

ANTOINE MARIE GARIN¹

First "Provincial²" of the Oceania Missions, 1841-1843

Antoine Marie Garin³ was born on 23rd July 1810 at St Rambert-en-Bugey, in the diocese of Belley, and ordained a diocesan priest on 19th October 1834. For three years he worked in the parish of Chalamont before applying to join the Society of Mary in order to go on the foreign missions. He was professed on 21st November 1840 and the following month left for Oceania, arriving in the Bay of Islands (New Zealand) on 14th June 1841.

Six weeks after Garin's arrival, Epalle reported to Colin that Garin has been selected to act as provincial superior. He had been nominated "Provincial⁴" by Pompallier⁵ and so was religious superior of the missionaries⁶. He reported back to Fr Colin⁷ on the state and the needs of the missionaries and threw himself with great zeal into working with the Maori people for the next nine years in various parts of New Zealand.

He was in Mangakahia in 1846. In a letter he wrote from there, he described himself as, variously, "a carpenter, a wheelwright, a gardener, a tailor, a mason, a bookbinder, a chemist, a farmer, a vinedresser, and a doctor"! He moved in 1848 to Howick, near Auckland, a village of about 1,000 Irish people⁸. Although he did not relish ministering to the Irish he grew very fond of them over the next two years, and it was with deep mutual regret that he left there in 1850 because of the dispute with Bishop Pompallier and the division of New Zealand into two dioceses. He was posted to Nelson.

He immediately began to minister to the young town and the whole surrounding countryside, a huge area. The town had a small chapel which was built in 1847 by Fr Jeremiah O'Reilly OFM Cap, who had resided in Wellington since 1843. It was an overwhelming task, but fortunately he had the help of Br Claude-Marie Bertrand who was with Garin in Nelson from the start⁹. Claude-Marie taught in the Nelson school, as Redwood acknowledged. Garin recognised that Claude-Marie was an integral element of his mission, remarking on several occasions to their superiors that it was Claude-Marie who cared for the boarders, prepared the church for services and led the church music. Garin was a priest on his own until July 1851 when, fortunately, he was given an assistant, Fr Moreau. Garin's travels to all his parishioners took

¹ The best information on Garin is found in: Tremewan, Peter and Larcombe Giselle, *Living among the Northland Maori; Diary of Father Antoine Garin, 1844-1846*. Canterbury University Press, Christchurch. 2019

² No evidence found that his authority extended past NZ. Not appointed by Colin – see phrasing in CS1 doc 301 "supérieur que sa grandeur a designé"

³ https://ir.canterbury.ac.nz/bitstream/handle/10092/3203/thesis_fulltext.pdf?sequence=1 p.182 (197)

⁴ Not appointed by Colin but by Pompallier. See LRO doc 104 / 111

Garin asks Colin for the rule for a Provincial. See LRO doc 128

See Garin's view of Forest's arrival to be provincial LRO doc 149. Asks to be removed by Colin from position to which he was appointed by Pompallier (without Colin's agreement). See LRO doc 239

⁵ In a letter in 1842, Colin asked Fransoni that the provincial be appointed by the superior general and act with his authority. J. Taylor, *Jean-Claude Colin*, Reluctant Founder, ATF Press, Adelaide, Australia. 2018. p.613

⁶ LRO 121; Servant to Colin 20 December 1841. "Our good provincial Father, Father Garin, does not fail to tell us: "You are this man".[cf 2 Samuel 12/7]

⁷ Asks Colin for the rule for a Provincial. See LRO doc 128. See Garin's view of Forest's arrival to be provincial LRO doc 149. Asks to be removed by Colin from position to which he was appointed by Pompallier (without Colin's agreement). See LRO doc 239.

⁸ Troops discharged from British Army, designated as RNZ Fencibles. Mainly recruited from Ireland.

⁹ Except for 187908-188110 when he was with FMS in Napier.

him over hundreds of miles every year over extremely difficult terrain.

Fr Garin had a great concern for education and opened his first school in 1850¹⁰. It quickly achieved a reputation for excellence and in 1867 Fr Garin succeeded in obtaining Government aid for Catholic schools. His other concern was for young orphans. He opened his first orphanage in 1872 and in later years opened another, so having one for boys and one for girls.

