicultural contemporary Guam.

While I was in Guam, the Ritidian Point Wildlife Refuge in the northwest part of the island celebrated its 30th year anniversary amidst protests by members of the CHamoru community (Fig. 64). According to Judy Flores, Ritidian, or Litekyan in Chamoru, means the place where things converge (personal communication, 17 December 2023). This site of at least four ancient settlements and beautiful limestone cliffs and caves with some of the oldest pictographs found on the island, became a wildlife refuge 30 years ago. In 1963, the U.S. Navy had expropriated the area from its traditional landowners, who were relocated and converted it into a restricted

military area for a classified facility (Dixon et al. 2022: 100). Because of its strategic location, the site was at the forefront of conversations between the local government and the U.S. military, who wanted to build a base and shooting range there. Community protests and negotiations managed to stop this project by arguing it was a site of significant endemic biodiversity, and the wildlife refuge was consequently established. However, this process did not entail the return of land to its traditional owners. On the 5th of June 1995, 21 Guam Senators unanimously passed Public Law 23-25 which demanded that the U.S. Department of Defense return CHamoru excess lands ‘to the rightful owners from which the lands were originally taken by force, deceit and outright theft’ (Hita Litekyan on an Instagram post, 15th December 2023), something that has not happened yet. Recently, the U.S. Navy has re-started conversations to build a new firing range at Ritidian.



Figure 64: Members of the traditional landowners of Litekyan, accompanied by well-known artists, scholars, activists and respected members of the Guam community protest at the 30th anniversary of the Ritidian Point Wildlife Refuge on the 17th of December 2023. Over 60 years ago, the U.S. Navy forcefully relocated traditional landowners and took ownership of Ritidian Point. While the site has been reconverted into a wildlife refuge, land has not been returned to its original owners. The protest did not include active shouting and protesting but was rather seen as a moment for the community to spend time together through the sharing of artistic practice and knowledge.

Paying homage to Litekyan’s CHamoru meaning, many community members regularly converge at this northern point to collectively protest the current situation of the site. During the protest that took place on the 17th of December 2023 (Fig. 64), members of the affected families alongside influential artists, scholars, activists and respected members of the community converged, just like the name of the place highlights, at the entrance of the wildlife refuge to protest and demand the return of their land. The protest did not involve active shouting, protesting, or marching but

instead took the form of non-violent resistance (Frain 2017) or peaceful protest (Na'puti 2014). It was expressed through spiritual, symbolic and creative means rooted in Indigenous feminist placental politics, defined as 'women enacting and employing ancient knowledge and sacred practices' (De Lisle 2021: 6). Some of them were preparing food to share with other protestors. Others were weaving coconut leaves together decorating bamboo shoots, exchanging knowledge and experiences or simply passing the time surrounded by community, reclaiming some of the most ancient CHamoru cultural practices.

Community protests to settler-colonialism, however, are not an isolated phenomenon happening in the Marianas. In recent years, *Kanaka Maoli* (Indigenous Hawaiians), for example, have collectively protested the construction of the controversial Thirty Meter Telescope on the summit of the sacred mountain Mauna Kea, guided by the cultural value of *aloha 'āina*: love of the land (Medeiros 2021). In the Marianas, these kinds of protests where art and activism intersect and that involve a physical re-occupation of space have been taking place for the last thirty years (Flores 2004). Just like street art, this is but one example of how artistic practice is an integral part of CHamoru processes of resisting ongoing colonisation. Protestors were reclaiming stolen narratives about their past through the act of *doing*, expressed in creative active forms of social interaction and community-building. Through re-articulated art practices, including street art used to re-conquest the urban landscape, CHamoru are actively reclaiming their rightful space and place, imagining a future of solidarity where individual power and agency merge into collective forms of resistance.

This section has explored three different ways in which CHamoru contemporary artists are expressing their identities, reflecting on what it means to be CHamoru in today's world and using art as a tool of political anti-colonial activism. The exhibition provided these artists, be they named or anonymous, with a platform to represent themselves, expressing complex themes of identity and nation-building through more contemporary artistic media.

## **Audiovisual productions**

Another medium used by CHamoru people today is the audiovisual. In general, film, video and documentary enable makers to tell their own stories. When created by Indigenous filmmakers, they can amplify community voices that are often

underrepresented, consolidate community solidarity (Fatubun 2024) and create valuable ethnographic records accessible to wider audiences (Orbach et al. 2015). In the Mariana Islands, Indigenous filmmaking is seen as a tool that ‘facilitates crucial acts of CHamoru refusal of and resistance to colonial geographies and narratives’ (Gumataotao 2023: 115) through storytelling and its focus on community initiatives. As Chamoru language and oral traditions serve as a vital conduit for cultural continuity in the Mariana Islands, the inclusion of CHamoru voices at MNA, literally and figuratively, mediated through Indigenous multimedia expressions, provided a platform that highlighted cultural and linguistic revival. In *BIBA CHamoru* this was done through the display of two recordings: first, the documentary *Navigating Cultures* by CNMI director Sophia Perez, talked about the revival of traditional seafaring through the voices of its protagonists; second, the short video *Inifresi I-linalai*, which echoed throughout the exhibition space, interpreted the Guam pledge, addressing numerous issues of deep cultural importance to the CHamoru people today. Together, these two pieces of multimedia documentary evidence created a soundscape where CHamoru people, using their own voices, could express their own agency and represent themselves within the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition space.

### ***Navigating Cultures (2021)***

In the back of the *Inafa’ Maolek* section, amongst the graffiti discussed in the previous section, there was a screen where a short documentary was played on repeat (Fig. 65). *Navigating Cultures* is a 2021 production of the Northern Marianas Humanities Council.<sup>147</sup> This 10-minute-long video showcases the revival of the ancient sailing tradition in the CNMI. The documentary was directed by Sophia Perez, a young Chamorro<sup>148</sup> filmmaker from Saipan. Its title, *Navigating Cultures*, alludes to a common CHamoru metaphorical device that comes from traditional seafaring and uses navigation and its associated terminology as a metaphor for success in one’s life, goals and visions (Perez Hattori 2022: 28). Community members involved in this revival were interviewed, both from the Chamorro and Refaluwasch community (Carolinians

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<sup>147</sup> I am discussing this documentary with the director’s permission. The documentary is free and available to watch at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pOX79qTsKKg>

<sup>148</sup> I use this spelling in this section to comply with CNMI orthographic conventions. For a longer debate see ‘Who Are the CHamoru’ section of Introduction.

living in the CNMI, mostly on the island of Saipan).<sup>149</sup> Both communities, in this respect, are equally represented in the video. Their voices appear without the mediation of any storyteller, holding an ahierarchical space. In this context, *Navigating Cultures* highlights both Indigenous personal (hi)stories and micro(hi)stories.

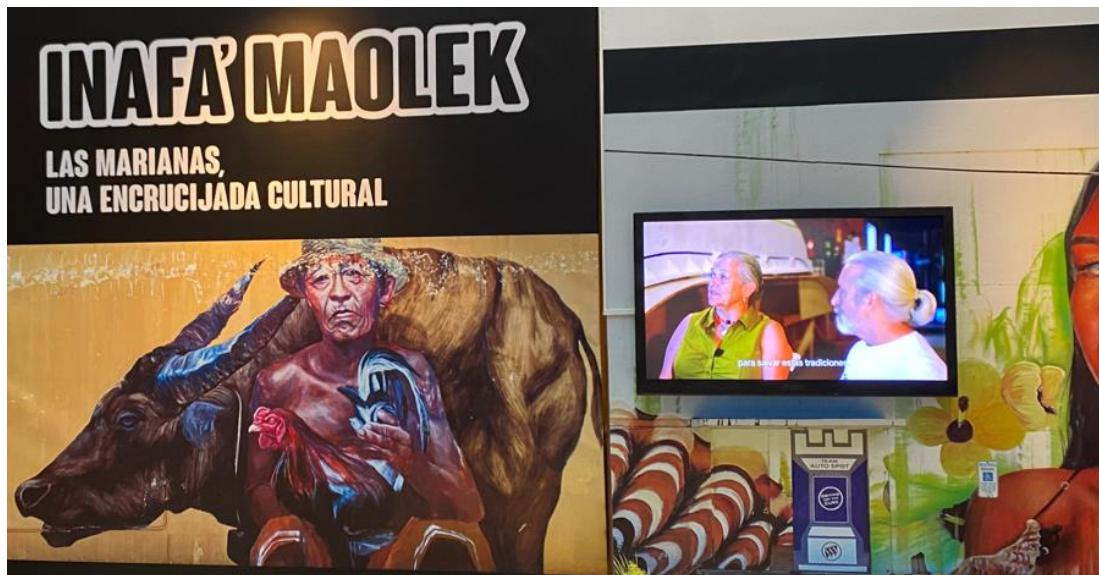


Figure 65: *Navigating Cultures* short documentary by Chamorro filmmaker Sophia Perez on display at the *Inafa' Maolek* section of *BIBA CHamoru*. This documentary focuses on the revival of ancestral canoe practices by the Saipan-based group 500 Sails in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The documentary gave members of the Chamorro community of the CNMI a voice in the exhibition space, enabling them to talk about cultural revival in their own terms.

The documentary begins with a quote from 'Papa Mau' Piailug (Fig. 66). Grand Master Navigator Pius 'Mau' Piailug was a navigator from the island of Satawal in the Federated States of Micronesia. In the 1970s, Piailug, who came from an island that preserved its seafaring traditions and culture, shared his knowledge of Indigenous wayfinding with the members of the Polynesian Voyaging Society in Hawai'i (Raigetal 2023: 348). Following his teachings, the PVS built *Hōkūle'a*, a reconstruction of a Hawaiian ancient double-hulled canoe that in 1976 successfully sailed to Tahiti and back. Piailug, who passed away in 2010, is still greatly remembered and revered by Pacific navigators. He is considered the 'father' of modern Oceanic voyaging. For navigators of the CNMI, where Chamorro and Refaluwasch communities co-exist,

<sup>149</sup> Groups of Carolinians, called Refaluwasch, have been living in Saipan since the 1820s and thus are considered one of the Indigenous communities of the CNMI, alongside Chamorros and Chamolinians. Furthermore, Carolinian is considered one of the Indigenous languages of the CNMI today.

Piailug is a strong symbol of the long-lasting Micronesian wayfinding tradition and the connections between the peoples of the Micronesian region.

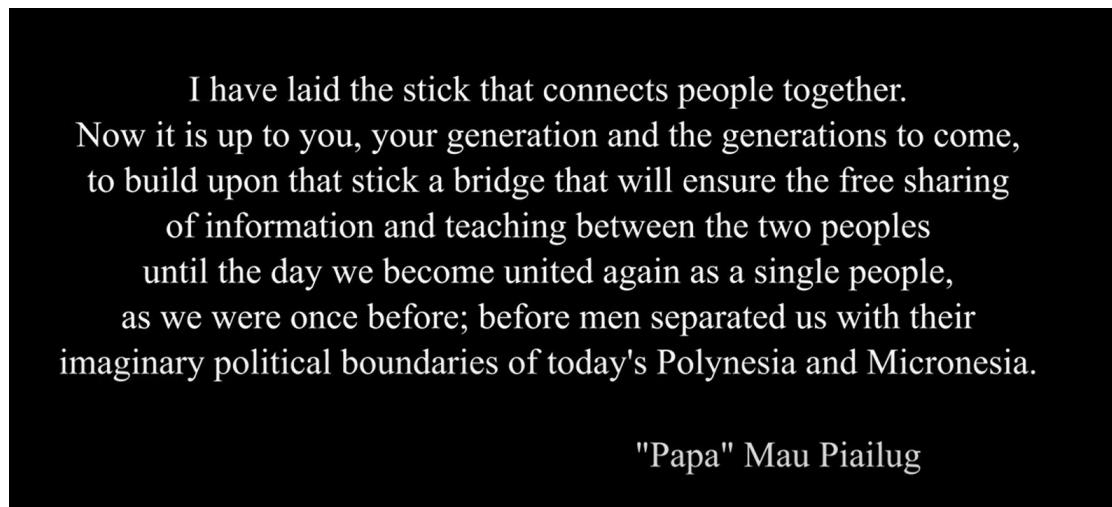


Figure 66: First seconds of the *Navigating Cultures* documentary, which include a quote from 'Papa Mau' Piailug, Micronesian navigator and 'father' of the contemporary Pacific wayfinding movement.

The documentary then turns to the face and voice of Gordon Marciano, Chairman of the Chamolinian Cultural Village who answers the question 'who lives in the CNMI today?' and identifies the Chamorros and the Refaluwasch as their Indigenous peoples (Fig. 67). He reflects on how it has taken a long time for the people of Saipan to unite and how sailing has been a key factor in bringing them together. Lino Olapai, a Carolinian cultural practitioner, tells the story of his uncle who voyaged on a traditional canoe to Saipan in 1974. Tony Piailug, master navigator and son of Mau Piailug, then talks about how wayfinding and the figure of the canoe is what brought Carolinians to the Mariana Islands. Gordon recalls his initial confusion upon encountering the first Micronesian canoes and remembers asking his mother why the Chamorros lacked similar vessels.



Figure 67: Gordon Marciano, Chairman of the Chamolinian Cultural Village Inc. in Saipan, appears in the *Navigating Cultures* documentary (00: 27). Gordon is a Chamolinian (Chamorro and Refaluwasch or Carolinian) and reflects on the revival of the Chamorro ancestral practice of sailing. *Navigating Cultures* included voices from the three different Indigenous communities of the CNMI (Chamorro, Refaluwasch and Chamolinian) and was incorporated into the *Inafa’ Maolek* section of *BIBA CHamoru*.

At this point, Pete and Emma Perez, founders of 500 Sails, tell the (hi)story of the colonisation of the Mariana Islands and the loss of long-distance canoe voyaging. Together, Pete and Emma reflect on the name of their organisation, 500 Sails, a term which arises from the account of the voyage of the *San Pedro* to Guam in 1565, when the sailors reported to have been received by 500 Chamorro *sakman* canoes.<sup>150</sup> This speaks of a time when the Chamorro people were ‘a strong nation and had their tradition intact’ (Pete Perez, *Navigating Cultures*, 02:30). The name 500 Sails inspires them to, one day, get ‘500 canoes on the water again’ (*Ibid*, 02:36). Emma Perez then goes on to discuss how 500 Sails used the engineering plan of a *sakman* canoe attributed to British Commander George Anson (1742) to build their new canoes (Fig. 68).

<sup>150</sup> Pete Perez’s comment about the origin of the name 500 Sails refers to the Legazpi Expedition that in 1565 stopped in Guam on their way to the Philippines. About the encounter between the CHamoru and the Spaniards, Rogers says that ‘over 400 Chamorro proas collected about the alien ships, according to the accounts of the voyage’ (1995: 13), though this number was probably an exaggeration. Following this, Legazpi ‘officially took possession’ of the island, although effectively speaking no Spanish occupation would exist until 1668 (*Ibid*: 14).

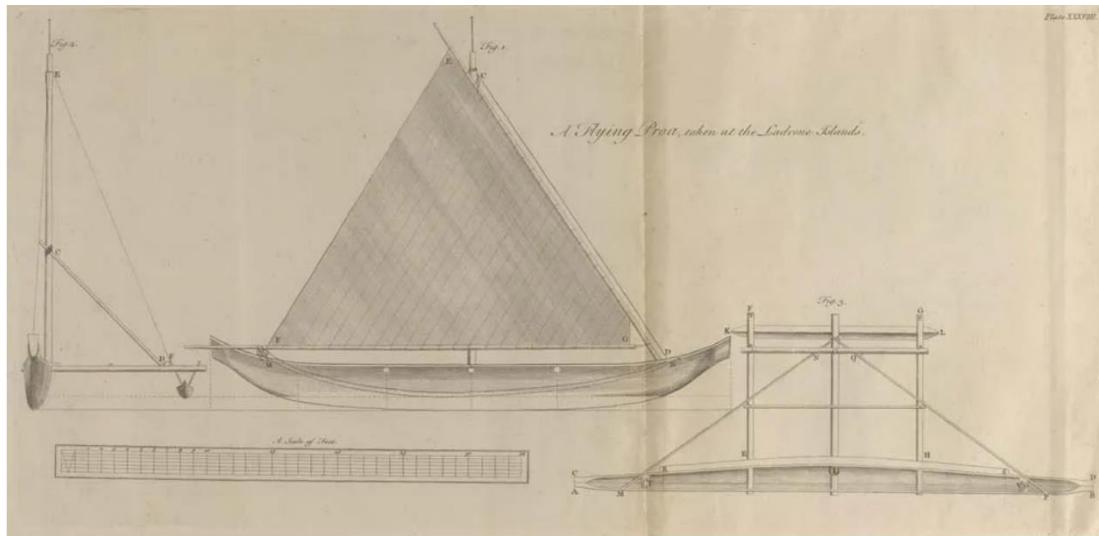


Figure 68: Technical plans of a *sakman* canoe attributed to British expeditionary George Anson during his visit to Tinian in 1742 (published in 1745), shown in *Navigating Cultures* (02:41). This is the only sketch to scale that is known of a *sakman*. 500 Sails based the construction of their canoes on this sketch, using mathematical and engineering formulas and techniques developed by Mario Borja. This sketch is proof of how, despite the Spaniards' restrictions on traditional long-distance voyaging, there was some continuity to the practice of building *sakman*.

Mario Borja, a retired rocket scientist and engineer from Saipan who lives in the diaspora in San Diego, California, was responsible for transforming Anson's plan into a physical, functional canoe (Fig. 69). He told me when I met him at the opening of the House of Chamorros in San Diego on the 20th of August 2022 that the journey began when he observed a Hawaiian canoe entering San Diego harbour, sparking his desire to revive the *sakman* tradition, which had been mostly lost following Spanish colonisation. His research involved examining canoe dimensions and delving into archival records in search of documents or illustrations referencing the *sakman*. Through this investigation, he discovered the existence of Anson's illustration (Fig. 68). This finding enabled Mario to discern the *sakman*'s proportions and using mathematical formulas to calculate the necessary dimensions for constructing a 47-foot single-hull, single-outrigger *sakman* canoe. Once the new model was ready, all that was left for Mario to do was to build the canoe, using traditional materials he collected in the Marianas.

While building the canoe, Mario and his team realised the importance of language: 'language and community come together, they cannot be separated', he told me in San Diego. As mentioned in Chapter 5, language serves as a mechanism for Chamorros to assert their inherent right to self-determination as a people (Na'puti 2014). In this sense, the construction of Mario's *sakman* went hand-in-hand with

efforts to revive the ancient Chamorro terms related to sailing techniques, the different parts of the canoe and the winds that would carry it. Once the canoe was finished, they decided to name it *Che'lu*, the Chamorro word for sibling, brother or sister, attributing human-like agency (Gell 1998) to the *sakman*. However, Mario soon realised that building a canoe and being able to sail it are not the same. Consequently, they learnt how to sail it through trial and error; they first sailed it in the San Diego harbour, but their ultimate goal was always to take it home to the Marianas. The *sakman* was shipped to Guam in February 2016 for the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts. ‘It sailed for the first time where it belongs on the 25th of February’, Mario told me. This highlights how the CHamoru revival of seafaring is not only a material but also a symbolic act. However, *Che'lu* was only able to sail across short distances within the reef, never venturing into long-distance travel.



Figure 69: Mario Borja, retired rocket scientist, engineer and honorary board member of 500 Sails showing the public how to sail a *sakman* canoe at the opening of the House of Chamorros in Balboa Park, San Diego (CA) on the 20th of August 2022. Mario was the engineer who worked on the construction of a *sakman* canoe following the Anson Expedition illustrations. Using traditional techniques and materials Mario built *Che'lu*, the first contemporary *sakman* which is based in San Diego.

Following Mario’s first experiment, 500 Sails had the technical skills to build a *sakman* that resembled Anson’s model but lacked the necessary skills to sail it. As told in *Navigating Cultures*, this is when they decided to recruit Micronesian master navigators like Cecilio Raiukiulipiy, who learned the traditional knowledge of

navigation in Satawal and Mario Benito, who learned how to sail and read the stars from his uncles during his childhood. With them, 500 Sails developed a training programme and formal sailing curriculum. They also started a Sunday sails programme, where the community is welcome to go on a ride and learn how to sail on one of the fiberglass canoes built by 500 Sails. In the documentary, April Repeki, a Chamolinian dance instructor and student in the sailing programme, talks about how important it is to ‘take advantage of this opportunity’ and learn from this pan-Micronesian collaboration (April Repeki, *Navigating Cultures*, 05:15). Cecilio then explores the idea that Polynesians, Melanesians and Micronesians are one people originating from the same ocean, reflecting a pan-Pacific mentality similar to the one imbued in Taitano’s storyboards. Pete and Emma then talk about the generosity that the Refaluwasch community has brought to the project, where every member of the Marianas community is welcome.

The documentary then shows footage of John Castro and Tony Piailug, who have been collectively working on a project to carve a *sakman* canoe using traditional methods and technologies. Tony reflects on the technique that goes into building a wooden canoe using shell adzes (Fig. 70). This project, which is expected to be long-haul, is compatible with 500 Sails’s vision of transmitting the skills of traditional navigation today. This is the reason why 500 Sails uses fiberglass for their canoes, Pete and Emma explain: ‘this is to get the canoes out as quick as possible so we can train people in sailing as quickly as possible’ (Emma Perez, *Navigating Cultures*, 07:21). The ethos of traditional navigation extends beyond the practice of building and sailing a canoe, it ‘encapsulates much if not all of the basic survival skills and knowledge that has been central to these communities for centuries’ (Raigetal 2023: 351). In the documentary, Tony Piailug refers to this, encapsulated in the concept *local ways*. ‘Learning how to use our medicine, how to plant out food’ he says: ‘that’s how we grew up’ he adds (Tony Piailug, *Navigating Cultures*, 08:03). Cecilio and Mario express concern that ancestral traditions are increasingly being lost due to insufficient governmental support and the impact of globalisation. They note that many Micronesian youth, most of who travel abroad for education, are not adequately exposed to these traditional lifeways. They suggest that legislation should be developed to integrate this knowledge into the school system as a means of ensuring its viability and survival in the future, thus adding a political dimension to the documentary.



