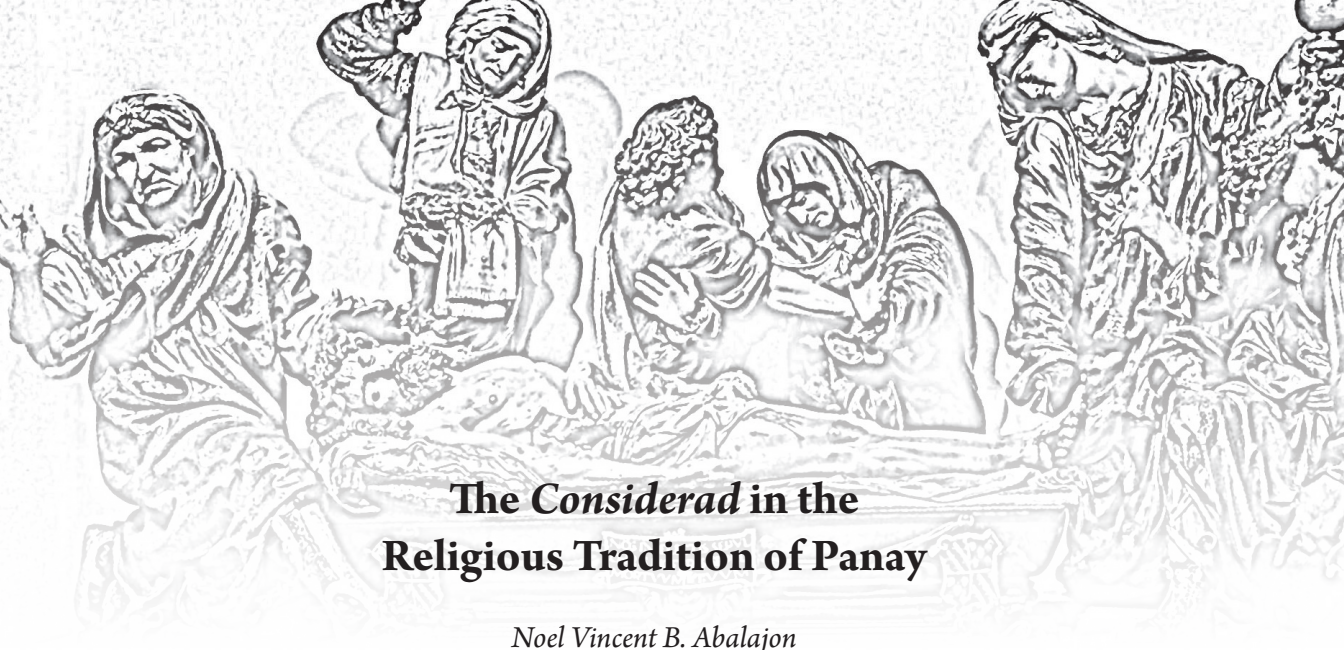




The *Considerad* in the Religious Tradition of Panay

Noel Vincent B. Abalajon

This article aims to preserve and conserve a significant part of the culture of the people of Panay, which is constitutive and reflective of their identity as a people.

Since the sixteenth century the town of Panay in the province of Capiz has been the cradle and bastion of Christianity in the island of Panay. It was the first town after Cebu that was evangelized by the Spanish missionaries who accompanied Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in 1565. Today, this old town stands as a silent witness to the unfolding of Philippine history as seen in the famous Santa Monica Church, declared as National Historical Landmark in 1997 and National Cultural Treasure in 2004, and other surviving structures, which may be traced back to the Spanish Period.

Aside from this built heritage, however, in the same town of Panay, a unique but less-known religious practice held every Good Friday during the Burial Procession of Jesus Christ (*Procesión del Santo Entierro*) called *Considerad*, from the first words that begin each verse, which means “reflect” or “meditate,” offers a veritable witness to a religious custom introduced by the Augustinians in Capiz that has survived the vestiges of time.

The *Considerad* is carried out by selected forty-six (46) young boys of the town of Panay, forming two lines and carrying bamboo poles with the symbols of Christ’s passion and death. It is accompanied by their recitation of prepared texts, alternately in Spanish and Hiligaynon, which exhort the Christian listener to contemplate on each instrument in the sufferings of Jesus Christ, from his betrayal to his death through crucifixion.

Two parts comprise this study: the first part provides the historical background of the town of Panay and the province of Capiz from the precolonial to the Spanish times (1566-1898) in order to situate this traditional custom in its proper context; and the second gives its central treatment to the *Considerad* of Panay, a revisionist attempt on the part of the researcher to reconstruct its obscure origins from primary sources.

Keywords: *Considerad, Panay Town, Capiz History, Filipino Culture, Popular Religiosity, Good Friday, Religious Procession*

Introduction

Since the sixteenth century, the town of Panay in the province of Capiz has been the cradle and bastion of Christianity in the island of Panay. It was the first town after Cebu that was evangelized by the Spanish missionaries who accompanied Legazpi in 1565. Today, this old town stands as a silent witness to the unfolding of Philippine history as seen in the famous landmark of the Santa Monica Church and other surviving structures, which may be traced back to the Spanish Period.

Aside from this built heritage, however, the town of Panay also abounds in religious customs which have survived several generations of Panayanons. One such traditional practice is the *Considerad* of Panay every Holy Week. Situating it in the rich context of Filipino popular religiosity in the different parts of the Philippines, Fr. Pedro Galende, O.S.A. and Fr. René Javellana, S.J. in their book *Great Churches of the Philippines* remark:

“Considerad, los Cristianos; Pamalandongan ta mga Kristiyano,” begins the refrain, a Good Friday custom unique to Pan-ay. The Considerad, a meditative antiphonal hymn, in alternating Spanish and Hiligaynon, is sung by a choir of boys holding symbols of Christ’s passion – a rope, a whip, a lance, even a live rooster – and who intone, at the top of their voices, verses which explain the meaning of the symbol each holds. Some churches are centers of popular rites. In Obando, Bulacan, a fertility rite in honor of Saint Clare, the Virgin Mary, and Saint Pascual Baylon, is held during the town fiesta, where women desiring to have children dance to ask for a child. In Pakil, Laguna, the Virgin of Sorrows is the object of a healing dance called *Turumba* which mimics the movements of the lame, maimed and blind.¹

This study of a particular religious practice of Panay, therefore, aims to preserve its memory as a significant constituent of the identity of the people. Two parts comprise this study: the first part provides the historical background of the town of Panay and the province of Capiz from the precolonial to the Spanish times (1566-1898) in order to situate this custom in its proper context; and the second gives its central treatment to the *Considerad* of Panay, a revisionist attempt on the part of the researcher to reconstruct its obscure origins from pertinent sources.

¹ Pedro G. Galende, O.S.A. and René B. Javellana, S.J., *Great Churches of the Philippines* (Manila: Bookmark, Inc., 1993), 55.

Los Yligueynes de Panay: Panay in Pre-Hispanic Philippines

The province of Capiz during the pre-Hispanic period covered the western area of the island of Panay,² which included the present-day Aklan. At the beginnings of the Spanish contact, Romblon and its adjacent islands were placed under the jurisdiction of Capiz. The Augustinian chronicler Fr. Gaspar de San Agustin in his *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas* describes the island of Panay, with the first two provinces, Panay (before the capital was transferred to Capiz in 1716) and Oton: “Eight leagues away, to the West of the island of Negros, is the large island of Panay, the Sicily of the Philippines, known both for its abundance of rice, as well as for its triangular shape at three points: Bulacave, Naso and Poto, measuring more than one hundred leagues. It is divided into two very opulent provinces which are Panay and Ogtong.”³

Formerly called “Bamban,” derived from “a reed with which they sew the nipa,”⁴ the name “Panay” (with the variant “Pan-ay”), henceforth was used to refer

² Antonio de Morga in *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* situates Panay Island in Philippine geography: “It is impossible to number all these islands – counting larger and smaller – of this vast archipelago. Those comprised in the name and government of Filipinas, number about forty large islands, besides other smaller ones, all consecutive. The chiefest and best known are Luzon, Mindoro, Tendaya, Capul, Burias, Masbate, Marinduque, Leyte, Zamar, Ibabao, Sebu, Panay, Bohol, Catanduanes, Calamianes, Mindanao and others of less renown” (Emma Helen Blair and James Alexander Robertson, eds., *The Philippine Islands (1493-1898)*, Vol. 16 (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1904-1908, 71). From hereon, **BRPI**.

³ Gaspar de San Agustin, O.S.A., *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas, 1565-1615*, Luis Antonio Mañeru, trans. (Manila: San Agustin Museum, 1998), 61. From hereon, **San Agustin**. Fr. Casimiro Diaz, O.S.A. in his 1890 *Conquista* calls these three promontories of Bulacave, Naso and Poto as “Trinacria.” He writes: “This province [Oton] and that of Panay are united in one island, yielding a great abundance of rice; it is the Sicilia of Filipinas for its fertility, and also resembles that island in its extent, and in having three promontories such as gave it the name Trinacria. This island is called Panay, so even its name suits it; for in it there grows so great an abundance of rice, which is the bread of this country” (BRPI, Vol. 38, 216).

⁴ “Junco con que cosen la nipa.” From Alonso de Mentrída, O.S.A., *Diccionario de la Lengua Bisaya, Hiligueina y Haraya de la Isla de Panay* (Manila: Imprenta de D. Manuel y D. Felix Dayot, 1841, 51). Fr. Juan Fernández, O.S.A. in his *Monografías de los Pueblos de la Isla de Pan-ay* writes the scientific name of the plant: “which is the Ascitaminea, Marantha Arundinacea of Blanco and the Marantha Dichotoma of Wall” (Jose G. Espinosa, Jr., trans., Iloilo City: University of San Agustin Publishing House, 2006, 174). From hereon, **Monografías**. In *Dila ng Bayan*, Isagani R. Medina comments: “The first printed Hiligaynon vocabulary was *Bocabulario de lengua bisaia hiligueyna, y haraia de la Isla de Panai y Sugbu* (Manila: en el Colegio de S. Thomas de Aquino por Luis [Beltrán] y Andrés de Belén, 16370 by Fr. Alonso de Mentrída, O.E.S.A. (d. 1646). Bibliographers agree that this *de visu* copy is actually the third edition, the first one having allegedly appeared in Manila in circa 1618. Considered a very rare Philippine incunabulum, only two stand copies are known to exist; one is being kept at the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid (R. 4507) and the other, at the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris (Oriental MSS. Section, Rés. p. X. 21). What may be considered a fourth edition of Fr. Mentrída’s work was published by the Felix Dayot Press in Manila (1841-1842). Bibliographers

altogether to the island, the province, and the town.⁵

According to missionary accounts, the pre-Hispanic townsfolk of Panay⁶ were named “Visayans” like all other settlers of the island and its neighboring islands, because of their happy disposition.⁷

They were also popularly called “Pintados,” because their bodies were decorated with tattoos.⁸ Fr. Ignacio Alcina, S.J. in his *Historia de las islas e indios de Bisayas* of 1668 writes: “The natives of these Bisayan Islands are commonly known by two names, because the Spaniards who live here refer to them thus. One name is *Bisaya*...; the other is *Pintados*...”⁹ San Agustín in his *Conquistas* affirms: “The natives of the island are Visayans, and called Pintados because they would paint their bodies in the past.”¹⁰ He, however, quickly adds of the virtues of the natives of Panay: “The people are populous, with a more docile nature than any of the Pintados.”¹¹

are silent on the date of the second edition” (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2005, 54-55). Regarding a revised edition of Métrida’s work, another Augustinian priest who served in the parishes of Capiz became prominent: “To Bernardo Giganto, O.E.S.A. (1788-1867) goes the credit of revising Fr. Métrida’s *Diccionario* (Manila, 1841); it was also he who edited Fr. Martín’s 1842 version of the same work” (Ibid., 57).

⁵ “Pan-ay was the capital of the province for two centuries and had the glory of having given the name to the whole Island” (Monografías, 174).

⁶ In the 1890 *Descripción física, geológica y minera en bosquejo de la Isla de Panay*, Enrique Casariego Abellá writes: “To the north of this island extends what is called as the *tablazo de Capiz* or a small interior sea comprising the whole Panay and the smaller islands of Tablas, Romblon, Sibuyan and Masbate” (Escolta: Tipo-Litografía de Chofre y Compañía, 1890, 7).

⁷ Fr. Ignacio Alcina, S.J. in his *Historia de las islas e indios de Bisayas* of 1668 explains: “The name *Bisaya*, therefore, if we are to draw it out from its own language, means “a happy man,” “a man of a fine and pleasant disposition.” This meaning is derived from certain rootwords: for example, *Aya*, *Saya* or *Caya* are all one and the same thing and in compounded forms as *Macaya*, it means “a person of a fine disposition;” *Mamicaya*, it means “an affable individual or one who has many friends;” *Masaya*, “a happy man;” *Mimaya*, “joy.” *Bisaya*, therefore, would mean “a pleasant and a happy person.” The root-words, as we shall see later, when we deal with the Bisayan language, take on different meanings as we combine them with different particles” (*History of the Bisayan People in the Philippine Islands* (1668), Vol. 1, Cantius J. Kobak, O.F.M. and Lucio Gutiérrez, O.P., trans., eds., annots. (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2002.Vol. 1, 71). From hereon, **Alcina**. This debunks the theory that the name “Visayas” came from the empire of Sri Vijaya.

⁸ Alcina narrates this common practice among Bisayans: “So, whether it originated with the people themselves or from their common enemy, who by his designs, (none of them ever good,) could have taught it to them, one thing is certain: all the Bisayan men usually tattooed themselves, except those who were called *asug*... Not all, however, practiced it in the same way nor did they execute it all at one time. They began tattooing themselves at about the age of twenty years and up; although some overcome by fear, deferred it until they were filled with shame when a little older they agreed to allow themselves to be tattooed. Aside from the pain they had to endure, the entire body oftentimes became inflamed and some even died, as a result” (Vol.1, 141 and 143).

⁹ Alcina, Vol.1, 71.

¹⁰ San Agustín, 61.

¹¹ Ibid.

