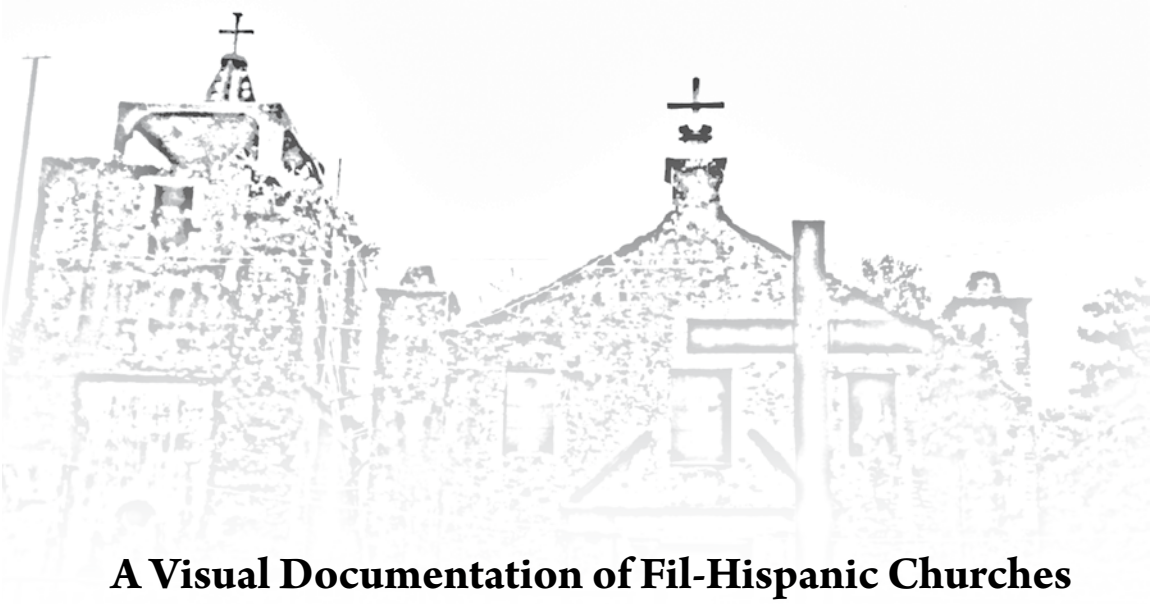

A Visual Documentation of Fil-Hispanic Churches
Part IX: Parish Church of San Ignacio de Loyola, Capul, Northern Samar

Regalado Trota Jose

Antis si panikangan aniya' na Allingon, ngan yayto Allingon aghuwang si Diyos, ngan i Allingon, iya i Diyos. Juan 1, 1[1]

A tiny island with much to tell

Capul is the name of an island in the middle of the San Bernardino Strait, the body of water which separates Luzon from Samar.[2] For its diminutive size, there is much to talk about Capul and its people. In earlier times the island was also called Abac. Although today's inhabitants call themselves Abaknon, and the language they speak Inabaknon, there was a time when three language communities shared the same island. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, Don Francisco García de Torres, who seems to have been a secular priest, noted that in the middle of the island were Negritos who spoke Inagta. Those who spoke Inabaknon lived towards the northern portion of Capul. Scattered elsewhere

[1] From *I Baha'o Kasuratan* [The New Testament in Sama Abaknon of Capul, Northern Samar]. N.p.: Philippine Bible Society, 1996. Imprimatur by Most Rev. Angel T. Hobayan, D.D., Bishop of Catarman, November 1, 1996.

[2] The treachery and turbulence of these waters are legendary. Due to lack of space, however, we shall refer the reader to descriptions of these in Alcina 2004, pp. 255-256 and 259, 261. Accounts of, and directions for sailing through the San Bernardino Strait are at Cushner (various pages). Full citations of the references will be found in the Bibliography at the end of this article.

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in the island were speakers of the language "in which we preach and administer the holy sacraments" [i.e, some version of Visayan].[3]

Although Capul today refers to a tiny island, its reach in the early 17th century seems to have included settlements on the northwest "horn" of Samar Island. In a report prepared around 1612 on the Jesuit missions in Samar, Capul curiously had the highest number of tributes: at 437, it topped the villages of Tinago (339) and Ybatan (330)[4] on the mainland. Capul's two settlements were listed as Sucar and Savan, which is significant because no other settlements were mentioned for the rest of the villages.[5] Sawang exists today on the mid-western coast of Capul, roughly where Linongsuran ("place previously settled") appears on a 1983 map. The "Sucar" of 1612 could be the "Sughan" mentioned as one of the *visitas* that later formed the town of La Granja (now Allen) in 1863.[6] Present-day Sughan is on the Pacific side of the north westernmost tip of Samar island, overlooking the Balicuatro Islands.

La Granja was formed as a town in December 1863 from parts of Capul, Bobon (itself a town created in August of the same year), Catarman, and Calbayog. La Granja incorporated the following visitas: Minapoa (the main part of town); Sughan and Borobaybay (both now pertaining to Lavezares, established as a town in 1875); Mawo (now Victoria municipality); and Pinonayan, of uncertain location today.[7] It is not possible to ascertain which of these localities pertained to Capul. However, when the Jesuits left Samar in 1768, Capul's boundaries on mainland Samar could have reached up to the boundaries of Bangajon (now Gandara) further south on the western coast, and Catarman on the northern coast: Bangajon and Catarman were the two towns nearest Capul. The Capul islanders might have maintained small farms on the mainland, perhaps like the way the people of Banton (Romblon Province) maintained farms on neighboring Tablas island,[8] or the people of Ivana (Batan island, Batanes Province) across on the island of Sabtang.[9]

[3] Don Francisco's observations were written in Rome in 1784, so my tentative guess is he was in Capul at some point during the transition between Jesuit and Franciscan spiritual administration (c.1768-early 1780s). He seems to have been a remarkable polyglot, fluent at least in Bisayan, Tagalog, and Pampango, and with an understanding of Inagta and Inabaknon. In fact, he had written a dictionary, catechism and other works in the latter language. Hervás, p. 268.

[4] Tinago is now known as Dapdap, in the municipality of Tarangnan. Ybatan or Hibatang is the predecessor of the Calbayog area; Punta Hibatan and a village called Hibatan are by the mouth of the Pagsanhan River, northwest of Calbayog, in the San Joaquin district or what was known previously as Tinambacan or Weyler.

[5] From highest number of tributes to lowest, these 11 villages were: Capul, Tinago, Ybatan, Libunao, Malulubug, Cavayan [Santo Niño], Paranas [now Wright], Bangaun [now Gandara], Calvigan, Boloneto, and Cotay [Catbalogan]. Lopez c.1612, pp. 205-206.

