UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Spanish Colonialism in Bikol, Philippines:
Localizing Devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Anthropology

by

Madeleine Amee Yakal

2023

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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University of California, Los Angeles, 2023

Professor Stephen B. Acabado, Chair

Spanish colonialism significantly altered the landscape of the Philippines from the sixteenth century to the nineteenth century, most notably though missionization and converting locals to Catholicism. Dominant historical narratives assert that Filipinos, like many other colonized or Hispanized peoples, resisted colonialism through either fighting or retreating, which neglects to acknowledge the agency of colonized peoples, and the ways in which local traditions were maintained through time. While many lowland Philippine polities did convert and join the Spanish Catholic Church, in the Bikol region, Bikolanos rapidly converted to Catholicism and established some of the earliest Catholic churches in the country. In this dissertation, I explore how Bikolanos created places on the landscape in which they could maintain and perform their new hybridized identities as they adapted in their newly colonized world. Bikolano Catholic religiosity persisted over the years, most visibly through their devotion to Catholic icons like Our

Lady of Peñafrancia who is the focus of today's largest Marian fiesta in Asia. This use of religious iconography suggests a unique response to the Spanish, in which Bikolanos utilized Marian devotion to maintain their changing Catholic/Bikol identity and their autonomy over the landscape. I identify and discuss places on the Bikol landscape that are essential components of the Peñafrancia devotion, and I explore how and why these places became sites of meaning, memory, and importance for Bikolanos. I argue that although these places are intended for Catholic rituals, they are intentionally localized to maintain distinctly Bikol and Filipino Catholic attributes. This subversive strategy permitted Spanish-period Bikolanos to stay "Bikol" while also becoming Catholic, which is a strategy still utilized today as Bikolanos maintain their fervent traditional devotion in a rapidly modernizing world. My analysis and discussion show that places – specifically Catholic churches, but also other smaller spaces – are markers on the landscape that dictate how local Catholic devotion is practiced while also ensuring that memory and meaning persist across centuries. This research is an important step in recent trends to explore nuanced responses to Spanish colonialism in the Philippines and the ways Filipinos used to landscape to express and maintain identity through difficult times.

The dissertation of Madeleine Amee Yakal is approved.

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Acknowledgements

I am incredibly grateful to the many communities that have supported me during the research and writing of this dissertation. There are a few I am particularly grateful for that I will mention here.

My committee chair and advisor Stephen Acabado was my mentor and guide long before this doctoral program even began. I am so proud to be his first graduate student. Everything I know about community archaeology, I learned from working with him. I especially thank him for believing in my potential, supporting my goals, letting me learn at my own pace, and sharing his passion for Philippine archaeology with me. He brought me to Bicol to find a research project in the place where he grew up, and it was on his suggestion that I study Our Lady of Peñafrancia. There are not enough ways to express my gratitude. Thank you Doc!

I would like to thank my committee members, Aomar Boum, Li Min, and Charlene Villaseñor Black. Professor Boum's thoughtful engagement with my work was essential to building my discussions. His commitment to students and their success, including my own, is a huge inspiration in moving forward with this project. Professor Li's archaeological perspective rounded out the many components of this project and I am looking forward to pursuing them in the future. I thank him for his encouragement throughout my entire doctoral studies. Professor Black's work was a crucial component for interpreting my data and organizing my theory. I am so inspired by her passion and enthusiasm for her research.

My sincerest gratitude goes to the many individuals and institutions I worked with in Bicol. I have endless gratitude to the Archbishop of Caceres, Rolando Octavus Joven Tria Tirona, OCD, for supporting me and my project in every way possible – from welcoming me into his home during my fieldwork months, granting me access to anywhere and anything in the archdiocese that could help my project, and his vibrant interest in my work and my future, and so

much more. The Caceres Commission on Communications for the many photos and videos I've had access to. I am incredibly grateful to work with Fr. Eric Bobis, who served as secretary to the archbishop during my fieldwork time, for caring about this project as fiercely as I do and for creating endless fieldwork opportunities for me. His discussions, contributions, contacts and introductions, and friendship made this dissertation possible.

I also want to thank the staff and friends at the Archbishop's Residence in Naga (especially Cleofe, Ate Kate, Sr. Mylene, Sr. Glo, Sr. Sul, and Fr. Darius) for welcoming me so warmly and going the extra mile to make my research happen. Thank you to Fr. Francis Tordilla, Fr. Don Federico, and all the many priests, sisters, and devotees who were a part of this project.

I am thankful to our colleagues and friends at Partido State University in Goa for their support of my work in Bicol, their resources for research, and their enthusiasm for Bicol scholarship. Special thanks are owed to Dr. Grace Barretto-Tesoro at UP-Diliman for her directive comments on my work, career advice, and support. I also want to thank the Acabado and Bercasio families for sharing the fiesta with me and making it a wonderful experience. A special shoutout to John Acabado for being a spectacular research assistant and friend.

At UCLA, I give a special thank you to Anne Walters, Jennifer Banawa, Tracy Humbert, Tanja Hrast, Alfonso Lopez, Sumiji Takahashi, and all the administrators at Anthropology and the Cotsen who have helped me in this process. This university runs because of them and I'm grateful for their work. I am also thankful to the Center for Southeast Asian Studies for their support of projects like mine. I am indebted for the institutions that funded this research, including the Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship, the Graduate Research Mentorship, the Steinmetz Foundation Summer Fieldwork Grant, the Meighan Archaeological Research Grant, and various support from the ULCA Anthropology Department and Cotsen

Institute of Archaeology. I am also grateful for the additional support that came from organizations like the Bicol Archaeological Project and the Archdiocese of Caceres.

I received my introduction to archaeology through working with Dr. Acabado on the Ifugao Archaeological Project and more recently on the Bicol Archaeological Project. I am grateful to all the many professors, colleagues, and friends I met through these fieldwork programs, for the experiences I had, and the many lessons I learned. I am also thankful for and inspired by everyone at the UCLA Southeast Asian Archaeology Lab for being my closest community here in Los Angeles.

To my friends who were there to discuss data, troubleshoot problems, share with me in my success and commiserate with me in my failures, I am so beyond thankful that they were there alongside me for this. A special thank you to Steven Ammerman, Kristine Chua, Mikhail Echavarri, Earl John C. Hernandez, and Iman Nagy – you are all the best! Thank you Stephanie Nannariello for being you. I am especially appreciative of my mentee Aidan Choi for helping me format and finalize this dissertation and for his unconditional encouragement for me.

To my family in the Philippines – salamat po Tita Ferly and Tito Danny for making the Philippines my home the past decade I've been an archaeologist. My family in New York, especially my dad (Dave), for believing in my brains and wild ideas, and my brother (David). In Los Angeles, thank you Alli for being my Ate always and making Los Angeles feel like New York. Kali and Concha – underrated team members of this whole experience, I love you. Erick, thank you for always encouraging me to be tougher and stronger when things get rough. You made Los Angeles my home and that’s gotten me through this doctoral program.

I am thankful for the blessings of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, and I’m grateful to have experienced so many intimate interactions with Ina during this project. And lastly, I dedicate this

work to all the mothers in my life, in particular Zeny, Henriette, my Inang Eugenia, and especially Angie – my mom, my research assistant, and my inspiration for studying Marian devotion. I understand and love this project because of her. I know a mother's love because of her. She doesn't just echo the love of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, but she creates it, and maintains it, and puts it back out there in the world in places where I know it will last a long, long time. There is not a place in Naga where I can go without being reminded of our memories together doing fieldwork and enjoying life. Experiences like the Peñafrancia devotion don't exist without people like my mother, and so I dedicate this dissertation to her.

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CHAPTER 1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

An important issue in the study of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines is understanding and exploring the nuanced ways Filipinos transformed Catholicism into a distinctly Filipino religion. Catholicism provided a space for Filipinos to maintain their dynamic and diverse community identities through the disruptive Spanish colonial period (1565-1898). Recent scholarship on the archaeology of colonialism has emphasized the agency of colonized peoples and their responses to colonialism (Acabado 2017; Acabado and Barretto-Tesoro 2020; Lightfoot 2015; Silliman 2015). In the Bikol region in Southeastern Luzon, Bikolanos responded to the Spanish by rapidly converting to Catholicism, and *santos* (sacred images of Catholic saints, often as carved and dressed statues) soon dominated the landscape. These *santos* and the intense devotions that developed around them and persist today, suggest that Bikolanos used Catholicism to maintain their identity and relationship to the landscape.

This dissertation is an examination of the religious landscape in Bikol using the concept of place making (Adams et al 2001; Basso 1996; Rubertone 2009; Swenson 2015) to explore how spaces were transformed into places on the larger landscape imbued with meaning, memory, and identity. The spiritual and material devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia provides a focal point for transformation and growth throughout the Spanish colonial period and beyond, where memory and meaning are embedded in localities through time and use. My primary research objective focuses on exploring how Bikolanos created, sustained, and replicated their religious landscape through this particular image, and how this was a direct response to Spanish colonialism.

Through examining through the Spanish colonial period up until contemporary times, this project identifies the spaces Bikolanos created to both maintain and actively shape their identity as Catholic Bikolanos. Following Bhabha's (1984, 1994) concept of hybridity and Black's mimicry (2015) inspired by Bhabha, places were used for the intentional misuse of Spanish Catholicism in efforts to subvert colonial pressures and instead give preference to their own construction of hybrid Catholicism. I argue that Bikol Catholic churches are important places for maintaining identity and memory as it is purposefully renegotiated into Catholic cults like Our Lady of Peñafrancia. It is within these places that Bikolanos were able to negotiate which traditions and practices they were able to retain whilst simultaneously adopting Catholicism. Using ethnographic data from Bikol religious clergy and devotees, as well as a material culture analysis of the image of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, I explore these questions:

- 1) How and why have Bikolanos made the devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia part of their distinct "Bikol" landscape?
- 2) How does this reflect how Bikolanos responded to Spanish colonization?

By exploring these questions using Bikol and Our Lady of Peñafrancia as a case study, we can gain a better understanding not just of how Spanish colonialism shaped the Philippines, but more importantly, how local communities actively shaped the devotions they inherited from the Spanish to serve their unique needs and traditions. This dissertation is an offshoot of the Bicol Archaeological Project (BAP), which explores local responses to Spanish colonialism in the Bicol region using a community engaged approach. This project is part of a larger initiative to explore local Catholic history in Bikol and in the Archdiocese of Caceres.

In this dissertation, I emphasize the argument that conversion to Catholicism was a strategy Bikolanos used during the Spanish period to maintain their collective identity, their land

holdings, and any amount of autonomy over themselves they could retain. This study contributes to the growing research in the Philippines that explores local responses to Spanish colonization outside traditional dominant narratives. Historically, it was believed that local communities either fought fiercely against Spanish colonizers, or retreated; however, it is important to acknowledge that there were a multitude of valid reactions and survival strategies to the pressures of colonialism. For example, Acabado (2017, 2018) contends that the Ifugao consolidated their political and economic resources, such as rice, as a form of resistance against the Spanish. Religious conversion was a negotiation tactic that allowed Bikolanos to maintain their identity through the colonial period as they adapted to their new and changing world.

The purpose of this dissertation project is to create a better contextual understanding of regional responses to Spanish colonialism in the Philippines, and to highlight the unique responses of large regions and small communities. Archaeology in the Philippines has traditionally focused on the deep, temporally distant past long before Spanish colonization. These projects have positively contributed to our understanding of the deep past including human migration patterns, subsistence methods, and trade routes, but they have also helped nationalists draw a sharp distinction between the pre-colonial period and the colonial period.

The concept of Philippine nationalism is rooted in an idealized "untainted" prehistoric identity which is in opposition to the Hispanized culture that developed during Spanish colonialism. Because of this disregard for Philippine regionality (often excluding peripheral regions like Bikol), there is a lack of understanding for the unique responses different populations had to Spanish colonialism. The development of Filipino nationalism in the nineteenth century focused its attention on coastal groups in Luzon and the Visayas (like Manila and Cebu) that had been Christianized in the early colonial period. Scholars continued this

fixation on the Tagalog region and gave historical preference to Filipinos that were near the colonial center at Manila (Larkin 1967). Studies focused on only a few narrow options that Filipinos had when confronting the Spanish – convert, resist, or retreat – and it was not very well understood why Filipinos would choose any of these paths. Over the past several decades, scholars are broadening what may have motivated Filipinos to make these choices, and how these choices were expressions of local agency. By expanding research on colonialism and centering Filipinos of the Spanish colonial period in the data, we can challenge dominant historical narratives and concepts of nationalism and broaden our understanding of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines.

The most visible legacy of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines is Catholicism. Churches are adorned with at least two holy images: Jesus Christ upon the crucifix, typically behind the altar; and the particular saint the parish is dedicated to (i.e., St. Joseph, St. Anthony, Our Lady of Immaculate Conception, etc.) who may be at the front of the church, or off to the side of the altar. In the Bikol region, there is a third image in each church, and that is Our Lady of Peñafrancia, who is endearingly referred to as *Ina*, which translates to "mother." This image of the Virgin Mary is recognizable and distinct from other Marian images by her triangular body, golden dress, gold crown, aureola or halo, and the infant Jesus in her arms.

The Spanish first came to the Philippines through Cebu in 1521, established the archipelago as a colony in 1565, and then moved the capital to Manila on Luzon in 1571. The goal of the Spanish crown was to missionize and Catholicize the local populations of the Philippines while simultaneously taking advantage of its position in the Pacific to link China to New Spain (present-day Mexico). The first Bikol diocese (now the Archdiocese of Nueva Caceres) was established in 1595, making Bikol one of the earlier Philippines regions to be

Catholicized. Bikol rapidly earned a reputation as one of the most intensely Catholic communities. Filipinos today, like many other Hispanized Catholics, pride themselves in their devotion to the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, a figure who is a cornerstone of their faith as a Catholic community.

Catholicism in Bikol is centered on Our Lady of Peñafrancia, an image of the Virgin Mary first introduced to the region by the Spanish in the eighteenth century. Over 300 years later, she now presides as patron saint of the entire Bikol region. Her history, celebration, and material culture dominate the religious landscape not just everyday but also each year in September with a week-long festival that draws millions of devotees to the Pilgrim City of Naga, Bikol.

The image has been an important figure in the Bikol region for three centuries, yet the region itself has been Catholic for over 400 years. Bikol (or Bicol) refers to a region of six provinces in Southeastern Luzon: four peninsular provinces (Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Sorsogon) and two coastal islands (Catanduanes and Masbate). When the Spanish arrived in Bikol in the sixteenth century, they wrote that the Bikolanos were a large population of successful agriculturists, making use of local waterways and producing surplus foods (Blair and Robertson 1903-9). What is known about pre-Spanish Bikol polities is based on limited historical documents: Bikolanos called their land *Ibalon* and practiced religious rituals involving anito, or spirits, and a place of "eternal bliss" known as *kamurawayan* (Carpio 2002: 19-27). In lieu of temples, Bikolanos considered the natural landscape of mountains to be their sacred grounds, around which they organized their community, or barangay. Family and individual courage were important values, and superstition facilitated their reliance on amulets, or *anting-anting*.

There is significant local study devoted to this Marian image, with several recent studies coming from theological or tourism-centered approaches (e.g. Bilason et al. 2020; Peterson 2020; Bagadion and Capistrano 2022). Naga is a thriving academic city, with many church historians, seminarians, and community members deeply interested in the religious and political history of the region, including Our Lady of Peñafrancia (e.g. Gerona 2010; Tordilla 2004). Prominent anthropologist Fenella Canell spent significant time exploring Bikol religiosity in her book *Power and Intimacy in the Christian Philippines* (1999), which focused on Bikol affinity for the dead Christ, also known as *Hinulid*. Her detailed ethnographic work highlights Bikol suffering and how they utilize funerals and Holy Week rituals to create space for their cathartic expressions of grief and struggle.

The image of Our Lady of Peñafrancia exists in spiritual spaces as a Catholic saint with agency and the ability to converse with devotees through prayer and visions; and in physical places as a material "object" or iteration, most typically a wooden or plastic statue in churches, homes, and other places. The devotion is dependent on both of these spaces where religious veneration occurs. I explore how and why Bikolanos interact with Our Lady of Peñafrancia, and how these interactions vary, across multiple scales:

a) Time - from when the devotion was first introduced in Bikol in 1710 up until 2022, the most recent celebration of the devotion.
b) Place - the devotion's annual September fiesta is officially celebrated in Naga City, Bikol, each September; it is also celebrated in each parish throughout the local Archdiocese of Caceres, and in many other parishes and communities beyond both Bikol and the Philippines and devotees immigrate outside Bikol.

c) Individual positionality - proximity to the image, which is essential to the devotion, is dependent on many individual factors, including but not limited to family status, financial wealth, proximity to the clergy, residence, gender, etc. For example, during the highly anticipated fluvial procession in the fiesta when the image of Peñafrancia floats down the Naga River, women are not permitted to be on the boat that takes her and prominent clergymen through the city.

This dissertation uses archaeology as an interdisciplinary tool to explore religion, colonialism, and identity, and how they are used to create places along the landscape. Methods used include ethnographic interviews and a material culture analysis of the spaces and artifacts used in both historical and contemporary devotions for Our Lady of Peñafrancia. Ethnographic data was collected onsite from the 2019 and 2022 fiesta celebrations – the last in-person celebration before the recent COVID-19 pandemic, and the first in-person celebration following the pandemic. The interluding years (2020 and 2021) were celebrated primarily remotely and are recorded as such. Local historical accounts of the devotion and recent archaeological excavations at Catholic churches within the archdiocese supplant this data by contextualizing a timeline of how the local church and Catholic devotion developed onward through the Spanish period.

Artifacts and places can inform us about human behavior both the deep and near past – how and why we interacted with the world, what was important and why it was so (Reid, Schiffer, and Rathje 1975; Rathje and Murphy 2001). Although archaeology developed as a method for studying the past, over the last 50 years its usefulness has expanded to also include the present (e.g. Arnold et al. 2012; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and de Salle-Essoo 2014; De Leon 2015; Reid et al 1974, 1975). Anthropological archaeology need not be dependent on ancient artifacts to investigate people and their processes; rather, artifacts from any time period can be

used to understand the relationship between material culture and human behavior (Reid et al 1974: 125; Reid et al 1975: 864).

Strategies for investigating behavioral archaeology are dependent on whether the artifacts are from the past or present, and if one is asking questions about past or present behavior (Reid et al 1975; Schiffer 2010). For example, archaeology that studies past material culture to ask questions about individuals who lived in the past is what the discipline is most traditionally known for: using methods such as survey and excavation to access material culture associated with a people and place of a past time period. An approach that analyzes present artifacts to study ongoing cultural systems and peoples draws its methods from a more traditional archaeology but also benefits from rules, structures, and strategies used in disciplines like ethnology. Binford's ethnoarchaeology (1978) is described as the study of living people's behaviors and interactions with the material world; most notably, Binford used ethnoarchaeology to record and analyze hunter gatherers and then make inferences about past behaviors.

The use of behavioral archaeology was the foundation for Rathje's Tuscon Garbage Project (1974) in which archaeologists analyzed contemporary consumption and disposal habits by sorting through modern landfills. Since then, archaeology of the present has expanded significantly: Arnold et al. (2012) define "the archaeology of today" as the archaeological analysis of contemporary material culture that focuses not on the life history of objects, but on the broad patterns that emerge from the analyses. Their analysis of twenty-first century Los Angeles homes utilizes archaeological methods of mapping and ethnography to document contemporary human life through material culture and behavior. Arnold et al. stress that the focus is not necessarily on the life history of objects, but on the broad patterns that emerge from analyses of material culture and associated behaviors, feelings, and attitudes (2012).

Colwell-Chanthaphonh and de Salle-Essoo (2014) utilize archaeological methodologies to map and quantify the artifacts at contemporary Catholic shrines in Mauritius. As the authors describe them, the shrines reflect a local folk Catholic tradition rooted in belief in the power of saints. The shrines feature a number of objects including plastic flowers, cigarettes, candles, Mary statues, fresh food, written notes, and more, with a total of 562 objects recorded (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and de Salle-Essoo 2014: 260). The shrines are described as "intercultural spaces" where different ideologies converge to act as "material mediators of difference" (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and de Salle-Essoo 2014: 274). By using archaeological methods on contemporary artifacts and sites, the authors are able to look at the unique Catholic traditions in Mauritius, an area with a long and complex history of colonization. Following this approach, the Bikol devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia serves as a proxy to understanding broader themes of Spanish colonialism, identity maintenance, Filipino Catholicism, and place-making within a landscape.

1.2 Outline of the Dissertation

Including this introduction (Chapter 1), this dissertation is divided into fivechapters. Chapter 2 describes the reach of Spanish colonialism during the early modern period (1400-1830s), which was a time of significant European expansion in the New World and the Pacific. The Spanish crown claimed New Spain (present-day Mexico) in 1521, followed by the Philippines in 1565. Because Spanish administration, clergy, and military were brought to the Philippines from New Spain, the two regions have a shared Spanish history closer than others. This is observable in their language, cuisine, and practice of Catholicism. This grounds our understanding of the Philippines as a Catholic nation shaped by multiple entities and circumstances.

In Chapter 3, I discuss the theoretical frameworks of hybridity and placemaking that are used to explore my research questions on Spanish colonialism in Bikol as it pertains to identity maintenance. The interactions of multiple cultures (Spain, New Spain, and Bikol) did not occur haphazardly, and their synthesis is a reflection of the complexities that occur during colonial encounters.

Chapter 4 describes the fiesta for Our Lady of Peñafrancia devotion as collected through ethnographic work in Camarines Sur, Bicol. I discuss the history of the devotion, fiesta processions in Naga, the importance of proximity to the image, and the development of devotion during times of hardship and suffering.

In Chapter 5, I discuss how the devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia transcends Bikol diversity yet also persists as a unifying practice. The transformations of the devotion over time signify significant cultural events that Bikolanos experienced, and their active choice to maintain the devotion is an example of how some colonized peoples chose to respond to the Spanish. By creating places and turning Naga into a heavily Catholic space, Bikolanos were able to maintain and practice particular aspects of their identity. This chapter also provides my conclusions based on the ethnographic and material analyses, and future directions for research. I find that colonialism was one negotiation after the other. Bikolanos should be recognized for the agency they exercised, and the efforts they took to maintain certain traditions and values, as well as the sacrifices they made and the traditions that were lost or transformed in their fight to survive colonialism.

CHAPTER 2. Spanish Colonialism in the Philippines

Following the successful colonization of the Americas, colonizing the Pacific was a new challenge for the Spanish that would produce a myriad of results due to the variation of communities across the Philippines. Drawing from secondary historical accounts of colonization in both regions, this chapter explores the unique facets of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines and how the processes were used as tools for Catholic conversion.

Historical accounts of the Spanish in the Philippines are limited, with most of them only accessible in Spain after natural disasters and military conflicts destroyed many local records. Similarly, archaeological data is also relatively scarce; archaeology in the Philippines has traditionally focused on the deep past long before Spanish colonization. These projects have positively contributed to our understanding of the deep past including human migration patterns, subsistence methods, and trade routes, but they have also helped nationalists draw a sharp distinction between the pre-colonial period and the colonial period. For example, Philippine national hero Jose Rizal considered Spanish conquest in the early modern period a "scourge" that distanced him from his ancient past and identity as a "true" Filipino (Aguilar 2005: 612). Although the Spanish colonial period is heavy with poor treatments of Filipinos, forced conversions and migrations, and many other problematic injustices, to deny how Spanish colonialism has shaped Filipino identity whether positive or negative is a denial of history itself. Spanish influence has become an irrevocable part of Filipino identity both directly and indirectly, and the search for a "pure" Filipino culture prior to conquest does not divorce 300 years of Hispanization from the Philippines.