As to their physical appearance, the Visayans, including those of Panay, were described by Alcina as “usually more corpulent, better built and somewhat taller than the Tagalogs. Even on some other islands (or in the same one perhaps), they distinguish themselves, not a little, by their larger bulky body, for some are more stout than others depending upon their occupation in life.”¹²

The settlers of Panay spoke the language called “Hiligaynon.” But during Spanish times, the term also referred to the inhabitants. The Spanish official Miguel de Loarca in his account *Relación de las Yslas Filipinas* used the word “Yligueynes” (Hiligaynons) to refer to “the people of the coast.”¹³ Santiago Alv. Mulato speaks of the etymology of the word “Hiligaynon” embellished by a local story: “When the Spaniards came, and since they also used water for travel, they came upon these people from upriver and their buyers transacting business at the river mouths in the Kalanagan Area and in Pan-ay, in Capiz. When the Spaniards asked the name of this group of people who navigated the river by using bamboo rafts like the *balzeros* (raftsmen) of Mexico, the inaccurate answer they received was “Iligaynon” as the informant thought they were being asked what profession those “manog-ilig sang kawayan” (bamboo “floaters”) people had. From the word “Iligaynon,” the Spaniards wrote in their records “Hiligueynes,” believing that they had discovered a group of people called by that name.”¹⁴

Furthermore, San Agustin speaks of the purity and elegance of the Hiligaynon language in the town of Panay: “Its administration is in the Visayan-Hiligaynon language, which is the most widespread among the provinces of the Pintados. However the one spoken in Panay is the purest and most elegant.”¹⁵ The Augustinian historian of Panay, Fr. Juan Fernández in his *Monografías de los Pueblos de la Isla de Panay*, gives a detailed description: “The inhabitants are mellow when they speak, and in their pronunciation they rather resemble the Andalucians, but they don’t have the poor taste of those from the capital of Cebu who omit letters in their pronunciation distorting, consequently, the naturalness and simplicity of the Visayan dialect. The ancient writers noted already what we say about the Pan-ayanons.”¹⁶

¹² Alcina, Vol.1, 97.

¹³ BRPI, Vol.5, 121.

¹⁴ Mulato describes the local bamboo trade during that time: “In our study of the change in the meaning of words, the basis of Hiligaynon, which was pronounced before as ‘Iligaynon’ was not the language of the people inhabiting those places mentioned but of the people whose occupation was floating downriver bamboo poles from the places upriver. The moment those bamboo products reached the river mouth, they were sold to those who needed them for building their houses; the ones not sold were hauled by little boats (*paraws*) and brought to places far from the river mouth. These people from upriver tied together bamboo poles and on these rafts they placed their merchandise as during those times there were no functional roads and transportation facilities” (Santiago Alv. Mulato, “The Hiligaynon,” *Ani*, Vol.3, no. 2, June 1989, 5).

¹⁵ San Agustin, 609.

¹⁶ *Monografías*, 174.

Men commonly wore g-strings (*bahag*); and women skirts of bark cloth.¹⁷ They were also fond of jewelry, made of gold.¹⁸ San Agustin reports of the abundance of gold in the province of Capiz: “Going upriver on the left-hand side, it connects to another river called Mayong [Maayon], which means good, perhaps due to the abundance of gold, that was originally discovered mixed in with the sand.”¹⁹

They practiced rice farming, planted root crops, went hunting and fishing for their daily living.²⁰ They were skilled in ironworking, woodworking, boatbuilding, pottery, goldworking and weaving. They had domestic trade with people from other islands; and international trade with the Chinese and the Borneans.²¹

¹⁷ Alcina observes: “Aside from the above-mentioned (i.e., jewelry and tattoos—*mine*), their first article of clothing was something they call a *bahag*. This was a piece of cloth about two or more brazas in length and either made of abaca, which is the most common, or a *manta* which resembles our linen, or even of linen itself (although very few wear this); finally, it is made of silk which only the *datus* wear... (Alcina, Vol.1, 115). Concerning the women, aside from what has been mentioned, we may say that the *principalas* wore short skirts reaching to the knees more or less; while the slaves wore them even much shorter. The common people had them made from abaca, while the *data* or *principalas* had them made of linen of cotton embroidered with silk or cotton of various colors” (Alcina, Vol.1, 117).

¹⁸ Up to the nineteenth century, gold can still be mined in Capiz. Jean Mallat in his book (published in 1846) speaks of gold mines in Dumarao: “There are gold mines in Dumarao, and some persons claim that there is also one of quicksilver (*Les Philippines: Histoire, Geographie, Moeurs, Agriculture, Industrie, Commerce des Colonies Espagnoles dans L’Océanie* (1846), Pura-Santillan-Castrence, trans. Manila: National Historical Institute, 1998,192).” Nicholas Loney likewise reports: “Gold is found in the bed of a river near the village of Abaca in this province (of Iloilo), and near Dumarao in Capiz” (*Document 287: Economic Report on the Island of Panay* (1857), *Documentary Sources of Philippine History*, Vol. 7, Gregorio F. Zaide, comp., ed., and annot., Manila: National Book Store, Inc., 1990, 119).

¹⁹ San Agustin, 609.

²⁰ Visayans practiced *kaingin* when they were farming. See William Henry Scott’s *Barangay: Sixteenth Century Philippine Culture and Society* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1994, 37).

²¹ Meanwhile, Scott mentions the presence of a commercial trade in Capiz with the Chinese: “But the Spaniards never saw either these Chinese or their ships: not until 1569 when Legazpi moved to Capiz did they capture a Chinese vessel and its crew – that is, on the far western littoral of the islands. (One of those Chinese taught his language to Fr. Martin de Rada, and twenty years later was the head of the Chinese community in Manila – Don Francisco Zanco)” (*Barangay*, 74). Scott continues “that Visayans called “foreign nations like the Borneans and Sangleys (Chinese), *Sina*,” and that Chinese sailing directions published in 1617 avoided inland Visayan waters by passing from Mindoro to Oton (Iloilo) to Dapitan” (*Barangay*, 75). The Australian archeologist Peter J.F. Coumts also remarks: “Later again Chinese traders began to reach the shores of Panay. Under the stimulus of trade, the pressures on the forest resources continued to increase. Urbanization had its roots in this period (following Hutterer 1974), agriculture intensified, and socio-political systems evolved to cope with the trade. The coastal areas were completely colonized by agricultural communities. This phase is manifested archaeologically in the cemetery sites which are found around the coastal margins of Panay... Traders probably moved into the interior in order to trade with hunter-gatherer communities and exploit the forest resources themselves. Again the fact that jar burials do not seem to be found in the caves in the

These developments in local trade and seafaring, which contributed to the social and cultural interactions of peoples in Southeast Asia, would define the succeeding centuries in Capiz until before the coming of the Spaniards during the sixteenth century.

Even during Spanish times, these commercial trades were still maintained by the people of the town of Panay, as San Agustin affirms: “The town sees much commerce from Spanish, *Sangleys*, mestizos and numerous tributary natives.”²² Hence, the principal industries of this locality which dated back even to precolonial era were “fishing, abaca and cotton fabrics, manufacturing of sack matting for sugar and weaving with leaves for the roofs of the houses; nipa wine distillery, or brandy, for which there are ten *alambrics*. They export the brandy to Manila.”²³

The people lived together in villages or hamlets.²⁴ They were organized according to three social classes: *datus*, the chieftains or heads of their communities called *haop* (or *sakop*); *timawas*, the freemen or freedmen; and the *oripuns*, the slaves.²⁵ Aside from these natives, San Agustin speaks of the other inhabitants of the province:

Towards the interior of the sierra, there are also Negroes who are said to be the older residents of the island. These are not as black nor as large as those of Guinea, but they are as barbarous as those who live without king or lord or town. They stay wherever the night catches them to suffer the inclement weather. Their weapons are bows and arrows, with which they are very adept. They normally inflict much harm to the Visayans if they ever catch them unaware; but not as much as other Visayans who also live around the mountains in hiding. They are commonly called *Mundos* against whom they usually wage wars.²⁶

interior suggests that trading settlements tended to be confined to specific areas” (*An Archeological Perspective of Panay Island, Philippines*, Cebu City: University of San Carlos, 1983, 172).

²² San Agustin, 607 and 609. In another section, he adds: “Panay should have close to two thousand native tributaries, as well as a ghetto of Christian *Sangleys* and merchants with more than fifty stores that sell necessary items” (Ibid., 609).

²³ Monografias, 174.

²⁴ Scott, *Barangay*, 136. According to Scott: “The villages and towns where one or more *haop* lived were *bongto* or *lungsod*; and hamlets or neighborhoods were *gamuro*, a cluster of houses within earshot” (*Barangay*, 136).

²⁵ Ibid., 127-135.

²⁶ San Agustin, 611 and 613.

This is confirmed by the archeological diggings in the different caves of Capiz. The Australian archeologist Peter J.F. Coutts expounds on the pre-Hispanic settlers of Panay Island:

By the time the Spanish arrived in the 16th and 17th centuries, Panay was controlled by powerful clans of brown-skinned Filipinos; the Negrito population occupied most of the interior, and coexisted with nucleated settlements occupied by traders, their dependants and an expanding agriculturally based population. The Spanish, as noted above, further stimulated trade, accelerated inroads into the forests and were responsible for reducing Negrito territory and ultimately, the Negrito population. Today, there are only a handful of Negrito people left on the Island of Panay.²⁷

As to their religion, they were animists or nature worshippers. They worshipped different gods and their ancestors, which were represented by small idols. Alcina writes: "All in all, today when they say *diwata*, it is understood that they mean the false gods."²⁸ He continues: "Their gods if not totally a product of human inventiveness substantially... had been altered by their superstitions."²⁹

Sacrifices called "paganito"³⁰ were offered through a religious practitioner, who is generally a female called *baylan* or *daitan*, but sometimes also a male – an effeminate man called *asug*. Alcina remarks: "Now, therefore, as far as their priests or petty sacrificers, who were of two different classes and who in ancient times had two names, I have discovered with very little doubt that they were commonly women and not men. If there was some man who might have been one, he was called *asug*... To these women they called in their language *daitan* or *baylan*..."³¹

While in the performance of worship, the *babaylan* sang and dance around their sacrificial offerings. An example of these religious chants speaks:

Weeeeeehoooooooooyy...
Unda mga diwata sa Madyaas,
Panggapit kamo sa amon yata;
Panggapit kamo sa amon itang;
Dapurong kamo sa wara't sal-ag;

²⁷ Coutts, *An Archeological Perspective of Panay Island, Philippines*, 172.

²⁸ Alcina, Vol. 3, 225.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Alcina writes: "(S)o too *anitu* means 'a sacrifice made to God.' Hence, from this is derived the term *paganitu* – "to sacrifice" (Ibid., 223 and 225).

³¹ Alcina, Vol. 3, 257.

Dapurong sa wara't kaalag-ag
 Irimaw kita magbusog kang ginhay,
 Irimaw kitya magtamoy kang ginhawa.

Giya ron ang amon handa,
 Giya ron ang ginsaad nga yata;
 Yata dya tigana kaninyo,
 Yata nga di malimulimo;
 Pagtuman dya kang burohaton
 Pagtimpus kang mga saralikwon;
 Sarialikwon nga tumanon dinag-on,
 Sarialikwon nga tuigan bulohaton.
 Panaog sa palhing Madyaas
 Panaog mga diwata kag mga diya
 Sunda ninyo si Bulalakaw,
 Sunod sanday Andungon, Magbanog;
 Sunod kamo kay Putingdaraga,
 Ang diwata kang kabikahan.³²

³² This religious chant is called “panagdahan o paanyaya” (i.e., invitation). This excerpt was recorded by Santiago Alv. Mulato. In *Siday: Mga Tulang Bayan ng Panay at Negros*, a collection of folk literature of Panay and Negros by Corazon D. Villareal, she remarks: “One way to appease the gods is to invite them to partake the food laid in a bamboo table as low as the knee called *yataan*. This is the altar of offering ... Holding the gong and *binalunggay* (an old bowl) amidst flaming coal, she/he (the *babaylan*) will chant the panagdahan” (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1997, 50-52), The translation reads:

“Weeeeeehoooooooooyyyy...
 Hear me, o gods of Madyaas,
 Come near to our offering;
 Come near to our altar;
 Partake and enjoy without any worry;
 Partake and don't ever doubt;
 Come and let us satisfy our hunger,
 Let us eat heartily.

 Here are what we prepared,
 Here is the offering we promised,
 These are all for you,
 May you never forsake
 This is in accordance to our duty
 This is in accordance to our task;
 Seasonal task
 Yearly task.

There were no temples, so worship took place “in private homes or fields; at grave sites or sacred spots outside the community; or along beaches or streams where little rafts could be launched, aboard which were disease and bad luck, or live pests like locusts or rats.”³³ Loarca affirms: “The natives of these islands have neither time nor place set apart for the offering of prayers and sacrifices to their gods. It is only in case of sickness, and in times of seed-sowing or of war, that sacrifices are offered.”³⁴

Finally, they believed in the afterlife, which is manifested by their practice of jar burials.³⁵

Come down from forbidden Madyaas
Come down, o gods and lesser divinities;
Follow Bulalakaw,
Follow Andungon, Magbanog;
Follow Bangutbanwa,
Follow Solian, Mangindalon,
Follow Putingdaraga,
The goddess of our race.”

Bulalakaw is the highest god of the people of Panay who resides in Mt. Madyaas while *Andungon* is the god of newly-born babies and *Magbanog* is the god of wisdom. *Putingdaraga* is the goddess of love and peace of every home. *Bangutbanwa*, *Solian* and *Mangindalon* are the ancestral *babaylans*.

³³ Scott, *Barangay*, 84. Taking from an early source, Fr. Juan Plasencia, O.F.M. in his *Relación* writes: “In the villages, or in other parts of the Filipinas Islands, there are no temples consecrated to the performing of sacrifices, the adoration of their idols, or the general practice of idolatry. It is true that they have the name *simbahan*, which means temple or place of adoration; but this is because, formerly, when they wished to celebrate a festival, which they called *pandot*, or “worship,” they celebrated it in the large house of the chief. There they constructed for the purpose of sheltering the assembled people, a temporary shed on each side of the house, with a roof, called *sibi*, to protect the people from wet when it rained. On the posts of the house they set small lamps, called *sorihile*; in the center of the house they placed one large lamp, adorned with leaves of the white palm, wrought in many designs ...” (BRPI, Vol. 7, 185-186).