[6] Jose III, p. 228; Nabong-Cabardo, p. 41a.

[7] Jose 2008, III, p. 228; Redondo, p. 229; Cruikshank 1985, pp. 137-138, 267-268.

[8] Jose 2012, pp. 180-181.

[9] González Alonso, p. 56.

Jesuit evangelization

The Jesuits began their evangelization of Samar island on Oct 22, 1596, in Tinago. By 1600, ten churches had been built on just as many villages, including Tinago, Hibatang, Bangahon, Paranas,[10] Catubig, and Capul, this last being the only mission on an island. Since Jesuits were expressly forbidden from administering stable establishments such as parishes, they conducted missionary "campaigns" in pairs visiting one village at a time. They all reported to one of two headquarters or "residences" on Samar: one at Tinago, which served those working on the western side of the island (the part of the island that was properly called "Samar") and another at Palapag which was established in 1614 (roughly at the junction of the northern and eastern coastlines of the island, the area then known as "Ibabao"). When Tinago was ravaged by a pirate attack, the Samar Residence was transferred to Catbalogan in 1616. Henceforth, Catbalogan became the capital (*cabecera*) of the province that eventually took on the name of Samar.[11]

The Jesuits began their evangelization in Capul at the same time as in the mainland of Samar. Alcina explains: "as the contagion and epidemic were stalking those smaller islands ..., it behooved the charity and fervent zeal of the first ministers, few that they were—three to be exact—, to reach out to all the islands and with a tireless spirit go visiting them and initiating them gradually in the Faith; and thus then the inhabitants of Capul were receiving baptism."[12]

The archipelagic context of the mission was daunting indeed. Alcina mentions various small islands in relation to Capul, and when these are located on a map, the Jesuit route between Capul and Catbalogan can be reconstructed: "neighboring Tagapola and Camandag, ... Limbancauayan, Talaheb, Napalisan, Libucan, Eana-awan, Buri" most possibly correspond to today's Tagapula, Camandag, Santo Niño, Talalit, Napaligan, Libucan, Canahauan, and Buri.[13] For some unknown reason, some of the islands *closest* to Capul are not mentioned by Alcina, such as Dalupirit, San Vicente, and the group of six islets known as the Islotes Naranjos.[14] They may have been uninhabited, although Alcina says that at that time the numerous scattered islands were substantially populated (*casi todas tenían gente, unas mas, otras menos*). The additional detail that an epidemic was raging through the islands underscores

[10] Bangajon is now Gandara; and Paranas is now Wright.

[11] Alcina 1979, p. 395.

[12] Alcina 1982, p. 133.

[13] Limbancauayan was also referred to as Cauayan, and was renamed Santo Niño Island; Talahib, Napalisan, and Eana-awan may have been mis-transcriptions of today's Talalit, Napaligan, and Canahauan Islands, respectively; Talalit has also been renamed Almagro Island.

[14] Dalupirit or Dalupiri was also known as Isla de Puercos in Fr. Algué's 1899 *Atlas*. San Vicente is the modern name of what Algué labelled Destacada, or what appears in some maps as Mongolbongol. The Islotes Naranjos were identified by Alejandro Malaspina during his expedition in 1792 as San Andres, de la Rosa, Darsena, de la Aguada, Escarpada, and del Medio; the map he prepared was printed in Madrid in 1808. The Naranjos, which at one time belonged to Masbate, now pertain to San Vicente municipality, Northern Samar province.

the facility with which the people crossed the waters. However, the occasional navigational disaster coupled with the lack of missionaries significantly hampered the initial evangelical push. Alcina wrote that when Fr. Andres de Lisaldi died in Capul "There was no one to give him Christian burial; a few natives buried him themselves." The vessel that Fr. Alonso de Pedraza took on his way back to Capul capsized and the poor Jesuit "escaped over the keel of the vessel after having stayed for hours at the mercy of the waves."[15]

Thus the Jesuits persuaded the islanders to re-establish themselves in the towns on the main island of Samar. For example those from the islands of Cawayan (Santo Niño) and Canahawan were resettled in Catbalogan, and those from Batag were brought to Palapag.[16] Those from Capul were relocated to a site by the Quirabana River "where they could be at our arms' length and thus could be administered or attended to spiritually oftener and more safely by the ministers."[17] The attempt did not prosper: as Alzina ruefully noted, "even though we ... tried several times to transfer its people to the mainland, ...they were not submissive for long and they returned to their island where they now live and will live until God should give them a desire greater than what they have now of being a good Christian...Capul has preserved an independent township and church."[18]

A tongue so different

Such an obstinacy may have a strong connection with the Abaknon and their language, *Inabaknon*. Alcina mentions that Abag was the other, perhaps older name for Capul, though the Spaniards tended to use the latter. Alcina adds that each name had its own meaning, but also implies that each proceeded from a language different from the other. Though the Abaknon were quite fluent in Bisayan which was spoken all over the islands, they had their own language as well. The same was true for the people of Viri, the largest of the Balicuatro Islands on the Pacific side of the northwest "horn" of Samar, and for "others." Thus Alcina theorized that the first inhabitants of Capul "came from a place different from where originated the Bisayans of the other towns who have a common tongue." [19]

Linguists note that Inabaknon like all Philippine languages is a member of the Austronesian family of languages,[20] specifically of the Sama Badyaw group which

[15] Alcina 1978, p. 529.

[16] Alcina 1979, p. 395.

[17] The Quirabana River cannot be presently located. The name could be a mis-transcription of, or related to, the present village of Quinaboan, on the north bank of the Bangajon River, just north of present-day Gandara. Bangajon/ Gandara, as mentioned above, was one of the original Jesuit missions, and could fit the description of having Capul "at arm's length" very well.

[18] Alcina 1982, pp. 133-134.

[19] Alcina 1982, p. 133; also Alcina 2002, pp. 166-169. The linguistic evidence for (extinct?) languages like those of Viri remains to be discovered.