Instead, this sentiment was reinforced by archaeologists who were interested in the allure of the Paleolithic past. Prehistory and the Paleolithic dominated archaeological projects (Hutterer

1987: 241) as the search for Rizal's illustrious "ancient" Filipino past continued. The colonial period was of low interest except where it overlapped with the Asian ceramic trade industry. Thanks in part to Beyer (1948) and Barton (1919), two American anthropologists, the idea of an ancient past was further solidified in academia when they ascertained that the Ifguao rice terraces (part of the "Igorot" region in the north") predated Spanish colonialism and were vestiges of pre-colonial Philippine society.

The concept of Philippine nationalism is rooted in an idealized "untainted" prehistoric identity which is in opposition to the Hispanized culture that developed during Spanish colonialism. In regard to drawing a distinction between Philippine prehistory and history, the problem with the concept of "othering" is that it implies that pre-Spanish Philippines was a monolithic culture. These boundaries do not acknowledge the diversity of the Philippine regions prior to Spanish colonization, or the diversity that persisted even after Spanish contact.

The complex colonial history of the Philippines is saturated with Eurocentric documents and perspectives, with limited local or on-Spanish sources (Belmonte 2003). In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan arrived on the shores of Cebu and initiated first European contact with the peoples of the Philippines. Previously, the Philippines had periodically been in contact with other Asian states including China and the Islamic communities of Southeast Asia, so this was the first instance that an outside polity influenced a region of the Philippines. Contact with Spain created a disruption across the Philippine archipelago that lasted the rest of the millennium. The Philippines officially became part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain in 1565. Over three hundred years later, they became an entity of the United States at the end of the nineteenth century until they gained total independence in 1946.

The disregard for Philippine regionality has resulted in two issues for the archaeological community: The first issue is a lack of understanding for the unique responses different populations had to Spanish colonialism. The development of Filipino nationalism in the nineteenth century focused its attention on coastal groups in Luzon and the Visayas that had been Christianized in the early colonial period. Scholars continued this fixation on the Tagalog region and gave historical preference to Filipinos that were near the colonial center at Manila (Larkin 1967).

Studies focused on only a few narrow options that Filipinos had when confronting the Spanish – convert, resist, or retreat – and it was not very well understood why Filipinos chose any of these possibilities. Over the past several decades, scholars are broadening what may have motivated Filipinos to make these choices, and how these choices were expressions of local agency (Acabado 2017; 2018). By expanding research on colonialism and centering Filipinos of the early modern period in the data, we can challenge dominant historical narratives and concepts of nationalism and broaden our understanding of Spanish colonialism in the Philippines.

The second issue deals with sociopolitical organization in the Philippines. Because of the fixation on regions colonized by the Spanish, there is a limited understanding of what types of nonstate polities comprised the Philippines in the early modern period. Historical documents clearly state that at the time of Spanish contact, the Philippines was composed of small "tribal" groups that were in contact, but not broadly united under a single authority (Phelan 1959; Reed 1979). Archaeological data suggests that trade was an important component with emphasis on chiefdoms as a model for social organization across Philippine sites (Junker 1998, 1999, 2004). However, it is problematic to impose a single model across multiple regions, particularly those as

diverse as in the Philippines, and I propose a more regional study is needed to contribute to this discussion.

From the sixteenth century to the end of the nineteenth century, the Philippines served a unique religious purpose to the Spanish Crown as a peripheral colony under control of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. Andaya and Andaya (2015: 11) define the early modern period (1400-1830) in Southeast Asia as the specific time-span in which Southeast Asia was integrated into the global system of economic and cross-cultural exchange, when locals willingly participated and facilitated these exchanges. When Spain made contact with the Philippines in the early modern period, they had three objectives: 1) gain access to the Portuguese-dominated spice trade, 2) establish contact with China and Japan in the hopes of converting them to Christianity, and 3) Christianize the Filipinos (Phelan 1959: 6).

Both the Spanish Crown and Ming China extracted massive amounts of taxation from the Manila galleon trade (Flynn and Giraldez 1995: 210) which linked Spain to China via Acapulco, Mexico and Manila, Philippines. This would indicate it was a profitable venture; however, both Spain and China were led into financial crises that would ultimately end the Manila galleon trade. Maintaining the colony in the Philippines was costly and did not draw in any direct revenue (Phelan 1959; Skowronek 1998: 48).

Spain accumulated massive debt by maintaining the costly galleon trade and sending money to the Philippines. The junks, or ships used in the trade, took years to make a roundtrip sail, and not many individuals were enticed to participate. In China, the domestic price inflation of silver destroyed Ming financial basis, and the fiscal crisis that ensued may have led to the emergence of the Qing dynasty (Goldstone 1991 as cited in Flynn and Giraldez 1995: 207).

Spanish missionaries used Catholic conversion as a powerful tool for conquest and control of Philippine peoples. Evangelization validated Spanish presence in both the Americas and the Pacific, especially when economic pursuits were failing as they did in the Philippines. Phelan (1959: 53-71) frames missionization as a process in which the Spanish imposed Catholicism onto colonized peoples. Following conquest and *reduccion*, in which indigenous peoples were resettled into structured Catholic communities, the missionary used sacraments like confession to maintain control through church doctrine. Utilizing these methods, Spanish missionaries effectively converted indigenous communities in the Americas and hoped to replicate this success in the Philippines. The environmental, cultural, and linguistic differences across the many regions of the Philippines posed unique challenges to the missionization process, but ultimately the Spanish were successful in converting much of the archipelago to Catholicism. Today, the Philippines has one of the highest concentrations of Catholics in Asia due this colonial history. Spanish colonialism in the Philippines was modeled after the successes in New Spain; however, there were several circumstances that differentiated the Philippines from New Spain that resulted in different approaches and strategies. This next section outlines the development of Spanish colonialism in New Spain, and how it was transferred to the Philippines.

2.1 Spanish Colonialism in the Americas

Spanish Conquest in the Americas was a continuation of the practices incurred over centuries of conflict in Iberia. Since the eighth century, the Muslims, or Moors, had occupied the Iberian Peninsula, and fought against Christian *Reconquista* campaigns until the fifteenth century, when the Roman Catholic Church regained control of the region. Of the remaining three kingdoms in Iberia (Portugal and Aragon being the coastal kingdoms), Castile occupied the landlocked core of the peninsula. Both Portugal and Aragon continued expansion via trade and

sea routes, but Castilians maintained the practice of conquest, establishing a formal rule, and collecting tribute. These practices had been first used by the Moors and then by the Christians during *Reconquista* (Lockhart and Schwartz 1983: 19). The Castilian Crown then funded expansion into the Americas and brought the tradition of conquest with them.

The continuity of the violent nature of conquest is exemplified by the history of conquistadores in New Spain. After Columbus made contact with the Americas on behalf of Castilian Spain in the late fifteenth century, "adventurers" attempted to follow his lead and gain access to the profitable materials of the region. After two failed expeditions, in 1519 Hernan Cortes led the third attempt into Mexico which subsequently led to the fall of Tenochtitlan at the hands of the Spanish conquistadores (see Kirkpatrick 1962: 70-108). Montezuma, emperor or king of the Aztecs, sent gifts to Cortes as custom dictated: The Aztecs believed their god Quezalcoatl was a tall, bearded man of fair complexion who had departed to the east with promises to return one day, and when the conquistadors arrived matching this description, the Aztecs met them with both fear and alarm. Despite the exchange of gifts, Montezuma also implored Cortes to leave Mexico (Kirkpatrick 1962: 71-72).

Cortes turned his attention to other indigenous communities, like the Totonac tribe. Although he gained their favor and successfully baptized the women gifted to him, he still violently destroyed their sacrificial idols in his religious zeal, asserting his political agenda as a "champion of the Cross" (Kirkpatrick 74-75). He then gathered his new coastal allies with Spanish troops and horses, and laid a violent siege on the imperial Mexican capital. Through a series of warfare in which Montezuma and his successors all perished, Cortes essentially destroyed the city and decimated the indigenous population through war and disease. With

populations devastated, indigenous leadership gone from many tribes, the indigenous peoples turned towards the Spanish for structure (Kirkpatrick 1962: 97, 103).

Cortes desired to select new chieftains himself from amongst the survivors of the local tribes. Kirkpatrick repeatedly points out that Cortes apparently disliked using slaughter and destruction but still utilized it when necessary (1962: 75, 98, 103). Cortes was alone among the Spaniards in desiring to preserve indigenous lifeways. Cortes wrote, "I knew not how to free ourselves without destroying their city – the most beautiful city in the world…the plan was to demolish every house as we penetrated into the city" (Kirkpatrick 1962: 98). His Spanish companions disagreed, and after failing to retrieve Montezuma's hidden treasure after the fall of the capital, they demanded some sort of payment for their voluntary services as conquistadors.

Against royal command and his own judgment, Cortes assigned them *repartimiento*, or "a group of Indians to be vassals and serfs to every Spaniard who settled down as a *vecino* or householder" (Kirkpatrick 1962: 103). This strategy of exerting control onto indigenous populations was already formally known as *encomienda* (Kirkpatrick 1962: 103; Lockhart and Schwartz 1983: 21), and it defined the relationships between the Spanish and the indigenous peoples of Latin America. *Repartimiento* more specifically described "an allotment of Indians" or the distribution of land, houses, food, gifts, etc. (Kirkpatrick 1962: 352). The encomienda and repartimiento system essentially damaged the traditional institutions within Latin America by imposing European standards of service and payment onto indigenous peoples (Kirkpatrick 1962: 103).

2.1.1 The shift towards non-violence: reduccion and reorganizing indigenous lifeways

Reduccion is arguably a major tool for the process of Spanish missionization. In 1493, Pope Alexander VI authorized Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella to bring the indigenous

people out west into the Catholic church. He used the word *reducere*, a Latin cognate of the Spanish *reduccion*, meaning to bring into order (VanValkenburgh 2017: 124). A decade later in 1503, Queen Isabella suggested that the indigenous people be united together in a town with a church, so that they could have a home, a family, and lands, and no longer live "scattered in the hills" (Malaga Medina 1974: 142 as translated by VanValkenburgh 2017: 125). The concept of *reduccion* involved concentrating indigenous peoples into urban settlements so that they could be converted into the Catholic faith. It was a practice that brought indigenous bodies and souls under Spanish control, both physically and spiritually. It worked in conjunction with the encomienda system.

Despite the forceful conquest at the hands of Spaniards like Cortes, the Spanish Crown was in the process of redirecting its policy of conquest away from violence and towards "peaceful assimilation" in the 1526 *Ordenanzas de Granada* (Hanson 1995: 17). The local population in the Americas had been devastated not just through warfare, but also due to their lack of immunity to Old World diseases (Newson 2006:4). To mitigate this, later in 1542 when Spain had become dependent on New Spain for economic capital, royal instructions asserted that warfare was no longer an appropriate strategy. Instead, the clergy was instructed to exercise control over the indigenous populace through evangelization, which also fulfilled the Crown's duties as an agent of the Roman Catholic Church (Hanson 1995: 17). The process of conversion was rooted strongly in the policy of *reduccion*.

Responsibility of conquest shifted from the military to the Franciscan friars, and the first execution of this new evangelical campaign took place between 1545 and 1579 in the Yucatec Maya. Fray Toribio de Benavente, also known as "Motolinia," was one of the original 12 Franciscan missionaries sent to colonial Mexico. He described some of the earliest colonial

interactions in his chronicle *Historia de los indios de Nueva Espana* (Motolinia 1950 [1541], as cited in Hanson 1995: 16). Motolinia explained that masses were held in pre-conquest structures before they were destroyed (along with religious idols) and subsequently replaced with Catholic churches and iconography.

The friars developed a strategy where they traveled beyond the urban center and reached out to local administrative and religious centers, then gathered as many individuals from nearby as they could to extend the reach of their conversion. The growth and development of churches and open chapels was gradual, and so friars held the responsibility of gathering an indigenous congregation wherever possible. Their efforts to create sacred Catholic places resulted in the manipulation of physical and symbolic spaces (Hanson 1995: 16).

2.2 From New Spain to the Philippines

The Spanish had decades of experience with indigenous peoples in Latin America and planned to replicate these practices in the Philippines; however, in comparison, the conquest in Asia is recorded as relatively bloodless (Phelan 1959). Ferdinand Magellan led an expedition to Cebu in the Visayas in 1521, where he encountered the *datu*, or local chieftain, Humabon, and influenced him to convert his community to Christianity (Phelan 1959: 16). Magellan was eventually killed by Cebuanos and the Spanish capital moved to Manila in Luzon where there were more food resources, but additional violence was minimal. This can be attributed to the political fragmentation of Philippine polities. Phelan argues that in contrast to other Asian societies like Japan and China, the Philippines was organized neither politically or militarily enough to completely reject Spanish conquest (1959: 28). Incidentally, the Spanish military presence was significantly lower in the Philippines than it was in the Americas due to its extreme

distance from both Mexico and Spain, but the Filipinos in Sorsogon, Bikol, still responded "sullenly" (Dery 1991: 52) to Spanish arms and evangelical efforts.

The relative lack of violence in the Philippines suggests that Filipinos responded quite differently to contact and colonialism than indigenous peoples did in the Americas. That is not to say that there was no violence or resistance, but instead a different response and result. Interestingly, in the sixteenth century, the Spanish mentioned that the Bikolanos were the fiercest group they had ever encountered (Blair and Robertson 1903). Over the following centuries, Bikol became heavily Catholicized and in 1618 was eventually described as "a very settled and tractable people" (Dery 1991: 49). The transition from a fierce people to a peaceable one may initially appear submissive but ignores the alternative motives the Bikolanos may have had for accepting conversion. Although patterns of resistance exist in both locales, and similar colonization strategies were employed in both places, the unique situational contexts can implicate what motivated conversion beyond the realms of physical force and encomienda systems.

The encomienda system persisted across the Pacific in the Philippines. In Sorsogon, Bikol, it was the first form of organization that the Spaniards established (Dery 1991: 41). It was a means of encouraging Spanish settlement in the new colony, but over the century and a half of encomienda from 1572-1720, the obligation acted as a burden to the Filipinos (Dery 1991: 44). Spanish *encomenderos* habitually abused the Filipinos: Inhabitants within the encomienda sought relief from paying tributes by converting to Christianity. Furthermore, Bishop Salazar in the Gulf of Sorsogon reported in 1583 that the pressure to pay tributes to the Spanish were so intense that Filipinos avoided marriage, fled into the interior, or even killed their own children to avoid exactions against them (Dery 1991: 45). The encomienda system was a stressor on the population and was eventually limited via royal order in the eighteenth century.

Reduccion addressed several issues that Spaniards faced in the Philippines. The spread of Catholicism was limited by three primary factors: a small number of secular priests, the political fragmentation of Philippine communities, and the plurality of local languages (Phelan 1959). The first issue was that the number of priests in the Philippines was very low at 254 to 400, which was an inadequate amount of support for evangelizing the entire Philippine population north of Islamic Mindanao (Phelan 1959: 41). Nothing could change the fact that the Philippines, located across the Pacific, was literally on the other side of the world from Spain. The Spanish colony was dependent on the galleon ships that traveled between Manila and Acapulco, Mexico, to bring both people and silver to fund the government. The journey was long and unreliable. The individuals who survived the 14-month travel were ill-equipped to live and work in the hot and humid climate of island Southeast Asia, and many of them considered Manila just a stopover before continuing their evangelizing journey in China and Japan (Phelan 1959: 42-44).

For 250 years, Manila was a commercial outpost for the Manila galleon trade that connected Acapulco, Mexico to Manila, and Manila to China. The trade route facilitated the exchange of Mexican silver for Asian goods such as porcelain, stoneware, and other metals (Goddio 1988; Junker 1999; Li Min 2013). The Philippines contributed abaca, gold, cotton, and coconut products, but remained dependent on the Viceroyalty of New Spain for income (Kirkpatrick 1962: 137). The Philippines was an economic failure and accrued massive debt for the Spanish. The profitless Philippines was reliant on the booming economy in New Spain. It took over a year for a galleon ship to travel between Acapulco and Manila, which limited the amount of Chinese goods they could import, but the Manila base was essential for Spanish access to the rest of Asia in a competitive colonial world. With a lack of incoming revenue from

the Philippines, Christian missionization became the validation needed for their continued colonization of the archipelago (Phelan 1959: 14).

The spatial organization of Filipino communities further complicated evangelization, and it also contradicted Spanish tradition and culture. Spaniards identified civilization with cities (VanValkenburgh 2017: 125), Many of the *ciudades* and *villas* that the Spanish founded in the New World had gridded plans to highlight these degrees of civility (Hardoy and Aranovich 1969 as cited in VanValkenburgh 2017: 125). The Visayas and Luzon were fragmented polities representing many different dialects and languages (Phelan 1959: 44). This geospatial arrangement made it difficult for the clergy to manage the hundreds of thousands of Filipinos, and thus motivated Spanish *reduccion*, or resettlement of local peoples, as a key method for colonial control.

Resettlement brought indigenous people into a colonial center where their religious conversion could be monitored, and their "Hispanization" could commence. Once in a newly established town center, called *reducciones*, locals were introduced into a temporal Spanish space. The ringing of church bells, confession, participation in the Eucharist, and saints' festivals integrated their bodies into a Christian calendar (VanValkenburgh 2017: 128). Colonized subjects did not always adhere to *reduccion* policy quietly, and in some cases, they were threatened with violence if they refused to move (VanValkenburgh 2017: 128).

The policies of *reduccion* were practiced widely across Spanish colonies in Peru (see Durston 2007, VanValkenburgh 2017), Mexico (see Lara 2008), and California (see Voss 2008), as well as the Philippines (Phelan 1959, Rafael 1987). These specially designed cities stood out as material monuments that reminded indigenous subjects of the ever-present watchful eye of the Catholic church, and their continuous passage into the era of Christ (VanValkenburgh 2017:

141). Resettlement resulted in the restructuring of indigenous daily practices and elicited various responses from local communities.

In Peru's Zaña valley, *reduccion* contributed to the devastation of Andean populations, but the reinstatement of their agency through abandonment and resettlement. Francisco de Toledo, the sixth viceroy of colonial Peru, intended to create *reducciones* that would strengthen colonial control and uphold religious practices with degrees from the Council of Trent. He established *reducciones* far from Andean ancestral sites of memory, to refocus religion around the church; committed public murders of Inka rulers; and commissioned Spanish colonials to write an official history of the region that skewed the events, condemning the Inkas, and claimed Andean *kurakas* as the natural lords in power (VanValkenburgh 2017: 118).

Reduccion was inscribed in architecture and performance, through the design of *reducciones* and the integration of indigenous people into the Christian temporal calendar (VanValkenburgh 2017: 129). However, Toledo's designs for urban settlements failed to plan for several devastating urban events, such as the spread of disease within close living quarters, water management issues, tributary requirements, shifts in the Atlantic economy, and population loss (VanValkenburgh 2017: 142). These events led to the abandonment of the *reducciones* and resettlement in new locations, where the structure *reduccion* was repeated and rebuilt through imbibed social memory (VanValkenburgh 2017: 141-142).

The fact that indigenous peoples employed *reduccion* discourse when rebuilding their towns does not imply that they were "reduced" subjects, nor that they believed in Christian doctrine or Spanish protocols. Instead, it implies that by properly observing Christian ritual, and acting as law-abiding Catholics, they could access greater autonomy when choosing a new

settlement location (VanValkenburgh 2017: 140-141). The expression of indigenous agency was only possible through careful conversion and adherence to Catholic law and discourse.

Missionaries directed indigenous attention away from their pre-Spanish belief systems by destroying monuments, temples, and idols. In New Spain, the Spanish commanded for all indigenous temples to be destroyed, and laborers were to use the temple fragments in the construction of Catholic churches (Hamann 2008). The practice of using architectural fragments to rebuild Christian churches echoed similar practices back in the motherland, Spain: At two different instances in time, Roman temples and Iberian Islamic mosques were destroyed and the debris was used to construct Christian churches (Hamann 2008: 816-822).

There were no temples in Spanish Philippines to be destroyed, as sacred spaces were not conceptualized as monumental structures like the ones found in Europe and the Americas. Instead, overzealous Spaniards cut down groves and other environmental religious spaces that were believed to have "magic sway" over Filipinos (Phelan 1959: 54). Animist idols were burned by the thousands and replaced with new ones, like the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ, who were intended to replace the *anito* or Philippine nature and ancestor spirits.

Reduccion altered the landscape and social structure of indigenous peoples both in the Americas and in the Philippines, and it was an ongoing process intertwined with conversion and the development of missions. The construction and maintenance of missions was vital to the control and maintenance of indigenous bodies.

2.2.1 Missionization

By the time the Philippines became an established Spanish colony and an official part of the New Spain empire in 1565, missionization had been successfully implemented in the Americas for several decades. The construction of missions and the policy of *reduccion*

continued to develop over the next three centuries across Mexico, Peru, North America, and the Philippines. Friars developed missions as urban centers to build churches, perform mass, hear confessions, and monitor the behavior of neophytes or recent Christian converts. Once a region's inhabitants had been gathered in a chosen site, they were divided into smaller units (called a *barangay* in the Philippines) headed by a district chief who maintained contact with the friars and endeavored to learn the local language (Dery 1991: 48). A chapel was built for the friar to live in and give mass, and from whence he could come and go to visit his recent converts. They distributed gifts as enticement and targeted the children of prominent families based on the idea that the younger ones would receive the teachings better (Dery 1991: 48-49).

Missions were designed to control both the bodies and minds of indigenous peoples. In Bikol, missions were structured so that inhabitants were "under the bell" (Dery 1991: 42) and could always hear the church bells signaling mass and other events. In an eighteenth-century Spanish mission in Alta, California, missionary agents recorded the drastic spatial reorganization that was undertaken to convert locals and maintain their Christianity (Voss 2000). Priests sequestered unmarried women in *monjerios* to protect them from the unchristian practice of pre-marital sex, but records indicated that indigenous men sneaked inside and released the women from these prison-like institutions.

Once the women were married in a proper Christian ceremony, they were moved into apartment-style family buildings where they could still be monitored by the missionaries. The mission structures essentially acted like prisons for neophytes who were not permitted to leave or interact with non-Christian individuals. Not only did the *monjerios* confine them physically, but they also cut off connection to the spirituality attached to the outside world in nature and with

their pre-Spanish community. Converts were limited to interact with other Christians and members of the clergy.

The structure of missions reflected the importance of the church and the conception of space for both indigenous communities and Spanish colonizers. Across New Spain, churches were built out of the ruins of indigenous temples (Hamann 2008); similarly, in New Mexico, the San Pedro church was built over an indigenous kiva at the center of the site, departing from the tradition of placing the church at the periphery (Lycett 2004: 371-372). This action implies that Franciscan missionary agents mobilized Pueblo social labor and resources in their production of colonial place-making, materially and symbolically eliminating an indigenous place (Lycett 2004: 371; see Creese 2013; see Lightfoot et al. 1998). The relationship between the friars and the local populace is critical for understanding how *reducciones* were designed, and how this created material places for colonial encounters.