³⁴ BRPI, Vol. 5, 132-133.

³⁵ Coutts in *An Archaeological Perspective* speaks of prehispanic burial sites in Pilar, Capiz: “The Pilar sites are somewhat anomalous in this suite of coastal cemetery sites. The major points of difference [with the caves in Iloilo] are: few trade ceramics are present, slipped earthenwares (particularly black and brown slipped wares) are rare, and a distinctive largely utilitarian, incised and impressed earthenware complex is present. However, there are also similarities. For example, the presence of stone and clay beads, earthenware net sinkers, a shell bracelet and metal at Pilar sites is paralleled at the historic site of Cubay, San Dionisio, which dates from the 10th century AD ... Although it is not known how long the Pilar sites were used, it is established that they were still in use just prior to the coming of the Spaniards, and were contemporary with the so-called ‘cemetery sites’ (166).”

Pan hay en esta isla: Panay during Spanish Contact

On the 27th of April 1565, Miguel Lopez de Legazpi and his fleet arrived in Cebu (formerly *Sugbu*). The natives were initially wary and cautious, which Legazpi managed to amend by the power of his tact and presence. Hence he convinced Tupas, the chief of Cebu, to acknowledge the sovereignty of Spain and later to accept Christianity because of his broadminded and friendly dealings with them.

Later on, Legazpi set forth the reconstruction, beautification and reorganization of the city of Cebu as the first Spanish settlement in the Philippines. It was named *Santísimo Nombre de Jesús* after its patron, the *Señor Santo Niño*, whose image was found in a small hut by the Spanish soldier Juan Camus, which was actually a gift of Magellan to the newly baptized wife of Humabon, Queen Juana, in 1521.

The following months were critical to the Spanish conquest. Because of the spiteful conduct of some soldiers, the natives refused to produce and provide food supplies to the Spaniards. With the growing hunger and scarcity of provisions as well as the continuing threats of Portuguese attack, Legazpi sent his men under Mateo del Saz, his *maestre de campo* (ship commander), to explore the other islands for food.

They lingered for a while on the coasts of Bohol, Negros and other islands, until they finally reached the island of Panay in the early part of June 1565, and landed in Jalaud River of Dumangas, Iloilo.³⁶ They, however, relocated later at the mouth of the Panay River, where Juan de la Isla built some fortifications. San Agustin in *Conquistas* reports:

Everyone agreed to move the camp to the river of Panay, since the place was impregnable and the island abundant with everything necessary to resist any enemy invasion. Having decided on this, the governor ordered his captains, together with their companies, to spread themselves to the neighboring islands, under orders that once they were informed of the Portuguese armada's return, they were all to gather at the Panay river to defend themselves.³⁷

Seeing the fecundity of the land, they were not frustrated by what they found. Panay since then earned the title of “the Sicily of the Philippines.” As Alcina affirms:

³⁶ Jalaud (Halaud or Araut) River; now, Dumangas. Demy P. Sonza in his article “History and Legend in Western Visayan Place-Names” follows Fernández’s account: “The expedition reached Panay, landing first in Halawod in what is now Dumangas, Iloilo, where the Spaniards procured some 1,000 sacks of rice. Then they sailed to the north and landed again in a place known as Bamban, where they found food to be plentiful. Bamban became the town of Panay, Capiz” (*The Journal of History*, Vols. 28-31, 1983-1986, 46).

³⁷ San Agustin, 523.

“Panay Island was the first landing place of most of the Spaniards, after they crossed over from the Island of Cebu, because it is more fertile and has a greater abundance of rice. It is like another Sicily with all its wheat.”³⁸

For some authors, this explains the legend about Panay’s name. As Felix Regalado and Quintin Franco relate: “(W)hen Legaspi was establishing his colony in Sugbu (Cebu), he was faced with the problem of food shortage. He sent his captains to scour the surrounding islands for food. One of the captains reached the island of Madia-as and anchored right at the mouth of the river running through Pan-ay, Capiz. Having found plenty of food in the place, he returned to Cebu and reported the news to Legaspi who exclaimed in thanksgiving, “Pan hay en esta isla.” The first two words eventually identified the island.”³⁹

Fernández, however, differs with the etymology of “Panay:” “With the entry of the Spaniards they started calling it with the name it bears now, which means “island channel” of the river, because the new settlers have taken residence in Banica where Juan de la Isla constructed a small castle. About the end of the 16th century, everybody was calling it Pan-ay. It was the King’s *encomienda*.”⁴⁰

Around 1566-1567, Fr. Martin de Rada, O.S.A., who accompanied Mateo del Saz, was reported as having evangelized the natives living by the banks of the river Pan-ay, Capiz,⁴¹ then afterwards to the river Jalaud in Dumangas, Iloilo. Fernández in his *Monografías* presents the argument:

It (Panay) is the only town of the Island that can rightly question Dumangas on the priority of having the word of God preached there. If we based it on the fact that each vessel parting from the fleet

³⁸ Alcina, 165. San Agustin affirms the description: “The island of Panay is very similar to that of Sicily, not only because of its triangular shape, but also because of its fertility and abundance of supplies. It is located to the southeast of Manila (San Agustin, 611).” In 1846, Mallat writes about the fertility of the province of Capiz. He writes: “Capiz is admirably fertile. It produces an almost unbelievable abundance of rice... Two harvests of rice are made per year, this foodstuff being so cheap there that it is sold for only two silver reales per *caban* of 48 *gantas* whereas in the other provinces the same measure is worth 25 reales (*Les Philippines*, 192).”

³⁹ Felix B. Regalado and Quintin B. Franco, *History of Panay* (Iloilo City: Central Philippine University, 1973), 6.

⁴⁰ *Monografías*, 174.

⁴¹ Mallat describes Panay River: “The principal rivers are those of Panay, which is full of crocodiles, and that of Dumarao. The river of Capiz, as large as the Pasig, presents at its mouth a bank called Baton Bagui, which prevents brigs from entering at low tide; the rivers of Calibar and Batan fall into the Capiz, which they feed. The banks of all these rivers are shaded by masses of trees, abodes of birds of all kinds and monkeys, and some white and others of different colors (*Les Philippines*, 192).” In the 1890 *Descripción* Casariego writes about the location and importance of Panay River: Los dos rios más notables e interesantes de esta región, y por tanto los que descuellan sobre todos los demás de la isla, son el Panay y el Jalaur, que presentan entre si mucha semejanza por su caudal, recorrido y otras circunstancias. Las cuencas de cada uno de estos dos rios forman

of Legazpi took a friar with it in order to prevent any harm against the indios, Halauod would take the glory. It should imply that the missionary would preach in those places at which he would arrive, since they had come for that. If we abide by the record that in 1566 and 1567, Fr. Rada was preaching the word of God from the river basins of Pan-ay until those of Halauod, both inclusively, rather than in the other towns of the Island, Pan-ay would take the glory.⁴²

Fr. Pedro Galende, O.S.A. in *Apologia Pro Filipinos* speaks of Fr. Rada's Christianization efforts in Panay Island:

In his labors, he was able to gather in some towns a sufficient number of Christians, enough guarantee for the Order to maintain convents there. These convents were admitted to the Order by Rada himself when he was Provincial in Manila. Rada extended his preaching along the shores of the Panay and Halaud rivers and according to the historians, he had made many converts in a brief period of two years. In Dumangas, Rada began the Christian community which later was to rise to a glorious era under Fr. Alva who constructed a church of strong materials over the small rural chapel built by Rada. It is possible that Rada might have made several excursions and had gone to work in Otong, once Christianity was established in Dumangas and in Panay. His itinerary must have covered Panay first, then Dumangas and finally Otong.⁴³

In 1567, Legazpi sent a regiment led by his nephew Felipe de Salcedo to Panay, who was later followed by his son Juan Salcedo.⁴⁴ The plan was to build another Spanish settlement after Cebu. Upon their arrival, they were welcomed

las más extensas e importantes zonas de las provincias de Capiz e Iloilo, individuando, por decirlo así, una y otra; y su divisoria de aguas es también la de las jurisdicciones de ambos distritos (48) En el caserío Agbangbang se presenta la actual confluencia de la gran rama que, pasando por el pueblo de Panay, sale al mar por tres bocas principales llamadas respectivamente de Jamulaon, de Paua y de Guibuangan Daco Otra bifurcación notable existe también, en el barrio de Tansasud, que se llama río Banica, el cual así mismo comunica por dos esteros con la bocana de Guibuangan Daco que acabamos de citar El recorrido total del río Panay es de unos 144 kilómetros aproximadamente (Casariego, 58).

⁴² Monografías, 174.

⁴³ Pedro Galende, O.S.A., *Apologia Pro Filipinos: The Quixotic Life and Chivalric Adventures of Fray Martin de Rada, O.S.A., in Defense of the Early Filipinos* (Manila: Salesiana Publishers, 1980), 73-74.

⁴⁴ San Agustín reports: "The governor stayed in Cebu to fix the *San Lucas* to send it to new Spain, as he had no other ship to send. It was decided to send Captain Felipe de Salcedo on it, as he was the most expert in the route. He therefore sent his brother to Panay to succeed him in command, with all his clothes on a frigate, since he was looking forward to moving to Panay once the *patache* had left (San Agustín, 525)."

by the townsfolk of Panay who received them with much affection.⁴⁵ San Agustin narrates:

The governor sent Captain Felipe Salcedo to accompany the camp and the artillery to the Panay river with the people who accompanied him when the Capitana was lost. They were well-received by the natives of Panay and after seeing to their lodgings, the natives asked them for help against some enemy villages who had come to their area and done them great harm, capturing some of them while they were fishing.⁴⁶

In return, Felipe Salcedo helped them in their fight, and succeeded, against the neighboring tribes who constantly raided them. San Agustin adds: "Felipe de Salcedo did so, burning the enemy villages as well as levying other forms of punishment."⁴⁷ This attests to the fact that there were inter-tribal raiding and slave trading among prehispanic Filipinos.

Moreover, the town of Panay was always under threat of Moro raids. As a consequence, in the nearby town of Capiz, a garrison was discharged to defend the natives from these Moros. San Agustin writes: "There is a garrison of soldiers to guard the island, with a stockade sufficient to defend against invasions from the Jolo and Mindanao pirates, who entered this port many times and did much harm, burning the sampans and ships they found moored there, as well as the Church and homes of the natives."⁴⁸ Even on the later part of the Spanish period, Fernández confirms the incidents involving these Moro raids, especially in the town of Panay:

The Moro pirates attempted to surprise the town many times, but they succeeded only on two occasions. The first one was in 1599, when Pan-ay was without military forces. After setting fire on all the vessels that were in the river, they set the town in fire also, killed many people and captured others after committing thousands of atrocities. The second raid took place in the middle of the 18th century when the wicked pirates took away the young mestizas who numbered considerably at that time.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ As Fr. Juan Fernández, O.S.A. says: "Embarcáronse, y con felicidad llegaron a Pan-ay, en donde fueron recibidos con mucho afecto de los habitantes, con los que continuaron viviendo pacíficamente y con gran armonía." In "Apuntes Históricos de la Isla de Panay," *Archivo Histórico Hispano-Agustiniano*, Vols. 13 (January 1920) and 14 (December 1920), 98.

⁴⁶ San Agustin, 523.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 523.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 837.

⁴⁹ Monografías, 174.

When Felipe de Salcedo returned to Cebu with such favorable reports, Legazpi decided to come to Pan-ay in 1569, where he stayed until April 15, 1571, when he sailed to Manila.⁵⁰ San Agustin recounts the coming of Legazpi to the Panay river to settle, who was warmly welcomed by the natives, led by their chieftains named *Madidum* and *Manicabug*:

After the governor left instructions for the good government of Cebu, and very solemnly held the honors due Prince Charles, as the sad news of his death was brought by the ship San Juan, that he had died on July 24, 1568 at twenty-four years of age, the governor left for Panay river accompanied by the *maestre de campo*... The governor was lovingly received by the natives whose highest leaders, named *Madidum* and *Manicabug*, proved in everything to be well-intentioned and more loyal than those of Cebu. Seeing their good behavior and obedience, he attempted to build some fortifications in the areas that seemed appropriate to him in the event the Portuguese armada returned. They were at all times suspicious of the Portuguese being close at hand to Panay amid reports that they had been sighted.⁵¹

The Augustinian provincial Fr. Diego de Herrera, after his visit to Panay with Captain Juan de la Ysla [Isla] on June 7, 1570, however, speaks of the unfavorable conditions of their new settlement:

When I got to this river of Panay where the Governor was, they were glad that I had come and they were equally glad of the aid and reinforcements sent by His Majesty and Your Excellency aboard the three vessels and the Governor ordered that the vessels should come to Panay although many were of different opinion. I myself thought that his decision was wrong for the port was bad and it would be hard to unload the vessels. Also, there was over one league and a half from the anchorage to the town and the sandbar at the mouth of the river made passage difficult. Nevertheless on June 22, the vessels got there and when the men aboard saw this sad and stricken place in which we are now settled they were sad. The swamps looked bad and the houses were built by the bank of the river where the water

⁵⁰ "From the last months of 1569 until mid-April of 1571, this town was the residence of Adelantado Legapi, whom the Pan-ayanons welcomed with much courtesy and entertainment. Distinguishing themselves on this occasion were *Madidong* and *Macabog*, the very respected figures in the town" (Ibid., 174).

