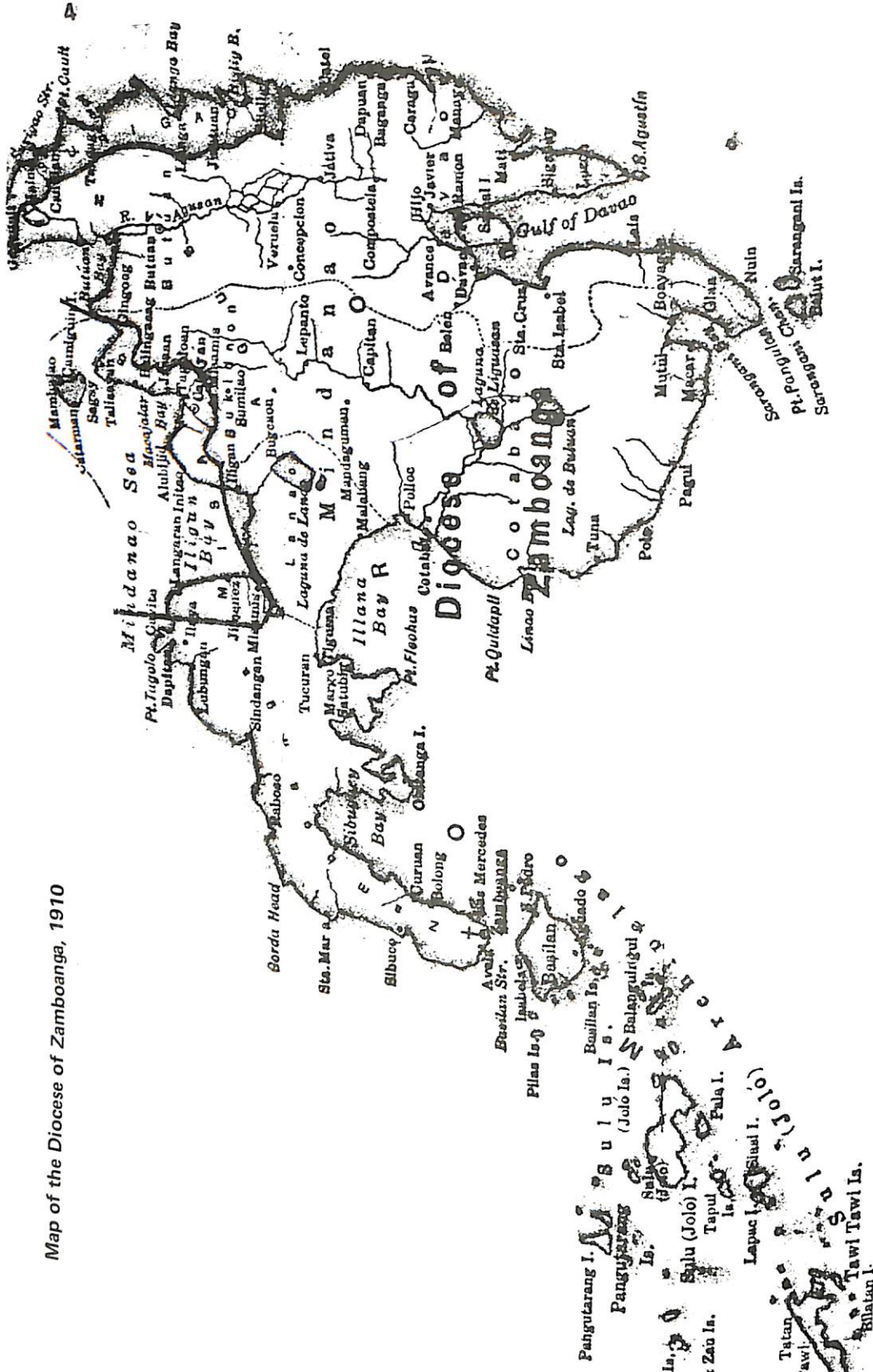


Map of the Diocese of Zamboanga, 1910



Chapter One

A SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF DAVAO, 1609-1898

The beginnings of Christianity in Mindanao go back to the earliest attempts of the Spaniards to establish a foothold in the southern islands of the archipelago in the 16th century. After 1565, the first Spanish governor-general of the Philippines, Miguel Lopez de Legazpi set out to entrench and consolidate Spanish control all over the islands by the colonial expedient known as *reduccion*, a process that combined resettlement and the subjugation of the native populations. By the end of the 16th century the first *encomiendas*, the precursors of Spanish colonial administrative machinery were created in Cebu, Panay, Manila, etc. In Mindanao, Caraga was listed as an *encomienda* belonging to Juan Gutierrez del Real and Francisco de la Cruz in 1591.¹

The brief account of Caraga stated that it was the source of 892 tributes from about 3568 people and that they were not yet pacified. For this, a missionary was need. Six years later, an expeditionary force composed of both missionaries and soldiers land in Caraga but was forced to turn back by hostile natives. The Spanish efforts and determination were not to be rewarded until 1609, when the first Spanish fort and *presidio* were successfully established at Tandag.²

The fort of Tandag was not to be left unchallenged and untested by the Caragans, and like any other Spanish enclave in a vast terri-

¹Dasmarinas, "Account of the Encomiendas" in Emma Blair and James Robertson (eds.), *The Philippine Islands*, (Cleveland: A.H. Clark Co., 1903), 8:128

²Up to the 18th century the Spanish Accounts tended to confuse Caraga and Tandag. In 1651, according to the account of F. Pedro de San Francisco de Assis, Caraga was but a part of the province of Bislig. F. de Assis however, stated that Bislig was popularly known as Caraga which was at that time, the most populous town in the whole province. In 1738, F. Juan Francisco de San Antonio explained that the word Caraga applied to the entire territory starting from the port of Surigao to the tip of the San Agustin Peninsula.

See F. Luis de Jesus, "Early Recollect Missions", Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 11:214

Ibid., 40:311

Ibid., 41:137

tory of unrelenting native inhabitants the fort was repeatedly besieged. The precariousness of the Spanish situation in Tandag was reflected in the refusal of F. Miguel de Sta. Maria to reside in the area. The missionary decided to set up a mission house in Gigaquit, further to the north of the island.

Caraga, The Oldest Mission³

The history of the first mission in Caraga or Tandag presaged a historical pattern that the whole history of the Christianization of Mindanao was to take in the next three hundred years. The 17th century was particularly violent and sanguinary. In 1649, F. Agustin de Sta. Ana, prior of Caraga was slain by Muslims and in 1651 another Recollect missionary, F. Bernardo de la Concepcion was poisoned by his Muslim servant. In 1629, the Caragans rose in arms when rumors of Muslim victories over the Spaniards in Jolo reached the east coast and much later, because of the cruelty and abuses committed by the commanding officer of the fort at Tandag.

In one such incident, the Spanish Captain of the Guards severely punished a native chieftain for setting free a slave belonging to the captain. Dumblag, the native chieftain was flogged publicly and then enchained. One of his kinsmen, Valentos, on witnessing the punishment and humiliation of his chief and relative swore to avenge Dumblag. In the ensuing hostilities five Spaniards, among them another priest, F. Jacinto Cor, were killed by the group of Valentos. Another group headed by Mangabo, put to death two more priests, F. Alonso de San Joseph and F. Juan de Sto. Tomas. A third group of natives headed by Zancalan attacked the visita at Bacoag and after ransacking the convent took its priests, F. Lorenzo de San Facundo and Fr. Francisco de San Fulgencio prisoners.

Zancalan took his prisoners to the land of Mangabo who was known as the "crocodile of Tago", a title which supposedly echoed his fierce and ruthless nature in dealing with his enemies. Mangabo

³Under the administration of Gov. Francisco Tello (1596-1602) certain encomiendas in the settlements of Butuan, Dapitan, and Caraga were mentioned. See Antonio Morga, *Historical Events of the Philippine Islands*, (Manila: J. Rizal Centennial Commission, 1962), p. 55

however, showed far more astute qualities than this. He freed one missionary and retained another, anticipating future confrontations with the Spaniards. The missionary was treated well by Mangabo who allowed the priest to travel and move about freely within Tago. When the vicissitudes of war turned in favor of the Spaniards, Mangabo's foresight repaid him well. Captured by the Spaniards, Mangabo's staunchest defenders were the two priests who argued for making Mangabo a friend instead of a permanent enemy.