[20] The Austronesian family of languages spans the Indian and Pacific oceans, extending from Madagascar in the west to Easter island in the East.

is spread throughout Indonesia, Sabah, and the Sulu Archipelago. Fr. Marc Jacobson, a long time consultant of the Summer Institute of Linguistics in Capul, told me that the language most closely related to Inabaknon was in fact Yakan, spoken in Basilan.[21] Interestingly, Inabaknon is the only Sama language without Arabic influence; its speakers had separated from their Sama linguistic cousins as early as 800 years ago. This is reflected in Capul oral tradition: unwilling to embrace Islam, the ancestors of the Abaknon fled from Balabac (hence the name "Abac") and eventually settled in where they are now.[22]

Alcina has more to say about Inabaknon. [Inabaknon] "is so different that no Bisayan from another region (nor the rest of us who know the Bisayan language) can understand a word of it, for it is so different in structure and pronunciation. We may conclude from this that these people have a different origin. Some of these people say that they can understand the *camucones* (a barbarous nation, a wretched and most despicable people about whom we will speak when we will treat the enemies who harass these islands). It is very probable that the people of Capul may trace their origin to them. The reason is due to the similarity of language, color, physiognomy and because they are smaller in stature than the rest of the Bisayans ...; the latter are fairer in complexion and more corpulent."[23]

The *camucones* in Alcina's account are referred to in other Spanish sources as *camuçones*, a collective name for the Tidung of northeastern Borneo and the nomadic Bajau of the Sulu archipelago. Both groups were mobilized by the Brunei sultanate to raid Sulu, Mindanao and other islands in the 17th century. The Tidung were animists, and were only gradually Islamized beginning in the late 18th century (that is why not all the slave raiders or pirates were "Moro").[24]

Perhaps another link to the complex cultural make-up of the Abaknon may be found in the group of islands to the west of Capul, known as the Naranjos ("oranges"). The southernmost island is named "Ternate:"[25] could it be linked to the

[21] Fr. Marc Jacobson, personal communication, October 14, 2012, Capul.

[22] Footnote 14 in Alcina 2004, pp. 268-269, discusses Inabaknon at length, drawing mainly from the major source on Inabaknon: Marc R. Jacobson and Suzanne M. Jacobson, "Sama Abaknon Phonology," *Philippine Journal of Linguistics*, 11:1 (June 1980). According to this article, speakers of Inabaknon (also called Kinapul, Kapulenyo, or Sama-Abaknon) numbered about 20,000, with 12,000 on Capul itself and the rest scattered throughout the country. According to the 1995 Census of the National Statistics Office, there were 13,000 speakers of Inabaknon, but the distribution was not mentioned. Honorable Isidro Suan Bandal, mayor, said he even found Abaknon in the Batanes; personal communication, October 15, 2012, Capul.

[23] Alcina 2002, pp. 166-167.

[24] Okushima, pp. 1-2, 23. The Brunei sultans also utilized a coastal people of northwest Borneo, the Bisaya, as a maritime force similar to the way they harnessed the Camuçones: *ibid*, p. 3. This adds dimensions to the significance of "Bisaya" in Philippine context. Communities of Bornean "Bisaya" are found on the northern coast of Brunei Bay.

[25] Alcina 2002, p. 293 (footnote by Fr. Kobak). In both the Malaspina and Algué maps, this island is named "Isla de la Aguada." Huerta mentions the island, misspelled "Tamate," had a visita ministered to from Capul.

people of the island of the same name in the Moluccas, the famed "Spice Islands?" The Catholic Ternateños fled their homeland in 1663 when the Dutch took over from the Portuguese. Could their odyssey that led to Manila and resettlement in a town, also called Ternate, in Cavite have made an intermediate stop in this island?

Who were the enemies?

The relation with the Camuçones, if verified, could help explain why the inhabitants of Capul Island were sometimes accused of allowing "the Moros a place of refuge and even [assisting] them in their depredations on their neighbours. Its inhabitants often aided and joined the Moros in their raiding sorties."[26] In 1636, 60 Camuçon raiders were killed and 18 *caracoas* destroyed near Capul:[27] were they about to seek shelter in, or launch a foray from Capul? In July of the next year, Camuçones fresh from a raid in Palapag were met by forces from Manila somewhere along the San Bernardino Strait, and were forced to land at Capul; here they also freed some Christian captives.[28]

The Capuleños were accused of consorting not only with "Moros" but with the Dutch as well. In 1614, six Dutch ships anchored off Capul; they not only whiled away their time, they were entertained by the natives.[29]

As Capul developed into a strategic beacon of the Hispanic empire along the galleon route, such consorting with the "enemy" would change. The Dutch, not quite 30 years after their tarrying in Capul, returned in 1642 and sacked the town. Such a raid had one positive outcome, however. As the church was burning, the Dutch recognized the "very smooth, pleasant aroma" of its wood, quickly put out the fire, and carted off what remained of the pillars. Only then did the islanders come to know that their heavy frameworks were made of sandalwood, a highly prized trade item with the Chinese.[30]

Capul started to become subject to attacks and slave raids, Moro or otherwise.[31] Datus of Jolo and Tawitawi burned the town in 1663[32] and again in 1763 (as if to mark the centennial of pillage).[33] A number of raids were unrecorded.

[26] Dery, p. 136.

[27] Dery, p. 20.

[28] Cruikshank 1979, p. 73.

[29] Alcina 1979, pp. 395, 397.

[30] Alcina 1982, p. 135; Alcina 2002, pp. 504-505.

[31] Moro raids on Samar while the Jesuits were there, are dated to as early as 1608; then 1613, 1629, 1636, 1658, 1754, 1756: Cruikshank 1979b, p. 142. Another list of Moro raids on Samar, 1754-1855, *ibid*., 167-171. It is unknown if Capul was affected by the Sumuroy Revolt, which began in Palapag in 1649 and then spread to as far as northern Mindanao; the Revolt was put down in 1650 (Redondo, p. 43).

[32] Redondo, p. 41; the "moros joloanos" also burned Poro, Baybay, Sogod, Cabalian, Basey, Bangajon (now Gandara), Gibatan (predecessor of Calbayog). See also Dery, pp. 22-23.

[33] Apart from Capul, towns destroyed in Samar included Basay, Bangajon, and Ybatan: Dery, p. 36.

Alcina lamented in the 1660s, that several islands were being depopulated because of these expeditions. Conditions were not much better a century later. In 1753 tributes in Capul numbered 226; the total dropped to 157 the next year. Similar losses were reported in Samar.[34] When the Jesuits were expelled from their Philippine missions in 1768, they left without the minister of Capul, Fr. Juan Esandi: months earlier he had been captured by raiders and executed.[35]

Franciscan ministrations

In 1768, Capul was among the Jesuit missions in Samar turned over to the Franciscans.[36] The first decades of Franciscan ministry in Capul were fraught with many difficulties. "Moro" raids continued without let-up. In fact, the peak years of such attacks in Samar waters appear to have been in the third quarter of the 18th century.[37] The lack of missionaries had grave consequences on the status of Capul as a parish, as we shall see. We have no names of Franciscans assigned for the years 1769 to 1771; in situations where religious were not available, diocesan priests were sent as temporary ministers. Even if there was a missionary, however, relations with the Abaknon were not always cordial.