⁵¹ San Agustin, 529 and 531. Cf. *Monografias*, 174.

is brackish so that when the river rises it is necessary to go by boat from house to house. It is hot and unhealthy and it rains day and night and although before we came, food was abundant; now we lack food. Also, we are very much afraid of the Portuguese so that if the men here found a place that is better hidden they would go there although it might be a worse place and although the Portuguese may not come in the end, these men will not dare to leave for Cebu unless somebody should impose some order.⁵²

The town of Panay indeed suffered from scarcity of food because of pestilence, as San Agustin narrates:

In Panay, he instructed that an excellent *gaillot* in the shipyard be finished while he was coming and going from Cebu. He intended to use it for the pacification and conquest of the island of Manila. In the same way, he sent the *San Lucas* to Leyte to buy rice for the trip, since they did not find any on the island of Panay, due to the terrible damage wrought by grasshoppers this year and the year before throughout the island.⁵³

In return for the timely visit of Fr. Herrera and Captain Isla from New Spain [Mexico], Legazpi in his letter to Philip II thanked the king for the favors he received while in his settlement at the town of Panay: He writes: "With Captain Joan de la Ysla, who arrived at this river on St. John's eve last, I received a letter from your Majesty from the Escorial dated the sixteenth of November, of the year sixty-eight, with the dispatches and the favors that your Majesty was pleased to grant this camp. For these and for other things that we expect from your Majesty, all these faithful vassals of your Majesty, and in their name for all, kiss your Majesty's royal feet and hands."⁵⁴ From the town of Panay, where this plant grew in abundance, San Agustin says: "The *adelantado* sent twelve pimiento trees to present to His Majesty at court."⁵⁵ Fernández remarks about these pepper harvests in Panay: "We believe that there was a good yield of pepper at that time. From this port Legapi sent to Spain as present of great refinement twelve flowerpots of that species, which was of much esteem in

⁵² Documento Número XIII: Copia de carta de Fr. Diego de Herrera dirigida al Virrey de Nueva España, dando cuenta de un viaje desde Nueva España a Filipinas con Juan de la Ysla: malas condiciones del sitio (Panay) en que estaba el Gobernador por miedo a los Portugueses. Desorden en que encontró la tierra. Escrita a fines de Julio de 1570 (*The Christianization of the Philippines*, Rafael Lopez, O.S.A. and Alfonso Felix, Jr., trans., Manila: Historical Conservation Society, 1965, 333).

⁵³ San Agustin, 543.

⁵⁴ "Letter from Miguel Lopez de Legazpi to Philip II. Panay, July 25, 1570," *The Colonization and Conquest of the Philippines by Spain* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1965), 183. Cf. San Agustin, 541.

⁵⁵ San Agustin, 541.

Europe in those times. The Compañía de Filipinas did great efforts in the 18th century to establish again that industry here, but it failed.”⁵⁶

In 1569, the encomiendas were apportioned by Legazpi himself before embarking on for the conquest of Luzon, with that of the town of Panay under the Spanish Crown. In his *Apuntes Históricos*, Fernández writes:

As soon as they decided to leave Pan-ay, Legazpi started the preparations to begin their conquest of Luzon, careful that none of the things needed were left out. Before they embarked, he judged it convenient to distribute and assign the encomiendas as follows: the town of Pan-ay for the encomienda of the Spanish king; from the banks of the river Pan-ay he gave the encomiendas of a thousand and two Indios to several soldiers, in the river Barbarán, Bago and its rivulet he gave a thousand and one to Baltasar Rodríguez and Alonso Sánchez; from Hamindang until Banga two thousand to Francisco Rivera and two thousand to Diego García; in Mahalud to Alvaro Angulo; by the creeks of Batan, etc., two thousand to Gonzalo Riquen; in Mayon two thousand to Francisco Rey; in Aclán to Antonio Flores; in Marabagui, Pengao, etc. to Hernando Monroy; in the river Aruy to Rodrigo Bargas; from Tigbaoan to Bangningguing to Esteban de Figúeroa; in Haro, etc., to Francisco Durán (transferred on April 5, 1572 to the hands of Luis Pérez. By the highlands of Dumangas, four thousand Indios to Gabriel Rivera; near the sea, six thousand, to Luis de la Haya; in Dulingan, Antique, Bunital and Asluman to Diego Jiménez; in Ogtong to Miguel Loarca.⁵⁷

The settlement in Panay, therefore, marked the beginning of the process of the Spanish conquest of Luzon and the establishment of their colonial capital in Manila.⁵⁸ And when Legazpi journeyed to Manila in 1571, the major settlement was moved to Oton-Arevalo area.

⁵⁶ Monografías, 174.

⁵⁷ Apuntes, 219.

⁵⁸ Fernández narrates Legazpi's journey to Manila: Once he [Legazpi] finished this affair, he transferred with Fr. Diego Herrera, his counselor, to the islet of Lutaya [**now, Olotayan Island**]. There he reviewed his strengths, and they counted 27 ships, 280 Spaniards, and some faithful Visayans. There with him, aside from Fr. Herrera, the Maestre de Campo, Andres Ibarra, Luis de la Haya and Juan de Salcedo. On the 15th of April 1571, they left the shore. They bade goodbye to the hospital village of Pan-ay. After two or three days of navigation unfortunately the ships lost the course, but step by step, without none of them having suffered any damage. They could follow again the same route, and with luck they continued towards Manila. They took possession of Manila on the nineteenth of May, naming it the capital of the Archipelago on the 24th of May [June] 1571” (Apuntes, 101).

In the *Account of the Encomiendas in the Philippinas Islands*, twenty-two years after Legazpi's division of the encomiendas, Governor Dasmariñas reports of the encomiendas existing in Capiz in 1591, which manifested the need for ministers in some areas:

Panay: *King* – His Majesty has along the river of Panay and its branch, the Mayo [Maayon], eight hundred and fifty tributes, which represent two thousand four hundred persons. They have instruction and justice.

Panay: *Guarnico; Lievana* – Captain Guarnizo and Ensign Pedro Guillén de Lievana collect, along the said river, two thousand three hundred tributes, which represent nine thousand two hundred persons. It has justice, and one ecclesiastic who furnishes instruction. It needs at least two more ministers.

Mambusao: *Rivera; Morales* – Francisco de Rivera and Gaspar Ruiz de Morales collect, along the branch river Mambusao, one thousand tributes, which represent four thousand persons. It is pacified, and has justice, but no instruction. It needs one minister.

Yguisan [Ivisan]: *Captain Sarmiento* – Captain Sarmiento collects, along the river of Yguisan, ninety tributes, which represent three hundred and forty persons. It has justice...⁵⁹

In 1693, the town of Capiz (now, Roxas City), known as *El Puerto de Capiz*, was finally created, but its ecclesiastical needs depended still on the parish of Panay.⁶⁰

It was only in 1716 when Capiz was organized into a separate politico-military province that the capital was transferred, which was previously the town of Panay.⁶¹

El Pueblo Único: First Christian Town

From Cebu, the Augustinians, the first religious Order to evangelize the country, went on to the island of Panay, where Fr. Rada preached the Gospel to the natives along the banks of the rivers Panay and Araut. In 1569, Fr. Juan de Alva, O.S.A., who

⁵⁹ BRPI, Vol. 8, 134.

⁶⁰ Monografías, 166. See also Pedro G. Galende, O.S.A., *Angels in Stone: Augustinian Churches in the Philippines*, Manila: San Agustin Museum, 1996, 313.

⁶¹ The American historian Milton Walter Meyer writes about this event (albeit with a different date): "In 1757, the capital transferred to Capiz and the town began to overshadow that of Panay." In *Colonial Bonding – Americans and Capiz: The First Decade (1899-1901)* (California: The Paige Press, 2005), 2.

accompanied Captain Luis de la Haya, built the first chapel in Dumangas.⁶² On May 3, 1572, Oton was accepted as a house of the Order, the third after Cebu and Manila, whose edifice was built by Fr. Rada himself around 1570.⁶³

There were fifteen (15) parishes founded by the Augustinians in the province of Capiz: **Panay (1581), Dumarao (1581), Dumalag (1596), Mambusao (1607), Roxas City, formerly Capiz (1707), Sigma (1744), Panitan (1806), Dao (1836), Ivisan (1840), Loctugan (1848), Pilar (1865), Cuartero (1872), Tapaz (1874), Pontevedra (1878), and Maayon (1893).**⁶⁴

There were only three parishes established by the Spanish missionaries during the sixteenth century, although the other succeeding parishes were former stations (*visitas*) of the early missions (*doctrinas*), which were Panay, Dumarao and Dumalag. In the seventeenth century, only one was added, that of Mambusao; while from the early to the late eighteenth century, two became parishes, Roxas City, with Capiz as its old name, and Sigma, which was absorbed by the parish of Mambusao shortly after its foundation. However, a great number of parishes, nine of them – Panitan, Dao, Ivisan, Loctugan, Pilar, Cuartero, Tapaz, Pontevedra, and Maayon – flourished as ministries of the Augustinians during the late Spanish period.

San Agustin in his *Conquistas* writes about the first parishes administered by the Augustinians in Capiz, namely in the towns of *Panay, Capis, Mambusao, Dumalag* and *Dumarao*. The friar-chronicler remarks:

They are administered by the religious of our father Saint Augustine, whose tributaries number more than sixteen thousand in the towns of Batan, Panay, Capis, Mambusao, Dumalag, Dumarao, Pasi, Laglag, Dumangas, Jaro, Ogtong, Tigbauan, Guimbal and Antique ...

All the aforementioned towns are the capitals of as many *visitas* as they have. The larger ones have resident religious because they are so numerous that they presently surpass twenty-eight.⁶⁵

⁶² San Agustin, 533.

⁶³ See San Agustin, 591.

⁶⁴ Elviro Jorde Perez, O.S.A., *Catalogo Bio-Bibliografico de los Religiosos Agustinos de la Provincia del Santisimo Nombre de Jesus* (Manila: Establecimiento tipografico del Colegio de Sto. Tomas, 1901), 816-825; Monografías, 166-176 and 180-181; Julian Martin, O.S.A., *Mapa General de las Almas que administran los PP. Agustinos en estas Islas Filipinas, 1848* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipográfico de los Amigos del Pais, 1848), 142-147. From hereon, **Martin**.

⁶⁵ San Agustin, 61 and 63.

The first ministry established by the Augustinians in Capiz is Panay in 1581 as a parish, but as a mission center as early as 1566, under the patronage of St. Monica, mother of St. Augustine.⁶⁶ San Agustin describes the town of Panay:

A minister was also appointed in the town of Panay, the capital of the island from where it takes its name, because the legitimate capital of this town is Bamban. Its advocacy is our mother Sta. Monica. It also has a vote in the Chapter. It is a very good convent with sufficient construction and living quarters ...

Finally, the juridical area of Panay is the major ministry throughout the island. Its capital has the largest Christian group known there, exclusive of the state that the rest of the ministries have on the island of Panay; i.e., twelve of our men, four clerics, with the port of Iloilo where the Company of Jesus has a college, and where they administer the infantry assigned there. The Panay natives are somewhat more peaceful and easy to deal with than those of other areas ...⁶⁷

San Agustin likewise enumerates the earlier *visitas* of the town of Panay, namely *Suysan* (now, Ivisan), *Aranguen* (now, a barrio of Pres. Roxas), *Sibara* (now, Pilar), *Capiz* (now, Roxas City), *Ipiong* (now, Panitan), and *Divingdin* (now, Dao). He says:

It has the following *visitas* which encompasses many administrative personnel: *Suysan*, whose patron saint is San Nicolas de Tolentino; *Aranguen*, under the patron saint San Jose; *Sibara*, whose patron saint is San Nicolas. Of the three, the latter two are practically on the beach, and the first one is very near the ocean. The town of Capiz, under the patronage of Nuestra Señora de la Concepcion is a seaport, and the most famous in the province, where all the boats

⁶⁶ Isacio Rodriguez, O.S.A. *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniana del Smo. Nombre de Jesus de Filipinas*, Vol. 17, writes: "Fr. San Agustin did not fix the exact date, limiting himself to say that the town of Panay was declared independent in the mandate of the Provincial Fr. Martin de Rada (1572-1575) – San Agustin, Conquitas I: 255-256; Espineyra writes that it was in 1573: AGI, Aud. De Filipinas, 1035, f. 903v; Medina, *Historia de los sucesos*, 482, and Jorde, *Catálogo*, 816, opt for the year 1581. We accept the latter date because we only encounter Panay as a town cited in the original acts of the provincial chapter [Manila, 22.4.1581], having already its own Prior: <De Panai. In convento nostro de Panai praeificamus in Priorem P. fratrem Bartholomeum de Alcantara [tachado: Ildephonsus de Castro] et Conventualem fratrem Augustinum Camacho. APM LGP, I, f. 38v. As to the rest of the towns of the Visayas, except the convent of Cebu [Santo Niño], Panay was accepted according to the decree of 7.10.1587 (ibid., f. 58v), as a town through the petition of Governor General Gomez Perez Dasmariñas: ibid., f. 66vv. (Manila: San Agustin Monastery, 1965, 171). From hereon, **Historia**. [Translation mine.]

⁶⁷ San Agustin, 607 and 609.

land to attend to their business. It is a league and a half from the town of Panay in one of the three mouths that its river has before it empties into the sea. Going upriver on the left-hand side, it connects to another river called Mayong, which means good, perhaps due to the abundance of gold, that was originally discovered mixed in with the sand. The convent of Panay has two visitas on this river. One is called Ipiong, under the protection of San Lorenzo. The other is Divingdin under the protection of Saint Augustine.⁶⁸

In another section, San Agustin interestingly provides these detailed descriptions of the *visitas*:

A convent and ministry was established in Bulacabe, which is one of the three main points on the island of Panay on the northeast. Fr. Diego de Solis, an exemplary religious, was appointed its prior. This ministry is the same according to what I found out – as that of Panay, because there is no other mention of it in the Registry, other than that of Santa Monica of Panay. Thus, I will not remiss in describing this island again, even considering what we have covered previously regarding it. The ministry of Panay has five parishes. The first is Mayong, under the advocacy of San Jeronimo, with another small parish called Ypion, under San Lorenzo. This town was originally rich in gold, since the natives would pan for gold among the rivers in placers. However, because of the vexations they used to receive at the hands of some magistrates, they stopped panning for gold, preferring to live in poverty rather than suffer similar hardships. The second is Aranguen, under the advocacy of San Jose. This town has a very healthy river that cures anyone who bathes in it from any contagious diseases. The third is called Sibara, under the advocacy of San Nicolas de Tolentino. The fourth, located in the mountain, Dumingding, under the advocacy of our father Saint Augustine, is a town of numerous people with a very kind disposition. The fifth parish is Juisan, a town near the ocean, with many people. San Nicolas de Tolentino is the patron of its church, whose sculpted image is very beautiful, devout, and by whom God wrought many miracles in curing different sicknesses. They have seen it perspire many times, especially when the natives of the town, forgetful of their Christian obligations, engaged in some superstitious acts which they used to do during pagan times by virtue of a demonic sacrifice.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 609.