He was a strong defender of the faith against religious bigotry, often disarming his opponents by his language, dignity and sincerity. He defended the right of the Sisters of the Mission to wear their religious habit when they arrived in Nelson in 1862. In 1863 he spent some time in the Redwoods' home recuperating from serious illness which almost killed him. For the rest of his life, he was to be in poor health. Despite his growing weakness he remained undaunted and struggled on, determined to be a good example to the young missionaries.

On 19th October 1884 Fr Garin celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his priesthood. Among those honouring him that day was Dr Francis Redwood, Bishop of Wellington and former pupil of Fr Garin in his younger missionary days. The last five years of his life were difficult as he came to terms with his failing health. The Apostle of Nelson and first Marist religious superior of the Missions, Fr Antoine Marie Garin, died on 14th April 1889.

Addendum

The following text has been edited¹¹ from: Pages 182-189 of

ANTOINE MARIE GARIN: A BIOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF THE INTERCULTURAL DYNAMIC IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY NEW ZEALAND

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in French in the University of Canterbury by Giselle Larcombe. University of Canterbury 2009

Antoine Garin Provincial, 1841-1843

Garin's Authority as Provincial

On 31 July 1841, six weeks after the arrival of the fifth group of missionaries in Kororarereka, Jean-Baptiste Épalle reported to Colin that Garin had been selected to stay in Kororarereka to act as provincial superior, taking over from Épalle. Pompallier had chosen between Garin and Michel Borjon, both of whom had two years of experience as seminary teachers at Meximieux and Belley respectively¹² though Borjon had been the spiritual director – essentially the role of provincial superior – on Garin's voyage. However, it was Borjon who was sent to the Maketu mission that Garin had expected to serve. Although Garin was to do some evangelizing work, if time allowed, his provincial duties were to be his first priority and he was not given responsibility for a mission station, and thus his original vision of missionary work in New Zealand was relinquished in deference to his bishop's orders. He pointed this out to Colin two months later, adding that:

¹⁰ School opened 1850 - Nelson Examiner and New Zealand Chronicle, Volume XIII, Issue 699, 6 January 1855, Page 2. Note Nelson College and St. Mary's School are not connected.

¹¹ Editing involved translating texts in French to English and updating and revising the referencing where required. The use of the text has been approved by Giselle Larcombe (2025)

¹² AEB, Tableau du Clergé de Belley.

However, thanks to the ability the good God has given me to yield serenely to the will of my Superiors, I am happy in my position, my soul is not tempted by it to be anxious; rather even I may have to fear going into [this role] with too much eagerness¹³.

Coterminous with Garin's appointment, Pompallier named three pro-vicars in New Zealand: Philippe Viard, who was to accompany the bishop on his travels; Claude-André Baty, who was to be based in Auckland and deal with the English authorities; and Épalle, who was to be based at Kororareka and replace the bishop in his absence as well as tending to the procure.

While Épalle said of Garin's appointment as provincial,

Everything seems to be settling down on a good footing and seems to me to be in good hands.¹⁴

The fact that Pompallier made the appointments was indicative of the misunderstandings that were arising between the Bishop and Colin, exacerbated by the time it took for letters to travel between France and Oceania. As noted, before Pompallier's departure for New Zealand, Colin had asked him to act as the religious superior of the original group.¹⁵

Confusion then appears to have arisen over who had the right to appoint a religious superior or provincial from among the Marist missionaries. Pompallier showed Garin letters in which he was given express permission to appoint a provincial by Victor Poupinel, who was Colin's secretary and the procurator for the Marist Pacific missions, but at the same time Pompallier claimed that only Colin had the right to change the provincial.¹⁶ Less than two months later Garin was advised by Pompallier that only Colin had the power to both appoint and to change the provincial.

Despite this, Pompallier appears to have selected first Petit¹⁷, then Épalle, and finally Garin, without any prior consultation with the Marist Superior. From the very beginning Garin found himself caught up in the problems that were developing between his ecclesiastical and religious superiors. Achieving harmony on the missions had been a constant source of concern for Propaganda Fide ever since its foundation in 1622. As late as 19 December 1839 a meeting of cardinals was held to discuss issues arising from the relationship of missionaries to vicars apostolic and to diocesan bishops.¹⁸ As John Hosie¹⁹ notes, Pompallier and Colin were becoming entangled in 'a centuries-old dispute' between the ecclesiastical or mission superior on the one hand, and the religious superior on the other.