The Philippines was not a monolithic culture, and Spanish missionization in the Philippines varied by region and religious order. On the order of the Council of the Indies in Spain, the governor and Bishop divided the Philippines into geoethnic regions with each one assigned to a different Spanish religious order (Phelan 1957: 49). Most of the Tagalog region went to the Augustinians and the Franciscans; the Dominicans took the Chinese community in Manila. The Augustinians also received Pampanga and Ilocos; Franciscans took the Bikol-speaking peoples in the Camarines; Dominicans took Pangasinan and Cagayan; and the Visayan islands went to both the Augustinians and the Jesuits. The divisions allowed for more concentrated language studies for each order (Phelan 1959: 50), but also indicated that relationships between the missionary agents and the local populations they were assigned to were varied.

At the time of initial contact, many historical accounts describe Philippine polities as fragmentary and kin-based, with a *datu* acting as chief of the local hierarchy (see Barretto-Tesoro 2008; Junker 1999; Loarca 1582; Rafael 1987). *Datus* were authoritative figures in pre-Spanish Tagalog and Visayan society, who gained a following and influence through skillful raids and acquired wealth. He oversaw the economic prosperity of the *barangay*, the small administrative unit in the Philippines and the *datu's* kinship network.

However, *datus* are a lowland concept, and this type of social ranking system is not uniform across the entirety of the Philippines. Historical accounts describing Philippine polities as chiefdoms with *datus*, riverine trade systems, and organized tribute relationships are extremely situational. This regionality in conjunction with the different styles and individual strategies of each religious order suggest that conversion rates were highly variable and dependent on multiple factors. What was successful in one community may have been rejected in another.

Missionary activity in Bikol may not have been as prominent as it was in the Tagalog region because it was geographically further away from the colonial center at Manila. Yet contemporary Bikol boasts one of the highest concentrations of Catholics in the Philippines. Bikol, a region spanning multiple provinces across peninsular southeastern Luzon, experienced a lag in conversion efforts. Villages were widely dispersed, and several groups of Bikolanos had moved into the interior and become known as *remontados*, or mountain people (Dery 1991: 46-47).

Friars were ideally qualified according to their religious corporations, but most likely they were also simple peasants with limited educational background (Phelan 1959: 42). The missionaries were responsible for bridging the linguistic gap between the indigenous population,

Spanish as a colonial tool, and Catholic Latin, as will be discussed in more depth later, using manuals and instructions brought with them from their monasteries in Spain. Macdonald (2004: 88) suggests that they brought more than the required materials with them – they also introduced the indigenous communities to the veneration of saints and various "superstitions" from Europe. Philippine friars (from both Spain and Mexico) brought their own brand of "folk Catholicism" to the colonies, ones that were already marked with pre-Christian polytheistic characteristics. Because the indigenous populace was so closely monitored by the missionaries, they had to conform to the missionaries' teachings and practices, which included the cult of saints and funerary rites.

For example, the devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia was brought to Bikol by a Spanish-born priest, Don Miguel Robles de Covarrubias. Before that, the Virgin Peñafrancia was discovered by Simon Vela in a mountain between Spain and France during the early 15th century. As we will be explored in detail in Chapters 4 and 5, this devotional cult demonstrates the extent of a missionary's influence over a local community. With his influence, Don Miguel made Peñafrancia an emblem of Bikolano Catholicism, and he fed the mythology surrounding her power as a Christian icon. Macdonald suggests that Spanish Catholicism itself contains pre-Christian elements, and the intersection of missionaries and indigenous peoples was a meeting for two folk religions, not just one (2004: 88-90).

2.2.2 Maintaining Catholicism

Once the population had been resettled and baptized into the faith, the friars were tasked with maintaining their devotion, monitoring their behavior, and keeping them in line with Catholic doctrine. Rafael (1987: 323) suggests that the translation of Catholic doctrine into the local vernacular was the key feature of evangelization in the Philippines. However, certain

words, such as Dios, Espiritu Santo, Cruz, and Jesu Christo were kept untranslated, because the Spanish felt that no direct equivalent existed in the local language (Rafael 1987: 323). (It is worth noting that other scholars in other mission sites have suggested that iconography was also translated along with indigenous names, to draw connections between pre-Spanish deities and Christians ones [see Peterson 2005, Russo 2002])

Translation and language were another form of control of Filipino bodies and minds, particularly through the performance of the sacrament of reconciliation, or confession. Traditionally, reconciliation is structured so that an individual will confess their sins to a priest, often under the threat that their soul is unclean until it has been absolved of sin. The priest then absolves their sins by assigning acts of penance. However, priests used confession to probe Filipinos into being more actively involved with the church, and they performed the sacrament by asking very invasive questions regarding specific sins, even if they were graphic (Rafael 1987).

Filipino Christians in the Tagalog region responded to this by converting the discourse of sin into a game of *bogtongan*, or riddle (Rafael 1987: 338). Upon hearing the priests' inquisitive confessional methods, a Filipino would respond with verbal dexterity that was difficult for the priest to understand; sometimes the confessor would even confess another individual's sins rather than their own, further confusing the priest. These small acts of defiance appeased the missionaries but deflected the hierarchy that priests were trying to impose on them. This type of resistance may not have had effects as visible as retreating or physically fighting, but it ensured that some form of pre-Spanish identity persisted through the colonial period, however subtle it was.

2.2.3 Non-Catholic Philippines

Although evangelization in the Spanish colonies across the Americas and the Philippines was overwhelmingly successful, certain regions of the Philippines did not convert to Christianity during the Spanish period and were only briefly mentioned in Spanish historical documents. This speaks to the failures of Spanish missionization in certain regions, and the effects that even brief encounters had on the local populace and their subsequent histories.

Philippine communities in the Cordillera region of northern Luzon were amongst the "tribes" that never succumbed to Spanish conquistadors yet were still subject to colonial attitudes and impressions, particularly in historical narratives (Acabado 2017; McKay 2005: 284). *Igorot* was term from the lowlands used to describe highland groups, and the Spanish adopted this word, despite its rejection by several Cordilleran groups, notably the Ifugao. Colonial presence in the lowlands pressured populations to migrate north, and Ifugaos then had to restructure their social organization to accommodate the influx of people to the region (Acabado 2017; 2018; Acabado and Martin 2022).

The Spanish attempted to missionize Ifugao groups into *reducciones,* but they were met with frequent attacks well into the nineteenth century, when the Spanish-American War closed all missions in the north (Lim 1978). The Ifugao communities lived in the mountains without road access, and they were notorious headhunters and animists. Oral histories fill the gaps where Spanish accounts are scarce, yet conflicts over Ifugao names, American enforced names, and other inconsistencies contribute to a narrative that insinuates certain cultures are "vanished" if they cannot be properly traced through time (McKay 2005: 483-484).

This imperialistic and Eurocentric view helped establish a binary between "us" (the cosmopolitan Manila) with "them" (the Igorots) (McKay 2005: 483). This divide fueled racial tension between unChristianized Filipinos who were associated with the deep, ancient past and

Christianized Filipinos, who were part of the global economy connected to the Old World. This has had a negative effect on contemporary Ifugao communities, who must mitigate their oral histories with the imposed histories of both Spanish and American colonization.

Conclusion

The strategies that the Spanish implemented in their colonies were dependent on multiple factors but ultimately the religious order (e.g., Franciscan, Jesuit, Augustinian, Dominican) held the authority to implement Christianity according to both formal Catholic doctrine and their own personal understanding of the faith. In this way, the friars held immense power over missions and the indigenous populace. It was up to them to create and maintain colonial place-making for these communities, and to carry out the will of the Spanish Crown. Without a successful mission, the encomienda system would not have had communities to flourish in. Missions were the basis of Spanish control, the physical places where indigenous bodies were monitored, and spiritual minds were coerced to perform Catholicism and essentially become Hispanized.

The disparities between not only the Philippines and Latin America, but also between different regions of the Philippines, are crucial differences. Focusing on a single region, like Bikol, can answer questions about unique responses to Spanish missionization, but they are best when contextualized against other regions in the larger archipelago. Bikol's general use of iconography is not unique in the Philippines, but it does speak to a distinctly Bikol personality of religiosity and affinity for a mother figure, all of which can be explored historically and archaeologically. The use of Catholic icons in Bikol across spaces, and in colonial-made places like churches, and highlight the friars' strategies for creating missions that were successful in converting Bikolanos. Historical documents in the Philippines are not as rich as they are in Latin America, where Hispanization was arguably a more intensive process, but the potential for a

larger regional study in the Bikol region and the entire Philippines can contribute to the broader picture of Spanish globalization in the early modern period.

CHAPTER 3. Colonial Imagery in Colonized Spaces

Amongst the various terms that are used to describe both natural and forced cultural exchanges, hybridity stands out as a dynamic epistemology that is broad enough to encompass the complex nature of colonial interactions. There is a wide interest in studying the effects of when cultures mix, but scholars debate over which terms are applicable to each unique case (see Dean and Liebsohn 2003; Liebmann 2013; Lightfoot 2015; Voss 2008; Swenson 2015). Homi Bhabha (1994), often credited with bringing the concept of hybridity to prominence, suggests that within colonialism, a new relationship forms between the colonizer and the colonized and creates a space in which cultural practices can be negotiated and transformed. In this space, colonized peoples can assert agency through their choices and the performance of identity.

In the Americas, the long process of Spanish colonization in the early modern period brought an influx of *Españols* into indigenous communities. This interaction forced both groups to respond: As the Spanish westernized and Christianized the Americas, indigenous iconography and practices, many of which were rooted in animism. Both groups found unique ways to maintain aspects of their pre-conquest characteristics, which resulted in hybridized identities. These transformations are preserved in iconographies like the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico (Peterson 2008) among many others.

Like Latin America, the Philippines was also colonized by the Spanish in the sixteenth century. Filipinos rapidly adopted a Catholic lifestyle uniquely distinct from many parts of the western world, particularly with the use of religious icons. Philippine religiosity is a remnant of the colonial past, where pre-Hispanic traditions were negotiated with Catholicism to create a mixed identity. Philippine Catholic cults and iconography, such as Our Lady of Peñafrancia or Santo Niño de Cebu, are fragments of both cultures that were negotiated in these hybrid spaces.

Religious imagery in Latin America has undergone many transformations since the introduction of Spanish Catholicism in the sixteenth century; Philippine imagery has had a similar trail. refers to the sacred images of Catholic saints, often depicted as either statues or pictures. Utilizing the concept of hybridity as opposed to other models allows for Latin American/Philippine agency to be the center of discussions where historically they have been disregarded. To explore this application, I expand first on the concept of hybridity, and then how iconography and identity have been analyzed in Latin America. The wealth of data on post-conquest art in Latin America, particularly Mexico, may inform how these processes can be explored in the Philippines. The shared histories between Latin America and the Philippines connect them inextricably in productive ways that highlight their unique responses to colonialism.

3.1 Hybridity, Mimicry, and Colonial Conquest

The concept of hybridity, or the mixing of cultures, emerged out of post-colonial studies that sought to define the interactions between the colonizer and the colonized. Bhabha (1994) outlined this concept by focusing on both the parties, instead of just the dominant one and analyzing the context. He writes:

> Terms of cultural engagement, whether antagonistic or affiliative, are produced performatively. The representation of difference must not be hastily read as the reflection of pre-given ethnic or cultural traits set in the fixed tablet of tradition. The social articulation of difference, from the minority perspective, is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation. The authorized power and privilege do not depend on the persistence of tradition; it is resourced by the power of tradition to be reinscribed through

> the conditions of contingency and contradictoriness that attend upon the lives of those who are 'in the minority.' (1994: 2).

Hybridity describes a broad realm created within colonial encounters, in which identity is dynamic and performative through the mutual exchange of culture between the colonized and colonizer. "Mutual" is the keyword of this concept; many other models of interaction tend to favor the colonizer (usually European) over the colonized (e.g., indigenous peoples and/or the African-American diaspora), which denies agency to those who have been systematically oppressed because of colonization. Bhabha describes hybridity as the "reversal of the process of domination" (1994: 112-113); through this lens, a colonized people can empower and liberate themselves from the colonial hierarchy by taking ownership of transcultural events and hybridized practices. Rather than view these traditions as descended from a "pure" culture, he instead implies that they are "reinscribed" or "recreated" and adapted to these new situations. Hybridity has since been used as a tool to deconstruct labels of race, language, and nationality, where hybrid individuals can come together in solidarity (Yazdiha 2010: 33).

In the early modern period the Spanish established the Viceroyalty of New Spain in the Americas and the Pacific, with most of their military presence in Latin America. The Spanish crown sought to evangelize the "natives" through conquest and conversion to Catholicism. The long history of Spanish colonization in the Americas disrupted indigenous lifeways and severely impacted these communities both culturally and biologically. The need for a framework like hybridity emerged in the twentieth century as *indigenista* sentiments grew in Mexico and Peru, which were the centers of the largest pre-Spanish populations (Dean and Liebsohn 2003: 7). There was a push to center the indigenous experience and the process through which cultures

were mixed, as most historical accounts favored the Spanish perspective over others. Acknowledging the mixed nature of Mexico and the Americas them was an empowering method to decolonize historical narratives.

Colonial theory in Latin America took time to develop, and historical narratives initially overlooked indigenous agency. The distinction between pre-conquest and post-conquest Mexico was solidly defined in early scholarship, partly because historiography focused on military narratives on combat and warfare. From this, the model of "conflict and resistance" between Spaniards and indigenous peoples gained prominence, followed by Robert Ricard's displacement model that assumed all indigenous things were destroyed and "swept aside" (Lockhart 1992: 324-325).

A model of isolated indigenous populations grew out of the desire to keep Hispanic and indigenous populations separate, but Charles Gibson looked to administrative documentation to show that indigenous peoples and traditions did survive through conquest in active ways (Lockhart 1992: 325). Lockhart negatively criticizes models of clash, population displacement, and survival through isolation (1992: 326), because these models center the European experience and promote a colonial agenda. "Resist and run" responses to conquest disempower indigenous populations by removing them from historical narratives and ignoring their contributions to a developing Mexican culture. As Lockhart points out, Spaniards in Mexico immediately began creating a distinct subculture that was racially and culturally mixed. As scholarship in the twentieth century moved to include pre-conquest Mexico, scholars worked to make studies more inclusive of the indigeneity, and to dissect the makings of this hybridized "subculture."

As indigenous contributions to the development of the Americas became the subject of interest, scholars struggled to characterize these studies. Choice in terminology reflects

knowledge of established meaning (Black 2015: 311). The term "mestizo" was first used to describe multiracial persons in the Americas circa the 1500s, specifically mixed Spanish-indigenous peoples, and then later utilized as a term to describe the style of colonial art and architecture, such as commissioned paintings, iconography, and missions.

Latin American scholars searched for a term that could accurately describe the art and architecture created in the wake of Spanish conquest. European labels could not adequately incorporate the various styles that intersected in Latin American art and architecture, including Gothic, Islamic, Isabelline, among many others. Black discusses how scholars Guido and Wethey advocated the use of "mestizo" to characterize the mixed styles; however, George Kubler denounced the term for carrying imbued racism and the baggage of conquest, rape, and patronization. "Tequitqui," a Nahuatl word for "one who pays tribute," was introduced by historian Jose Moreno Villa in the early 1900s to describe the transformation of art after conquest, but again, the term fails to encapsulate the agency of indigenous peoples. "Tequitqui" sculptures or paintings are viewed as "poor imitations" of "poorly understood" Europeans models which assumes that indigenous peoples were "visually illiterate" (Black 2015: 314).

Instead, drawing from Bhabha's work, Black (2015: 314-315) argues that indigenous artistic techniques and iconographies might be a subversive strategy or survival tactic. There is an emphasis in studies that the Spanish allowed indigenous iconographies to continue to exist so that Catholic doctrine would be easier to teach and more readily accepted if it maintained similarities a pre-established, often animist, tradition; however, it is necessary to explore alternative responses to colonialism, and the varied ways in which peoples responded. Black argues that scholars should reject these narrow terms and instead pursue epistemologies that allow indigenous agency, resistance, and creativity to flourish and be recognized (Black 2015:

314). Central to her argument is Bhabha's "mimicry" which creates a space for indigenous consumption and appropriation of European practices.

Bhabha (1984) identifies mimicry as the construction of slippage, or difference, between the colonizer and the colonized. Mimicry is the "representation of difference," a complex strategy in which one party appropriates the other to visualize power (Bhabha 1984: 126). Bhabha stresses that this is done out of the colonizers' desire to convert the colonized into subjects that are almost identical to them, but the differences maintain their distinct identities. Afanador-Pujol (2010) utilizes what she calls "visual mimicry" to instead view appropriation of the "other" from an indigenous perspective.

In the sixteenth century, an unknown artist created the "Relacion de Michoacan," an indigenous rendering of the European Christian Tree of Joshua. This new image depicted pre-conquest ruling lineage in place of Christ's lineage. The integration of indigenous imagery and knowledge into a traditionally Christian image ensures the message would be better received by Spaniards; the goal of the image was to have the descendants of the pre-conquest lineage acknowledged as territorial rulers (Afanador-Pujol 2010: 301-303). Furthermore, the document discloses the multicultural nature of Michoacan as a society not strictly divided between colonizer and colonized, but a mix of different indigenous and ethnic groups with various economic interests, loyalties, and affiliations. The Relacion de Michoacan mimics Christian documents and uses "colonial" vernacular, or visual culture, to successfully convey a message. From this example, mimicry can either be enforced by the colonizer or selected by the colonized as an act of co-opting colonialism and exerting agency.

Context determines whether a hybrid culture is empowering or disempowering: a person or community's hybridity will be positive or negative depending on its ability to expand or

diminish capacity for agency (Bauhn and Tepe 2016: 353). For example, Bauhn and Tepe analyzed Turkish migrant communities who form new spaces of identity in the Netherlands, a foreign place wherein their culture is now a hybridized, or mixed, version of the old and new. Social and cultural settings determine whether an individual views her hybridity positively or not. This depends on several factors, including whether the migration is forced or voluntary, and how her new identity shapes her worldview and acceptance (or unacceptance) by other groups. Migrants considered themselves residents of a new *third* cultural space, in which they maintained a duality for their homeland and new community. As Bauhn and Tepe point out, hybridity may be perceived as a problem when the dichotomy of "us" versus "them" is stressed and a sense of belonging is difficult to achieve; conversely, this hybrid duality can be empowering when one views is not as a polarizing position, but instead as one that overlaps and has access to both communities (2018: 356-357).

Scholars have questioned whether hybridity is an accurate framework to describe these interactions (Dean and Liebsohn 2003; Liebmann 2013). Alternative concepts, such as acculturation, syncretism, bricolage, mestizaje, and creolization have been used sometimes interchangeably to describe cultural mixtures. The issue with many of these concepts is that they imply one dominant culture over the other, usually the colonizer above the colonized, and thus denying the colonized group a claim for agency or empowerment. This becomes especially problematic when discussing indigenous and/or enslaved peoples, such as pre-Hispanic populations in the Americas, or the African American diaspora.

Acculturation is one of these hierarchical terms, and it is associated with a loss of traditional non-western values as the values of the dominant culture are acquired in their place (Liebmann 2013: 28). Over time, archaeologists have moved away from utilizing acculturation

because it implies a unilinear direction; the degree of change in artifacts is measured by how similar they are to foreign, usually European, culture. The narrow scope of this definition is its limiting factor. Creolization and mestizaje, as Liebmann continues, were coined for very specific types of cultural interactions: Creolization was created through an assessment of common cultural vocabulary found in situations of forced relocation or diaspora.

The dislocation from a homeland is what makes creolization a unique term (2013: 28-29; 43). These circumstances fit studies that explore the African diaspora during the transatlantic slave trade, but do not fit a study of Spanish colonialism, in which colonized peoples mostly remained in their homelands and were not always physically displaced. Mestizaje refers specifically to the social hierarchy created within New Spain, and the complex ordering of various social classes based on lineage and place of birth. It explains unequal power relations and the creation of a distinctly new culture through the mixing of races (2013: 29, 43). However, mestizaje can homogenize the realities of multiculturalism and distinct ethnic identities that emerge (Liebmann 2013: 40).

Syncretism and bricolage, on the other hand, have been used specifically to denote the mixing of religions between two or more cultures. Syncretism describes the combination of two or more religious traditions within a cultural frame (Stewart 1999 as cited in Liebmann 2013: 28); however, like acculturation, it implies that a hierarchy exists wherein these interactions disrupt a "cultural purity" and the acquisition of another culture's traditions is undesirable. Like acculturation, syncretism covers a narrow scope that does not account for the complexities associated with dislocation, enslavement, or colonialism.

Additionally, the word has a negative connotation, and within its simplicity lies the suggestion that dominant cultural traditions, such as Catholicism, suppress others, like African

traditions during the transatlantic slave trade (Schmidt 2006: 236). Schmidt's polyphonic bricolage accounts for these complexities by acknowledging that more than one voice is present to create sites of memory, which is how mixed religion (particularly Afro-Caribbean Catholicism during the period of slavery) should be conceptualized (Schmidt 2006: 241). Bricolage elsewhere indicates an emphasis on structures, and these structures impose limitations on colonized peoples who are forced to produce new forms of culture (Liebmann 2013: 39-40, 43).

These terms may describe colonial encounters in the Philippines, but they limit the potential for exploring Spanish colonialism in a way that centers the Filipino experience. Hybridity moves beyond these terms because it addresses the intentionality of actions and the agency used to make choices in situations where a dominant figure (the colonizer) is traditionally understood to have control (Bauhn and Tepe 2016; Liebman 2013). To address this, Bhabha (1994) identifies the "third space" of hybridity, which is understood as the indeterminate, liminal space between the colonizer and the colonized. This is the locale for the disruption and negotiation of the hegemonic narrative. It is in this space that hybrid identities can be formed, and traditions negotiated, including iconography like the Bikol Peñafrancia.

Archaeological studies of material culture are an ideal method for exploring this duality between colonizer and colonized, or "third space," because as Kent Lightfoot suggests, the use of these spaces in repeated, daily practices is what creates a structured space where people "organize and make sense of their lives" (Lightfoot et al. 1998: 201-202). The study of material culture and repeated behaviors can reveal what is shaped in these idealized spaces that are manifested in physical places. Other archaeologists, including Lightfoot, recognize identity formation within these spaces. Barbara Voss (2008, 2015) explores the application of ethnogenesis in Spanish-colonial North America. She defines ethnogenesis as the process of

displaced colonized peoples reinventing themselves as a unified force, specifically based on their shared ancestry, territory, language, history, and tradition (Voss 2008: 407). Lightfoot analyzes multicultural, plural societies to make sense of cultural mixing during colonial periods, where the organization of daily life is a form of measuring culture change and persistence (Lightfoot et al. 1998).

In archaeology, there is a tendency to overuse the word "hybridity" and simplify it to its basic meaning of "mixed cultures" (see Silliman 2015). Silliman recommends that hybridity is considered a social practice and a quality "so that it can be used to accentuate moments of transformation, change, and creativity" (2015: 286). Considerations of temporality, specifically the long *durée* as opposed to the short *purée* (Silliman 2012 as cited in Silliman 2015), ensure that hybridity is dynamic. By using a multiscalar approach and analyzing the changes over time rather than individual short-term changes, we can gain a better understanding of how cultures are transformed and in constant negotiation, particularly those affected by long term disruptions like colonialism.