In times past, it is said that a native malcontent, on seeing the saint uncovering some crimes, went to the church and slapped him. His boldness, however, did not go unpunished, because on the same day a crocodile carried off the native's right hand, leaving him alive to realize his guilt and forever serve as proof of his crime. In addition to these parishes, the military garrison and the port of Capiz are also under the responsibility of the Panay ministry. There is a garrison of soldiers to guard the island, with a stockade sufficient to defend against invasions from the Jolo and Mindanao pirates, who entered this port many times and did much harm, burning the sampans and ships they found moored there, as well as the Church and homes of the natives. The advocate of the church is *La Concepcion de Nuestra Señora* (Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception).⁶⁹

Los Agustinos de Panay: Augustinian Curates of Panay

Of the 2,830 Augustinians who came to the Philippines during the 333 years of Spanish rule, around 84 friars had served as ministers in the town of Panay from 1566 until 1898. In 1581, Fr. Bartolome de Alcantara, O.S.A. was named first prior with Fr. Agustin Camacho, O.S.A. as his companion; and in 1895 Fr. Gregorio Hermida, O.S.A. served as the last curate with Fr. José Garmendia, O.S.A. as his companion.

Two of these Spanish missionaries became bishops: Bishop Pedro de Arce, O.S.A. of the Diocese of Cebu (1612-1645),⁷⁰ who served as assistant (*compañero*) to Fr. Bartolome de Alcantara, O.S.A. in the parish of Panay (1584-1587) and later as its minister (1587-1591);⁷¹ and Archbishop Hernando Guerrero, O.S.A. of the Archdiocese of Manila in (1634-1641),⁷² who served as the minister of the parish

⁶⁹ San Agustin, 837.

⁷⁰ Pedro G. Galende, O.S.A., "The Augustinians in the Philippines 1565-1890," *Boletín Ecclesiástico de Filipinas*, Vol. 39, 1965, 60. Ma. Lourdes Díaz-Trechuelo in her article *Episcopologio Agustino en Filipinas 1595-1645* speaks of Fr. Arce's character as a bishop: The kind-hearted character of Fr. Pedro de Arce has been manifested in many occasions, among others, in his good relationship with the religious of the different orders, who are under his See (*Episcopologio Agustino en Filipinas 1595-1645*, Valladolid: Actas de Congreso Internacional V Centenario Agustinos en América y Filipinas, 1990, 784). Cf. *Historia*, Vol. 17, 243-245.

⁷¹ Jorde, 23-24.

⁷² Galende, "The Augustinians in the Philippines 1565-1890," 61. The *Anales Ecclesiásticos de Filipinas 1574-1682, Vol.1* speaks of the elevation of Archbishop Guerrero, O.S.A. to the seat of Manila: "(He) was presented (to the Holy See) as Archbishop of Manila on January 16, 1632... Archbishop Guerrero waited for two (2) years in Manila for his Papal Bull and Pallium. Finally with a

of Panay (1597 and 1605-1609).⁷³ Archbishop Guerrero was also previously the Bishop of Nueva Segovia (1627-1634).⁷⁴ A number of them were also appointed as superiors of their religious Order, the first of whom was Fr. Martin de Rada, O.S.A., the evangelizer of Panay.

There was a steady growth of Christian population during the Spanish era: 4,604 in 1732, 5,033 in 1773, 5,685 in 1818, 6,605 in 1835, 11,160 in 1845, 12,445 in 1854, 13,562 in 1866, 18,772 in 1883, 14,701 in 1890 and 16,672 in 1898.⁷⁵ There was, however, a terrible epidemic of cholera in 1882 which killed 1,005 of its residents.⁷⁶

Los Edificios Públicos de Panay: Panay Ecclesiastical Complex

The original ecclesiastical structure of Panay was built during the term of Fr. Manuel López, O.S.A. (d. 1705) between 1692 and 1698,⁷⁷ and was rebuilt by Fr. Manuel Murguia, O.S.A. (d. 1797) in 1774.⁷⁸

In the past, the town of Panay was often visited by storms and earthquakes which destroyed the church and its convent several times.

In 1884 after the destructive typhoon of 1875, the famous Augustinian builder, Fr. José Beloso, O.S.A. (1815-1888),⁷⁹ renovated the stone church.⁸⁰ In 1895, Fr.

testimony that said documents have already been sent and are forthcoming, he was given possession of the Archdiocese on June 23, 1655" (Manila: The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila, 1994, 67).

⁷³ Jorde, 48-49.

⁷⁴ See Díaz-Trechuelo, *Episcopologio agustino en Filipinas 1595-1645*, 791-792.

⁷⁵ See Historia, Vol. 27, 171; Hipolito Casiano, O.S.A. "Estado de los Pueblos de Pan-ay en 1714," *Archivo Histórico Hispano-Agustiniano*, Vol 12, 1919, 288-296, 351-361; Jorde, 816-824, 829; *Estado General de los Religiosos de que se compone la provincial del Dulcísimo Nombre de Jesus de padres agustinos calzados de estas Islas Filipinas, 1818-1819*; and *Mapa General de las Almas que administran los Padres Agustinos Calzados en estas Islas Filipinas*, 1835, Sampaloc, 1836.

⁷⁶ Guillermo Kabelle, *Memoria sobre la epidemia de Colera Morbo que se padecio en la Cabecera de Capiz en el año 1882*, Capiz: 1882.

⁷⁷ Galende, *Angels in Stone*, 320. For his biography, see Jorde, 139 and Manuel Merino, O.S.A., *Agustinos Evangelizadores de Filipinas 1565-1965* (Madrid: Ediciones Archivo Agustiniiano, 1965), 218. From hereon, **Merino**.

⁷⁸ Jorde, 393; Marin, 139; Galende, *Angels in Stone*, 320. See also Alicia M.L. Coseteng, *Spanish Churches in the Philippines* (*Spanish Churches in the Philippines* (Quezon City: New Mercury Printing Press, 1972), 106; Norma I. Alarcon, *Philippine Architecture during the Pre-Spanish and Spanish Periods* (*Philippine Architecture during the Pre-Spanish and Spanish Periods*. Manila: UST Publishing House, 1998), 183. For his biography, see Jorde, 393 and Merino, 234. A Mexican by birth, his name was registered "Miguel" in Monografias, 216 and in Galende, *Angels in Stone*, 320.

⁷⁹ Jorde, 450. Veloso is the variant spelling of his name (Monografias, 175).

⁸⁰ Jorde, 450; Marin, 139. See also Galende, *Angels in Stone*, 320; Coseteng, *Spanish Churches in the Philippines*, 106; Alarcon, *Philippine Architecture during the Pre-Spanish and Spanish Periods*,

Lesmes Pérez, O.S.A. (1849-1915) restored it in its beautiful grandeur from the aftermath of the typhoons of 1874 and 1875.⁸¹

The convent, made of rubblework, also constructed by Fr. Beloso, was destroyed also by these consecutive typhoons.⁸² It was elegantly reconstructed in 1892 by Fr. Miguel Roscales, O.S.A. (1849-1905),⁸³ and finished by Fr. Gregorio Hermida, O.S.A. (1848-1917),⁸⁴ but unfortunately was burned, alongside with the Municipal Hall, by the Spanish Governor General Diego de los Rios to dislodge the rebels from the town during the 1898 Philippine Revolution.⁸⁵

Aside from constructing the convent garden, the cemetery with its chapel made of stone, the public schools, the municipal house, various bridges and ditches,⁸⁶ Fr. Beloso commissioned Don Juan Reina for the casting of the largest bell in the Philippines and in Asia and the third biggest bell in the world in 1878 (aside from other bells under his name). The *Dakong Lingganay* (meaning, “big bell”), as it is popularly known, was made from 70 sacks of coins donated by the townsfolk and measures seven feet in diameter, five feet in height with a weight of 10,400 kilograms.⁸⁷ It carries a meaningful inscription which reads: “Soy la voz de Dios que llevaré y ensalzaré desde el principio hasta fin de este pueblo de Panay para que los fieles de Jesús vengan a esta casa de Dios a recibir las gracias celestiales” (“I am God’s voice which I shall echo and praise from the beginning till the end of this town of Panay, so that the faithful followers of Christ may come to this house of God to receive the heavenly graces.”)⁸⁸

Fr. Pedro G. Galende, O.S.A. tells an interesting account about its casting and its blacksmith:

183; Benjamin Locsin Layug, *A Tourist Guide to Notable Philippine Churches* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 2007), 149.

⁸¹ Galende, *Angels in Stone*, 321. See also Alarcon, *Philippine Architecture during the Pre-Spanish and Spanish Periods*, 183; Layug, *A Tourist Guide to Notable Philippine Churches*, 149. For his biography, see Jorde, 549 and Merino, 226-227.

⁸² Galende, *Angels in Stone*, 321.

⁸³ Marin, 139. For his biography, see Jorde, 598-599 and Merino, 163.

⁸⁴ Marin, 139. For his biography, see Jorde, 564-565; Merino, 489.

⁸⁵ Marin, 139; Monografías, 175. Fr. Fernández writes: There was another convent in construction of stone and bricks, but General de los Rios destroyed it, setting on fire likewise a big stock of wood that was there for the new convent. He also burned the Municipal Hall in order to dislodge the insurrectionists from the town (Monografías, 175).

⁸⁶ Jorde, 450; Merino, 172; Monografías, 175.

⁸⁷ Jorde, 450; Merino, 172; Galende, *Angels in Stone*, 321. See also Layug, *A Tourist Guide to Notable Philippine Churches*, 149.

⁸⁸ Galende, *Angels in Stone*, 325. Galende opines: “The bell in the words of the town’s mayor, is very dear to the Panayanos both in moments of happiness and in times of tribulation” (Ibid.).

With just few rudimentary tools, Reina set up temporary shop at the foot of the town and hurried with the casting of the bell. Priest and caster agreed on the testing time. When the bell was tried during the *Angelus*, the sound was so loud that “every nearby town heard the voice of the bell of Panay.” After being paid by the parish priest, Don Juan returned to his shop in Iloilo. In a month’s time, the bell cracked. From then on, it sounded more like a frying pan than a bell. Furious, the priest summoned Don Juan Reina and ordered him to have the bell recast, for free. Don Juan, who had the temper of a genuine *baturro* (country man from Aragón) would have none of it. Fr. Beloso, no less stubborn appealed to Bishop Cuartero who, after a heated discussion with the blacksmith, sent a circular to all the priests of the island, prohibiting them from contracting any job to Don Juan ... The deadlock was broken in a very strange manner. Bishop Cuartero would spend long sleepless nights due to a chronic toothache. Ironically, the only dentist who could help him was no other than Don Juan, the blacksmith! Don Juan was sent for, and the bishop meekly submitted himself to have his toothed pulled out. The *sacamuuelas*, as Don Juan was called, laughingly relished the great opportunity. As he got ready to apply the hook he asked the Bishop with unfeigned insolence: “Your Excellency, is there any job for the bell caster?” “Of course, Don Juan, there is,” whispered the Bishop. A big pull and the tooth went out. After this twist of events, it was no longer difficult for the blacksmith to find work.⁸⁹

According to local tradition, “artisans from Manila fashioned the Baroque decorations, set in silver, of the main altar.”⁹⁰ The town’s greatest sculptor, Joseph Bengaro or *Sarhento Itok*, did most of the bas-reliefs and religious statuary.⁹¹

At present, the parish church of Panay, an excellent example of Filipino Baroque style with Neo-Classic influence, is endowed with the distinctions as a National Historical Landmark in 1997⁹² and as a National Cultural Treasure in 2004.⁹³

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 320.

⁹¹ Regalado and Franco, *History of Panay*, 155. Galende gave another spelling of the name Joseph Bergaño or *Sarhento Itak*” (Galende, *Angels in Stone*, 320). Regalado and Franco’s reference came from Rodolfo M. Claparols, “Historic Panay,” *Philippine Free Press*, Vol. 59, December 10, 1965, 40165; and Angel Inocencio, “Panay, An Undiscovered Tourist Attraction,” *Graphic*, Vol. 30, No. 111, April 12, 1967, 80 ff (*History of Panay*, 155).

⁹² The historical marker reads: Pan-ay, originally called Bamban, was established in 1572. The first church, constructed in 1774 by Fr. Miguel Murguia, was heavily damaged by typhoon in 1875. The present church was constructed in 1884 under the direction of Fr. Jose Beloso who

As a center of pilgrimage during the Spanish period, Fernández writes about the miraculous cross inside the Panay church. He recounts:

In the first quarter of the 17th century a devotional image of the Crucified Christ venerated in the Church of this town became famous for its miracles. The judicious historian Fr. Juan de Medina, eyewitness of some, relates different miracles in his appreciable story, for he was the parish priest.⁹⁴

Considerad de Panay: A Remnant of Its Catholic Past

In their evangelization of the Philippines, the Spanish missionaries also introduced many Catholic practices and customs, which are until now widely practiced with great devotion. In time, many of these became part of the Filipino culture and are now considered expressions of popular religiosity.⁹⁵

From the patronal fiestas which every town joyfully celebrated, to the different liturgical seasons, like Advent with the *misa de gallo*, Christmas with the *panunuluyan*, Lent with the *Cuaresma* and *Semana Santa* observances, and Easter with *salubong*, these religious practices and customs had been cherished by all generations since

commissioned Don Juan Reina to cast a bell for the church from seventy sacks of coins donated by the townpeople. This bell, the biggest in the Philippines measures seven feet in diameter, five feet in height, and weighs 10,400 kilograms. By virtue of NHI Board Resolution No. 3, S. 1997, this church is declared a national historical landmark.” Cf. Benjamin Locsin Layug, *A Tourist Guide to Notable Philippine Churches* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 2007), 149. It is one of the only two historical landmarks recognized by the National Historical Institute. The first is the birthplace of Manuel Acuña Roxas, the president of the post-war Philippine Republic. It was installed in 1958 by the Philippine Historical Committee, almost forty years before that of Panay Church.

⁹³ Layug, *A Tourist Guide to Notable Philippine Churches*, 149. For the discussion on Filipino baroque art, see *Endangered: Papers from the First International Congress on Fil-Hispanic Architecture* (Manila: Instituto Cervantes, 2005). The renovation of the old Church through the installation of brick roofing and the repair of the belfry, and likewise, the reconstruction of the old Parish Convent, happened during the term of the present curate, Rev. Msgr. Benjamin F. Advincula.