Figure 70: Tony Piailug, Carolinian master carver and navigator and son of great navigator Mau Piailug, speaking for the *Navigating Cultures* documentary at the *guma'higai* (carving house) in Susupe, Saipan. Tony has been an integral part of the traditional seafaring revival project in the Mariana Islands.

When I visited Saipan in January 2024, I had the opportunity to sail with 500 Sails and experience this deep connection between navigation, environment and traditional knowledge first-hand. Every Saturday from 10 am to 1 pm, the crew from 500 Sails meet at the *guma'sakman* (canoe warehouse), just north of Lower Base on Susupe. There, they offer free rides (open to everyone) around the crystal-clear waters of the Saipan lagoon on one of their *sakman* canoes (Fig. 71). The canoe can fit two navigators inside the hull and up to four or five riders who sit on a platform that stretches onto the outrigger. The navigator in the front is in charge of the sail while the navigator in the back of the canoe uses a paddle to steer, although most of the steering is done by the wind. They always sail almost into the wind, but never straight into it. To change direction, one literally turns the back of the canoe into the front. This is achieved by moving the point of the sail from one end of the hull to the other, keeping the outrigger to windward (for Marianas and coverage of Anson's descriptions see Haddon and Hornell 1936: 412ff). Overall, the technical skill required to manoeuvre the *sakman* reflects the depth of Indigenous Micronesian navigation, which involves not only steering the canoe but also understanding currents, celestial bodies, weather patterns and marine life (Nuttall et al. 2023: 238; Raigetal 2023: 351); in this case, three majestic eagle rays gliding by, parallel to the *sakman*. All of these issues related to the cosmological ethos and praxis of navigation that I experienced when I sailed with 500 Sails were taken up by *Navigating Cultures*.



Figure 71: Riding along on one of 500 Sails' *sakman* canoes on the 6th of January 2024 at Saipan Lagoon, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. 500 Sails' canoes are built using fiberglass. During the ride, navigators explained the vision of the project and showcased some of the techniques of traditional sailing that they have learned from Refaluwasch navigators and are now applying to traditional Chamorro canoes.

Finally, the documentary completes a full circle with Gordon Marciano speaking again. Talking about the connection between the Chamorro and the Refaluwasch community, he says that they are one: '*un koråson*', one heart in Chamorro (Gordon Marciano, *Navigating Cultures*, 08:40), while a group of Chamorrita dancers are shown on screen dancing on Susupe Beach (Saipan) with one of 500 Sails' canoes in the background (Fig. 72). This final scene, I believe, celebrates the idea of what it means to live in the CNMI today: cultural co-existence, collaboration and Indigenous brotherhood. These themes were expressed through the inclusion and amplification of diverse Indigenous voices (Chamorro, Chamolinian and Carolinian) from the CNMI in the documentary and their reverberation throughout the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibit.



Figure 72: A group of Chamorrita dancers performing in Susupe Beach, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, is featured in *Navigating Cultures*. A fiberglass sakman canoe built by 500 Sails appears on the shore behind them. While this shot is shown in the documentary, there is a voiceover by Gordon Marciano, Chamolinian and Chairman of the Chamolinian Cultural Village Inc. Gordon speaks about how the Indigenous peoples of the Northern Marianas (the Chamorro and the Refaluwasch) are one. This is one of the final shots of the documentary, highlighting the importance of cross-cultural collaboration in the *sakman* revival project.

### ***Inifresi I-linalai***

Guarded by the banners of the Guam and the CNMI flags, a video called *Inifresi I-linalai*<sup>151</sup> was included in the *Fanhasso* section. *Inifresi I-linalai* was produced by Blue Waves, a Guam-based production company, for the 2021 Mes CHamoru in Guam. This video reflected upon the legacy and resilience of pre-contact CHamoru cultural practices, which have survived more than three centuries of colonial and military presence. In the words of the producers ‘it is a reminder of our pledge as CHamorus to protect and defend the beliefs, the culture, the language, the air, the water and the land of our people’ (Blue Waves 2021). Played on a loop, the video showed a group of young CHamoru men and women singing in Chamoru. The sound of the video could be heard throughout the exhibition, surrounding visitors in a multisensorial experience as they made their way around MNA.

At the beginning of the video, we see a young girl wearing a white dress and writing in a notebook. Out loud, she asks the CHamoru to rise ‘from the inner-most recesses’ of her mind and heart, an allegory to her ancestors that live within the depths of her. A group of young men and women, an all-CHamoru cast, appear wearing

<sup>151</sup> Analysed with the production company’s permission. *Inifresi I-linalai* is free and available to watch at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JPYNXc3QzHM>.

traditional CHamoru attire and dancing as they chant (Fig. 73). As she turns older, she joins the performers in pledging the *Inifresi* or CHamoru pledge (reproduced below) for her generation and the generations that will come (Fig. 73). The *Inifresi*, originally written by Bernardita Camacho Dungca, was reinterpreted by Master of CHamoru Chant Leonard Iriarte for this video. The use of the Chamoru language in the chant is part of the ongoing efforts to revitalise CHamoru culture and language in the islands. CHamoru chant (*lålai*) has become an accepted contemporary tradition that is a part of official welcoming rituals and other cultural events. According to Iriarte, *lålai* dates to ancient times and can be considered the most respected form of CHamoru artistic expression (in Flores n.d.b). The *Inifresi* is a form of chant often recited in Guam schools and government events, among others. *Inifresi* is a word derived from the CHamoru word for offering. Building on Bernardita's *Inifresi*, Iriarte himself composed the words in *Inifresi I Linalai*, as part of the *I Fanlalai'an Oral History Project*:

*Inifresi I Linalai* – Master of CHamoru Chant Leonard Iriarte<sup>152</sup>

I submit to promise,  
Rise,  
Rise up CHamorus  
From the inner-most recesses of my mind,  
From deep within my heart,  
And with the utmost of my strength,  
I submit to promise...  
Rise,  
Rise up CHamorus  
To protect  
And to defend  
The beliefs,  
The culture,  
The language,  
The air,  
The water,  
And the land of the CHamoru  
My heritage comes directly from God our Father  
This I affirm on the Bible,  
And my flag,  
The flag of Guåhan.

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<sup>152</sup> The video itself has English subtitles, so what is reproduced here is the video's translation of the words being said in Chamoru. In this thesis, I will only analyse the English translation, keeping in mind that much cultural content might be lost in translation.



Figure 73: The child wearing the white dress, now a young woman, joins the performers and chants and dances with them at the end of *Inifresi I-linalai*. This scene represents how the younger girl is holding the promise to uphold her CHamoru heritage, a promise she made as a kid. The values of what it means to be CHamoru in the contemporary world, of balancing tradition and modernity, are highlighted in the video and, consequently, in *BIBA CHamoru*.

The *Inifresi* speaks about the importance of ‘culture, language, air, water and the land of the CHamoru’, all of which are embedded in the landscapes that appear behind the actors and at intersecting shots. As discussed above, *tåno’ CHamoru* (the land of the CHamoru) is deeply connected with CHamoru concepts of culture and heritage. A reference to the Christianisation of CHamoru culture or rather, the CHamorisation of Catholicism, is made when the chanters point out that ‘their CHamoru heritage comes from God’ and they ‘swear it on the Bible and the flag of Guam’. The transmission of CHamoru culture, often done within the nuclear family, has been deeply linked with the transmission of Catholicism since the end of World War II (Diaz 2010: 23). Furthermore, the sentence points out the deep connection between tradition, religion and politics in the Marianas. All of these issues, which form a contemporary CHamoru identity, expressed in CHamoru terms, were emphasised in the video.

Like in many Pacific societies, for CHamoru people chanting and dancing, reflected through bodily movement and other embodied practices used for sustaining cultural lifeways, are deeply associated with the presence of ancestors (Fig. 74). While most CHamoru dances and chants were discontinued during the Spanish colonial period and substituted by Spanish dance forms (Flores 1999: 131), recent years have seen a re-invention of CHamoru dances (Farrer and Sellman 2014: 130). This revival, re-construction (Flores 2002) or re-invention of tradition (following Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) was started by Frank Rabon, who choreographed Guam’s first

performance in the Festival of Pacific Arts 1985 (Flores n.d.c; 2002). He was first exposed to Indigenous forms of dance when he moved to the U.S. and was mostly trained in Hawaiian and other Polynesian dances, sparking debates about the authenticity of CHamoru dance<sup>153</sup> (Flores 1999; 2002). In this way, the CHamoru dance revival movement is greatly influenced by the latter and acts in ways parallel to the re-construction of a uniquely distinct CHamoru identity (Flores 2002; Farrer and Sellman 2014: 130). The technical skills inspired by other Pacific dance traditions are complemented with the knowledge reconstructed from CHamoru myths and legends, as well as the information gathered from missionary reports (Farrer and Sellman 2014: 137). Dancing is done through a series of embodied movements, including slapping, stomping and swaying in place (Flores n.d.c). In this way, by showcasing CHamoru dancing, *Inifresi I-linalai* reflects the importance of the revival, resilience and transmission of CHamoru cultural practices. It also evokes a reverence for the ancestral past.

The clip also reflects how CHamoru cultural features interact with the contemporary globalised world. In the video, the protagonist that sings throughout the video is dressed in a white dress (Figs. 73 and 74). The other people that appear in the video wear what has come to be the ‘typical’ CHamoru attire worn in ‘traditional’ performances (Flores 2002; Figs. 74 and 75). These were based on some vague ethnographic descriptions of the costumes worn by CHamoru women after the arrival of the first Jesuit missionaries in 1669-70 (Flores n.d.c). According to these accounts, the women adorned their foreheads with fragrant flowers and sometimes red shell strings (likely Spondylus) with turtle shell trinkets. They wore similar shells around their waists, with small coconuts hanging from root-made strings, creating cage-like skirts.

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<sup>153</sup> Debates about the authenticity of CHamoru cultural practices have existed since the 1980s. Flores says the following about this issue: ‘While it may be difficult for an observer to find historical authenticity in the recent proliferation of neo-Chamorro art forms, these creations are based on a reality created by the sociocultural matrix of Chamorro life today. No other ethnic group can legitimately lay claim to *latte*, *taotaotano*’ rock art or *sinahi* neckpieces, nor can these symbols evoke emotive responses from any other social group except Chamorros. These are symbols from an indigenous past that are finding significant cultural meaning in the present’ (1999: 130).



Figure 74: Different ‘dress-scapes’ that appear in the *Inifresi I-linalai* video showed on repeat at *BIBA CHamoru*. The top image includes the traditional attire worn by CHamoru performers. The bottom image shows a young girl (who later in the video turns into a young adult) wearing a white dress. This represents the dynamic tensions that tradition and modernity play in the contemporary Mariana Islands.

Similar costumes were worn by the Guam performance delegation during the 13th Festival of Pacific Arts or FestPac (Fig. 75). FestPac has served as a forum for the construction of a unique CHamoru identity within a pan-Pacific context (Flores 2002: 62). In this sense, the costumes worn by delegates at FestPac and in subsequent festivals have been reintroduced into society as a form of cultural expression. While the attire worn by the performers at the 13th FestPac included a green grass skirt, a wrap-around orange cloth and shell crowns and necklaces for women, the female performers in *Inifresi I'linalai* wear a longer, dry grass skirt supported by an orange belt, a black wraparound cloth and flower crowns and armbands. In the case of men, the FestPac performers were shirtless and wore a black loincloth, spondylus crowns, a *sinahi* and leg bands, while the men in the video wear similar attire but with wraparound skirts and flower crowns instead of loincloth and shell crowns. While many similarities are noticed in the use of wraparound cloths, *sinahi*, grass skirts, crowns and necklaces that allude to the descriptions provided by early missionaries, small variations, which correlate with the use of alternate symbols by different dance groups, can be appreciated.



Figure 75: Similar costumes worn by performers in the *Inifresi I-linalai* video showed at *BIBA CHamoru* (top image) and Guam delegates performing on the 7th of June 2024 in Waikiki Beach Walk, Honolulu, Hawai'i during the 13th Festival of the Pacific Arts. Women's attire includes a grass skirt, a sleeveless top, a flower crown and shell necklaces. The men's attire includes a black loincloth or skirt, a flower crown and a *sinahi*. These are seen as important markers of CHamoru cultural pride.

In the video, all the characters appear against different backgrounds, mostly landscapes (cliffs, forests, beaches) of the islands they inhabit and love. The video's 'dress-scape' (Montón Subías and Moral de Eusebio 2021) and landscape reflects the dynamic tensions between the local and the global in the contemporary Marianas. On the one hand, the Marianas are a cosmopolitan hub that has benefited from a global cultural structuration. On the other hand, they are proud of their past, their culture and their CHamoru heritage. Overall, the video deals with issues of great importance for the CHamoru community: the revitalisation of their Indigenous language through practice and the use of chant as a vehicle for reclaiming the past and for the transmission of culture; the importance of oral tradition in Indigenous cultures; the often-subtle tension between tradition and modernity; and the connection of communities across Oceania, a hint of the Pan-Pacific 'unity in diversity' Epeli Hau'ofa writes about (2008: 44). In the words of the video's production company, it is

a ‘call for our people to pass down the lessons and spirit of our culture’ (Blue Waves 2021).

All of these important topics were also mentioned by different members of the CHamoru community and diaspora during the opening of the House of Chamorros in San Diego (August 2022). In the case of CHamorus, processes of cultural revival are strongly rooted in the diaspora. This way, the Pacific Ocean (*Tåsi Pasifiku*) not only connects the different islands in the Marianas and Micronesia (as emphasised in *Navigating Cultures* and Taitano’s art) but also connects the Marianas with its diaspora in Southern California. ‘Our roots, our origins, are embedded in the sea’ Hau’ofa says (2008: 57). ‘Contemporary developments are taking us away from our sea anchors’ he adds. Hau’ofa’s discourse, circulated across modern transnational networks, has infiltrated all aspects of the CHamoru identity as peoples from Oceania. And the ocean is the road to the perpetuation of cultural transmission, inseparable from cosmopolitanism, migration and cultural exchange, all emphasised in the two videos analysed here, and consequently, through its display, in *BIBA CHamoru*.

## **Heritage and revival**

This final section examines how *BIBA CHamoru* highlighted heritage initiatives in Guam, looking at two other ways in which ancient heritage has been retrieved, reinterpreted and revitalised. These, in a way, bring a contemporary counterpoint to ways of understanding the past, presenting a CHamoru perspective and worldview. On the one hand, the contemporary revival of slinging, one of the most prominent ancient CHamoru practices that holds a special place in the construction of a contemporary CHamoru identity, was reflected upon in the exhibition. On the other hand, *BIBA CHamoru* brought in two examples of institutions working through community archaeology, the Guam Preservation Trust and project ABERIGUA. Due to the historico-political circumstances of the Mariana Islands, community archaeology is essential for heritage preservation, a role highlighted in *BIBA CHamoru*.

### **The revival of slinging**

The revival of slinging was featured in two ways in *BIBA CHamoru*. On the one hand, through the display of the modern sling and ‘slingstones’ made from synthetic materials by slinger Roman dela Cruz, on display alongside the ones collected for the 1887 Exhibition (Fig. 76). On the other hand, *BIBA CHamoru* acted as a forum of self-

representation for CHamoru slingers through the incorporation of a text panel including information on the contemporary revival of slinging in the Marianas, mentioning some of the key figures in this revival.<sup>154</sup> The panel, shown in Figure 76, said the following:

‘New CHamoru sling’

The skill required to use a sling is an ancestral technique being revived in the Marianas as part of ongoing efforts to reconstruct cultural identity. While slings were once used as weapons, they have now become central to sports and recreational activities. Various groups across the islands are participating in this resurgence, with Fokkai [misspelling of Fokai] being among the most active, attracting many participants.

Regular competitions and demonstrations are organised, and some of these groups have taken part in international conventions that focus on traditional sports and skills from around the world, particularly those involving cultures where slinging is also a tradition, such as the Balearic Islands in Spain.

These groups have played a key role in passing on slinging to younger generations, just as it was practiced in the past. A significant change today is that slinging is no longer an exclusively male “art” – many women now participate as well (author’s translation)



Figure 76: Photograph of the case dedicated to slinging in the *Latte* section of *BIBA CHamoru*. The sling and slingstones collected for the 1887 Exhibition appear displayed alongside the contemporary ‘versions’ of themselves donated by Roman dela Cruz in 2021. The text panel talks about the ‘new CHamoru sling’ or the contemporary revival of slinging in the Mariana Islands. The panel mentions the different groups that today are reviving the ‘art’ of slinging, with an explicit mention to Roman dela Cruz’s *Fokai* project. Rather than focusing on slinging as a hunting and fighting method, they practice slinging as a sport, teach workshops and attend international slinging competitions worldwide.

In the Marianas, slinging is a deeply cultural and spiritual practice. It was practiced by ancient CHamorus and was largely discontinued during the Spanish

<sup>154</sup> It must be pointed out that the revival of slinging is led by few key actors (mainly Roman dela Cruz, Guelu and BJ Leon Guerrero), as it is a relatively new process.

colonial period, although it never fully disappeared as reported in several eighteenth and nineteenth century sources (Clement 2022: 180). As the panel stressed, several attempts to revive slinging have been made in the Mariana Islands in recent years. Two have most notably been successful: Åcho Marianas and Fokai. Both were founded and spearheaded by the same person, professional slinger and local business owner Roman dela Cruz, who also donated the contemporary sling displayed in the exhibition (Fig. 76). As part of my fieldwork in Guam, I interviewed Roman. Our interview shed light on the revival, re-framing and engagement processes of CHamoru slinging:

I've always admired slingstones and had slinging in the back of my mind but I always thought that it was something that was just done in the past... In 2008 a buddy had told me that people were still slinging on Guam and that somebody makes slings. And I'm thinking 'I understand now that it is just really simple, you could do it with one piece of fabric'. So, I eventually started slinging in 2009 (Roman dela Cruz, interview).

Reflecting on slinging as an embodied, highly technical practice, Roman traced the genealogy of the process of revival in these terms:

I was able to purchase a sling here from some local sling makers. I was terrible, I was terrible for a very long time. For about close to 3 years I had to sling in secret, not only because I didn't want to hurt anybody, but also because I was so embarrassed to sling in public. And then finally I was showing one of my friends who I met through martial arts this thing and then he brought in his buddy from Rota who had done slinging before, who was Guelu.<sup>155</sup> So then, Guelu started bringing his family [the Rosario family from Rota], we started growing this group and learning how to sling. And then we decided to start advocating for it.

And finally, Åcho Marianas was created:

Åcho Marianas came into play because in the course of creating all of this we noticed that we needed a structure. We created this weekly event called slingstones and stories which turned into sling Wednesdays. We met without fail for a very long time (Roman dela Cruz, interview).

'Åcho', which means stone in Chamoru, was chosen as a name to reflect on the ancestral link between ancient CHamorus and the symbolism of stone, embodied in the sacred *latte* and *åcho atupat* or slingstones. Today, Åcho Marianas is a non-profit organisation led by Bernard 'BJ' Leon Guerrero whose goal is to 'teach about slinging, teach slinging and share and promote CHamoru culture in the modern world, both in

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<sup>155</sup> Guelu is the nickname given to Ben Rosario from the island of Luta (Rota) in the Northern Mariana Islands. He is a cultural advocate for the Chamorro culture and a professional slinger. For several years, he has represented the Mariana Islands in the Slinging World Cup alongside Roman dela Cruz.

the Marianas and beyond' (13North 144East 2021). The group meets every Wednesday evening at the Sagan Kotturan Chamoru Cultural Center in Ypao, Guam, where anyone regardless of their level of expertise is welcome to join for target practice. This involves aiming and shooting towards a wooden board or target that resembles an archery target, mounted on two legs. In a competition, the closer one gets to the central circle of the target, the more points one gets. Besides the weekly practice meetups, Åcho Marianas also runs workshops for schools around Guam, runs slinging competitions and participates in local fairs and fiestas.

In parallel, Roman's organisation, Fokai, also runs slinging workshops for schools on a regular basis. Roman's philosophy of slinging, however, extends beyond viewing it as just a sport; he regards it as an art.<sup>156</sup> 'Whereas Åcho Marianas is there to provide slinging with stones in a larger space' he told me during the interview 'we [Fokai] can emphasise slinging with seeds, slinging with tennis balls and also be the experimental lab for all of the other ideas we bring, like sling golf'. In this sense, Fokai has organised seed-dispersing slinging events, where thousands of seeds of the *daok* tree (a tree endemic to the Mariana Islands) are shot into the forest as a metaphorical act against deforestation. This practice, which is still in the early stages of development, seeks to integrate slinging with ancestral *åmot*, emphasising 'the cultural connection to the land and the importance of cultural and environmental stewardship' (micronesiaclimatealliance 2024). Roman has also creatively invented new varieties of slinging such as sling golf. He teaches this as part of his slinging curriculum in the workshops he runs (Fig. 77). His aim with this is to 'provide a gateway experience into the world-respected sport of Golf to help build better citizens. Golf courses seem to do the best job at preserving natural landscapes; this experience roots slinging well to its connections with the Biblical David vs. Goliath' (fokai.tv 2016).

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<sup>156</sup> CHamoru slingers and cultural advocates often refer to 'the art of slinging', thus encoding multiple symbolic, identitarian and cultural meanings embedded in the practice. This framing elevates slinging beyond a mere physical activity or tool for hunting and defense, positioning it as a refined technique that ties to a pre-colonial past.