Fr. Miguel Rico, a Franciscan assigned to Capul in the early 1770s, got into an altercation with that island's *datu* (chieftain). At one point he was so mad he almost fired a cannon at the *datu*'s house. A similar problem arose in the 1830s, where miscreants were hidden from the authorities. Some of the disturbances arose when the Franciscans abolished the commerce which the local leaders had carried on with their previous Jesuit ministers (for example, the collection of wax for candles). The Samar scholar Bruce Cruikshank suggests that Capul society had a strong sense of separateness from mainlanders; their solidarity for one of their own could hardly be broken by the Spaniards, whether they were friars or captains. Capul, Villareal, and Borongan were the three pueblos of Samar with the most troubles between priest and parishioner.[38]

When Capul was turned over to the Franciscans in 1768, part of its territory on the mainland included the *visita* (mission station) of Calbayog. As trade routes between the Bicol peninsula and Samar improved, Calbayog gradually developed into a major port. The Franciscan priest at Capul was also responsible for Calbayog, but in 1785 spiritual administration of Calbayog was transferred to Bangahon which was nearer, and in 1788 Calbayog received its first minister.[39] Because of the lack of missionaries, the tables were turned on Capul. Capul became a visita of Calbayog.[40]

[34] Dery, p. 62.

[35] See the account in Cushner 1964, pp. 69 and 168.

[36] These missions or quasi-parishes were Catbalogan, Paranas, Umauas, Borongan, Sulat, Tubig, Catubig, Palapag, Catarman, Bangahon and Capul.

[37] Cruikshank 1985, p. 43.

[38] Cruikshank 1985, pp. 48-51, 62.

[39] Redondo, p.212, citing Huerta p. 312.

[40] Huerta, pp. 294-295.

Almost eighty years were to pass before Capul was separated spiritually from Calbayog as per Superior approval of September 12 1864, and formally made a parish by diocesan decree 18 November 1869.[41] According to Fr. Redondo, it had *visitas* on the islands of Dalupirit, Ternate (misspelled Tamate), Maragat (on San Andres island), and Tando (unidentified location).[42] Due to the Philippine Revolution, the Franciscans vacated most of their Samar parishes in late September 1898. The Franciscan parish priest of Capul apparently stayed on until 1903. Bishop Thomas Hendrick requested for the return of thirty Franciscans to Samar, and Fr. Salvador Rodriguez re-connected Capul to the Franciscan family in 1907.[43] A successor, Fr. Angel Ranera, was martyred during the Spanish Civil War in 1936 and was beatified in 2007.[44]

Aromatic churches

We may assume that the first church, perhaps better called a chapel, was erected of light materials during the first years of Jesuit ministration. This was possibly the chapel still up when Capul was listed as one of the Jesuit missions in Samar in a 1602 report. Combining details from various accounts, many of which have yet to be verified, Capul church is said to have been razed in 1615, 1642, 1650, 1663, 1763, and 1768.[45] The Dutch set the church ablaze in 1642; all the rest were caused by the "Moros." No mention has been found about the damage caused by typhoons, so prominent in the Bicol and Samar-Leyte region, until quite into the contemporary era.

The church burned by the Dutch in 1642 was built with pillars of aromatic sandalwood, as noted above.[46] Although one modern source says the church was rebuilt in stone in 1615, it is more plausible that this development was achieved at some later date. The first Jesuit constructions in stone in Samar began with Fr. Cristobal de Miralles, who arrived in the Philippines in 1653. The principal churches

[41] By this time Capul had also advanced economically. The fields were planted to rice, corn and tobacco, and there was a variety of root crops as well. The rice surplus, along with the *guinaras* cloth woven by the women, was usually brought to Albay on middle-sized ships. A luxury item that was also traded was *carey*, the shell of marine turtles that abounded along the coasts. Ironically, there was not enough fish due to the strong currents of the San Bernardino Strait. The sailboats took about three hours to get to Luzon, and about the same time to sail to Samar. Mail was received every week, because it was a point of transit between the Visayas and Luzon. see Huerta pp. 294-295. A lighthouse was inaugurated on December 30, 1896 on the northern tip of the island facing the Embocadero and Sorsogon and a short distance from the only protected anchorage called Punta Galera (now San Luis): Sanchez Terry, pp. 348-354.

[42] Redondo p. 229.Tando is probably not the present-day Tando on Capul Island; it was 2 ½ leagues away from Capul, farther away than Dalupirit (1 ½ leagues away).

[43] Nabong-Cabardo pp. 56, 70.

[44] Nabong-Cabardo.

[45] According to Anonymous, Alcina 2002 pp. 504-505, Ampuan p. 95, Redondo p. 41, Dery p. 36, and Ampuan p. 95, respectively.

[46] Among other hardwoods in its forests were the *alintatao*, the best known of its class, and *ipil*, which often yielded timbers reaching up to 62 feet in length. Huerta, pp. 294-295.

he built were those in Paranas (now Wright), Balangiga, and Basey (a small *hermita*); however, it is unknown how much of this has survived.[47] No other detail on the construction of the stone church in Capul has been found, although it was the one turned over to the Franciscans when the Jesuits left.[48]

The Franciscan historian Fr. Felix Huerta tells us that the stone church in Capul was repaired in 1781 by Fr. Mariano Valero.[49] During his two year assignment in Capul, he also built the bell tower which Huerta (perhaps rather the one who sent him the account on Capul) considers "the most beautiful and solid tower in Samar."[50] In 1903, the Philippine Commission reported that of the forty pueblos in Samar province, four were partly destroyed: Catbalogan, Capul, Catarman and Basey.[51] It is not known what caused the destruction, nor if the Capul church compound suffered with the rest of the town. At some point an altar was constructed in neo-Gothic style; the painted ceiling featured God creating the world, Saint Peter holding a key, and "Saint Paul and the angels." All this was destroyed when Typhoon *Jean* assaulted the island in 1947. A temporary church had to be built in the courtyard of the convent, until the church was rebuilt by Fr. Semeon Desoloc when he was parish priest between 1950 and 1952. *Wilming* in 1967 and *Dinang* in 1981 inflicted more damage; in 1988 another typhoon ripped off the roof of the church and part of the convento. Subsequent repairs resulted in the loss of the choir loft.[52] Thus today's interior is rather bare.[53]

The history of the construction of the stone fortress is unknown, although a palisade of timber may have already been constructed in the 17th century. (One of the first defensive walls to be put up in the region was that at Carigara, northern Leyte, raised after a 1629 raid[54]). Unverified sources attribute Capul's stone fortification to the first Franciscans on the island, either Fr. Joaquin Martinez or Fr. Miguel Rico de Jesus.[55] They were assigned to Capul in the early 1770s, which coincides with the peak years of pirate expeditions in Samar waters as mentioned above.