⁹⁴ Monograffias, 174. Fr. Juan de Medina, O.S.A., (d. 1637), known as the “Apostle of Panay,” served as parish priest of the town of Panay from 1619 to 1623. For his biography, see Jorde, 83-85 and Merino, 431.

⁹⁵ The CBCP Pastoral Letter on Filipino Spirituality affirms this fact: “We have inherited from our ancestors a rich spirituality. This is the product of our long history as a people... Our ancestors received those missionaries cordially as they would normally accept foreigners into our beautiful land: respectfully, hospitably, warmly...” (*Filipino Way to Holiness*, Manila: Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines, 1999, no. 11). Fr. Lucio Gutiérrez, O.P. remarks: Popular religiosity, so strong today, and so vilified in some Christian and theological quarters, grew mightily. The people encouraged by the missionaries, started to build little altars in their houses. Most commonly they were in honor of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Blessed Mother and the saints (*The Archdiocese of Manila: A Pilgrimage in Time (1565-1999)*, Vol. 1, Crisostomo A. Yalung, D.D., ed. Manila: The Roman Catholic Archbishop of Manila, 2000, 132).

the earliest native converts until now.⁹⁶ In all the towns of Capiz today, these are occasions that enliven the Church and inspire the faithful to deepen their spirituality as Catholics. The 1991 *Second Plenary Council of the Philippines* makes this resounding declaration: “We kept the traditions of our forbears in the faith. We have kept them even to this day: Our fiestas and festivals, our rites of Christmas and Holy Week, and our devotion to the Santo Niño, the Virgin, the Saints, our dead – all witness to the strength of those traditions. External rites and celebrations – possibly too external – they speak nonetheless powerfully of an internal faith.”⁹⁷

In the town of Panay is found a unique but less-known Good Friday procession called *Considerad*, from the first words that begin each verse, which means “reflect” or “meditate.”⁹⁸ According to the 1842 *Diccionario Hispano-Bisaya* by Fr. Julian Martin, O.S.A., “considerar” is translated as “hunahuna,” which means “to reflect” or “to remember.”⁹⁹ Its Hilgaynon counterpart “pamalandungon,” from the rootword “landong,” means “to represent, to bring to memory or understanding, to meditate or contemplate something, and can also be a bad, stupid or dishonest thing.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Gutiérrez opines: Many were the customs introduced in the Philippines by the missionaries. Some of them are still very much alive today, though some are disappearing due to the secular culture coming from the west or due to the efforts, according to some people, to be modern (*The Archdiocese of Manila*, Vol. 1, 136).

⁹⁷ *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines* (Manila: Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, 1992), No. 11.

⁹⁸ Leothiny Clavel, “Philippine Revolution in Capiz.” *Diliman Review*, Vol. 43, No. 3-4, 1995, 33. For his further treatment of the *Considerad*, see Leothiny Clavel, *Social History of Capiz* (Roxas City: Leopoldo P. Clavel Infoshop, 1996), 38-43 and 126-127. Except for these two works of Clavel and a short write-up by Galende and Javellana in *Great Churches of the Philippines*, there is almost nothing written about its popularization as a religious practice. In the internet, only one personal blog came out from the repetitive word searches about the *Considerad* of Panay. Dated March 31, 2008, it narrates: On Good Friday, we joined the procession, again my first time in so many years. Unlike in our Parish here, the procession there starts right after the Adoration of the Cross, at around 5pm. The main difference of the procession in Pan-ay is the *Considerad*, which leads the procession. Little boys hold up decorated poles with items related to Jesus passion and death hanging from the top. Some of the items are nails, a rooster (only a drawing of course), sponge, and crown of thorns. The boys shout out the significance of the items in Spanish and Ilonggo throughout the procession. Apparently it's some sort of a rite of passage for a lot of young boys in our town. My own dad and most other male relatives are alumni of the *Considerad* (<http://www.aleafofgrass.wordpress.com20080331>).

⁹⁹ Other related words in this dictionary are: “considerable” which is translated as “paghunahuna, con timaan, tacus huna-hunaon” (to reflect, with a sign, worthy of reflection), and “consideracion” which is translated as “painoino” (mind or understanding). In Julian Martin, O.S.A., *Diccionario Hispano-Bisaya* (Manila: Imprenta de D. Manuel y D. Felix Dayot, 1842), 523. In modern usage, “considerar” means “1. to consider, to think over, 2. To judge, to deem, and 3. To treat with respect.” From *Merrism-Webster's Spanish-English Dictionaries* (Massachusetts: Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, 1998), 68.

¹⁰⁰ Mentrida, *Diccionario de la Lengua Bisaya, Hiligueina y Haraya de la Isla de Panay*, 223.

The *Considerad* offers a veritable witness to a religious custom introduced by the Augustinians in Capiz that has survived the vestiges of time. Quite negatively, however, Leothiny Clavel in his article “Philippine Revolution in Capiz”, who seems to follow the lead of Reynaldo Clemeña Ileta’s *Pasyon and Revolution*, says that *Considerad* was a “colonial strategy of promoting the idea of human suffering as the will of God,” which “was a subtle design to make Capisnons accept their sufferings under the Spanish government as part of the Divine plan.”¹⁰¹ He goes in length to explain: “To subdue rebellious thoughts and behaviors, the Spaniards intensified their popular projection of the suffering Christ. They stressed that human suffering, if offered to the glory of God, was a noble experience. Suffering according to them, could bring a Capisnon closer to God, just as the sufferings of Christ on the cross brought Him closer to God the Father. In short, acceptance of one’s sufferings is fulfillment of His will.”¹⁰² And so, he tries to interpret the accompanying symbols in the text of the *Considerad*: “Among other things, the references to *haligi* (post), *pisi* (rough cord), *palad* (palm) and *sentencia* (sentence) sought to promote the functional images of these objects in the Spanish rule. This approach was a colonial strategy to justify certain punishments at a time when an increasing number of Capisnons were defying the Spaniards.”¹⁰³

Using the text of the popular *pasyon* to describe the Filipino struggle, Ileta observes: “From the Spanish perspective, what could be a more effective tool than the *pasyon* to discourage Indios from enriching and educating themselves to the point where they might constitute a threat to colonial rule. But from the perspective of the mass audience, the identification of the wealthy, educated Pharisees, *maginoó* and *pinunong bayan* (local leaders) with Christ’s tormentors could not fail to have radical implications in actual life.”¹⁰⁴ In contrast, Fr. Lucio Gutiérrez, O.P. gives another perspective by situating the proper context of these Lenten traditions: “The early Filipinos took seriously the Christianity preached to them. It was Christianity from late medieval Spain, strict, demanding and from a reformed Spanish Church. Some of the practices imposed by the missionaries, like not taking a bath everyday. Other customs were peculiarly Christian, like bodily disciplines during Holy Week and scourging as a form of penance. The missionaries, perhaps with certain exaggeration, spoke of the penitential practices of the early Filipinos, and how they eagerly wanted to imitate the great penitents of Christianity. Unfortunately in modern times this practice of flagellation during the Holy Week has been corrupted.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Clavel, “Philippine Revolution in Capiz,” 33.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Reynaldo Clemeña Ileta, *Pasyon and Revolution: Popular Movements in the Philippines, 1840-1910* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1979), 15.

¹⁰⁵ Gutiérrez, *The Archdiocese of Manila*, Vol. 1, 133.

El Autor de Considerad: The Search for the Unknown Progenitor

According to the study of Leothiny Clavel, *Considerad* was said to have been introduced in 1895.¹⁰⁶ Although no mention of the priest's name as the originator was made by Clavel and most probably he only knew its circumstances by local tradition, it could probably be Fr. Miguel Roscales, O.S.A., (1849-1905), who served as minister of Panay from 1889 to 1895 but remained there until 1898.¹⁰⁷ The reasons to support this assumption are two-fold: *first*, he stayed for nine years in this town, enough to be acquainted with the religiosity of the people; and *second*, interestingly, he was a renowned author according to Jorde and Merino, who wrote, among many useful canonical-liturgical works, *Memoria sobre titulares, patronos y fiestas...* Malabon: A. de H., 1895, 108 pp., which may contain the said practice but is unfortunately not available to the researcher. Nonetheless, it could have also been Fr. Gregorio Hermida, O.S.A., who was the regent of Panay in 1875 and 1895 or Fr. José Garmendia, O.S.A. (1861-?), who was a companion of Fr. Hermida in 1896.

Surprisingly, there was no mention of Fr. Miguel Roscales, O.S.A. in Fr. Policarpio Hernandez, O.S.A.'s *Augustinians in the Philippines*, which recognizes the different contributions of the Augustinians in different areas of Filipino life.¹⁰⁸ But Fr. Isacio Rodriguez in his *Historia de la Provincia Agustiniiana del Smo. Nombre de Jesus de Filipinas* provides an account of him and his famous work "*Memoria sobre titulares, patronos y fiestas*." He remarks:

The *Memoria* was printed together with the calendar for 1896, of which a little later the "Separata" was made. Formerly, it was presented in the Philippine Exposition held in Madrid in 1895, and merited the gold medal award. Fr. Roscales, having seen the recognition his work deserved thought of completing it with another study which exists unedited in the library of Valladolid. It consists of Volumes II and III, the first (I) comprised the beginning of the former *Memoria*.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 33. Clavel assumes: "The parish priest of Pan-ay introduced the *Considerad* in 1895" (Ibid.).

¹⁰⁷ The researcher also does not discount another theory saying that the dating of this religious custom could be much earlier, since no mention about it was made in the biography of Fr. Miguel Roscales, O.S.A. For his biography, see Jorde, 598-599 and Merino, 163.

¹⁰⁸ See Policarpio F. Hernandez, O.S.A., *The Augustinians in the Philippines and their Contribution to the Printing Press, Philology, Poetry, Religious Literature, History and Sciences* (Makati City: Colegio de San Agustin, 1998). For a similar study, albeit with a comprehensive scope including other religious orders, see Pablo Fernandez, O.P., *History of the Church in the Philippines (1521-1898)* (Manila: Life Today Publications, 1988, 358-447).

¹⁰⁹ *Historia*, Vol. 4, 383. Cf. R. Morales Maza, *Augustinians in Panay* (Iloilo City: University of San Agustin, 1987). 285.

El Texto de Considerad: A Comparison with the Hiligaynon Pasyon

Like the popular *Pasyon*, a favorite Lenten practice which narrates the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ,¹¹⁰ the *Considerad* of Panay is accompanied by a simple chanting of prepared text on the sufferings of Christ, which the participants committed to memory, albeit the former is much longer and more melodious.

Inherited from Spanish Catholicism, the first *pasyon*, *Mahal na Passion ni Jesu Christong Panginoon Natin na Tola* by Gaspar Aquino de Belen was published in 1703.¹¹¹ Other *pasjons* in other Philippine languages came out later, but many of them translations of the most commonly used 1814 *Casaysayan nang Pasiong Mahal ni Jesucristong Panginoon Natin*. Written by an anonymous author, it is often referred to as *Pasyon Pilapil* because it was edited by a native priest named Mariano Pilapil,¹¹² or *Pasyon Henesis* because unlike the earliest *pasyon*, “it begins with an account of the creation of the world and concludes with a glimpse of the Last Judgment based on the Apocalypse of St. John.”¹¹³

By tracing their roots, according to René Javellana, following recent scholarship, one can single out these references as possible bases for the writing of Philippine *pasjons*: “Old and New Testament,” “Apocryphal literature and Christian legends,” “Spanish *pasjons* such as Iñigo de Mendoza’s *Vita Christi* (Zamora, 1482), Commendador Roman’s *Coplas de la Pasion con la Resurreccion* (Toledo, 1490), Juan de Quiros’ *Cristo Pathia* (Toledo 1552), and Francisco Hernandez Blasco’s *Universal Redencion*,” and the creative imagination of the writers.”¹¹⁴

The aforementioned 1814 *Pasyon* became the basis for the Hiligaynon version, “Kinabuhi kag Pasion ni Jesucristo nga Aton Ginuo” translated and published by

¹¹⁰ Gutiérrez writes: A study of the *Pasyong Mahal* of Aquino, and of the *Casaysayan nang Pasiong Mahal*, makes us realize the strong biblical basis for the Passion. It has been Filipinized and has become a unique way of reading theologically the Passion, Death and Resurrection of the Lord” (*The Archdiocese of Manila*, Vol. 1, 134).

¹¹¹ For an in-depth study of Belen’s *Pasyon*, see *Mahal na Passion ni Jesu Christong Panginoon Natin na Tola ni Gaspar Aquino de Belen*, René B. Javellana, S.J., ed. (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1990).

¹¹² Culled from previous studies, Iletto writes the *pasyon*’s allusion of authorship to Fr. Mariano Pilapil: “This popular name for the *casaysayan* of 1814 originates from a traditional belief that it was written by a native priest named Mariano Pilapil, but recent scholarship has established that Pilapil merely edited the 1814 text, the author of which remains unknown” (*Pasyon and Revolution*, 12).

¹¹³ Iletto, *Pasyon and Revolution*, 12. Iletto also accepts the theory that the *Pasyon Pilapil* is “to a large extent, based upon De Belen’s earlier *pasyon*” (*Ibid.*). He also mentions the criticisms against *Pasyon Pilapil*: “The *Pasyon Pilapil* was, in fact, soundly criticized in the late nineteenth century by Aniceto de la Merced, a native priest, in a pamphlet titled *Manga Puna* (Critique) ... The major criticisms of the *Pasyon Pilapil* are its incoherence, faulty scholarship, repetitiveness, and clumsy, inaccurate use of language” (*Ibid.*, 13).

¹¹⁴ Javellana, *Mahal na Passion*, 28.

Mariano Perfecto in 1884, with an *imprimatur* from Fr. Celestino Fernandez and *nihil obstat* from Fr. Jose Maria Climente.¹¹⁵ A good examination of the text reveals that the instruments of Christ's passion used in the *Considerad* have striking parallelisms in the Hiligaynon *Pasyon*. One could, therefore, safely assume that the *Considerad* text is loosely, if not largely, based on the existing *Pasyon* materials.

