Accounting for Calamity: Parish Financial Records in the Philippines During Times of Natural Disaster, Epidemic, and War

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Abstract: Written archives stored in parish churches in the Philippines are valuable sources of information about the life and activities of parishes and their inhabitants. Financial records, inventories, and other documents often detail the consistency and regularity of spiritual life in the community, but they also highlight cataclysms and calamities caused by natural disasters, epidemics and pandemics, conflict and war. During the last fifty years of the Spanish colonial period and throughout the American colonial period, parish records and the parish priests who maintained them were witnesses to many events that impacted the financial, physical, and spiritual conditions of the parishes. These included damages inflicted by earthquakes and typhoons, by revolution and war, and by vagaries imposed through the change of colonial administration. At all times, records illustrate the priority given by parish priests to the spiritual direction of their communities, even at great personal cost and danger to themselves. While written records are technically silent, these pages nonetheless speak out to us about the life and times of each community as it surrounded its own collective heart, the parish church.

Keywords: Archival sources, Spanish colonial period, American colonial period, Natural disasters, Spanish-American War, 1918 Flu pandemic, World War II, Financial administration.

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Archival work can induce a special mode of consciousness, especially after hundreds or thousands of hours spent poring over materials. A peculiar trance-like state is produced when reading financial records from the many parish churches in the Philippines, records whose impressive accuracy and often-invariable regularity prompts the altered mental state in the first place. However, it is in the midst of years or decades of unchanging documentation that you are startled out of your reverie by something different, not something slightly out of the ordinary but something *catastrophically* out of the ordinary. After scores of regular entries documenting a certain number of *pesos*, *reales*, and *granos* for bottles of wine for the Holy Mass, wheat for hosts, oil, incense, expenses for parish *fiestas*, and salaries for parish employees, one encounters a large payment for *nipas* to reroof the church because a typhoon blew the previous one away, or a sharp increase in receipts for burial fees that suggest an outbreak of disease, or even a break in the records due to the pressures of conflict and war.

Parish financial records are not only very regular, but also impersonal, merely recording accounts without mention of the human, social, or spiritual costs of these disastrous occurrences. However, at times we can detect evidences of these very human costs. Throughout 1867 and 1868 one can observe the signature of Fr. Antonio Úbeda de la Santísima Trinidad, parish priest of Baclayon, Bohol, get weaker and shakier until we see it for the final time on July 27, 1868, as he hands the parish over to a new priest. Fr. Úbeda would pass away not many months later,[1] but his probable illness or cause of death is never mentioned. The death of a parish priest only produces a brief note from the priest of a neighboring parish that the death has occurred, that care has been taken to ensure there are no irregularities in accounting, and that parish funds and properties are properly preserved. The rare accounting error is quickly rectified and any shortfall paid from the parish priest's own funds. The regular visits (*Santa Visita*) made by representatives of the diocesan bishop or the provincial of the order administering the parish always include strong exhortations to properly keep financial records, with occasional reprimands if the visitor feels the parish is not exercising prudent fiscal judgement. So it is understandable that these records have been kept in such precise and impersonal detail. The only exceptions are when parish accounting is rendered impossible due to periods of extreme stress (usually war), and in these cases explanations provided by parish priests are included in the records only to explain why accurate accounts have not been kept.

This article will focus on approximately a hundred years of financial records[2]

[1] Archives of the Baclayon Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1856-1909*, passim.

[2] While the majority of the archival materials I am using are indeed strictly financial records (registers of income and expenditures), other materials are also consulted, such as parish inventories and books of orders, policies, and regulations from ecclesiastical and political authorities. For general

covering the later years of the Spanish colonial period (ca. 1850-1898) and the entirety of the American colonial period (1899-1946) in parish churches in the central Visayas, specifically in Cebu, Bohol, Siquijor, and Negros Oriental.[3] It is intended to provide some potentially new angles on the subject of calamitous events through the use of parish financial records and the many valuable insights they can offer. The individual sections below will use various means to approach the data, such as narrative, quantitative, and qualitative methods. The use of these various means are illustrative of the potential range and flexibility of the information contained within the archival record, as well as a commentary on how a researcher might understand, synthesize, and communicate that information. In short, my interpretations of the various archival records represent one set of ways of reading them, but not the *only* ways of reading them. Other researchers may validly filter and interpret the data differently, using other deductive lenses.

Natural Disasters[4]

It is both well-known and lamentable that the Philippines is prone to natural disasters of several kinds. Its location on the Pacific Ring of Fire makes it highly susceptible to seismic and volcanic events, as well as related calamities like landslides and tsunamis. Lying astride the Typhoon Belt also makes the country prone to high winds and severe flooding and their associated dangers (landslides again, among others). Occurrences of these kinds are discernibly at odds with much of modern human infrastructure, a fact that was learned early on by Spanish colonizers. The following passage illustrates this reality from the perspective of a 17th-century European visitor to the Philippines, including a bit of rather dark humor.

> For Nature, bountiful there almost to prodigality, revelling in all the luxuriance of tropical vegetation, has always at hand, as a set-off to her gifts, terrible manifestations of her power. The seventeenth-century navigator, William Dampier, in his own quaint and amusing way, describes how the natives and the Spanish colonists of Manila strove to guard against the double danger

reference, the books themselves are typically around 200 pages in length and bound in soft leather. Depending on the style and quality of penmanship (which varies greatly), a financial register will average around 50 years of coverage; an inventory might cover a much larger time period, in some cases more than 150 years. Most of the parish churches I have studied have at least one or two financial registers, less than half have a surviving inventory, and very few have a book of orders. Compare with the dozens of books of baptismal, birth, and death records existing in most parishes.

[3] A map showing the location of most of the places mentioned can be found in Figure 13 at the end of the article.

[4] I have been informed that the term "natural disaster" is generally vague, and that the term "natural hazard" is more appropriate to describe the complex interactions of environmental and human/social factors. However, I am choosing the retain the original term due to the fact that it is widely used and understood.

> of earthquakes and typhoons, and how they both failed ignominiously. The Spaniards built strong stone houses, but the earthquake made light of them, and shook them so violently that the terrified inmates would rush out of doors to save their lives; while the natives from their frail bamboo dwellings, which were perched on high poles, placidly contemplated their discomfiture. All that the earthquake meant to them was a gentle swaying from side to side. But the Spaniards had their turn when the fierce typhoon blew, against which their thick walls were proof. Then, from the security of their houses, could they view, with a certain grim satisfaction, the huts of the natives swaying every minute more violently in the wind, till, one by one, they toppled over— each an indescribable heap of poles, mats, household utensils, and human beings.[5]

Rather than abandoning the building of imposing stone structures for churches and governmental and commercial buildings, the Spanish colonizers adopted a pragmatic architectural style suited for the local environment, known as Earthquake Baroque. While this eventually mitigated some of the risk,[6] the necessity of extensive repairs to and reconstruction of damaged buildings was still all too common in the Philippines.[7]

Parish financial records give us glimpses into these disasters and their aftermath through expenses for repairs, equipment, and labor. For instance, a typhoon that struck on December 26, 1874, severely damaged the roof of the parish church and kumbento in Bacong, Negros Oriental. The church had to spend 128 pesos and 42½ centavos to purchase 6500 *nipas* and *tabique*, as well as other related materials and labor costs for repairs. To put that amount in perspective, the income of the Bacong parish for the two-month period in which the repairs were performed was only 8 pesos and 47½ centavos; so this represented a significant expenditure.[8] Similarly, a somewhat less-destructive typhoon hit the parish church in Barili, Cebu,

[5] Ambrose Coleman, OP, *The Friars in the Philippines* 2nd ed. (Boston: Marlier, Callanan & Co., 1899), 7-8.

[6] But by no means complete protection. Several iterations of the Manila Cathedral have been destroyed by earthquakes over the centuries and more modern calamities such as Super Tyhoon Yolanda and the 2013 Bohol Earthquake illustrate the continued vulnerability of colonial-era, and even modern, structures to natural disasters.

[7] For more valuable research on the risks inherent in architecture in the Philippine context please see Greg Bankoff, "Fire and Quake in the Construction of Old Manila" in *The Medieval History Journal* 10/1-2 (2007), 411-27; Xavier Huetz de Lemps, "Materiales Ligeros vs. Materiales Fuertes: The Conflict between Nipa Huts and Stone Buildings in the 19th-century Manila" in Elmer Ordoñez, ed., *The Philippine Revolution and Beyond,* Vol. 1 (Manila: Philippine Centennial Commission, National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 1998); Luis Merino, OSA, *Arquitectura y Urbanismo en el siglo XIX: Introducción general y Monografías* (Manila: Centro Cultural de España and The Intramuros Administration, 1987), 179-314. Kind thanks to the article reviewers for suggesting these sources.

[8] Archives of the Bacong Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1846-1954*, fol. 108v. However, for further context, the Bacong parish had been preparing for years to build a new church (which was under construction in 1874) and at the time of the typhoon had saved up over 5500 pesos.

on November 25 and 26 of 1887. The costs for repairs came out to only 17 pesos and 7 reales.[9] The Bantayan parish, just west of the northern tip of Cebu, suffered an unfortunate string of storms in the mid-nineteenth century. A typhoon in 1849 caused 9 pesos in damage to the roof of the church,[10] another in 1851 unroofed both the *kumbento* and the church at a cost of 96 pesos and 2 reales,[11] and the roof and *tabique* of the *kumbento* and church required 11 pesos' worth of work after a storm in 1854. [12] Of course, typhoons do not cause damage only to buildings and structures themselves, but also to the objects housed within. The parish of Loay, Bohol, was struck by back-to-back typhoons on November 19 and December 12 of 1879. These two storms caused major damage to the pipe organ, costing 33 pesos, 2 reales, and 16 cuartos in materials and labor.[13]

Earthquakes also crop up from time to time in parish financial records as an expense, both directly and indirectly. The records from the kumbento in Loay note that 100 pesos were sent to assist with the repair of the Recoletos mother church in Manila in the aftermath of the earthquakes of July, 1880, in Luzon.[14] The church of Barili, Cebu, experienced a temblor on August 12, 1898, that caused damage to the old church (the parish was in the process of building a new church on higher ground), prompting an outlay of 35 pesos to repair the damaged stone floor of the presbytery, fix an image of St. Joseph and the Holy Child that had fallen down, and to shore up the *campanario* that was in danger of collapse.[15] The parish of Liloan, Cebu, spent 186 pesos and 61 centavos for building materials and wages for carpenters and builders to repair the church after an earthquake on February 28, 1922.[16]

An oft-overlooked but indispensable source for information when conducting research of this kind is eyewitness accounts of the events themselves. Such accounts corroborate events recorded in written archival sources while clothing the dry, impersonal financial accounts with "flesh and bones," as it were, while providing valuable additional information and perspectives not found in the written records. I would argue that these accounts, while not traditionally considered "archival," do indeed constitute a kind of archive. Both the written and remembered

[9] Archives of the Barili Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1887-1902*, fol. 2r.

[10] Archives of the Bantayan Parish, *Libro de Cargo y Data 1842-1879*, fol. 17v.

[11] Archives of the Bantayan Parish, *Libro de Cargo y Data 1842-1879*, fols. 22r and 25v.

[12] Archives of the Bantayan Parish, *Libro de Cargo y Data 1842-1879*, fol. 29r.

[13] Archives of the Loay Parish, *Libro de Cuentas*, fol. 131v.

[14] Archives of the Loay Parish, *Libro de Cuentas del Convento de Loay 1816-1886*, fol. 145v. Given that this account book is for the *kumbento* and not the church, these funds would have been taken from the personal stipends of the priests living there, and not from church operating funds.

[15] Archives of the Barili Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1887-1902*, fol. 78v.

[16] Archives of the Liloan Parish, Cebu Archdiocesan Museum, *Libro de Cuentas 1845-1923*, fol. 231v.

records represent human recall and interpretation, both (in this case) are "stored" in close proximity to the church and within the context of its spiritual mission, and both are subject to loss due to the vagaries of time and neglect. While we will encounter a number of written personal accounts later in this article, sometimes one is fortunate enough to find elderly people in the towns and parishes who hold these events in living memory, and such a "living archive" will figure prominently in this article. On July 25, 2016, I attended mass for the fiesta of St. James the Great in Tanjay, Negros Oriental, and afterwards shared lunch in the *kumbento* with Mrs. Restituta M. Limbaga who, at 93 years old, was the oldest *cantora* of the town and still accompanied the parish choir at the keyboard when needed. In addition to a wonderful memory and a beautiful voice from which she could still sing many of the Latin masses and *solfeggio* exercises she had learned as a young girl, she could relate many important events in the history of Tanjay. She remembers the devastating earthquake of May 5, 1925, which occurred when she was a small child about three years of age. She was near the church, which was destroyed, and remembers seeing the orange trees which were at that time planted across the plaza swaying so violently that their tops were striking the ground. Such was the impact of a violent natural disaster that left its imprint on the mind of a parishioner nearly 90 years after the event.