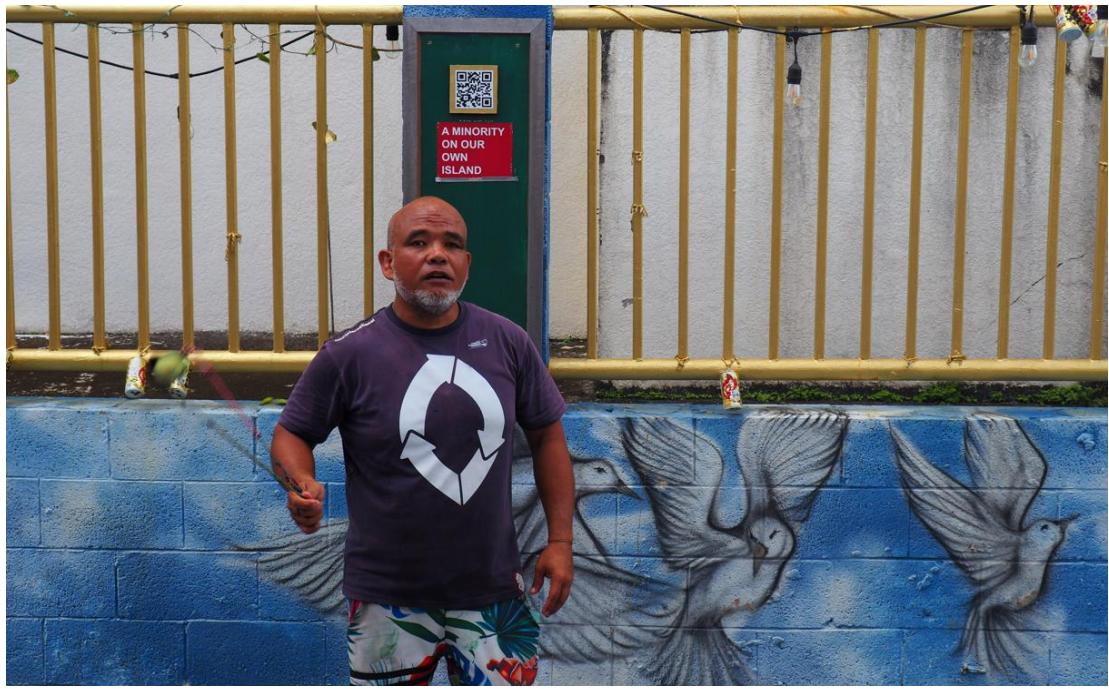


Figure 77: Roman dela Cruz teaching sling golf to a group of 8th graders from the W.A.V.E. Club during a workshop he runs at Fokai in Tamuning, Guam, 16th of December 2023. Roman's teaching curriculum includes three steps: slinging with a stone towards the wall, sling golf and target practice.

Another part of Roman and Guelu's promotion of CHamoru slinging in the international sphere is to attend the Slinging World Cups that are hosted in the Balearic Islands (Spain) yearly. In our interview, Roman reflected on his first experience of going to the World Cup:

In the later part of 2016, we had heard from this guy from Austria about the International Competition taking place in Mallorca. We didn't even know where Mallorca was, didn't even know Mallorca was in Spain, thanks goodness for Google. And we made that decision to go.

Since that first time in 2016, Roman and Guelu have returned to the World Cup every year (except for 2020 and 2021 when it was postponed due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic). For the CHamoru slingers, slinging in Spain initially felt like an act of historical justice, a symbolic reversal of colonial encounters. However, Roman acknowledged that 'I think, in the end, it helped us' (interview). Rather than deepening divisions, the competition fostered mutual respect and understanding, demonstrating how slinging serves as a shared tradition that bridges cultures across the world. Slingers of different backgrounds connect through a common skill, transforming an ancient art of warfare into a unifying force.

Overall, CHamoru slingers' vision is to celebrate the art of slinging, (re)introduce people to the CHamoru culture, foster a reconnection with ancestral traditions, emphasise CHamoru people's interconnectedness to the land, create new global connections through sport slinging and foster pride among the CHamoru people, while creating an inclusive and reframed space for local and non-local practitioners to grow. These values were highlighted in *BIBA CHamoru*, where Roman's sling and shots (Fig. 76) and the text panel on the revival of slinging were brought into the exhibition space, reflecting the exhibition's role as a space for the representation of local initiatives.

### **Guam Preservation Trust and project ABERIGUA**

In a place where archaeology lacks university support and the sole career path for archaeologists involves contracting, primarily with the U.S. military, community archaeology takes a central role in the preservation of local heritage. This issue was highlighted and featured in *BIBA CHamoru*, which acted as a forum for the representation of these community-led projects in the words of its organisers and participants. On the wall between the *Matao* and the *Mestisu* sections, several information panels were included, each of them introducing a community project or local organisation for the recovery and preservation of historical and cultural heritage in the Marianas.

First, the Guam Preservation Trust (GPT)<sup>157</sup> was given a voice in the exhibition. The text panel described the GPT's project as the 're-conquest' of colonial heritage. Using the term 're-conquest' is not a coincidence, but rather a conscious decision to re-appropriate a term widely used in the context of Spanish history, used in the wider contexts of the 'politics of self-determination' (Clifford 2013: 259) of CHamoru people. In this sense, and among other projects, the GPT is trying to re-assign meaning to Guam's colonial past by means of community archaeology. One of the projects promoted by the GPT is the Humåtak Community Museum, an institution run for and by the community, where history is explained through their eyes in a kind

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<sup>157</sup> GPT is a non-profit, public organisation created in the 1990s and directed by Joe Quintana, based in the island of Guam. It is dedicated to preserving Guam's historic sites and culture as well as educating the public about those issues. Although primarily tasked with restoring historic structures, which are listed in the Guam Register of Historic Places and/or the U.S. National Register of Historic Places, the GPT also funds various types of cultural preservation projects (GPT 2024). It creates opportunities for community members to learn more about their past, to establish networks with other islands in the Pacific, to preserve what is important for the inhabitants of Guam and to give continuity to CHamoru cultural practices (Quintana 2021: 149).

of ‘living museum’, showcasing the ‘history the community wants to tell, reflecting a true “mirror” image rather than presenting an “official” history in which the community would not recognize itself’ (Quintana and Prados Torreira 2021: 151). The text panel in *BIBA CHamoru* (Fig. 78) presented the Humåtak Community Museum’s goal as ‘linking education, cooperation and the defense of the local culture to preserve the balance between the natural and cultural resources that want to be transmitted to future generations’. Some of the activities conducted by the museum include culturally guided tours of the historical sites of Humåtak, such as my visit to Fu’ā Rock with Joe Quinata for example, organising the yearly CHamoru Culture and Heritage Day and raising a new generation of community-based stewards (Ibid: 157-158).

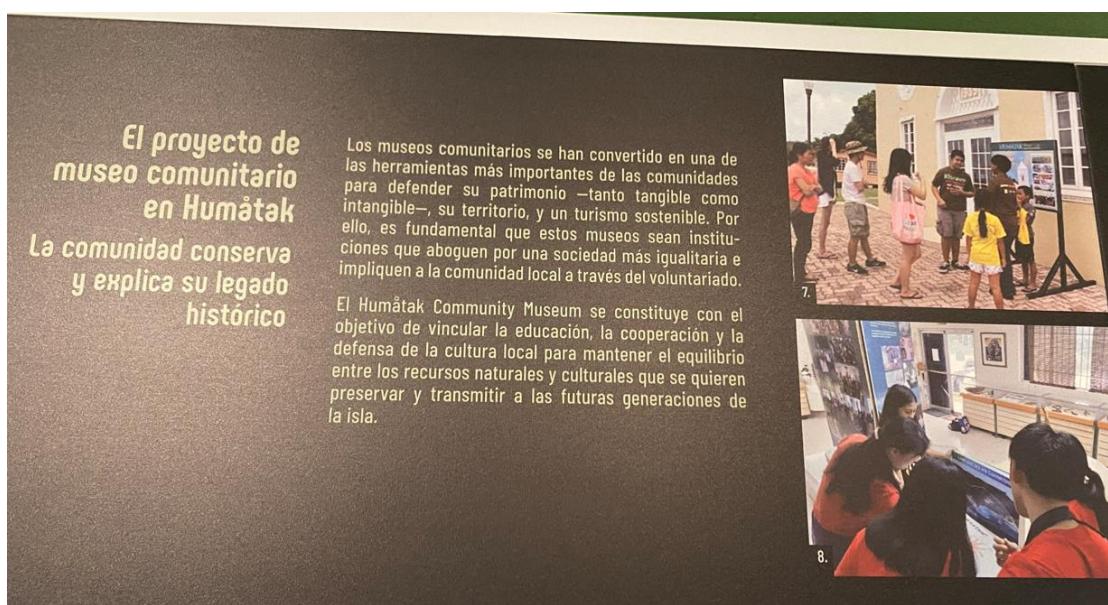


Figure 78: Text panel mentioning the Humåtak Community Museum at the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition. This project was led by the GPT and involved members of the community of Humåtak. An outdoor ‘living museum’, the Humåtak Community Museum is an institution run by and for the community.

In March 2024, the village of Humåtak got the good news that a new project to rehabilitate the F.Q. Sanchez Elementary School, proposed by the Guam Preservation Trust, had received 3.5 million dollars of U.S. federal funding. The school, one of the pillars of this southern community and the village’s only school, closed in 2011 due to lack of funding. Its name commemorates the school’s first principal and an early pioneer of historic and cultural preservation in the village: Francisco Quinata Sanchez. The building was built in 1953 and placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998 (Sablan 2024). It is located next to the ruins of the old Spanish church, overlooking Humåtak Bay. Archaeological excavations that have been conducted in

the past by a team of archaeologists from the ABERIGUA project, alongside members of the community, have found several burial sites around the ruins. On the 8th of March 2024 Humåtak Mayor Quinata, Governor Lou Leon Guerrero, Påle Eric Forbes and Lieutenant Governor Josh Tenorio, alongside senators from the legislature and BME & Sons Inc workers, officially broke the ground to inaugurate the restoration work (Fig. 79).



Figure 79: Humåtak Mayor Quinata (fifth from the right), Lieutenant Governor Josh Tenorio (sixth from the right), Governor Lou Leon Guerrero (seventh from the right) and Påle Eric Forbes, alongside senators from the legislature and BME & Sons Inc workers, officially break the ground of the new project to rehabilitate the F.Q. Sanchez Elementary School grounds in the village of Humåtak, Guam. Supervising them is Joe Quinata, Director of the Guam Preservation Trust and leader of the project. 8th of March 2024.

This symbolic shoveling not only granted support to the project but marked the beginning of the community archaeology work that will be conducted to survey the location of new burials, so no human remains are disturbed in the process. While some trained archaeologists have been hired to lead the project, most of the surveys will be conducted by volunteer amateur archaeologists from Humåtak. By involving the community in the process of rehabilitating the school grounds, the GPT hopes that people will engage in public consultations the Mayor will hold to decide the future use of the school. Furthermore, they hope this form of interactive action will allow the younger Humåtak generations to contribute to the narratives about their village and its heritage that are being constructed and circulated in a U.S. national sphere. The

training provided by professional archaeologists translates into opportunities for young people's future. These themes were highlighted in the text panel discussed above, which mentioned the connection between education, collaboration and the preservation of local culture in maintaining the village's natural and cultural resources, ensuring they are preserved for future generations.

Second, a panel in the exhibition (Fig. 80) talked about ABERIGUA, an archaeological project that studies the material remnants of cultural contact and colonialism in the Marianas. ABERIGUA, which means 'to investigate' in Chamoru, puts the emphasis of its research on daily life, the body and the material culture of colonial Guam (Montón-Subías 2021: 78). One of ABERIGUA's projects, highlighted in the *BIBA CHamoru* text panel, was the 2017 excavation of the ruins of San Dionisio Church in Humåtak, next to the school grounds. Humåtak has some of the best-preserved Spanish-period heritage in all the Pacific (Ibid: 81). The purpose of ABERIGUA, in this respect, was to 'better understand the start of the missionary colonisation in the archipelago, its evolution through time and its impact on the local population' (Ibid: 82). This project 'integrates inhabitants and scholars from the community', as the panel in Figure 80 reads. The excavations were requested by members of the community in the first place (Montón-Subías 2021: 84). Much like the GPT and the Humåtak Community Museum, this project actively involved the local community, linking education, cooperation and the defense of local heritage together.

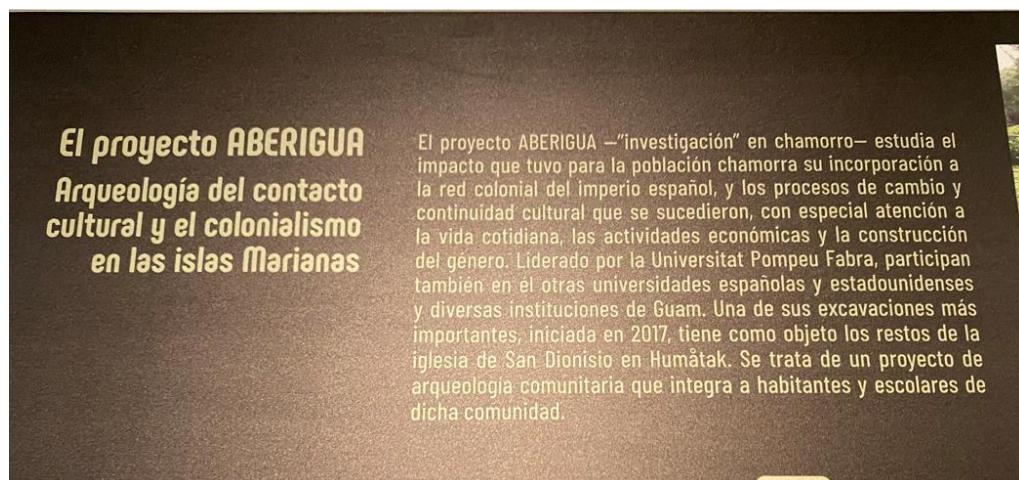


Figure 80: Text panel presenting project ABERIGUA at the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition. This is a collaborative project that involves archaeologists from Spain as well as partners in Guam and members of the Humåtak community.

By bringing these community-based initiatives to the exhibition, the organisers of *BIBA CHamoru* successfully engaged with the present efforts of the Indigenous

inhabitants of the Marianas to re-interpret their past in their own way. Ultimately, the role of GPT and ABERIGUA in imagining and funding community archaeology projects is about sovereignty in the production of their own knowledge, and about the self-representation of their own past. Furthermore, Joe Quinata and members of the GPT wanted to emphasise how the telling of history through a CHamoru perspective can be a powerful tool for re-conquering the ways in which their past is interpreted. Featuring in *BIBA CHamoru*, an exhibition which happened in one of the Marianas' coloniser countries, was another way of 're-conquering' and re-appropriating spaces where CHamoru people have been largely marginalised.

## Conclusion

This chapter has explored three strategies used by *BIBA CHamoru* that allowed for the Indigenous self-representation of CHamoru people in MNA. First, it examined three examples of visual art displayed in the exhibition. These artists use new art forms to reflect on their own identity politics and to depict the different landscapes and spaces of the globalised Mariana Islands. Second, this chapter examined how Indigenous filmmakers physically and figuratively integrated community voices and the CHamoru language into the exhibition space through their audiovisual productions, deepening its cultural impact. Third, it explored how the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition highlighted initiatives in cultural revival and heritage preservation through focused case-based text panels. Overall, the integration of these diverse media collectively highlighted the theme of self-representation throughout the exhibition. Together, they emphasised the role of culture, arts and heritage in nurturing collective identity and cultural continuity for the CHamoru people. Museo Nacional de Antropología, in this sense, became a space where CHamoru artists, cultural practitioners and community members could express themselves and share their island heritage with a European audience, as they navigate their own complex identity.

## Thesis Conclusion

This thesis has explored the circulation, agency and display of CHamoru objects, people and knowledge in Spain across 134 years. This particular focus on these three theoretical axes has not been previously applied to the study of CHamoru collections in general nor to Pacific collections in Spanish institutions. At the onset, four main questions were posed:

1. How have CHamoru objects, people and knowledge circulated to, from and within Spanish institutions in different periods of time?
2. What distinct themes were articulated each of the times objects and knowledge have been on display and how do they reflect the broader historical, political and intellectual contexts of their respective eras?
3. How is Indigenous agency revealed in the production, circulation and display of CHamoru objects kept in Spanish museums?
4. In which ways have CHamoru techniques of self-representation through material, artistic and written expressions evolved or remained consistent across time?

In order to address these questions, this thesis was divided into three parts, each analysing a historical or exhibitionary process. Each part, furthermore, focused on a particular ‘motion’ or flow, alluding to the mobility of people, objects and knowledge in both colonial and postcolonial settings.

Part I looked at the ‘motions’ taking place during the period of direct contact between Spain and the Marianas (1521-1898), with a particular focus on the 1887 *Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas*. This part was divided into three chapters. Chapter 1 covered the joint history of Spain and the Mariana Islands, providing the necessary historical background to understand the processes explored in the thesis. Chapter 2 focused on nineteenth-century representations of CHamoru people and culture written by Spanish travellers, colonial officers, anthropologists and journalists in several ‘field’ journals and exhibition reports and on how these representations were materialised at the 1887 Exhibition. Overall, their writings portrayed nineteenth century CHamorus as a physically, morally and technologically ‘less advanced’ people than the ancient CHamoru society, reflecting contemporary scientific debates grounded in the ‘science of race’. Chapter

3 traced the agency of CHamoru exhibitors in the production and circulation of objects from the Mariana Islands to Spain for the 1887 Exhibition and that of CHamoru participants in their travel and participation in the exhibition. To do this, the chapter used a ‘partial biographies’ approach that aimed to reconstruct the lives and possible motivations of exhibitors and participants as much as possible given the limited documentation available.

Part II examined the period between the 1887 Exhibition and the 2021 *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition, which I called an ‘interlude’. It traced the biographies and trajectories of CHamoru objects as they have been circulated and re-circulated across Spanish exhibitions and institutions. Within this process, I have explored the different ways in which they have been exhibited and interpreted, following the Spanish museum system’s historical shifts, evolving governmental and scientific discourses and the personal beliefs of exhibition and museum curators and directors.

Part III, titled ‘collaborative motions’, focused on the 2021 *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition. Chapter 5 examined the re-assemblage of materials, people and knowledge carried out by exhibition curators to construct and present a specific narrative about CHamoru (hi)story, identity and culture. This process involved collaboration, partnership and negotiation with multi-localised institutions and individuals. I have also demonstrated how most of the collaborations operated through a network of pre-existing social relationships. Through dialogue and respect, *BIBA CHamoru* strove to create a negotiated display of Spanish and CHamoru perspectives of the past and present, putting both at the same epistemic level. Chapter 6 focused on three strategies used by CHamoru collaborators to represent themselves in *BIBA CHamoru*: visual art, filmmaking and heritage work. In this chapter, I ultimately argued that the exhibition provided a platform for key CHamoru artists and cultural practitioners to represent themselves through their chosen medium.

Some general conclusions can be drawn from the topics discussed across the three sections of this thesis. First, the circulation of objects, people and knowledge from the Mariana Islands to Spain has been ongoing for a long period of time, involving various actors with differing levels of engagement. In Part I of the thesis, I examined how both Spanish and CHamoru people submitted objects, or themselves, to the 1887 Exhibition and how their involvement was shaped by the social dynamics of the colonial Marianas. Part II looked at how CHamoru objects in Spain have been circulated and re-circulated across Spanish exhibitions and institutions in the period

between 1887 and 2021, often guided by administrative changes that responded to shifting political scenarios. In Part III I argued that it was the personal connections of Spanish exhibition curators, institutions around the world and CHamoru collaborators that resulted in the circulation and re-assemblage of objects and knowledge to the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition. While the thesis has primarily focused on the period between 1887 and 2021, the conclusion to Chapter 1 has emphasised how this circulation process began long before the 1887 Exhibition and is likely to persist into the future as Spanish-CHamoru relations continue to unfold.

Second, CHamoru objects kept in Spain have been displayed and represented in different ways throughout history. First, they were displayed as colonial *curios* (at the 1887, 1888 and 1893 exhibitions and Museo-Biblioteca de Ultramar) that aimed to convey particular narratives about who the CHamoru people were in the past and who they are in the present, reinforced by the intellectual postulates of the ‘science of race’. Second, in response to the changes happening in the discipline, they were interpreted as anthropological specimens when they were circulated to Museo de Antropología, Etnografía y Prehistoria. Third, they were presented as trophies of colonial plunder during the Francoist military dictatorship in an attempt to reclaim Spain’s imperial ‘glory’. They then became deactivated objects in storage at Museo Nacional de Antropología, awaiting an encounter that would reactivate them. Finally, they were displayed as agents of CHamoru identity and heritage at the *BIBA CHamoru* collaborative exhibition.

Third, while most of the literature on Indigenous agency has focused on field collecting practices, in this thesis I have argued that CHamoru agency can also be traced through the systematic analysis of exhibition displays and their contexts using material gathered from archival documents. The participation of CHamoru people in the 1887 Exhibition responded to a variety of local and personal agendas. These included accurately and appropriately representing themselves and their islands, expressing CHamoru collective identity, personal benefit, exploration, economic reasonings and fulfilling social obligations to family members (like in the case of the 1887 Exhibition) or friends or colleagues (like in *BIBA CHamoru*). All of these, ultimately, provided CHamoru people with access to a world beyond the Marianas.

A comparative approach across time and space has allowed for the analysis of the continuity and change that CHamoru modes of representation, cultural practices and material culture have suffered over time. Some, such as slinging, weaving and

seafaring, have evolved and adapted to changing worlds through a process of ‘adaptive resistance’ (Atienza 2019). New materials have been introduced, which CHamorus have adapted and integrated into the production of cultural objects in a process of transculturation (Spitta 2006). For example, synthetic materials, plastic and leather are now used in crafting slings and slingstones, while fibreglass is employed in the construction of *sakman* canoes. Additionally, new techniques and forms are being explored in practices such as weaving, while ancient techniques that had fallen out of use in the Marianas have been reintroduced through engagement with museum collections from the Spanish colonial period. Finally, new artistic formats have been introduced, including visual arts and filmmaking, which allow for CHamoru artists and cultural practitioners to represent their identity and culture in innovative ways within an increasingly globalised world.

This study is based on the information I have gathered over the four years of conducting research, though future findings may emerge that could change the course of research or offer new interpretations of the data; in fact, several avenues for future research may already be highlighted. On the one hand, this thesis has primarily focused on so-called ‘ethnographic’ rather than ‘natural history’ collections. This decision was influenced by pragmatic reasons involving the project’s time constraints, word-count limit and the scope of possible research. Generally, ‘natural history’ collections from the Mariana Islands circulated to Spain for the 1887 Exhibition remain widely unlocalised within Spanish museums. A potential starting point for future research would involve the systematic search of Spanish museum catalogues and their associated documentation to try to locate these collections.

Another possible avenue stemming from this study would be to focus on the Micronesian collections; this is, the collections from the ‘Caroline Islands’, today Federated States of Micronesia that are kept in MNA and that were also circulated to Spain for the 1887 Exhibition. As stated in the preface, my initial intention was to examine collections from the entire Micronesian region. While I conducted some provenance research on the collection, doing a comprehensive analysis of its significance and meaning to the Micronesian people would have required extensive fieldwork in the FSM, which was not feasible within the time constraints of my project.