What was fundamentally at issue was their respective authority over the missionaries. According to Hosie, church law, based on monarchical authority, was particularly strong in the nineteenth century, and presumed that proper authority in any dispute lay with the religious in charge (p. 24). In the mission this was Pompallier, and not Colin. Because of the complete authority that vicars apostolic were granted, Pompallier could disregard Colin's wishes over how missionaries were appointed; Colin was concerned that the Marists, who

¹³ LRO 0111, Garin to Colin, 22 Sep. 1841.

¹⁴ LRO 0104, Épalle to Colin, 31 Jul. 1841; LRO 0103, Épalle to Colin, 8 Jul. 1841.

¹⁵ APF, SC Oceania vol. I, fol. 398v, Colin to Franson, 25 May 1837; fol. 389v, Pompallier to Franson, 22 Feb. 1837, cited in Wiltgen, pp. 130-31.

¹⁶ LRO doc. 194, Garin to Poupinel, 5 Sep. 1842.

¹⁷ LRO doc. 59, Pompallier to Colin, 14 May 1840.

¹⁸ Wiltgen, p. 247.

¹⁹ John Hosie, *Challenge, The Marists in Colonial Australia* (1987), Allen and Unwin Sydney p.23

were having problems with Pompallier, could be locked into his vicariate and unable to be transferred back to France (p. 25). In Pompallier and Colin's case, the situation had been complicated further by the fact that Colin had designated Pompallier as religious superior for the Oceania missionaries. Pompallier explained to Colin at the end of 1841 that he had decided to delegate the role of religious superior to a Marist missionary because Colin was resolved to '*exclude from the congregation those whom the Holy See raises to the episcopate*'; and being delegated as religious superior had left Pompallier '*in a position where the most skillful spiritual master could never govern*'.²⁰

There was, then, considerable doubt over whether Pompallier had the authority to appoint Garin as provincial. Interestingly, Colin made a formal request to Rome on 21 June 1842 to establish in New Zealand a provincial to represent the superior general of the Society, and he took the step in late 1841 of sending Marist Visitor Jean Forest as his 'second self' to visit the Oceania missions and assess the religious life of the missionaries and how they were observing the Marist rule.²¹ Pompallier would eventually appoint Forest to take over the role of provincial from Garin.

That in mid-1843 Forest advised Colin to appoint the provincial himself, and to give that person clear direction on the limits of Pompallier's power over the missionaries,²² plainly demonstrates the confusion that reigned over the role of provincial and the administration of the mission as a whole at this time. In fact, the formal '*Règles du provincial dans les missions étrangères*'²³, which outlined the responsibilities of a provincial to the Marist Society, Marist superior, vicar apostolic, and missionaries, in addition to the terms of nomination of a provincial and the basis of his authority, were not written by Colin until 1845.²⁴

Garin's appointment as provincial was therefore a clear reflection of the troubles that were emerging between Colin and Pompallier. One can only imagine with what dismay Colin received the news '*I thank you most sincerely, my most reverend father, for sending us the reverend Father Garin. He has become our provincial father*'. Not only had Garin been chosen by Pompallier without consulting Colin, but Garin was not a seasoned Marist, having made his profession on the day of his departure for Oceania.

Being Provincial

Garin thus found himself based at the Bay of Islands at the Marists' central headquarters as provincial, with the support of a superior in Épalle, and the companionship of a number of Marist priests, brothers, novices and laymen who worked at various times at the station, including Petit Jean and Jean-François Yvert. The French mission headquarters with its beach frontage and conglomeration of brightly painted buildings was prominent in Kororareka, as suggested by the description that Vicar General of Sydney William Ullathorne gave of the town following a December 1840 visit to Pompallier. According to Ullathorne,

²⁰ LRO 116, Pompallier to Colin, 15 Nov. 1841.

²¹ Wiltgen, pp. 248, 259.

²² LRO 254, Forest to Colin, 12 May 1843

²³ Rules of the Provincial in Foreign Missions

²⁴ Autour de la règle, ed. by Coste and Lessard, I, 7492.

*The town at that time consisted of a native pah, a small British settlement, and the French Mission [...] [The priests'] residence was of wood, and their little wooden church, bright with green paint, stood adjoining: small as it was, it had its font, confessional and all appointments complete.*²⁵

In addition to acting as the base for the provincial, the Kororareka headquarters functioned as a mission station and parish under the care of Petit Jean, a supply base under Épalle as provicar and procurator, and a residence for Marists who newly arrived, between mission stations, or completing their novitiate.