Ten years later, another episode in this patently volatile history was ushered in by the activities of the Dutch. Between the years 1646 and 1647, the Dutch were wreaking havoc on several Spanish strongholds all over the archipelago. The Muslims and other natives of Mindanao perceived the Dutch incursions as a factor that would help them succeed in expelling the Spaniards from their midst. In the east coast, another factor was soon to act in collusion with the Dutch presence that would result in the severe setbacks to the pacification work undertaken by the missionaries.

One of the most onerous, and therefore, hated colonial impositions was the *polo y servicio*, a form of conscript labor exacted on all male natives between the ages of fifteen to sixty-one years. The impact of this conscription was such that families were separated; farming households were deprived of male members and of their roles in family agriculture. Consequently, crops could not be sown on time or were left untended and eventually damaged by the elements or wild animals. In brief, *polo y servicio* intruded insidiously into the family's very means of livelihood.

In 1648, due in part to the Dutch threat, another conscription order for *polistas* for the Cavite shipyards was issued in Manila. A great consternation prevailed all over Mindanao when news of the new conscription order reached the island. In Caraga, the inhabitants took to burying their valuables in preparation for flight from the oppressors who will soon be combing the mountains and forests in search of native *polistas*. In Tandag, the Alcalde Mayor, Bernardo de la Plaza hid the decree in an effort to abate the massive unrest among the inhabitants. Ironically, it was in a friendly territory where the Spanish government had a relatively peaceful outpost, that violence broke out.

This was in Linao, a remote *visita* in the Agusan highlands. Here, a native chieftain whose name was Dabao had recently consented to

have one of his children attend the parish school of F. Agustin de Sta. Maria, the prior of Linao. Apparently, the fact that Dabao had been in more or less friendly terms with the Prior of Linao in no way indicated his predisposition and attitude in regard to the policies of the colonial government. When news of the call for *polistas* circulated in Linao, Dabao secretly gathered the other Manobo chiefs and held several meetings with them during which he talked to the other chiefs about the harsh rule of the Spaniards, how they had been forced to accept Christianity, the possibility of a successful uprising due to the preoccupation of the Spanish forces with the Dutch invasions, and finally, the realization of their desire to go back to the old, indigenous worship.

Dabao was able to organize a small but determined force which soon had the Fort at Tandag embattled. In the initial assault both the commanding officer and F. Agustin de Sta. Maria were killed. The Spaniards who survived the battle of Tandag fled to Butuan where a retaliatory force, reinforced by a contingent from Cebu, was soon unleashed upon the rebels. When this force had done its job, not a single Caragan escaped death or indiscriminate persecution. Those who were not killed were seized as slaves to be worked in Spanish houses in Manila and their properties confiscated.

Although many missionaries were themselves the objects of these uprisings, some were also the people's most sympathetic defenders. A missionary in Manila wrote that at this time, Manila was teeming with slaves from Caraga and Butuan. A Recollect Father, Agustin de San Pedro secured a decree from the Governor General setting the Caragans free and allowing them to return to their homes in Mindanao.

For some time no Spaniard dared to set foot in Caraga, but in 1650 the Recollect Provincial undertook to hold parleys with some Caraga chieftains imploring them to leave the mountains and return to the lowland settlements provided for them by the colonial government. Twenty years later, another Recollect Provincial, F. San Phelipe led the re-establishment of the Spanish government in Caraga. F. San Phelipe appointed a missionary for Cateel and then instructed the Prior of Bislig to pay regular visits to Caraga and to actually live there for certain periods of the year. It was the Prior of Bislig who personally organized the expeditionary forces which sustained the campaigns on the entire east coast until the whole of Caraga from

Surigao to the tip of the San Agustin peninsula once more submitted to Spanish rule.

The Caragans⁴

The characteristics of the natives of Caraga in the early 18th century as described by the Spaniards did not differ much from the Spanish descriptions of other peoples elsewhere in the archipelago. The first group of natives whom the Spaniards came in contact with was known as Tagabaloy, which name was said to have been derived from a mountain of the same name, Balo-oy. The Tagabaloy were described by the Spaniards as gentle and peaceful. The Spaniards also noted that physically the Tagabaloy were of a powerful built, and in many ways resembled the Japanese people. Their physiognomy, complexion, and customs were said to have many things in common with the latter. Apparently, the Tagabaloy were aware of the resemblance and were said to be quite proud of it.

The local headman or chieftain was usually the bravest and the wisest among them. He characteristically led a class of warriors and together they represented a quasi-nobility, class whose members distinguished from the rest by a red kerchief tied around the head. At mealtimes the warriors share the table with the chief. A slave class existed which performed menial tasks for commoners.

The early Caragans were observed to be animists who worshipped their ancestors together with heavenly bodies like the sun and the moon. An account stated that they practised human sacrifice as part of their religious beliefs. The offerings of human victims were said to occur more frequently in times of crises, such as when they were at war, and also during community celebrations like the sowing and harvesting of rice.

Their fratricidal wars were often the result of countless vendettas. When one of them was killed the nearest kinsman was obliged to avenge the death by killing another or others, for the number of victims taken in a vendetta correspond to the social status of the slain one. The higher the social status, the more victims were needed

⁴F. Diego de Sta. Theresa, "Recollect Missions", Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands*, 36:114, 128-137; 21:196, 212, 202.

to pay for the one life that was taken. The avenger customarily placed as many bracelets in his arm as the number of intended victims and removed them one by one as vengeance was exacted.

One of the more valuable contributions of the Spanish presence in early Caraga was an account of the natural history of the place. The long years during which the priests stayed in Caraga afforded them not only precious insights into the culture of the people but also observations of the wildlife found in the east coast. The missionaries identified a bird known as the Tabon which looked a like small chicken and which laid its eggs along the beach, its natural habitat. They also noted the Cagri, a strange species of bat. The animal that filled the missionaries with utmost wonder was the nocturnal Hamac, described as a small roundheaded monkey which had a special attraction to the moon. The Hamac was known to make its appearance only at night when it would leave its lair in order to wait for the moon. Perched on a tree it would wait patiently for the moon to emerge from the clouds and as soon as it appeared the Hamac would fix its unblinking gaze upon the luminous disk following its peregrinations on the horizon. When daylight came and the moon could no longer be seen the Hamac returned to its lair where it remained until nightfall when once more the moon beckoned it to come.

In the 19th century the Spanish accounts of the Caragans became more copious and acquired more clarity.⁵ The people of the east coast had been identified as Mandayas. They were described as "an honorable people, peace-loving, respectful, obsequious, docile, submissive and patient." Their complexion was brown and sometimes white and their noses were tall and even aquiline. The men grew the hair on their head as long as the women's, but they trimmed their long beards with pincers.

Their kinglets were called *hari-hari* or *tigulang* and were said to occupy their social station on account of their wealth. The *hari-hari* took precedence over the principal families who had their own followers or *sacopes* and was consulted and obeyed even by the *gobnadorcillo* and other Spanish officials in the locality. He alone had the power to declare war on others, demand satisfaction for insults to his ranch or farmstead, and was an arbiter and last appeal

⁵Jose S. Arcilla, S.J., "The Christianization of Davao Oriental: Excerpts from Jesuit Missionary Letters", *Philippine Studies*, (Oct. 1971) 19:689

after hearing the opinion of the *principales* in the trials of subordinates.

It appeared that the Caragans retained their traditions and native institutions up until the 19th century. The religious writer of the account attributed this to the close family ties among the Mandayas. Relatives always sought to live close together. For this reason, they remained inseparable from their native beliefs and believed that they will die if they were forced to abandon them and become Christians.

Their religious practises were held in honor of their various gods or idols whose images they carved out of wood and were called *manaug*. These wooden images were carved exclusively from one kind of wood known as *bayog*. The idols had no hands and the male *manaug* was distinguishable from the female which has a comb in its head. The fruit of the magubahay was used as the idols' eyes.