Hybridity is one of many terms used to describe the mixing of peoples and cultures, yet its distinction is that hybridity carries "political charge" and refers to "political and cultural events in which conquest and colonization, resistance and subversion play significant roles" (Dean and Liebsohn 2003: 9). Hybridity acknowledges the power dynamics between the parties in question, primarily the colonizer and the colonized; however, a broader scope recognizes that multiple culture groups may have a direct or indirect presence or influence (for example: Spanish, indigenous, and African groups in New Spain). Art historians may not be necessarily interested in the origins of specific styles, practices, iconographies or materials (Dean and Liebsohn 2003: 6), but instead shift focus onto how meaning is accrued in material culture, and

how contemporary interpreters choose to reconstruct these contexts. It is much simpler to view hybridity in objects where indigenous/non-indigenous markers are present (a portrait of a British woman dressed as an Indian queen), but the invisible markers, such as ethnicity of the manufacturer, audience, meaning, etc. are often more important. These invisible forms of hybridity may even be more dangerous because they are "deeper and more consequential" (2003: 26).

Dean and Liebsohn (2003: 24) raise the point that although archaeologists see hybridity from a temporal distance, hybridity was not necessarily a concern for individuals who lived these realities. Perhaps we recognize hybrids because we seek to see survival instead of cultural decimation. Perhaps it is that desire that has allowed simpler concepts like acculturation and syncretism to flourish in the past, not because they reproduced a colonial narrative, but because they held vestiges of indigenous culture that would otherwise be rendered invisible. However, if we approach Latin American (and Philippine) material culture with the understanding that there is no such thing as a "pure" culture, then of course we would see hybridity in everything that is consumed under a colonial context, because the moment art or iconography is produced by or for a colonized subject, it is already processed as a changed material.

3.2 Places for hybridity

Recalling Lightfoot et al. 's (1998) identification of a "third space" for negotiating the relationship between colonizer and the colonized, as well as Bhabha's (1994) description of hybridity as a realm in which the colonized and the colonizer interact, the concept of placemaking describes the process of how these interactions developed through time and how they accrued meaning. Adams et al. (2001) contends a space becomes a place when it is a representation of social relations that are defined and created by social and spatial contexts

(2001: xiv). Placemaking then refers to the context of both *physical* spaces that are occupied and *social* spaces where identities are negotiated and practiced. Places are "dynamic and fluid" (Adams et al. 2001: xxi-xxii) and may fluctuate over time as their meaning adapts to the people who occupy it, giving place a temporal contingency. For example, Rubertone (2008) describes monuments in North America built by colonizers to commemorate indigenous places as sites that "may leave archaeological traces that document continuing attachments to place undisclosed by what is visibly remembered by the monument" (2008: 199). Schmidt (2006: 241) calls these abstract and physical places "sites of memory" where multiple voices converge to maintain and navigate identity. Social memory may be an important part of maintaining local, or "indigenous" identities in the face of events like colonialism, which threatens to eradicate non-colonial practices. Social memory is especially important for places lacking monumental structures, or for places that experience significant changes over time.

These conceptualizations identify place less as a proxy for phenomena, and instead as "efficacious, vitalistic, and even agentive" (Swenson 2015: 482). In his critique of religious landscapes, Swenson (2015: 482-483) argues that archaeologists are moving away from the former model, and moving toward examining religious space as a multifaceted dimension with multiple layers of meaning between the material and the space it inhabits. Lefebvre's (1991 as cited in Swenson 2015) "thirdspace" or lived space serves as "spaces of representation" in which meanings and memories are constructed. Temples and other monumental structures "often imbue place with thirdspace qualities, for they demarcate performative arenas of intense, alternate experience, the meaning of which is potentially fluid and variable" (Swenson 2015: 484). Parallels between ritual space and thirdspace show that both conflate "the imaginative and real, the informative and introspective, the past and the present…the intimately personal and the

intensely social" (Swenson 2015: 483). Interestingly, Swenson contrasts everyday landscapes to exceptional sacred spaces, noting that landscapes are unreflexive whereas sacred spaces provide essential space for change.

When looking at the landscape that Apache in North America occupy, Basso (1996: 5-7) describes placemaking as a process to bring the past into being and to construct history itself. It is a process to revise former times and to connect to oneself and the world they inhabit, as the way one creates places reflects how they view oneself and how they construct and practice social traditions. Through exploring Apache tribal lands with community members, Basso observes how Apache use the landscape for remembering cultural stories and histories, teaching ways of living and behavior, and connecting with one another. Places anchor the past to the present, connecting people with their ancestors as they saw the world, and imbuing the landscape with memory markers. The physicality of place-making takes abstract spaces that people inhabit – their minds, their spirituality, their dreams – and turns it into something that can be shared and occupied by others in the community.

As discussed in Chapter 2, when the Spanish came to the Philippines, there were no temples similar to those observed from the Aztecs or the Mayans in New Spain. Without any remaining physicality, these sites could only be remembered and sustained through the repetition of stories and names. Ritual in sacred space plays an important role in maintaining memory of a place, especially when material culture and monumental structures are frequently lost and replaced, as in the Philippines. Religious rituals in particular are embedded with multiple layers of purpose; Rappaport describes religious rituals different from non-religious rituals as such:

> Whereas the semantic content of the secular ritual is exhausted by the psychological, physiological, or social information transmitted in the ritual, this is not so

> in religious rituals. Religious rituals always include, in addition to messages of social import, implicit or explicit references to some idea, doctrine, or supernatural entity (1971:29).

Sacred landscapes are of particular interest for archaeologists who rely on material culture, space, and memory to understand human behavior as it pertains to their modified environment. Knapp and Ashmore (1999) define sacred landscapes as "socio-symbolic aspects of human-environment interaction" (as cited in Reese-Taylor 2012: 753). Identifying sacred landscapes allows archaeologists to observe the phenomena of religion by looking at the relationship between the environment and the divine or spiritual, which may be observed in artifacts, ritual, or place (see Häussler and Chiai 2020). Although many methodological issues present themselves when investigating sacred landscapes, one in particular is that evidence of most ritual activity from the past is lost. However, in areas where the sacred landscape is maintained through time, places of memory and ritual are able to persist and continuously produce new material culture that can be observed and can contribute to our understanding of the people who occupy and maintain them.

The places where colonized peoples negotiated and performed their changing identities through the colonial period either became new critical components of the sacred landscape they inhabited, or reinforced the value they had already been ascribed before colonial influence. Likewise, the material culture and iconographies within these places that were used in ritual and identity were also subject to alteration as spaces shifted to accommodate hybrid interactions.

3.3 Hybridity in Latin America

The intersection of Spanish Catholicism and Philippine pre-Hispanic religions had unique results, mostly because the religions of the Philippines were separate due to regional variation and a disunity amongst tribes. Different Philippine groups in Bikol converted to Catholicism at different times possibly out of a desire to form alliances with the Spanish and take the place of the social elite. Multicultural interactions created unique places in which cultural transformations occur. If hybridity and identity are understood to be dynamic and in constant flux relational to the environment, then the pattern of change across the Naga landscape from the early modern period until the present can give insight to how colonial interactions were negotiated, and how Bikolanos built their devotion and identity directly into the landscape as a form of maintaining identity in the Spanish period.

To analyze hybridity, agency, mimicry, etc., it is necessary to avoid drawing simplistic parallels or analogies across icons, styles, and images, whether they are from the same culture or not. Even calling an icon pre-conquest or pre-Spanish does not refer to a monolithic Latin American culture. Kubler (1967) points out the problems in assuming that Teotihuacan, the Aztecs, and early colonial records are all interrelated, despite the large interval of 800 years between Teotihuacan's abandonment at Spanish conquest of the Americas. The "pre-conquest" period of Latin America does not refer to a unilinear culture, and it is important to recognize that pre-Spanish cultures are diverse, and their iconographies do not necessarily imply the same meanings. For example, the Aztec Quetzalcoatl appears as a feathered serpent, but the meaning of the Aztec deity may be different from the feathered serpent icon that appears at Teotihuacan hundreds of years earlier (Kubler 1967: 12).

There are many instances of iconography and architecture in Latin America that suggest an intersection of Spanish and pre-Spanish cultures. Many of them are images that were the

result of a collaboration between a Spanish friar and an indigenous artist. These images raise the questions, what motivated their construction? What iconography was carefully selected by either the friar or the artist? In the late sixteenth century, the Franciscan brother Bernardino de Sahagun instructed an indigenous painter-scribe, or *tlacuilo*, to salvage the visual culture and religious practices of New Spain (Olson 2008). The painter created an image which appeared in the Florentine Codex. The image depicts clouds and rain and is accompanied by a description of the deity Tlalocatecutli, who is associated with clouds and rain.

Olson describes the image as a persistence of the indigenous Nahua peoples during the new colonial administration (2008: 102). The style and technique used to create this image, specifically the use of hatching, were European in nature. Hatching and cross-hatching were transferred from woodcuts and prints, which were necessary for the mechanical reproduction of Christian iconography; however, these techniques gave an undoubtedly "European" effect to the indigenous image that could have been created without the use of hatching (Olson 2008: 109-112). This mechanical form put on paper may be either misreading of the viewer, or motivated mimicry; the question remains whether the *tlacuilo* intentionally used hatching to bridge the gap between indigeneity and European imagery (Olson 2008: 112).

The negotiation of Spanish/indigeneity within these images occupies a space for pre-Spanish iconography to exist dually in both ethnic worlds. The negotiations become more complex when the images depict people, and not just abstract icons. Carrera (1998) analyzes a series of *casta* paintings that depict images from colonial Mexico City in the late eighteenth century. The intersection of settlers from New Spain, indigenous Mexicans, and enslaved Africans created several social identities set within a strict hierarchical scheme, including *Españiols*, mestizos, mulattas, and creoles. Qualifications of social identity were based less in

physical characteristics, like skin color, and instead exemplified in paintings through clothing, environment, and activity. Spatial ordering in physical, social, and economic spaces (1998: 41) were the defining boundaries of late colonial life. In addition to paintings, architecture and novels confirm these racially motivated *casta* confinements. Painters sought to show the "purification" of *casta* blood (1998: 43) as *Españiols* who lived in urban elite homes. Carrera writes, "As visualizations of race, casta paintings stabilize the ambiguity and complexity of physical race by locating the meanings of race in the confluence, interactions, and mediations between and among physical, social, and economic spaces" (1998: 45).

In some places, artists explored the multiple intersections of iconography, race, and politics in a single space. The walls of a latrine area in a monastery at Actopan, Mexico, contains an amalgamation of these themes (Russo 2006). The first wall contains the Mexica eagle, *nopa* (prickly pear cactus), the Holy Roman Empire eagle, Christian churches, and felines. The combination of icons refers simultaneously to pre-Spanish domains, the Hapsburg empire, the kingdom of Castile, and the Augustinian order. The north wall contains the festive image of a man on horseback, and the east wall depicts a cryptic body falling and crashing to the ground. Russo speculates that the graffiti was drawn by the incarcerated friar Juan Duran, who drew inspiration and critique from the assortment of art and imagery elsewhere in the monastery. The graffiti may be political iconography depicting two of New Spain's viceroys as a critique and warning to other governors (Russo 2016: 73-73). Whatever the meaning behind the graffiti, the drawings of the two bodies parallels several images, including Christ as mortal/immortal. Russo suggests the two bodies are possibly a juxtaposition between two artistic traditions, indigenous and European, and the graffiti is a "locus of ceaseless aesthetic transformation" (2016: 77). Perhaps the graffiti attempts to preserve the dynamic nature of a colonial identity, fluid and

changing, in a single place where iconography spanning temporal and geographical distances can stand together and have a single meaning.

The indigenous Central Mexican concept of ceramics was intertwined with sacred space and the construction of Spanish Catholic churches (Hamann 2008). According to historical accounts, every certain number of years, during the New Fire ceremony *tlazolli* was produced to ensure the sun would rise again the next day. *Tlazolli* were destroyed and broken ceramics or household goods that were then disposed of because their vitality allegedly expired along with the solar and ritual calendars. Both whole and fragmented objects were sacred to Central Mexicans, though for different reasons (Hamann 2008). Hamann illustrates that in later years, when the Spanish arrived in Mexico, they commanded all indigenous temples to be destroyed, and the indigenous laborers were to use temple fragments to build Catholic churches. Because these fragments, or *tlazolli*, were still considered sacred, though dangerously so because of the expired sun calendar, Catholic churches were literally built with sacred objects that still maintained power and agency in a pre-Spanish world. The practice of using animistic architectural fragments to rebuild Christian churches echoed similar practices as animist Rome shifted to Catholicism, and as the Spanish inquisition demolished Iberian Islamic mosques (Hamann 2008: 816-822).

Spanish Catholics not only built their churches over sacred spaces with temple ruins, but they also co-opted indigenous iconography into Catholic images. Plumage and birds hold significance in both the indigenous pre-Hispanic world and the Spanish Catholic world (Russo 2002). The image of a multicolored bird, ringed with a halo above the words *espiritu santo* implies that this is a rendering of the Holy Spirit for sixteenth century Mexican peoples (Russo 2002: 227). Typically portrayed as white dove, the use of colorfully plumed bird appeals to

indigenous peoples and incorporates a pre-Hispanic image into the Catholic Holy Trinity. Feathers are also a "common denominator" for Mexica deities, appearing in many iconographies of pre-Hispanic human sacrifices and hiding a multilayered association to important icons like the sun and shadows.

Cordova (2009) explores the similarities between Catholic nuns and Aztec vestal virgins. A Mexican-Creole scholar and priest don Carlos de Siguenza y Gongora wrote on the parallels between the Aztec past and the colonial present. He wrote of the cihuatlamacazque, or "vestal virgins" who, like Catholic nuns, were young girls who served the Aztec faith. They were particularly linked by the imagery of flowers: the cihuatlamacazque were crowned with flowers when taken to the temple to be dedicated to a sacred life of service and sometimes mortal sacrifice; likewise, Catholic nuns in New Spain were immortalized in paintings in which they wore flower crowns.

These examples of hybridity in Latin America suggest that the spaces in which colonial encounters occur are unique, and the contexts through which they are expressed are varied. Contexts ranged from collaborative between a Spaniard and an indigenous individual; to more covert like in the graffiti, church architecture, the multicolored bird Holy Spirit, or nuns adorned in flowers; to more subversive like in the Virgin of Guadalupe as will be discussed below. The common denominator with these examples is not simply that the icons persisted, but that their persistence implies indigenous agency in navigating the new communities that colonialism created.

Jeannette Peterson (see 2015) discusses the hybrid devotion to Virgin of Guadalupe, also known as Mother of the Mexicans, is a Marian icon who allegedly first appeared in 1531 on the hill of Tepeyacac in Mexico (Peterson 1992). She showed herself to Juan Diego, a newly

Christianized man, and spoke to him in the Aztec language of Nahuatl. Many parallels exist between the imagery used to construct this Catholic icon and indigenous pre-Columbian imagery; the Guadalupe icon was essentially used to prompt indigenous peoples in Mexico to convert to Catholicism. The image itself was adapted to reflect several established local or animistic characteristics, including: olive-ashen skin, straight black hair, sun and moon iconography, the element of miracles through the cloak, the Aztec eagle, and her use of Nahuatl instead of Spanish when she appeared to individuals. Colonial individuals allegedly devoted themselves to this Marian icon under the guise of Catholicism but were accused of using her to perpetuate their animistic beliefs. In addition to being used as a Catholic conversion tool, Guadalupe was also used as a creole class political emblem, and a Mexican nationalistic icon later on. Creoles used apparitions of Guadalupe as "an American phenomenon, to justify the [Spanish] conquest, and to glorify Mexico" (Peterson 1992: 48).

Guadalupe is just one of many cults in Mexico that is centered around a Catholic icon (see Black 2006). Devotion to a saint was ironically a point of disagreement between Catholics and Protestants that was occurring simultaneously in Europe to the colonial administration in the Americas (Hamann 2008: 822-823). Protestants accused Catholics of idolatry for the continuation of image culture, whereas Protestants worshipped no idols other than God, and Muslims also abstained from utilizing icons or similar imagery. Devotion to saints, and its associated mythology and religiosity, has become a characteristic of Philippine Catholicism as well.

3.4 Philippine Catholicism

Like Latin America, the Spanish colonized the Philippines in the sixteenth century and remained there for over 300 years; however, unlike in Latin America, there is a dearth of

information on the effects of Spanish conquest in the Philippines. The only successful, lasting achievement out of these three goals was the conversion of the Filipinos to Catholicism, and in doing so, Spain secured the Catholic Church's hegemonic hold over the archipelago. Catholicism became the dominant background of Philippine identity, despite the existence of pre-Spanish animist religions (Paredes 2017: 226).

Dominant historical narratives preferencing a western/European perspective are maintained both within the formal education system and in the public's general understanding of history. Philippine prehistory is idealized, and a racial "purity" is both praised and criticized. For example, the Waves of Migration Theory (Beyer 1948) has persisted in the general education system, even though it asserts that levels of intelligence and "authentic" Filipino culture are based on skin color and proximity to the colonial center in Manila. There is a tendency to focus on areas around the Spanish/European influences, which often ignores or downplays the importance of other Philippine regions. This promotes a limited engagement with studies that explore how local Filipino peoples responded to Spanish colonialism.

A dichotomy then emerged in the narrative between Hispanized Filipinos, who were considered "civilized," and unChristianized Filipinos (e.g. *cimarrones*, or mountain people; and tribes in the Cordillera mountains), who were considered "uncivilized" and anim ist. However, herein lies the potential for exploring the hybrid nature of Bikolanos who maintained a duality between Catholicism and pre-Spanish practices through their negotiation of Catholic iconography. Hybridity then has the potential to legitimize Filipino agency amidst the disruption of colonialism, where it can challenge historical narratives of a Filipino racial purity (the colonized). Through this application, we can challenge historical narratives and explore what motivated Filipinos to convert to Catholicism and essentially become "colonized."

Catholic cults in the Philippines revolve around a community or parish saint. *Fiestas* are held annually in each saint's honor and draw massive crowds to participate in community processions with a material seriation of the celebrated saint. The image used in the procession, sometimes considered the "original" , is just one of a seriation of many icons: the image is reproduced thousands of times in images and statues that Filipinos can keep in their homes to maintain a closeness to the vitality of the real icon. There are many cults across the Philippines, including Santo Niño de Cebu, a childlike Jesus; and the Black Nazarene from Quiapo, a dark-skinned Jesus carrying the cross. Some *fiestas* like the Obando Fertility Rites in Bulacan celebrate three local patron saints and feature dancing in a bid for increased fertility. Do these *fiestas* continue the Catholic tradition of idolatry that early modern period Protestants so despised them for? The Santo Niño de Cebu and the Black Nazarene are two examples of icons that have been recreated thousands of times for veneration in private homes, business establishments, and transportation vehicles. What can an analysis of the use of this Catholic iconography reveal about Spanish Catholic influence in the Philippines?

If we refer to Bhabha's hybridity and mimicry, and re-center the discussion on the Philippine perspective, then we are directed to the context of the colonial encounter and administration during the early modern period. Like pre-conquest Latin America, the Philippines was not a monolithic culture. More than 7000 islands make up the archipelago, and at the time of Spanish contact only the Islamic south was considered a united region. The rest of the country consisted of separate tribes and communities, many from differing ethnolinguistic groups. To explore the concept of Filipino Catholic hybridity, I suggest the Bikol region, southeast of the capital city Manila. Bikol is an ideal case study as it is the home of one of the oldest dioceses in the Philippines, the Archdiocese of Caceres, established in 1595 in Naga City, Camarines Sur,

Bikol. Bikol comprises six provinces (Figure 3-1) on the southeastern end of the island Luzon. When the Spanish first appeared in Camarines Sur, the Bikolanos were a large population of successful agriculturists, making use of local waterways and producing surplus foods (Blair and Robertson 1903-9). They called their land *Ibalon* and practiced religious rituals involving *anito*, or spirits, and a place of "eternal bliss" known as *kamurawayan* (Carpio 2002). In lieu of temples, Bikolanos considered the natural landscape of mountains to be their sacred grounds, around which they organized their community, or *barangay*. Family and individual courage were important values, and superstition facilitated their reliance on amulets, or *anting-anting*.

3- 1 Map of Bicol highlighting its six provinces

Augustinian friars first reached the Bikol islands of Burias, Masbate, and Ticao in 1569. Unlike in Latin America, where the Spanish language was a tool of colonialism, the friars in Bikol learned the local dialect (Carpio 2002: 31). Franciscan friars subsequently took control over the Bikol region for the next three centuries and Catholicism spread quickly through the

region. As of 2004, several dioceses in Bikol hold the highest percentages of Catholics in the country, including the number one spot at over 97% (Catholic Hierarchy 2005). The context of Catholicization in Bikol is a departure from strict Catholic doctrine and traditional colonial administration, in which the language of the colonizer prevails over the local vernacular. This implies an already hybrid nature from the beginning, in which the colonized subject, not the colonizer, maintained an aspect of pre-Spanish culture at the discretion of the Spanish friars.

The icon of interest in Bikol is Our Lady of Peñafrancia, a Marian icon holding Infant Jesus. Like the Virgin of Guadalupe in Mexico, she is entrenched in mythology and the ability to perform miracles for those who devote themselves to her. In 1710, the *cimarrones* in Bikol converted to Christianity and allegedly requested that a chapel be built for them (Carpio 2002: 49). Fr. Miguel Robles de Covarrubias, a Spaniard in the Philippines, had made a promise that he would build a shrine for Peñafrancia, because he had prayed often to her image during his life and she had saved him from many illnesses. The devotion to Peñafrancia Naga draws millions of Catholic Bikolanos to the region every September, where they participate in the nine-day novena in honor of the Virgin of Peñafrancia. The image of Peñafrancia is brought to the shrine in Naga Cathedral, and on the last day, she is returned to her shrine via the Bikol River route in a fluvial procession. The events are crowded with devotees shouting, "Viva la Virgen!" and attempting to touch the image and experience the miracles and healing of Peñafrancia.

The events of Christianization in Bikol and the subsequent devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia frame questions regarding the Gorospe draws the distinction between "official" and "popular" Christianity, in which the latter is "highly colored by Filipino culture" (Gorospe 1994: 75-76). Popular Christianity is subjective and reflects the "religion of the people" as opposed to the religion of the elitist, educated minority. This practice of Catholicism is successful in the

Philippines because it is characterized by a mixture of Filipino culture and religion that encourages traditional Filipino values; in other words, a hybrid culture.

Elsewhere in the Philippines, and devotions reflect similar instances of hybridity. Fenella Cannell (1995) has documented the imitation of Christ in Sorsogon, approximately 160 kilometers southeast of Naga. Bikolanos of S. Ignacio worship the cult of the Amang Hinulid, or the Ama, which is life-sized carved wooden image of Jesus after he has been taken down from the cross for crucifixion. Bicolano funerals and the Holy Week procession of the Ama mirror each other; they both involve a similar funeral procession and ritual weeping as well as rituals surrounding physical healing. The healers borrow Catholic symbols, such as the cross, to mark movements of spirits, and their shamanistic voyages echo terms from the *Pasion* and evoke the Ama through a replication of his death and resurrection (Cannell 1995: 384-387). These parallels between Bicolano individuals and the Ama figure of Christ is a management of the relations between humans and supernaturals (Cannell 1995: 388) and a way for Bicolanos to not only imitate Christ but identify with him through their similar sufferings and pain.