[47] Redondo, p. 44. Fr. Miralles was rector of the Dagami residence in Leyte, of the Catbalogan residence in western Samar, of the Carigara residence in Leyte, of the College of Cebu (twice), and later assigned to the Tagalog missions; he died in Manila in 1708.

[48] Huerta, pp. 294-295; also in Cruikshank 2003, III p. 50.

[49] Fr. Santiago de Cabezas reported in 1785 that the churches that had been burned in Catbalogan, Paranas and Capul were rebuilt. Nabong-Cabardo, p. 172.

[50] Huerta, pp. 294-295. Repeated by Marin y Morales, II, p.476.

[51] Nabong-Cabardo p. 70.

[52] Javellana 1992, p. 219; Ampuan p. 96; I Capul pp. 98, 110; Anonymous.

[53] The sacristy and convento harbored some very bad spirits and they had to be exorcised. Fr. Tobias G. Irinco, parish priest, personal communication, October 15, 2012, Capul.

[54] Javellana 1992, p. 132; also Dery, p. 81.

[55] Ampuan p. 95, and Anonymous, respectively. Huerta states Fr. Joaquin Martinez was the first Franciscan in Capul, and is listed as having been assigned there in November 1772 (Huerta p. 294 and Cruikshank 2003, III p. 50). A later Franciscan chronicler, Eusebio Gomez Platero, states that Fr. Miguel Rico de Jesus was the first on Capul but does not give any date (Gomez Platero p. 536); he was listed as having been assigned to Capul in November of 1775, although Cruikshank narrates Fr. Rico's quarrels with the datu of Capul during 1772 and 1773 (Cruikshank 1985 pp. 49-51 and Cruikshank 2003, III p. 50). Perhaps Fr. Martinez exchanged his assignment with Fr. Rico, or relinquished it soon after he landed in Capul, giving way to Fr. Rico's assignment.

The fort of Capul is quadrangular in plan, with bastions of different shapes at each of the corners. The two facing inland (to the west) are shaped like expanded aces of spades, while the two facing the sea (eastwards) are circular. The southeast bastion seems to have been re-enforced with additional walls on two sides[56]. Atop the northeast bastion is a cannon. The massive nave of the church bisects the fort. The entrance to the church is also the entrance to the fort, a symbolic configuration found in a few other fortified churches such as in Cuyo (Calamianes Islands, Palawan) and Calapan (Mindoro). The crenellations that crown the fortress walls—a continuous line of solids and spaces that enabled defenders with small firearms and other weapons to fire from any point along the ramparts—are unique, not seen in forts of similar size.

On a promontory not far away from town and facing the sea across the Samar mainland are the ruins of a watchtower. Nearby is a stream of fresh water that could have supported a populace waiting out an enemy siege. On the opposite end of town, about a couple of blocks north of the church façade, is another ruin. Presently it is ensconced in a house compound, but its upper stone walls can be seen from the street. The thick walls surround a room-like quadrangular space: it could have been a blockhouse that served as one more line of defense against invaders trying to enter the church. The church, bell tower, fortification, watch tower, and "block house" are all of mixed coral stone and river stone, very roughly hewn into brick-like shapes of varying sizes. A number of walls have still preserved layers of protective *palitada* or lime plaster.

The church, dedicated to San Ignacio de Loyola, has a stark façade articulated only with an entrance crowned with a rudimentary "broken" pediment and three rectangular windows corresponding to the choirloft. The windows along the sides have been enlarged and it is not quite possible to ascertain the original height and disposition of the openings. The sacristy occupies the ground floor of the back of the church; above it is a portion of the convento. This convento extends eastward from the south end of the church (its rear), giving the building an "L" plan. On the opposite, western side of the nave is another, smaller extension, roughly coinciding with the communion rail on the other side of the wall. Though it seems to be a transept, it could be the remains of an older convento.

This older convento is referred to in Redondo's 1886 description of Capul. Then, it measured 19 *varas* long, equal to the width of the church. Today there are only ruins, but the site could probably match the dimensions. The newer convento seems to be the one behind the church, and is the one in use. A gateway leading to this convento was opened from the eastern wall of the fort; the year 1898 is inscribed over it.[57]

[56] Javellana 1992 p. 132; artist's rendition of the compound, pp. 158-159.

[57] Redondo's descriptions and measurements of the church and its auxiliaries are the following. The church of *mamposteria* (rough cut stone) was roofed with nipa; length 61 *varas* (one vara is the Spanish equivalent of a yard); width 19 *varas*; height 9 *varas*. The bell tower was also of *mamposteria*,

The church of San Ignacio de Loyola on Capul Island is the visible heritage of a people who have tenaciously kept their language and culture alive, despite keeping open the flow of cultures to and from the many seas around them.■

Priests in Capul, 17th century-1920[58]

Legend:

OFM	Order of Friars Minor (Franciscan)
Sec.	Secular priest
SJ	Societatis Jesu (Jesuit)