The Mandayas believed in the twin principles of good; represented by Mansilatan and Badla, father and son; and evil, symbolized by Pundaugnon and Malimbong, husband and wife. Their cult was maintained and preserved by priestesses known as *baylanas* or *bailanes* who officiated in their various rituals and ceremonies. Their healing rites propitiated the principle of good. When they wished to cure each other of sicknesses they invoked Mansilatan and Badla to whom offerings were made; while the idols of evil, Pundaugnon and Malimbong were ritually attacked with knives. Their most important religious sacrifices were the *balilic*, *talibong* and *pagcayag*. The *balilic* and the *talibong* both involved animal, i.e. pig sacrifice and both were performed by a number of *baylanas* but all three satisfied the most important purposes of religious activities: healing, divination, and propitiation of the omnipotent supernaturals.

To celebrate the *balilic*,

... Ten, twelve or more bailanes come together according to the splendor they want to give to the feast. A small altar of the diwata is previously erected in front of the house of the man who spends for the ceremony: the owner comes out with a huge hog and presents it to the bailanes in the presence of 100 or 200 invited guests. The hog is set on the altar and the bailanes, dressed meticulously for the occasion, immediately gather around it. The Mandayas next sound (the) guimbao music consecrated to the diwatas, as the bailanes keep time with their feet, dancing around the hog and altar, singing Miminsad, etc. Shaking from head to foot and swaying from one side to the other, they form several semi-circles with their movements. They raise the right arm to the sun or the moon, depending on whether it

is day or night, praying for the intention of the patron . . . All at once the chief bailan separates from the others and pierces with her balarao the victim on the altar. She is the first to share in the sacrifice, putting her lips to the wound to suck and drink the blood of the animal . . . The others follow and do the same . . . They then return to their place, repeat the dance, shake their bodies, utter cries . . . (and) converse with Mansilatan who they say has come to them from heaven to inspire them in what they later prophesy . . . ⁶

The Other Natives of Davao⁷

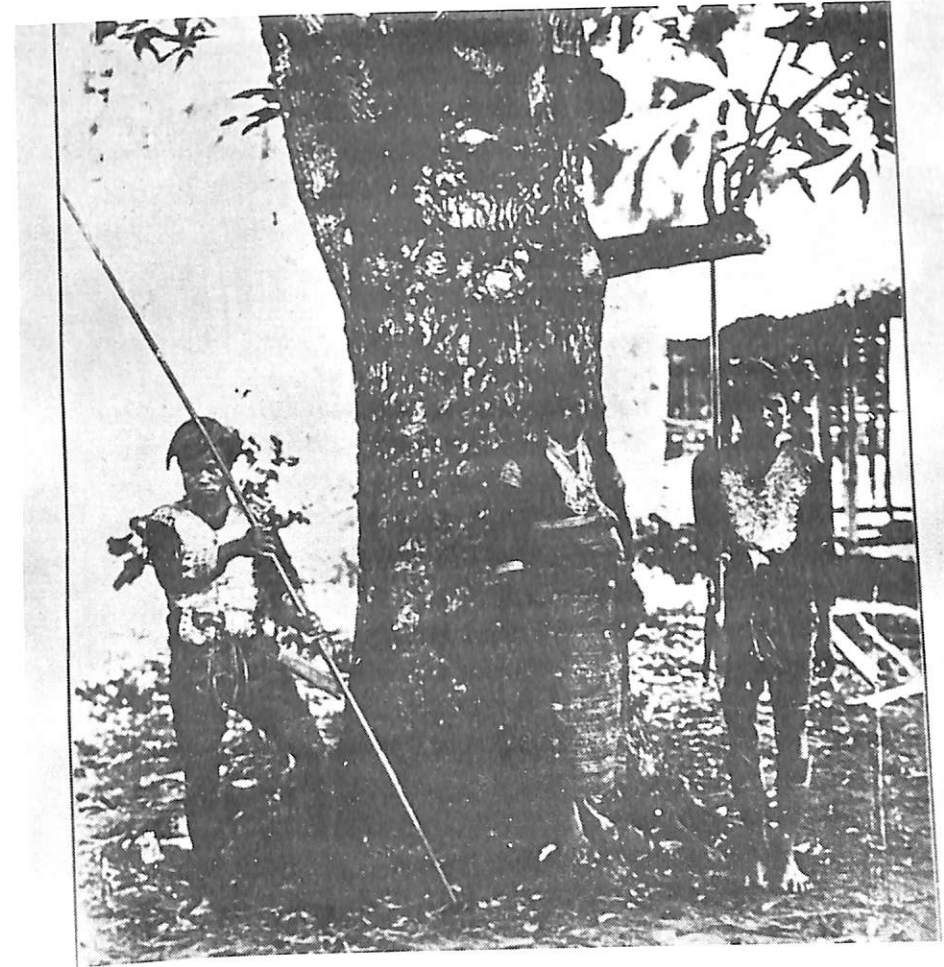
The Spanish conquest of Davao in the 19th century resulted in the first description and documentation of the peoples inhabiting the coast and the vast interiors around the Gulf of Davao. One of the first native groups whom the Spaniards came in contact with were the Bagobos, the principal inhabitants of Mt. Apo, a volcano. By this time, the Spaniards had sufficient familiarity with the different groups of natives in southeast Mindanao and their varying customs so as to be able to state with confidence that the Bagobos were the only ones who practised human sacrifice. For this, the Bagobos were feared by other groups of natives. The practise of human sacrifice was the central rite in the cult of Mandarangan and Darago, husband and wife deities whom the Bagobos believed to dwell on Mt. Apo. The Spanish missionaries were impressed by the antiquity of the Bagobos who were the only natives known to possess a genealogy of their forbears. The Bagobos could trace their lineage up to the eleventh ascending generation ending with Saling-Olop who is the legendary founder of Sibulan, the center of Bagobo population in the 19th century.

Aside from Mandarangan and Darago, the Bagobos believed in other "demons" e.g. Colambusan, Comalay, Tagamaling, etc.; as well as in benign beings: Tiguiama, the creator; Manama, who dispenses rewards and punishments; Todlai, the patron of marriages and for whom are offered buyo and rice; and Tagalium and Lumabat. They

⁶ Ibid., pp. 690-691

⁷ Cartas de los Padres de la Compania de Jesus de la Mision Filipinas, vol. 9, (Manila: Imprenta de los Amigos del Pais, n.d.)

recognized two beginnings and believed that each person had two souls, one which goes to heaven and another which goes to hell. In addition to Tiguiama who created all things lesser gods were said to assist him: Mamale, who made the earth; Macoreret who made the air; Domacolen, the mountains; and Macaponguis, the water.



The Tagakaulos of the Davao Gulf 1895.

The Tagakaulos

The Tagakaulos were so-called because of their preference for

dwelling at the origins of rivers. They inhabited the Hamiguitan mountains in Cape San Agustin and were found as well in Malalag, Malita, and Lais. They were described to have a good built and a fairer complexion than the other tribes but not as fair as the Mandayas. As fighting men they were as brave and skillful as the Bago-bos but not as cruel. Widowers were said to be especially courageous in war since to have killed a man was a special qualification for obtaining a new wife.

The Bilaans or Bilanes

The 19th century account of the Bilaan placed their settlements in the surrounding region of Buluan lake as well as in the Sarangani Gulf. They were described as docile, retiring, shy and easy to reduce. Such traits earned the Bilaans further categorization as the most exploited and physically degraded tribe along with the Mamanua.

The Mamanua

The name Mamanua was said to be a derivative of *manbanua*, meaning country resident. They were apparently of the Negroid race having a dark, oily complexion, kinky hair, and were characteristically hunters and gatherers. They wore little or no clothing, had no permanent houses, being accustomed to sheltering themselves in an improvised shed of tree branches or any available grasses. They lived in the small peninsula of Surigao and as far inland as the mountain of Tago in the same province. Their chiefs usually took Manobo women for wives.

The Manobos

The Manobos or Manuba were river dwellers. Their settlements were found along the big rivers or river systems in Agusan, the San Agustin Peninsula, Malalag and Cotabato. The Manobos were a numerous tribe. The Spanish accounts were able to distinguish between two main types; one athletic of build and another of smaller phy-

sique. They were swidden agriculturists and as such were semi-nomadic being forced to leave old fields as soon as they were no longer productive. Their clothings and adornments resembled those of the Mandaya except that the Manobos preferred black to colored cloth or beads. Tattooing was widely practised among them.