Epidemics

Various epidemics and illnesses were, unfortunately, a very common part of Filipino lived experience during the century or so examined in this study.[17] Accurate colony-wide statistics were often hard to come by, particularly during the Spanish era when the colonial government relied largely on data provided by local parish priests.[18] This is not a criticism of the quality of parish records or their systems of record-keeping, but an acceptance of their inherent limitations. These limitations include the following: most colonial medical and public health officials were stationed in and around major population centers and not in the remoter areas of provinces where the majority of people lived, parish priests were typically not trained

[17] For more information on the history of epidemics and diseases in the Philippines, please see Warwick Anderson, *Colonial Pathologies: American Tropical Medicine, Race, and Hygiene in the Philippines* (Duke University Press, 2006); *Linda A. Newson, Conquest and Pestilence in the Early Spanish Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2011), Luis C. Dery, *Pestilence in the Philippines: A Social History of the Filipino People, 1571-1800* (Mandaluyong: Anvil Publishing, 2006); Reynaldo Ileto, "Cholera and the origins of the American sanitary order in the Philippines," in David Arnold, ed., *Imperial Medicine and Indigenous Societies* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1988), 125-48. Thanks again to the reviewers for these suggestions.

[18] Ken De Bevoise, *Agents of Apocalypse: Epidemic Disease in the Colonial Philippines* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 7. Peter Smith, "Crisis Mortality in the Nineteenth Century Philippines: Data from Parish Records," *Journal of Asian Studies* 38/1 (Nov. 1978) makes the same point.

in medicine[19] and thus not particularly qualified to determine causes of death (often the cause of death in a parish register was a symptom of an underlying disease, such as fever), and the sometimes-fluid nature of local populations. This last point bears further analysis. Ken De Bevoise makes the following point:

> Everywhere during chaotic years, substantial portions of the local population seem to disappear so far as the parish registers are concerned. At all times and places a small segment of the Christian population purposely dodged administrative control and took to the hills for a variety of reasons—to avoid paying the annual tribute, to practice shifting agriculture, or to evade the law.[20]

De Bevoise includes late 19th century accounts from the parish priests of Silay and Hinigaran, both in Negros Occidental, to illustrate that the vagaries of weather and the wide distribution of parishioners in the agricultural areas of Negros made provision of the holy sacraments difficult or impossible. While these accounts are valid and help to illustrate and humanize what are otherwise impersonal statistics, I would balance the characterization of "substantial portions" of people disappearing from parish registers (which certainly can happen) with the generally stable nature of local populations in the parish financial documents I have examined,[21] even during times of epidemic and inclement weather (war, of course, is an entirely different issue). I would also be remiss if I did not mention a further limitation of parish records, particularly those related to local populations; the American era brought with it an end to the relative monopoly that Catholicism had enjoyed during the Spanish colonial period. Beginning at the end of the nineteenth century and accelerating into the twentieth, there were many Protestant missionary endeavors as well as schismatic religious movements. Members of such groups will typically not appear in parish registers and records. However, the purpose of this section of the article is not to record population data in complete forensic detail, but to demonstrate general trends in localities which were, at all times, overwhelmingly Catholic.

[19] Though not trained in medicine, they were often the closest thing in the parish to a Western-trained doctor and sometimes diagnosed and treated diseases in their parishes. Such was the case in Loay, Bohol, during the worldwide cholera outbreak in late 1882, when the *kumbento* was purchasing various medicines to treat the disease. Archives of the Loay Parish, *Libro de Cuentas del Convento de Loay 1816-1886*, fol. 143r.

[20] De Bevoise, *Agents of Apocalypse*, 8.

[21] These are largely concentrated in Negros Oriental, Siquijor, Cebu, and Bohol, so it is entirely possible that what I am describing are the unique realities of only one part of the Philippines. I will note that De Bevoise's research is based on a broad array of parish documentation from around the country, and he does admit of regional differences and "holes" in the documentary evidence. I would be particularly interested to study parish records in the area of Negros where sugar plantations were prevalent, with the large populations of migratory workers that came about as a result. This illustrates a need for the close examination of documentary evidence across the entire Philippines.

The *Sanctorum* and Population Records

During the Spanish era, the collection of the tribute tax on households (later a graduated income tax on individuals) was very important both to the parish and to the local municipality. The *gobernadorcillo* and the *cabezas de barangay* were responsible for the collection of the tribute and relied largely on parish registers for an accurate count of residents in their respective districts. The parish priest would naturally have a strong interest in this collection, as a portion of the tribute tax was the *sanctorum* for the support and maintenance of the parish church. In every parish where I have been able to examine records, the *sanctorum* represented far and away the largest portion of the annual income of the parish, usually 80 to 90 percent. The *gobernadorcillo* and *cabezas de barangay* received a percentage of the *sanctorum* as payment for the trouble of collecting it and thus would not have had a strong motive for under-collecting the tribute. These officials were legally and financially responsible for any amount they failed to collect and could even be imprisoned as a result of an under-collection. The parish priest also had little reason to countenance an undercount, since that would reduce funds collected for the operation of the parish and the ultimate obligation of providing access to the sacraments.

Yearly census data was often included in parish financial registers to ensure that the *sanctorum* collected by the town officials coincided with the population of the parish. In the second half of the 19th century, these entries typically recorded the number of tributes (family units) of different classes and categories. The largest portion of the population was made up of *naturales* (native Filipinos), *mestizos de Sangley* (Chinese mestizos), and *monteces reducidos* ("wild" or "mountain people," perhaps referring to recently-Christianized peoples or racial minorities within the settled population), who paid as part of their larger tribute the *sanctorum* of 2 *reales* (equivalent to 25 centavos). A much smaller part of the census, but in some communities still sizable, were the *mestizos Españoles* (Spanish mestizos), who were counted as individuals (not as tributes/family units) and each paid a double *sanctorum* of 4 *reales*. Another relatively large group were the *reservados* and *privilegiados*, who were exempt from paying the tribute tax due to age (either youth or old age) or infirmity, as well as those who were exempted as a benefit due to their position or work. For instance, local town officials were generally exempted from tribute taxes, as were parish employees, such as the *cantores* (members of the choir), bell ringers, parish secretaries, sacristans, and others.[22] These categories and the related *sanctorum*

[22] Archives of the Tagbilaran Cathedral, *Libro de Órdenes 1830-1850?*, fols. 14v-15v.

amounts collected allow us to see changes in parish-level population data over time, and what is generally seen is a high level of stability. In most parishes I have studied there is a relatively steady increase in population throughout the second half of the 19th century with a concomitant increase in income from the *sanctorum*. Sudden drops in both do occur, but these are always directly related to the many new parishes that were being created during this period. It is clear that if an existing parish is split into two, the original parish will see a sharp decline in its population numbers and monetary receipts, as a portion of those now "belong" to the newly-created parish.[23]

The loss of *sanctorum* income that came about as the result of the change to an American colonial administration was almost uniformly disastrous to parish finances.[24] A medium-sized parish that had received 100 pesos per month now saw that income shrink to 10 or 12 pesos.[25] This, coupled with the fact that most records show that existing parish funds were forwarded to Cebu or Manila for safekeeping during the Spanish-American War (and were never seen again) meant that parishes could not depend upon funds that had been saved prior to the wars, and were therefore forced to start again with nothing. We can see parish churches running fairly deep operating deficits in the decade or so after the start of the American era, and a steep decrease in spending for parish activities, especially the major fiestas.[26]

[23] The mother parish would often collect the *sanctorum* on behalf of the new parish for a period of time, until the parish was in a position to collect it themselves. Also, surrounding parishes were also often ordered by the bishop to provide different kinds of assistance to a new parish, such as money for building a new parish church, vestments, and other liturgical items (books, processional crosses, *santos*, etc.).

[24] Lest we forget, it is important to note here the many drastic changes to the way of life and threats to the means of support and sustenance of many people during times of conflict and war. The movements of newly-arrived occupying forces are always net-negative pressures on local populations, whether through overt acts of violence (assaults, murders, rapes, arsons, thefts), damage to or destruction of crops and farm animals, environmental degradation and pollution, interruption of social and religious life, restrictions on regular patterns of movement and migration, or the destabilizing impositions of "conflict" economic systems (prostitution, sales of alcohol and other illicit substances, traffic in black-market goods, etc.). The American army, due to its large size and efficiency, was not only able to move men and materiel swiftly around the archipelago to fight the Spanish and then the Filipinos, they were also very effective disease vectors, helping to quickly spread epidemics of typhoid fever and cholera (to say nothing of venereal disease) around the country, especially between 1901 and 1903. De Bevoise, *Agents of Apocalypse*, 41-44 and 175-76. I am not able to treat this particular period in depth precisely because the resulting turmoil precluded most record keeping in the parish churches.

[25] Another way of looking at this drastic reduction in income is to compare multi-year periods between *Visitas*. In Baclayon, Bohol for instance, four-year periods between episcopal visits during the 1870s regularly showed total parish incomes of over 10,000 pesos, while *five-year* periods in the 1910s show incomes of less than 1000 pesos. Archives of the Baclayon Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1856-1909*, passim, and *Libro de Cuentas 1909-1956,* passim.

[26] However, during the American period many of these expenses were taken over or assisted with by local municipalities, individual donors, and local *Cofradías*.

After this, parish financial life seems to stabilize somewhat, in part to what we might call "new business ventures" on the part of the parishes. We start to see entries for profits derived from *coco* or banana harvests from church-owned lands (often such farms were donated to the church, or gifted in the wills of devout parishioners upon their death), or income from renting out the *kumbento* to American civil or military authorities, but the largest number of churches seem to go into the funeral business.

The Parish Funeral Business and Mortality Data

We could probably make the assertion that the Church has *always* been in the funeral business, as a proper funeral mass and burial in consecrated ground is essential for the devout parishioner passing into the next life. However, in the early part of the 20th century, financial records show a distinct pattern of parishes investing in the expansion of their funeral services, from constructing walls and gates around the cemetery grounds (and often purchasing nearby plots of land for cemetery expansion), to building burial chapels, hiring a *portero* to take care of the grounds, constructing and selling *nichos* in the graveyard and in the church for wealthier parishioners, to making and selling caskets (*ataudes*) in adult and child sizes. These activities made quite a difference in parish finances, and given the accuracy with which parish records were kept, also give us a perspective on life and mortality at the local level.

Although financial records were meticulously kept, parishes did not always use the same terms and accounting styles. Some list their incomes (usually bi-monthly) in general categories, such as a certain amount for baptisms, another amount for burial fees, and another for marriages. Other parishes itemized such sources of income into sub-categories, such as regular baptisms, baptisms in the extraordinary form, and free (*gratis*) baptisms. Funeral activities had more options, such as fees for a burial plot, for a simple spoken service, a sung mass, the purchase of a casket, or a *nicho* in the cemetery or the church. In the case of itemized records, it is fairly simple to count the numbers of services and related funeral items to gain a sense of the mortality rate in any given parish during a bi-monthly period. Even in a parish that combined their reports of burial fees, we know the standard rates as established by the diocese, so we can again get a fair idea of the numbers, at least in comparison with entries from other bi-monthly periods. Examples of these differing documentation styles can be seen in the figures below. In Figure 1a, we see the fees collected for the categories of burial plots, caskets, and funeral masses. In nearly all

the bi-monthly periods examined, total fees average between 300 and 400 pesos, but in the November/December 1918 and January/February 1919 periods, there is a large spike in fees collected, suggesting that something is causing about twice the normal number of deaths during this time in Barili, Cebu. Figure 1b tells us the actual number of baptisms taking place in Barili during the same time period. We know that exact number because the parish recorded it that way.[27] We can visualize similar data differently in Figure 3, which show fees collected for baptisms and funerals in the parish of Baclayon, Bohol. Since Baclayon recorded the actual numbers of each category, we have quite a clear view of births and deaths during the examined time period.[28] With that explanation of the data, we can now examine in depth the effects of epidemics on parish finances, from which we can extrapolate the effects on the populations in those parishes. What is fascinating about the data is not only how they illustrate the terrible toll taken on Filipinos in these towns and parishes, but also that these parishes and towns were affected differently. In many ways, each place had its own unique experience.

To achieve a local baseline for establishing average birth and mortality rates, I recorded bi-monthly data from January/February 1916 until November/ December 1922, with the intent to track data from the worldwide influenza pandemic of 1918-19, providing a two-year buffer on either side of that period. This allowed me to also discover possible evidence of an additional disease outbreak, that of encephalitis lethargica, which appeared in Europe late in 1916 and was noted worldwide by 1917. Contemporary reports noted that populations that appeared to be particularly stricken with the disease were people of Jewish descent, and natives of South Africa, India, and the Philippines.[29] Among the parishes I have been able to study, it appears that the encephalitis lethargica outbreak was particularly severe in Baclayon (Figure 3), where the death rates were higher in mid-1917 than even at any time during the subsequent 1918 influenza pandemic. Figure 5 shows a similar, though less severe, spike in mortality in Jagna, Bohol, about 60km east of Baclayon along the southern coast of the island. Likewise Lazi, Siquijor, shows a similar pattern in Figure 6. Also notable is the apparent absence of the illness in the other parishes in the figures below, perhaps illustrating that the epidemic was highly localized.[30]

[27] Archives of the Barili Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1902-1936*, passim.