A dedicated examination of CHamoru ancestral remains held in Spanish museums, something that has only been touched upon tangentially in this thesis, requires further exploration. While some provenance research on this subject has been

conducted by me and Carlos Madrid, a comprehensive monographic study on the provenance and current condition of the remains would provide important insights. Recent conversations between MNA staff, Spanish and CHamoru researchers and representatives of Guam and the CNMI's Historic Preservation Offices and Museums have been taking place to discuss the future return of remains back to the Mariana Islands. A focus on this eventual return would also allow for the theoretical exploration of restitution as a form of mobility, incorporating a CHamoru perspective to important debates that are currently happening worldwide.

On a broader scope, another interesting topic for research would be how CHamoru/Marianas culture and history is presented in the islands, and especially by comparing narratives and modes of display across the archipelago. It would be particularly interesting to examine the Guam Museum and the Northern Mariana Islands Museum, but potentially also including other private museums such as the Cave Museum or Galerian ÅtteYan Kuttura in Rota.

Also, a bigger comparative project on historic material from the Mariana Islands in museums/collections in Europe, Asia and North America would assemble a lot of data for future researchers, especially CHamoru ones. I have already begun conducting research in the collections at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington DC, and there are others currently undertaking related research in Germany.

Finally, tracking the dynamic creative scene in the Micronesian region (Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati and Nauru, or a selection of those) would be interesting, examining how heritage and culture are being interpreted, re-interpreted and adapted in current circumstances. Specific focuses could include navigation, slinging, archaeological heritage, weaving, chanting or dancing, among others.

To bring this discussion full circle and as a matter of conclusion, I return to my experiences at the *BIBA CHamoru* exhibition. On the 1st of March 2022, I met with Guam-based artist and SRU alumna Judy Flores and her daughter, former director of CAHA (Guam Arts Council) Sandy Flores Moylan, in front of the nineteenth-century neoclassical building that houses MNA, in the busy district of Atocha, Madrid. The excitement could be felt as we made our way to the museum. Both Judy and Sandy were wearing Guam-patterned facial coverings in compliance with the existing Covid-19 rules imposed by the Spanish government at the time. When we were walking through Paseo del Prado, we passed another man wearing a Guam mask. We wondered:

could this be another CHamoru? Did he just visit the exhibition? Did he live in Spain, or did he travel specifically to visit the exhibition like Judy and Sandy? As we entered the museum, Judy and Sandy started taking photographs and videos to share with other CHamorus in the islands and beyond. We soon encountered the island stickers on the floor, representing the fifteen islands that form the Marianas Archipelago. Sandy, who was wearing a shirt which read 'I am Chamorro' posed on top of the Guam sticker, reflecting a sense of island pride.

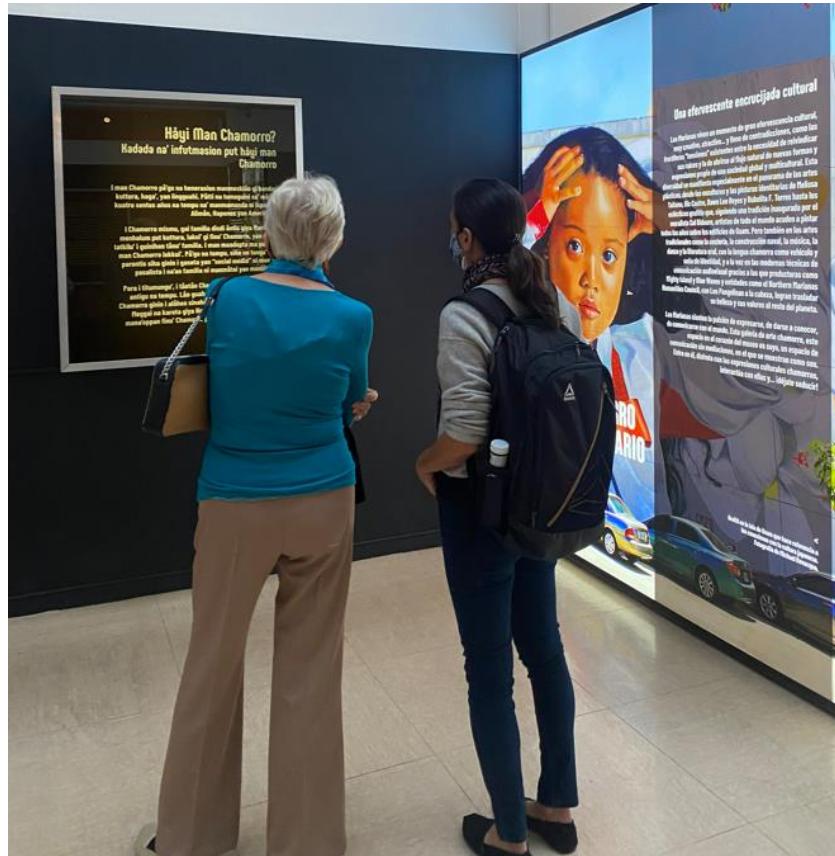


Figure 81: Visiting *BIBA CHamoru* with Guam-based artist Judy Flores and her daughter, Sandra (Sandy) Flores former director of CAHA (Guam Arts Council), 1st of March 2022. While we visited the exhibition, they put an emphasis on many elements integral to the CHamoru community today, such as family ties, the importance of names and the recognition of important CHamoru cultural practices expressed and represented so far away from their homeland.

Among the things that interested Judy and Sandy the most was reading the quotes included in the exhibition, watching the short documentaries and reading the names of those who had donated contemporary objects and works of art, as they recognised most of the people featured in the exhibition (Fig. 81). They also immediately made ties with the work they do for and with the community. When we reached the section on slinging, for example, both Judy and Sandy were pleasantly surprised that Roman dela Cruz had contributed one of his slings to the exhibition.

Their emotion was evident in their faces as recognition took over. They told me that Roman was a famous slinger in Guam and that he represented Guam yearly in the World Slinging Championship. Furthermore, it seemed like, even if they did not know some of the CHamoru collaborators personally, they recognised their last names and were trying to trace familiar ties with others who shared the same name. I asked them if they knew Melissa Taitano, for instance, as they enjoyed her artworks very much, and even though they did not, they certainly know other Taitanos that might be connected to her.

Overall, our discussions revolved around how *BIBA CHamoru* represented CHamoru people and their history in an appropriate and respectful manner, incorporating the names, voices, artworks and experiences of individuals from the Marianas archipelago. This visit and our discussions, held just before the exhibition's closing, encapsulate key themes explored in this thesis. Later that day, as we had the opportunity to reflect on our visit, Judy and Sandy expressed a range of emotions. Alongside feelings of island pride, they found it particularly exciting that CHamoru people had their own exhibition in Europe. They reflected on the significance of this moment, remarking that 'for us, a small island in the middle of the Pacific, to have the opportunity to represent ourselves and be represented abroad is incredible'. *BIBA CHamoru*, in many ways, broke through the rigid confines of the museum, amplifying the presence of a people and culture that is too often overlooked on the global stage. Although the future trajectories of CHamoru objects and the associated knowledge preserved in Spanish museums remain uncertain, I hope that this research will facilitate the reconnection of CHamoru people with their cultural heritage and foster future cross-cultural collaborations between Spain and the Mariana Islands.

I want to end by reflecting on the implications of projects such as mine to the field of museum studies and to the practice of museums that care for Indigenous collections. This thesis dealt with two exhibitions (one colonial, one postcolonial) that took place 134 years apart. Comparing their inner workings can help reveal how exhibition-making practices have evolved over time, showing shifts in focus, methods, and approaches to developing them. The decision to trace these genealogies of display, however, did not simply arise from the desire to understand the past and the continuities and discontinuities in Spanish museum practice. As an exhibition text in the new permanent display of the *Weltmuseum Wien* states: 'looking at the past should not be an end in itself, it should give the possibilities for rethinking our own acting and

to improve our practice' (Augustat 2019: 21). While *BIBA CHamoru* was, I would argue, a step in the right direction towards the practice of collaboration with Indigenous communities in the exhibition-making process (particularly notable for a Spanish museum, where such issues are rarely addressed), the project was far away from making a lasting impact in the structure of MNA. In the conclusion to an article published by the *Journal of Museum Ethnographers*, Augustat (2019) reflects on the exhibition on colonialism titled *In the Shadow of Colonialism* they ideated for the Weltmuseum Wien. In this piece, she mentions how, in her opinion, they did not devise a post-colonial display, insofar as Indigenous input was scarce and mostly relegated to temporary exhibitions (due to time and budget constraints), and, ultimately, the internal structure of the museum remained the same (Augustat 2019: 29-30). Similarly, the organisation of MNA has not changed, with Spanish curators continuing to occupy the institution's primary decision-making roles and the museum's databases and storage facilities continuing to be structured according to a Western scientific logic. However, I do believe this is the beginning of a slow process of change. In the coming years, the MNA is set to undergo a complete reorganisation of its permanent exhibition, with members of diasporic communities in Spain participating in the planning committees. Projects such as mine can help initiatives like this one think through the past in order to inform the future. Hopefully, this will make museum practice more multivocal and democratic.

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# Appendix 1:

## CHamoru Objects at Museo Nacional de Antropología

Photo	Object Number	Name	Materials	Display	Production date	Collection date	Accession date	Collection site	Collector/Donor	Museum history	Section of 1887 Exhibit
	CE2156	Doga (sandal)	Pandanus	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	José Portuach	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 2
	CE2157	Doga (sandal)	Pandanus	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	José Portuach	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 2
	CE2168	Tabo (water container)	Coconut husk	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	José Muñoz	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 2
	CE2169	Tabo with handle	Coconut husk	N	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	José Muñoz	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 2
	CE2158	Quichala (spoon)	Coconut husk, coconut fibre	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	José Muñoz	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 2
	CE2136	Gueha (fan)	Coconut leaves	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	José Muñoz	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 2
	CE2137	Gueha (fan)	Coconut leaves	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	José Muñoz	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 2
	CE2167	Tabo (drinking container)	Coconut husk	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	José Muñoz?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 2
	CE2869	Comb or rake	Wood, coconut fibre	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Juan Castro? Enrique Millchamp?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 6 or 7
	CE19170	Mitáte (metate)	White coral stone	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Justo Dungca	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 6
	CE2872	Model of plough	Wood, iron ploughshare, plaster, rope	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Antonio Martinez	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 6
	CE2105	Kômyo (coconut grater)	Wood, iron	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	José Pérez	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 6
	CE6974	Tali' (rope)	Coconut fibre	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Governor of the Marianas	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE6993	Basket (kottot)	Pandanus fibre	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Andrés de Castro	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE6996	Basket	Pandanus fibre	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Andrés de Castro	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE6992	Guafak (mat)	Pandanus fibre	N	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Andrés de Castro (petate de burí?)	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE2138	Kostat tengguang (satchel)	Pandanus fibre	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Andrés de Castro	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE2139	Kostat tengguang (satchel)	Pandanus fibre	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Andrés de Castro	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE5804	Machete	Wood, bronze, iron, leather	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Commander of Garrison of Agaña	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE5803	Working machete	Iron, bone, leather	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Joaquín León Guerrero	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE2134	Fisga (fishing harpoon)	Brava palm	N	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	José Muñoz?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE2122	Fisga (fishing harpoon)	Bamboo, wood, coconut fibre	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Vicente Guerrero? Lorenzo León Guerrero?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE2255	Harpoon shaft	Bamboo, dye	N	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Vicente Guerrero? Lorenzo León Guerrero?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE2848	Galaide or baroto (canoe model)	Wood, coconut fibre	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Vicente León Guerrero	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE4720	Galaide or baroto (canoe model)	Wood, coconut fibre	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Vicente León Guerrero	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE6987	Layak (sail of canoe model)	Pandanus fibre, coconut fibre, seeds?	N	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Vicente León Guerrero?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE6988	Layak (sail of canoe model)	Pandanus fibre, red dye	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Vicente León Guerrero?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE6989	Layak (sail of canoe model)	Pandanus fibre, red dye	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña	Vicente León Guerrero?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE6973	Atupat (sling)	Coconut fibre	Y (BIBA CHamoru)	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Governor of the Marianas	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1

Photo	Object Number	Name	Materials	Display	Production date	Collection date	Accession date	Collection site	Collector/Donor	Museum history	Section of 1887 Exhibit
	CE2102	Hat	Palmleaf, hay, coconut fibre, black fabric	N	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908		Francisco Cobo	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE2101	Hat	Palmleaf, hay, coconut fibre, black fabric	N	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908		Francisco Cobo	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 7
	CE2129	Arrow tip	Bamboo, liana, feathers	N	1800-1887	1886-1887	1908			Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 2?
	CE2170	<i>Higam</i> (adze)	Tridacna shell	N	900-1695	1800-1887	1908	Saipan	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE2171	<i>Higam</i> (adze)	Tridacna shell	N	900-1695	1800-1887	1908	Saipan	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE6984	<i>Higam</i> (adze)	Tridacna shell	N	900-1695	1800-1887	1908	Saipan	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	DE275	<i>Higam</i> (adze)	Stone	N	900-1695	1891-1906?	2015	"A cave"	Luis de los Santos Fontordera/ Julio Martínez Santa-Olalla	Expo 1893, Santa-Olalla, MAN, MNA	
	DE276	<i>Higam</i> (adze)	Stone	N	900-1695	1891-1906?	2015	"A cave"	Luis de los Santos Fontordera/ Julio Martínez Santa-Olalla	Expo 1893, Santa-Olalla, MAN, MNA	
	DE277	<i>Higam</i> (adze)	Stone	N	900-1695	1891-1906?	2015	"A cave"	Luis de los Santos Fontordera/ Julio Martínez Santa-Olalla	Expo 1893, Santa-Olalla, MAN, MNA	
	DE278	<i>Higam</i> (adze)	Tridacna shell	N	900-1695	1891-1906?	2015	"A cave"	Luis de los Santos Fontordera/ Julio Martínez Santa-Olalla	Expo 1893, Santa-Olalla, MAN, MNA	
	DE279	<i>Higam</i> (adze)	Tridacna shell	N	900-1695	1891-1906?	2015	"A cave"	Luis de los Santos Fontordera/ Julio Martínez Santa-Olalla	Expo 1893, Santa-Olalla, MAN, MNA	
	DE280	Spear tip	Silica stone	N	1500 ac-1695	1891-1906?	2015	"A cave"	Luis de los Santos Fontordera/ Julio Martínez Santa-Olalla	Expo 1893, Santa-Olalla, MAN, MNA	
	DE281	Spear tip	Silica stone	N	1500 ac-1695	1891-1906?	2015	"A cave"	Luis de los Santos Fontordera/ Julio Martínez Santa-Olalla	Expo 1893, Santa-Olalla, MAN, MNA	
	CE6976	Spear tip	Human bone	N	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Likely Kalabera Cave, Saipan	Governor of the Marianas/Antoine-Alfred Marche	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE2173	âcho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE2174	âcho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE2175	âcho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE6978	âcho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE6979	âcho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE6980	âcho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE6981	âcho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE6982	âcho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE6983	âcho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE6985	âcho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1

	CE6986	ācho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Mariano Fausto? Governor of the Marianas?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	DE270	ācho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	N	900-1695	1891-1906?	2015	"A cave"	Luis de los Santos Fontordera/ Julio Martínez Santa-Olalla	Santa-Olalla, MAN, MNA	
	DE271	ācho'atupat (slingshot)	Stone	N	900-1695	1891-1906?	2015	"A cave"	Luis de los Santos Fontordera/ Julio Martínez Santa-Olalla	Santa-Olalla, MAN, MNA	
	CE6977	Stone? Sinker?	Black stone	N	900-1695	1886-1887	1908	Hagåtña? Saipan?	Alfred Marche?/Mariano Fausto?/Governor?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1

Photo	Object Number	Name	Materials	Display	Production date	Collection date	Accession date	Collection site	Collector/Donor	Museum history	Section of 1887 Exhibitons
	CE2172	Spoon? Scraper?	Shell	N	900-1887	1886-1887	1908	Saipan	Mariano Fausto ?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE2104	Spoon? Scraper?	Shell	N	900-1887	1886-1887	1908	Saipan	Mariano Fausto ?	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
	CE7351	Basket	Pandanus	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	1900-1984	1967-1984	1980s		Maria Teresa Arias (missionary)	MNA	
	CE7353	Necklace	Plastic, synthetic fibre	N	1900-1984	1967-1984	1980s		Maria Teresa Arias (missionary)	MNA	
	CE7354	Necklace	Plastic, synthetic fibre	N	1900-1984	1967-1984	1980s		Maria Teresa Arias (missionary)	MNA	
	CE7358	Incense burner	Wood	Y (BIBA Chamoru)	1900-1984	1967-1984	1980s		Maria Teresa Arias (missionary)	MNA	
	CE7359	Vase	Ceramics, pigment	N	1900-1984	1967-1984	1980s		Maria Teresa Arias (missionary)	MNA	
	CE7360	Frame	Tortoise shell, bone?, plastic, metal	N	1900-1984	1967-1984	1980s		Maria Teresa Arias (missionary)	MNA	

## 1.1 HUMAN REMAINS<sup>158</sup>

Photo	Object Number	Name	Materials	Display	Production date	Collection date	Accession date	Collection site	Collector/Donor	Museum history	Section of 1887 Exhibitons
HUMAN REMAIN	CE9564	Skull	Human bone	N	900-1695	1887?	1908	Rota	Alfred Marche/Mariano Fausto	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
HUMAN REMAIN	CE6934	Skull	Human bone	N	1800-1887	1887?	1908	Hagåtña	Mariano Fausto	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
HUMAN REMAIN	CE6944	Skull	Human bone	N	1800-1887	1887?	1908	Hagåtña	Mariano Fausto	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
HUMAN REMAIN	CE6947	Skull	Human bone	N	900-1887	1887?	1908	Rota	Alfred Marche/Mariano Fausto	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
HUMAN REMAIN	CE6950	Skull	Human bone	N	900-1887	1887?	1908	Kalabera Cave (Saipan)	Alfred Marche/Mariano Fausto	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
HUMAN REMAIN	CE6955	Skull	Human bone	N	900-1887	1887?	1908	Kalabera Cave (Saipan)	Alfred Marche/Mariano Fausto	Expo 1887, MB U, MNA	Section 1
HUMAN REMAIN	CE9682	Skull	Human bone	N	900-1882		1875-1882	??	Pedro González Velasco? CCM?		
HUMAN REMAIN	CE9820	Skull	Human bone	N	900-1887		1908	"Pigo Caves, Guam"	Comisión Central de Manila	MB U, MNA	Section 1
HUMAN REMAIN	CE9828	Skull	Human bone	N	900-1887		1908	"Pigo Caves, Guam"	Comisión Central de Manila		Section 1

<sup>158</sup> No photos of the human remains are shown in the database.

## Appendix 2: Dossier of exhibitors from the Mariana Islands at the 1887 Exposición de Filipinas and other collectors of CHamoru objects kept at Museo Nacional de Antropología

### Francisco Olive y García (1842-1909)

Lieutenant Colonel Olive was Governor of the Marianas between 1884 and 1887 (Olive 2006[1997]: xix). He was ‘President of the Subcommission [of the Marianas]’ during the organisation of the Exhibition (Miyagi 1975). He sent 34 objects to the Exhibition from the Marianas and 10 from the Caroline Islands and received three honorary mentions from the organisers of the Exhibition (Gaceta de Manila 1888) for exhibiting the archaeological material, the weaving loom from Yap (CE2114) and two Carolinian model canoes (CE2386 and CE1580).

Olive was born in Madrid on the 20th of February 1842. He completed most of military his career in the Philippines, where he oversaw the Guardia Civil<sup>159</sup> of the province of Pampanga. He was appointed Governor of the Marianas in 1884 after the assassination of his predecessor, Ángel de Pazos. After three years of being Governor, he returned to the Philippines in 1887, where he was named Colonel and became close to the Capitanía General (Driver in Olive 2006[1887]: xix). Upon returning to the Philippines, he wrote his memories from his time as Governor of the Marianas (Olive 2006[1887]). This report includes interesting descriptions of the islands, colonial government buildings, as well as details about the economic, demographic and political situation of the Marianas during his term. Olive was repatriated to Spain in 1898 after the U.S. invasion of the Philippines, under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. He returned to his birthplace, Madrid, and became part of the military reserve corps in 1903. He passed away in Madrid on the 12th of June 1909 (Driver in Olive 2006[1887]: xix). A few scattered references about people’s opinions about Olive during his time in Guam. Rogers describes Olive as a ‘smart, hard-working army officer’ (1995: 104). While the hard-working part is confirmed by Susana Perez, William Safford’s cook, she also adds that ‘he did not seem to think much of the Chamorros and he did nothing to make us better’ (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 89).

He wrote and submitted to the exhibition the following book: *Islas Marianas:lijeros [sic.] apuntes acerca de las mismas, porvenir a que pueden y deben aspirar, y ayuda que ha de prestar la administración para conseguirlo* (2006[1887]). In this book, Olive retells how he travelled to the islands of Saipan and Tinian with French naturalist Alfred Marche and excavated several caves, where human remains and ancient artefacts were removed from ancestral burials. The collection of archaeological material including at least three human bone spear tips, submitted by Olive to the 1887 Exhibition comes from different

<sup>159</sup> The Guardia Civil is the oldest law enforcement agency in Spain and one of the two national police forces. This police agency also patrolled the Spanish colonies in the nineteenth century.

sites across different islands in the Marianas Archipelago. According to Dotte-Sarout, Olive was known for having developed ‘a specific interest in ethnography and archaeology of the archipelago’ (2021: 82). In this sense, at the beginning of 1887 Olive accompanied French ‘travel naturalist’ Alfred Marche – along with other CHamoru and Carolinians – on his year-long expedition around six of the Mariana Islands (Olive 2006[1887]: 95). In his proposal to the French Government submitted in 1886, Marche detailed how he would use a series of anthropometric methods on the indigenous population of the islands and that he would especially search for skulls and other human remains in ancestral sites (Dotte-Sarout 2021: 77). During his time in the Marianas, Marche conducted numerous excavations, including some of the first digs of latte sites (Ibid: 72), as well as burials in caves around the archipelago (Olive 2006[1887]: 95). One of said caves, where Marche unburied two skeletons which were submitted to the 1887 Exhibition (Ibid), is referred to by Olive as being in a very remote area of the mountain called Calaveras in Saipan. This is likely to refer to Kalabera Cave in northern Saipan. Marche and Olive also visited the ‘Marpi Mountain’, what today is commonly known as Suicide Cliff, northwest of Kalabera Cave, where the Frenchman reports finding the spearheads, alongside other human remains (1894: 15) that would be sent to the Exhibition in Madrid (Olive 2006[1887]: 95). Olive’s memoire also includes the following information regarding their trip to Saipan:

also found are regularly wrought stones that could be used as throwing weapons (slingstones) and adzes, as well as for other purposes, including domestic ones. Two bones spearheads were found and sent to the Philippines Exposition with examples of the other objects mentioned.