The Founding of Davao⁸

In 1847, the Spanish mandate appropriating the entire southeast of Mindanao and the subsequent creation of the Fourth Military District of Davao in the island was the result of some fortuitous incidents. Some Muslims of the Gulf of Davao attacked a Spanish trading vessel, the San Rufo which was anchored in the Gulf's waters engaged in trade. When news of the attack of San Rufo reached the capital at Manila, the Spanish government confronted the Sultan of Maguindanao, Iskandar Qudratullah. The crew of San Rufo carried a letter from the Sultan stating that they came in peace and for the purpose of trade. The Sultan for his part disclaimed responsibility over the incident saying that since the Muslims of Davao did not honor his letter, that they were not therefore his subjects and he would not answer for their misdeeds.

The disclaimer gained for the Spaniards more than the value of the plundered San Rufo and cost the Sultan of Maguindanao more than what he hoped to avoid by refusing to take responsibility for the attack. The Spanish government regarded the Sultan's disclaimer as a waiver of all political intentions and pretensions in the Gulf area. The waiver paved the way for claiming the entire area around the Gulf of Davao as a Spanish territorial preserve.

An experienced Spanish trader, Jose Oyanguren who had been engaged in trade in the east coast of Mindanao for sometime heard of the Sultan's waiver and proposed to the governor-general the conquest and pacification of the territory in return for the governorship of the new province to be established in the Gulf area. In addition, Oyanguren also asked for exclusive rights over its commerce for ten

⁸Benito Francia and Julian Gonzales Parrado, *Las Islas Filipinas*, (Habana: Imprenta de la Subinspeccion de la Infanterria, 1898), 1:38, 199-200.

years. He likewise promised to undertake the founding of a Christian settlement, the Christianization of its native inhabitants, and the development of the province which will be under his charge.

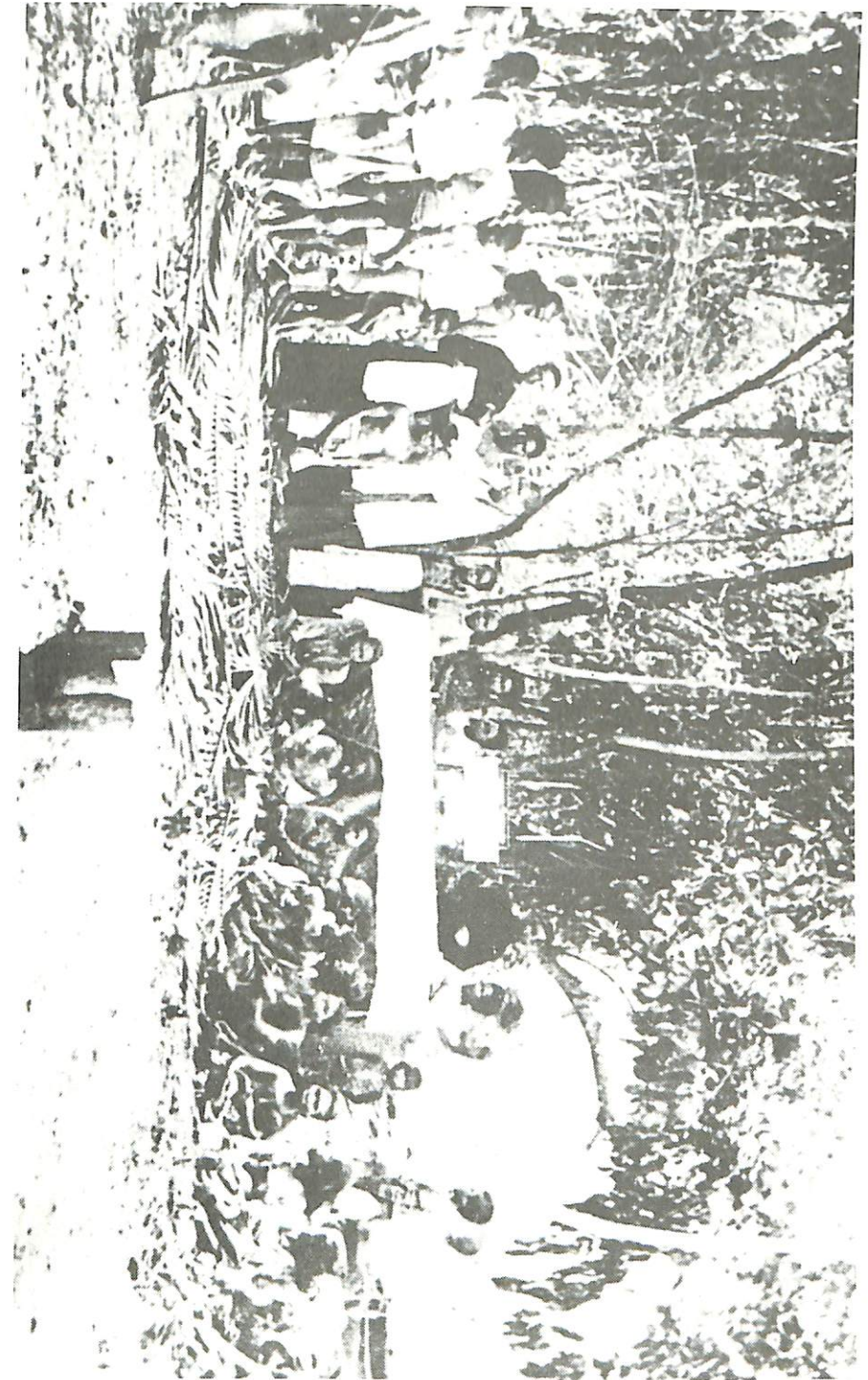
The concession granted by Governor Narciso Claverria in 1847 made Oyanguren the Governor of Davao for ten years and allowed him a monopoly of its commerce for the first six years. Oyanguren's concession comprised a large territory which extended as far east in the Pacific coast as the old town of Caraga and included the whole of the San Agustin peninsula. The new province, officially designated as the 4th Military District of Mindanao, was bounded to the north by the province of Agusan, while the western part was vaguely delineated by the Pulangi river or Rio Grande de Mindanao as the Spaniards called it. Southwards, the demarcation was marked by the islands of Sarangani guarding the entrance to a bay of the same name. The new province was given a new name, Guipuzcoa, after the name of Oyanguren's birthplace in Spain, and the *cabecera* or capital was established at the mouth of the Davao river and named Nueva Vergara.

The Christianization of the *Infieles* of Davao

The first Christians of Davao to be baptized from among the *infieles* (literally, infidels or unbaptized natives) were led by Francisco and Doroteo Mateo, and Nicolas de la Cruz, all Bagobos from the capital at Nueva Vergara. Outside of the *cabecera*, Jose, Francisco, and Angela Loaya, an entire family from Cautit, were baptized in 1851; Petra Pamansag and Basilisa Agustin of Sibulan in 1852; and Fidel Calapsad and Cristobal Gapas, Manobos from Lais, also in 1852.⁹

The church established by the Recollects in Davao was proclaimed a parish in 1860 when the Jesuits replaced the Recollects as missionaries of Mindanao. The first parish priest of Davao was P. Jose Fernandez who did not live long and expired in the same year. In 1868, a group of Jesuit missionaries; P. Ramon Barua, Domingo Bove, and Ramon Pamies arrived in Davao to undertake the continuing task of the evangelization of its inhabitants. The Fathers of

⁹Libro de Bautismo, 1848-1882, Parish Records at San Pedro Cathedral, Davao City.



Jesuit Missionary Baptizing 42 Moros of Davao.

the Society of Jesus bought the convent of the Recollects at the *cabecera* and established residence in the area.¹⁰

The Christianization of Davao in the late 1800's demanded the dedication and efforts of an enterprise that seemed to have just begun. The first disappointment was over the conversion of the small island of Samal. The natives of this island, the Samales, were said to have aided the Spanish forces against the Muslims at the time of Oyanguren's conquest. The Spanish civil authorities assured the missionary, Fr. Domingo Bove, of the friendship of the Samales and the governor himself accompanied the latter to the island to gather the Samales who were informed about the plans and intentions of the church and government. The governor manifested the desire of the missionary to build a church and convent in Samal.¹¹

After the meeting, the governor went back to the *cabecera* at Davao leaving the priest to accomplish his purpose and mission. In Samal, on the day that the work was to be started, only a few natives presented themselves to Fr. Bove and after stating that they had no desire to become Christians, left the priest.