According to the instructions that Pompallier gave Forest in 1843, the main tasks of the provincial were spiritual direction, visits and retreats, meaning that he was essentially Colin's representative in Oceania.²⁶ Although it does not appear that Garin had such explicit guidance from Pompallier, given that he asked Colin in early 1842 to send him a rule that explained his responsibilities as provincial,²⁷ his central preoccupations were the same as Forest's. Garin gave Yvert and another novice, Brother Pierre Marie (Pierre) Pérénon, daily philosophy lessons and a weekly theology lesson, and on Sundays held a class and spiritual meeting to explain the rule.²⁸ Notably, he held the first ever retreat for the New Zealand missionaries in November 1841, following what he had learned at past retreats at Belley and Meximieux. The fact that he was the first provincial to organize a retreat suggests his diligence in the role and understanding of the issues facing the missionaries: the lack of communal life afforded on the missions had been one of the grievances presented to Colin by Servant in his 1840 letter on the state of the vicariate.²⁹

In France, annual retreats were an important part of Colin's approach to his role as superior general, as he believed they allowed confrères to acquire and maintain the same Marist spirit.³⁰ Garin's retreat followed Colin's model meticulously, including the confirmation of vows, and though the brothers were also forced to work on the building for the printing press throughout the retreat, Garin endeavored to involve them by relating their tasks to those of the holy family. Unfortunately, the demands of the mission were such that the retreat could only be attended by the priests, brothers and novices based at the Hokianga and Kororareka missions and also had to be held in Pompallier's absence. While Garin's role in administration set him apart from his contemporaries by allowing him to continue living in a Marist community and to assume leadership in certain areas, his correspondence as provincial constitutes another way in which his early experience on the mission considerably reflected the difficulties that were faced by the Marists. The Marist rule that Épalle, Garin and five other Marists revised for the missions at a chapter held in Kororareka in July 1841 specifically stipulated that the missionaries were to write accounts of conscience to the provincial every three months, an element already present in the rule of 1836. From an examination of these accounts, it would appear that they wrote to their provincial purely

²⁵ William Bernard Ullathorne, *The Autobiography of Archbishop Ullathorne: With Selections from his Letters*, 3rd edn (London: Burns & Oates; New York: Benziger Brothers, [1891]), p. 177.

²⁶ LRO 245, Pompallier to Forest, 19 Mar. 1843.

²⁷ LRO 128, Garin to Colin, 19 Jan. 1842.

²⁸ LRO 111, Garin to Colin, 22 Sep. 1841.

²⁹ LRO 055, Servant to Colin, 26 Apr. 1840.

³⁰ Coste, J., *Lectures on Society of Mary History* (Rome: Society of Mary, 1965) p.210

out of obedience. Baty, for instance, began a letter to Garin

It's high time I finally put pen to paper, you may think I'm forgetting my rules',

and Jean Pezant also began:

'I'm cutting everything short to start building relationships with you that are both prescribed by the rule and at the same time very consoling'.

Other missionaries wrote because they felt a profound need of guidance. As Jean-Baptiste Comte explained,

It was with the greatest joy that I learned of your happy arrival in this antipodean world. At this pleasant news, I felt like a secret virtue penetrating me'.

Comte admitted to Garin,

I have distanced myself from our mother, and driven God from my heart, [...] by introducing the spirit of the world.

– perhaps on account of finding himself in Akaroa, a 'poste stérile' [sterile station] where political necessity had forced Pompallier to leave two Marist priests and a brother to care for the French colonists as well as attempt to convert local Maori. There is a further theme evident in the letters that Garin received as provincial, that of despondence. After the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, many Marists had been discouraged from their work and had come to the conclusion that New Zealand would be better served by English speaking Catholic missionaries.