16??	**Franciscus Petrus**, "first permanently assigned priest". Anon.
c. 1645	**Alonso de Pedraza**, SJ. Drowned on his way back to Capul. Alcina 1978, p. 529.
1655	**Matias Montemayor**, SJ. Nabong-Cabardo, p. 17.
c.1657-1660	**Andres de Lisaldi**, SJ. Alcina 1978, p. 529.
1768	**Juan Esandi**, SJ (1730-1768). Taken by the Moros and later killed. Cushner, p. 168.
1768	Not listed in Franciscan sources. Cruikshank 2003, III p. 51.
c.1768-1780s?	**Francisco Garcia de Torres**, Sec. Hervás, p. 268.
1771	Left to the discretion of the Franciscan Provincial. Cruikshank 2003, III p. 51.
1772	**Joaquin José Martinez de las Rosas**, OFM (1732-c.1787). First Franciscan in Capul (Huerta, pp. 294-295); Gomez Platero, p. 532; Cruikshank 2003, III p. 51.
1772-1773	**Miguel Rico de Jesus**, OFM (1736-died after 1775); with Calbayog; fought datu, 1772-1773 (Cruikshank 1985, pp. 49, 51, 62). Gomez Platero, p. 536, says "primer ministro franciscano" for Capul, without mentioning years; in 1775, was in Calbayog. Cruikshank, 51.
1774	Left to the discretion of the Provincial. Cruikshank 2003, III p. 51.
1775-?	**Miguel Rico de Jesus**, OFM (see above). Administered together with Calbayog.
[From about 1777 to 1785, missionaries shifted to and from Capul and the nascent Calbayog]	
1777-1780	**Vicente de Nuestra Señora de la Porteria**, OFM (1735-1780). With Calbayog; died in Bulusan, en route (ill) from Capul to Manila. Gomez Platero, p. 549; Cruikshank 2003, III, pp. 22, 51.
c. 1781	**Mariano Valero**, OFM (1747-1821). With Calbayog; repaired church and built tower in 1781. Huerta p. 294; Gomez Platero p. 567, "administró en Samar Capul y a los dos años volvió a Manila"; Cruikshank 2003, III pp. 50-51.
c.1781-c.1784	**Agustin Hueca**, OFM (1753-1797). In 1783, administered from Calbayog; was in Casignan by 1784. Gomez Platero, pp. 563-564; Cruikshank 2003, III pp. 22 (Huesca), 51.
1784	**Francisco de Gata**, OFM (1743-?). Administered from Bulusan (Sorsogon). Gomez Platero, pp. 551-552; Cruikshank 2003, II p. 380, III p. 51.

20 *varas* at the base and 15 *varas* high (interpreting this is not quite clear). The old *casa parroquial* was 19 *varas* long and 11 wide; the new one was 12 *varas* long, 7 ½ wide. Both *conventos* had ground levels of *mamposteria*, while the upper floors (*piso principal*) were of wood. The cemetery was protected by a *cota* (wall of rough stone) 1 ½ *varas* in height; it was 44 *varas* long by 32 *varas* wide. Redondo pp. 229-230.

[58] For complete citations of the sources, please see the Bibliography at the end of this article.

1786 **Benito Diaz**, OFM (1758-1812). Administered from Bulusan (Sorsogon). Gomez Platero, pp. 573; Cruikshank 2003, II p. 380, III p. 51.

[In 1785 Calbayog was separated from Capul and attached to Bangajon, an old town adjacent to it, until 1788 when it received its own parish priest. Since Calbayog was on the rise as the major town in northeastern Samar, Capul was reduced to visita status, with the minister of Calbayog travelling to Capul as time permitted.]

c.1786-1789 **Benito Rodriguez del Carmen**, OFM (1759-1789). Administered from Calbayog; drowned while crossing the San Bernardino Strait in 1789. Gomez Platero, p. 579; Cruikshank 2003, III p. 23.

1790-1808 **Jacinto Ordieres**, OFM (1766-1810). Administered from Calbayog. Gomez Platero, p. 600; Cruikshank 2003, III pp. 23, 51, V p.235.

1810-1832 Vacant [administered by seculars?]. Cruikshank 2003, III pp. 23, 51.

1832-1835 **Felix Fernandez de Jesus y Maria**, OFM (1795-1868). Born in Pandacan; administered from Calbayog. Gomez Platero, pp. 642-643; Cruikshank 2003, III p. 23, V p. 113.

1835-1853 **Jose Huerce**, OFM (1808-still alive in 1880). Administered from Calbayog. Gomez Platero, pp. 671-672; Cruikshank 2003, III pp. 23, 50-51, V p. 152; Jose 2008, III p. 224.

1853-1854 **Manuel Monasterio**, OFM (1796-1854). Administered from Calbayog. Gomez Platero, pp. 670-671; Cruikshank 2003, III p. 24, V p. 214.

1855 **Alejo de San Antonio**, Secular; interim. Administered from Calbayog. Cruikshank 1985, pp. 232-233; Jose 2008, III p. 224.

1855-1862 **Francisco Juan Moreno de Montalvanejo**, OFM (1813-1875). Administered from Calbayog. Gomez Platero, p. 672; Cruikshank 2003, III p. 24, V pp. 222-223; Jose 2008, III p. 224.

1862-1868 **Aniceto Carral**, OFM (1838-1870). Administered from Calbayog. Gomez Platero, p. 726; Cruikshank 2003, III p. 24, V p. 63; Jose 2008, III p. 224.

1868-1869 **Eusebio Ibañez**, OFM (1844-?). Administered from La Granja, separated from Capul and created a parish in 1867). Cruikshank 2003, III p.164, V p. 155; Gomez Platero p. 762.

[1869, Capul separated ecclesiastically from Calbayog, by *superior aprobacion* 1864 September 12; by Diocesan edict, 1869 November 18 (Redondo, p. 229)]

1870-1874 Vacant [administered by seculars?]. Cruikshank 2003, III p. 51.

1875-1879 **Maximo Congzon**, Secular; interim. Cruikshank 1985, p. 231; Jose 2008, III p. 225; Nabong-Cabardo, p. 142.

1879 **Eustaquio Paniagua**, OFM (1850-?). Administered from La Granja. Gomez Platero, p. 785; Cruikshank 2003, V p. 242; Jose 2008, III p. 228.

1880-1884 **Candido Ezguerra**, OFM (1851-?). Gomez Platero, p. 801; Cruikshank 2003, III p. 51, V p. 109; Jose 2008, III p.225.

1885-1892 **Francisco Latorre**, Secular; interim. Cruikshank 1985, p. 232; Jose 2008, III p. 225.; Nabong-Cabardo, 56. Earliest book in the parish, Book 9 of *Bautismos*, 1886-1894, has signatures of Latorre 1887 August–1892 July 6.

1892-1903 **Jose Maria Avila**, OFM (1866-?). Jose 2008, III p. 225. Cruikshank 2003, III p. 51. Listed in the parish as Jose N. Villa, 1892 July 13–1903 May: Anon.

1903-1906 **Wenceslao Singzon**, Secular. Anon.

1907-1911 **Salvador Rodriguez**, OFM. Anon.; Nabong-Cabardo, p. 70.

1911-1914 **Hermogenes Cela**, OFM (1860-1922). Cruikshank 2003, V p. 70; Anon.

1914-1915 **Serafin Lopez**. Anon.

1916-1919 **Benjamin Atienza**. Anon.