[28] Archives of the Baclayon Parish, *Libro de Cuentas 1909-1956*, passim.

[29] Leslie A. Hoffman and Joel A. Vilensky, "Encephalitis lethargica: 100 years after the epidemic," *Brain: A Journal of Neurology* 140 (2017), 2249.

[30] Other instances of localized epidemics are also found in the parish records, such as the cholera outbreak of 1908-9. However, many records are fragmented and incomplete during this time.

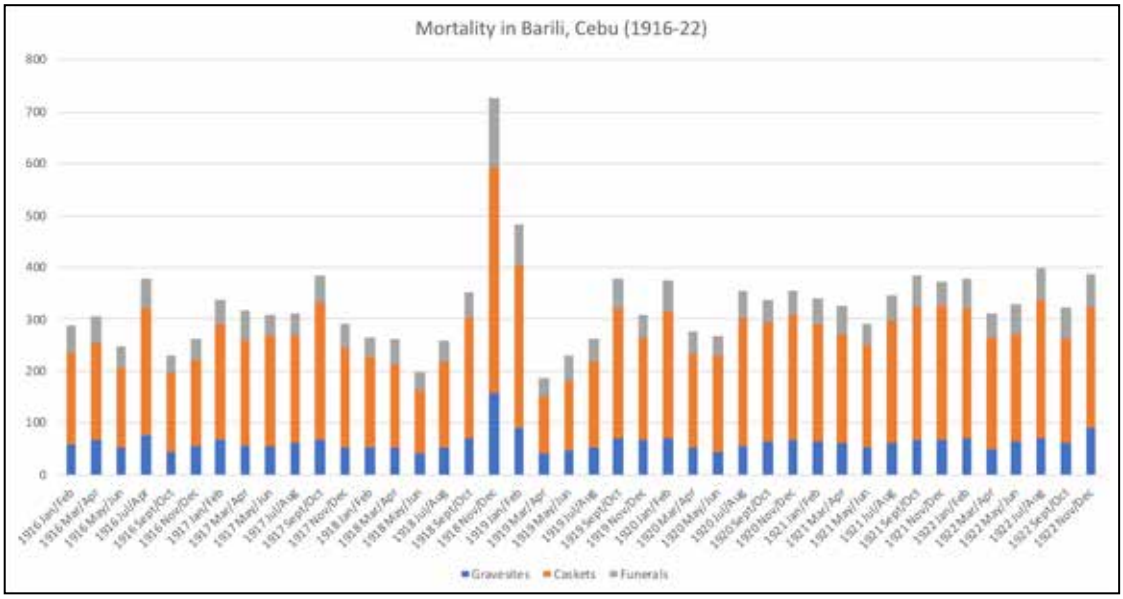

Figure 1a

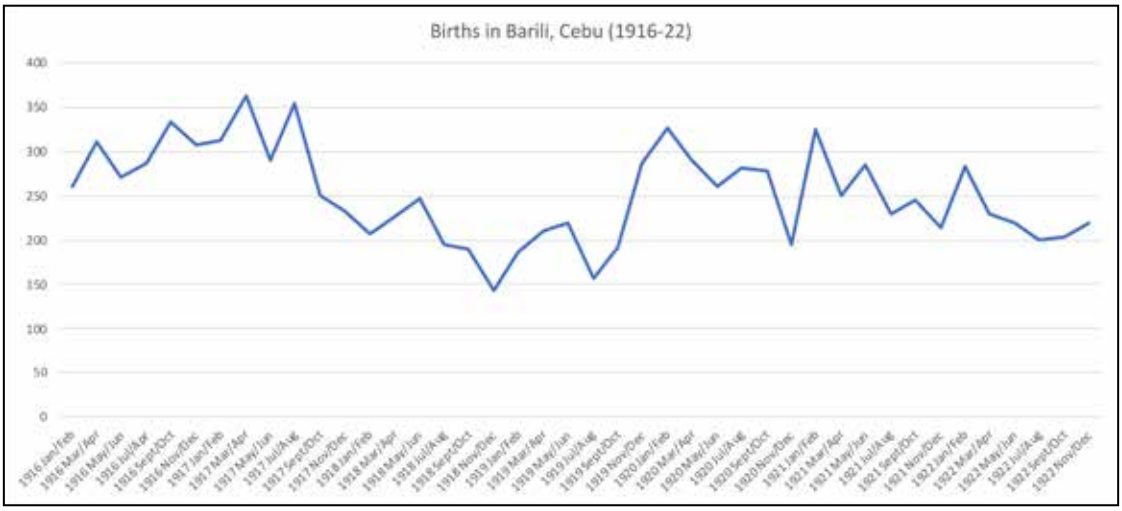

Figure 1b

The 1918 influenza pandemic

Focusing on the infamous influenza pandemic of 1918-19, parish documents record the devastation and human cost, and the various ways the illness presented itself

in individual parishes. The pandemic occurred in three major waves worldwide,[31] in April-July of 1918, in October-November of the same year, and in February-March of 1919, with the second wave in late 1918 causing the largest number of deaths in most parts of the world.[32] Data shows that the pandemic exhibited fairly consistent patterns in various archipelagic regions, typically traveling on ships to islands with port facilities and spreading along the coasts and inland from there. Smaller islands without major ports as well as relatively inaccessible or mountainous inland regions would experience their own waves of infection weeks or months later. An illustrative case is that of Liloan, Cebu (Figure 2 below). We can see spikes in deaths in July/August 1918, November/December 1918, and July/August 1919, precisely when we would expect to find them, given that Liloan is situated just north of Cebu City and would be affected by proximity to its port facilities.[33] However, other parishes on the island of Cebu fared somewhat better. See in Figure 1a above that the parish of Barili (about 60km southwest of Cebu City and over the mountains on the west coast of the island) seems to experience only one spike in mortality, during November/December 1918-January/February 1919, likely the second wave of the influenza pandemic. Likewise the parish of Dalaguete (Figure 4a), about 85 km south along the east coast of Cebu has one large spike, peaking in Jan/Feb 1919.

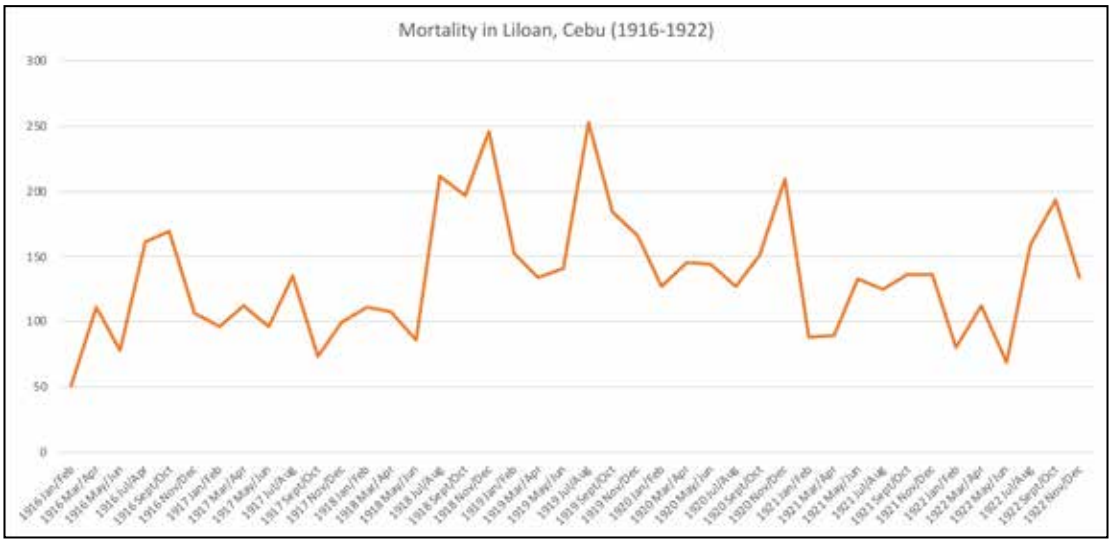

Figure 2

[31] Some sources mention four waves.

[32] Francis A. Gealogo, "The Philippines in the World of the Influenza Pandemic of 1918-1919," *Philippine Studies* 57/2 (June 2009), 264.

[33] Contrary to the general mortality patterns, the third wave appears to have been as virulent in Liloan as the second. I am also not able to adequately explain the large mortality spike in November/December 1920.

The island of Bohol also presents interesting statistics. Without a particularly large or busy port, it nevertheless experiences the ravages of the pandemic, but with some interesting variations. Baclayon, seen below in Figure 3, appears to experience the first wave of the influenza pandemic in July/August-September/October of 1918, and the third wave in July/August 1919, but not the most severe second wave. Jagna (Figure 5) appears to have avoided the first wave, but suffers acutely from the second wave in November/December 1918 and much less severely the third wave in July/August 1919.[34]

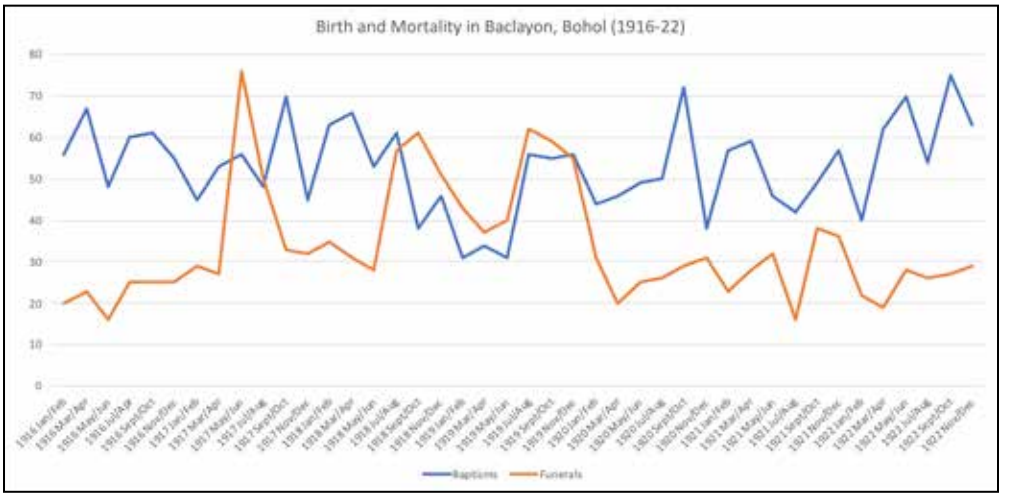

Figure 3

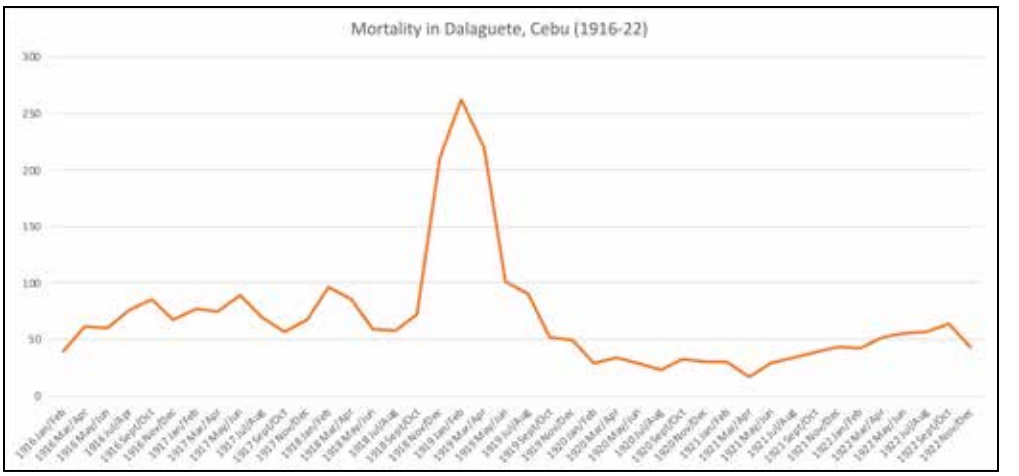

Figure 4a

[34] It should be remembered that Jagna was a transit point from Bohol to Camiguin and Mindanao to the south.