While they complained first and foremost of the apathy of Maori and the poverty they were having to endure, many also mentioned the difficulties of having to work under a British administration, compete with Protestant missionaries and minister to European Catholic settlers. A number of missionaries, including some of the most experienced, expressed their desire to leave New Zealand for the tropics, where there were no British settlers, and where the mission would be less costly to run.³¹ While Comte's concerns about living among Frenchmen were specific to the Akaroa station, a further theme in the letters that Garin received was the difficulty of labouring alone at the smaller missionary posts. In one instance, Louis Rozet, a diocesan priest and Marist novice, described being driven to despair by the number of his flock turning to the Protestant missionaries for want of Catholic books, and believed that his virtue was too weak to continue in his present position alone, describing himself as '*ready to make a sad shipwreck*'.³²

Accounts of conscience such as these led Garin to remark in a letter to Colin that the missionaries needed a Marist house to which they could come for a short period and seek refuge and spiritual guidance from the provincial. (The project for a Marist house would be revisited a number of times over the years, until its eventual abandonment at the insistence of Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda Fide Franson after the Marists had moved to Wellington³³). An account from Borjon in late 1841 outlined a number of problems common to the Marists, which in his case were accentuated because of his lack of a companion:

Seeing the constant indifference of the tribe where I live, the number of other tribes I'm in charge of, their remoteness, the difficulties of the language, the relentlessness of the

³¹ For example: LRO 0117, Tripe to Colin, 18 Nov. 1841; LRO 0139 Tripe to Colin 31 Mar. 1842; LRO 0124 PetitJean to Girard, 4 Jan. 1842; LRO 138, Roulleaux Dubignon to Colin, 2 Apr. 1842; LRO 090, Comte to Colin, 25 Apr. 1841; LRO 097, Servant to Colin, 31 May 1841.

³² ATL, MicroMS0669, 12, Rozet to Garin, 28 Mar. 1842.

³³ Lillian G. Keys, *Philip Viard, Bishop of Wellington* (Christchurch: Pegasus Press, 1968) pp.95-97

*Protestants, the avarice of the people, the fatigue, the privations, I confess to you, Reverend Father, I feel inclined to discouragement, and it would hardly be necessary for my desires not to turn towards the delights of solitude and contemplation. What pains me most is my pastoral work, and the all-too-frequent news that someone has died without baptism. The thought of having to respond to soul for soul is overwhelming. Another pain is solitude, not always being able to consult in difficulties; being obliged to take advice from myself alone, being inexperienced. [...] You see that I am in great need of the spirit of strength and light; pray to the Holy Spirit to communicate it to me in abundance.*³⁴

Later, Séon, who was also based at a sole charge station, listed for Garin four problems that the Marists were encountering: unrelenting competition from the Protestant missionaries, poor choice of sites for mission stations, lack of books, and reliance on local Maori for goods and services.³⁵

Upon his own appointment to a sole-charge mission at Mangakahia, Garin would be confronted by many of the issues of which Comte, Rozet, Borjon and Séon had informed him: solitude, intense Protestant competition, reliance on Maori for goods and services, and distance of many tribes from the main mission station. The fact that he had prior warning of these difficulties enabled him to remedy some of the issues, and to deal with others more astutely than he might otherwise have been able to. For example, the Mangakahia mission station was moved with Pompallier's assistance to a more central location within months of Garin's arrival there. Hearing the trials of the missionaries based at stations like Akaroa, where there was a European flock to attend to, in addition to missionary work, also meant that he had forewarning of the difficulties that he would encounter when forced to move to the settler parish of Howick.

Colin later described the virtues required of a provincial in his '*Règles du provincial dans les missions étrangères*'³⁶, as being intelligence, business sense, empathy, a knowledge of the religious life, and leadership.³⁷ But Garin expressed relief in 1842 that Jean Forest had arrived to take over his position as provincial, as he claimed to have never felt capable of being Colin's representative in Oceania on account of the brevity of his novitiate.³⁸ The Marist Provincial in France, Denis Maîtrepierre, believed that Garin had been a worthy provincial, adding the following note to Garin's account of the first Marist retreat held in New Zealand:

*He zealously sees to the maintenance of good conduct - advice, counsel, writings, reprimands, encouragement - retreat in good standing of 12 retreatants, 5 priests, 5 brothers and 2 novices - consoling fruits. He is a little meticulous, but he produces solid good; he is the guardian of the ecclesiastical and religious spirit.*³⁹

Maîtrepierre's confidence in the Oceania Provincial was similarly felt by Garin's superior Épalle, who wrote that:

Father Garin carries out his responsibilities boldly but also gently. ['Garin s'acquitte avec intrépidité de sa charge et cependant avec douceur']

The letters of encouragement that Garin was sending by late 1842, after a year of

³⁴ APM, Z 208, Borjon to Garin, 31 Dec. 1841.

³⁵ APM, Z 208, Séon to Garin, 16 Jul. 1842.