Ten years after, another missionary experienced the same dis-appointment when he attempted to improve the state of conver-sion in Samal. Fr. Mateo Gisbert noted a great disparity between the number of Christianized natives and the numerous houses that indicated a large population in the island. He built a small chapel in one part of Samal called Habongon and named it after its patron, San Jose. Soon a rumor reached him that the Samales were threat-ening to cut off the head of anyone who will submit himself to be baptized. When a woman whose name was Suguila presented herself to the missionary for baptism, a delegation of natives confronted Fr. Gisbert to inform him that they were against Suguila's baptism. The priest who was undaunted replied that anyone was free to accept Christianity or refuse it, and that one who had no respect for a priest or a Christian had no respect for the government, the King of Spain, and God, and deserved to be punished severely.

Characteristically, the missionaries' resolute efforts to win con-verts produced enclaves of Christian communities all over Davao. In Samal, San Jose was founded as the first Christian town from out of

the old Habongon. Later, in Tigpan Fr. Gisbert was able to per-suade several apostates or *remontados* to return to Christian life, build a chapel, and construct houses around it. The latter community was enlarged with the arrival of some Bagobos, Mandayas, and Mus-lims who were dissatisfied with the rule of the Moro datus of Samal.

In the Bagobo settlement of Cautit, some Tagacaolos came to join the new Christian converts. Lobo was another *reduccion* south of the *cabecera* which had already a chapel. Judging by the large numbers of members that it was gaining daily, the missionary thought that in the very near future Lobo would be the biggest Christian pueblo in Davao.

The old province of Caraga passed to the charge of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus in 1873.¹² During this year, five missionaries led by Fr. Domingo Bove travelled to the different *visitas* of Caraga to take care of its old Christians and convert new ones. With the help of Pantaleon Ajos, a Visayan and an old resident of Caraga, 139 more Mandayas were converted to the faith in Manay, Jovellar, and Tarrag-ona. Besides new Christians, 39 children of old Christian settlers in the eastern province were also baptized. Although the progress of conversion work was slow and fraught with many problems, the missionaries expressed confidence that the *infieles* were not diffi-cult to convert, for they were like children who were easily won over by means of gifts and kind words. The missionary, in order to succeed in his mission had only to search the fastnesses of forests and mountains to find the native, who once discovered, presented no real obstacle to conversion.

The Social Impact of Christianity

Christianization could hardly be confined to the process of cate-chizing and baptizing the native inhabitants. Throughout the history of culture contact and culture change Christianity had been the single factor known to have unleashed some of the most massive and per-vasive changes resulting from acculturation and to a lesser extent, inculturation. In the Christianization of Davao, the more perceivable

¹⁰ P. Miguel Saderra Maso, S.J., *Philippine Jesuits, 1581-1768*, (Manila: n.p., 1974), p. 85

¹¹ *Cartas de los Padres de la Compania de Jesus de la Mision Filipinas*, 5:242-246.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 78-79

changes occurred in the physical transformation of the native environment. The *reduccion* enforced the sedentary form of settlement among a people known to be semi-nomadic. Permanent settlements were intended to bring about a cultural re-adjustment to sedentary, as against shifting modes of agriculture. Hence, a change had to be made from hunting and gathering activities and part-time agriculture to being fulltime producers of their food supply. All these were actually pre-conditions that had to be met before the missionary could begin his work of evangelizing the native inhabitants. For their part, the natives were called upon to reorder their lifestyle in an irrevocable manner.

The first *reduccion* to be made in Davao was Samal island which in 1866 was headed by Datu Taupan who was known to have aided Oyanguren in the conquest of the Gulf. Town-making in Samal began with a visit from the Governor-General, Antonio del Campo accompanied by a few officials of the *cabecera* and a contingent of the local civil militia, the *Tercio Civil*. The governor explained the purpose of his visit and the desire of the Spanish government to have a town which was to be situated along the shore rather than in the interiors of the island and the designation of the Datu as the representative of the colonial government.

This was followed by a census of five communities; Tagdaliao, Binoling, Malipano, Lidao, and Liboac which were to form the nucleus of the first *pueblo de indio* in the new province. The governor also left instructions as to certain policies that henceforth had to be followed; the head of the new town was to be known as *Matanda sa Nayon* and his first function was to preside over the election of his successor, one who will the de jure leader of the new town. The governor reserved the right to intervene however, at anytime during the elections and to nullify or validate its outcome.

The old Datu calmly accepted all these conditions requesting only that the Spaniards respect the old beliefs and customs of the islanders. This *modus vivendi* rested more or less in relative equanimity until the death of the old Datu. When Datu Taupan died, the islanders refused to recognize the authority of his son, Severo. Although the Spaniard insisted that the succession of Severo was in conformity with the customs and traditions of the island, the people proceeded to elect another datu, Batutun, whose election was presided over by no less than fourteen Moro datus from the different

parts of the Gulf. From then on, there were two acknowledged chiefs of the island; Severo, who was the one recognized by the Spaniards; and Batutun, who was elected by the native inhabitants.

By 1894, six more *reducciones* were effected in Samal while in the Davao mainland itself five *pueblo de Moros* were added to the list of Spanish administered towns. The missionary accounts of this period however, noted a tension approximating a crisis in the local economy; all forms of livelihood appeared to be suffering a serious setback which the Spaniards attributed to the fact that the native inhabitants were paying tribute to two administrations: the Spanish government and the Muslim datus.

That this pattern of administrations was not a peculiarity of Samal island alone indicated the adjustments made by the Spaniards to the local conditions. The same type of governance prevailed in Caraga and other towns created in the east coast by the Jesuits.¹³

The payment of tributes was a significant factor both in making a new town or in unmaking one. The natives appeared to join a new town in a rash of enthusiasm at the beginning and in reality because of the mistaken belief that under the Spaniards they would be protected from paying tribute to the Muslim datus. Later, with the realization that not only will they continue to pay tribute to the Moro datus but to the Spaniards as well, the town would gradually but inevitably lose its inhabitants. Since the Spanish government avoided direct confrontations with the Moros as a matter of policy, the only recourse left was to abstain from collecting it. Fr. Pablo Pastells advocated a tribute-free status for all new converts in Mindanao.

¹³A list of Christian and infiel *governadorcillos* or *capitanes* in the east coast according to F. Pablo Pastells, S.J. in *Cartas de los Padres de la Compania de Jesus*, 2:82

Town	Christian <i>governadorcillo</i>	Non-Christian
1. Loyola	Hilarion	Aguran
2. San Nicolas	Gregorio Anauan	Masodo
3. San Luis	Luis Duque	Dumaan
4. Carmelo	Amadeo Sumampot	Atog
5. Santa Fe	Geronimo Alimbung	Col-las and Tanlion
6. San Jose	Monico Aguilar	Luntad and Balas
7. San Pedro	Jacinto Mocon	Mabandas and Bantayan
8. San Ignacio	Benito Bernabe	Sagapan, Inodian and Tapayan
9. Santa Maria	Gregorio Moralizon	Mapayo
10. San Francisco	Onofre Silveran	Evaristo
11. San Estanislao	Pedro Aguilar	Mamiling

... let the Government issue a definite disposition for the newly-reduced pagans, exempting them from the tribute and personal service for a time . . . Let such disposition be sent to the Superior of the Missions, so that the missionaries can explain it to the pagans and the newly-reduced . . . The same should be observed regarding the fifths . . . The day this is carried out, the pagan converts in Mindanao will total millions through the years. ¹⁴

A fruitful approach to town-making was to intervene in disputes and conflicts between native groups. The Malalag coast in the olden times was the scene of frequent and bloody episodes between the Moros and the various non-Muslim groups who inhabited its coasts. With the influx of the Christian immigrants from the Visayas and Luzon in the 18th and 19th centuries the problem was aggravated to a no mean degree until eventually, the whole Malalag coast was left entirely deserted.

Thus, the first *reduccion* in Malalag took place in the hinterlands among some fifty families of Tagacaolos from Culaman. The missionary earned this *reduccion* through efforts that were largely spent towards a vigilant care and protective concern of the Tagacaolos against both Muslim and Christian malefactors. On another fortuitous occasion, Fr. Mateo Gisbert mediated a feud between another group of Tagacaolos and some Manobos. The priest was able to persuade the Manobo chieftain, Banton to remove his people from Tibungoy, the disputed area and through gifts elicited promises from the latter to cease all further harrassments of the Tagacaolos who were in turn persuaded to join the *reduccion* and accept religious instruction.