Although this statement does not provide enough information to assert the provenance of the slingstones and adzes, it does point towards their origin on the island of Saipan. Olive’s collecting most definitely responded to an institutional must: as the Governor of the Marianas and the President of the Subcommission, he *had* to submit different types of objects to encourage others to submit too. It is interesting, however, that most of the artefacts Olive exhibited were archaeological rather than contemporary. Besides bringing into light Olive’s interest in archaeology and the past, this suggests that he wanted to praise the ancient people of the Marianas, which he considered a different civilisation.

## **Manuel Aflague [Camacho] (1844-?, alive in 1894)**

Parents: Justo Enos Santos Aflague & Manuela Chargualaf Aflague

Spouse: Saturnina Manalisay Aflague

Children: Vicente Flores Aflague

Uncle of José Flores according to Miyagi (1975)

Manuel Camacho Aflague was a gobernadorcillo (Miyagi 1975) or First Deputy Mayor (*Teniente Primero*) of the City Hall of Hagåtña (Madrid 2023: 13). According to Carlos Madrid, he was the closest CHamoru to Spanish administration. At the 1887 Exhibition he exhibited a CHamoru woman's dress and copra and obtained a bronze medal for the copra copra (*Gaceta de Manila* 1888). He owned a house in Hagåtña, at C/ San Nicolas 1 made from masonry and tile (Vallejo n.d.).

## **Jose Flores [Aflague], alias Chubito (ca. 1865-1940s?)**

Parents: Julian Flores Manalisay & Ramona Aflague Camacho

Children: 7 children

Nephew of Manuel Camacho Aflague

José Aflague Flores, alias Chubito, was the CHamoru man who travelled to Madrid in 1887 to participate in the Philippines exhibition. Although the exact circumstances of his participation in the exhibition remain unknown, evidence points towards the fact that he certainly had a say in deciding to travel to Madrid. *Chubito* is a nickname associated with the Flores last name (Miyagi 1975; Punzalan 2014). As a child, he attended school in Hagåtña. According to Miyagi (1975) he was a famous musician in Guam who also sang in his Church's choir and played in the Church band.

### **Antonia [de los Santos] Leon Guerrero, alias Antonia Ada (ca. 1867-?)**

She was the CHamoru woman who travelled to Madrid in 1887 to participate in the Philippines exhibition. The exact circumstances of her participation in the exhibition remain unknown, evidence points towards the fact that she certainly had a say in deciding to travel to Madrid. ‘Ada’ is one of the nicknames associated with the San/Santos last names (Miyagi 1975; Punzalan 2014), pointing towards the fact that she is part of the Santos family. No family members are known.

## **Agapito Leon Guerrero**

He exhibited a *fosiño* (thrust hoe). No other information has been found.

### **Joaquin Leon Guerrero [y Esponsa] (alive in 1893)**

Joaquin Leon Guerrero exhibited a bucket and a work machete (CE5803). According to William Safford, he was the ‘official armer of the native artillery and an excellent blacksmith’ (in Leon-Guerrero, 2016: 86). In 1891 and 1897 he obtained licenses to be a blacksmith, locksmith and shoemaker. He lived in Hagåtña, where he owned three houses(Vallejo n.d.):

- C/ Santa Cruz 53 (masonry & tile)
- C/ General Solano 68 (masonry & tile)
- C/ Paros (masonry & tile)

## **Lorenzo Leon Guerrero**

He exhibited two fishing spears (*fisga*) (CE2122 & CE2255?).

Two Lorenzo Leon Guerreros exist on ancestry websites:

Lorenzo Manalisay Leon Guerrero (born 1851). This Lorenzo was the son of Mariano de Leon Guerrero and Luisa Manalisay. He married Joaquina Martinez Baza and had 2 children.

(<https://www.ancestry.co.uk/genealogy/records/lorenzo-manalisay-leon-guerrero-24-t4h9k8>)

And

Lorenzo Acosta Leon Guerrero (1851-1919). Born in Hagåtña to Jose Borja Leon Guerrero and Maria Baza Sudo. He married Dolores Campos Taitingfong and had 16 children. He passed away on the 15th of September 1919 in Garapan, Saipan.

(<https://www.ancestry.com.au/genealogy/records/lorenzo-acosta-deleon-guerrero-24-14p6mm5>)

## **Vicente Leon Guerrero**

Vicente Leon Guerrero exhibited two working machetes, two fishing spears (*fisga*) (CE2122 & CE2255?) and a *galaide* model (model canoe) (CE2848 OR CE4720). He obtained an honorary mention for the *galaide* model (model canoe) (CE2848 OR CE4720) (*Gaceta de Manila*, 1888). In 1891 he received a license to be a carpenter (Leon Guerrero 1891).

## **Justo Dungca (1850-?, alive in 1899)**

Mother: Fabiana Bautista

Grandfather: Nicomedes Asuncion

Spouse: Marcela Jesus Gosum

Children: Enrique Dungca, Concepcion Dungca, Jose Dungca, Felicita Dungca, Teodoro Dungca, Soledad Dungca, Felix Dungca

Justo Dungca was Guam's first Justice of the Peace (de Viana 2004: 114). He exhibited a cooking tool (*canoa*), a basket, *a mitate* (CE19170) and a fishing tool (*chinchorro*). He received an honorary member for exhibiting the *chinchorro*. Dungca was of Filipino origin and was the grandson of Nicomedes Asuncion, one of the Filipino convicts sent to work the fields in the Marianas in 1854 (Ibid: 113-114). Justo was born in Hagåtña in the 1850s. He was the son of Fabiana Bautista (one of Nicomedes Asuncion's daughters) and their nephew 'of surname Dungca' (Ibid) who became a prominent copra trader. Justo Dungca married Marcela Jesus Gosum and had seven children. He owned a house at C/ Hernán Cortés 64 & 65 (masonry and tile) and a chapel (*camarín*) at C/ Padre Aniceto (masonry & tile) (Vallejo n.d.). He also owned a coconut plantation and several countryside houses (Leon-Guerrero 2016: 102).

Dungca was a good salesman and acquired licenses to import and sell products such as cloths, fruits and other goods from China, Japan, Europe and British India (Dungca 1891). In 1897 he received a license to sell tuba (Dungca 1897). He was also 'one of the most thrifty citizens of the island' according to Safford and the 'first man in Guam to send copra to Manila' (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 102). All of his businesses must have made him a wealthy man with multiple properties: a house and a small chapel were registered to his name in Agaña (Vallejo n.d.) and Safford recorded that Dungca owned a coconut plantation with several houses, which he refused to sell to Safford (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 102).

Two of the women who had been arrested after the 1896 Philippine Revolution and deported to Guam were entrusted by the Spanish authorities to Justo Dungca, who employed them as housekeepers (de Viana 2004). This suggests that Dungca was in good terms with the Spanish colonial administration and was probably happy to submit items to the Exhibition Subcommittee. It also conveys that he may have been close to the Filipino diaspora. In 1891, he received a license to import wines from the Philippines into the Marianas (Dungca 1891b), suggesting that he never cut ties with his Filipino side.

## [Henry] Enrique Millinchamp (1840-?, alive in 1927)

Parents: Richard M. Millinchamp [English] & Titi Maria [Marquesan]

Spouse: Emilia Anderson y Castro

Eldest daughter: Maria Victoria Anderson Millinchamp, wife of Cap. Pedro Duarte

‘Enrique Millchamp’ (as it appears in the 1887 Catalogue and as he may have been known by Spaniards in Guam) refers to Henry Millinchamp, son of an English whaler (Richard Millinchamp) and a Marquesas Islander (Titi Maria). He was born in the Japanese Bonin Islands in the 1840s, where his father was based (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 237). He married Emilia Anderson Castro in Guam and had multiple children. Millinchamp’s eldest daughter, Maria Victoria, in turn married Captain Pedro Duarte of the Spanish Army, one of the few Spanish military men that remained on the islands after the American invasion (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 21). Millinchamp was the official pilot for the port of Hagåtña for many years (in Leon-Guerrero, 2016: 21; Guamology n.d.a). According to Driver and Brunal-Perry (1998) he was one of the most respected citizens of Guam. He lived at number 52 of Hernán Cortés Street (Vallejo n.d.). He exhibited two models of houses and an agricultural cart model.

## **Jose Portusach [y Martinez] (1859-?)**

Parents: Joaquin Portusach Aguon & Remedios Antonia Martinez Pangelinan

Grandparents: Luis Portusach & Juliana Aguon

Siblings: Francisco 'Frank' Portusach Martinez (merchant & whaler & briefly governor of Guam), Maria Portusach Martinez (married to Cap. Harrison)

Spouse: Consuelo Currelo

José 'Portutusach' or 'Portusac' (both spelling appear in *Catálogo* 1887) is José Portusach y Martínez, born in 1859. He exhibited a CHamoru man's costume, two pairs of *doga* (sandals) (CE2156 and CE2157) and two pairs of flip-flops (*chinelas*). He obtained an honorary mention for exhibiting the CHamoru costume. He was the grandson of Luis Portusach, a Spaniard that migrated to Guam around 1825 and Juliana Aguon, a CHamoru woman, mistress of Spanish Governor José Herrero (Guamology n.d.b). His parents were Joaquin Portusach Aguon and Remedios Antonia Martinez Pangelinan. His brother was Francisco Portusach, a leading merchant and whaler of Guam. Francisco was born in Barcelona, and it is likely José was too. Their father was a merchant, so they spent their childhood in Spanish ships travelling to the Philippines and Spanish Micronesia. According to Francisco's report on the capture of Guam by the *USS Charleston* in 1898 (Portusach 1917: 707-708), José had spent some time in Europe and had recently returned to Guam. During this event the two brothers took part of the negotiations between the U.S. and Spain. José acted as interpreter; Frank eventually briefly became the Governor of the Marianas in 1898 (The Washington Post 1898).

Portusach owned three houses (Vallejo n.d.):

- C/ General Ferrer 62 (masonry & tile)
- C/ General Ferrer 72 (masonry & tile)
- C/ General Solano 81 (masonry & tile)

He obtained a license to be a merchant to import cloth and goods (Portusach 1891). In fact, in 1900, he signed a letter as the 'principal merchant of Guam' (Guamology n.d.c). In 1895, he received, from the colonial government, the rights to exploit the islands of Agrigan and Pagan, in the Northern Mariana Islands, for four years (Leon-Guerrero 2016: 45). The lease was granted to Portusach on the condition that he maintained regular communication between the Northern Islands with a ship flying the Spanish flag, although it is claimed that he did not comply with it (Leon-Guerrero 2016: 108). On top of this, he owned three houses in Agaña (Vallejo n.d.). Some of the descendants of the Portusach brothers still live in Guam, although they are likely related to Frank Portusach rather than José Portusach, as the former is rumoured to have taken a CHamoru mistress while he was governor (descendant of Portusach, personal communication).

**Ezekial, Esiquiel or Exequiel Castro [Leon Guerrero] (1832-?)**

Exhibited a kitchen knife

Spouse: Maria Wilson

Children: Juan Wilson Castro, Francisco Castro, +2

Family nickname of the family was Siket. From the Chamorro pronunciation of Ezequiel (E - se - kiet) is derived the family nickname 'Siket' (paleric 2017).

## **Andres de Castro (1822-?)**

Spouse: Maria Cruz Anderson

Children: Concepcion Anderson Castro

Andrés de Castro was born in 1822. He was married to Maria Cruz Anderson and had one daughter. In 1891 he got a license to sell goods imported from Europe (De Castro 1891). He owned a house at C/ Maria Ana de Austria 2 (masonry & zinc) (Vallejo n.d.).

He exhibited the following items: a model of a riding chair, a tool to make cord, a pandanus mat (CE6992), a tobacco container made from palm leaves, two pandanus baskets (CE6993 and CE6996), palm leave baskets (CE2138 and CE2139) and a trap to catch wild boars and deer (*lason-pisao*). He received a bronze medal for exhibiting the tool to make cord and honorary mentions for the baskets and the trap.

## **Juan [Wilson] Castro (1873-?)**

Parents: Ezekiel Castro Leon Guerrero & Maria Wilson

Wife: Nicolasa Pangelinan Mendiola

Children: Maria Mendiola Castro, Santiago Mendiola Castro, Concepcion Mendiola Castro, Ana Mendiola Castro, Regina Mendiola Castro, Enrique Mendiola Castro

Juan Wilson Castro was probably the son of Ezekiel Castro and Maria Wilson. He exhibited a mouse trap, a tool used for spin cotton, a kitchen knife and a comb or rake (CE2869).

## **Mariano [Borja] Fausto (1857-1920s?)**

Parents: Manuel Fausto

He married a Carolinian woman (Carlos Madrid, personal communication)

Punzalan (2013) records that Mariano Fausto was involved in the transaction of the Pigo Catholic Cemetery area from Dolores de la Cruz. These records, written in 1895, describe Fausto as '38 years of age, married and a labourer'.

Mariano Fausto, who exhibited archaeological materials, several human remains (CE9564, CE9634, CE9644, CE9647, CE9650, CE9655), a Carolinian-style harpoon and a fishing net, was probably the son of Manuel Fausto. Paleric (2019) reports that Mariano's father was a CHamoru man married to Maria Aurora, a woman from Lamotrek (Yap State) and thus became an honorary member of the Carolinian community. Manuel Fausto, though Chamorro, seems to have been an 'honorary' Carolinian, almost an integral part of the Carolinian community. He often acted as godfather to many Carolinians being baptised. He taught them, as did his son Mariano Borja Fausto (son of a prior marriage) who taught the Carolinians living in Tamuning (Madrid 2006: 59). A mestizo himself, Mariano was also in contact with the Carolinians relocated in Tamuning, Guam (Ibid). It is almost certain that Manuel Fausto spoke Carolinian or at least had a very good grasp of it. In fact, he was a teacher at the wooden school that was built in Tamuning to serve the Carolinian community in the Carolinian language (Ibid). Speaking Chamorro and almost assuredly some Spanish, he would have made an excellent go-between for the Spaniards and Chamorros in their dealings with the Carolinians, who, in the main, could not speak Spanish nor Chamorro (paleric 2019). Additionally, during the early 1890s, Fausto was described by the governor as the 'leader of Tamuning, a *teniente de justicia* who directs them and is their schoolteacher and interpreter'. Fausto stepped down as *teniente* in February 1892, citing illness, after serving in the role for nearly a decade (O'Connor 2021: 426).

Mariano probably acquired the Carolinian artefacts through his close connections to the Carolinian community of Guam. He also accompanied Alfred Marche and Governor Olive on their trip to the Northern Mariana Islands (Driver and Brunal-Perry 1998: 88). He was officially appointed to send objects for the 1887 Exhibition by the Spanish administration in the Marianas (Madrid 2025). Mariano Fausto obtained a silver medal for the archaeological materials he exhibited and an honorary mention for the harpoon (Gaceta de Manila 1888).

## **Antonio Martinez [y Pangelinan] (1839-1907)**

Parent: Jose Martinez

Spouse: Eduviges Wilson

Children: 12

Antonio Martinez y Pangelinan was born in 1839, son of Jose Martinez. He is believed to be a direct descendant of Lieutenant Ignacio Martinez, an officer of the Spanish Artillery that arrived in Guam from Mexico in the late 1790s (Carano 1974: 9; Leon-Guerrero 2016: 22). Antonio married Eduviges Wilson and had twelve children (Guamology n.d.d). He was a businessman and owned extensive areas of land, including three properties in Hagåtña (Vallejo n.d.):

- C/ General Solano 77 (masonry & tile)
- General Solano 77 superior (masonry & tile)
- General Solano 79 (masonry & tile)

He also owned a large cattle ranch in Dandan, in the southwest of the island and three lots in different parts of the island (paleric 2020).

As the ‘wealthiest planter in Guam’ (Guamology n.d.c), he was a member of the colonial elite. According to William Safford, Martinez was ‘one of the most enterprising and intelligent natives’ (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 22). Martinez also became the owner of Apapa or Cabras Island (Northern Mariana Islands) during the Spanish administration and was involved in the copra trade, having employees dedicated to it in some the Northern Islands (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 108, 243).

According to paleric (2020), at the time of his death Antonio Martinez had the following assets: ‘two houses of masonry with tiled roof in Hagåtña, two lots in Hagåtña, a building in Hagåtña, cattle ranch in Dandan, a lot in Mongmong, a lot in As Penggao, a lot in Mañila’, a lot in Maso’, 144 cows, bulls and calves, one horse and 37 carabaos’.

Antonio Martinez exhibited two pairs of metal earrings (possibly CE2165 and CE2166), a model of plough (CE2872) and samples of crops, which is consistent with his renowned state as landowner. He received a bronze medal for exhibiting coconut oil and sugar.

## DOLORES [DE LA] CRUZ

Dolores exhibited a pair of *doga* (sandals), two *quichala* (spoons) and two ‘bojas’ (*gueha*, fans)

According to research conducted by Punzalan (2013), Dolores de la Cruz was reportedly a landowner who bought ‘a piece of property consisting of five hectares and fifty-two ares to Doña Dolores de la Cruz’ from Don Manuel Brabo in 1858 in the area where the Pigo Catholic Cemetery is located today. ‘On January 13, 1873, Doña Dolores sold two ares and twelve and a half centares to Fray Aniceto Ybanez del Carmen for 50 pesos. To the north, east and south of this property were the coconut plantations of Doña Dolores and to the west is the Pigo river’.

Land documents written in 1895 stated that ‘Doña Dolores de la Cruz was...73 years old and a single woman’ (Punzalan 2013).

She could be two possible people:

### **Dolores Crisostomo Cruz, Dolores de la Cruz (?-1898)**

Parents: Jose Reyes de la Cruz & Maria Torres Crisostomo

Spouse: Jose Aguon Herrero

Siblings: Rosa Cruz Camacho

Children: Ana Cruz Herrero, Josefa Cruz Herrero, Francisca Cruz Herrero, Joaquina (Cruz Herrero) Herrero Kammenga, Maria Cruz Herrero, Vicenta (Cruz Herrero) Herrero Rosendo, Caridad Cruz Herrero, Dolores Herrero Torres, Jose Cruz Herrero, Tomas Cruz Herrero, Consuelo Cruz Herrero, Luis Cruz Herrero, Francisco Cruz Herrero & Jesus Cruz Herrero

Mentions to this Dolores de la Cruz appear in Leon-Guerrero: ‘José Herrero... spoke most tenderly of his dead wife, saying that she had been a hard working wife & mother & how he thought of her every day especially when he came up to this hill & saw the path up which she had so often paused [to their lancho]’ (2016: 119) and Driver and Brunal-Perry: ‘The top of the hillside that reaches toward the monte behind the house of Dolores de la Cruz’ (1998: 41).

OR

### **Dolores (Muna) Cruz (1844-?)**

Spouse: Juan dela Cruz

Children: Ignacio dela Cruz, Vicente dela Cruz, Eulogio dela Cruz, Jose dela Cruz, Pedro dela Cruz, Paula dela Cruz, Romalda dela Cruz, Miguel dela Cruz, Nicolasa dela Cruz (Nicolasa born in 1883, so Dolores probably alive in 1887)

### **Ana [Cruz] Herrero (1861-?)**

She exhibited a model of a 'poor people's house'

Parents (possibly): Jose Aguon Herrero & Dolores Crisostomo Cruz

## **José Muñoz [González] (alive in 1895)**

Spouse: Isabel Cepeda Lizama

Children: Juan Muñoz, María Muñoz, Francisco Muñoz and Vicente Muñoz

José Muñoz González was originally from Jerez de la Frontera, Cádiz, Spain and was deported to Guam sometime between 1860 and 1875. He exhibited two water containers (*tabos*) (CE2167, CE2168 & CE2169), spoons (*quichalas*) (CE2158), fans (*gueha*) (CE2136 & CE2137), bait (*acho-lumago*), fishing net (*taraya*), harpoon (*fisga*) (CE2134?), shrimp trap (*nasa*) and received an honorary mention for exhibiting the fishing-related items.

He was a teacher in Spain before he was deported. He married Isabel Cepeda Lezama and had four children together. After the royal pardon Muñoz decided to stay in Guam. He tried to find some work in the Philippines but soon returned to Guam to be with his family (Madrid 2006: 203). He made a life for himself in Guam, carrying out all sorts of jobs to remain on the island: from becoming a master bricklayer (*Ibid*) to getting a license to slaughter cattle (Muñoz 1895a) and to sell alcoholic products (Muñoz 1895b).

Muñoz was one of the few non-Americans who attended the ceremony of the raising of the American flag in 1899, and Madrid suggests that this could mean that he was very detached from the Spanish authorities (2006: 204). However, as one of the major contributors of artefacts to the 1887 Exhibition, it appears Muñoz was somewhat connected to the Spanish administration in the Marianas.

## **Francisco Cobo [Piñer]**

Francisco Cobo Piñer was originally from Algar, Cádiz, Spain. He was deported to Guam in 1874 (Madrid 2006: 204). He exhibited a young CHamoru woman's braid, rice, two hats (CE2101 & CE2102), tobacco and *bêche-de-mer*, and received a bronze medal for exhibiting the hats an honorary mention for exhibiting *bêche-de-mer*.

Cobo pursued a series of quite successful businesses, including construction and other assignments for the Presidio (Madrid 2006: 204). He owned four properties at the following addresses in Hagåtña (Vallejo n.d.):

- C/ Legazpi (x2) (masonry & tile)
- C/ Juan de Letrán (masonry & tile)
- C/ General Solano (masonry & tile)

During the departure of the ship *Victoria* with the deportees in 1876, Cobo, who had been threatened with death by other deportees, hid himself and managed to remain on Guam (Madrid 2006: 182).