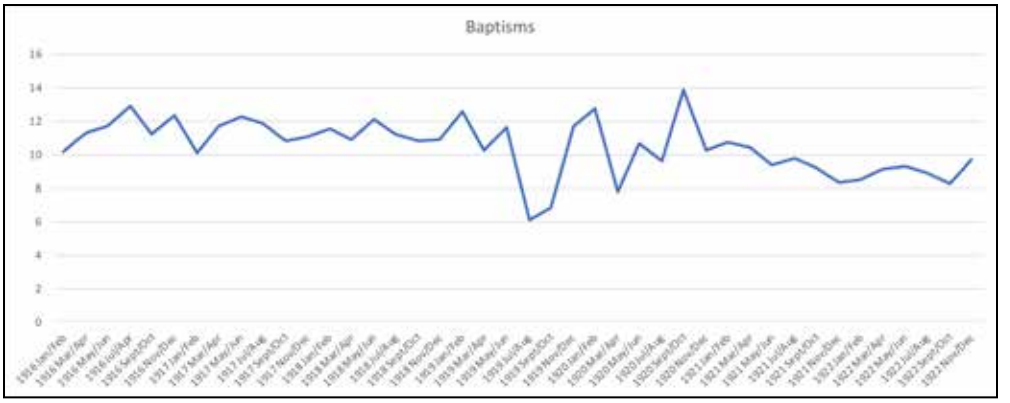

Figure 4b

Lazi, Siquijor (Figure 6), is another case that belies the overall pattern in the Philippines. Even before the arrival of the 1918 influenza pandemic, death rates rise steadily during 1917 and early 1918, culminating in what can be assumed to be the first wave of the pandemic in July/August 1918, a less virulent second wave in November/December 1918, and a still less severe wave in March/April 1919. There are a few potential reasons for the relatively strange presentation of the influenza pandemic in individual parishes in the Philippines. One is certainly the nature of aggregated data, which draws from a wide variety of local data sets. If we were to combine the data from all the parishes in this small study, the strong second-wave spikes in Jagna, Dalaguete, and Barili would likely cancel out the absent or less-severe second waves in Baclayon and Lazi and show a combined picture that conforms to

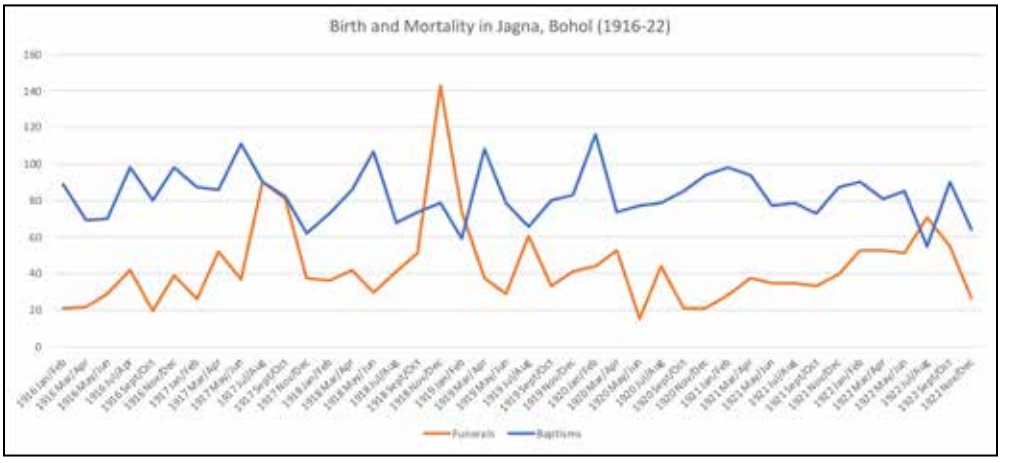

Figure 5

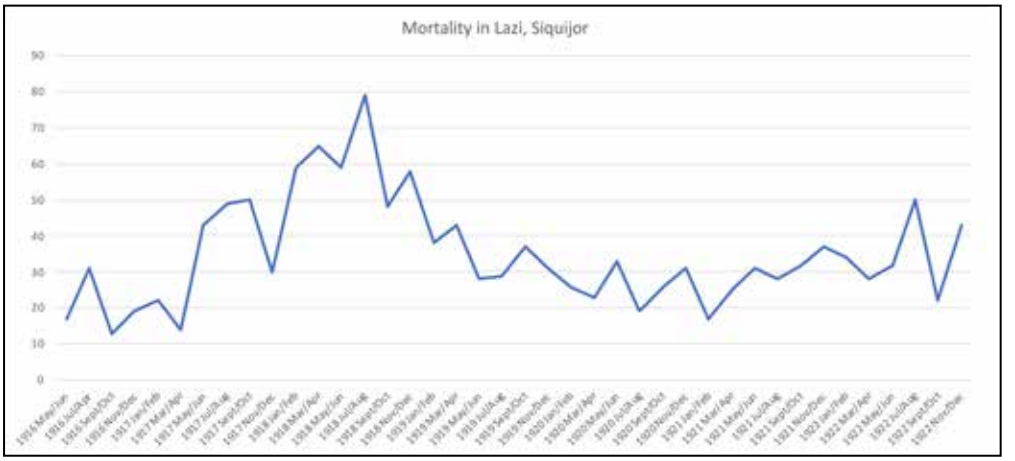

Figure 6

the larger pattern. Another reason is the nature of the parish records, which are by definition concerned with people residing *within* the parish boundaries, and not the movements of individuals and families. The general impact to their health and economic situation during the pandemic may have prompted some to relocate, which may skew the data somewhat. However, there is not strong evidence in the parish records that mass internal migrations were taking place at this time, at least not in these parishes in the central Visayas.

Death and Rebirth: Baby Booms after the Pandemic

A final aspect I would like to explore in relation to the 1918 influenza pandemic is the demographics of mortality, together with the subsequent rebound in population. As Francis Gealogo notes, the pandemic typically exhibited a peculiar "W-shaped" mortality curve, meaning that the populations most susceptible to the virus were the very young, the very old, and the generally healthy and disease-resistant 18-40 age group.[35] While my research does not bear on the age distribution of those who perished due to the pandemic in individual parishes, there are interesting "echoes" to be found in the financial records. These are the steep declines and rebounds in birth rates that can be derived from records of baptisms performed at parish churches (with their associated fees). How we should read and interpret the data is not completely clear, but there are two major (and perhaps interconnected) hypotheses I would like to posit. One is that the influenza pandemic caused the death of a large number of pregnant women, contributing to the increased death rate as well as a decreased birth rate. This is supported by the above-cited mortality

[35] Gealogo, "The Philippines in the World of the Influenza Pandemic," 264.

rates for adults aged 18-40, which are prime years for childbearing. This hypothesis is partially supported by the Barili data (Figures 1a and 1b) in which a rise in mortality due to influenza is mirrored by a simultaneous drop in baptisms to less than half of pre-pandemic levels. However, if a very large proportion of women of childbearing age in a given parish were to succumb to the virus, I feel it unlikely that we would see an immediate rebound in the data back to pre-pandemic birthrates, as there would simply be fewer fertile women to support such increased births.[36] It also seems implausible that a relatively large cohort of young, unmarried women would be available and "waiting in the wings" to serve as replacement spouses, and that they all would have married, conceived, and given birth at around the same time. My second hypothesis, and one that I feel is more fully supported by the local data, is that the 1918 influenza pandemic caused various complications that resulted in the loss of existing pregnancies, either early in the pregnancy (miscarriages) or late (stillbirths).[37] Research on contemporary populations in the United States and Scandinavia shows that influenza-related first-term pregnancy loss begins to appear in birthrate data six to nine months after a wave of infection.[38] This is extremely clear in Dalaguete, Cebu (Figure 4a and 4b), where the three-fold increase in deaths, peaking in January/February 1919, is matched by a birthrate that is cut in half approximately six months later. The same pattern is experienced in Baclayon where the first wave, peaking in July/August-September/October 1918 is matched by a dip in births from January to June of 1919. The third wave peaks in Baclayon in July/August 1919, with a more modest decline in baptisms in January/February 1920. However, this idea is more difficult to sustain in Barili and Jagna. In Barili, the second-wave spike in deaths occurs amidst an extended drop in birthrates that lasted two whole years (September/October 1917 to September/October 1919). Existing records and accounts from Barili do not provide any further illumination. In Jagna,

[36] Studies of birthrate declines during the pandemic focusing on the United States and Scandinavia find that maternal mortality accounts for only a small portion of the "missing births" and that other factors are largely responsible. Kimberly Bloom-Feshbach, et al., "Natality Decline and Miscarriages Associated With the 1918 Influenza Pandemic: The Scandinavian and United States Experiences," *Journal of Infectious Diseases* 204/8 (Oct. 15, 2004), 1161-62. However, lest we underrepresent the danger to pregnant women caused by the virus, maternal mortality did increase five-fold in some places. Svenn-Erik Mamelund, "Can the Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918 Explain the Baby Boom of 1920 in Neutral Norway?" *Population* 59/2 (Mar-Apr 2004), 245.

[37] A third hypothesis, that the influenza outbreaks resulted in high levels of post-birth infant mortality is possible in explaining lowered birth rates, and a desire of parents to replace children who had died of the virus is cited as a contributing factor in the post-pandemic baby boom in Norway. Memelund, "Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918," 256. However, for the infant-mortality-caused drop in birthrate hypothesis to work fully in the Philippine context, it would require that a very large number of infants did not receive the sacrament of baptism before succumbing to the virus, which in the devoutly Catholic Philippines strains credulity.

[38] Bloom-Feshbach, et al., "Natality Decline and Miscarriages Associated With the 1918 Influenza Pandemic," 1163.

the large second wave of influenza deaths exactly mirrors a decrease in baptisms, and the smaller third wave likewise mirrors a small drop in births. Perhaps this refers to more incidences of maternal mortality, coupled with late-term stillbirths.[39] However, this does not explain why this would happen in Jagna and not in Dalaguete or Baclayon.

What *is* abundantly clear from parish financial records is that, whatever the underlying causes of decreases in births, the birthrate quickly rebounds, in some cases to higher than pre-pandemic levels.[40] This supports the argument that the 1918 influenza pandemic caused many miscarriages and stillbirths, but also that the surviving fertile populations of these central Visayan parishes took seriously the Biblical injunction to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth."

Conflict and War at the Turn of the Century

Probably nothing is worse than war for upsetting the regular rhythms and activities of life, even famines and pandemics, though the Philippines was cursed with coinciding visitations of these horsemen of the apocalypse in the years surrounding the turn of the twentieth century. The Philippine Revolution and the Spanish-American War were immediately followed by the Philippine-American War, near the end of which much of the country was further brought to its knees by a cholera outbreak coupled with famine caused by an infestation of locusts.[41] Likewise with parish financial documents, nothing but armed conflict was able to keep parish priests from keeping consistent, accurate records. These records, including gaps in the records, give us valuable information about the lives and struggles of priests, parish employees, and parishioners alike.

[39] Late-term pregnancies were at very high risk of stillbirth or spontaneous abortion (as well as maternal death) if an infection by the virus was followed by pneumonia. Mamelund, "Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918," 235-36.

[40] There are some interesting factors contributing to such a rebound in pregnancies and births. First, males can experience temporary sterility as the result of an influenza infection (but not females). Second, females who have recently lost a pregnancy will not then be breastfeeding a newborn infant, thereby placing them at peak fertility. This combination of men who are no longer *baog* with women who are very fertile are prime ingredients for a baby boom. Mamelund, "Spanish Influenza Pandemic of 1918," 236. It is important also to note that the cited study by Mamelund focuses on Norway, a country that was neutral during the World War, and so would not have had large portions of its male population under arms and fighting abroad. This allows for a broadly apt comparison between Norway and the Philippines.

[41] These infestations arrived in the wake of environmental degradation caused by the cutting down of forests and the elimination of natural watersheds. The resulting drying effect on the cultivated lowland areas created prime breeding conditions for locusts. De Bevoise, *Agents of Apocalypse*, 61-3. Parishes assisted their parishioners during these times of famine. In the parish church of Dalaguete, Cebu, the bishop authorized the very large expenditure of 400 pesos to "help the poor in this time of hunger." Archives of the Dalaguete Parish, *Libro de Cuentas 1905-?*, fol. 21v.

