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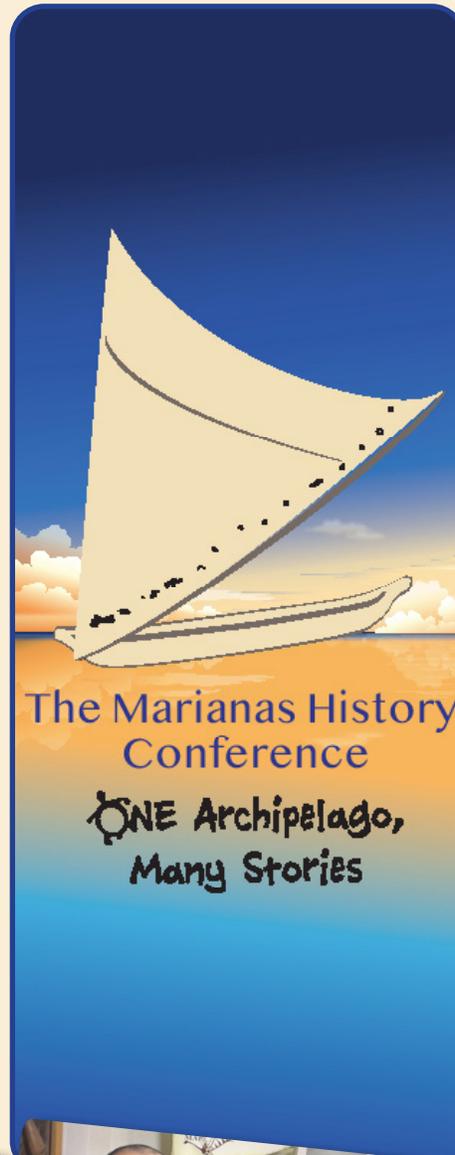
5th Marianas History Conference

This [Marianas History Conference](#) (MHC) was created 10 years ago to provide a space to bring to light and make accessible the rich history and enduring cultural heritage of the Marianas. It is also meant to inspire passion for Marianas history and cultural heritage, especially for *man'atatti* and *famagu'on*, our future generations.

The 5th MHC, which just wrapped up, reached some historic milestones in and of itself, being hosted on a virtual platform for the first time, showcasing a record 65 presentations over a 10-day period.

The opening keynote speaker, *Saina Malia Ramirez* of Guam, delivered a compelling and heartfelt address *gi fino-CHamoru/Chamorro* and in English. She reminded participants that our history is Mariana's history and that we can connect from an islander-centered historiography through our *familia*, lineage, lands, heritage and language.

The final keynote address was given by Dr. Theresa "Isa" Arriola of Saipan, a sociocultural anthropologist. Arriola shared an interdisciplinary



approach to understanding how processes of militarization transform the sociopolitical realities of indigenous peoples and environments in the contemporary Marianas. She encouraged participants to re-imagine their existence in these homelands, focusing less on empire and more on indigenous resurgence.

If you weren't able to attend this year's conference, don't worry. The papers presented will be e-published in Guampedia in the upcoming months. In addition, for the first time, video recordings of each panel session will be available on YouTube.

This year's conference theme was "One Archipelago, Many Stories: Navigating 500 Years of Cross Cultural Contact." It was organized by the University of Guam, Northern Marianas College, Micronesia Area Research Center, Guam Preservation Trust, Northern Marianas Humanities Council, Humanities Guåhan, and Guampedia.

Spearheading the planning for the 6th Marianas History Conference in 2023 will be Dr. Lawrence Camacho and Leo Pangelinan.



From the Desk of Guam's Historian



This is the final installment in the series of reflections from Toni "Malia" Ramirez of Guam's Department of Parks and Recreation, on the first recorded Western contact with the Marianas 500 years ago. Ramirez uses the CHamoru language and the knowledge of a member of the crew to give us her final reflection.