## **José de Salas**

He exhibited a fishing net (*taraya*).

José de Salas obtained two licenses to be a carpenter, one in 1891 and another one in 1897.

1891 & 1897: license to be a carpenter (de Salas 1891; 1897).

Punzalan (2013) records that to the east of Dolores de la Cruz's land in the Pigo area José de Salas owned an estate.

A reference to José de Salas appears in the following paragraph: 'On March 1<sup>st</sup> 1869... a loud detonation, like a cannon shot, was heard throughout the city... the cause of the detonation was discovered when it was learned that the pilot José de Salas, while aboard a whaler, had bought a small barrel of gunpowder weighing about twenty-five pounds. In order to determine the strength of the gunpowder, it was his custom to place a small amount of his palm on his hand and light it. it seems his oldest daughter, Dolores, tried to imitate her father and, when she lit the powder, the entire barrel, caught fire' (in Driver and Brunal-Perry 1998: 38).

## **Manuel Pangelinan (1825-?)**

Manuel Pangelinan exhibited a model carriage, models of chair, table and bed & a model of fruit extractor machine.

He had a house made from masonry and tile in C/ General Solano 67, Hagåtña (Vallejo n.d.). Throughout his life, he had three wives: Manuella Espinosa Blas, Rosa Espinosa & Maria Guerrero and two children (as far as reported), Luisa Blas Pangelinan & Jose B Blas.

In 1891, he received a license to be a carpenter (Pangelinan 1891a) and a license to prepare cane sugar (Pangelinan 1891b).

### **Joaquin Diaz Flores (1870-1945)**

Exhibited a fruit grater (*etses*)

Spouse: Maria Cruz Flores

Punzalan (2013) records that Joaquin Diaz owned a coconut plantation to the north of Dolores de la Cruz's estate in the Pigo area.

## **Commander of the Presidio of Agaña**

Although we cannot be certain who the Commander of the Presidio was at that point because of the lack of documentation available, it is possible it was Sisto Moreno (Carpeta de cédulas 1890) or Manuel Vallejo y Hernando (n.d.), whose names appear in different documents.

The Commander exhibited two *fusiño* (rust hoes) and a machete (CE5804). The objects were likely made by the prisoners of the Presidio.

## **José Pérez**

José Pérez exhibited a coconut grater (*kamyo*) (CE2105).

She could be two possible people:

José Pérez y Rivera. This name appears in the *Relación de Objetos* found at Museo Nacional de Antropología (*Relación de Objetos* 1908?). Paleric (2024) reports that José Pérez Rivera was a Sergeant in the local military force in Guam.

Or

José Pérez Cruz, who was the Chamorro lieutenant in Hagåtña 1875 (Madrid 2006: 142). José Pérez Cruz was Susana Perez's brother. Susana Perez was William Safford's cook in 1899-1900 (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 184). José Pérez Cruz had a daughter, Doña Juliana [Torres] (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 184).

## **Juan Torres Diaz (1845-1910s)**

Juan Torres Diaz was the son of José de Torres and Vicenta Palomo Diaz. He was the brother of Luis Torres Diaz, who was a Judge in Guam. Juan married Juliana Perez Salas and had three children: Juan Perez Torres, Jose Perez Torres, Maria Perez Torres.

Juan was Auditor of the Treasury and Island Treasurer during the First US Naval Administration (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 182). Juan taught William Safford some Chamorro (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 184). Safford described him as ‘one of the most intelligent & reliable citizens of Guam’ (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 22).

He exhibited a musical instrument (*belembao*). He received a bronze medal for exhibiting salep starch (*Gaceta de Manila 13 July 1888*).

Safford said the following about Juan Torres’s house: ‘He lives in a large house of masonry not far from the beach; met his wife Doña Juliana Perez. The rooms of Don Juan’s house are very large; the floors of polished Afzelia wood; some of the furniture is of island manufacture and the rest brought from Manila by some former governor; a piano of good tone and in remarkably good tune; a good library, including the various codes – criminal, commercial and civil – of the Spanish colonies, also works on natural history’ (in Leon-Guerrero 2016: 39).

### **Luis de los Santos Fontordera**

‘Cavalry Lieutenant Colonel Luis Santos Fontordera, the successor of Joaquín Vara de Rey, served as governor of the Mariana Islands from 14 August 1891 to 23 August 1892. His administration was extremely unpopular. An unsigned letter from Agaña, dated 10 Jan 1892, addressed the Gov General of the Philippines, demanded his immediate removal from the office, as well as that of Manuel Arias, the administrator of the Hacienda’ (Varas de Rey y Rubio and Cadarso y Rey 2000: 61).

## **Maria Teresa Arias (c-2019)**

Born in Burgos (Spain)

Belonged to the Order of Mercenarias Misioneras de Bérriz (MMB)

Travelled extensively across Micronesia as a missionary for her Order

She was an avid collaborator of the Micronesian Area Research Center (MARC) at the University of Guam (aep, 2019)

One of the founders of Asociación Cultural Islas del Pacífico (AEEP) in 1986 (aep, 2019)

She donated seven objects to MNA in 1984 (Alonso Pajuelo 2021: 126)

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# Appendix 3: Roquin Siongco interview transcript<sup>160</sup> – 26 March 2024, Sagan Kotturan CHamoru, Tamuning, Guam

**Interviewer: Alba Ferrández Gaudens, University of East Anglia**

**A: Let's start by... introduce yourself a little bit.**

R: Buenas and Håfa Adai, my name is Roquin-Jon Quichocho Siongco. I was born and raised in the village of Yigo, Guåhan. I actually also spent my high school years and college years in Washington State and have moved back and forth these past few years, but I'm officially back as of fall 2023. And I'm a weaver.

**A: Tell me about when you started weaving. First in general and then when you moved or transitioned or started to work with åkgak.**

R: My weaving journey began at the very tender age of 8 years old. I was in CHamoru class and my teacher, Siñora Flores, taught me how to weave an apåcha, and that's our grasshopper. Something just clicked in my mind as I made that. I looked around the room and saw all of the hats, the baskets and beautiful things, and my little mind was like “what? You mean to tell me all of these are just leaves? They just fold?” It just blew my mind. Ever since then... you know, some kids get hooked up on origami, or jigsaw puzzles, or things like that, and for me it was weaving. Yes, it was presented in a cultural context in terms of the CHamoru class, but it wasn't necessarily in the context of trying to revive it or keep a traditional life; it was really just me having fun with some leaves. At that time, in the early 2000s there really weren't as many weavers as there are now, even though we can always use more weavers, but at that particular time I didn't have any living relatives that could teach me, or community members that I could outreach to. It was really my Siñora, and she taught me all of these small things, but when I wanted to learn the bigger things I had to learn that on my own actually. So it was a lot of trial and error. I would go in the backyard, pick as many leaves as I could, the trees were naked at the end of the year pretty much, and just messing around with the leaves. That taught me a lot right there, but in middle school my family had relocated to Washington State, so no leaves there. I did pick up origami and a few other handicrafts.

Later on, in high school and in college, I actually got the opportunity to learn from native weavers out there: various different tribes, different heritage. I learned loom weaving, I learned weaving with seeders, cattails and other natural materials there. I even tried paper weaving and stuff like that. And weaving is just one of those things where there is a lot of structure and universal technique into it. It's a conversation between a people and their environment. Sometimes environments change and things change, but at the end of the

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<sup>160</sup> This interview has been included in the thesis with the participant's consent, following approval by the UEA Ethics Committee.

day a lot of people go under-over-under, right? That really allowed me to home in on that and every so-often, when we actually had an opportunity to come back home, I'd just run straight to the jungle, pick some leaves, make sure I remembered what I remembered and slowly build up my knowledge repertoire there. In college, that's actually when I kind of knew more than most, so I would host workshops and connect a lot of diaspora folks with their heritage that way. So I've been weaving for about close to 20 years and been teaching for about 10 so.

But that was all coconut at the beginning. I didn't really pick up åkgak until I started teaching workshops. It's almost a very intimidating art form, because coconut weaving is fast in some respects compared to åkgak, but at the same time, like I mentioned, there's a lot of universal techniques. So it's just a matter of even having more patience and just having a little bit of foresight and understanding the process of it. You can make almost anything you can do. I always like to say: if you can dream it we can weave it.

#### **A: I love that. So how is it different, åkgak and coconut weaving?**

R: Coconut and åkgak are the two primary weaving materials that we have here in the Marianas. I guess you can also say poksi which is the lace bark or hibiscus bark, as well as the coconut sennit. But more often than not you'll see coconut, that's more common. As I mentioned that's a little bit quicker, and that's going to be more so like your day basket, most of your hats, trinkets, things like that. Coconut, you need to work with it as soon as you pick it, pretty much. You can keep it in water for a few days and it's good to go. The preservation process is that you freeze it overnight because there's so much water in the leaves that it shrinks; if you let it dry out it kind of shrinks. But by freezing it, what it does is that the water inside it expands and it keeps those cell structures in place. When you freeze it, you know, you can spend your time weaving a basket very tight and then it'll stay that tight, as opposed to if you weave it and let it dry out, then it's shriveled, it's brittle... it's important to kind of understand that kind of process.

Another one that a lot of people think is coconut but actually isn't that I forgot to mention is called nipa palm, so that's the palm that's going to be in the more swampy areas. That one would be used more so for the thatching of roofs because they just last a little bit longer. But even then there is actually a process where you don't want to weave with it so freshly, you actually kind of want to let it dry out just a little bit to have a little sweet spot and then do your thatching.

We have three different types of pandanus here in the Marianas: we have påhong, kaffo' and then åkgak. These are all various different types of pandanus. Kaffo', we call it a trash tree to be quite frank; its leaves are dark green, pretty wide, but they're just really brittle when they dry out and just not very good to work with. Påhong is the one that would bear fruit. We'd actually process that fruit, it's kind of like a starchy fruit that we would eat, but it's not too common today. Åkgak is actually the male to påhong, but it only produces flowers, it doesn't produce seeds. The only way you can actually have åkgak is if you have a cubby. You never find it in the wild, you always find it in someone else's garden. But even then it takes a little bit to discern. Those leaves tend to have a little bit more of

a blueish-silvery tone to it, as well as not only the three rows of teeth on either side and the mid-rib, but also in between those sections. They like to stay pretty low and close to the ground, so they're easy pickings. Those leaves are really the strongest, and we are actually known throughout Micronesia for that. Even other places, other islands, call it hågon (leaf) Luta, Luta is the island of Rota, to the north of us here in Guåhan. It's because of those leaves that are known as the strongest. I know we used to have trade routes with other islands and we'd have the strongest mats, the strongest sails and things like that. That's actually what åkgak would be used for: it would primarily used for sails, mats, finer baskets, burial baskets, birthing baskets... We also have, I would say... I guess superstition is the word, kind of a philosophy where it's ok to burn coconut leaves but you would not want to burn åkgak, because we say that the tree will sense it and get sick. So this is something we kind of avoid doing. We usually just let that go back to the earth and let it decompose naturally.

**A: I didn't know that.**

R: Yeah, unfortunately, I think due to so many years of colonization, we don't happen to have any, I guess you could say folklore or origin story or, not philosophy, what's the other one?

**A: Cosmology?**

R: No... Imagine like big gods...

**A: Oh, mythology.**

R: Yes, mythology. We don't have any mythology around the origins of weaving, about how the knowledge came to us in the cultural sense. But we understand that weaving is something that pretty much every culture has to some capacity and so we know that we've been weaving even before, I guess you could say, before we were considered CHamorus. Obviously we had to weave some sails to get over here.

**A: Thank you so much. I guess my next question is, when you were talking about how you started weaving coconut leaves as a child, and then the other day I was talking to Marty [Martha Tenorio] and she said something that I thought was interesting. She said that as a child she saw her grandmother weave åkgak but she didn't want to do it because for her it wasn't as exciting. Was that your experience as well?**

R: I don't think I would say it wasn't so exciting, but I would say it looked a little bit more intimidating, because with coconut you're able to bang on basket or bang on a hat in 20-30 minutes. But there is a lengthy process and a diligence that you need to have in terms of measuring your leaves, cutting them just right. With coconut leaves it's often that you'll cut a branch, or you'll separate the mid-rib, but you're not necessarily thinking too much about the width of the leaf or the size of it, maybe just picking a good branch to start with. A good branch for hats or baskets usually ideally would have the leaflets pretty close together and as wide as you can get it. If it's a bit more spread out it's probably better for trinkets, things like that.

With åkgak what you do is, the whole process of it, is that: you take the dry leaves... you can use green ones and I'll get to that in a second, but usually we prefer the leaves that have already turned brown, or pretty light beige or white naturally. You would remove the thorn on either side with a tool that we call a si'i. You would clean them up, you'd roll them into what we call royun, and those would be in nicely tight packs. You would also, maybe even before you get to that part, depending on if you have so speckles on your leaves, you would dry them in the sun... but yeah, you roll it up and from there the leaves are pretty wide, so you don't necessarily work with it as it is that wide; you can strip it down to the width that you want: it can be very fine, say like 2cm approximately, or as much as half an inch... it just depends what you want to do. The finer you have your strands, the longer is going to take for you to weave, but the more desirable the weaving tends to be.

I would say it's a little more intimidating if you don't know what you need. I was able to pick up a lot of self-information from coconut, but I'll say that I don't think I'd have been able to do åkgak without some guidance from other community members and people who actually knew what they were doing.

**A: Great. So let's look at... talk to me about what weaving means to you. Let's get a bit more philosophical.**

R: I mentioned a bit earlier that weaving is a conversation between the people and their environment. I also feel it is very cultural. Sometimes we think of glass and oftentimes we think of glassware such as vases, cups, stuff like that. But we've been able to see artists truly be very sculptural with it, and in different colors. It's very utilitarian but it's also utilizing an art form. And I also think that weaving is seen in a similar capacity. Oftentimes people think the basics of hats, mats, and things like that, and they think that it's beautiful and useful, and definitely continuing with that...

But the joy that comes to me from weaving is to really be able to take these different techniques and play with it. Really just create things that you wanna see, things that you haven't seen before... just really experimenting with it. And oftentimes I think that Indigenous artists, especially when it comes to "traditional crafts", there's oftentimes this lens, or this conversation, that is put on us about authenticity, about how something is true because it's historically what's been. But the reality is that weaving is a very innovative practice in its own nature. Innovation is the tradition in itself.

**A: Love that.**

R: Whenever I like to play around with stuff I look at three different things, these are the kinds of variables that I see in my equation: materiality, technique and story. So if you have something that is made using traditional materials, using traditional technique, with a story that's been established, that's one thing. You can say that's as traditional as it gets. But I get bored! It's like: done this, done that... Sometimes what I like to do is use my traditional materials but then maybe some new techniques, and the story kind of changes a little bit. Or vice versa; maybe it is contemporary materials and traditional techniques, and the story changes yet again. But it's about breathing new life into it. I think that's

what I have a lot of fun with. And who can argue about the authenticity if you have a little bit of something that does that? It's all lineage, it's all continuation and building upon each other. We're allowed to be inspired not only by our environment but, since the world is now more connected than ever, with Instagram, Pinterest... we're always inspiring each other. But we've never really been isolated; we've always been a people that traded with others, that have dreamt beyond the horizon. So I always think that that's the tradition in itself. We shouldn't question it. Obviously we can be mindful about where things come from and not just copy paste, but really understanding what is it that we're really trying to do, what is it that we need, what is it that we're trying to perpetuate.

**A: Tell me a bit more about the types of things you create.**

R: Sure. I think, I don't know if it was maybe due to Catholic colonization and this idea of purity, but I feel like a lot of our weaving today is very plain, and you know, there's beauty in just seeing the natural patina and patterns... but when I look all around us, to the west to the Philippines, even further east and the Americas, I see a lot of beautiful intricacies; whether you play with color, whether you play with technique or strands. It's really inspiring to me, so that's something that I love to see and to do, kind of combining different techniques. I think of traditional items and I just want to see a little twist to it.

And I myself happen to be gela', queer, and so there's something that lends to that about having an outside perspective, or just having that kind of creative flare when it comes to it. Some of the things that I've made are a woven harness. Leather culture in the queer community is pretty big, but I always felt a little weird, I always felt a little awkward. Leather is a beautiful material, but I just never found something that fit me, never found something that I resonated with, I think a lot of times about Tom of Finland and their aesthetic and very ouverte explicitness. I think part of me just wants to reclaim that. We're also known to be sexually liberated, we were known to be very open and very accepting of gender diversity, of sexuality, of expression really. Colonization at its core, I like to say, is repressed expression. For 500 years we weren't allowed to express art.... language to some extent, but beliefs had changed, really who we were as a people had changed. Of course that's natural, that's part of it, we adapt and survive; but at the same time, I feel like in some ways I'm just catching up with those 500 years and really letting the ancestors speak through my work, maybe what they would've liked or what I'd like to see. I know my lifetime is too short to catch up for all 500 years, so that's really the joy I bring in perpetuating and teaching others, because I don't want to be the only weaver, it's lonely! I want us all to be in a circle, just doing our thing, talking shit... that's what it was. It was a way for us to gather and commune. The tradition doesn't lie within the item itself that we make, but in the practice of making it. The practice of tending to the land, cleaning our trees, gifting things to one another.

Other things that I've made are tuhong, a traditional hat, but one of the things that I did was that I kind of wanted it to embody the Spondylus, so I dyed it orange and I put spikes on it to embody that.

I think it's just all about reclaiming identity in the full humanity and in every way that we can, so not necessarily... really kind of challenge what is taboo. Is it taboo only because it's something that we don't talk about? Why don't we talk about it? What's that shame that has revolted around it? And obviously I want to make it tasteful too... we've all been loving since ever since. I think it's something that we need to acknowledge it, because some people don't believe that we took a shit in the jungle if it wasn't documented. But let's just go there and say that. There is lack of documentation that we never danced, and it's just like... come on, I get up and move and dance and all of it. Maybe there was a book that was burnt or something... but if not now, if we can't get a book and look at references... I had a good friend tell me "now we have an opportunity to fill in those gaps". And I think it's a beautiful mission and intention that we can look forward; get reinspired by community, get reinspired by the land.... Of course we can take hints from our neighbors, but again, being mindful of what it is that we copy and paste vs what we are able to be inspired by and create.

**A: Super. So let's go back a little bit and talk about the workshops that you do, and community... whatever you want to say related to that.**

R: I started giving workshops, like I mentioned, in the diaspora, primarily in Washington State. Yes, it was åkgak at times but also coconut... there's a company out in Florida that ships coconut leaves and the branches in itself are cheap, but it's just a matter of the shipping; it'd be like \$400 for 10 branches. Of course, again, you need to work with it as soon as, because they've been ready for a week when they arrive. Anyway, being able to reconnect with people there, but again, connecting with native weavers out there and understanding a lot of similarities...

**A: Did you have a lot of diaspora people going to your workshops?**

R: I did, yes. Washington State, if I remember the statistics as it stands today, but behind Hawai'i and California, Washington State has the third largest demographic of people with CHamoru heritage, primarily in the Tacoma area, so South Sound kind of area. I'd have a lot of community members come out, but also, I'd open it up to people who weren't of CHamoru ancestry, just have them have some time with some material, have some time with themselves, have some time with the community and teach it as well. They're just curious about it, and I think this is something that can offer a little bit of something to everybody. I'll disclose that it's not necessarily for everyone; not a single person can embody an entire culture. I can't be a weaver, and a peskadot, and this and that... But I can do a few things, and I hope I can do them well, and practice the interdependence that is in our community. I always like to start my workshops by saying "weaving is that tradition that has been passed down from one generation to the next since time immemorial. It wove our sails to allow us to cross the oceans. It gave us thatching for our shelters. It gave us mats for when we dream. And it's a beautiful sacred tradition... but at the same time we're just folding leaves. So don't worry about it, just take a breath and just enjoy it, because at the end of the day it's that mind-hand-spirit-earthly connection that we're just practicing. And it's so big, but also so small at the same time".

Oftentimes people will come in and have a lot of pressure on themselves; “oh, my grandma used to weave, my grandma used to do this and that...” Well, but if we go back into anyone’s lineage we’ll find a weaver, a fisherman, a hunter... it’s all about who YOU are and what you want to contribute to today. So please, be inspired. Please, try it out. But also don’t get on yourself if it’s not right the first time. Even right is a little... I don’t really use the binary of right and wrong, I just say what is and what isn’t, and even to quote James Bamba, one thing that he said that sticks with me is that “there’s just as many ways to weave as there are weavers”.

**A: Yes, I was just going to mention that. And I’ve heard it from multiple weavers as well, not just James and you, but Lia too...**

R: Exactly. All the more that. You find your style, you find what you enjoy, what you want to share with the world.

**A: Yeah. And what I like about that statement is that, just because it’s the first time that you’re doing it, it doesn’t mean that you’re not a weaver.**

R: Exactly.

**A: You’re already going to produce something. It’s going to look whatever, but it’s something.**

R: Exactly. I’d show you some of my first baskets, but they’ve gone back to the earth so... and that’s the beauty of it too. As frustrated as I feel when trying to look at it in terms of archaeological records... if I was a carver, I’d maybe be able to see a little bit more references of beads, of shells, of bones... but weaving for the most part, at least for us is primarily with leaves that goes away in just a matter of months if anything. So, it’s all the more important to keep perpetuating it, but also understand that it gives us almost a license to do all the more exploration with it, because if it doesn’t work out, oh well, on to the next, and if it does work, great, let’s keep on doing it.

**A: Super. I think I got super awesome information. Thanks so much for sharing that.**

R: Thank you for listening.

**A: So if you want to look at the collections we can do that. Do you want to maybe... so then we can stop the recording... so do you want to talk a little bit about your position on rematriation/repatriation and then we can stop the recording?**

R: Sure. Do you mean in terms of what I’d like to see happen?