The Philippine Revolution and the Spanish-American War

While it is important to remember that the Philippine Revolution was experienced differently in the various regions of the colony, and this study is focused on the central Visayas, there are still important lessons to be drawn from the general unrest during those years. It appears that the Spanish colonial government was offering for sale a bond for the raising of funds (called an *empréstito de Filipinas*) in late 1897, as we see an entry for such a bond for 200 pesos in the Bacong parish records for November/December of that year.[42] The timing of this *empréstito* is interesting, as it would have come right around the time of the Pact of Biak-na-Bato, and it is possible that these funds were raised either to assist the colonial government in prosecuting the war, or else to pay the funds promised in the Pact to General Emilio Aguinaldo and his revolutionary associates. This financial support places the Church firmly on the side of the Spanish colonial government (quite obviously), and this is illustrated as parish churches became the targets of attacks by revolutionary forces. Such was the case on the night of April 4, 1898, in Liloan, Cebu, as recorded in the March/April 1898 entry of the register by Fr. Casto Sesma, OAR. Fr. Sesma records an expense of 79 pesos, 1 real, and 9 cuartos for the value of items stolen by "los insurrectos" who broke down the door of the church to take the caskets, candles, and official documents that were there (see Figure 7 below). Beneath the entry, he tells how they came back on the night of April 8 to break into and loot the *kumbento*, making off with Fr. Sesma's personal funds, more official documents, a chasuble, several silver ornaments, a number of images including that of the Sto. Cristo, holy oil, and mass wine.[43] In the next entry of May/June 1898, Fr. Sesma is obliged to purchase replacements for the some of the stolen items, including 18 pesos for a new chasuble and 9 pesos and 4 reales to purchase mass wine from the Franciscans.[44]

As the Revolution restarted and intensified in 1898, followed by the outbreak of the Spanish-American War and the Spanish surrender in mid-August of that year, the bishops and parish priests must have seen the writing on the wall. Knowing that parish funds were not safe where they were in the *kumbentos* (as evidenced by the experience of the Liloan Church), parish priests transferred existing funds for safekeeping to the bishop or to the local vicar forane, sometimes accompanying the funds to Cebu themselves to ensure their security. There, the funds appear to have been forwarded to Manila and deposited with the representative of a "casa estrangera," which was likely one of the same corporations to which the different religious orders transferred their lands and other properties at this time.[45] Many large

[42] Archives of the Bacong Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1846-1954*, fol. 190r.

[43] Archives of the Liloan Parish, *Libro de Cuentas 1845-1923,* fols. 143r-144v.

[44] Archives of the Liloan Parish, *Libro de Cuentas 1845-1923*, fol. 144r.

[45] The Dominican order transferred most of their property to the "Philippine Sugar Estates Developing Co. Ltd.," a company created by an Englishman living in Manila; the Augustinians

amounts of money were transferred in this way, much of them originally intended to be spent to enlarge or repair an existing church, or to build a new one. Baclayon transmitted its entire balance of 1181 pesos, 2 reales, and 14 cuartos in November,[46] Duero, Bohol, transferred 2782 pesos and 16 cuartos by the end of October,[47] and

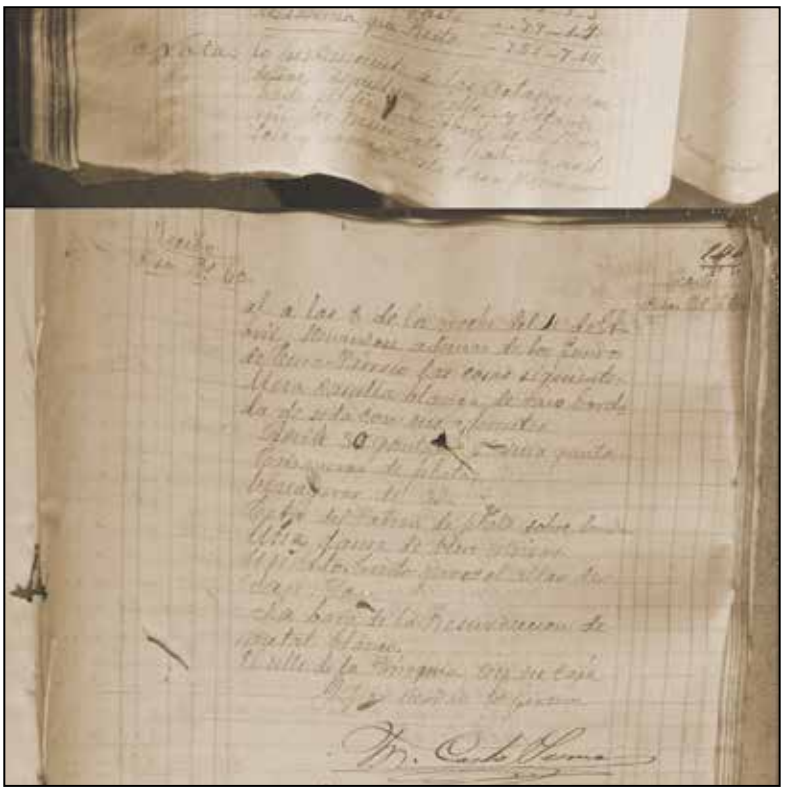

Figure 7: Details from Libro de Cuentas de Liloan, 1845-1923, fol. 143r-144v

placed their holdings with the Spanish corporation "Sociedad Agricola de Ultramar;" the Recollects transferred their properties to the "British Manila Estates Company Ltd. of Hong Kong." Peter G. Gowing, "The Disentanglement of Church and State Early in the American Regime in the Philippines" in Gerald H. Anderson, editor, *Studies in Philippine Church History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1969), 215-16. While the previous source seems to note that these transfers were restricted to land holdings, it seems reasonable that the corporations also absorbed the cash reserves belonging to the orders. These land holdings were part of the agreement to liquidate the estates of the religious orders in the Philippines, finalized in 1903. Whatever happened to the large agricultural estates, we know that the cash reserves never returned to the parish churches.

[46] Archives of the Baclayon Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1856-1909*, fol. 173r.

[47] Archives of the Duero Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1863-1910*, fol. 111v. In the case of Duero, there is no official notice or receipt in the records that the funds had been officially transferred (other than that they are gone), but this can be reasonably assumed since nearby parishes in Bohol were doing this.

Loay, Bohol, sent 4794 pesos, 1 real, and 15 cuartos in April of 1898.[48] The Church (now Basilica) of Sto. Niño de Cebu attempted to send the impressive amount of 13,000 pesos to Manila, but was unable to transfer the funds because the capital was by this time inaccessible.[49]

Other parishes were obliged to take less formal measures when attempting to protect their funds. In a September/October 1904 entry from Boljoon, Cebu, it is noted that the parish received 493 pesos of "old funds" ("fondos antiguos") that the former parish priest, Fr. Fabián Rodríguez, OSA, had given to an individual for safekeeping during the revolution and the war.[50] The church also received back a total of 190 pesos from Estanislao Romero in six payments, spread over the years between 1907 and 1917.[51] While this may have been an unorthodox method, it ended up being rather effective as far as parish finances were concerned. While Boljoon eventually retained 683 pesos from the Spanish era (albeit between six and nineteen years late), the parishes that sent their funds out for safekeeping received not an iota back after the end of the Spanish-American War. Churches that were able to continue their operations through the Philippine-American War and its aftermath all note that among the funds shown as existing in the financial documents, "not even a single *cuarto*" remains. At this point, the parishes had to start again with nothing. The priest who took over the administration of the Duero parish[52] wrote poignantly on June 10, 1899, when he took possession of the parish records and responsibilities

[48] Archives of the Loay Parish, *Libro de Cuentas 1844-1918*, fol. 190v. A receipt for this authorization is included in the *Libro de Cuentas*, signed by Fr. Antonio Muro del Pilar, OAR, the Vicar Forane for southern Bohol, and signed April 17, 1898. These funds, while no longer "on site" at the church or *kumbento*, were still counted as existing in parish financial records.

[49] Archives of the Sto. Niño Basilica, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto del Convento de Sto. Niño de Cebú 1883-1906*, fols. 104r-105v. The original instructions to remit the money were received on April 18, 1898, but the entry was later scratched out and a note added explaining their inability to send the funds to Manila. It should be remembered that the Battle of Manila Bay took place less than two weeks later, on May 1, so entering or exiting the capital city was likely impossible.

[50] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de Cuentas 1899-1956*, fol. 7r. Given the complete disappearance of the rest of the parish funds, as far as local parish use was concerned, Fr. Rodríguez should be recognized as quite prescient in preserving some of the money this way.

[51] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de Cuentas 1899-1956*, fols. 27v, 49v, 53v, 55r, 57r, and 58r. It is not clear in what form this repayment took, given that Spanish-era coinage was demonetized in 1904.

[52] His signature is in every case illegible and I have been unable to find other records relating to this parish priest. I will permit myself here to comment generally on handwriting and penmanship in parish records and documents. The vast majority of the tens of thousands of pages of documents I have examined were written by priests whose handwriting I will charitably describe as enigmatic. When reading entries in the registers and inventories, it often appears as if the *kumbento* is on fire and the parish priest is in dire need of vacating the premises. I give a brief prayer of thanks to St. Catherine of Alexandria (patroness of scribes) when I run into the rare priest with legible handwriting, and rejoice when I come upon a document beautifully written by a lawyer.

for the church: "…without having received anything from my predecessors the church may be rightly considered to be in poverty."[53]

Parish Finances after the Spanish-American War

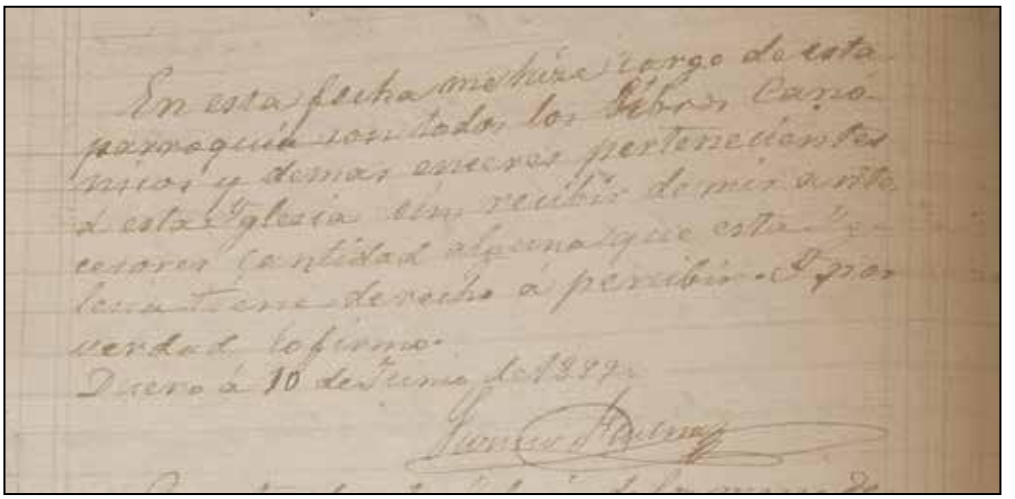

Figure 8: Detail from Libro de Recibo y Gasto de Duero, 1863-1910, fol. 111r

Many parishes were not able to operate, or at least to maintain their financial records, during this time. Many parish registers end abruptly late in 1898 and do not begin again until 1902 or 1904, a shocking sight in parish books that had seen unbroken and faithful recording over the previous 50 or 75 years.[54] But whether the records continue uninterrupted through this intervening time or not, all parishes faced the same problem, the loss of the *sanctorum*. I discussed the sanctorum at some length in the previous section, noting that for many parish churches, this governmental support represented the vast majority of their operating income. Many parish records have at the head of the regular bi-monthly entry, "nada de sanctorum," for several years after 1898. This lack of funds made it impossible for many churches to pay their parish employees, and when they could, only with a reduced staff or at

[53] Archives of the Duero Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1863-1910*, fol. 111r. Interestingly, Duero experienced a similar situation with old funds, as did the parish priest in Boljoon, though with different results. Upon taking possession of the parish in mid-1899, the priest was informed by the parish employees that 30 pesos belonging to the church was in the possession of Don Román Abrea. The priest called on this gentleman to ask if it was true, and he responded affirmatively. However, he begged the priest to wait, but never paid back the money despite several requests. Archives of the Duero Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1863-1910*, fol. 123r.

[54] Of course, this break in records is not surprising given that many parishes were left without priests during this time, as the large majority of Spanish priests (particularly of the religious orders) were expelled or otherwise departed the Philippines. It would have taken some time to reestablish parish life and record-keeping. It is not known to what extent the local parishioners had access to the sacraments during this period.

reduced wages.[55] They also could not perform some of the most basic functions in the parish. Fr. Filomeno Orbeta, parish priest of Duero, makes a note at the end of 1906 that because of lack of funds he has been unable to celebrate the three major feasts of the year, or pay the *labandera* to wash the fine linen and vestments, and cannot purchase candles, incense, or wheat for hosts.[56] Fr. Orbeta finally received some relief from the bishop, but not until May/June of 1909.[57]

As mentioned above, some parishes went into different kinds of "business" to cover their most basic operational costs, whether by offering expanded funeral services or through agricultural endeavors. An additional and important source of income, especially in the difficult first couple of decades of the twentieth century, was direct aid from local pious lay organizations, confraternities, and even local municipalities. In Jagna the local Centro Católico covers the salaries of certain parish employees[58] as well as the costs for the patronal fiesta for many years, from 1906 well into the early 1920s.[59] In Duero, the Centro makes regular yearly contributions to the parish between 1911 and 1915.[60] Perhaps knowing this to be the case, the Santa Visita from the diocese on May 26, 1914, states that the parish should not be spending funds on any of the three major fiestas of the year and that the Centro Católico should cover the costs.[61] In Lazi, Siquijor, the Centro donated 24 pesos to support the Escuela Católica in July/August 1928.[62]

The local chapters of major lay confraternities had long been important sources of support to parishes during the Spanish era. In this study in particular, parishes that were administered (or had been founded) by Augustinians and Augustinian Recollects housed local chapters of the Cofradía of Our Lady of Consolation (or Our Lady of the Correa [Cincture]) that were very supportive of the religious life of the parish. Their official constitutions instructed them to be active in both the maintenance and the pious works of the church.[63] I will use the parish

[55] In nearly every case, the first employee to reappear on the books is the parish secretary, typically followed by the organist.