In 1886, Fr. Gisbert proposed the opening of a port in Malalag, the better to sustain and consolidate the Spanish gains along the whole Culaman coast. Malalag had a well-formed bay the depth of whose waters was ideal for anchorage of steamers and bigger boats. The following year, a military detachment was also established in the area which was soon deserted by its soldiers who returned to the *cabecera* in Davao apparently not finding the place congenial enough. Despite this setback, Malalag metamorphosed into a *pueblo* which was named Las Mercedes in 1891.

All throughout the Gulf of Davao during the last three decades

of the 19th century, town-making was a process that could not but produced many quaint vignettes which merit retelling. Altogether they form a palpable pattern in an otherwise inchoate mosaic of collective human experience. A town called Manresa was founded somewhere in the east coast in 1883. The story about its founding stemmed from a personal talent of the missionary, Fr. Pablo Pastells in playing the harmonica. The negotiations with the local Mandayas who were being persuaded to form a town were conducted amidst a celebration in the community. The Mandayas butchered a pig on which they feasted for two days. When everyone had eaten and drank his fill, the native chief, Masaudlin produced his Mandaya guitar whose music soon heightened the gaiety which prevailed in the occasion. Not to be outdone, Fr. Pastells also played his harmonica to the delight of the native audience. After this, the priest distributed gifts which he brought along for the Mandayas. At the end of two days, the missionary was able to collect 402 names of Mandaya families who were to be the occupants of the new town.

Manay was an old mission and a barrio of the town of Caraga. In 1895, some of the old residents of Manay; Eusebio Moralizon, Policarpio Mapayo, Canuto Mabulao, Gregorio Moralizon, Bernardo and Maxima Ajos among others petitioned the Spanish Commandant in Mati for the creation of the town. The petition was motivated by the desire of Manay residents for a separate administration from Caraga which was regarded as quite remote from Manay on account of the bad roads one had to travel to reach the principal town. That the petition was justified on these grounds was evidenced by the fact that it had the sympathy of the *gobernadorcillo* of Caraga, Ciriaco de la Vega who recommended the petition stating that Manay had its own *tribunal* (administrative building), school, church and convent, etc. The original town of Manay thus was composed of the following barrios: San Fermin, Manresa, Zaragoza, Sta. Cruz, San Ignacio, Jovellar and Tarragona.

Mati was an old Moro village ideally situated at the mouth of the Pujada Bay. The Bay was in turn ideal for anchorage for two small islands, Pujada and Mamban, protected its harbor from typhoons. Southwards of the Bay was the beautiful point called Macambol which abounded in *almaciga* (resin) and *biao* (*lumbang*), two of the principal products of the Davao Gulf during this time. All these added to the potentials of Mati as a new town. The first to conceive

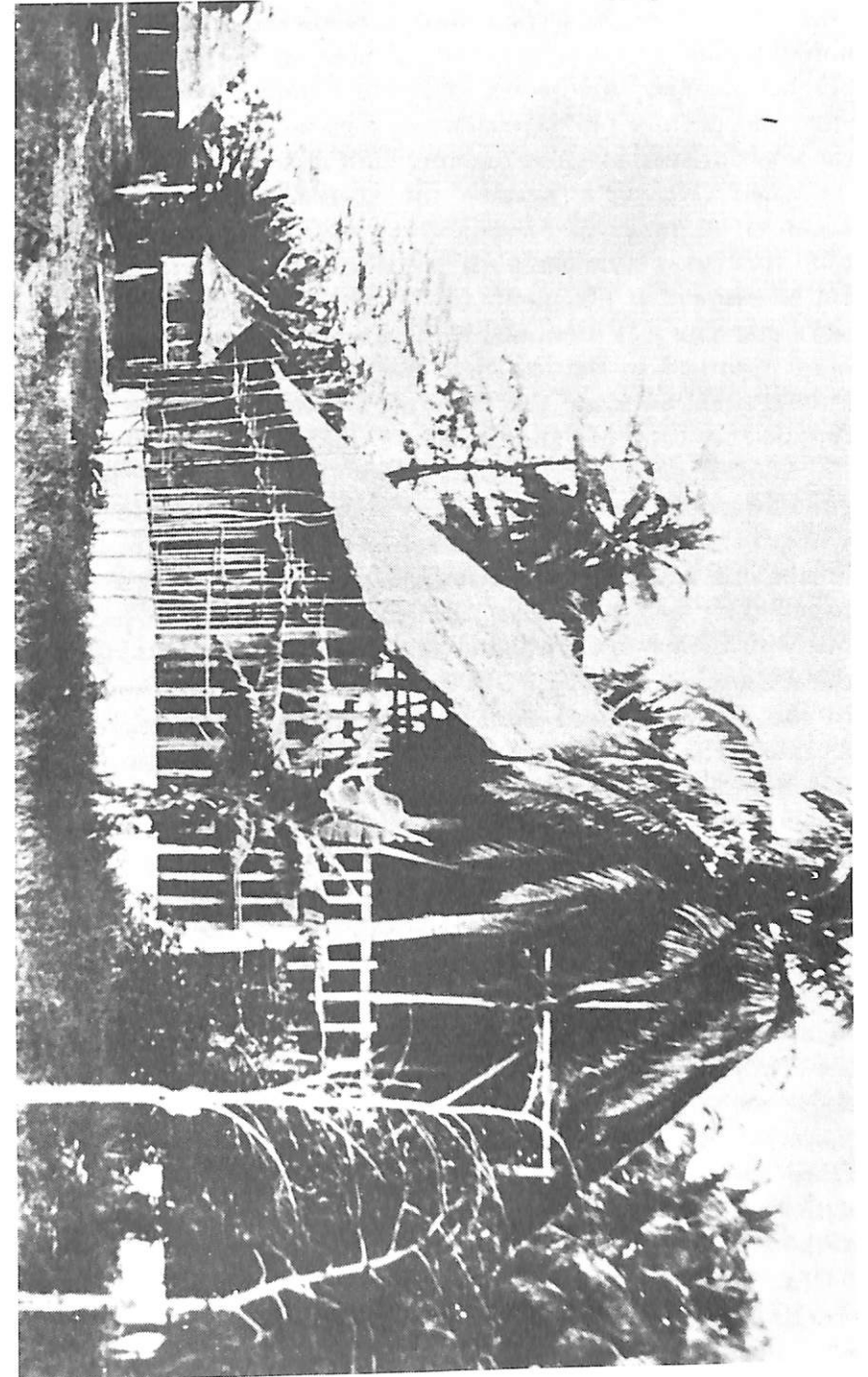
¹⁴ Arcilla, "The Christianization of Davao Oriental", p. 672

of this idea was the *gobernadorcillo* of Baganga, Juan Nazareno who proposed to open a *visita* at Mati and send some Christians from Bislig as settlers. However, it was not until 1864 that the Davao government finally decided to implement the plan. By this time, Nazareno had already lost interest in the project. The government appointed Faviano Diving as lieutenant and caretaker of the *visita* at Mati and proceeded to campaign for settlers. The first to respond to the invitation were two escaped convicts from Tandag, three residents of the *visita* of Mampanon, two from Manorigao, and three from the town of Baganga.

Mati at this time was peopled by Moros who were subjects of the Datu of Sumlug. The Christian settlers who arrived in Mati in 1864 won the goodwill of its Moro inhabitants through gift-giving. Two years after, to the *visita* came the Governor of Davao, Enrique Garcia, who appointed the new officials for the new town. In 1867, the missionary, Fr. Francisco Lenguas arrived and constructed a new church. Unfortunately, the new town was soon ravaged by a series of catastrophes; one was an earthquake whose force and intensity sent all residences and public buildings reeling to the ground. The other was a long drought which devastated the local farming economy for four years. Finally, a locust infestation finished off the remainder of the crops that the townspeople were able to grow.

The southern tip of the eastern coast of Mindanao is a peninsula called Cape San Agustin. The old name of the Cape was Altar, a name derived from a much older lore; a legendary visit by St. Francis Xavier, the great Apostle of the Indies. This saint was supposed to have wrought a miracle, an altar to preserve the memory of his visit to the peninsula. The natives of the place spoke of a natural rock formation of such a shape that it resembled an altar of the Christian churches.