**A: Yes. And what are your thoughts on it. In general, it doesn’t have to be specifically about this collection.**

R: I think it’s been a more prevalent conversation across institutions today. Growing up it was just a given: museums are just supposed to tell all of these stories from all of these different places. But that’s even before learning how they got these things. Some of the things that I’d like to see is just even access to see it, first and foremost. When I was a little kid I would look at things that were done... like I remember my uncle had brought

home this woven bird from one of his co-workers or co-workers' auntie or whatever. Overnight I recreated it and then gave it back. But I think it's one of those opportunities where if, not even the physical item itself, but even just time to talk with the pieces and learn from them in a more intimate way. It's very curated that they only put out certain things that they deem worthy. But who knows, most museum curators are not weavers, are not carvers, and they don't know what they're really really looking at, with all due respect. It really takes somebody that can see the intricacies or understands the process, who has actually made those items themselves to see that. Wouldn't it be beautiful to then have a replica, another modern-day reproduction of it, that is 100% preserved? I would totally be up for a job where someone's like "hey, here's this basket that is half gone, can you complete the other half?" Ok, I would love to see what that would look like. Especially with things like the guåfak, the mat, it's like, just because it's starting to show signs of wear you don't throw out the guåfak, it means that you need to get some more leaves, patch it up, and there's a beauty in that too. So I'd like to see something like that. I would love to see us, in our respective homelands, to be in this position to receive these items. Things like baskets, those material objects of course, but I think all the more especially for ancestral remains. I think that's a little bit more important.

I was actually requested to do these burial baskets, but unfortunately it was too tight of a turnaround and they didn't necessarily have a budget in mind, they were kind of anticipating some free labor... that's a little insulting there. They're saying they want to honor these bones, they want to honor these people, but if you're not doing your due diligence, you're not thinking it through, you're not having the proper conversations that needed to happen. I think it's really about giving that autonomy back to these communities and saying "how would you like to bury your grandmother? How would you like to bury your auntie, your uncle?" I think it's an important conversation to have, and it's a hard conversation. I think that for us, indigenous people, it's really painful to be putting ourselves back together and understanding that ancestors have been at the hands of so many different people, so much pain. And I also can understand a little bit of that; you have done so many years and so much work in preserving these things, but, at the same time, people need a rest. Again, it's this idea of not holding on to the material things, but really supporting the practice of making it. Also, it allows us to make new things that can actually paint a better picture of who we are, who we were and who we can be.

**A: I think this concludes the interview. Si Yu'os Ma'åse.**

# Appendix 4: Roman dela Cruz interview transcript<sup>161</sup> – 1 February 2024, Fokkai shop, Tumon, Guam

**Interviewer: Alba Ferrández Gaudens, University of East Anglia**

## **A: You can start by stating your name**

R: Hafa Adai, my name is Roman dela Cruz, I have been slinging for 15 years now, and I am a co-founder of Acho Marianas, and also a participant of the Slinging Work Championships which was first started as Tiro de Fonda, and for the last three years we've been competing. 2017, 2018 and 2019 it was Tiro de Fonda Internacional and now it's been converted, now the international slinging tournament is called the Slinging World Cup, Copa del Mundo.

## **A: Tell me more about your experience in the World Cup.**

R: From this year or generally?

## **A: Let's start with this year.**

R: Ok. This year was a good year. We had as much time to train but I was so busy with other things that I wasn't able to put in the time. But I felt like one sole week of time to train was, I felt like I was making some really good developments, that I was making some really good progress. I felt good going into the slinging tournament, but for one reason or whatever during performance, although we performed decently, we didn't perform to our capacity. Of course, in a sense that was disappointing. A lot of our mission is to showcase the gravity and the depth of the substance of slinging within the CHamoru culture. We felt that that would best be communicated through proficiency, which is, in the case of competition, best showcased through results. We didn't get the results that we wanted in competition, but I know that we got the results that we needed. But I realize that we got even bigger results in just keeping the bridge frequented. It was a big step for us and when I look at it, it was a big step for the CHamoru culture, the connection that we made not just with the rest of the world but in this particular conversation with Spain, the Balearic Islands, because it really did show some kind of resolve. It makes sense in this 500 years.

When anyone is talking about colonization there is a lot of negativity, and then there's a lot of finger pointing, there's a lot of blaming, there's a lot of dissatisfaction. But you wonder if there really should be solution making. I think, in the end, it helped us. When we framed our slinging around sport and around the 500 hundred years you get to see all of the positivities that this brings, the Balearic Islands, being a territory of Spain but having such a rich slinging history, and then to hear how the Spaniards, the explorers visiting Guam, and for them to marvel at the slinging ability of what we had here,

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<sup>161</sup> This interview has been included in the thesis with the participant's consent, following approval by the UEA Ethics Committee.

definitely, they must've seen this before but why was that never mentioned, to have such a rich, deep history in the Balearic Islands of slinging, and to have such a rich, deep history of slinging in the Mariana Islands, there must've been a point where an ancient Mariana Island slinger came across an ancient Balearic Island slinger. There's also the conversation that this might have happened before Ferdinand Magellan came to Guam. What if the world's voyagers...? Wind is crazy, it blows away people to far away places, so what if there is a chance that we got our slinging from them in the past? Or what if there is a chance that somewhere down the line they got slinging from us? Or maybe it is something that we each developed on our own, independently. But if we both developed something so intricate independently then this shows that we are really not that different after all: we have the same preferences. For slinging you need coordination, you need some critical thinking.

So yes, we were engaging in that and we saw that we had the same focus going to Mallorca for the first time. We're blowing our shows, they are blowing their shows but we cut our shows differently, but you're looking at the respect for the elders and you think, wow, they speak a different language. Because of the Spanish influence in the CHamoru culture you understand, but they speak a different language, they have a different look, but at the same time you're like, we're the same people. You get that sense. And then, because of the slinging internationals you get the similar connection with all of these other countries. Of course you're seeing these great differences; we come from the islands, we're meeting people who come from the mountains surrounded by snow, ice and cold weather for their entire lives. But we all converge around slinging, it's cool. It's great to see all of these different kinds of people really wanting the same thing to happen, which is bringing people together through slinging and to see the sport of slinging grow. I think we're at a point where there are a lot of countries with a deep slinging history, but I believe, as a CHamoru, that we have the deepest slinging history, but maybe we don't, but maybe we just understand our slinging history better than most people. But it's an invitation for them to go and do their research. If you talk to an American, maybe he's Irish blood but he's never been to Ireland, his father's never been to Ireland, but he has Irish blood. But because they're so convinced that they're American maybe a lot of them will be like "nah, it's ok. Ok great, I'm Irish but I'm American". But for those that get curious and say "I'm Irish, I need to go to Ireland one day and meet and visit my relatives, and I need to go and find out where I come from", that kind of search, that kind of soul searching experience, just that recognition gives you a goal. It gives you a life-long goal; it's a goal beyond how much it costs, it's a deeper thing. I think Guam sets a really good example of that. We just become a critical part to it, for igniting people towards that pursue.

If we're doing that from out here, not even on our own ground, not even on our home turf, we're gaining confidence here that these people actually come through here and do this over here... not just in Guam but Guam, Rota, Saipan, Tinian. And they feel that slinging energy here, they see what it has done for some people here, and they see a weapon, but they see the way of life that this weapon or tool defended. It turns on a different part of the soul, that primal sense. A lot of people think they don't have that

primal sense because they're surrounded by whatever setting, they never get to really activate it, or life just becomes so convenient for them... you shape your character through adversity, and the harder the adversity is... it sucks that people have to go through that, but you see some very strong people built from some very dark places. I think slinging is a way of saying you don't have to be miserable in your life, you don't have to go through this, because slinging is so darn hard, it's a practice, it's a very self-accountable practice: you can't lie to yourself.

I think that was part of, going back to the results of this year's competition, you start feeling entitled. I was lucky enough that in 2017 I went out there and I slang. We were only there one of the four days and I missed all of my practice attempts and I missed all my shots in my actual competition attempt, I went 0 for 30 in Mallorca, all the way across the world. Terrible. But then on the very next trip I did great, I won the international category of slinging with tennis balls and then that day I got to stand alongside, when they were giving the awards, I had Luis Pons who is the legendary slinger of the world, he's in all of these National Geographic videos and he's huge...

**A: He's from Mallorca?**

R: No, he's from Menorca. But, competitively, I think he's the most decorated slinging competitor out there at that time. I also got Diego Camuñas who is a founder of sling sport on the other side, and they are both helping me hold the Guam flag. I look at that and now I can't even believe that that happened. It was a really great experience. To go back and have a result like that, and to go through 2019 and not getting the same results although we still got some decent results. 2019 you're very lifted by these results. Then going through the actual 500 year anniversary, going through covid it [2023] was a time to really come back better than ever. And then, back to reality. Slinging doesn't care, sports don't care about "yeah, you won the international, yeah you taught however many people to sling, yes, you've been behind this, you've been supporting this thing, you have a museum", it doesn't care. It cares about the physics of what you're doing...

**A: and the technique...**

R: and the technique. And when you watch slingers, you see people slinging... and to be honest with you, there's all kinds of excuses: my sling, the wind... this sport sucks, my feet were wrongly placed, I did this, last year I did that... it's funny because you see everybody going through the same thoughts that you do. Not everybody is going to get so deep with the thought but when you get... I have a background in martial arts, and martial arts takes your body to a dark place but it takes your mind to a really bright place. There's a saying for a company that says "exhaust the body, proceed the mind, cultivate the spirit". Being able to take that mantra and bring that into slinging and then being accountable for it and starting to recognize these life lessons in slinging, that's not something that everyone signs up for. But it's an experience that's always available. It's just a matter of how are you going to tune yourself.

All those levels: to promote slinging nationally, to promote slinging individually, to promote slinging internationally, to promote slinging athletically, and then even to the

point of promote slinging soulfully, that's great. It's accessible: as long as people can find a rope they can do this. Before we would say find a rope and a rock; but now we're finding we don't even need a rock. I'm doing more slinging without any ammunition that I am with, because I've learned the value of it. The question was, before, how far or how fast or how straight am I going to get this thrown; right now I'm not even concerned about that, now I'm worried about how am I going to control my sling. That's where that lesson's been for me. Now it's become limitless. Before my slinging was focused on slinging ammunition. I would never be able to sling on city buildings watching exciting sunsets and sunrises. But now, because I've released myself from that necessity of having a sling ammunition, I've been going to Japan and staying in this 42 floor condo. There's a gate that gets to the roof and there you're seeing the whole city, sunset and sunrises are available, and you're slinging up there with a coffee, and you feel like Spiderman. One day it was me and my late friend Tony Quinua[?]. We got in about 200 throws each, to the point where you're sweating and exhausted but you're standing on top of this building. On the roof there's a fence but if you sneak there's a ladder that takes you on top of the generator room, you go in the generation room and then you're standing on that edge. You're 42 stories up and surrounded by buildings and you're slinging so hard and get tired and then sit and stare out going "God, this is crazy". It's an amazing feeling. Now, having some of those conversations with our friends on the World Cup you see that people have also shared the same things. They're sharing their views,, they're showing all these amazing views from all over the world... And then getting the invitation to visit these places. That is incredible.

**A: And you getting the opportunity to maybe host the International Competition.**

R: Yeah, the conversation now is very real. Years ago, it was our ambition to have the international slinging world championships here on Guam. We wanted to host for the 500-year anniversary and our plan was to create enough resources to pull the community together, to create enough resource to fly out the founder of slinging, Diego Camuñas, the president, and we wanted to fly also Luis Pons, the most competitive greatest sling competitor ever, and let the people follow. That was the goal, to have it in the year 2021. And also, to win as well. That was the goal, because it's bringing the testament, we're inviting the strongest Spaniard here to compete over here, we're letting them compete here against these multitudes of people that have learned how to sling, and for them to come and maybe defeat Spain, even through sport it's kind of like...

**A: Historical justice.**

R: Historical justice but at the same time, our ideal situation would be we beat them but then we bring them to bbq, and everybody else would say "yes, CHamorus are the greatest slingers in the world" and this would be observed from the man who started sports slinging, so he'll feel the value of where all of that comes from...and the president of stone sling organization, to say that we need to believe in what's happening over here, because it's just special. But of course covid happened and then after the revisit here, the people were very grateful that we coped. They were zoned out when we came out for the first time: "what? What?" And then the second time they were like

“Holy shit, they came back, with more. Can’t believe it”. And then the next year “hey, you gotta come to dinner, you gotta come to my house, and this is what it has to be. Yo, Guam, can you send us a video here? Can you show us that really there interest is there?” And then we came back a fourth time and they went “Holy shit they came back after covid. These guys are real, we need to get over their path. Look at these guys...” And then naturally, hospitality is just in our genes, so they can see the way... especially going with Guelu, Guelu is... the way he treats people is just, he’s a natural. We were going to places where he was becoming the host when he was a guest. He just has that natural ability. But we had an international panel that we brought back to the table because World Championship is always in Ibiza, well, in the Balearic Islands, so we said how about we make it go somewhere else? And then it wasn’t us; it was the other countries that said “how about we have it in Guam?” And this year we had somebody from France who is planning a trip to Guam, we have a group from Switzerland who are planning a trip to Guam to come and see us.

**A: Awesome!**

R: I know, that’s crazy, it’s pretty cool. So it’s on us, it’s just coming in slowly now. We know that’s an expectation. We’re not trying to force them to come to Guam for a gambling experience or a slinging experience; we’re not promising to have what we don’t, we’re not telling them to come here for what we don’t know, we’re telling them to come here for what we do. Before, maybe, the people who were campaigning in Guam didn’t believe that that [slinging] was attractive, but I think it is attractive. And what’s great is that it’s not based on a situation to turn into something that we’re not; it’s a situation where we just have to emphasize who we are. And part of that is knowing who we are and being sure where we come from. That is something that makes this process even that much more worthwhile. If you wanna lead someone somewhere you really have to move your way, so it really became a case of that. For myself, at least even as a slinger, because I knew that in order for me to have a more penetrating voice with slinging, I needed proficiency in slinging. I thought that proficiency in slinging was going to help to lubricate that.

**A: maybe now we can go back to the origins and you can talk about how you got into slinging. You said that was 15 years ago... so if you could tell me a little bit more about that, and about how you got to found Acho Marianas.**

R: Co-founder of Acho Marianas is because originally getting into slinging I would have to go kind of stem into that. I really admired slinging from around, after turning 18 years old I’ve always admired slingstones and had slinging in the back of my mind but I always thought that it was something that was just done from our ancestors, something done in the past; you have to be primal, you have to be ancient. And a large part of that is because a lot of the islands we were trying to modernize. But I was already into martial arts, so martial arts really influenced that deeper thinking and that deeper thinking eventually led into deeper thinking culturally. First you’re deeper thinking soulfully and then now you’re deeper thinking culturally. It kind of got to a point where we were looking at slingstones as top shelf stuff and then wanting to get a closer look at

the slingstones, get a closer look to what a sling looks like, all of that... have all of these curiosities... and finally in 2008 a buddy had told me that people were still slinging on Guam, and that somebody makes slings. And I'm thinking "I understand now that is just really a simple, you could do it with one piece of fabric but before I thought it actually had to be like a sling for it to be a sling.

So I eventually started slinging in 2009. I remember it was my buddy who is from, who had steered my head towards the possibility of slinging, and this was an American friend who'd lived in Saipan who moved to Guam, who I saw slung, like I saw him sling, and then I was like "holy shit! We can do this now still!" So I saw him sling and then finally I was able to purchase a sling here from some local sling makers. They were very hard to find, you literally had to go into the jungle to find these slings that were made by these local guys. So I started slinging. I was terrible, I was terrible for a very long time, and then for about to close to 3 years I had to sling in secrecy, not only because I didn't want to hurt anybody, but also because I was so embarrassed to sling in public. I wanted to share this thing, slinging in public, but how do you do it if you really suck? And then finally I was showing one of my friends who I met through martial arts this thing and then he brought in his buddy from Rota who had done slinging before, who was Guelu. And then we built this small little group of three slingers. And then it took me a while, but I was always seeing them sling straight and I was always feeling worse. But continuing to push through it noticed that I eventually learned how to sling. And I finally slung straight two years and ten month later. It's amazing, my window of success before was just forward. I remember it was at that point whenever at times people would catch me slinging in public I would sling and then I would even pretend like, wherever the stone went, I'd pretend I was aiming for that. And then I started to do that to myself even when I was slinging in private. But then I recognized, for me personally, I recognized how the numbers of slinging, how broad the level of slinging... So then Guelu started bringing his family, we started growing this group and learning how to sling. We're slinging into the sunsets, into the ocean; we were slinging and we were trying to bring back the ancient weapon of slinging. And we did this until... trying to advocate for it, we were ready at that point, we had spoken at a few schools and we had tried to advocate for the ancient weapon of slinging.

And then finally in the 2000.. later part of 2016, we had heard from this guy from Austria about the International Competition, and we made that decision, we said "when is it?" and he said "next month". We just started talking to him in 2016-2017 February or later part of January he's telling us about this international tournament and saying "hey, you should come and do this one year". We didn't even know where Mallorca was, didn't even know Mallorca was in Spain, thanks goodness for Google. We're looking at it and we said "hey, do you wanna go?" And we just knew it was a slinging tournament, right? We had only slung at sunsets. We heard that there were targets. We didn't pay any attention to the details, we said "hey, we can sling into the Sun"...that was our visualization back then. We went to Mallorca, and before we went to the World Championships we attended this event in the mountains, a slinging tournament in the mountains, attached to all of this other carnival of events. This cost us 100€ for the cab

ride. It was so frustrating, we ended up finding out that we missed the slinging tournament, that we went a little bit late. But as we're walking around the area we see these two guys with slings and we ask them where it's at and they bring us to this field. They say "the tournament was here but it's over". And then everybody around the field says we're different, everybody around the field is trying to see where we're from, just wondering "who are these guys?" They're trying to invite us to try slinging. And then we say "no, we already sling". We break our slings from our bags and then.. everybody was coming and putting their bags down and saying "what are these guys doing?" And then they asked us to try to hit these targets. We'd never done target slinging before, the 95 feet distance of slinging. They gave us two shots each; that was the only shot that I made in Mallorca. The first day of slinging [at the tournament] on my second shot I hit the board. At that point Diego Camuñas invited us, he said "you have to join our team!" and then we find out later on that he is the founder of sport slinging and then we missed the tournament but they're fascinated with us, we break out some artifacts and everybody is coming together, it's a whole carnival of welcome. We became swarmed with all these people looking at these exotic guys. And then, after that, we just joined the award ceremony. They told us "hey come and join even though you guys didn't compete come and join us". This is in front of a large public, Diego brought me and Guelu to the stand and said "hey these are our guys from Guam, they're here to compete in the international slinging tournament!" And there was just a great energy. We're concerned because our cab there was so expensive, and two guys say "hey man, if you don't mind we gotta go this way but we can give you a ride back". We said ok, you know we can find some weed. They knew were to find the weed, and we were smoking with some other slinger guys. They said "we're going to do some training this evening, you wanna come train with us at the field?"

And then we became good friends and the day of the tournament some people we had met came to support. And I remember I'm missing every shot at this point, feeling so disgusted and looking at my friends who drove two hours to come and see me, and in the last round one of my friends said "come on Roman, just one!" and then I was like... god... came over here on this cultural mission and now I feel like a special needs slinger. Really! I was like, crushed by it, a little bit. You know? I had a big mission there, happy to meet everybody, but I was like, man... As a kid I was always the guy in the back, the wait for me guy, always slow, had no money, everybody is paying for my thing... and it got to a point with surfing and martial arts where I actually became a little bit good at it, so I thought I had overcome that and compensate that. And when I heard just that one [comment] it brought me waaay back, back to that phase. We had to fly back here and then I was already asking the media... I used to have a column, so I was tasked to do a full report, full feature on the whole event. So I had to tell the island about going 0/30. We went on this cultural mission, we're here to represent you guys, we even went with a little bit of vengeance before we went out, 'cause we didn't know whatever. I remember we received 10 artifact slingstones from different parts of the island and we were supposed to sling them in Spain, to find the right places to sling

them. As we went though we realized everyone was so freaking nice, plus they sling really good!

Looking at the sling culture was wow. But getting to see all of that, we thought that our mission was there to win, but our mission was there to observe and then to bring this framework back to the islands. What was great was that it was the framework of slinging sport that made it a lot easier to grow slinging. Now, instead of telling... of course there are some parents that might be interested in teaching their kid the ancient weapon of slinging, but there's way more parents that are willing to teach their kids about the modern sport of slinging. The modern, ambitious sport of slinging. And also, now, it is a great way to say "hey guys, Guam, we can actually be pivotal with this whole thing". We're not just an accessory to this; we are actually a critical pivot point for the growth of this. Let's think about it together, Saipan, Rota, Tinian. Come on, this is all for us. Let's get together, we need this. We need to be impressive... look at the Balearic Islands, look at what those guys are doing, look at that. We should be doing this. These guys are good. That's where we're at, this great bridge.

So if you rewind just a little bit, in 2017 when we heard of the tournament, then we returned in 2018 and the 500<sup>th</sup> year anniversary is coming closer. We're thinking that the 500<sup>th</sup> year anniversary is going to be this biig giant thing here in the islands, like huge. And then we're wondering where we can fit in. So we're asking around, where can we fit, and we start getting questions like "what 500 year anniversary?" And then we're making noise about it but covid slowed everything down. But we were ready, we gotta be doing something for the 500 year anniversary, there's no excuse not to. Our government did a little bit of something but nobody else did. There was nothing in the schools, there was nothing on the streets, there was nothing in the businesses, there was nothing at all. But we still went ahead and then we actually, we were working with the organization [of the World Cup] to have, to run online compete scores, we're trying to get the consent of their president to do that, and then we're thinking that it's going to bring all of us together but he didn't want to. He didn't have the logistics, I guess he was just too busy but he said "no, we want the World Championship to stay here [in the Balearic Islands]. We will never move". And we're thinking that we've been out there fucking 3 times... and then it got to a point where we actually became divided. We said "fuck that, they wanna do their thing? We'll do our thing. We'll fucking launch slinging here in the Pacific our way". That happened. And so we had this tension, right? And then more closer to the 21 year anniversary we're noticing that it's crickets but then I start communicating again with, we have this long conversation with the President of the organization who wanted to talk. And then we start sharing in photos. He ends up getting a front page article on the 500 year anniversary in the Balearic Islands newspaper. Front page or back page, with a photo I sent him through Whatsapp and a write up of the 500 year anniversary and Guam. And what is amazing is that that didn't happen through government procurement, that happened from the floor.

**A: Yeah, from the grassroots...**

R: Yeah, there was nothing going on and we're looking like "heey, I've been doing tournaments all of these years so my friends in the newspaper, look what they published!" Full page article, not bad.