[56] Archives of the Duero Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1863-1910*, fol. 129r.

[57] Archives of the Duero Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1863-1910*, fol. 135r. A letter is attached to this entry and dated January 4, 1909, in which Fr. Orbeta says he is sending copies of the *Plan de Almas* and the financial entries for 1908, assumedly to demonstrate the need for assistance. The secretary of the bishop responds to the letter on April 26, likely together with 500 pesos that are subsequently listed in the register.

[58] Specifically the parish secretary, organist, and portero of the cemetery. The church was able to pay the salary of the labandera.

[59] Archives of the Jagna Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1894-1953*, passim.

[60] Archives of the Duero Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1910-1947*, fols. 4r, 9v, 12v, 16v, and 19v.

[61] Archives of the Duero Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1910-1947*, fols. 13r-14v.

[62] Archives of the Lazi Parish, *Libro de Cuentas de la Escuela Católica de Lacy 1916-1954*, p. 43.

[63] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Copia de los Estatutos de los Cofradías de la Correa de Ntro. P.S. Agustín, con la Advocación de Ntra. Sra. de la Consolación*(Manila: Imprenta de Santo Tomas, 1847), 3.

church of Boljoon, Cebu, as a good general example of the traditional activities of these Cofradías. In Boljoon, in addition to the yearly dues collected from its members the Cofradía had its own sources of income from at least 1807, from raising cattle.[64] The Boljoon cofrades raised 45 pesos and 2 reales that year for the purpose of gilding the altar,[65] in 1825 they spent 55 pesos and 4 reales to purchase a new *sagrario* in Manila,[66] and in 1888 used 87 pesos to obtain a new image of Sta. Monica and have


COPIA

DE LOS ESTATUTOS DE LAS COFRADIAS

DE LA

CORREA DE NTRO. P. S. AGUSTIN,

CON LA ADVOCACION

DE

NTRA. SRA. DE LA CONSOLACION.

In Nomine JESV omne genu flectatur

MANILA: 1847.

POR D. MANUEL RODRIGUEZ.

Figure 9: Copy of Statutes Governing the Cofradía de Ntra. Sra. de la Consolacion (Correa), Archives of the Boljoon Parish

[64] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de la Cofradía de Ntra. Sra. de Consolación y Sagrada Correa de Boljoon 1804-1941*, fol. 10v. This book was actually purchased in 1881, and included copied entries from the earlier 1804-1881 volume, which was in very poor condition.

[65] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de la Cofradía de Ntra. Sra. de Consolación y Sagrada Correa de Boljoon 1804-1941*, fol. 10v.

[66] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de la Cofradía de Ntra. Sra. de Consolación y Sagrada Correa de Boljoon 1804-1941*, fol. 20v.

her painted and provided with vestments.[67] Obviously, the Cofradías were at all times intimately involved in the veneration of Our Lady of Consolation and the celebration of her fiestas. They hired singers and instrumentalists who would play during fiestas, both at the vespers and solemn mass in the parish church and outside during the continuing festivities, and they also paid for food and decorations. The Cofradía was always a patron of music, purchasing pieces of music for the parish band and paying to have the tiples (boy sopranos) sing for Saturday masses throughout the year.[68] But the Cofradía of the Correa really comes into its own as a supportive body in the wake of the American period and the loss of the *sanctorum*. The records and finances of the Cofradía suffered in similar ways to those of the parish church; there are no entries between 1898 and 1902 and the 219 pesos and 78 centavos that had constituted the funds of the Cofradía in 1898 are no longer to be found due to the revolution.[69] Despite these temporary difficulties, the cofrades continued in their support of the Boljoon parish, now assisting with or even completely covering certain expenses that had previously been the sole province of the church, such as the purchase and maintenance of musical instruments and facilities. The Cofradía spent 227 pesos for the purchase of musical instruments in 1905,[70] and in 1909 paid 40 pesos to repair the choirloft.[71] The Boljoon pipe organ had, by 1925, become infested by termites (*anay*) and needed a major overhaul; the church was able to raise the 1153 pesos and 50 centavos for the repairs entirely from the community,[72] including 200 pesos provided by the Cofradía.[73] In other projects, they assisted the church in purchasing an electrical generator in 1921, contributing 600 pesos, and in an undertaking still enjoyed by the Boljoon faithful today, the parish *kumbento* and church were painted

[67] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de la Cofradía de Ntra. Sra. de Consolación y Sagrada Correa de Boljoon 1804-1941*, fol. 70v.

[68] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de la Cofradía de Ntra. Sra. de Consolación y Sagrada Correa de Boljoon 1804-1941*, fol. 80r. What is most interesting is that a year's worth of sung masses cost the Cofradía only six pesos.

[69] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de la Cofradía de Ntra. Sra. de Consolación y Sagrada Correa de Boljoon 1804-1941*, fols. 105v-106r.

[70] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de la Cofradía de Ntra. Sra. de Consolación y Sagrada Correa de Boljoon 1804-1941*, fol. 97v. The entry in the register does not specify what instruments were purchased, but they were likely a goodly fraction of the instruments listed in the inventory of 1914: six clarinets, a flute, a piccolo, an oboe, two flugelhorns, three cornets, two French horns, two trombones, two euphoniums, one baritone, two tubas, and several different percussion instruments. Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Inventario de la Parroquia de Boljoon 1914-1961*, fol. 26v.

[71] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de la Cofradía de Ntra. Sra. de Consolación y Sagrada Correa de Boljoon 1804-1941*, fol. 102v.

[72] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de Cuentas 1899-1956*, fol. 86r.

[73] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de la Cofradía de Ntra. Sra. de Consolación y Sagrada Correa de Boljoon 1804-1941*, fol. 123r.

and decorated, including the beautifully-painted *kisame*, with the Cofradía paying 645 pesos and 95 centavos of the total cost of 1672 pesos and 80 centavos.[74]

Religious Schism and Parish Finances

The new American administration, with its institutional practice of separation of church and state, generated some conflict regarding land ownership. While the large agricultural estates controlled by the Church were sold to the colonial government, the plots of land where church buildings, cemeteries, parish schools, and other structures were placed needed to be established and their dimensions measured. In Panglao, Bohol, a legal document was drawn up on May 24, 1900, which was a declaration made in the presence of the local municipal officials describing the composition and dimensions of the parish church, the belltower, the cemetery and its constituent chapels, as well as the dimensions of the open land, noting the names of the landowners bordering each side of the property. The purpose of this declaration was to state that the buildings and land belonged to the parish and not to the municipality.[75] The opening up of the Philippines to external Protestant evangelism and the proliferation of local religious movements that came in the wake of the American occupation also created legal issues of land ownership,with attendant financial burdens. Besides the loss of parishioners to newly-arrived religious movements, many local parish churches, chapels, and plots of church-owned land were occupied by the new *Iglesia Filipina Independiente*, colloquially known as the Aglipayan Church. This was initially allowed by the "Declaration of Peaceable Possession" instituted by William Howard Taft, first civilian governor of the Philippines. Though all church-owned properties were protected under the terms of the Treaty of Paris, which ended the Spanish-American War, the Declaration stated that anyone in physical possession of a church or church-owned building could not be forcibly removed except through official legal action. Many of these churches and chapels had been left without an official pastor due to the expelling of many Spanish priests at the end of the War, which left them open to unsanctioned occupation; in some cases a Filipino priest would defect to the new *Iglesia* together with all of his parishioners.[76] Given that parishes and dioceses had to initiate legal actions at their own expense, and knowing the poor state of parish finances in the

[74] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de la Cofradía de Ntra. Sra. de Consolación y Sagrada Correa de Boljoon 1804-1941*, fol. 157r.

[75] Archives of the Panglao Parish, *Inventario de la Iglesia de Panglao 1847-1934*. The declaration is a loose-leaf document placed inside the *Inventario*.

[76] Sr. Mary Dorita Clifford, B.V.M., "*Iglesia Filipina Independiente*: The Revolutionary Church" in Gerald H. Anderson, editor. *Studies in Philippine Church History* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1969), 236.

early part of the century, it is no wonder that the Catholic Church in the Philippines was not able to recover its properties for some time.[77] It was not until mid-1919 that the parish of Jagna, Bohol, was able to receive a court ruling in their favor against the *aglipayanos* regarding a chapel and plot of land in the barrio of Calabacita, valued at 960 pesos. This legal action cost the parish the relatively large sum of 200 pesos which only became possible when parish income began to recover and stabilize.[78] These evidences of conflict between the Catholic Church and the schismatic religious movements have echoes in other aspects of parish life. It is difficult not to detect this in entries in parish registers where parishioners are donating money to support parish operations and projects. In Ginatilan, Cebu, the parish begins receiving such donations relatively early, including the amount of 200 pesos in May/June 1902 provided by the "sensible Catholics of the parish."[79] A donation of 20 pesos in May/June of 1909 is listed as coming from the "good, sensible, and obedient Catholics of the parish."[80] In this unstable religious environment it is not difficult to guess who the bad, unreasonable, and disobedient people were! These "good" Catholics of the parish continued to assist not only with the basic functions of the parish, but also with major projects. Between July/August 1914 and March/April 1920, the parishioners raised nearly 20,000 pesos toward building the parish school (provided with potable water) and a bandstand in front of the church.[81]During the American period, just as today, parishioners who went abroad to work sent back money to support their families and to fund improvements in their home parish. In Anda, Bohol, a group of men from the town who were working in Hawaii remitted 332 pesos in 1919 for the purchase of a crystal chandelier for the church[82] (see Figure 10 below), and in Panglao another parishioner working in Hawaii donated a silk mantle for the Sto. Entierro around 1928.[83]

[77] This may have been exacerbated by the fact that in some cases, the local municipal governments actively supported the Aglipayan occupation of Church properties. This was certainly the case in Negros where, according to Modesto P. Sa-onoy, the Aglipayans had many adherents in the early part of the century; I am not sure if this was the case elsewhere. Modesto P. Sa-onoy, *A Brief History of the Church in Negros Occidental* (Bacolod City: Bacolod Publishing House, 1976), 85-8.

[78] Archives of the Jagna Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1894-1953,* fol. 90r. Oddly enough, in late 1906 the Supreme Court of the Philippines ruled in favor of the Catholic Church regarding all contested properties, but obviously the Jagna parish was forced to litigate at its own expense a full 13 years later.

[79] Archives of the Samboan Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto de Ginatilan 1848-1933*, fol. 178r. For unknown reasons, the parish archives of Ginatilan are housed with the archives of the parish of Samboan, the parish immediately adjacent to the south.

[80] Archives of the Samboan Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto de Ginatilan 1848-1933*, fol. 200r.

[81] The school building is most likely part of what is now Holy Trinity College, located behind the parish church. Archives of the Samboan Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto de Ginatilan 1848-1933*, fols. 217r, 218r, 234r, 237v, and 238v.

[82] Archives of the Anda Parish, *Libro de Inventario 1885-1958*, fol. 30r.

[83] Archives of the Panglao Parish, *Inventario de la Iglesia de Panglao 1847-1934,* fol 110r.

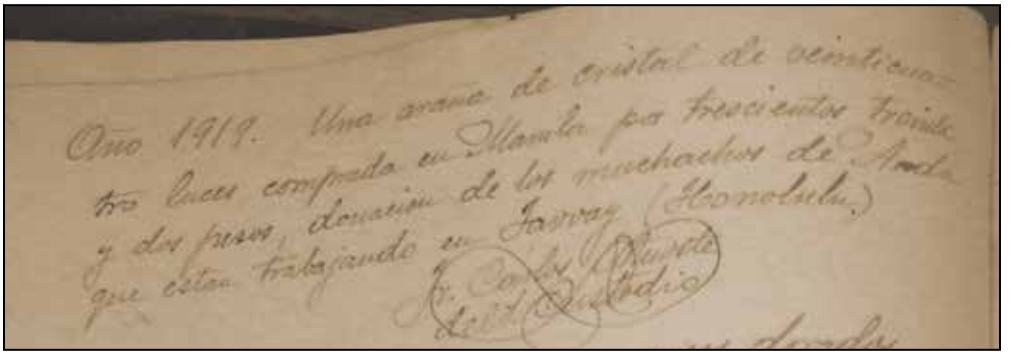

Figure 10: Detail from Libro de Inventario de Anda, 1885-1958, fol. 30r

During the decades of the 1920s and 1930s, the finances of the parishes continued to stabilize, due in large part to the reasons illustrated in the above paragraphs. However, as the 1940s opened amid the darkening clouds of war, parish life and finances would again be thrown into turmoil.