CHamoru oral histories are a powerful tool in the interpretation of our *sainas* (elders), *finaloffan* (past) and *hinanau* (a journey). For more than five decades, I have emphasized using *Finu'hâya* (CHamoru language) in understanding and learning of the CHamoru *finaloffan* and *hinanau*. There is no alternative since our *saina* did not write their past. In CHamoru, there is a very powerful proverb, *Ti Mamaigu' Si Yu'us* (God does not sleep!). In learning and understanding CHamoru history, I restated the proverb as, *Ti Man Mamaigu' I Man Saina-hu* (CHamoru elders do not sleep!). This has been my relationship with them since I can remember.

In revisiting an event that occurred 500 years ago, I could literally hear *finu'-ñiha* (their voices) in my writing and my reflections with their emphatic statements. *Atan i ha'âni?* (Review the dates?). *Atan hâyi I man tautau gi lagu?* (Who

were the people who arrived from the direction of the eastern horizon?) *Man hâyi?* (Who are they?). *Yanggin un atan maulik, un sodda' i ineppi!* (When you search intensely, you will have the answer)! And I did!

Of the 270 crew member expedition, there was one crew member that is linked intimately to what occurred 500 years ago. His name was Enrique de Malacca, a Malaysian, known to his people as Awang Pawgilinan. He and I are both distant *CHe'lu* (siblings) of the Proto-Austronesian race. Our *saina'* reached the shores of thousands of islands in Oceania.

Of the same ancestry, I speak CHamoru and Enrique spoke several Malay dialects, all of which are Proto-Austronesian languages. When I reviewed various Malay dictionaries, I was amazed by a pivotal lexicon shared by CHamoru and Malay. These lexicons include the human anatomy, the constellations, pronouns, and numerical systems, to cite a few. In any *inatulaka* (trade), numerical systems are indispensable.

After realizing and knowing our ancestral relationship, other questions unfolded in my search for enlightenment. One question was, who among the crew members who were able to communicate with my *saina* 500 years ago? Enrique!

In my interpretation of the event 500 years ago, Enrique perhaps said the following; "Magellan, the CHamoru(s) speak a language I understand!" Sure enough, after the Expedition departed Las Islas Marianas three days later, they reached Las Islas Filipinas within 10 days, arriving March 16, 1521. Thus leading them to the Spice Islands.

Why was this account not written or more documented? Because Enrique was not an integral part of the narrative of the Expedition. The focus was on Magellan and Elcano. Enrique was not even a subtitle to the Las

Islas Marianas. The chroniclers, including Antonio Pigafetta, were focused on the deeds and merits of the lead explorers, all who were Europeans.

I have always questioned why they only made a three day layover in Las Islas Marianas, based on CHamoru ocean voyaging traditions. If indeed the chroniclers were truly descriptive of the expedition's plights, they would have had no choice but to remain in Las Islas Marianas longer to recuperate. However, they did not and departed after three days.

As a CHamoru, I know our *saina* would not risk the health of their crew. Their crew comes first before the objective of the voyage. The only reason and explanation I can think of is that Enrique was instrumental in the three day layover. He must have convinced Magellan and Elcano of the proximity and just days within reach of the Spice Islands. Who else on the expedition had the knowledge?

There is another pivotal storyline regarding Enrique. Enrique was Magellan's *esklâbu* (slave). As Magellan's *esklâbu*, Enrique was likely a part of the expedition to be interpreter once the expedition reached the Spice Islands.

Enrique is our link to the first circumnavigation of the globe. He may also be the first Malay to circumnavigate the globe. As a CHamoru, as a part of the Proto-Austronesian people, my pride in Enrique is endless. Enrique and *guâhu* (I) are *CHe'lu* only divided by spaces of time, ocean and land. We are both Austronesian!

Finally and emphatically, I also became an *esklâbu* through Western expansionism and colonialism. I became the "governed!"

Gi mina'âsi', la sangri yâma yan fanatahguiyan I ha'âni
(With gratitude, the blood calls the winds of change).

Spanish Ship, Juan Sebastian de Elcano Arrives in the Marianas

Guam residents took to the northwestern coastline from Tumon to Asan, reenacting a scene that unfolded 500 years ago, almost to the day, when the people of the Marianas encountered large foreign vessels. As part of Spain's 500th year commemoration of its Magellan-Elcano Expedition, the naval training vessel, the Juan Sebastian de Elcano, has been retracing the charted course of the first recorded circumnavigation of the world. The Elcano entered the Marianas waters early morning Friday, February 26, and departed Tuesday, March 2 (CHST).



