The career of one of the early governors-general of the Philippines, Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas (1539–1593, governor 1589–1593), exemplifies the variety of challenges that were generated for, as well as by, the Philippines. In his search for understanding of the peoples of the region Dasmariñas was, as far as we know, the person who commissioned the *Boxer Codex*, which is now in the Lilly Library. This manuscript can, in part, be regarded as an anthropologist’s guide, complete with illustrations. I shall try to give some impression of the character of Dasmariñas and also describe some of my recent work on the *Boxer Codex* and its travels.