**A: Not bad at all.**

R: And then we were on the same side again. And then, 2022 we were able to make it back out there. We were still trying to formulate some things over here. And then 2023 we went back there. Truthfully, there is a lot of room for improvement, coordinating the whole event, there were a lot of things that fell apart. And then we start having the conversation, "hey dude, we're not trying to remove it [the world cup] from here but we need it to be good". And some people started saying "we should have it in Guam now". And then it was like "no, we're not trying to get people to hate Ibiza or whatever". We know where the root of this tournament is and we're not trying to uproot it, but if you wanna move it for one time, especial edition, bring it over here. Now we're doing the gateway for that. We're not trying to get everybody to come here for international world championships, but that's going to be the icebreaker to show everybody the attraction that the Mariana Islands is through slinging. That'll be the icebreaker and if the islands continue to be as attractive as we think it is and everyone can agree, then the gates are open. So that's where we wanna do that. We realize Guam can be attractive but of course we create this incentive to come and visit, because, you know, the flights are so expensive... but creating an experience so that people can say "hey we came from so far, we went the whole freaking way, and now we're doing this Guam, Saipan, Rota, Tinian slinging adventure".

**A: So when does Acho Marianas come into play?**

R: Acho Marianas came into play because in the course of creating all of this we noticed that we needed a structure. We really wanted to... it was very pro-Guam at the beginning of slinging, of course, in the back. Of course pro-CHamoru so pro-Marianas. But when we started to see that.. it was actually a Rota family that lives on Guam that was the critical mass that made slinging grow more. It was the Rosario family. They would show up in groups of 10, sometimes even 20, entire families, we used to have tournaments back here [in the Effect]. We created, when we came back from Mallorca, we wanted to bring the rules back, so we created this weekly event called slingstones and stories which turned into sling Wednesdays and we met without fail for a very long time. I think we've had more than, about 300 Wednesdays now of gathering for slinging. And Guelu's family populated that for the most part. And it was weird because Guelu's immediate family is from Rota, and then we met a guy from Tinian here and we were telling him about slinging, inviting him to the event that night, and then he looked at Guelu and went "uncle Guelu!!!" Guelu happened to be his uncle. Then we invited someone from Saipan: "ohh uncle Guelu!!!" and then when we went to Pagan, there's two guys that are living on fucking Pagan. We're talking about slinging and then one of them turns to me and goes "oh, you mean uncle Guelu??". Fucking uncle Guelu! This guy is everywhere! This is a Marianas-wide thing.

“Acho” means stone in CHamoru. And then we wanted to have equal authority headquarters in all of the Mariana Islands, so kind of what happened organically with Guam and the Balearic Islands. Nothing officially, there’s no flag, no written documents, nothing officially... you know, there’s always been this talk about how difficult it is to unify the Mariana Islands. People think that unifying the Mariana Islands only means politically. And it’s like no, we can just be friends and doing things as a unit, moving forward as a unit. Anytime we’re talking about slinging and fortifying slinging in Guam we let everybody go this is going on, all of the islands, and likewise all of the advocates that do their sling workshops. They’re saying “hey, our ancestors did that, this ignited from Guam”, so you have that unifying force, Acho Marianas. So we wanted to form our own non-profit organization cause we were already slinging a lot with the seafarers. They had their own license for non-profit organization, so we came, and because slinging and seafaring have such a connection, a deeper connection, we just became an extension using the non-profit organization of Tasa. And then Tasa became... we finally found a home at SKC, the Acho Marianas home has floated from place to place, we finally found SKC. And I was spending a lot of time there.... But my duties are here at the shop, I have a lot of work responsibility, and I realized that all of the time that I was spending off location, spending so much time slinging, really started to bite into my work and my responsibilities here. So that’s when I stepped down as President from Acho Marianas, and then I thought that I had to actually step away and take a little bit of a gap from slinging, but then we ended up opening this museum there, The Effect, and then, really.... In order to fuel the museum I found myself slinging again. And then I needed to slow down from teaching slinging because it was taking away from my work, but then I realized when I was able to put everything into one place [Fujita Rd location] is that it’s beyond my work, it’s my duty to do this [teach slinging]. And now at least with The Effect museum, being so close to the shop, I can unify and synergize and optimize all those efforts, make it work, provide a museum and expand the services of Guam slinging. Whereas Acho Marianas is there to provide slinging with stones in a larger space – cultural center, they are able to fortify that; right now here we can emphasize slinging with seeds, slinging with tennis balls, and also be the lab, the experimental lab for all of the other ideas we bring, like sling golf or whatever. But in the end what’s great is that we work together with Acho Marianas. It was weird because at first people thought it was a fall out, and I can see that in some ways it can be, but it was a fallout in the sense that, I think, the situation was ripe where it needed this other separate place, an additional place to provide these additional services. And that’s where The Effect comes into place.

**A: I think we can finish by talking about the slinging workshops that you hold here at the Effect. What do you do, what do you offer...**

R: What we do here with the Effect is we offer... I’m not going to say a crash course, but definitely a quicker course. We can give them a good history of slinging, give them the opportunity to hold artifacts, to feel closer to the ancestors. And also to look at the basics without actually slinging ammunition. We’ve developed the foundational skills for slinging and also to get a good view, a better view of the longer vision of slinging.

Whereas Acho Marianas are going to focus on teaching you how to sling that stone to hit that target, here we're gonna teach you the basics of slinging, send you to Acho Marianas to really fine tune that among their community of slingers, but also here we're going to keep you connected to all of that technical, all of that logistics. Instead of teaching you how to sling and why to sling, we also wanna show you where to go from here and how far you can take it from here. And that responsibility before we were trying to push through Acho Marianas, but just because of everyone's schedule, it wasn't the proper setting, because Acho Marianas's priority is not just in showcasing, developing sport slinging, but also fortifying slinging's place when people are having that conversation about what the CHamoru culture is like, slinging has to be there. Especially given our national flag.

**A: Thanks so much Roman.**

## Appendix 5: Table of Exhibitors and Items from the 1887 Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas, by colonial province. By author.

Exhibitors and Items from the Philippines Exhibition, by colonial province		
Provinces	Number of Exhibitors	Number of Items (estimate <sup>162</sup> )
Abra	43	237
Albay	71	1000
Antique	32	173
Batáan/Cápiz	35	448
Batangas	25	580
Benguet	8	180
Bontoc	6	253
Bulacán	12	300
Burias	4	40
Camarines Norte	24	150
Camarines Sur	15	460
Cavite	18	103
Cebú	274	1690
Ilocos	32	500
Ilo-Ilo	196	980
Infanta	2	18
Isabela de Luzón	9	295
Islas Marianas <sup>163</sup>	38	297
Isla de Negros	8	848
Laguna	32	395
Leite/Leyte	11	160
Lepanto	4	152
Manila	169	8000

<sup>162</sup> It is impossible to determine the exact number of items that were displayed because often the Exhibition Catalogue does not list an exact number of items but rather says “a number of”. Estimate of objects is by the author.

<sup>163</sup> The colonial province of the Marianas included the Caroline Islands and Palau and hence they have been included together in this table.

Masbate y Ticao	6	167
Mindanao/Misamis	62	657
Mindoro	26	566
Nueva Écija	8	95
Nueva Vizcaya/Tiagán	10	228
Pampanga	33	450
Pangasinán	73	330
Samar	37	250
Tayabas	43	314
Unión	18	425
Zambales	26	90
Spain	90	3380
Others <sup>164</sup>	20	59

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<sup>164</sup> This includes exhibitors from European countries, anonymous exhibitors, and exhibitors without a place of origin.

# **Appendix 6: List of objects from the Mariana Islands submitted to the 1887 Exhibition (this list includes all objects and samples compiled in the 1887 Catalogue, including those that remain unidentified or no longer exist in the Spanish collections)**

## **SECTION 1**

### **Comisión Central de Manila**

Two ancient skulls from Agaña (Marianas)

Iguatata, Carolinian king's skull (Yap, Carolines)

### **Fausto (D. Mariano). – Rota, Marianas.**

Four ancient skulls found in a cave (the second one in Saipan)

Jaw

Femur: found in the ruins of an ancient monument in Saipan

Skull of a chamorro mestizo, found in Agaña

Skull of a carolino mestizo, both skulls are sent to be compared with the ancient skulls

A sacrum, jaw, sternum, ribs, and vertebrae, found in Saipan under skull number 2

### **Gobernador (P.M.) – Agaña, Marianas**

Plate with drawings of skulls

Plate with archaeological and prehistorical details about the skulls

### **Fausto (D. Mariano) – Saipan, Marianas**

Plate with prehistorical instruments made from stone or shell and found in the ruins of the ancient houses

Prehistoric snails called *casco* and *rosca*, found in ancient ruins on the island of Saipan

Fragment of one of the columns from the ruins in Tinian

### **Gobernador (P.M.) – Agaña, Marianas**

Plate with archaeological and prehistorical details

### **Muñoz (D. José) – Agaña, Marianas**

Fossilised wood

Coal from Umata

Coal from Agat

*Dangís* or mineral wax

**Muñoz (D. José) – Agaña, Marianas**

Pumice stone

**Gobernador (P. M.) de Marianas – Saipan, Marianas**

Plate containing a stone axe, bone spear tips, three shell coins, ten slingstones and an ancient sling

**Muñoz (D. José) – Agaña, Marianas**

Pumice stone used for tanning hides and polishing woods

Fossilised wood, called Umata coal

Same, called coal in Agat. These examples are uncommon on the islands

*Dangís* or mineral wax

New jars of plastic clay. Used by the natives as paint, although despite its quality, they do not use it for pottery: it is extraordinarily abundant

Three examples of the same

A rusty jar of plastic clay, extracted from Inarajan's river. Carbonated Iron. It can be found on several spots around the island of Guajan

Sample of green mudstone (claystone). It is used to make tombstones and pipes

Same but white

*Tomon*, refractory rock composed of clay and lime

Iceland spar (carbonated lime). It is very abundant in the country, but the natives do not use it

## SECTION 2

**Herrero (Doña Ana) – Agaña, Marianas**

House made of cane with a nipa roof: inhabited by poor natives

**Millchamp (D. Enrique) – Agaña, Marianas**

Model of a wooden plank house with a nipa roof, completed and furnished in the local style (the roof can be lifted)

Model of a house made of cane and nipa

**Aflagüe (D. Manuel) – Agaña, Marianas**

Ordinary attire of a Chamorro, includes a *saya* [skirt], shirt, inner shirt and a headscarf

**Castro (D. Andrés de) – Agaña, Mariana**

Model of a saddle

**Cobo (D. Francisco) – Agaña, Marianas**

Braided hair belonging to a young Chamorro woman

**Cruz (Doña Dolores) – Agaña, Marianas**

A pair of palm slippers (*doga* or *abarcas*)

**Gobernador (P.M.) de Marianas**

Necklaces used in Saipan and Tinian

*Belembao*, musical instrument used by the natives of the Marianas

**Martínez (D. Antonio) – Agaña, Marianas**

Silver hairpins

**Martínez y Crisóstomo (D. Juan) – Agaña, Marianas**

Two hairpins

**Pangelian (D. Manuel) – Agaña**

Models of a bed, chair, table and stool

**Portutusach (D. José) – Agaña**

Ordinary attire of a Chamorro, with a hat, shirt and troussers de

A pair of slippers (*doga* or *abarcas*) for the countryside

A pair of slippers (*doga* or *abarcas*) for the countryside

Two pairs of slippers (*chinela*)

**Castro (D. Juan) – Agaña**

*Ocodo*, mousetrap

*Malacate*, used for spinning cotton

**Torres (D. Juan de) – Agaña**

*Belembao*, primitive musical instrument played by the natives by running the back of the fingers along the wire.

**Castro (D. Ezequiel de) – Agaña**

Kitchen knife

**Castro (D. Juan) – Agaña**

Kitchen knife

**Cruz (Doña Dolores) – Agaña**

Two *quichala*, spoons used by the natives

Two *boja*, fans

**Dungca (D. Justo) – Agaña**

*Canoa* or *tapi* for various cooking uses

**Muñoz (D. José) – Agaña**

*Dudos*, tabos for water

*Quichalas*, coconut spoons

*Goja*, palm fans

## SECTION 5

**Martínez (D. Antonio) – Agaña**

Leaf of the palo brea tree

**Muñoz (D. José) – Agaña**

Legume of the *gogo* tree, with its seeds

**Gobernador (P.M.) de Marianas – Agaña**

Collection of raw woods

Display of samples of wood

**Martínez (D. Antonio) – Agaña**

Trunk of the palo brea tree

Coffee stick

**Muñoz (D. José) – Agaña**

*Gogo* or soap-stick

**Martínez (D. Antonio) – Agaña**

White palo brea

Native palo brea

**Muñoz (D. José) – Agaña**

Resin of the breadfruit tree

*Tinecha pacao* (poisonous and medicinal product=

**Muñoz (D. José) – Agaña**

Centipede, millipedes of the chilopod class

**Díaz (D. Joaquín) – Agaña**

Snail

**Flores (D. Manuel) – Agaña**

Big snail

**Muñoz (D. José) – Agaña**

Sponge

## SECTION 6

**Aflagüe (D. Manuel) – Agaña**

Copra. Dry coconut – for export

**Castro (D. Juan de) – Agaña**

Rice

Preserved *mongoes* [a small type of bean]

Breadfruit bread

Sugar

**Cobo (D. Francisco) – Agaña**

Unhusked rice

**Commander of the Presidio de Agaña**

*Abacá*

**Cruz (D. Felipe) – Agaña**

Coconuts

**Dungca (D. Justo) – Agaña**

Vinegars made from coconut and cane

Preserved capers

**Flores (D. Manuel) – Agaña**

Corn

**Martínez (D. Antonio) - Agaña**

Refined coconut oil

Sugar

Cotton

Pineapple

Lily

**Pérez (D. José) – Agaña**

Beans

**Portusac (D. José) – Agaña**

*Esoc.* Breadfruit bread

**Rodes (D. Antonio) – Agaña**

Beans

Green beans

Preserved *cuchumecos*

**Sablan (D. Mariano) – Rota, Marianas**

Unhusked rice

Beans

*Mongo*

*Aparote*

Garlic and onions

Ginger

Pineapple

*Gao-gao* [East Indian arrowroot]

*Gao-gao* starch

**Torres (D. Félix) – Agaña**

Coffee

Cassava

*Inca*

*Gao-gao*. Arrow-root starch

**Torres (D. Juan) – Agaña**

*Salep* (flour made from the tuber of the orchid species *Ophrys*)

Macerated *salep* starch

*Salep* starch. It is used for starching clothes

**Tudela (D. José) – Agaña**

Indigo

**Castro (D. Juan) – Agaña**

Comb or rake model

**Commander of the Presidio de Agaña**

*Fusiño* [farming tool]

**Diaz (D. Joaquín) – Agaña**

*Etses*. Fruit grater

**Dungca (D. Justo) – Agaña**

*Bilao* [rice winnower]

*Metate*. Corn grinder

**León (D. Joaquín) – Agaña**

Bucket

**Martínez (D. Antonio) – Agaña**

Plow model

**Millchamp (D. Enrique) – Agaña**

Farming cart model

**Panjelinan (D. Manuel) – Agaña**

Sugar mill model

**Pérez (D. José) – Agaña**

*Camyo*. Fruit grater

## SECTION 7

**Castro (D. Andrés) – Agaña**

Fibre used to make rope

**Governor of the Marianas – Agaña**

Coconut fibre

**Castro (D. Andrés de) – Agaña**

*Bejuco* [guaco] baskets

Palm cigar holder

Two buri palm mats

Prepared palm leaves

Palm leaves

Palm sacks

**Cobo (D. Francisco) – Agaña**

Two buri palm hats

**Herrero (D. Vicente) – Agaña**

Palm sack

**Cobo (D. Francisco) – Agaña**

Samples of tobacco and *chupas* (the latter are smoked by women)

**Díaz (D. Joaquín) – Agaña**

Refined coconut liqueur

Coconut rum

**Dungca (D. Justo) – Agaña**

Anise-flavored coconut liqueur

Sugarcane rum

**Panjilinan (D. Manuel) – Agaña**

Carriage model

**Commander of the Presidio de Agaña**

Luxurious machete

*Fusino*, tool used to work the land

**Guerrero (D. Vicente L.) – Agaña**

Work machetes

**León Guerrero (D. Agapito) – Agaña**

*Fosino*, tool used to work the land

**León Guerrero (D. Joaquín) – Agaña**

Work machete

**Castro (D. Andrés de) – Agaña**

*Lason-pisao*, A trap for catching deer and wild pig

**Cobo (D. Francisco) – Agaña**

First class rice, exported to China

Second class rice, exported to China

**Dungca (D. Justo) – Agaña**

*Chinchorro*, fishing tool

**Fausto (D. Mariano) – Agaña**

*Apong* or fishing spear, used by Carolinians in Guam

*Nasa* or fishing trap

**Guerrero (D. Vicente L.) – Agaña**

*Fisga* or fishing harpoon (two specimens)

**26. León Guerrero (D. Lorenzo) – Agaña**

*Fisga* or fishing harpoon (two specimens)

**Muñoz (D. José) – Agaña**

*Acho-lumago*, device for baiting fish

*Taraya* or fishing net

A harpoon made of wild palm

*Nasa* or fishing trap used to fish shrimp

**Salas (D. José de) – Agaña**

*Taraya* or fishing net

**Governor of the Marianas – Agaña**

*Sagman* (pirate ship): A private boat of the Carolinians, which is poorly suited for transporting goods and passengers, being of little stability

Same, for transporting passengers

Drawing of the two previous vessels

**León Guerrero (D. Vicente) – Agaña**

*Galaide*: A vessel used by the natives for fishing and for transporting goods

Model canoe

# Glossary

*atole* – a beverage of Mesoamerican origin introduced to the Marianas by Spanish conquistadores

*atupat* – sling

*åcho' atupat* – slingstone

*åkgak* – pandanus, *Pandanus tectorius*

*åmot* – CHamoru traditional medicine

*BIBA* – Long live

*casas de los antiguos* – houses of the ancient people, today known as *latte* sites.

*chamorri* – highest ‘caste’ in ancient CHamoru society

*chenchule'* – reciprocity

*cho'cho'* – coral

*corona* – woven crown

*derecho por descubrimiento* – Spain’s right to possess the lands that had been discovered in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries

*derecho de posesión* – Spain’s claim to a territory based on its colonial rule

*doga* – sandals used for walking on coral

*Finu' Chamoru* – Chamoru language

*Fino' Håya* – a version of the Chamoru language without Spanish borrowings

*fosiño* – a tool similar to a hoe

*galaide* – reef canoe used for fishing during the Spanish colonial period

*gobernadorcillo* – Indigenous chief or member of the local elite that acted as a political intermediary between the Indigenous population and the Spanish administration during the Spanish colonial period

*guafak* – mat

*gueha* – fan

*guma' sakman* – canoe house

*haligi* – pillar of a *latte* stone

*higam* – adze

*Hispanidad* – a concept that instrumentalised the Spanish colonial past and its peoples as a testimony of Spain’s greatness and its universal mission of exploration and Catholic

evangelisation, mostly used during the Francoist military dictatorship (1939-1975) but that has modern-day ramifications

*inafa'maolek* – interdependence, care for others, hospitality, community cooperation

*indio* - A label invented by Spanish colonial administrators to classify diverse Indigenous populations into a single, manageable category

*Inifresi* – CHamoru pledge

*kåmyo* – coconut grater

*kostat tengguat* – a specific type of basket

*kostumbren Chamorro* – a mix of CHamoru and foreign cultural practices

*kulu* – conch wind musical instrument

*lancho* – family ranch or farm

*latte* – megalithic stone pillars unique to the Mariana islands

*layak* – canoe sails

*lålai* – CHamoru chant

*maga'håga* – chiefly women in ancient CHamoru society

*maga'låhi* – chiefly men in ancient CHamoru society

*mai'es* – corn

*mamåhlao* – shame or embarrassment

*manåmko* – CHamoru elders

*mestizo/a* – person of mixed ‘racial’ background

*mestizaje* – process of interracial and/or intercultural mixing used to categorise the Indigenous populations of the Spanish colonies based on their level of racial purity

*mitåte* – stone grinder

*mo'na* – the eternal return

*niyok* – coconut, *Cocos nucifera*

*pokse'* – hibiscus bark, *Hibiscus tiliaceus*

*quichala* – spoon

*reducciones* – system of population concentration used by the Spanish colonial administration in the Mariana Islands and the Americas

*respetu* – respect

*saina* – CHamoru elders and ancestors

*sakman* canoe – CHamoru traditional outrigger canoe

*saligao* – centipede

*sinahi* – fossilised gigant clamshell pendants in the shape of a crescent moon

*sirena* – mermaid, mythological CHamoru creature

*suruhånu/a* – CHamoru traditional healer

*tabo* – coconut drinking container

*tali 'i* – rope

*taotaomo 'na* – the people of before, ancestral presences that inhabit the earth

*taotao tåno'* - people of the land

*tåno'* – the land

*tåsa* – capstone of a *latte* stone

*tåsi* – the ocean

*titiya* – corn tortilla

*tornaviaje* – return journey between Acapulco and Manila established by Spanish galleons

*yo 'åmte* – CHamoru healer

### **List of Abbreviations**

1887 Exhibition – Exposición General de las Islas Filipinas, Marianas y Carolinas

AHN – Archivo Histórico Nacional

BIBA CHamoru – BIBA CHamoru: Cultura e Identidad en las Islas Marianas

BNE – Biblioteca Nacional de España

CNMI – Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

DOD – United States Department of Defense

FestPac – Festival of Pacific Arts

FSM – Federated States of Micronesia

Guam Museum – Senator Antonio ‘Tony’ M Palomo Guam Museum and Chamorro Educational Facility

GPT – Guam Preservation Trust

MAN – Museo Arqueológico Nacional

MARC – Richard Taitano Flores Micronesian Area Research Center, University of Guam

Micronesia – Federated States of Micronesia

MNA – Museo Nacional de Antropología

MBVB – Museu Biblioteca Victor Balaguer

NAP – National Archives of the Philippines

NMI – Northern Mariana Islands

NMNH – National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution

RAE – Real Academia Española de la Lengua

SKC – Sagan Kotturan Chamoru Cultural Center

UoG – University of Guam