Photos courtesy of TASA

Traditions Affirming Our Seafaring Ancestry

[Traditions Affirming Our Seafaring Ancestry Inc.](#) (TASA) in historic symbolism of the initial name penned by Antonio Pigefetta on [Magellan's](#) first sighting, Islas de las Velas Latinas, island of the lateen sails, raised their sails and greeted the Elcano. At 8:30 am, the Elcano sounded their sirens three times with TASA replying with three sounds from the *kulu* (conch shell). This seafaring greeting is customary in traditional Micronesian voyaging culture, as a visiting vessel arriving in peace must seek permission from the people of the land upon entering their waters.

The Elcano's mission of goodwill and peace in the midst of a global pandemic reflects the significance of this global historic milestone, the key role the Marianas played in its success, and the indelible cultural bond that was forged thereafter.



Spanish Delegation in Humatak

On March 1, Spanish delegates were hosted by the village of [Humatak](#), the site of the first onshore encounter between the CHamorus and Spanish 500 years ago. The delegation was joined by island leaders and US military officials in the unveiling of a commemorative plaque to honor Guam's seafaring culture.



Biba Marianas!

This month, CHamorus/Chamorros residing in both the Mariana Islands and abroad come together to celebrate the unique culture and history of our people, marking a time where we consciously act to recenter our lives in the 21st century around the various milestones that have brought us to this present day. For many of us, this comes in the form of history lessons and cultural activities performed in our schools or places of work. Regardless of where we

find ourselves in 2021, when we call to mind the history of our *mañaina* (elders) and our connection to them through our culture, we do true justice to their memory, sacrifice, and triumphs. Here a few people and events that have shaped the history of our islands across its [seven eras in history](#). Hopefully this can jump start your personal journey in expanding your knowledge of CHamoru/Chamorro history and culture.

Ancient CHamoru/ Chamorro Era



Illustration of Marianas flying proa. Courtesy of Ballou's Pictorial Drawing-Room Companion/Guam Public Library System

3,500 BCE:
The first-ever successful open-ocean migration of people springs from the islands south of modern-day China. Using their [vessels](#), these people eventually find their way to the Marianas, becoming the CHamoru/CHamorro people.

WWII Era

1941 CE: 120 men in the [Guam Insular Guard](#) engage in the only battle against the invading Japanese forces. Despite receiving minimal firearm training and armed with severely outdated weaponry, these Guardsmen put their lives on the line to defend the Guam capital of Hagåtña.

Post-WWII Era

1947 CE: The United Nations forms the [Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands](#) to be administered by the US. The Territory contained 100,000 people from various islands and cultures, including the CHamorus/Chamorros of the Northern Mariana Islands.

Spanish Era

1568 CE: The [Manila Galleon Trade Route](#) brings porcelain, silk, ivory, and other goods from China to Mexico. The Marianas served as a pivotal stop along this route, visited one to two times year by these galleons' on their return trips to Manila.

Guamanian Era

1968 CE: [Johnny Sablan](#) release "Dalai Neni," the first commercially recorded album in the CHamoru/Chamorro, marking the beginning of the local music industry in the Marianas.



Photo of Johnny Sablan. Courtesy of Flora Baza

US Naval Era



Guam Native Nurses Program. Photo from the Smithsonian Institution courtesy of Anne Hattori.

1914 CE: [Maria Anderson Roberto](#) begins work as a nurse in Guam Naval Hospital. During her time there, Roberto pioneered the Guam Native Nurses program, allowing for an entire generation of local women to be trained.

Contemporary Era

2016 CE: The [Senator Antonio M. Palomo Guam Museum and Educational Facility](#) officially opens. The Guam Museum holds over 250,000 artifacts, documents and photographs in its collections and serves as a place for CHamorus/ Chamorros and visitors alike to explore the unique history of these islands' people.