One of the old towns founded by the Recollects in the Cape was Linas. The original settlement was built on top a promontory overlooking the sea. The site must have been purposely chosen for this geopolitical advantage. It was a natural lookout tower for Moro attacks. As a townsite however, it had one disadvantage; it lacked enough arable flat lands for farming. Despite this, a few Christians were persuaded to settle. A father with his young son, three young men from Cantilan, and another three from Bislig joined the non-Christian natives and together they became the original settlers of



The Construction of a Church in Mati, 1895

Linas. The Christian settlers who were all males eventually married non-Christian native women. When these unions begot children and became families, the parish priest of Caraga travelled all the way from his parish to Linas to solemnize these mixed unions and baptized the non-Christian mothers together with their offsprings.

When Oyanguren became the governor of Davao, he ordered Linas to be relocated to somewhere nearer the *cabecera*. Some of the Christian settlers complied, but others followed their non-Christian townsmen to the mountains. A few years later, when Oyanguren's mandate was presumed to have lapsed or forgotten, the *remontados* returned to the lowlands and settled alongside a river named Pundaguitan. So it was that the same settlers who founded Linas also founded the town of Pundaguitan.

Another old Christian town in the Cape is Sigaboy. Like Pundaguitan, Sigaboy was also settled by the former inhabitants of Linas. When this town was ordered dissolved by Oyanguren, the disbanding inhabitants emigrated to surrounding areas in the peninsula. Some found their way to Sigaboy, but left soon afterwards preferring to live with their non-Christian companions in the mountains. In 1880, the missionary F. Domingo Bove tracked the *remontados* of Sigaboy to the mountains and unsuccessfully tried to bring them back to Sigaboy. The objection of the former settlers to return to Sigaboy was borne of fears of Moro attacks. Like any other coastal town, Sigaboy shared the same vulnerability to Moro attacks which were invariably mounted from the sea. The outbreak of small pox and measles did nothing to mitigate the unattractiveness of the place which was soon left deserted.

A number of settlements in the peninsula rose and fell consequent to the fluctuations of the *almaciga* trade. Almaciga is a resinous substance extracted from a tree of the same name which together with two other forest products; *biao* and *cera* (beeswax) was a major export commodity of Davao in the 19th century. The *reducciones* of Tagabili, Tibanban, Cuabu, and Sarangani were all established under a common economic model. An enterprising Christian settler was appointed as *encargado*, an agent and later, the caretaker of the new pueblo.

In 1870, Tagabili was founded as a *reduccion* with forty-five Manobo *infielos* (non-Christians) and some Christians from Pundaguitan. The *reduccion* was largely the handiwork of the Palma Gil bro-

thers; Mariano and Eugenio, and Mariano Generoso all of whom were former residents of Sigaboy. A year after its founding, the *reduccion* was already showing signs of stagnation: the Manobos as well as the Christians had no lands to cultivate, the only known source of livelihood being *almaciga* which at this time had already become scarce.

Cuabu is an isthmus between the Gulf of Davao and Pujada Bay in Mati. The Spaniards perceived its strategic significance as a relay station between the west and east coasts. An *encargado* was found in the person of Andres Javier and his family. Javier willingly accepted the position which gave him an opportunity to foster his business interest with the Moros of the place.

On the other hand, the residents of Sigaboy with a long history of erratic and unstable conditions regarded the plans with suspicion fearing that the move was yet another ruse to dislocate them. They made no secret of their opposition to the new town saying that Cuabu had no source of drinking water, etc. Finally, nature itself appeared to conspire with the townfolk. A typhoon levelled the houses, the church, and the convent, all of which were still in the process of construction; a flood destroyed the newly-sown crops and as a *coup de grace*: the only dog in town used for hunting fell into the river and was eaten by the crocodiles.

The southern boundaries of Davao as the 4th Military District of the Spanish colonial government in Mindanao were defined by the Sarangani Islands of Balut and Tumanao, the bigger of the three islands guarding the entrance to the Sarangani Bay. These islands were inhabited by Moros and Bilaans. In the years 1873-1875, the government *encargados* in Sarangani were a Spanish mestizo, Jose Saavedra from Zamboanga; and an *indio*, a Christian named Panay from Pollok, Cotabato. Saavedra and Panay arrived in Balut island sometime in 1873 and started to put up a business. The two were inevitably drawn into a conflict with the local Moros of the island. After Saavedra killed an important Moro *datu* in combat he acquired some measure of prestige which enabled him to stay for a few years in the island unmolested. He and Panay left three years later in search of new business opportunities elsewhere in the District.

A few other Christians were known to have established businesses in Sarangani such as Marcelo de Jesus who came to Boayan, and Esteban Fernandez who settled in Glan. Rufino Balderas who was a former capitán (*gobernadorcillo*) of the *cabecera* established his own

business in Malabinuan. Other than these traders who came in the interest of trade, no further efforts were made by the government at founding permanent settlements in Sarangani. Consequently, as the southern boundary of the District, Sarangani remained a weak spot highly vulnerable to Moro attacks. The missionary, Fr. Quirico More suggested that the *Estacion Naval* should launch a decisive conquest of Sarangani in order to secure the southern defenses and check the nefarious trade in arms conducted in the islands by the Moros.

The most prized *reduccion* of Bagobos was Lobu which in 1882 was founded by Fr. Mateo Gisbert. The *reduccion* was settled by some nine Bagobo datus with their families and *sacopes* (following). The location of Lobu was one of the most idyllic as described by Fr. Gisbert. Lobu was situated at the confluence of two mountain streams whose waters were as clear as crystal and was but a short distance from the coast. The Bagobos who were living in the place were already cultivating corn, tobacco, bananas and coconuts. From Lobu one could go to the nearby forests and mountains using the wide paths which the Bagobos had built and maintained long before the Spaniards came to Davao. In 1884, the old Lobu was founded into a town and renamed Sta. Cruz.¹⁵

The first town to be founded in the northern regions was Moncayo. In 1870, the Spanish government appointed an *infiel*, Dagohoy as *gobernadorcillo* and head of some twenty households which composed the citizenry of the new town. Dagohoy had been a good friend of Fr. Domingo Bove to whom he shared the knowledge of the passage by land from Agusan to Davao.

The *reduccion* closest to Davao was Tuganay, established at the confluence of the Salug-Tagum Libuganon rivers. The exploration of Salug-Libuganon was the work of Fr. More who was assigned to the place in 1877. The land around these rivers were inhabited by Mandayas and Atas who were subjects of the Moro datus. The latter prohibited the Mandayas and Atas from building their houses along the riverbanks which the Moros reserved for themselves and also from having any dealings with Christians.

¹⁵ Cartas de los Padres de la Compania de Jesus, 6:104-105.

The Native Responses to Christianization

While town-making was changing the face of the landscape as a prerequisite for Christianization it was at the same time making indelible imprints on the lives of the people slowly and almost imperceptibly. The Christian presence was at this time negligible, but patently forceful enough to propell communities of people towards the direction of change. The magnitude of the changes wrought by Christianity has not been fully ascertained. Some insights into these changes are provided by the native responses to Christianization.

The initial impact must have been thoroughly disorienting and thus, destabilizing. The mass dislocations caused by the *reducciones* and the confusion of the *reducidos* could not but result in internal as well as external upheavals such as the violent responses to the early 17th century Christianization efforts in Caraga. The flight from the Christian settlements periodically resulted in ghost towns, depopulations of former centers of populations, and regressions to more primitive and backward conditions such as internecine warfare and famine. The Muslim attacks, as well as the depredations by the native *baganis* who were widely feared in the east coast were reprisals against Christian settlements. The escalation of intertribal conflicts was an active resistance against Christianization by those whose traditional positions or statuses were threatened by the new dispensation and social order. Famine and the scarcity of forest products such as *almaciga* towards the end of the 19th century were the likely consequences of population pressure and an intensification of its collection in keeping with increased commercial activities.

Such external upheavals indicated little of the internal workings and turmoils that Christianization wrought. It took some time for Christian teachings to take root, considering the many constraints the missionaries had to work with, not the least among these being the indigenous culture itself. The struggle between the old and the new beliefs was fought largely in the sub-conscious which is the domain of culture. Sometimes the struggle found an external forum or arena in the religious revolts and the outbreak of superstition and other elements of the pre-Christian worship which the Spaniards regarded as lapses.