Similarly, Bautista (2011) says that while Filipino Catholicism is "devout and loyal [it] nevertheless falls short of a Church-prescribed ideal" (2011: 125). The Santo Niño of Cebu is arguably the most recognizable in the Philippines, and also one of the oldest as it was introduced to locals in Cebu by Ferdinand Magellan in the sixteenth century when he first attempted to colonize Cebu. Like Our Lady of Peñafrancia, this Catholic icon has a cult-following in Cebu that is celebrated with fiestas, street vendors, and cities crowded with devotees and pilgrims. And like Peñafrancia, the icon is both an official figure of Catholicism and a "people's figure" that goes against prescribed Catholic doctrine that forbids the worship of icons and materials. Bautista calls Santo Niño a brand of "folk Catholicism," and it is difficult to distinguish whether individuals in

the colonial period worshiped the icon as a form of God or if they did so out of pure sentiment and infatuation (2011: 126). Nevertheless, he highlights that religiosity and ritual behavior surrounding the Santo Niño in contemporary culture can be viewed as a form of persistence of pre-Spanish beliefs and practices, alluding to its hybrid construction (Bautista 2011: 141).

As Bautista also points out, the Pope Paul IV in 1970 visited Manila and conceded that "pluralism" was permitted and a person could be both fully Catholic and fully "Asian," referring to one's commitment to indigenous or local practices so long as they brought them closer to Jesus Christ (Bautista 2011: 146). Official Church recognition is critical to these devotions because it validates their practitioners as fully Catholic as well as local to their places. Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Bicol received her Canonical Coronation on September 20, 1924, meaning the pope formally identified Ina as an image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This type of recognition elevates a local image to papal recognition, a stature that acknowledges and validates "folk" or provincial (which can be translated as naive, according to Bautista) characteristics.

To explore hybridity

CHAPTER 4. Peñafrancia in Bikol

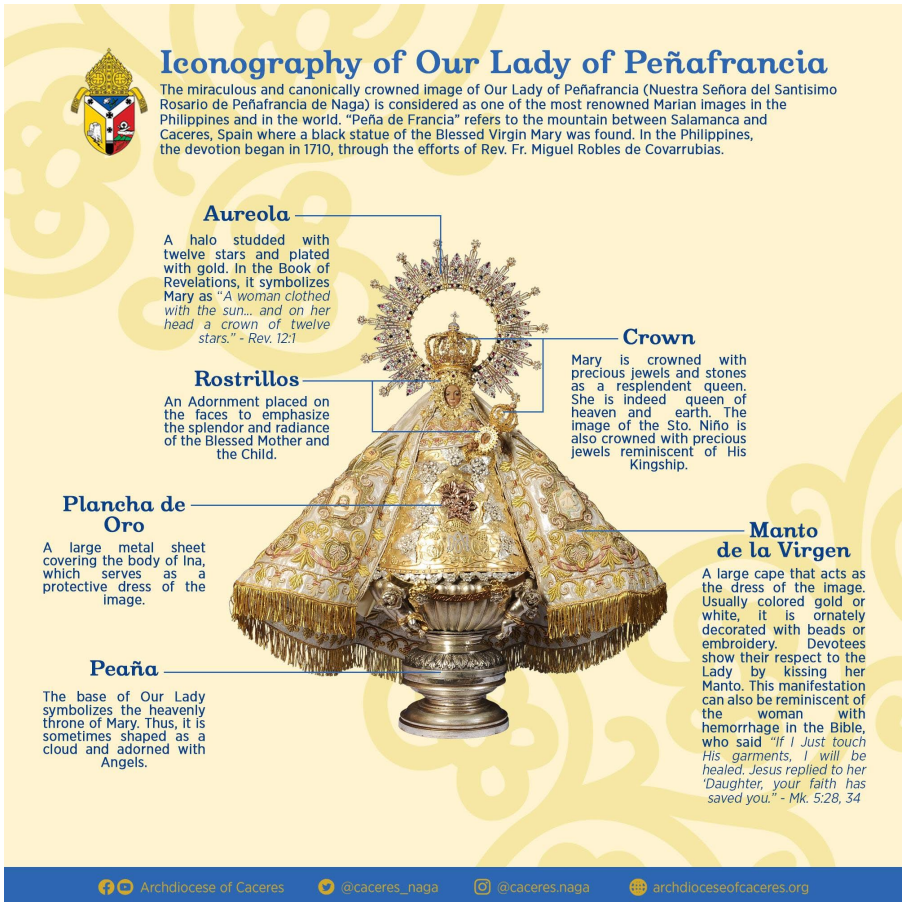
To explore the relationship between Bikol and Catholic devotion as a major part of their identity, I approached this project using an archaeological framework that posits the image of Peñafrancia both as an important religious being, and as a *santos* or portable material artifact. This makes Peñafrancia a Marian image observable as a form of iconography (see Peterson 2014) with recognizable and replicable features, much like the images and icons discussed in Chapter 2. As a religious artifact that exists in the physical world, Peñafrancia is also observable as an object of memory, a community heirloom, and an invaluable component of local religious practice (see Colwell-Chanthaphonh and de Salle-Essoo 2014; Fennell 2000; Lillios 1999). The materiality of Catholic devotion is one of its very distinct features; for example, the consecration of the Eucharist, the acknowledgement of relics, and the assortment of vessels and clothing used in mass (see Orsi 2016) make up some of the vast material culture used in Catholic rituals.

Archaeologists' interests in religion and sacred landscapes are contingent on interpretations of material culture and space. Using ethnographic interviews to supplement the limited surviving historical records available on the Peñafrancia devotion, this chapter presents the intersection of Peñafrancia and the Bikol region, with emphasis on the history of the image when it was first introduced to Bikolanos; the places identified as significant locations for the practice of the devotion; and the rituals and behaviors that these devotional places elicit from devotees. I discuss the contexts of the meaning and memory within each place, and how this reinforces the relationship between Bikol and Peñafrancia. The rituals that are observed within these places echo the negotiations between Bikolanos and the Spanish as unique facets of Bikolano Catholicism emerge as part of the Peñafrancia devotion.

4.1 Peñafrancia as an image

It is first important to know what she looks like and what her prominent features are. Our Lady of Peñafrancia of Bikol, Philippines is a figure distinct not just from other Marian images, but from other iterations of the Virgin Peñafrancia who originated in Salamanca, Spain. Aside from her formal titles, both the English *Our Lady of Peñafrancia* and the Spanish *Nuestra Senora de la Peñafrancia*, in Bikol she is commonly called *Ina* which translates to *Mother*, a term of endearment that illuminates the important role she plays not just to her child Jesus, but to her devotees as a mother figure. In this dissertation, I refer to her interchangeably at the Bikol Peñafrancia, Virgin Peñafrancia, and Ina.

The Bikol Peñafrancia (Figure 4-1) is a wooden statue approximately three feet high, usually wearing a gleaming yellow and gold *manto* that gives her body a triangular shape; "her body is her gown at one and the same time" (Gorospe 1994: 68). The *aureola* or halo of 12 stars increases her height to four feet. The infant Jesus is positioned on her left side as she is holding him; both of them have *rostrillos* or adornments placed around their faces, and they both wear gold crowns.



4- 1 Image descriptions of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. Source: Archdiocese of Caceres.

When I was in the Philippines, and I told people I do research in Bicol, I would often hear this in response: "That is a very religious place. They have a devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia that is *very* big." When I was finally in Naga, and I told people that I was planning to research said devotion, the words that almost always followed, in one way or another, were: "Have you seen the fiesta for Ina? You have to be here to experience it." And once I was at fiesta in Naga, and had already experienced the grandeur of the devotion, I would hear this: "You have to come *back* to experience it again."

The open invitation to join, to experience, and to repeat the ritual of fiesta and prayer keeps the devotion sustained. Tiatco and Bonifacio-Ramolete define *panata*, a Filipino concept,

as "a religious vow whereby the devotee promises to do a sacrifice for his faith in hopes of being rewarded by divine response to his prayers" (2008: 59). Tiatco and Bonifacio-Ramolete further postulate that *panata* is framed within the doctrines of the Catholic Church yet it has been modified by ordinary Filipinos to suit their own specific needs, therefore "indigenizing Catholicism." *Panata* is sometimes referring to rituals or sacrifice. The ritual of nailing oneself to the cross on Good Friday during Holy Week in Pampanga has been a point of interest in understanding *panata*, Philippine religion, and the power of ritual (see also Bautista 2019).

Panata can lead to a lifetime of *debosyon*, or devotion. It is prompted by a petition to the divine asking for assistance, and then followed by *utang na loob* and *biigat ng loob*, or "debt of gratitude to God...and a heavy heart" (Tiatco and Bonifacio-Ramolete 2008: 60). *Panata* is often inspired by health related requests, but it may be for any sort of intervention an individual seeks. For example, the Hinulid, or dead Christ, in Calabanga just 23 kilometers away from Naga, lies in a glass case filled with pens and notebooks for exams; devotees do this so the Hinulid can bless the materials they use and transfer the blessings and help directly to themselves. Likewise, the devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia is often prompted by a request for a miracle or an intervention, often for healing, safety, and wellness.

Panata is the gateway for more ritual, as it invites repetitiveness into one's devotion. Rappaport identifies this as a "sacred proposition" (1971: 29 as cited in Stone 1992: 111). Summarizing Kertzer's (1988) and Bloch's (1974) discussions on ritual, Stone posits that rituals are especially emotive and the reenactment of rituals in various forms of communication (like music and dance) discourages an intellectual analysis of the information they transmit, and therefore encourages one to participate without significant questioning. Ritual is guided by sacred propositions, and in turn ritual legitimizes the proposition (Stone 1992: 111).

The ritual of the September fiesta for Peñafrancia serves as a homecoming for devotees who return to Naga to honor Ina. The Bikol diaspora extends throughout the Philippines and also overseas, and while fiestas in the diaspora serve as a form of ritual, memory, and homemaking for immigrant Filipino communities (Tondo 2009), the most powerful ritual is found in returning to the site of the original devotion in Naga. Through the repeated use of sites within Naga, these sites maintain their status as important places for Bikol Catholics to fulfill their devotion.

Devotees who had experienced a miracle from Ina were not hesitant to share their personal stories, often unprompted. Prior to the start of Fluvial Procession in 2019, a devotee excitedly shared with me his witnessed account of a past Fluvial Procession when a woman was accidentally pushed onto the pagoda carrying Ina, where women are strictly forbidden from standing. When the pagoda began to sink, the woman, a police officer by his account, was understandably expelled from the pagoda which then miraculously stopped sinking. The devotee who shared this story was insistent on its truth as he was one of the men aboard the pagoda when this happened.

Similar accounts echoing of the same excitement and reverence are well documented in the book *Ina: Little Stories of Faith* (Rodriguez-fajardo 2010) which was published as part of the Tercentennial celebration for 300 years of Ina in Bikol. The book is composed of stories from devotees sharing the reasons for their devotion. Joseline Imperial-Intia described her devotion:

> "Devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia was one of the best things I learned from my mom. At a very early age, she would bring me to the old Peñafrancia Shrine to attend Holy mass every first Saturday. At first I didn't understand why we had to travel that far just for a Mass…At age 12, meningitis struck me. And I was cured of the illness. That was the time I began to realize how strong my mom's faith was and how INA answers

her prayers. My doctor…explained that I did not just survive the illness. He said it was a blessing…After that I was drawn to deeper intimacy with Our Lady…Though I can not always go home to join the fluvial procession and other festivities every September, I regularly pray the novena each year in gratitude to INA…I am confident that in the days and years to come, my own children will also have their own stories to share about how Our Lady of Peñafrancia their petitions" (Rodriguez-fajardo 2010: 63-64).

Carmen Villafuerte-Bernas similarly wrote of her request for Ina's intercession for her own health:

"It was the week before the feast day of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. Being a Bicolana from Naga City, it was even then my practice to go home for the fiesta every year, although I was not a fervent devotee. I decided to go home before checking into the hospital [for an atrophied kidney]...[my friend] encouraged me to join the penitential processions devoted to the Virgin. This is a procession solely of women who walk along the streets of Naga at 4:00 in the mornings of the Wednesday and Thursday before the Virgin's feast day which falls on a Saturday…On the first morning, I inched my way close to INA and clasping her, whispered my worry. 'Please,' I begged. 'Anything but an operation.' …[Three days after] There was no sign it was diseased and there was no risk it could affect my other body organs. I did not need an operation. I broke down in tears, but this time, I shed tears of gratitude. It was then that I dedicated myself to INA" (Rodriguez-fajardo 2010: 41).

Both women practice their devotion to Ina in similar ways – both are Bikolanas from Naga, both asked for Ina's intercession while they were experiencing sickness, and both

attributed their improved health to Ina. Interestingly, both women inherited the devotion as part of their Catholic practice because they grew up in Naga, but they deepened their devotion after their own personal experiences with Ina. The fulfillment of the request increased the repetitiveness of the ritual – praying the novena, returning to Naga for fiesta, walking in processions with Ina – and became a "story of faith" that could be shared with others to continue spreading devotion.

The feast day for Ina falls on the third Sunday in September. During this fiesta period, the image is carried in a procession through the streets of Naga during the nine-day novena that precedes her feast day. The processions draw thousands of devotees and Pilgrims to Naga for her annual journey from Basilica to Peñafrancia Shrine, then from the shrine to Cathedral, then back down to the Naga River, and finally up the river and back to Basilica. Even when the devotion is practiced outside of Naga – in other parishes, cities, or countries, or even remotely – the ritual aspects follow what is observed in the Naga fiesta; for example, the physicality of a procession from point A to point B, typically with the image upon a body of water.

4.1.1 Our Lady of Peñafrancia - Salamanca, Spain

The image is not to be confused with other Marian images or even other images of Our Lady of Peñafrancia. Gorospe (1994: 65-66) synthesizes the Spanish historical documents (including letters, correspondences, and official church documentations) that describe Peñafrancia's earliest origins, and the important person who uncovered them: In the fifteenth century, Simon Vela was a devout Catholic from Paris who frequently prayed to the Virgin Mary. While he slept, he heard a voice that instructed him to go to "Peña de Francia" (or the Rock of France) to look for an image who resembled the Virgin who spoke to him. He began a long journey to western France but was unsuccessful in finding the Virgin.

Several years passed when he heard a woman in the markets of Salamanca discussing a hard wood from Sierra de Francia. Simon went alone to the mountain and climbed for several days, struggling immensely. At last, the Virgin again appeared to him in a vision, holding the Child Jesus, and she instructed him toward a rock where he was to dig until he found her image. Simon returned with five men and on May 19, 1434 they found the image of the Virgin in the mountainous region between Spain and France. The assortment of artifacts they uncovered were allegedly buried there by Christians fleeing the Moors in the years prior. Upon the discovery by Simon, he and his helpers received "special graces" from the Virgin and were healed of their wounds and illnesses. The image they had found was named "Nuestra Señora de Peña de Francia."

A sanctuary was built on the hill and it became a site of pilgrimage run by the Dominicans. Despite the arduous and somewhat remote climb up the mountain to where the image rested, pilgrims were attracted by the stories of miracles, and they made the journey to be close to the "santisima imagen" ("most holy image") (Vizuete Mendoza 2013: 267-268). In those early centuries, the devotion to Nuestra Señora de la Peña de Francia was dependent on the miracles that first spread through word of mouth via pilgrims, and then by written word when they were collected, printed, and disseminated (Vizuete Mendoza 2013: 272).

Vizuete Mendoza describes "imágenes de culto" as old images in the Christian West venerated in destination sanctuaries; they are unique and immobile, lacking replicas outside their sanctuaries, and they dispense favors to pilgrims who journey to see them (2013: 265-266). The image of Peñafrancia in Salamanca is notably a black madonna. The Virgin is depicted with dark skin, and draping gold and white clothing. She carries the Child Jesus in her arms, who holds his right hand up with two fingers down. Both Child Jesus and the Virgin are crowned, yet only the

Virgin has a gold halo around the top of her head. Pilgrims who journeyed to Salamanca, Spain to visit the image experienced their own miracles and helped spread the story of the devotion. The site of the image is still present in Salamanca and remains an important place for pilgrimages to see Peñafrancia. The cult of Peñafrancia has since spread widely across the world throughout Spain, Portugal, Brazil, Mexico, among others, and of course, the Philippines.

4.1.2 Our Lady of Peñafrancia - Bikol, Philippines

The story of how Our Lady of Peñafrancia came to Bikol tells of the first miracle that brought the image to Bikolanos. Like the origin story in Salamanca Spain, a singular figure stands out as an important part of the story: Don Miguel Robles de Covarrubias was a seminarian in Cavite, Philippines. Born in the sixteenth century to Spanish parents, he prayed frequently to Our Lady of Peñafrancia. He had a picture of the Virgin from Spain that he turned to during his moments of frequent suffering and illness. He claimed the Virgin granted him "heavenly favors" and he described himself as a "miracle of her miracles" (Gorospe 1994: 67). He vowed to continue his devotion by establishing a chapel in her honor along the Pasig River. However, the bishop of Nueva Caceres, Mons. Andres de Gonzales, O.P. relocated Don Miguel to Nueva Caceres in Bikol, where he was soon ordained to priesthood and his dreams of a chapel on the Pasig River were no longer feasible.

Despite this, Don Miguel was able to fulfill his promise to Peñafrancia in a different way soon after arriving in Camarines Sur. Although the Diocese of Nueva Caceres had been in Camarines Sur since 1595, there were still several groups that had resisted conversion by retreating into the mountains to avoid *reduccion* policies. Bikolanos who had not converted to Catholicism were called *cimarrones* by the Spanish, which translates directly to "wild bulls." They were also considered *remontados* (from the translation "to climb again"), for having

retreated outside Nueva Caceres to evade the Spanish. According to stories, in 1710, the *cimarrones* now requested Don Miguel create a "visita" or a chapel for their use on the perimeter of the city (Gorospe 1994; Gerona 2010).

Don Miguel responded by happily building a shrine for Our Lady of Peñafrancia along the Naga River so that despite being two kilometers away from the town center, it was accessible to the Bikolanos who were to use it. To complete the shrine, which was likely a simple nipa hut, he ordered the construction of an image created in the likeness of the picture he had of Our Lady of Peñafrancia from Spain. The image was possibly created by a Chinese carpenter, who used dog's blood to color her face. The dog was then thrown into the river, presumed dead; however, in what is often considered the first miracle of the Bikol devotion, the dog instead swam to the riverbank and returned home.

Miracles and sightings of the Virgin Mary were already being recorded in Bikol before the miracle of Peñafrancia (Gerona 2010). Gerona describes Marian devotion in Bikol as "gentle and meek…but with an aura of majestic authority" (2010:14) in contrast to Jesus Christ, who was visibly "weak" in the various forms of infant Christ, suffering Christ, crucified Christ, and dead Christ (see Cannell 1995; 1999). For example, a sighting of the Virgin Mary in Bikol on January 4, 1641 begins with the eruption of a volcano known as Sumagang in the Rinconada area. Several days later, three men from a nearby Agta village witnessed a light, followed by the image of Virgin Mary and her son Jesus. The place became known as Inorogan, and the Virgin became Nuestra Senora de Angustia, for her sorrowful demeanor. The Agtas and the priest were unable to lift the image, but a Nabua woman named Maria Dia ascended the mountain, prayed to the image and promised to honor her every May 4, and she and her sisters were able to lift the image themselves. The descent down the mountain to the church of Iriga was followed by

thunder, lightning, and heavy rain, which was interpreted as disapproval, and the group proceeded to Nabua instead (Gerona 2010).

The simple and straightforward story of Don Miguel and the *cimarrones* implies that Ina's first Bikol devotees willingly converted in an almost serendipitous encounter. However, Fray Francisco Gainza, O.P., Bishop of Caceres in the nineteenth century, describes the Historical accounts of the early years of Catholicism in Bikol lean toward the observation that conversion was relatively quick. According to Gerona, Christianity in Bikol "took immediate root and hardly encountered any serious challenge, almost throughout the Spanish regime" (Gerona 2010: 10-11). He instead cites clashes amongst local church authorities as the main source of discord in Nueva Caceres, which has been the epicenter of Bikol Catholicism since its foundation in 1595.

Yet discord between Bikolanos and the Spanish was certainly present. In response to conquistadors, Bikolanos were described as "the most valiant and best armed men of all these islands…therefore, since all the people defended themselves, more have perished in that land than in any other yet conquered" (de Rada 1574: 286-287 as cited in Ragragio 2012: 28). An anonymous account further observed Bikolanos as "the most warlike and the most feared, as was shown by their resistance" (Anon. 1618: 95 as cited in Ragragio 28). However, other accounts observed Bikolanos as humble, modest, intelligent, vigorous, and industrious (Ragragio 2012: 29). Ragragio points out that there was a tendency for Bikolanos to be included in descriptions of other better documented groups in the Philippines such as the Visayans, who were nearby and have similar languages (2012: 27) in a practice that failed to acknowledge the diversity of peoples across the entire Bikol region.

Nueva Caceres was experiencing an economic lull during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: The galleon trade with China and New Spain was not increasing economic viability, especially for Bikolanos who were not permitted to participate in the exclusively Spanish trade. Local goods were not of particular interest for trade either, yet Bikolanos were expected to pay high tributes in the form of rice (Gerona 2010: 23, 25-27). In the early seventeenth century, large groups of *remontados* left the Franciscan missionaries to seek refuge in the mountains, resulting in *entradas* sent by local authorities to try and retrieve them. The Bishop of Caceres, Fray Anotonio de San Gregorio, estimated a thousand *remontados* lived near Mr. Isarog in 1656 (Gerona 2010: 32-33). Just a few decades later, Bishop Andrews Gonzales y Cano, O.P. (Bishop of Caceres from 1678-1709) was concerned the appropriation of colonial institutions would result in more "mass exodus" of Bikolanos to the mountains, where they would "live without regard for the laws of God" (Gerona 2010: 28-29). He also complained of the state of the Church in Bikol – the grass roof, the lack of material items such as ornaments and linens and oil lamps for the Blessed Sacrament.

Bishop Gonzalez took significant action to retrieve the *remontados* and complete the missionization process. He utilized the *entradas* and military force to pressure Bikolanos to yield to the Spanish. Bikolanos that yielded then entered negotiations with Franciscan missionaries to create settlements for their groups in exchange for Catholic conversion (Gerona 2010: 35-37). Gerona suggests that, as described by Bishop Gainza, the *cimarrones* who approached Don Miguel were seeking the protection of a new priest following the death of the previous priest who had originally relocated them to their community. By aligning themselves with the missionaries, Bikolanos were able to enter negotiations that benefited both sides: the Spanish

succeeded in converting “rogue” cimarrones, and Bikolanos were able to establish communities with land holdings nearer to important resources, like the Naga River.

4.2 Churches of the Peñafrancia Procession

Processions of are an important practice within Catholicism. The image of Ina was carried by Bikolanos in a procession since she first came to Bikol in the eighteenth century. The procession has changed significantly since those early days as the devotion has grown in size, the city has modernized, and Bikol Catholicism further developed into what it is today. Over the last 313 years of devotion, the importance of carrying Ina through Naga has not diminished. The repetition of this practice in Naga has created places of significance for the devotion in the city. In this section, I will discuss the three locations on the Naga landscape that are critical to the repetitive practice of the devotion and fiesta processions: Peñafrancia Shrine and Parish, Basilica Minore, and Naga Metropolitan Cathedral.