As what Nicanor G. Tiongson in his book *Sinakulo* explains regarding the influence of the 1814 *Pasyon* to other Lenten folk rituals:

As it blossomed into a full-blown play in the 19th century, however, the *sinakulo* drew substance no longer from Aquino de Belen's *pasyon* but from an expanded version, the *Casaysayan nang Pasion ni Jesucristong Panginoon Natin na Sucat Ipag-alab nang Puso ng Sinomang Babasa*. Completed in 1814, this *pasyon* (called *Pasyong Genesis* by the folk because its narrative begins with the creation of the world) sired two related Lenten folk rituals: the *pabasa* and the *sinakulo*.¹¹⁶

To illustrate in a few selections only, as regards the instrument of *haligi* (pillar or post), where Jesus was tied and scourged, the *Pasyon Perfecto* reads:

Didto nila ipahamtang
Sa atubangan sang balay
Ni Cayfas nga tampalasan
Sa **haligi** ginhigut lang
Ang mga tiil kag kamut man.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ See *Kinabuhi kag Pasion ni Jesucristo nga Aton Ginuo nga Ginbinisaya kag Ginpaimprenta ni Hal. Mariano Perfecto*, 8th ed. (Iloilo City: La Panayana, n.d.). The date of publication came from the notice of *imprimatur* (or *censura* in the book) by Fr. Celestino Fernandez on January 26, 1884 in the Parish of Miag-ao. The Bishop of Jaro through Licentiate Fr. Jose Maria Climente gave its *nihil obstat* on February 6, 1884. A short biographical entry with his picture in this edition reveals: "Hon. Mariano Perfecto, the writer of *Pasion sang aton Ginuo Jesucristo*. He died on November 3, 1913, shortly after his term as Governor of the Province of Ambos Camarines (Ibid., 2). From hereon, **Pasyon Perfecto**."

¹¹⁶ Nicanor G. Tiongson, *Philippine Theatre: History and Anthology*, Vol. 3: *Sinakulo* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1999), 2. *Sinakulo* is the stage play of the passion of Jesus Christ, while *pabasa* is the public chanting of the *pasyon* done by the old and the young alike whether in chapels or homes from Holy Monday to Good Friday.

¹¹⁷ *Pasyon Perfecto*, 78:1235 [Page:Stanza]. The English translation (by the researcher) says:

"There they brought him
In the courtyard of the house
Of the treacherous Caiphas.
And in a pillar they tied
His feet and his hands."

Concerning the instrument of *manok* (cock or rooster), which crowed thrice when St. Peter betrayed his Master, the *Pasyon* reads:

Sa pagmitlang ni San Pedro
 Nga paglilong sa Ginuo,
 Gilayon namalu sadto
Manuk sang mga Judiyo
 Inugbulang nga tutuo.¹¹⁸

Concerning the instrument of *krus* (cross), the *Pasyon* has many references, like the following verse:

Sang mabasa kag matapus
 Yadtong sentensia kay Jesus
 Karon ining mga Fariseos
 Pinapas-an na sia sang **Krus**
 Nga sa duta nagaguyud.¹¹⁹

Concerning the instrument of *panyo* (handkerchief or cloth), which St. Veronica used to wipe the face of Christ, the *Pasyon* reads:

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 80:1281. The English translation (by the researcher) says:

“When St. Peter uttered
 His denial of the Lord,
 Thereupon crowed
 The rooster of the Jews
 Truly prized for a fight.”

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 107:1744. The English translation (by the researcher) says:

“When finally read
 The judgment upon Jesus
 Thereupon these Pharisees
 Had him carry the cross
 Which touched the ground.”

Yadtong **panyo** o tuka niya
Nga iyang ginadaladala,
Amo ang ginpahid niya
Saditong kay Jesus nga guya
Tungud sang kahanuklog niya.¹²⁰

And finally, concerning the instrument of *rotulo* (signboard), which Pilate placed on the cross of the “King of the Jews”, the *Pasyon* reads:

Ang Evangelista nga apat
Nagsaysay kag nagpahayag
Nga si Pilato nagdugang baya
Sa Cruz sining mahal nga *Mesias*
Sa isa ka **Rotulong** sulat.¹²¹

In the *Laygay* (Advice or Counsel) Part, after every narrative, one could find allusions to the word “considerad” like these lines:

Bisan sin-o ka nga tao
Bagay may **painoino**
Panumdumon mong totoo
Ang mga **kasakit ni Cristo**,
Nga gin-ilub tungud sa imo.¹²²

¹²⁰ Ibid., 113:1847. The English translation (by the researcher) says:

“That handkerchief or cloth
Which she carried with her
She then used to wipe
The face of Jesus
Because of her pity.”

¹²¹ Ibid., 120:1943. The English translation (by the researcher) says:

“The four Evangelists
Told and Narrated
That Pilate had placed
On the cross of this dear Messiah
This written signboard.”

¹²² Ibid., 79:1259. The English translation (by the researcher) says:

“Whoever person you are
Who can understand
You should really remember
These sufferings of Christ,
He underwent for you.”

Another similar stanza reads:

Busa abyan kong **Cristianos**
Dili pagpanundugan mo,
 Yadto nga mga Judio,
Ikasubu mo nga totoo
 Ang **Pasion ni Jesucristo**.¹²³

Doing contextual reading with the Gospels as the principal source of all the *pasyons*, and including the *Considerad*, reveals the following instruments of Christ's passion – from his being sold to being buried: “30 ka bilog nga pilak” (30 pieces of silver - Mateo 26:15; Marcos 14: 11; Lucas 22:5), “mga parol kag mga sulo” (lamps and torches - Juan 18:3), “espada” (sword - Mateo 26:51; Marcos 14:47; Lucas 22:50; Juan 18:10), “tampa” or “bunal” (slap or scourge - Mateo 26:67; Marcos 14:65; Lucas 22:63; Juan 18:22), “manok” (rooster - Mateo 26:74; Marcos 14:72; Lucas 22:60; Juan 18:27), “kunop” or “kapa” (cape - Mateo 27:28; Marcos 15:17; Juan 19:3), “hanot” (whip - Mateo 27:30; Marcos 15:19; Juan 19:1), “korona nga tunokon” (crown of thorns - Mateo 27:29; Marcos 15:17; Juan 19:2), “bayu” (vestment - Mateo 27:31; Marcos 15:20; Lucas 23:11), “tubig” (water - Mateo 27:24), “ginhukman nga pagapatyon” (condemned to death - Mateo 27:26; Marcos 15:15; Lucas 23:25; Juan 19:16), “krus” (cross - Mateo 27:31ff; Marcos 15:20ff; Lucas 23:26ff; Juan 19:17); “bino nga nasimbugan sing apdo/mira” wine with bile/myrrh - Mateo 27:34; Marcos 15:23), “ginlansang” (nailed - Mateo 27:35; Marcos 15:24; Lucas 23:33; Juan 19:18), “pagabutgabot” (gambled - Mateo 27:35; Marcos 15:24; Lucas 23:34; Juan 19:24), “panumbongon” or “pahibalo” (signboard - Mateo 27:37; Marcos 15:26; Juan 19:19),

¹²³ Ibid., 99:1611. The English translation (by the researcher) says:

“Therefore my fellow Christians
 Do not emulate
 Those Jews,
 Rather you should mourn
 This Passion of Jesus Christ.”

For the other instruments of Christ's passion and death used in the *Considerad*, see Pasyon Perfecto: *bulsa* (pocket, bag), 60:914; *parol* (lantern, torch), 74:1175; *tangab* (knife, sword), 76:1196; *palad* (palm of the hand), 78:1242; *pisi* (cord, string), 93:1522; *tunok* (thorns), 102:1668; *korona* (crown), 102:1669; *bayo* (garment, tunic), 102:1680; *sentencia* (judgment), 104:1703; *baso* (glass), 117:1905; *martilyo* (hammer) and *lansang* (nail), 118:1917; *baraha* (cards), 119:1937; *bulak* (cotton), 125:2044; *bangkaw* (spear), 127:2074; *hagdan* (ladder), 128:2083; and *kimpit* (pliers), 128:2094. Surprisingly, there is no *hanot* or *hampak* (whip) or *palanghunawan* (basin) in the *Considerad*, unlike in Pasyon Perfecto, 100:1624 and 104:1703 respectively.

“espongha” (*sponge* - *Mateo* 27:48; *Marcos* 15:36; *Juan* 19:29), “bangkaw” (*spear* - *Juan* 19:34), “gintaltal” (“*taken down*” - *Mateo* 27:59; *Marcos* 15:46; *Lucas* 23: 53; *Juan* 19:40), “malahalon kag maputi nga panapton nga lino” (*expensive and white linen cloth* - *Mateo* 27:59; *Marcos* 15:46; *Lucas* 23:53; *Juan* 19:40); “sinimbog nga mira kag aloe” (*mixture of myrrh and aloe* - *Juan* 19:39), and “lulobngan” (*tomb* - *Mateo* 27:60; *Marcos* 15:46; *Lucas* 23:53; *Juan* 19:41).¹²⁴

The official *Considerad* text, usually with twenty-three verses, exhorts the Christian listener to contemplate on each instrument in the passion of Jesus Christ, from his betrayal to his death through crucifixion. The *Considerad* piece, with the Spanish and Hiligaynon versions used in the actual recitation, reads:

I

Considerad, Cristianos
Que estos dados,
Fueron los que jugaron los Judios
ni Judas,
Y Judas cuando vendio,
A nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandongon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga mga dais,
Amo ang ginsugalan sang mga Judios kag
Sang pagbaligya niya
Sa aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

II

Considerad, Cristianos
Que esta bolsa,
Fue en que guardaron los Judios
Las treinta reales que los dieron,
Por nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga bulsa,
Amo ang gintaguan sang mga Judios
Sang katluan ka pilak nga bili
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

¹²⁴ All biblical citations come from *Maayong Balita nga Biblia (May Deuterocanonico): Hiligaynon Popular Version* (Manila: Philippine Bible Society, 1972). Note that a number of symbols used in the *Considerad* are not found in the Gospels like Veronica's handkerchief or the pillar used for the scourging. Likewise, a number of instruments of Christ's passion in the Gospels are not included in the *Considerad* like the whip or Pilate's basin for the washing of his hands.

III

Considerad, Cristianos
Que esta columna,
Fue en donde manotearon los Judios,
A nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga haligi,
Amo ang gingairan sang mga Judios
Sa aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

IV

Considerad, Cristianos
Que este cordel,
Fue lo que azotaron los Judios,
El sagrado cuerpo
De nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga pisi,
Amo ang ginhampak sang mga Judios
Sa mahal nga lawas
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

V

Considerad, Cristianos
Que esta tunica,
Fue la que mando a vestir Pilato,
A nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga bayo,
Amo ang ginpasuksok ni Pilato
Sa aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

VI

Considerad, Cristianos
Que esta corona,
Fué la que coronaron
Los Judios,
A la sagrada cabeza
De nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga korona,
Amo ang ginpurong-purong
Sang mga Judios
Sa mahal nga ulo
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

VII

Considerad, Cristianos
Que esta palma,
Fue con que bofetearon los Judios
Al sagrado rostro
De nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga palad,
Amo ang gintampa sang mga Judios
Sa mahal nga nawong
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

VIII

Considerad, Cristianos
Que esta lampara,
Fue la que llevaron los Judios
Cuando iban al Calvario

Con nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga parol,
Amo ang gindala sang mga Judios
Sang pagkadto nila sa Kalbaryo

Upod ang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

IX

Considerad, Cristianos
Que este alfanje,
Fue lo que corto San Pedro

La oreja de Malco Judio
Cuando agarraron los Judios
A nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga tangad,
Amo ang gingutlab ni San Pedro

Sang dulunggan ni Malco Judio
Sang pagdakop sang mga Judios
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

X

Considerad, Cristianos
Que esta sentencia,
Con que Pilato,
Condeno a muerte
A nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga sentencia,
Amo ang ginpamatbat ni Pilato
Sa pagpapatay
Sa aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XI

Considerad, Cristianos
Que esta cruz,
En donde murio
A nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga krus,
Amo ang kinamatyan
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XII

Considerad, Cristianos
Que este martillo,

Fue con que golpearon los Judios

Para clavar en la cruz
Los sagrados pies y manos
De nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga martilyo,

Amo ang ginpakang sang mga Judios

Sa paglansang sa krus
Sa mahal nga tiil kag kamot
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XIII

Considerad, Cristianos
Que estos clavos,
Fueron los que clavaron los Judios
A nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga mga lansang,
Amo ang ginlansang sang mga Judios
Sa aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XIV

Considerad, Cristianos
Que esta escalera,
Fue en donde subio

José de Arimatea para arrancar
Los clavos de la cruz
De nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga hagdan,
Amo ang ginsakaan ni José de Arimatea

Sa paggabot sang mga lansang sa krus
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XV

Considerad, Cristianos
Que este gallo,
Fue el que tres veces canto
Cuando San Pedro nego
Que no concocio
A nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga manok,
Amo ang nagpamalo sing makatlo
Sang paglilong ni San Pedro
Nga siya wala makakilala
Sa aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XVI

Considerad, Cristianos
Que esta lanza,
Fue la que herio Longinus
El sagrado costado
De nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga bangkaw,
Amo ang ginhandos ni Longinus
Sa santos nga kilid
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XVII

Considerad, Cristianos
Que esta tenaza,
Fue el instrumento que arrancaron
Jose y Nicodemos
Los clavos de la cruz
Para descander el sagrado cuerpo
De nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga kimpit,
Amo ang instrumento sang pagpagabot
Ni Jose kag ni Nicodemos
Sang lansang sa krus
Sa pagpanaog sang mahal nga lawas
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XVIII

Considerad, Cristianos
Que este paño,
Fue lo que Santa Veronica limpió,
El sagrado rostro
De nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga panyo,
Amo ang ginpahid ni Santa Veronica
Sa mahal nga nawong
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XIX

Considerad
Que estas espinas,
Fueron las que coronaron los Judios
mapintas
Con crueldad a la sagrada cabeza
De nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga tunok,
Amo ang ginpurong sang mga Judios nga

Sa mahal nga ulo
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XX

Considerad, Cristianos
Que este vaso,
Fue lo que los angeles usaron
Y applicaron los Judios

A nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga baso,
Amo ang gingamit sang mga anghel
Sa pagpainom sang mga Judios

Sa aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XXI

Considerad, Cristianos
Que esta esponja,
Fue la que remojaron
Con hiel y vinagre
Y applicaron los Judios
A nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga espongha,
Amo ang gintuhop
Sa apdo kag langgaw
Kag ginpainom sang mga Judios
Sa aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XXII

Considerad, Cristianos
Que este rotulo
Que con que Pilato
Mandó a poner y colocar sobre la cruz
De nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga rotulo,
Amo ang ginpabutang ni Pilato
Sa ibabaw sang krus
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.