1919-1920 **Angel Ranera**, OFM (b. 1877 according to Cruikshank's source, 1887 according to *Positio*; died 1936). Cruikshank 2003, V p. 268; Anon. .; Nabong-Cabardo.
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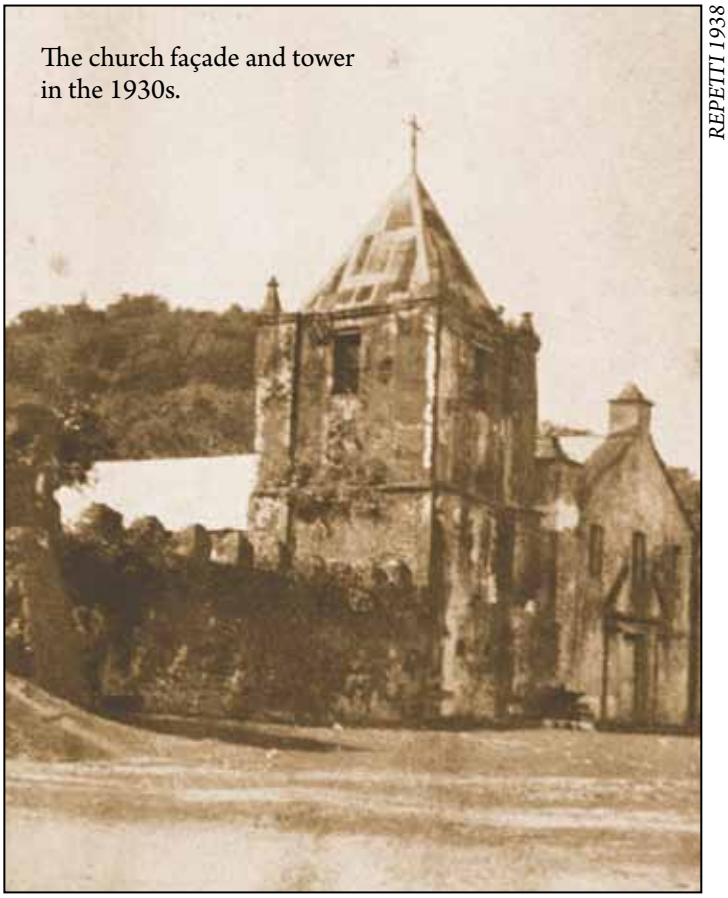
National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA).

The island of Capul. Capul island is the centremost of a group of islands in the northwest quadrant of the map, facing the Embocadero or San Bernardino Strait.

Detail of two maps from Algué's 1899 Atlas de Filipinas conjoined by Raphael Kalaw for this article.

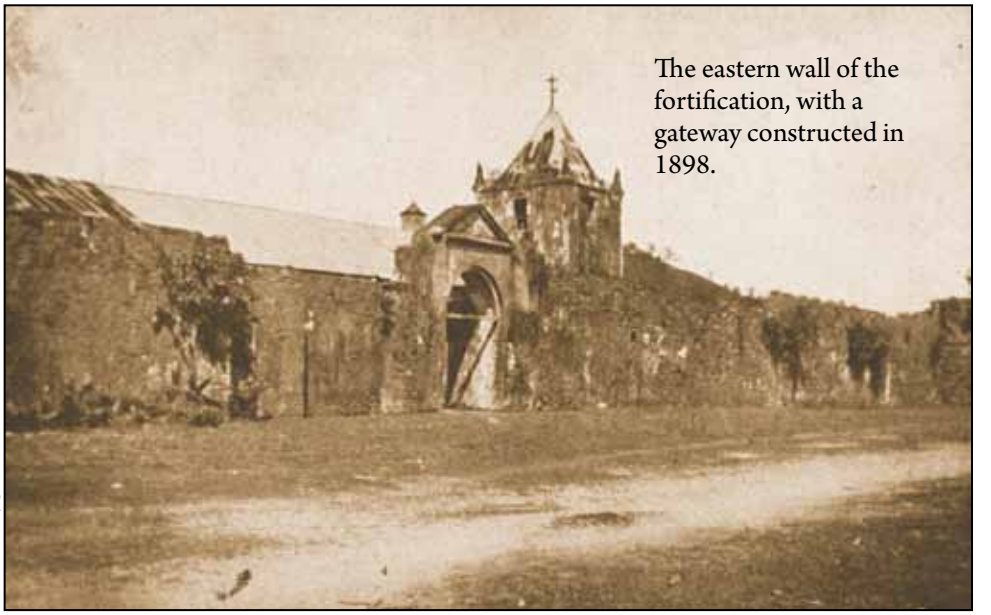
NCCA- Loida Olegario 2012

View of the San Bernardino Strait from the northern tip of Capul, with Bulusan Volcano, Sorsogon, in the distance. The confrontation of Philippine waters and the Pacific Ocean at this juncture is at its most turbulent and dramatic.



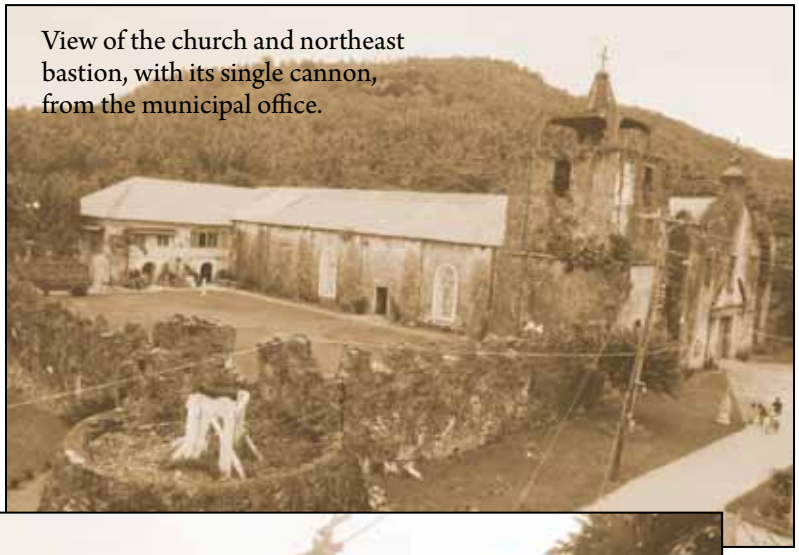
The church façade and tower in the 1930s.