4.2.1 Peñafrancia Shrine and Parish

The origin stories of Peñafrancia root the image onto the landscape: first in Spain, where she is honored at a shrine that has become an important place of pilgrimage to those who devote themselves to her, and later in Bikol, one of several places where her image has journeyed to. When Don Miguel shared the story of Peñafrancia to Bikolanos, the events that followed (specifically the miracle of the dog and the Naga River) transformed the space of the miracle into a place where something extraordinary and powerful had occurred. By building the Peñafrancia Shrine, and holding a procession of the image to honor the miracle, both Don Miguel and the new Bikolano devotees validated the importance and intersection of the miracle and the place it had happened in. So long as the shrine was intact, and the image honored at this place, the story would persist and maintain its importance and value to Bikolanos who knew the story.

Peñafrancia Shrine has since been rebuilt and renovated, and it currently sits not too far from where it was allegedly first built next to the Naga River on Peñafrancia Avenue in Naga. The shrine functions as a regular Catholic parish, with additional features that highlight its importance for the Peñafrancia devotion. In front of the church is a large monument in the likeness of Don Miguel, with a plaque telling the brief story of how he brought Peñafrancia to Nueva Caceres. Inside the church behind the altar is an image of Our Lady of Peñafrancia behind a glass window. Devotees can access the image from a door behind the altar and there is a small window large enough to reach a hand inside to tough the image's manto. It is customary for devotees to touch their hand or a handkerchief to the image. Although most parish churches in Bikol have an image of Peñafrancia somewhere inside, only a few have one that is accessible this way.

4.2.2 Basilica Minore

Although Peñafrancia Shrine is the place where the devotion began in 1710, it is just one of three churches in Naga identified earlier in this chapter that are part of the major September processions. By the twentieth century, the number of devotees who came to the fiesta in Naga had outgrown Peñafrancia Shrine's capacity. To accommodate the influx of devotees, the archdiocese built the Minor Basilica of our Lady of Peñafrancia, or the Basilica Minore, on Balatas Road in Naga City. The construction had been in plans since the 1960s and was completed in 1982. The Basilica Minore is where the original image of Peñafrancia is enshrined – the first of Ina that was commissioned by Don Miguel in 1710. It was designed to house the image in a secure location and to accommodate the growing devotion in Naga for all pilgrims and devotees. The completion of the space was especially important following the theft of the image in 1981. Although the image was later returned in 1982, sans manto, grown, and other

adornments (as will be discussed more later in this chapter), the Archdiocese determined that the image must be protected and Basilica would be the safest place to accommodate those needs.

Basilica Minore is one kilometer from the Peñafrancia Shrine and Parish. During fiesta time, Balatas Road leading up to the basilica is lined with street vendors selling candles; of Ina, Santo Nino, and other saints; and a wide array of market goods such as clothes, toys, and other items. Additional store buildings sell and other religious items related to Our Lady of Peñafrancia around the perimeter of the property. A sprawling grassy square surrounds the covered pavilion with enough space to house several thousand people for outdoor mass. Speakers amplify the priest's voice as he presides over mass, echoing the liturgy and prayer across the wide pavilion. Inside, the Basilica itself can seat up to 1,500 people under the stained glass windows that depict the story of Bikol Peñafrancia.

On a regular weekday or Sunday mass day, patrons line up along the side of the church to enter the back area where, like at the Peñafrancia Shrine and Parish, they can have access to the image of Peñafrancia that sits behind the altar. However, unlike the Peñafrancia Shrine and Parish, at Basilica the space is large and spacious to accommodate a larger number of devotees at any one given time. There is even a large outdoor queue spanning several floors for devotees to wait in during fiesta times. The queue can accommodate hundreds of people at a time.

A devotee who enters the area behind the altar walks up a short flight of steps to find themselves directly behind the image and the altar. There is a small window large enough to reach a hand in to touch her manto with either their hand directly or with a handkerchief so as to bring her blessings with them when they leave. The devotee then walks down another short flight of stairs to enter the wider prayer space where there are large panels depicting prayers to Ina in both English and Bikol; kneelers to pray at; and a large life-size of Padre Pio with his hands

extended for devotees to place themselves under for his blessing. The paint on the hands is often chipped because of the high volume of devotees grasping them in prayer.

Until more recently, the image of Ina in the Basilica (like the image in Peñafrancia Shrine and Parish) was a replica of the original Peñafrancia created in 1710. The original image was housed in a private chapel behind the Basilica, and one could only view her with special access from the Archdiocese. The small chapel was locked and guarded, with several seats and kneelers to accommodate a small group of devotees. The room was quiet and silence was observed. The image was protected in a large glass case built into the wall, much like the replicas in the other parishes, with a small access window on her left side for devotees to reach inside and touch her. She was dressed in all yellow and gold, flanked by a small framed photo of Divino Rostro on her left, and a small crucifix on her right. Notably different from replicas in her image that are more commonly seen, she had a large white dove above her crown, and both she and the infant Jesus were wearing multiple rosary beads around their necks.

All of these are considered past tense; during the recent COVID-19 pandemic, the director of the Basilica made the decision to bring the original 1710 image of Peñafrancia out of the private chapel and into the Basilica itself behind the altar, so that the people of Naga could be closer to their beloved Ina during the difficult time. To maintain security and to adhere to government regulations on safe contact, in the devotion space behind the altars, the small access window is no longer open to physical contact. Despite this, for the first time in several decades, the original 1710 image is visible to devotees in a common space.

The Basilica Minore's location on the Naga landscape is relatively new compared to the Peñafrancia Shrine and Parish which is rooted in over 300 years of local history. However, the creation and maintenance of Basilica Minore exemplifies contemporary place making for the

Devotion. Basilica exemplifies the devotion's strength and size – the number of devotees who came to Naga to participate in the fiesta for Our Lady of Peñafrancia exceeded the space available at Peñafrancia Shrine, and Basilica was built with these large numbers in mind to more safely accommodate them. Bikolanos sought to create a place that is essentially an extension of the Peñafrancia Shrine in that it is imbued with importance (it houses the 1710 image of Ina); is continuously filled with meaning as more and more fiestas are celebrated there each year; and serves as a place for Bikolanos identity to be practiced and maintained.

Basilica is the location where Ina begins her annual journey during fiesta through Naga on the street, and it is where she ends her journey after the fluvial procession along the Naga River. It is directly across the street from the river for easy access, and only one kilometer away from Peñafrancia Shrine, her second location. Basilica is an important part of Ina's journey because Bikolanos made it that way and created it for that purpose.

4.2.3 Naga Metropolitan Cathedral

The Naga Metropolitan Cathedral, also known as Saint John the Evangelist Cathedral Parish but more often referred to just as Cathedral, is located on Elias Angeles Street in Naga adjacent to the Holy Rosary Minor Seminary, and across the street from the Archbishop's Residence. It is 1.2 kilometers away from Peñafrancia Shrine and Parish via Peñafrancia Avenue. The original Cathedral was established at the same time as the Diocese of Caceres in 1595, but was destroyed by a fire in 1768. It was rebuilt but damaged multiple times by earthquakes and typhoons.

During fiesta time, Cathedral (Figure 4-2) becomes the main hub for fiesta activity. It is the third location that the image of Ina travels to after Basilica and Peñafrancia Shrine, and there

are no major processions (other than the Dawn Processions at 3:00AM) until one week later. In the interim, the novena masses are celebrated at Cathedral.

4- 2 Naga Metropolitan Cathedral and Quadricentennial Arch, September 14, 2019. Photo by: Phillip Mari Figura. Edit: Charlene Bellen. Source: Archdiocese of Caceres.

Elias Angeles Street leading into Cathedral is filled with vendors, much like Balatas Road leading up to Basilica. The large sprawling property in front of the Cathedral is teeming with people – devotees, pilgrims, vendors, tourists, and members of the clergy. A long line of devotees wraps around the church, all waiting to visit an image of Ina that is available for access during fiesta time.

Like both Peñafrancia Shrine and Basilica, the Naga Metropolitan Cathedral is an important place in the Catholic landscape because of its historic value and its designation as a place for the Peñafrancia devotion. Although it is not the oldest church in the region (it is second to San Francisco Church just down the road, established by the Franciscans) it was established in

the sixteenth century by the Augustininans, who controlled much of the diocese. It completes the trio of places on the Catholic landscape that are important to the devotion. It has been an important site in the history of the Archdiocese which predates the introduction of the Peñafrancia devotion by over 100 years. It is adjacent to the Holy Rosary Minor Seminary, where the Union of Bicol Clergy is held during the fiesta. It is directly next to the Archbishop's Residence, where the archbishop and his secretariat live and conduct church business such as confirmations and baptisms.

4.3 Large-scale devotion: the public

Devotees to Ina seeking to fulfill their devotion can do so in multiple ways – praying the novena, dedicating rosary prayers to Ina, visiting Ina in local churches during the year, but pilgrimage to Naga is considered the highest form of devotion. Naga was declared the Pilgrim City of Naga (Figure 4-3, 4-4) by the Philippine government through Proclamation No. 33, September 10, 2010. The proclamation described Naga as such:

> [The] Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is the only regional feast in the country and, for the past three (3) centuries, has become an epic historical event that has become part of our cultural heritage. Beginning every September of every year until mid-October, the City of Naga and the Province of Camarines Sur welcome millions of pilgrims from different parts of the country and the world who participate in the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia…the City of Naga, the Heart of Bicol, where the 300-year old image is enshrined, has long been recognized and considered as the pilgrimage capital of the Bicol region" (Proclamation No. 33).

MALACAÑAN PALACE
MANILA

BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES

PROCLAMATION NO. 33

DECLARING THE CITY OF NAGA AND THE PROVINCE OF CAMARINES SUR AS PILGRIMAGE CAPITALS OF THE BICOL REGION AND RECOGNIZED TOP TOURIST DESTINATIONS OF THE PHILIPPINES

WHEREAS, Section 15, Article 14 of the 1987 Constitution declares that the State shall conserve, promote, and popularize the nation's historical and cultural heritage;

WHEREAS, the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia is the only regional feast in the country and, for the past three (3) centuries, has become an epic historical event that has become part of our cultural heritage. Beginning every September of every year until mid-October, the City of Naga and the Province of Camarines Sur welcome millions of pilgrims from different parts of the country and the world who participate in the celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia;

WHEREAS, the City of Naga, the Heart of Bicol, where the 300-year old image is enshrined, has long been recognized and considered as the pilgrimage capital of the Bicol region;

WHEREAS, the State, pursuant to the Philippine Constitution and recognizing its duties and responsibilities, as expressly prescribed in Section 15, Article 14 thereof, and cognizant of the contributions of the Peñafrancia festivities to the local economy, regardless of religion, promotes peace and order, provide and environment conducive tourism, a venue for appreciation of Bicol arts and culture, its indigenous and culinary arts, natural wonders and archaeological treasures.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, BENIGNO S. AQUINO III, President of the Republic of the Philippines, by virtue of the powers vested in me by law, do hereby declare and proclaim the City of Naga and the Province of Camarines Sur as pilgrimage capitals of the Bicol region and recognized top tourist destinations of the Philippines.

The programs and activities instituted during the Peñafrancia Festival must be conducted in an atmosphere of peace and order that must be assisted and maintained by the government, and that the solemnity and sensitivity of the nature and character of the festivities must be preserved. Towards this end, the government shall ensure that the conduct of the observances essential to the feast, which include but are not limited to the *Traslacion*, the Fluvial and Dawn Processions and other cultural and historical remembrance activities, shall be respected, and that commercial exploitation during the pilgrimage period such as street parties that may become rambunctious, drinking sprees in plazas, street vending that obstruct passages towards the pilgrimage sites, and other similar activities, shall be discouraged. Accordingly, the local government units within the area are thereby enjoined to ensure that the nature and character of the Peñafrancia Festival shall not be unduly breached and that such commercial undertakings shall not be conducted in public places so as not to disturb and disrupt the activities, but shall be confined to enclosed places such as in malls, supermarkets, hotels, restaurants, theatres, assembly halls and the like.

Consistent with the foregoing premises, and in recognition of the Feast of Our Lady of Peñafrancia to the local economy and to our nation's cultural heritage, the government agencies in the City of Naga, in the Province of Camarines Sur and in the Bicol Region such as the Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Tourism, Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, Department of Agriculture, and the Department of Labor and Employment, among others, in partnership with the Archdiocese of Caceres, shall put together their technical and financial resources and participate in the conduct of trade fairs, job fairs, skills training and seminars on agriculture, aquaculture and crafts during the months of September and October, and the Philippine National Police is hereby mandated to provide security assistance to the pilgrims and maintain peace and order during the period of celebrations and festivities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Republic of the Philippines to be affixed.

DONE in the City of Manila, this 10th day of September, in the year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Ten.

By the President:

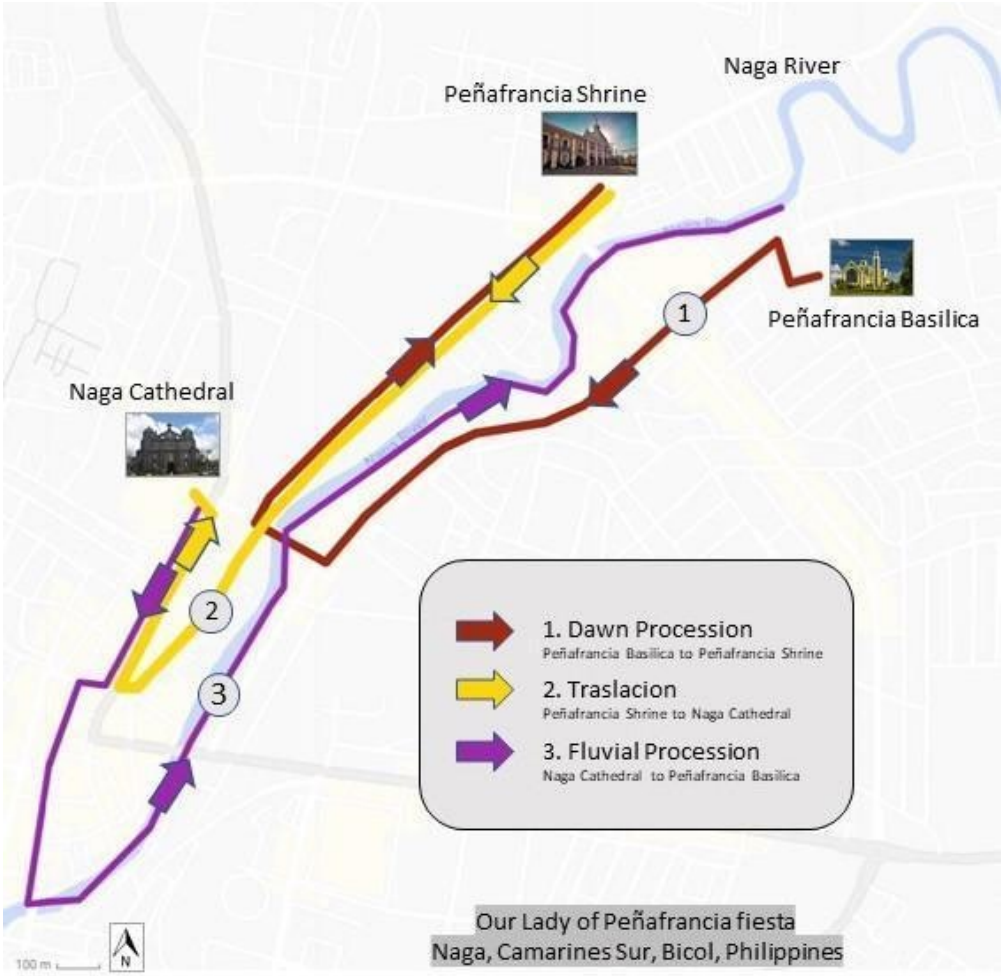
PAQUITO N. OCHOA, JR.
Executive Secretary

4- 3 Proclamation No. 33. Source: https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2010/09/10/proclamation-no-33-s-2010/

4- 4 Pilgrim City of Naga sign in Naga City. Source: Naga City Deck Facebook. September 27, 2019.

The first procession for the devotion occurred in 1710, when Don Miguel first introduced Our Lady of Peñafrancia to Bikolanos. The original shrine was likely built on the Naga River, just nearby to where the current Peñafrancia Shrine is located in Naga City, less than three kilometers from Catedral. The story of the dog whose blood was used for the face of the Virgin Peñafrancia, and its survival in the Naga River, solidified the devotion as the stuff of miracles, and it firmly tied the devotion to the Naga landscape. The Bikol River Basin is characterized by the Bikol River, the eighth largest river in the Philippines, which cuts across Camarines Sur and diverts into the Naga River.

The procession of Our Lady of Peñafrancia around Naga City is not the foundation of the devotion; rather, it is an expression of love and devotion, and a space for devotees to fulfill their promises to Ina. Processions signify the beginning and end of the novena. Each procession begins and ends with a celebration of mass. The journey through Naga marks important spots on the landscape that are part of the historical and ongoing celebration of the devotion (Figure 4-4). Processions also invite devotees to see Ina, to be close to her, to express their love and devotion, to reinforce or fulfill their panata. There are many notable qualities about the processions themselves, but they are all contextualized and draw their meaning from the places they connect together.



4- 5 Map of Naga City. Highlighted paths indicate procession routes.

There are many different processions of the image of Ina celebrated preceding and during fiesta time, but in this section I will focus on the largest, most visible, and most publicly attended processions in Naga. These are the Dawn Processions, first Traslacion, second Traslacion, and Fluvial Procession. 2019 was the last public fiesta processions before COVID-19 regulations. During 2020 and 2021, the public fiesta was not held and the Archdiocese relied on virtual live streaming of clergy-only events via their official Facebook page. The fiesta resumed for in-person celebration in 2022 as COVID-19 restriction in the Philippines began to be lifted.

In September, in preparation for the influx of tourists, pilgrims, and devotees, Naga transforms into a “fiesta” city. The streets are filled with colorful yellow, white, and blue flags (*banderitas*), and posters/advertisements with the image of the Virgin Peñafrancia hang on building fronts. Hotel bookings fill up, many of them doubling their prices, and the rooms with the best views of the fiesta streets and the river are reserved months in advance. The sounds of devotees singing the "Himno a la Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia" or "Resuene Vibrante" as Bikolanos call it fills the air as parishes host *pagsungko*, when the image moves throughout the city small local processions to visit other parishes in preparation for the feast day.

As mentioned earlier in this project, the fiesta for Our Lady of Peñafrancia begins with a nine-day novena leading up to the feast day which falls on the third Sunday in September. The fiesta was previously celebrated in July but moved to September in the twentieth century. The fiesta for Ina immediately follows the novena and celebration for Divino Rostro, a painting of Veronica holding the cloth with Jesus’s face on it. Divino Rostro has been honored and venerated in Naga since the cholera epidemic in 1882 (and will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter). The procession for Ina during the fiesta is always preceded by Divino Rostro.

4.3.1 Dawn Procession

Dawn Procession at 4:00AM is the first leg of Ina’s journey through Naga. The streets are closed, but teeming with people heading toward the Basilica for the first mass of the fiesta. This is when Ina’s new manto, crown, and aureola for the fiesta are unveiled publicly. When mass is complete, the icon of Divino Rostro is placed upon the andas, and Ina is placed on her andas behind them. Members of the Cofradia de San Jose are present; the Cofradia is an elite organization of men who are devoted to Ina and designated to facilitating the event alongside the clergy, police, and military. This organization emerged out of the Tricentinary initiatives in

2010. They take care of Ina's mobility on the andas in the street and on her boat on the river. The Cofradia climbs atop the andas to catch handkerchiefs that devotees throw to Ina; they touch the handkerchiefs to her manto and throw them back to the devotees.

4- 6 The image of Ina departing Basilica at the Dawn Procession, view from the entrance. September 13, 2019.

4- 7 Dawn Procession, view from behind Ina as she is carried through the streets of Naga. September 13, 2019.

Ina and her devotees move through the streets in what is described by the church as a "penitential" procession (Figures 4-5 and 4-6). The crowd is large but devotees move together at a slow and steady pace. A band plays Himno A Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia as the crowd makes its way down Balatas Road. Devotees sing along or pray the rosary. Some walk barefoot as part of their devotion. As the procession approaches Peñafrancia Shrine, the number of participants grows. The crowd becomes dense as they enter the church plaza where more devotees, clergy, and vendors await them. The music intensifies as multiple speakers and musicians play at once and calls of "Viva la Virgen!" ring out – devotees respond by shouting, "Viva!" Devotees for outdoor mass around 5:00 AM in the plaza given by the Archbishop of Caceres. At the conclusion of mass, "Viva la Virgen!" rings out again, and devotees approach the altar to be near to Ina. The Cofradia is accommodating during this time, looking for openings to let people close (Figures 4-7. It is an ideal time for women, children, and the elderly to approach the image. In 2019, I observed that once the crowd had dissipated, the image sat available on the

altar for anyone to still approach as desired. In 2022, devotees were not permitted to approach the image so directly, and both Ina and the Divino Rostro were led away immediately as part of COVID-19 safety precautions.

4- 8 Image of Ina following morning mass after Dawn Procession. September 13, 2019.

Recalling Carmen Villafuerte-Bernas's retelling of her devotion from *Ina: Little Stories of Faith* earlier in this chapter, Carmen attended the additional Dawn Processions held during the novena which are exclusively for women. These women-led processions for Ina are also held during the month of May in Naga. The penitential aspect of the Dawn Processions allows for the ritual of procession and prayer to be conducted without the louder aspects of fiesta, such as excessive shouting and alcohol consumption, which are experienced during the daytime Traslacion processions.

This was a sentiment that I observed a somewhat subtle shift from 2019 to 2022 – the importance of penitential prayer during fiesta. In 2019, my comments calling Traslacion "rowdy" in comparison to the Dawn Procession was met with some resistance by the priests I spoke with. "Rowdy" perhaps implied a lack of control by the Church, and their response to me was to be mildly defensive of the intense behaviors witnessed during Traslacion – mildly defensive, but not necessarily supportive. In 2022, following the absence of fiesta for two years due to the COVID-

19 pandemic (as will be discussed further later in this chapter), priests were significantly more vocal about their preference for a more temperate observation of fiesta similar to what is experienced at the Dawn Processions. Their sentiments were supported more fully by the Church at this time, who had spent the last two years promoting a penitential, intimate fiesta in lieu of the public processions.

However, the differences between the Dawn Processions and the Traslacion of the image are emblematic of the importance of temporality for places. The public streets at 4:00AM are extremely different from how they are experienced at 12PM the same day. The shift of time allows the city to dually display two very different types of Catholic ritual devotion for the public.

4.3.2 Traslacion

Later that same day in the afternoon, Ina and the Divino Rostro begin their journey from Peñafrancia Parish to Naga Metropolitan Cathedral around 12:00 PM via the streets in a procession called Traslacion, or the transfer of the image from one site to another. This is the first of two Traslacions; the second is when Ina and Divino Rostro depart Cathedral back to Basilica first via the street, and then via the Naga River in the Fluvial Procession. More roads close off access for cars to make way for devotees, military, police, Cofradia. The city shuts off cell service as an added security measure.