World War II

Just as we saw during the wars at the turn of the century, armed conflict is generally anathema to the operations of a parish church, including its record-keeping. The Second World War affected different parishes at different times, depending on when Japanese forces occupied a specific island or region. In the Central Visayas, there are occasions where record-keeping stops in mid-1942, others where it stops at the end of that year, and still others where records continue until the end of 1944. Most interesting of all are the parish churches where records (and assumedly much of parish life) continues uninterrupted straight through the war. Examples of this include the Boholano parishes of Duero and Jagna, and the Escuela Católica in Lazi, Siquijor. I do not know why these parish institutions seem to have been relatively unaffected by the conflict, but my barest conjecture is that these places were far from large population centers and militarily strategic positions. However, it is clear that in many places, parishes simply ceased to function. I will later examine some of the more extraordinary cases.

Just as was the case at the end of the Spanish-American War, parishes in the Philippines saw the looming threat of another foreign occupation, but rather than sending their parish funds away for safekeeping, they generally tried to protect the other valuable properties of the church, such as vestments, *santos* (with their accouterments), and sacred vessels. The parish in Jagna spent 20 pesos in July/August 1942 to have the vestments and other important items of the church transported to

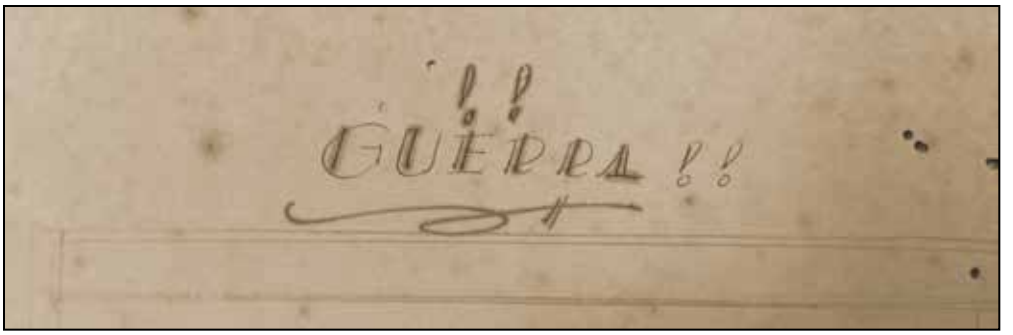

Figure 11: Succinct and Accurate Reason Given for Gaps in Financial Records, Libro de Recibo y Gasto de Tagbilaran, 1913-1956, fol. 101r

the "casa de evacuación,"[84] as the Japanese had landed in Tagbilaran, 65 km to the west, in May. At the end of the war, they paid another 16 pesos to have these items returned to the sacristy.[85] There was good reason to be concerned for these items, as both they and the buildings housing them were in grave danger during the course of the war. While the appalling destruction of the entire Intramuros in Manila and of the Cathedral of Cebu and its bishop's residence are well-documented,[86] other church structures also suffered damage due to the conflict. The St. Joseph the Worker Church in Tagbilaran was elevated to cathedral status upon the creation of the Diocese of Tagbilaran in late 1941, though the quickly-approaching war prevented the bishop from taking residence or for anything else to be done. The building must have suffered from some damage since it receives regular payments for the repair (reparación) of the cathedral between May/June 1946 and the end of the year.[87] Parish churches within the newly-created diocese have records of contributing to these repairs, including 150 pesos from Baclayon[88] and 400 pesos from Jagna.[89] Baclayon itself was able to maintain parish functions until September/October 1944; in November/December 1944 they have moved to one of the barrio chapels[90] and many parish activities cease. They are not paying any church employees (except the *labandera*) but are able to perform marriages and baptisms (many fewer than

[84] Archives of the Jagna Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1894-1953*, fol. 165v.

[85] Archives of the Jagna Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1894-1953*, fol. 174v.

[86] This statement is palpably ironic, as it is the destruction of these important archival sites that is largely to blame for our poverty of documentation about the history of the Church in the Philippines.

[87] Archives of the Tagbilaran Cathedral, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1913-1956*, fols. 108r-110v.

[88] Archives of the Baclayon Parish, *Libro de Cuentas 1909-1956*, fol. 138r.

[89] Archives of the Jagna Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1894-1953*, fol. 175r. The amount to be paid by each parish for the repair of the cathedral appears to have been determined by the Archbishop of Cebu.

[90] The name of the barrio is illegible and none of my Boholano colleagues have been able to identify it.

normal), but not funerals.[91] I have been told that the Baclayon Church had been bombed during the war;[92] certainly by late 1944 the church is not available to be used as the parish operations are moved to the barrio chapel and entries in the parish registers do not restart until May/June 1945. The stories from the parish are supported by post-war documents from Baclayon. A document from 1951 entitled "Statement of the War Damage Claim of the Baclayon Church" is attached to the parish financial register. The total monetary damage from the war as claimed by the church and submitted to Cebu Archbishop Julio Rosales was 13,000 pesos. The claim was reduced by the archbishop, who then forwarded a claim for 7,473 pesos to the Philippine War Damage Commission (6,000 pesos for damage to buildings, and 1,473 for damage to possessions). The War Damage Commission approved 3,587 pesos and 4 centavos in damages, less 179 pesos and 35 centavos for attorney's fees, for a total net claim of 3,407 pesos and 69 centavos. A receipt dated August 5, 1950 from the archbishop and signed by Fr. José B. Reyes notes that 1,024 pesos and 31 centavos had been received (a written emendation states that 500 pesos more had been received). This means that a total of 1,524 pesos and 31 centavos was received from the claim by 1951. I have not found any other evidence or documentation that the other 1,883 pesos and 38 centavos was received by Baclayon.[93] Given that the initial claim was for the large sum of 13,000 pesos, it would seem that damage to church buildings and properties was substantial.

An important, yet largely unnoticed, consideration in parish financial analysis is the nature of the money itself. In the period we are analyzing (ca. 1850 to ca. 1950), coins in base metals, silver and (during the Spanish era) gold were minted in Manila and saw widespread circulation in the Philippines.[94] We know that parishes often purchased strongboxes to hold coinage ("silver of the church"), and

[91] Archives of the Baclayon Parish, *Libro de Cuentas 1909-1956*, fol. 137r.

[92] There is some authority to this story, which I heard from Fr. Milán Ted Torralba, currently the Executive Secretary of the CBCP Episcopal Commission for the Cultural Heritage of the Church, and a former parish priest of Baclayon. He noted that people in the parish say the bombing was the cause of the broken glass casing of the image of the *patrona*, now housed in the church museum. Email correspondence with Fr. Milán Ted Torralba, Jan. 21, 2020. According to Regalado Trota José, the church also suffered damage from Japanese sniper fire. Email correspondence with Regalado Trota José, Dec. 31, 2020.

[93] It is likely that the remaining balance was never received. The 1,524 pesos and 31 centavos listed as disbursed to the Baclayon parish represented just under 45% of the approved amount of the claim. The Philippine War Damage Commission (authorized through the Philippine Rehabilitation Act passed by the United States Congress in 1946) was allotted $400 million; and only 52.5% of approved claim amounts were eventually paid. Nicholas Orlando Berry, "Representation and Decision-Making: A Case Study of Philippine-American War Claims" (PhD dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1967), 1.

[94] Larger-denomination banknotes were also produced. It is not likely that local parish churches would possess large amounts of this type of currency during the Spanish or American eras (before World War II), as most parish income came from fees for baptisms, marriages, and various funeral services, most of which cost a fraction of a peso.

the parish funds were in a form that could be transported for safekeeping during the Spanish-American War, or could be stolen, as during the Philippine Revolution.[95] However, during the Japanese occupation of the Philippines, paper *fiat* currency was issued for all denominations, down to one centavo. This currency shows up in parish registers during the war, as some distinguish between "hard" Philippine-American currency and Japanese wartime notes. Where such differences are noted, the Japanese money is referred to as "dinero Japones," "dinero de emergencia," or "papel-moneda de emergencia" and American colonial currency is "dinero antiguo," "dinero genuino," "dinero real," or "dinero filipino." After the war, the occupation currency became officially worthless, though due to hyperinflation experienced during the war years, the paper money was nearly worthless anyway. For example, the Tagbilaran Cathedral lists its current funds in May/June 1945 as comprising 400 pesos and 45 centavos of "Dinero Japonés" and 73 pesos and 30 centavos of "dinero antiguo."[96] In the next entry, from July/August 1945, only the 73 pesos and 30 centavos of "dinero genuino" remain.[97] However, the case of the Escuela Católica of Lazi, Siquijor, is different. In November/December 1944 the financial register shows a positive balance of 185 pesos. The next entry, for January/February 1945 shows a balance of 121 pesos and 40 centavos "en dinero filipino;" there had been no expenditures in either of the entries, so it appears that the Japanese currency was simply discarded from the balance. The school continues receiving funds until January/February 1946, when it reports it balance as containing 67 pesos of "dinero de emergencia" and 98 pesos and 75 centavos in "dinero genuino."[98] Again, only the "dinero genuino" is carried forward as part of the balance of the school. What is interesting is that the school receives much later, in September/October 1949, 30 pesos and 50 centavos in exchange for wartime currency ("cambio del dinero de emergencia").[99] Unfortunately, the register entry does not say how or through whom this exchange was made, which is curious given that the occupation currency had been officially worthless for more than four years.

Stories from the War

As I noted near the beginning of the article, excellent and oft-untapped sources of archival information are the living memories of parishioners who lived through and experienced many of the events recorded in parish documents. These help to clothe the generally impersonal accounts with relatable experience while reminding

[95] This is opposed to the parish receiving payment in kind, as was sometimes the case earlier in the Spanish era.

[96] Archives of the Tagbilaran Cathedral, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1913-1956*, fol. 104r.

[97] Archives of the Tagbilaran Cathedral, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1913-1956*, fol. 105v.

[98] Archives of the Lazi Parish, *Libro de Cuentas de la Escuela Católica de Lacy 1916-1954*, pp. 106-7.

[99] Archives of the Lazi Parish, *Libro de Cuentas de la Escuela Católica de Lacy 1916-1954*, p. 114.

us that these events often exacted a terrible toll on individual lives and communities. One such account, recorded in Azucena L. Pace's book *The Story of the Barili Parish*, tells of an event in 1944 in which the parish priest, Fr. Pedro Montebón, was visited in the *kumbento* by a group of Philippine Constabulary troops collaborating with the Japanese. They asked Fr. Montebón to accompany them to their headquarters at the municipal hall, where five young men suspected of being guerillas were being held, including the teenage son of the church organist. There, the men were allowed to make their confessions and receive absolution from the parish priest, before being led away to be executed.[100]

Another story with similar themes is one that I heard directly from Mrs. Restituta M. Limbaga during the parish fiesta in Tanjay, Negros Oriental, in 2016. As related above, she witnessed the 1925 destruction of the Tanjay parish church as a small child, and was a young woman when the Japanese occupied the town during the war. Her family was heavily involved in parish life, her father being a musician who orchestrated liturgical music for the parish orchestra, and she and her siblings were church musicians. She mentioned that most of the music and many of the musical instruments were destroyed when the Japanese burned the town in 1944 while she and many of the townspeople hid inside the church. One of her brothers was also tortured and executed by the Japanese for being a suspected guerilla. When the American military liberated Tanjay at the end of the war, they had to come to the town on horseback because there was no available motorized transport. On their arrival, the soldiers were treated to a midnight mass with the parish choir and orchestra performing the well-known mass of 19th century Spanish composer Bernat Calvo Puig. One of the American officers told them, "we thought we were coming to a wilderness, but here we are in the midst of civilization."[101]

The Archives Speak: the Trials and Hardships of Fr. Juan Lorenzo

Sometimes the archival documents speak for themselves. In Boljoon, Cebu, the parish priest Fr. Leandro Morán writes in the financial register (which stops in May/June 1942), "for reason of the turmoil occasioned by the war, I had to leave for Cebu where I resided until July 10, 1945, returning to this parish on the 12th of the same month."[102] At this point, the parish records begin again from July 12, 1945. But sometimes the archives speak with a much louder voice, and this is the case with the church in Bacong, Negros Oriental, and its parish priest Fr. Juan Lorenzo.