³⁶ *Autour de la Règle* ed. Coste and Lessard, I, 79

³⁷ LRO 149, Garin to Colin, 7 May 1842.

³⁸ LRO. 122, Garin to Colin, end 1841.

³⁹ LRO 122, Garin to Colin, end 1841.

experience in the role, do seem to suggest great empathy for his fellow missionaries and an understanding of the religious life, as well as attempts at leadership which he admitted came more easily to him in his correspondence than orally (*de vive voix*). The following letter to Brother Florentin, who was ministering to French colonists at the Akaroa station, typified Garin's common sense but sympathetic approach:

*How many merits, my dear friend, you can earn where you are, merits perhaps greater than if you were among the naturals, for one would rather have to suffer at the hands of savages than at the hands of one's own, and it is precisely this that is the subject of your merit. Yes, you are truly a missionary, if you know how to make the most of your position, because the merit of a missionary is not being in the midst of savage infidels, it's having to suffer a great deal for the name of Jesus Christ, and I'm convinced that you suffer no little, especially when it comes to the interior. So, take heart! Don't let yourself be robbed of the beautiful crown you have come to seek.*⁴⁰

Despite repeated requests to Pompallier and to his Marist superiors in France to be divested of the title, Garin remained officially as provincial until leaving for Mangakahia in 1843. Jean Forest, who arrived on 4 May 1842, though assumed many of the provincial duties, including organizing the annual retreat and replying to the letters of the missionaries.⁴¹ In any case, acting as provincial had the important consequence for Garin of making him aware of both the administrative difficulties and practical trials of the missions. As noted, this left him better prepared than most for his eventual posting to a tribal mission station. It also meant that Garin's early experience of the mission reflected to a considerable extent the particular difficulties that the Marist mission was facing in New Zealand, making his correspondence from this period of special interest. This would be even more the case with the new role that he assumed in July 1842, as procurator of the Oceania missions.

Garin as Procurator 1842-1843

Garin's role as procurator signalled his complete involvement in matters of administration. Soon after Garin arrived, Pompallier left Kororareka to take the new missionaries to their postings aboard the *Sancta Maria*. Having learned of the martyrdom of Pierre Chanel, the Bishop hastened directly from Akaroa to Futuna and so was away from the Bay of Islands for over a year, until August 1842. In his absence, the missionaries found it nearly impossible to obtain credit, and, with the fifth sailing having lost all of the funds it was taking to New Zealand upon the failure of Wright's bank in London, the mission's finances were in dire straits.

Having no means of generating income, the missionaries were dependent on the allocations that were provided by Pompallier, who was in turn dependent on the arrival of new missionaries who brought the funds provided twice-yearly by l'Œuvre de la Propagation de la Foi in Lyon.⁴² But after the loss of the fifth sailing's funds, Pompallier was forced to borrow money on the security of future allocations from France, and, without the Bishop's prestige, Pro-Vicar Épalle was unable to negotiate new loans.⁴³ The fact that the Marists had

⁴⁰ APM, Z 208, Garin to Brother Florentin, 18 Oct. 1842.

⁴¹ LRO 239, Garin to Colin, 15 February 1843; LRO 255 Garin to Epalle, 12 May 1843

⁴² Kevin J. Roach, 'Jean-Claude Colin and the Foundation of the New Zealand Catholic Mission', *NZJH*, 3 (1969), 74-83 (p. 78).

⁴³ Fr Michael O'Meeghan, 'The First Wave of French Marists'. *Symposium: The French Place at the Bay of*

a plethora of stations to be supported in Northland, Bay of Plenty and Banks Peninsula did not help matters. In Petit-Jean's words,

*Debt crushes. We trade bills on France at a great loss. We pay interest at 15 percent, with interest on interest every three months.*⁴⁴

The financial crisis caused demoralisation among the missionaries, and panic among those who had been left in charge in Pompallier's absence.