Unlike the Dawn Procession, the energy of Traslacion is especially heightened. The images are preceded by parades of local and visiting organizations and bands. Thousands of devotees fill the streets to watch the image of Ina make her annual journey from Peñafrancia Parish to the Cathedral, but the highest concentration of devotees can always be found directly around the images themselves. The surge of devotees is what pushes the andas forward down the

street – it is not mechanized, and it relies on devotees to propel it forward as directed by the priests who ride atop it (Figure 4-8).

A new group of devotees is particularly visible during this procession – the voyadores. Voyadores are men or "voyagers" who are devotees to Ina and use Traslacion to get as close to the image as possible, as part of their devotion and promise to her. The surge of voyadores streaming toward the image, plus the barricade of military and Cofradia, turn the crowd into a massive entity that pushes the image forward.

As each image passes, shouting increases as the various groups communicate with one another and the sense of excitement amongst everyone heightens. The air is filled with the smell of alcohol – a key feature of the voyadores is their consumption of alcohol, which is described as an "anesthesia" for the intensity each man experiences as he makes his way through the crowd to be near Ina. Being a voyadores is not for the faint of heart, but it is the strength of one's devotion to Ina that motivates him to try. For some, it is a dream to attempt this, driven by the prayers and blessings they seek from Ina.

Once both Ina and Divino Rostro finally arrive at Cathedral, another outdoor mass is celebrated. The streets are packed with attendants, and sitting access requires a ticket. The crowd is at its largest there; once the image has passed a location along her path, devotees follow her to the Cathedral to hear the Archbishop give mass again. Women are unable to gain direct access to the image during Traslacion – the Cofradia, military, and voyadores do not permit women to attempt to enter the moving mass of people. They would immediately be pushed away.

4- 9 Ina in the street during the Traslacion in Naga. September 13, 2019.

The second Traslacion takes place at the end of the novena, nine days later on the Saturday before the feast day for Peñafrancia. It is much like the first Traslacion – surges of the crowd, packed streets, parades preceding the images. The image of Ina and Divino Rostro are led back down Elias Angeles Street in the opposite direction toward Danlugan, which is the original site of the Cathedral.

4.3.3 Fluvial Procession

Here, Ina boards her pagoda, the boat she will ride with the Divino Rostro and up to 300 men, including the Archbishop, other clergy, the Cofradia, and invited participants. The Fluvial Procession is the climax of the fiesta (Figure 4-9). After months of preparation, negotiations between the local government and the Archdiocese, novena masses, parades and processions, devotees surge toward the Naga River to witness Ina make her final journey down the Naga River, back to Basilica, where she will be enshrined until the following year.

Like the *andas* at Traslacion, the pagoda is not powered by a motor. Instead, it is attached to ropes pulled by small boats, called baroto, paddled manually by the Cofradia. It is considered an honor and a feat to do so, powered by one's intentional devotion to Ina, to exert his body to carry her image through her city.

Devotees fill all empty spaces available on the Naga River to wave their handkerchiefs at Ina as she passes them. Ina makes her way down the river back to Basilica, where thousands of devotees are waiting for her to make her homecoming and to hear mass again upon her arrival. Because space on the pagoda is limited, and the pagoda moves much faster than the *andas* without crowds to slow them down, the Fluvial Procession is much quicker than Traslacion. The Naga government also places restrictions on how many private boats can be on the river during Fluvial Procession.

4- 10 Ina on her pagoda on the Naga River during Fluvial Procession. September 2022.

4.3.4 Summary

The route of Our Lady of Peñafrancia during the fiesta reflects the history of both the city and the devotion, and how they grew with each other. Basilica, the first location, was

intentionally selected for its proximity to the river, and for its intended use as a space large enough for the thousands of annual devotees and secure enough for the original image. Its repetitive and intentional use reinforces its value to the devotion as a place for devotion, and all things "officially" Peñafrancia for all days of the year.

Peñafrancia Shrine and Parish, the second location, reinforces the history of the devotion. Its closeness to the river and the original site of the miracle reinforces the start of the devotion to Peñafrancia in Bikol in 1710. It is a site full of memory, history, and religious power, much like the Naga River itself.

Cathedral as the third location reinforces the power of the Archdiocese of Caceres.

As one of the earliest dioceses in the Philippines originating in the sixteenth century, its role in converting many Bikolanos was instrumental in shaping the region. As demonstrated by Gerona (2010), the success of the diocese and later archdiocese was dependent on the reigning bishops who sought to reinvigorate Catholicism in the region by building and renovating churches, advocating for locals, and modernizing the devotion. For example, Archbishop Leonardo Legazpi, OP, DD made significant efforts during the Tercentenary, the 300 year celebration of the devotion in 2010, to bring the devotion back to its penitential and prayerful purpose. This included negotiating with the Naga City Local Government Unit to remove or change fiesta events to not distract devotees from the veneration of Ina. For example, the Miss Peñafrancia Pageant was altered to Miss Bicolandia so as to not associate women and their bodies in revealing clothing with the devotion to Peñafrancia. These events were also moved to be outside the fiesta days. The use of Danlugan, the original site of Cathedral, as the launching spot for the pagoda also reinforces Cathedral and the Archdiocese's power in the devotion.

The Fluvial Procession on the Naga River also recalls the story of the first miracle, when the dog came to life in its waters and swam ashore after having its blood used to on the first Bikol image of Ina. Water is an essential part of the devotion. Rain during the novena is considered positive and necessary, as the river needs to swell in order to accommodate the pagoda – although devotees will note that while it rains during the procession, it does not rain on Ina herself. Devotees have been observed wading in the water when Ina is on her pagoda, even drinking the water, to be closer to her.

These locations function as "place-worlds," or locations where the past is brought into being (Basso 1996: 5-6). Places are dynamic; they lead to inward thoughts of self, memories, other people, and a network of associations (Basso 1996: 107). The annual Peñafrancia processions provide devotees with places that they themselves have built and sustained over the last three centuries, where they express their devotion and love to Ina among their community. Although these places are built into the landscape and exist every day of the year, during processions, they imbibe additional meaning as devotees put their bodies into motion: walking the processions with the image, praying the rosary, singing the fiesta songs, wearing fiesta accessories, calling out chants to Ina.

The fervor with which devotees greet the image during the fiesta sometimes contradict Church-prescribed behaviors. The consumption of alcohol in particular is discouraged by both the government and the Church, but government restrictions on the sale of liquor during fiesta time does little to slow it down. Voyadores, the men who consume alcohol and approach the image during Traslacion, quote their love for Ina as the driving force behind their actions, and their belief that closeness to her will either answer their prayer requests or repay the blessings she has already bestowed upon them. Inebriation by alcohol has long been acknowledged as a

way for individuals to enter an altered state of consciousness in religious ritual (see Dietler 2006) which is likely what enables the voyadores to heighten their emotions for motivation to participate.

The importance of water and this focus on waterways is one that can be traced to the pre-Spanish period. When the Spanish arrived in Bikol in the sixteenth century, they observed that the region was "a large and thickly populated river called Bico" (Anon. 1572: 171 as cited in Ragragio 2012: 114) inhabited by "excellent husbandmen [who had] considerable rice" (Anon. 1586: 386 as cited in Ragragio 2012: 114). Waterways were important features on the landscape (Ragragio 2012); whether it be seas, rivers, or streams, settlements appeared primarily alongside these prominent waterscapes (Scott 1995: 5). The environment provided productive agricultural land, rich marine resources, local sources for precious metals, and an extensive system for boat travel which facilitated inter-polity trade and interaction. Ethnographic and archaeological evidences suggest that Bikolanos relied on riverine travel over land travel (Ragragio 2012: 113), as river systems connected many different settlements together. Some sites near the water, like Bagumbayan in Masbate, were occupied by Bikolanos for at least three different periods over a span of 5,000 years (Ragragio 2012: 107-108), emphasizing how important water systems were for deep Bikol history.

The processions are wide-scale events of varying energies (penitential versus celebratory) that are immensely public. Processions as rituals recall the history of Naga as a Catholic city, reminding participants of its days as an early diocese whose size and strength was increased by the devotion to Ina that invited pilgrims for participation. The procession routes maintain the sites of memory within the city that describe its history and development, ensuring that Peñafrancia Shrine and Basilica will always be remembered and identified as places for devotion

to Ina; Cathedral will always be the center of activity for the Archdiocese; and the Naga River will be honored as the entity that carries Ina home each year. The persistent use of these sites gives the processions and the fiesta a story-telling capability so that the history of Naga as a place is retold each time fiesta is celebrated and each time Ina is carried through the city in any type of procession.

4.4 Small-scale devotion: the personal

Churches – the building itself, the plaza surrounding it, and the other associated church buildings nearby – are fixed places upon the landscape. The Peñafrancia processions link Basilica, Peñafrancia Parish, and the Cathedral together so that their cohesive histories are woven in ways that illuminate their importance to devotees. Their values and meaning are maintained by the figures that come to them, including the image itself, as well as her devotees. However, a much smaller place can become part of the devotion based on its proximity to the image as it moves in and out of these spaces.

The fiesta processions all bring the image of Ina into the public spaces of Naga to invite devotees toward her, where they can practice their devotion. As previously discussed in this dissertation, religious images and the artifacts they are in close contact with or touch are embodiments of saintly presence. This understanding of the power of objects, the devotion and panata that drive one to them, rationalizes the thousands of pilgrims and devotees that come to Naga each year despite the crowds and the financial burden it may place on some people. The other communal aspects of fiesta such as food, the sale of goods, the parades, are all secondary things that drive people to a singular place at a particular time.

Catholicism has a particular physicality; the consecration of the Eucharist, the use of water, oil, and incense, and the many other objects, dress, and color used during mass create a

wide range of material culture that are used to bring the spiritual world into the physical one. These artifacts and the rituals that surround them impart meaning onto the locations where they are practiced, turning churches into places where Catholic identity is attached. The Church, of course, sanctions and legitimizes the use of these artifacts by the appropriate individuals.

Hooper (2014) defines "image/relics" as "images or objects that are equivalent to, and/or substitutes for, the body of a special personage" (Hooper 2014: 194). Images are often considered not as substitutes, but as the personage represented, as well as a "material embodiment of them" (Hooper 2014: 198). Following John Mitchell's assessment of Catholic images in Malta, he describes saintly statues as "substantial embodiments of saintly presence, which are both conduits of spiritual power and agents of such power in and of themselves" (Mitchell 2010: 275 as cited in Hooper 2014: 198). Hooper's broader assessment of relics also identifies a type of relic called "contact relics/touch relics" that have come into contact or close proximity to another relic (2014: 194). Hooper's assessment importantly raises the notion that images, like Our Lady of Peñafrancia, are *both* persons and objects, and are treated as such a duality. Much like a body relic/corporeal relic (another type of relic Hooper identifies), which can include body remains such as bones, blood, or hair, these artifacts are attributed with significant powers, qualities, and high status that alter behavior patterns toward them, induce veneration and respect, and lead to dedicated journeys and altered medical, psychological, and emotional states. And, like body relics, image relics can also generate additional contact relics when they are in proximity to other objects and persons.

This closeness and proximity and very "corporeal" nature is encouraged in Catholicism; for example, religious relics such as the Shroud of Turin and the Crown of Thorns are legitimized by the Catholic Church as authentic relics, making their ownership or proximity a

powerful driving force for pilgrimage and replication of more contact relics that imbibe the powerful qualities that are embedded in the relics and images themselves. The draw to be near to an image, to be near its power and its ability for generating miracles, creates the practice of pilgrimages which implore believers to travel long distances to have the chance to potentially witness and experience the miracles associated with the image or relic.

The Catholic Church restricts the sales of relics. Even regular Catholic artifacts, like crosses, , or holy water, are usually not permitted for sale if they have already been blessed by a priest. However, the sale of a replica of an acknowledged image is permitted, and so owning a is common practice in the Philippines and other Catholic-practicing communities.

As such, one would assume that the image of Ina used in fiesta processions is the original created in the eighteenth century that devotees seek proximity to; however, since the 1980s, the original image has not been used during fiesta. This was done following the theft of the image in 1981; when she was finally returned in 1982, she was missing her crown, jewels, and *manto*, and so to protect her from both future theft and also potential damage during the intensity of Traslacion, she was relegated to her private chapel at Basilica. This is of course where she stayed for almost 30 years until the COVID-19 pandemic and she was moved into Basilica.

In the original image's place, a particular replica of the image is used that has since grown its own distinct importance and value different from other replicas and of Ina. I refer to this image as the Archbishop's image of Ina, because during the rest of the year, she lives in the Archbishop's palace, visible to the Archbishop, his staff, and his guests all year round (Figure 4-10). This image attracts thousands of people to her base, is dressed and prepared reverently for processions, and is likely the singularly most photographed and viewed replica of the image.

4- 11 The Archbishop's image of Ina, in the Archbishop's Residence. 2019.

At its core, the devotion is a spiritual one for a mother figure, the Blessed Virgin Mary. But in the same way that one may be devoted to Mary but choose Bikol Peñafrancia over Salamanca Peñafrancia or Our Lady of the Holy Rosary over Our Lady of Perpetual Sorrow,

devotees have their preferences for which images they choose to devote their time and prayers to. Time also adds value and power to the devotion. If a devotee attends the Dawn Procession, it is the Archbishop's image, that he may approach and be near for his panata and devotion after the mass that follows the procession. The calm and penitential nature of the event ensure that he may approach, and the Cofradia even assist him. However, if a devotee attempts to approach the image later that day during Traslacion, he *must* take on the role of a voyadores – barefeet, intoxicated with alcohol, and prepared to join the masses of other voyadores all with the same goal as he.

Taking on the role of voyadores is not an easy one. A Bikolano who participates in Traslacion as a voyadores each year shared his panata and devotion with him. He described Traslacion as something that interested him since high school, but he considered himself too small and afraid to join. It was not until adulthood, when the father was ill, that he was fortified with enough courage to join Traslacion as part of his prayers to Ina to heal his father. He said:

> "During that time, I think it was already August or July like this, I'm very eager now for the Traslacion because I will use that as my devotion. It was 2011…I forced myself even to touch the [*andas*]...just my goal. I got myself drunk, and drunk, and drunk. You know what I feel after that? I forced myself, I used all my force to get inside…in Bicol, in Tagalog: *Pwede ang? Pwede ang?* Although you see the people inside, they are noisy, you think they are mad…because they are shouting, but they are very nice inside…It's just the energy. Even if you want to, for example, you are in the middle, and you want to go outside… *Labas ako! Labas ako!* And they are shouting…they will help you, because it's also difficult to exit because the people are coming in, but, when you shout, *Labas! No more energy, no more energy*…And also,

> once you get into the middle of the people, you are going to shout: *Viva la Virgen!* And they will respond. That's the, when I get inside, when I was in the middle, I feel…happiness…I just touched the [andas] because, Ina is, like, in the…but there are a lot of people in, *matigas na ulo* [climbing the head]...But I promised, you see? It was 2011, 2012. Papa, according to doctors, only 3-4 months he would live…I feel the miracle. I feel the happiness in the middle of the people, that I think my prayers are answered…[he lived another 6-7 years]…and that's why that becomes my yearly devotion, even if he's no longer here, I keep doing it. Even if my job doesn't let me take leave, so I take absence to join."

When asked why he does not fulfill his devotion in easier ways, such as the Dawn Procession when it is much simpler and safer to get close to the image, he insisted it just was not the same as Traslacion. This is a sentiment that is both echoed and contradicted in the same breath, particularly by local priests. The devotion is meant to be penitential and prayerful – but fiesta is also meant to be experienced and witnessed so one may know the depths of Bikol's devotion. Yet there are limitations to how one may participate – Traslacion is for voyadores only. Fluvial procession is for men only. And then to even be in Naga during fiesta time is a privilege for those who live there or can travel, who are not restricted by health or duty, and who have the energy or money to afford watching the fiesta from a decent vantage point.

In many ways, the modernization of the devotion has sought to expand Ina's reach in Bikol and beyond, and to increase accessibility so that there are a multitude of options for penitential participation. Archbishop Leonardo Zamora Legaspi, O.P. was Archbishop of Caceres from 1983-2012. During his time as Archbishop, he spearheaded the Tercentenary – the

300 year anniversary of the Peñafrancia devotion in Naga from 1710-2010 – by forming the Caceres Archdiocesan Tercentenary Committee. He strived to revamp the devotion not by changing it to something new, but by bringing it back to its penitential and deeply religious intentions. This included a fierce negotiation with the Naga Local Government Unit to limit the sale of alcohol and rearrange the events schedule so as not to take attention away from Peñafrancia as a holy image; for example, the pageant "Miss Peñafrancia" was renamed to "Miss Bicolandia" so as not to associate the holy image with immodestly dressed women. The pageant and other non-religious events (excluding the military and civic parades) were also pushed outside the novena days so as not to conflict interest. This penitential aspect was also revived during the 2020 and 2021 fiestas, which were entirely remote and closed to the public due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

4.4.1 Pagsungko

Aside from these important adjustments that were instituted, Archbishop Legaspi also made a massive effort to bring the devotion to the peripheries of Bikol. His goal was to extend Ina's reach so that more devotees could participate, especially if they could not attend Traslacion and Fluvial Processions. A major feature he instituted was *pagsungko*, or visitation of the image. In the weeks leading up to the fiesta, different institutions (parishes, schools, local businesses, etc.) will either host or partake in pagsungko. As described earlier, an image of Ina is typically in each parish already.

The parish will create a schedule of pagsungko with other businesses and even private households to have the image "visit" for several hours to a day or more. The image is transferred from place to place in a small local procession of those who are associated with the pagsungko location, and mass is celebrated as Ina arrives at each location. For some locations, a new image

of Ina does not visit from someplace else, but the resident image will “visit” the barangay or local area in a procession to invite locals to join. The procession can be on foot, in a motorcade, or on the water, river, or ocean.

Pagsungko mirrors the visitation Ina makes during the fiesta: a procession of devotees with similar paraphernalia (candles, Peñafrancia t shirts) and fiesta music. It builds and strengthens memory into Bikol places, deeply embedding the devotion into more localities. This allows for local identity to weave itself into a regional identity, allowing for both place making and identity maintenance to flourish at the same time as exemplified by the different presentations of pagsungko.

At St. Anthony de Padua Parish in Camaligan, which is directly across from the Naga River, pagsungko is celebrated on the river to mirror the Fluvial Procession (Figures 4-11, 4-12, 4-13, 4-14). The local government’s boat is pulled by community members on their baroto, and they manually pull the image. The procession is quiet and prayerful, and invited guests stand the entire time the Reseune Vibrante is played and the rosary is prayed. Because not many can fit on the boat, Camaligan community members watch the procession from the banks of the river (Figure 4-15, 4-16).

4- 12 Image of Ina and Divino Rostro on the boat at the Camaligan pagsungko. September 8, 2019. Photo from the Archdiocese of Caceres.

4- 13 Devotees at the Camaligan pagsungko. September 8, 2019. September 8, 2019.

4- 14 Image of Ina and Divino Rostro on the boat at the Camaligan pagsungko. September 8, 2019.

4- 15 Image of Ina and Divino Rostro on the boat at the Camaligan pagsungko. September 8, 2019.

4- 16 Devotees at the Camaligan pagsungko. September 8, 2019.

4- 17 Devotees at the Camaligan pagsungko. September 8, 2019.

Proximity to any body of water to echo Fluvial Procession brings joy to Bikolanos. Our Lady of Peñafrancia Parish in Balaton, Lagonoy (Figure 4-17) was established in 2010 as part of the Tercentenary in an explicit effort to bring the devotion to more remote parts of Camarines Sur.. Balaton is only accessible via boat, and so parishoners are not always able to make the long and expensive journey to Naga for the devotion to Ina. Pagsungko is an opportunity to still celebrate and honor Ina despite these challenges. Recently, the current Archbishop, Rolando Octavius Joven Tria Tirona, O.C.D., ensures Balaton is on his visitation schedule so he may be present during their pagsungko for Ina. Because Balaton is primarily a fishing community, their procession is a maritime one upon the sea. Unlike the Fluvial, maritime processions utilize the motors on the bangkas, or boats, and families will follow Ina on the ocean sometimes with their own of other saints along with them.

4- 18 Pagsungko at Our Lady of Peñafrancia Parish, Balaton, Lagonoy. September 4, 2019.

Because the bangka is moving quite past, most devotees are seated as someone sings over a speaker that can still be heard over the waves and Ina looks out over the edge of the boat into the ocean's horizon. When the waves get rough, her devotees laugh with joy. "The sea is happy!" one woman exclaimed as the bangka we were in during the 2019 Balaton pagsungko bounced up and down. "I am happy with Mama Mary," another woman said gently.

When neither ocean nor river are nearby for pagsungko, one parish chose a different route to make the devotion more special for its people. Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary Parish in Bombon held their second pagsungko in 2019 using not their local image of Ina, but the image from the Archbishop's palace that is used in Traslacion. According to Fr. Don Federico, who was the parish priest at the time, this was done to make pagsungko special for parishoners so they could feel especially close to Ina in Bombon. The route of the procession took devotees through the more rural and remote parts of Bombon, which is made up mostly of farmland. Along the

way, many young girls wore their white communion dresses and threw flowers at the image as she passed. The crowd grew larger and larger as it got closer to the church near dusk.

Some visitations of Ina include local businesses as well. A visiting image of Ina can be found throughout Naga in local hotels like Nagaland, or in schools. Pagsungko ensures that within the weeks leading up to the fiesta, the image is already moving around the region each day. It is normal to hear the sounds of a band playing the Resuene Vibrante each morning in August and September as another procession enters or leaves Cathedral for visitation.

4.4.2 Ina in the home

Viewing this image after witnessing my first Traslacion was my first insight into the meaning certain images of Ina can have for devotees. Since observing fiesta in Naga and many pagsungko throughout the archdiocese, I had viewed many different replicas of the image, from the original image in her private enshrinement to the distant image on a boat in Balaton. Yet the image of Ina at the Archbishop's Residence holds a particular place for me, not only because it is the image that braves the streets and the river and the voyadores each year, but also because she is the imagine that resides in the house I lived in during my fieldwork stay.

During my fieldwork I had the privilege of being the Archbishop's guest in his home which gave me access to all things Peñafrancia, including unlimited access to the revered image any time of the day or night. It was a particular experience to stand in my pajamas alone looking at the image that elicits so much emotion and energy in so many people. As a relatively new devotee to the image, and a non-Bikol American Filipina, my relationship with Ina has of course been influenced by the privileges I've experienced as a foreigner and as a researcher. Yet despite these nuances, the image still has the ability to build a place around herself – to alter the aura, to command her corner with her sparkling manto and halo of jewels, her kind face and distinct

shape. The industry of selling of Peñafrancia during fiesta time ensures that devotees can always have access to her image, even if it is not as strong as the older images in Naga.

4- 19 Santos for sale near Cathedral during fiesta time. September 2022.

During fiesta, the image of Ina is visible in many places – images at the altar in churches, images doing visitation or pagsungko, and Ina's image printed on t-shirts, posters, flyers, masks, billboards, jewelry, and more. There are thousands of small of Ina being sold on the street and in stores (Figures 4-18) for home use so that devotees can express their Bikol devotion in their own private spaces. Out of 100 individuals surveyed in 2019 at the Archbishop's Residence, Naga

Metropolitan Cathedral, and at a pagsungko celebration in Pampanga (outside of Bikol), 75 reported to own at least one of Ina for personal use; 49 of these devotees identified an altar at home (Table 4-1; Figure 4-19) as the place where they display their personal image of Ina.