The Spanish missionaries considered the natives attachment to idolatry as a greater difficulty than the problem of the *baganis* whom

they termed assassins, or professional murderers. An important dimension of this idolatry was the recurrence of false gods and prophets. In Bungadon, a six year old Mandaya boy who was a good player of the *guimbao* (native drum) was reported as a divinity giving orders to the Mandayas not to form towns in Caraga, nor send their children to the parish schools in the Christian *pueblos*, and instead to return to the worship of the *diwatas*.¹⁶

On another occasion, a story was concocted about an apparition of an old lady descended from heaven who ordered the people to go back to the mountains after destroying their fields and killing their domestic animals. In the mountains, they were told that they would pass a year without eating after which all would go up bodily to heaven together with the old lady. The people were warned that if they refused to heed the orders of the old lady and remained in the Christian towns, the Spaniards would cut off their heads and deliver their children to the Sultan of Jolo for hostages.¹⁷

The missionaries blamed the enemies of Christianity; the *bailanes* or native priestesses, and the *baganis*; and lamented the readiness of the Mandayas to believe such stories. As many towns as were affected by these stories were deserted by their inhabitants. The efforts of the missionary to convince the people of their error did little to repair the damage done. The religious Fathers failed to recognize these occurrences as an overall syndrome of a more deep-seated struggle within; a fierce dialectic between the indigenous culture and Christianity.

Events of 1898

The Philippine Revolution which began in Luzon in 1896 spread to Mindanao in 1898. As political events in history took to the fore to assume a dominant role in the historical setting Christianization suffered a temporary setback. All the priests in Mindanao were recalled to Manila, and in Davao most of the Spanish elements including the last Governor, Bartolome Garcia had left by January, 1899. After

the departure of the Spaniards the residents of the *cabecera* held a meeting to form a government junta headed by Antonio Matute, a Spanish merchant who was elected *presidente*; and Bonifacio Quidato as *comandante de policia*. The provisional government was soon overthrown by a mutiny of soldiers led by Basilio Bautista and Lucas Auting. The mutineers killed the *comandante*, Quidato, his wife, and a brother-in-law of minor age. After this, the only Spaniard left in the *cabecera* was the parish priest, Saturnino Urios, who succeeded in restoring some order in the general anarchy that prevailed.¹⁸ On December 14, 1899 the American forces under the command of Gen. James Bates arrived in Davao. Mindanao and Sulu were placed under a military government until 1914 when the Department of Mindanao and Sulu was created.

A Hiatus in Catholicism

Under the Americans a major development in the history of Christianization was the introduction of Protestantism. For 350 years the Philippines had known only the Catholic faith. The Christianized Filipino was nurtured exclusively on Roman Catholicism whose source derived from the 16th century reign of the great Catholic sovereigns of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabela. By a coincidence, the Protestant Reformation also took place in the same century while the fire and fury which were its aftermath engulfed all of Christian Europe for the next 100 years.

The Philippines as a colony of Spain was not spared from some of the aftershocks of this great conflict. Twice in its history the Philippines suffered invasions, the Dutch in 1647 and the English in 1762, from the Protestant enemies of Spain. However, Spain's political and religious preponderance over the Philippines always prevailed. But now, under the Americans, Catholicism suffered a temporary hiatus.

American Protestant missionaries overran the country beginning 1900. They directed and taught in the non-religious schools of the

¹⁶ Arcilla, "The Christianization of Davao Oriental . . .", pp. 667-668

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 671

¹⁸ "Report of the Commanding Officer of Davao, March 1902," Annual Report of the War Department, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902) pp. 540-543

new public school system introduced by the Americans. American Protestants and even Freemasons dominated as well the government officialdom.¹⁹ In Davao this turn of events tended to be a grave threat to the growth of Catholicism, given its underdeveloped state in the whole of Mindanao.

When Fr. Gisbert returned to Sta. Cruz in 1904 he found the town almost deserted. Of the church nothing was left standing except for its posts. During the revolution when the Spanish officials left Davao, the town of Sta. Cruz was left to the charge of Angel Brioso, the schoolteacher. For reasons unelucidated in the Spanish accounts Brioso underwent a change; he became a degraded Christian spreading erroneous principles and heretical views and committing immoralities by taking several wives. Brioso led a number of Moro and Christian residents of the town proclaiming themselves *insurrectos* or rebels and destroyed the town left to his charge. They melted the church bell and other metals and then divided the melted produce among themselves.²⁰

In two years of revolution not a single church or chapel outside the *cabecera* escaped pillaged and destruction. Church bells and candle holders were melted and made into *lantakas*, or Moro cannons while the new converts readily found cause with the new principles of freedom and liberty which were soon indiscriminately applied to religion. Fr. Gisbert noted the growing strength of Protestantism, and later the Aglipayan church whose advocates in Davao were led by a certain Kinilaw who was reputed to be a former *Katipunero*. The priest recommended to his Jesuit religious superiors that American Catholic missionaries be sent to Davao and lamented the mistaken belief on the part of the American government that the religious dimension pertained only to the previous Spanish colonial administration.²¹

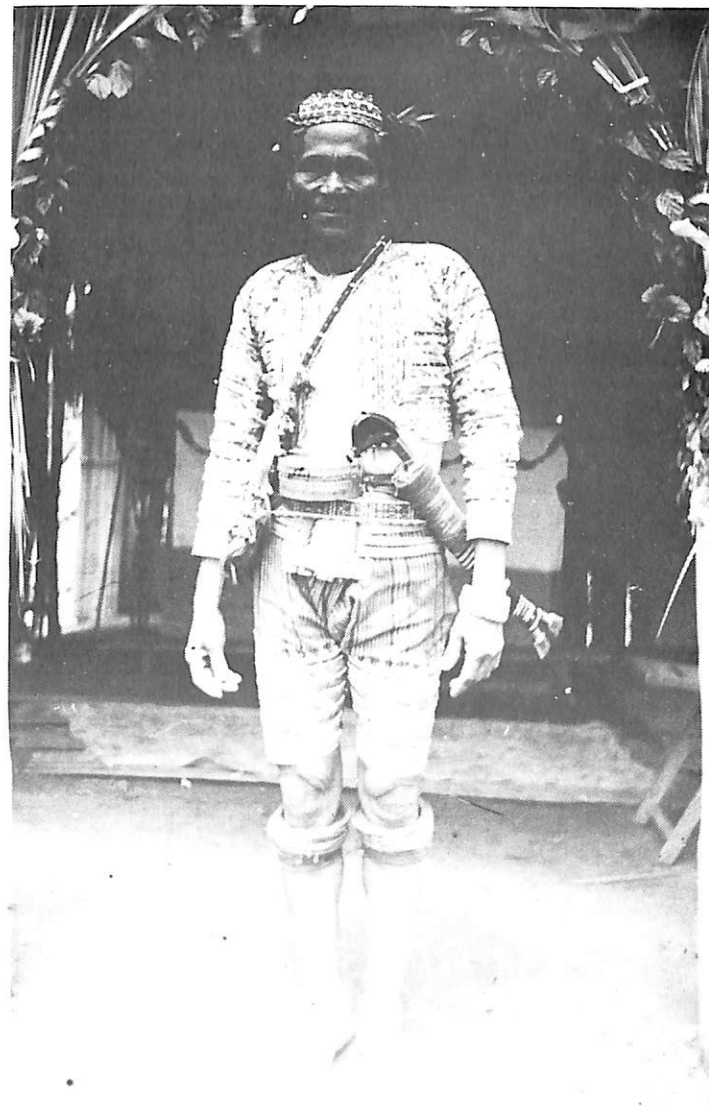
Fr. Gisbert also visited the town of Astorga in 1907 and observed the same state of desolation; there were no more than four houses left and the town was in all respects abandoned. Its Bagobo inhabit-

¹⁹F. Bernard Bazinet, p.m.e., "The Beginnings of the Church in Davao", MS collection of the PME Fathers, PME Regional House, Davao City

²⁰Mateo Gisbert, S.J. "History of Sta. Cruz", Loyola House of Studies Archives, Loyola Heights, Quezon City.

²¹Ibid.

ants had long since returned to the mountains. Those who were left in the town were preoccupied with planting abaca which the priest said was adored more than God.



Bagobo from Sirib, Calinan



CUPID STUDIO
Davao

MGA BAYAN AT WIKANG RIZAL DAY
DEC. 30-37

Rizal Day Parade in Davao, Dec. 30, 1937.