XXIII

Considerad
Que estos dados,
Fueron los que jugaron los Judios,
Para ver quien de ellos,
Poseeran la tunica inconsutil,
De nuestro señor Jesucristo.

Pamalandungon ta, mga Cristianos,
Ini nga mga dais,
Amo ang ginsugalan sang mga Judios,
Agud makilala kon sin-o sa ila,
Ang magatag-iya sang tunica nga wala
sing tinakipan
Sang aton Ginuong Jesucristo.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ The researcher edited the Spanish version from the piece given by an informant Mr. Romeo Buenvenida Berjamin, and did the same with Clavel's published Hiligaynon version. Moreover, Clavel provides the English translation of the original text ("Philippine Revolution in Capiz," 32-33):

I

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on these cards
which the Jews dealt
after selling
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

II

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this pocket
where the Jews kept
the thirty-four coins, the price of
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

III

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this post
where the Jews tied
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

IV

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this rough cord
which the Jews used
to whip the dear body of
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

V

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this garment
which Pilate asked
our Lord Jesus Christ to wear.”

VI

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this wreath
which the Jews crowned
on the dear head of
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

VII

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this palm
which the Jews used to slap
the dear face of
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

VIII

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this lantern
which the Jews brought along
when they went to Calvary
with our Lord Jesus Christ.”

IX

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this knife
which St. Peter used
to cut off Marco Judios’ ear
when the Jews arrested
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

X

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this judgment
which Pilate made
to put to death
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

XI

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this cross
where died
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

XII

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this hammer
which the Jews used to nail
the dear feet and hands of
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

XIII

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on these nails
which the Jews used to crucify
our Lord Jesus Christ.”

XIV

“Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this ladder
which Joseph of Arimathea climbed
to uproot the nails on the cross of
[our Lord Jesus Christ.]”

La Procesión de Considerad: The Good Friday Observance

The different religious processions during Holy Week were Catholic practices brought by the Spanish missionaries to the Philippines from Spain. They gained popularity and became widespread during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries because of the proliferation of several *cofradias* (religious associations) which centered on mortification or sacrifice (*pagpepenetensiya*) as the penitent's way of participation in the sorrows and sufferings of Christ.¹²⁶ Each *cofradia* during that time is "devoted to a particular event in the passion of Christ (for example, *La Vera-Cruz*, carrying of

XV

"Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this rooster
which crowed three times
when St. Peter lied
that he did not know
our Lord Jesus Christ."

XVI

"Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this spear
which Longinus thrust
into the sacred side of
our Lord Jesus Christ."

XVII

"Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on these pliers
which Joseph and Nicodemus
used to uproot the nails
on the cross when they brought down
the dear body of
our Lord Jesus Christ."

XVIII

"Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this handkerchief
which St. Veronica used to wipe
the dear face of
our Lord Jesus Christ."

XIX

"Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on these thorns
which the Jews placed

on the dear head of
our Lord Jesus Christ."

XX

"Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this glass
which the angels used
to quench the thirst of
our Lord Jesus Christ."

XXI

"Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this cotton
which was saturated
with gall and vinegar,
the mixture the Jews made
for our Lord Jesus Christ to drink."

XXII

"Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on this signboard
which Pilate ordered to be placed
on the dear cross of
our Lord Jesus Christ."

XXIII

"Let us reflect, fellow Christians
on these cards
which the Jews dealt
to determine who would own
the robe of
our Lord Jesus Christ."

¹²⁶ Michael P. de los Reyes, *Prusisyon: Paghahanda at Pagdiriwang* (Quezon City: Claretian Publications, 2006), 8.

the cross; *La Expiracion*, death on the cross; *El Santo Entierro*, sacred burial).¹²⁷ From this popular religiosity sprang forth the devotion to the *Via Crucis* by identifying the different stations of Christ's passion.¹²⁸

These Lenten processions led by the different *cofradias* begin on *Viernes Dolores* (Friday of the Fifth Week of Lent) until *Domingo de Pascua* (Easter Sunday).¹²⁹ The *Considerad* of Panay, as part of the Good Friday procession, is rooted from this tradition of religious processions. Michael P. de los Reyes in his study *Prusisyon: Paghahanda at Pagdiriwang* reveals a particular practice called *La Cruz de Guia* or *Arma Christi* similar to the *Considerad*, but without the recitation of verses:

Every procession is led by the *La Cruz de Guia* or *Arma Christi* (symbols of Christ's passion). Every symbol is carried by a *nazareno* (a member of the *cofradia*), who stands between two other *nazarenos* carrying candles, torches or standards. Those who carry the candles are called *hermanos de luz* (brothers of light).¹³⁰

In the Philippines, friar accounts like Fr. Pedro Chirino, S.J.'s *Relacion de las Islas Filipinas* (1606) and Fr. Francisco de San Jose, O.F.M.'s *Baculo de Ministros* (1686) give their observations of these religious processions. In *Historias de las Islas e Indios de Bisayas...* (1668), Fr. Ignacio Francisco Alcina, S.J., "the great defender of the Visayans," for example, describes a Good Friday procession in Samar and Leyte during the seventeenth century closely akin to the *Considerad*, but with no mention of any recitation or chant:

When Good Friday comes, the procession of the Sacred Burial [*Santo Entierro* or *Santo Sepulcro*] is held after the homily on the passion of Christ, and the ritual of the descending [taking down] of Jesus from the cross [*Descendimiento*] in other places. The procession is very organized according to the following order: those flagellating themselves, young boys carrying symbols of the passion of Christ,

¹²⁷ Ibid., 9.

¹²⁸ The holy rosary devotion of the Catholic Church, the foremost Marian piety, which gradually developed during the Middle Ages, preceded all these traditional practices in the Church. There are five (5) sorrowful mysteries in the roary, which depict the passion and death of Jesus, namely: *The Agony in the Garden*, *The Scourging at the Pillar*, *The Crowning with Thorns*, *The Carrying of the Cross*, *The Crucifixion and Death*. See Richard Gribble, *The History and Devotion of the Rosary* (Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor, 1992).

¹²⁹ De los Reyes, *Prusisyon*, 9.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 10. See also Susan V. Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998).

image of the Lord Jesus Christ, cross with black cloth hanging on it, and the Virgin of Sorrows.¹³¹

This historical introduction on religious processions in Spain and in the Philippines aids to adequately understand the *Considerad* of Panay. The foregoing discussion reveals that the *Considerad* of Panay forms a significant part of the Good Friday Procession called *Procesion del Santo Entierro*. As Gilda Cordero-Fernando and Fernando Zialcita (as editors) in *Cuaresma* opines: “The most important Holy Week procession takes place on Good Friday, and the principal figure is the *Santo Entierro*.”¹³² They explain: “Good Friday processions around the Philippines feature dramatic *carrozas* [carriages, floats], some of which bear angels that carry symbols of Christ’s passion. The symbols of Christ passion are hammer and nails; scourges, sometimes the scourging pillar; a lamb (of God); the soldiers’ gambling dice; a cross; a crown of thorns; a skull; a shield; a lance; a sponge soaked in vinegar, Mary Magdalene’s jar of ointment; a rooster to recall Jesus’ betrayal by St. Peter, a whip; the ear that Peter cuts off from a soldier; the Last Supper plate; and Judas’ bag of silver pieces.”¹³³

As gathered from valuable interviews, there were other *Considerads* existing before, and a number of them like those of Loctugan, Sigma, Dumarao, Casanayan and Pres. Roxas were probably imitations or copies of the *Considerad* of Panay, initiated and introduced by former ministers of Panay to other towns.¹³⁴

But the actual performance of the *Considerad* of Panay is preceded by a rigid two-month preparation from the date of the Holy Week. As early as January or February, forty-six young boys (23 for the Spanish and 23 for the Hiligaynon)

¹³¹ De los Reyes, *Prusisyon*, 20. See also Cantius Kobak and Pablo Fernandez, “Alcina’s Report on the Celebration of Feasts in XVIIth Century Samar and Leyte, *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. 16, No. 46, 1981, 167.

¹³² Gilda Cordero-Fernando and Nakpil N. Zialcita, eds., *Cuaresma* (Makati City: Bookmark, Inc. and Bungang Araw, 2000, 213. Cordero-Fernando and Zialcita speak about the colorful Lenten season in the Philippines: “No other liturgical season in the Philippines has as varied, as visible, and as vibrant a folklore as Lent has. The Christmas season has indeed inspired a distinctive art, music, cuisine and etiquette, but Lent has these too and more. While native carols are sung at Christmas, chants whose phrasing dates back to the days of the *datus* give Lent its unmistakable, uncanny character. Elaborate plays and playlets, a popular epic on the life of Christ, magical beliefs, taboos, ornate processions, and spectacular rituals have sprung up around Lent. It is on Good Friday when town after town turns out in full force to honor the bier of the Dead Lord. Machos, who will otherwise not be caught at a religious service, will be seen holding a candle in procession. Holy Week constitutes the inmost sanctuary of the Christian Filipino’s soul” (Ibid., Preface, ix).

¹³³ Ibid., 212.

¹³⁴ The informants of the researcher in his interviews are the following: Rev. Fr. Antonio B. Billones, a native of Panay and now parish priest of Pres. Roxas, Capiz; Mr. Romeo Buenvenida Benjamin; and the *Considerad* boys – Brandon Bechayda (11 years old, who joined just this Holy Week 2008), Joshua Bermejo (12 years old, who has been a participant for three years now) and Rex Dumol (who joined only once when he was 8 years old).

between seven (7) to fourteen (14), elementary and highschool students, are chosen, before through careful selection, but now by voluntary participation.¹³⁵ The practices, dwelling on the pairing of the participants for the Spanish and Hiligaynon versions of the text, its memorization and chanting, and the mock procession, are held on Saturdays, between 8 and 9 in the morning, after which snacks are served. Decades ago, this responsibility of training the children and supervising the actual event of the *Considerad* rested on the shoulders of the parish priest. It was only around 1948 when Fr. Juan Cerdeña as curate of the Sta. Monica Church (1939-1976) passed the administration of this religious practice to the Buenvenida Family after the war. Mr. Vicente Buenvenida, fondly called “Tay Cente,” devoted his time and effort, for several years, to perpetuate and celebrate this traditional custom every Good Friday as a *panata* (vow). And upon his death, this important function went to his nephew, Mr. Romeo Buenvenida Berjamin, a retired school teacher and government official in 1986. This phenomenon of entrusting religious customs to the able leadership of the lay faithful helps unburden the priests, the pastors of the Church, from their enormous duties. De los Reyes gives an instructive example as regards the processional images: “As the procession becomes more pompous, the sacred images used in the procession also grow in numbers. At first, the principal processional images were under the custody of the Church. Later on, the priests entrusted the care of these images to the prominent families of the parish.”¹³⁶

On the day of the procession itself, the participants wear their white t-shirts printed with the face of Christ and the words “Considerad ni Hesus,” along with their black pants and black shoes. Each of them is tasked to carry a bamboo pole of seven (7) feet, wrapped with black (or if unavailable, purple) crepe paper, and where hangs a symbol of Christ’s passion, made from wood and other materials, artistically drawn, and colored.

Originally, the *Considerad* of Panay took the spot in front of the *carroza* of the *Santo Entierro*, but it was lately transferred at the start of the whole procession after the *ciriales* [processional cross and candles] to give it certain prominence and to

¹³⁵ The young girls, on the other hand, who are dressed as angels, belong to the *Hossana* group. They usually follow the carriage of the *Santo Entierro*. As the procession progresses, they all sing:

Hosanna sa Anak ni David!	Hosanna to the Son of David!
Dayawon ang nagakari	Let us worship him who comes
Sa ngalan sang Ginuo.	In the name of the Lord/
O Hari sang Israel!	O King of Israel!
Hosanna sa Anak ni David!	Hossana to the Son of David!

This is adapted from the Gospel narrative of the glorious entrance of Jesus to Jerusalem *Mateo* 21:9; *Marcos* 11:9-10; *Lucas* 19:38; *Juan* 12:13).

¹³⁶ De Los Reyes, *Prusisyon*, 25.

introduce the whole pageantry of Christ's Paschal Mystery, i.e., His passion, death and resurrection, depicted and carried by different beautifully adorned carriages.

As the Good Friday procession begins, the participants also start to chant the verse alternately in Spanish on the right side and in Hiligaynon on the left, and recently, with the aid of wireless microphones. They repeat the whole text until the processional crowd reaches the grounds of the Church. After the final blessing given by the priest, the participants share a hearty *merienda* (snacks) before going home.¹³⁷

Below is the notation of the simple chant:¹³⁸



Considerad,	Cris-	tia-	nos,
Que	estos	da-	dos,
Fueron los que jugaron los Ju-	di-	os,	
Y Judas cuando ven-	di-	o,	

A	nues-	tro	señor	Jesu-	cris-	to.
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Conclusion

The *Considerad* of Panay undeniably plays a significant role in the religious tradition of the people. This Good Friday procession to a great extent is reflective and constitutive of their identity as Panayanons, since they have been Catholics for almost five centuries now. It continues to be their bridge from the past to the present, and hopefully, towards the future. And every generation of Panayanons has been a part of the *Considerad*, that even almost every male child of every family has become a participant of such pious custom. May the town of Panay always be grateful of this Catholic heritage which it continues to treasure by preserving and conserving it for the succeeding generations!

Laus Deo!

¹³⁷ In his article, Clavel gives his own description of the *Considerad*: "The participants were 46 Capisnon boys each carrying a pole (*palos*). From each pole was hung an object to symbolize a significant part of the life of Jesus Christ. The boys were divided into two: those on the right recited the Spanish text of the *Considerad*; while those on the left, the Hiligaynon translation" ("Philippine Revolution in Capiz," 33).

¹³⁸ This notation was done through the expertise of Msgr. Guillermo Belvis, H.P.