REPETTI 1938



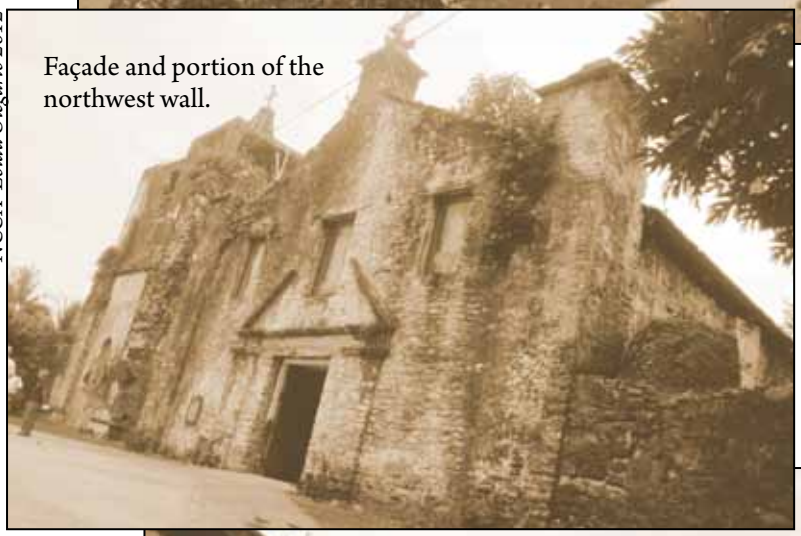
The eastern wall of the fortification, with a gateway constructed in 1898.

REPETTI 1938



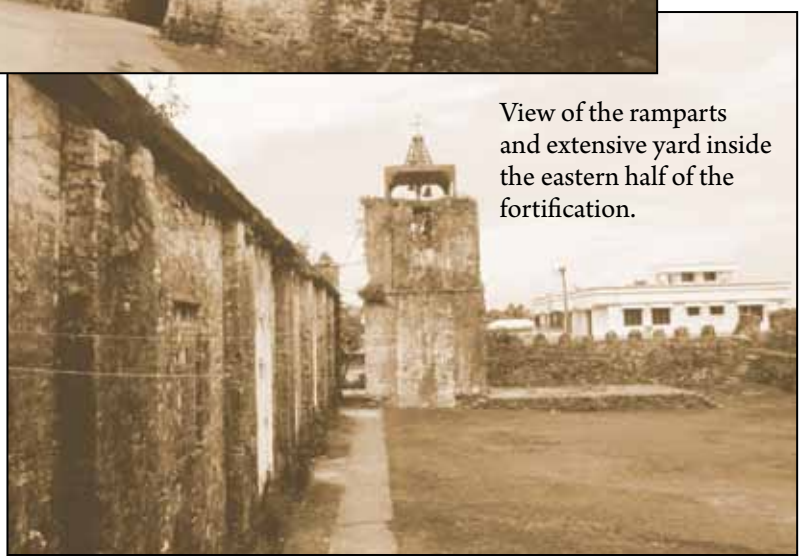
View of the church and northeast bastion, with its single cannon, from the municipal office.

NCCA- Loida Olegario 2012



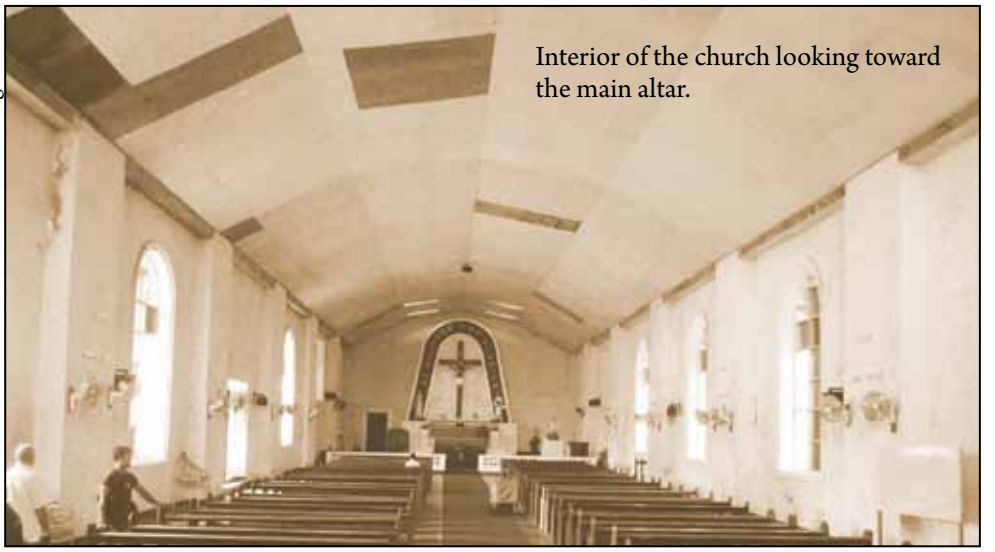
Façade and portion of the northwest wall.

NCCA- Loida Olegario 2012



View of the ramparts and extensive yard inside the eastern half of the fortification.

NCCA- Loida Olegario 2012



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Interior of the church looking toward the main altar.

NCCA- Loida Olegario 2012

The brick tile flooring of the church is still well-preserved.

NCCA- Loida Olegario 2012

A pillar in the ruins of what may be the earlier *convento*, in the western half of the fortification.

NCCA- Loida Olegario 2012

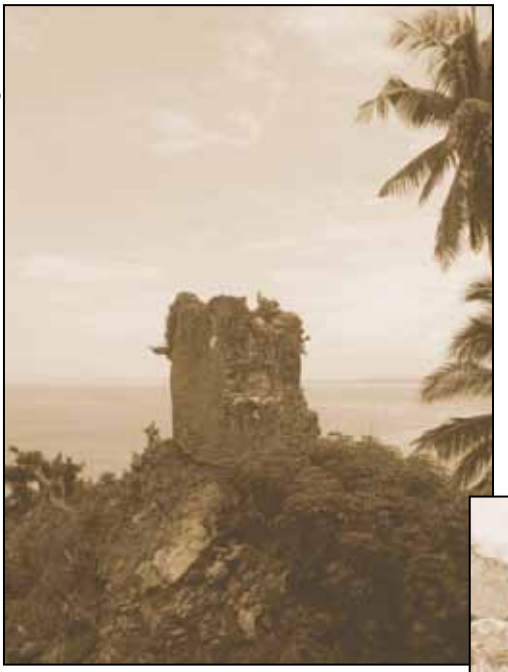
Image of San Ignacio de Loyola, possibly early 18th century. He holds a book, symbolic of his having founded the Society of Jesus.

NCCA- Loida Olegario 2012

Image of San Francisco de Asis, possibly mid-19th century.

NCCA- Loida Olegario 2012

Bas-relief of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, possibly 19th century.



NCCA- Loida Olegario 2012

A watch tower or *baluarte* on a hill south of the poblacion.

NCCA- Loida Olegario 2012

Ruin of a wall that may have formed part of a defensive blockhouse, a few blocks north of the church.

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