Fr. Lorenzo explains his situation and experiences in Bacong in three separate entries in the parish register, written at different points during the war. For the most

[100] Azucena L. Pace, *The Story of the Barili Parish* (Azucena L. Pace, 2014), pp. 127-28.
[101] Interview with Mrs. Restituta M. Limbaga, Tanjay, Negros Oriental, July 25, 2016.
[102] Archives of the Boljoon Parish, *Libro de Cuentas 1899-1956*, fol. 137r.

part, I will let him speak for himself with minimal commentary. Parish records show their first gap after November/December 1942, after which Fr. Lorenzo writes the following note.

> On November 19 of 1942, Japanese troops took me [from here] to Dumaguete together with Fr. Antonio Ullate of Dauin and Fr. Benito Lozano of Tolang who were staying with me. On July 19, 1943, those same Japanese troops established themselves in Bacong and I was obligated to come back with them and stay with them here.[103]

Though he is permitted to return to his parish church, parish religious life is severely limited due to the vagaries of war and occupation. This is seen in the number of baptisms, marriages, and funerals conducted by the parish, which are perhaps only one-third or less the average encountered in non-war years. Fr. Lorenzo laments this state of affairs in a note after the November/December 1943 entry.

> This is the state of the parish at the end of the second year of the war in the Philippines. The parish life is completely paralyzed; no baptisms, no marriages, no ministering to the sick, no burials, no attendance at Sunday Mass and feasts, even the most solemn. At the feast day of our patron San Agustín one can count only 110 attendees at Mass, and in the later procession only 200 come. On All Souls Day and Easter even fewer attend. On the rest of the feast days and on Sundays there are 15, 30, 40, but never more than 50 attendees. On ordinary days there is no one. All of the people have left and remain in the fields and the mountains and there are no human means available to oblige them to return to the town.[104]

Fr. Lorenzo continues administering his parish under these conditions for a total of 17 months, at which point his trials truly begin. His next account, written just before parish records resume in July/August 1945 recounts the harrowing experiences that began on the morning of November 6, 1944.

> On November 6, 1944, the little amount of parish administration that I could achieve during the 17 months of control and occupation of the Japanese in Bacong came to an end. On December 19, 1943, a permanent detachment of Japanese troops established themselves, and brought civilians from Dumaguete to form the municipality, and at the same time they forced me to remain in the convent to administer the parish, that I was determined not to abandon. At dawn on November 6 [1944], a considerable number of Filipino troops attacked the Japanese detachment. They immediately abandoned their post and retreated along the beach toward Dumaguete, abandoning the town which was immediately occupied by the Filipino troops. Once they

[103] Archives of the Bacong Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1846-1954*, fol. 309r
[104] Archives of the Bacong Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1846-1954*, fol. 310v.

> had occupied the town, I and those few living with me in the convent were forced to abandon the town and go up into the mountains, even though I protested and begged to stay and take care of the properties of the church; I was not permitted and I had to leave with only the clothes I was wearing. Immediately I was taken to the Barrio of Tugawe in the jurisdiction of Dauin where I spent three months and afterwards to the Barrio of Timbanga in the jurisdiction of Bacong where I spent another three months. During these six months that I lived in the mountains I only said mass on Sundays and feast days with some small help sent from Siquijor, the parish priest of San Juan, to help with the sick and dead, with little means to do more. On May 6 [1945], a Sunday, after saying mass in the Chapel of Lourdes in the Barrio of Timbanga I continued to the town and continued on to Dumaguete because the church and convent [in Bacong] had been occupied and converted into barracks. On arriving at Dumaguete I fell sick with malaria, which lasted until June 14. When I recovered from the sickness I returned here to the Bacong convent, but on the fifth day being here the fever returned and on the 21st I was taken in an ambulance back to the hospital in Dumaguete and could not return to Bacong until August 18. During my sickness in Dumaguete, the parish was administered first by Fr. Vendiola, a Filipino priest who came from Bacolor to visit his family and stayed for 15 days during which he administered baptism and the sacraments to those who needed them. Afterwards, Fr. Jesus Gonzales, partner of the priest of Dumaguete, came every Sunday to say mass and give baptism, and on other days helping the sick and burying the dead. With these brief notes is left a sufficient explanation of the vacant time and the confusion that arises in these financial accounts and the administration of the parish during the last few years.[105]

What I find most amazing about these wartime entries is not the fact that Fr. Lorenzo had to administer his parish under Japanese occupation, or that he was trapped in the middle of a pitched battle, or that he was obliged to spend six months in mountainous areas with guerilla forces, or that he survived two bouts of malaria, but that these many ordeals are mentioned only to explain why the parish was left unadministered and why proper records had not been kept. This represents the height of commitment to all aspects of Fr. Lorenzo's religious avocation and mission of service to Bacong.

We return finally to a big-picture view provided by parish archival materials. The issues treated in this article, namely natural disasters, epidemics, and war, are only a few of the instances in the life of the parish that may be detected and examined through the archival record. Over decades and centuries, we can see the parish as a kind of living organism, growing and fragmenting, experiencing periods of health

[105] Archives of the Bacong Parish, *Libro de Recibo y Gasto 1846-1954*, fols. 311r-312v.

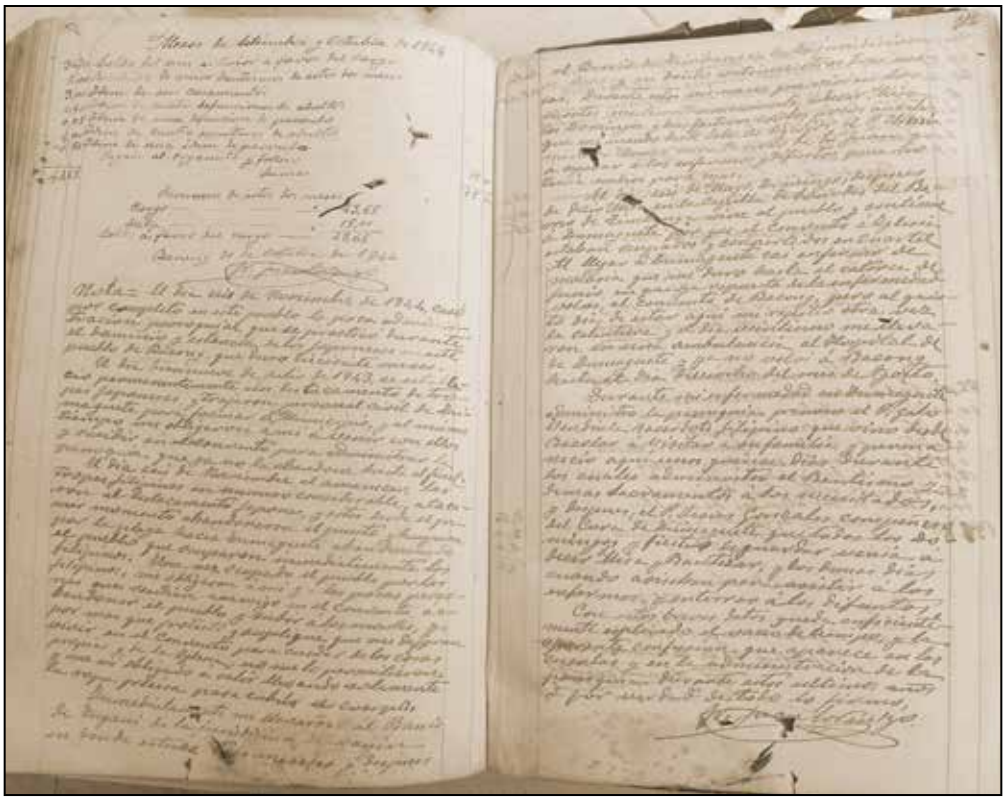

Figure 12: Fr. Juan Lorenzo's 1945 account of his travails during World War II, Libro de Recibo y Gasto de Bacong, 1846-1954, fols. 311r-312v

and sickness, of wealth and poverty. These records speak to us of the parish church as the center of the community, whose health and well-being are interconnected.

The records speak to us also of the selfless commitment and dedication of those who faithfully tended the parish, from parish priests fulfilling their calling and avocation, to the too-often unnamed and unacknowledged secretaries, musicians, sacristans, laundresses, workmen, porters, and servants who likewise dedicated their lives, talents, and labor to the work, maintenance, and beautification of their community's spiritual home. We remember the priests of Loay, Bohol, treating their cholera-stricken parishioners during the outbreak of 1882, Fr. Fabián Rodríguez of Boljoon, Cebu, saving what he could of parish funds so the church would not be completely destitute after the Spanish-American War, Fr. Casto Sesma of Liloan, Cebu, who faithfully continued providing the sacraments even in the midst of attacks by revolutionaries, the priests across the colony who must have had to

work day and night tending the sick and burying the dead during the waves of the 1918 influenza pandemic, and Fr. Juan Lorenzo of Bacong, Negros Oriental, who endured ordeals, depredations, and illnesses during World War II with thoughts only of returning to and serving his parish. We remember the members of devout community organizations like the *Cofradía de la Correa* and the Centro Católico, who stepped into the gap left by the loss of the *sanctorum* to financially support their parishes, the individuals who generously remembered the parish church in their wills and bequests, and the many gifts given by parishioners living and working abroad. We remember Mrs. Restituta M. Limbaga and her fellow parish musicians in Tanjay, Negros Oriental, who felt that the greatest expression of thanks they could offer to American forces liberating their burnt-out town was a musical setting of the mass at midnight in the parish church.

The materials examined in this article represent only a tiny fraction of what has yet to be documented in the Philippines. As more documents are uncovered and studied, still more stories and pictures of parish life will emerge, illustrating the primary place occupied by the church as the physical and spiritual heart of its community.[106] PS

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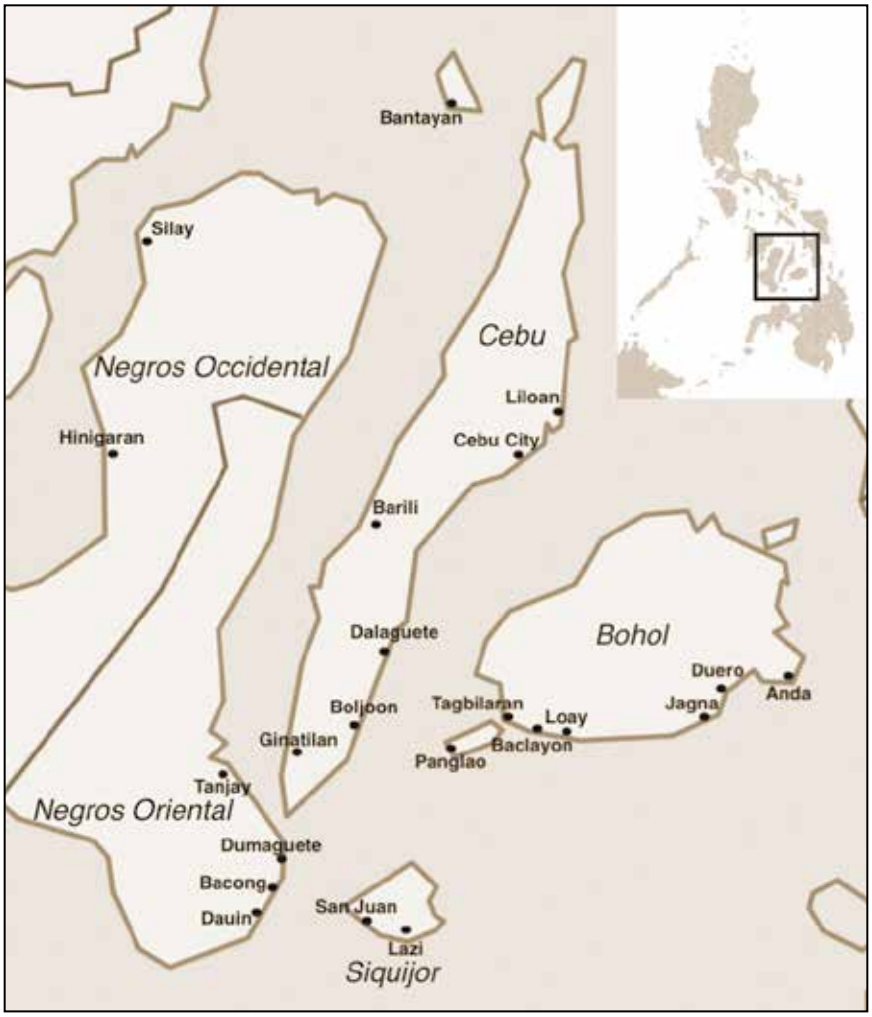

Figure 13: A Map Showing Most of the Locations Mentioned in the Article

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La salue Regina en romance

Salue te dios reyna y madre de misericordia. vida dulçura y esperança nuestra. Dios te salue a ti llamamos los desterrados hijos de Eua. A ti suspiramos gimiendo y llorando en aquesta valle de lagrimas. Ea pues abogada nuestra. buelue a nosotros essos tus misericordiosos ojos. y despues dea