With the rumours of Pompallier's non-return spreading, in May 1842 Épalle borrowed three hundred and fifty pounds in Kororareka on a bill of exchange payable at Lyon and left for Europe to put the mission's desperate plight before l'Œuvre de la Propagation de la Foi and Colin. At Valparaíso he obtained another draft against the allocations of the Propagation de la Foi and sent twelve hundred pounds to New Zealand, which unfortunately did not arrive until November 1843.⁴⁵ With Épalle gone, the missionaries remaining at Kororareka were forced to take precipitate action to obtain some relief, and so in June 1842 Forest, Garin and Petit-Jean examined the best ways of reducing the mission's expenses. As a result, personnel at the Bay of Islands – where living costs were higher – was reduced from eighteen to eight, with the remainder, including Forest, sent to understaffed stations.⁴⁶ After the departure of Petit-Jean in July on a rescue mission to Sydney to seek funds for the ailing mission, Garin found himself left alone for a brief period at Kororareka, until the return of Pompallier in late August. As the only resident priest, he had been charged by Petit-Jean with the role of pro-vicar, having responsibility for the whole vicariate. He had also been left in the role of procurator.⁴⁷

Garin wryly commented that of the procurators Petit's had been the golden age, Epalle's the silver age, Petit-Jean's the bronze age, and his the iron age.⁴⁸ The role of procurator meant that Garin was responsible for ordering mission supplies and distributing them via the various heads of stations,⁴⁹ having Yvert to assist him with accounts.⁵⁰ The meticulously-composed lists of goods to buy that he sent off to France could run into several pages, and included such things as the clothing required by the priests and brothers each year, the Bibles and other religious reference works required for the library, church ornaments needed for the sacristy, and the many bottles and vials of remedies such as arnica, eau de Cologne and camphor, that were required by the priests for their visits to sick parishioners.⁵¹ A year later Garin could tell Épalle that, though his task was difficult and unpleasant for the most part and Épalle had left him '*a sad gift*' in the procure, the need to obtain supplies had led him to have greater contact with local Maori, which he had enjoyed very much and which had enabled him to make some progress with the Maori language.⁵² The letters he wrote to Colin immediately following Petit-Jean's departure, on the other

Islands, held at Russell, 4-6 April 2004

⁴⁴ APM Z 208 Petit-Jean to Colin 18 May 1842

⁴⁵ E. R. Simmons, *Pompallier: Prince of Bishops* (Auckland: CPC Publishing, 1984), p. 66

⁴⁶ LRO 0247, Forest to Colin, 26 Mar 1843

⁴⁷ LRO 0178, Garin to Colin 22-26 July 1842

⁴⁸ Ibid

⁴⁹ APM OOC 202 Garin to Petit, 8 August 1842

⁵⁰ LRO 0186, Garin to Colin, 9 August 1842

⁵¹ LRO 0186 Garin to Colin, 9 August 1842

⁵² LRO 0255 Garin to Epalle, 12 May 1843

hand, suggest that he felt overwhelmed by the position in which he had been placed, with responsibility for the entire vicariate at a time when the mission was suffering from extreme poverty and there was disagreement between Colin and Pompallier over administration. As stated, Garin found himself quite caught up in the developing rift, in part because of his brief period in charge of the mission. An analysis of Garin's experiences from mid to late 1842, during which time he had to act as pro-vicar and procurator in addition to his original role as provincial, provides an interesting perspective from which to view the feud that arose between Colin and Pompallier in the early 1840s.

Much work has already been undertaken on the Pompallier-Colin feud, which has been described as 'the first major nineteenth-century mission dispute'.⁵³ The fascinating and detailed analyses by Ralph Wiltgen and Kevin Roach concentrate on the documents of the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide who oversaw the mediation of the dispute, and therefore provide an account of the feud at the administrative level of dealings in Rome. John Hosie has similarly taken this focus, although his account seeks to be a corrective to Wiltgen and favours the position of Colin. In a more recent work, Jessie Munro has analysed the rift in terms of the personalities involved, at the level of the Bishop and the Marist Superior's correspondence.⁵⁴

ANOTHER USEFUL REFERENCE ON GARIN

John V. Broadbent. 'Garin, Antoine Marie', Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, first published in 1990. Te Ara - the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1g4/garin-antoine-marie> (accessed 13 August 2025).

⁵³ Jessie Munro, '*Colin and Pompallier and the Founding of the Catholic Church in New Zealand*' in Marist Studies Colloquium (Suva, 2007)

⁵⁴ Wiltgen. '*The Founding of the Roman Catholic Church in Oceania*'; Kevin J. Roach, '*Venerable John Claude Colin and the Mission in New Zealand 1838-1848*' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Pontificia Universitatis Gregoriana, 1963) Hosie, '*Challenge*'; Munro, '*Colin and Pompallier*'