Table 4- 1 Places where devotees display their personally owned image of Ina

Places devotees display their image of Ina*	**N=100**
Did not respond to the question / owned images only for sale purposes	25
Altar	49
Car	9
Living Room	7
Private Chapel	3
House	5
Bedroom	9
Other (Wall, stairs, wallet, cabinet, next to spouse, bag, front door)	8
*Participants were permitted to write in more than one option; for example, several participants identified use of an altar but also indicated they displaced their image in their bedroom or living room.	

4- 20 An altar featuring , in the Philippines with Our Lady of Peñafrancia the second figure from the right. 2019.

Home altars are private shrines for images, , and other important religious relics. Recalling the importance of shrines for commemorating memory (see Colwell-Chanthaphonh and de Salle-Essoo 2014), altars provide places where Bikol Catholics can display markers of their Bikol identity and affiliation. Even for non-Bikol devotees, by displaying an image of Peñafrancia in their home, they are linking their private space to Bikol and Naga and the religious history of the region.

Since the Tercentenary, the devotion has moved further and further into private and personal spaces, first with the increase of pagsungko and community visits, and in the COVID-19 pandemic. When local and national health restrictions prevented communities from gathering for mass or other religious activities, especially fiestas, the Caceres Commission on Communications (CCCom) utilized Facebook to livestream masses and installed speakers so mass could be heard throughout the barangays. Facebook was also used to convey important

announcements within the Archdiocese, messages from the Archbishop, and updates on the newly remote way of practicing the faith. The CCCom also conveyed instructions on how families should acknowledge the devotion in their own homes. Reverting to private spaces as opposed to public ones also allowed the Archdiocese to re-emphasize the importance of a prayerful and pentital devotion devoid of the more physical and communal qualities seen in the past that were now restricted.

4.5 Devotion through tragedy and suffering

The devotion has not been devoid of challenges since its introduction to the region. Four particular disasters related to the Peñafrancia devotion will be discussed; three of them have already been mentioned earlier in this dissertation. Despite the challenges they pose to the community, these tragedies do little to dispel or disquiet the devotion for any significant period of time.

The first major tragedy related to Peñafrancia was the cholera epidemic. In 1882, a cholera epidemic was spreading in Nueva Caceres. The Vicar General at the time was Rev. Fr. Pedro De La Torre, who was from Osa de la Torre, Spain and a devotee of the Divino Rostro, or a painting of the Face of Jesus held by Veronica. The Divino Rostro had acquired devotees after the miracle of perspring with blood. During a cholera epidemic in Spain in 1834, devotees in Osa de la Torre prayed to Divino Rostro to spare them of the disease.

When they were spared, they increased the fervor of their thanks and prayers. Now in Nueva Caceres in 1882, the Vicar General implored that the holy picture be enshrined at Cathedral so Bikolanos could venerate it during this trying time. The Archbishop, Most Rev. Casimiro Herrera, DD, enshrined Divino Rostro alongside Our Lady of Peñafrancia in the Cathedral, and for the first time the two images were venerated together. When the disease was

finally dispelled from Nueva Caceres, the two images retained their partnership in protecting Naga from disaster. Divino Rostro always precedes Peñafrancia in Traslacion and Fluvial and they enhance one another's strength.

Devotees describe each devotion as similar and will not directly identify which devotion they prefer or find stronger, but Divino Rostro is often superseded by Our Lady of Peñafrancia. However, special devotions to Divino Rostro were noted by priests to have increased during the COVID-19 pandemic when devotees prayed for health and safety during dangerous times.

Years later, in 1972, a second major disaster occurred during the Fluvial Procession. The Colgante Bridge was a typical location over the Naga River for devotees and onlookers to observe the pagoda carrying Ina and Divino Rostro, but on September 18, 1972 the bridge collapsed due to the overwhelming weight of people crowding it. 138 individuals died due to drowning and electrocution when live wires hit the water, and hundreds more were injured. Only 50 years later since the tragedy, the event remains somewhat of a distant memory except for those who knew family or friends lost in the event: On the 50th anniversary of the tragedy, the CCCom created a post (Figure 4-20) retelling the story and calling on the intercession of Our Lady of Peñafrancia and Divino Rostro for the souls of the victims. The post has been liked over 2000 times and has 253 comments of devotees remembering the event.

4- 21 Facebook post commemorating the Fall of the Colgante Bride. 2022.

The third disaster is the theft of the original image of Ina in 1981. The image was stolen and missing for over a year. Devotees prayed for her return when the former rector at the Peñafrancia Shrine received a box containing the pieces of the image. She was without her manto, jewels, and crown, but she was returned to her city and her people. Following this, as described earlier in this chapter, she was enshrined at the Basilica in a secure location to protect her from additional theft.

During more recent times of tragedy, disaster, and stress, the internet has provided new spaces for the devotion to exist in. The last and most recent tragedy to be mentioned is the recent COVID-19 pandemic. Community restrictions halted gathering for mass, and the Peñafrancia Traslacion and Fluvial Procession were canceled in 2020 (Figure 4-21) or 2021. The CCCom and the Archdiocese utilized Facebook to inform devotees and parishioners on new COVID-19

restrictions, to share instructions on how to participate from home, and to livestream masses (Figure 4-22).

ARCHDIOCESE OF CACERES
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP
Archbishop's Residence
Naga City

CIRCULAR

Number 0018
Series of 2020

TO: ALL THE PRIESTS AND FAITHFUL IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF CACERES
RE: PEÑAFRANCIA CELEBRATION 2020

As the Archdiocese of Caceres prepares for the annual celebration of the Peñafrancia Fiesta for this year 2020, we remember with deep gratitude how Our "Ina" protects our families from harm and sickness. She is our refuge in times of difficulties and calamities. In thanksgiving and as we look forward to celebrate her feast, we, her devotees, shall follow her example as a steward of life. She calls us to care for each other as she cared for her son, Jesus, as He fulfilled His mission on earth. And so, cognizant of the fact that Covid19 continues to pose a threat to public health, we are introducing some changes in our traditional celebration of the fiesta while expressing the same fervent devotion to "Ina" and imploring her maternal protection:

a. We encourage families to practice the devotion in their respective homes. Families are asked to recite the novena to the Divino Rostro from September 2-10 and the novena to Our Lady of Peñafrancia from September 11-19, 2020. Novena prayers and family guide are available on the Archdiocesan website (www.archdioceseofcaceres.org).
b. Parishes shall hold novenary Masses during the abovementioned dates. All public Masses shall observe necessary health protocols.
c. Parishes shall continue to conduct the traditional "Pagsungko ni Ina", without any form of procession, before the month of September. All other forms of procession are cancelled.
d. On September 20, 2020, the Solemnity of Our Lady of Peñafrancia, Fiesta Mass shall be streamed live from the Basilica Minore. Parishes will be asked to air the livestreaming in their respective areas for the benefit of their parishioners.
e. We encourage pilgrims and devotees from outside Naga City to attend the novena Masses at their respective parishes or the novena Masses aired through media and internet.
f. There will be no kissing or touching of the images.
g. The traditional Traslacion and Fluvial Processions and all other forms of procession are cancelled this year. The images of the Divino Rostro and Our Lady of Peñafrancia will remain at the Peñafrancia Parish Church and Basilica Minore, respectively, during the entire duration of the festivities.
h. Other dioceses in Bikol are highly encouraged to hold novena Masses on the same dates so devotees residing in their localities may also express their devotion without the need to come to Naga City.

While we cancel the traditional Traslacion and Fluvial processions, let us take this as an opportunity for the devotion to become more distinctive and rooted in our families, the domestic Church. This year, we are also invited to reflect on the theme: Fostering Dialogue and Harmony in the Spirit of Mary's Gentleness and Humility. The changes in our celebration should inspire us to discover how our faith can lead us to be gentle and humble in receiving the grace of God in the face of this pandemic.

Let us pray for God's mercy and compassion in the protection of the Divino Rostro and through the intercession of Our "Ina", Our Lady of Peñafrancia.

Given at the Chancery, Pilgrim City of Naga, Republic of the Philippines, this 27th day of June in the Year of our Lord, 2020.

In Christ,

✠ Rolando J. Tria Tirona, O.C.D.

✠ **ROLANDO J. TRIA TIRONA, O.C.D., D.D.**
Archbishop of Caceres

4- 22 Announcement from the Archdiocese of Caceres informing devotees that the fiesta will not be celebrated publicly. Source: Archdiocese of Caceres Facebook page. June 27, 2020.

4- 23 A screencap of the livestreamed mass for Our Lady of Peñafrancia during the 2021 fiesta. Source: Archdiocese of Caceres Facebook page.

When the fiesta resumed in 2022, it had shrunk down from its previous celebrations, with more emphasis on mass and praying the rosary, and less on civic events. Parades were limited, with school competitions and parades no longer part of official scheduled activities. Masks were still required outdoors until just a few days before Fluvial Procession. But otherwise, the crowds were still filled during Traslacion and Fluvial Procession as the city welcomed its devotees and pilgrims back home.

A priest of the Archdiocese described the experience of the pandemic for devotees:

> "First in the level of experience, people were really sad. First time in their lifetime they experience no procession. Procession is one of rituals people find significant that they can experience as a people. The devotion, cathartic, they feel relieved to join the procession and they feel like a community together. Tt's an experience of, like, a sadness to have lost the grandeur of the devotion because it's very important to them. But on the other hand, it is an opportunity to reexamine devotion."

In regards to how he considered people would feel about the 2022 return to fiesta:

> "I think there is a great relief in the people...they saw the people participating...but I think the devotion is still there. Because when I went to the parishes, I asked, who are going to Naga? And most of the old ones did not want to go because they have learned what covid is, so they would rather stay at home and they have learned to celebrate devotion in the parish... and they still know the risk, so they have learned from the experience…the personal experience is also important, that we have to deepen it....more than as just institutional compliance and management and just blind obedience of the commandments without understanding. So the call is for us to discover more deeply the faith, our faith and experience it in a more personal level…"

The sentiment was shared across other priests in the Archdiocese who had served parishes during the pandemic. Their common call for a more penitential and prayerful fiesta echoes the initiations of Archbishop Legaspi. Yet although the Peñafrancia fiesta is now more accessible than ever, with local pagsungko for community gathering, and each transfer or procession of the image during fiesta from church to church live streamed on the Facebook, and even mass still live streamed on Facebook, with the sale of for home use and clear instructions on how to celebrate fiesta at home, Naga was still packed with pilgrims and devotees in 2022 who had waited three years to be there (Figure 4-23).

4- 24 Devotees crowding the bank of the Naga River while waiting for Ina on the pagoda during Fluvial Procession at San Francisco barangay. September 2022.

Bautista (2019) describes church doctrine as how early Catholics were encouraged to engage in "suffering" behaviors like atonement and self-flagellation in order to bring themselves closer to God. The practice was linked with martyrdom and sacrifice, and when passed onto Filipinos by the Spanish, it was used to turn converts into "self-policing colonial subjects" (Bautista 2019: 27). Bautista further argues that the recitation and also the practice of the Pasyon (the suffering and death of Christ) in Pampanga was used by the Spanish to transplant suffering as a normativity. Cannell also identifies suffering as a common theme in Bikol in their affinity for the dead Christ, the Hinulid, because the image of a dead provides them with a space to express their own suffering and hardship.

Is suffering an inherently Catholic emotion? Through the elicitation of guilt, shame, pain, and other negative emotions, Catholics persist through the pain and continue their devotion on the promise that life and circumstances will be better if some being performs a miracle, or else

relief and reward await them in a heavenly death. The devotion to Peñafrancia is like many other Catholic devotions – the devotee is often seeking relief from pain, an improvement in health, a reprieve from oncoming death. When devotees come together to perform the ritual of Traslacion, when the voyadores crowd the streets to await Ina, they are suffering – no shoes, no body armor, armed only with the inebriating effects of alcohol and the will and determination to get inside the middle of the crowd.

Fulfilling devotion is a form of suffering and sacrifice, putting one's body and faith on the line for a miracle request. When devotees come together for the ritual of Traslacion, or when they sing the fiesta songs, or move their bodies in processions and pagsungko, their mixed suffering and celebration are shared with others. The memories they bring to the rituals of family members who inspire their devotion decorate the places they walk with meaning and importance. Suffering heightens emotions, and it heightens the stakes when one asks Ina for intercession, and it layers these places with memory.

4.6 Summary

I have now outlined how the devotion to Peñafrancia was introduced to Bikolanos, the major sites of importance for the devotion, how the devotion is accessible for large-scale communities and small-scale communities, and how the devotion persists through time and tragedies. The next chapter will be a discussion of these items and conclusions for research, including new directions and questions that can be explored.

CHAPTER 5. Discussion and Conclusions

5.1 Discussion

When this project first began, I initially sought to explore the deep origins of the devotion, and to identify which aspects of the fiesta were pre-Spanish and which were Spanish. As discussed in earlier chapters, ritual and iconography can hold information about past negotiations and exchanges, as has been demonstrated extensively in Latin America. In Bikol, how were these images and practices associated with Peñafrancia different from the ones that existed before the Spanish arrived? The origins and influences of local non-Catholic mythologies in Bikol, like the Ibalong (see Espinas 1996), are contested and not fully clear. What do we gain by digging through these myths and stories searching for evidence of pre-Spanish tradition? What do we gain by calling Filipino Catholicism a hybrid religion, or a hybrid identity? Does the knowledge that certain fiesta activities, such as dancing and alcohol use, were already in practice before the Spanish arrived make the Bikol Peñafrancia devotion any more valid, tolerable, or "Bikol" by nature? As Silliman (2015) articulates, one of the limitations of hybridity is that it can be argued everything is essentially a hybrid, everything is a product of interactions on a continuous spectrum. Is there then value in separating "Bikol" from "Spanish" within the devotion?

We are reliant on mixed historical documents and oral histories to attempt to identify these features. Those categories do not exist so explicitly once they have been negotiated into a hybrid identity that reflects not just the choices Bikolanos made during the early Spanish period, but the choices they made throughout the entire regional history. Identity is not a fixed concept, it is a continuous negotiation of relationships and interactions, and our constant interrogation of

material culture and how it is used not just once, but multiple times throughout history, can provide insight on how these traditions and identities are maintained.

These questions are still valuable to explore, although their answers and speculations do not fall within the scope of this dissertation. Instead, I focus on the process and motivation behind the growth of the Bikol Peñafrancia devotion from 1710, and the motivations that kept it growing to the massive ritual as it is experienced today. As Gerona (2010) outlined through his extensive study of historical records in Spain, in the early years of Catholicism in Naga/Nueva Caceres, the growth of the local Church was dependent on specific individuals on multiple levels, from the bishops of maintained the diocese on a larger level, and the priests who interacted directly with local Bikolanos. These were the individuals who used strategies like military force to enforce , but who also advocated on behalf of Bikolanos as they negotiated their new shared occupancy of the Bikol region. Bikolanos who had retreated away from Spanish occupied spaces returned to Miguel Robles, ready to convert, knowing that this alliance with him was a part of the exchange for protection and land tenureship. This strategy to regain autonomy in Bikol was maintained through their subsequent devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia; by embracing the devotion, they ensured that their alliance with Fr. Miguel and the diocese was maintained and their position within Bikol would be stable.

This would also allow Bikolanos to have agency when building meaning into new places on the Bikol landscape; even if these locations were not "new" to them, they were new to the Spanish who were rapidly constructing churches throughout the diocese as part of and missionization. Converting to Catholicism would have been a major lifestyle shift for Bikolanos, and the churches were community spaces essential for their conversion under Catholic doctrine. The churches functioned as places for Bikolanos to learn, practice, and perform their newly

adopted faith. I argue that mimicry (Afanador Pujol 2010; Bhabha 1984; Black 2015) intentionally kept Catholicism in Naga distinct from other areas, and therefore maintained it as a localized version of Catholicism. Fr. Miguel Robles, like many other priests and friars like him, brought his personal devotion to a community and implanted it into their local practice of Catholicism. Had Fray Miguel Robles not been assigned in Naga, and had he introduced Penfrancia to a different group of Filipinos in Pasig where he was originally assigned, the devotion would likely have developed in different and distinct ways that reflected the local community there.

The relationship of Bikol the people to Bikol the place has been in flux since the arrival of the Spanish in the sixteenth century. Colonialism, *reduccion*, and missionization threatened to disrupt the way of life Bikolanos had already established, including their connection to the land and the environment they inhabited. They were faced with the choice to abandon their landscape completely, or remain and convert to Catholicism. The relatively quick development and growth of the Archdiocese of Caceres suggests that Bikolanos retained their tenure of the land by converting to Catholicism as a strategy in response to colonial pressures. Even groups who had retreated to Mt. Isarog eventually returned to the missions to concede to Catholicism in exchange for land tenure (Gerona 2010). Since the Spanish came to Bikol and established Nueva Caceres, the city and its people have been negotiating nonstop for land, for control of the devotion (civic versus clerical), and for more closeness to the image.

Peñafrancia devotion as a central part of Bikol Catholicism is indebted to Fr. Miguel Robles who, like many clergymen assigned throughout the Philippines, brought his own personal Catholic practice to the entire region. As Macdonald (2004: 88) suggests, many friars brought more than the required materials with them – they also introduced the indigenous communities to

the veneration of saints and various "superstitions" from Europe. Philippine friars (from both Spain and Mexico) brought their own brand of "folk Catholicism" to the colonies, ones that were already marked with pre-Christian polytheistic characteristics. Macdonald suggests that Spanish Catholicism itself contains pre-Christian elements, and the intersection of missionaries and indigenous peoples was a meeting for two folk religions, not just one (2004: 88-90). This devotional cult demonstrates the extent of a missionary's influence over a local community. In these forms, the Peñafrancia devotion connects multiple places together across both time and space.

This mimicry is still negotiated today: localization of the Peñafrancia devotion is encouraged and celebrated at different parishes and communities throughout the Archdiocese. For example, the Naga Fluvial Procession is "copied" by the Camaligan *river* procession and the Balaton *maritime* procession, using the resources locally available to them that reflect each community. Similarly, displaying the figure of Ina on altars in homes, cars, schools, businesses, and other places mimics Ina on her altar in Basilica, yet the use of more small, intimate spaces allows for personalization of the altar – which flowers to use, which personal items or other to place with Ina, etc. – that reflects the individual's or group's identity.

Through this localization, Bikolanos were essential agents in building and maintaining Bikol as a sacred landscape. The "thirdspace" (Bhabha 1994; Lightfoot et al. 1998; Swenson 2015) in which they negotiated their new and changing identities coincided with the new physical places they were occupying and ritualizing – Catholic churches and the procession routes in Naga. These are the places where Bikolanos were *both* Catholic and Bikol, where they negotiated with the Spanish to make their devotion distinctly *Bikol*; for example, by calling Peñafrancia by the local title "Ina" (Mother). Today, the negotiations to exert local practices into

the devotion continue: while the Archdiocese calls for a more prayerful fiesta as prescribed by higher church authority, the public consistently supports keeping the fiesta large and energetic with alcohol, music, and noise. The long history of processions, of carrying Ina through the city, gathering together to pray and to be close to her, links today's devotees to devotees of the past via the places they both utilize. The use of the landscape for these markers of memory connects devotees across time, and the persistence of these practices allows devotees to view the world as their ancestors once did (see Basso 1996), connecting communities despite the years of change and adaptation between them.

Placemaking is a significant component of local responses to Spanish colonialism in Bikol. By growing the Peñafrancia devotion and intensifying their participation, Bikolanos were able to exert agency and influence in how and where the devotion operated; for example, the Fluvial Procession on the Naga River is considered the culmination of the entire fiesta and her presence on the river transforms its waters into a sacred space. Although other Marian devotions and instances of miracles appeared throughout Bikol (e.g. the apparition of Our Lady of Salvation in Tiwi, Albay), no other cult of devotees has grown as large as the pilgrimage to Our Lady of Peñafrancia in Naga. Future research looking at the distinct devotions throughout the Bikol region, and how they reflect localities across communities, could expand our understanding of the complexities of Spanish colonialism and Catholicism in Southeastern Luzon. It would also highlight the relationship between places and the people who occupy them, and how this is reflective of the many nuances to Bikol identities.

An important conclusion of this study is that despite the devotion at large acting as a unifying ritual for Bikolanos, "Bikol" Catholicism is still not a monolith. Bikol refers to many things – the place, the people, the language (see Ragragio 2011). Although Our Lady of

Peñafrancia is the patron saint of the Biko region, and her history is centered in Naga, the devotion extends into the peripheries of the region and wherever Bikolanos travel and bring the image with them. Consequently, the devotion to Ina should not be viewed as singular, and its dynamism can be observed in the many parishes and communities that extend throughout the Archdiocese of Caceres, other Archdiocese in Bikol, and Catholic communities outside of Bikol in the Philippines and the rest of the world. Even within the city of Naga, individuals experience the devotion at many different levels based on their gender, age, socioeconomic status, and family relations.

Future research looking at the individual altars devotees create in their homes would also explore the more localized and small-scale ways individuals practice their devotion. The contrast of public and private spaces is a critical layer of the Peñafrancia devotion, and of all Catholic devotions in general. As the world modernizes and technology makes community engagement and participation more and more accessible, individuals can participate in community rituals without physically being present, for example for mass and processions which can be livestreamed. Private altars have preceded this type of technology, bringing and devotions into people's homes for private prayer and participation. Shrines and private altars can also be explored as markers of place in the way that they transform a space into a religious place with sacred meaning.

5.2 Conclusion

Spanish colonialism in the Philippines was a largely disruptive period in which local peoples were faced with difficult choices as they navigated new realities. As the dominating religion in the country 500 years after first culture contact with the Spanish, Catholicism remains both a celebratory feature for some and a point of contention for others who see it as the tool that

removed indigenous peoples and their practices from the Philippines. However, through an exploration of the complex relationship between colonizers and the colonized, especially in a remote place like the Philippines far removed from Spain, we can observe that this process was not a loss of identity but a negotiation of community and self that resulted in local and unique Catholic communities. The fluid and adaptable nature of identity gave colonized communities, such as in Bikol, the ability to become both Catholic and local through intentional mimicry of Catholic practices that gave them the space to develop their own version of Catholicism. These local practices allowed them to build places, such as churches, where they could perform these new identities through community gatherings such as fiestas, which incorporate local modes of communication like music, dance, and food.

Exploring the diverse ways different Filipinos responded to Spanish colonialism enriches our understanding of the past and combats the two-dimensional idea that the Philippines was a monolithic place at the time of Spanish contact. Looking at places like Bikol also expands our historical focus beyond the Tagalog region in Luzon, which has traditionally been the focus of study as the colonial capital region. Areas like Bicol have rich and complex religious, economic, and archaeological histories, but the dearth of historical records after years of natural disasters and World War II bombings requires scholars to use nuanced methods of inquiry and research. Nevertheless, the information to be learned from such a broad place like Bikol is critical to exploring the patterns of human behavior and change across the entire Philippines.

In this dissertation I have used ethnography and secondary historical evidences to determine that Bikolanos in Naga utilized the devotion to Our Lady of Peñafrancia as a strategy to maintain their identity during the Spanish colonial period. As time went on, Bikolanos increased the intensity of devotion to maintain their alliance with the Spanish and to create

places in Bikol where they could perform and maintain their changing identity. Other data that could be used to support this contention include material analysis of the original image to determine its origins and maintenance, and additional ethnographic work to paint a more clear picture of the early days of the devotion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

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