

The term “Bicol” could have been derived from “Bico,” the name of a river which drains into San Miguel Bay. Possible origins also include the bikul or bikal bamboo tree which line rivulets, and the ancient native word bikod meaning “twisted” or “bent.” The region, administratively known as Region V, is located on the southeastern end of Luzon; it is surrounded by the Visayan Sea in the south, the Pacific Ocean in the east, Lamon Bay in the north, and Sibugan Sea and Quezon province in the west.

Bicol has a rugged topography. Its highlands tower over the few expanses of plain, which are concentrated in Camarines Sur and Albay. These include: Mayon Volcano, Mount Malinan, and Mount Masaraya in Albay; Mount Isarog, Mount Iriga, and the Calinigan mountain range in Camarines Sur; and Bulusan Volcano in Sorsogon. Important bodies of water are: Lamon Bay and San Miguel Bay; the Lagonoy, Ragay, Albay, and Asian Gulf; the Sibugan Sea, Burias Pass, Ticao Pass, and Maqueda Channel; the freshwater lakes of Buhi, Batis, and Baa in Camarines Sur and Bulusan Lake in Sorsogon. Rains fall regularly and heavily over the region; precipitation generally exceeds 2 meters annually, with Baras in Catanduanes receiving 5.4 meters of rain annually (the highest in the country). Frequent and destructive typhoons mark the later months of the year.

Region V comprises six provinces: Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Albay, Sorsogon, and Masbate, the capitals of which are Daet, Pili, Virac, Legaspi, Sorsogon, and Masbate, respectively; three cities, namely, Legaspi in Albay, and Naga and Iriga in Camarines; 112 municipalities; and 3,455 barangays.

In 1990 the regional population stood at 3,910,000, spread out over a land area of 17,632.50 square kilometers or 5.9 percent of Philippine territory. Bicol and Tagalog are spoken in the region, with some Cebuano in Masbate.

The Bicol language is basically Malayo-Polynesian with adaptations of some Arabic, Indian, Chinese, and Spanish words. An agglutinative language, it has a simple structure and an inflection that retains the meaning of the word. Father Alonso de Jimenez wrote a *Catecismo de la Doctrina Cristiana* (Christian Doctrine) in Bicol in 1577. Father Marcos de Lisboa wrote the *Vocabulario de la Lengua Bicol* (Dictionary of the Bicol Language) between 1590 and 1620. Bicol grammar books include Father Andres de San Agustin’s *Arte de la Idioma Bicol* (The Art of the Bicol Language), Father Santos Herrera’s *The Bicol-Spanish Grammar*, and the *Grammar* by Father Roman de Vera.

Among many variations of Bicol, Naga Bicol and Legaspi Bicol are the most commonly used. One dialect identifies Albay’s interior towns from Daraga to Polangui. The isolated people of Libon speak another dialect which combines the dialects in the Rinconada district of Camarines Sur, from Bato to Baa. Another dialect is spoken in southern Catanduanes. Some parts of Masbate and Sorsogon fall linguistically between Bicol and Cebuano. Tagalog with a distinct Bicol accent is spoken in Camarines Norte.

History

The Bicol region was known as Ibalon, variously interpreted to derive from *ibalio*, “to bring to the other side”; *ibalon*, “people from the other side” or “people who are hospitable and give visitors gifts to bring home”; or as a corruption of *Gibal-og*, a sitio of Magallanes, Sorsogon where the Spaniards first landed in 1567. The Bico River was first mentioned in Spanish documents in 1572. The region was also called “Los Camarines” after the huts found by the Spaniards in Camalig, Albay.

No prehistoric animal fossils have been discovered in Bicol and the peopling of the region remains obscure. The Aeta from Camarines Sur to Sorsogon strongly suggest that aborigines lived there long ago, but earliest evidence is of middle to late neolithic life. The burial jars excavated in Masbate can be linked with the Dongson culture, and those dug in the coast of the Bondoc peninsula prove the existence of an ancient cultural community in southeastern Luzon. In 1959 stone tools and burial jars were unearthed in Bato, Sorsogon. The University of the Philippines Department of Anthropology Field School in 1984, 1985, 1990, and 1994 also unearthed a number of pre-Spanish primary burial jars in Bahia, Bagatao Island in Magallanes, Sorsogon. Golden crowns, believed to date from 91 BC to 79 AD, were also found in Libmanan, Bulan, and Juban. Recent diggings at the Almeda property in Cagbunga, Pamplona, Camarines Sur have yielded 14th- and 15th-century ceramic plates, clay pots, and even human skeletons with bronze arm and leg bands.

A barangay system was in existence by 1569. Records show no sign of Islamic rule nor any authority surpassing the *datu* (chieftain). Panga lorded over Bua (Nabua); Bonayog, Tongdo, Magpaano, and Caayao were chieftains of Antacodos, Caobnuan, Binoyoan, and Sabang, respectively. Precolonial leadership was based on strength, courage, and intelligence. The natives seemed apolitical. Thus the *datu*'s influence mattered most during crises like wars. Otherwise, early Bicol society remained family centered, and the leader was the head of the family.

The Spaniards arrived in Masbate in 1567 under Mateo del Saz and Martin de Goiti. The villages were empty, for the natives, accustomed to Muslim hostility, had fled to the highlands in anticipation of a raid. Yet this was no inroad, merely a stopover to restock. It was Luis de Guzman's visit in 1569 that began colonization. The Augustinian priests, Alonso Jimenez and Juan de Orta, pioneered the conversion of Bicol, who were the first natives of Luzon to be Christianized. Bicol would also produce the first Filipino bishop of the Catholic Church, Jorge Barlin Imperial, 1850-1909.

At the start of the Spanish regime the barangay varied in population. Pedro de Chavez founded the Spanish city of Caceres near the village of Naga. In 1594 it became a Franciscan mission, and in 1595, the capital of the bishopric. In 1636 the region was subdivided into Ibalon and Camarines, the former composed of Albay, Catanduanes (once part of Albay), Sorsogon, Masbate, and the Ticao and Burias islands, while the latter included towns from Camalig northwards. In 1829 Camarines split into Norte and Sur, but were reunited in 1893; in 1919 they were formally established as provinces.

Records show that Spanish abuse in Luzon started in Bicol. The natives were first oppressed by Andres de Ibarra who reached Bicol in 1570. Then their gold mines too were exploited upon Juan de Salcedo's discovery of these during his explorations of northern Bicol in 1571. The natives' quick defense brought upon them the whip of conquest, e.g., property confiscation, forced labor, conscription, and loss of traditional power. Among others, it was reported that one Father Pedro Ferrer, both a man of the cross and of the sword, nearly lost his life to the natives for wielding more of the latter.

The hispanization of Bicol was also seen in the introduction of religious education; the strict imposition in these provinces of the 1854 Claveria law ordering the adoption of Spanish surnames; the introduction in 1669 by Father Pedro de Espallargas of a hemp-stripping machine in Sorsogon which promoted Bicol's abaca industry; and the establishment of a shipyard for the building of Manila-Acapulco trading galleons on the island of Bagatao at the mouth of Sorsogon Bay, a site close to Sorsogon's timber source and the San Bernardino Strait where ships would enter from Acapulco, Mexico. The Muslim invasions during the 17th and 18th centuries also necessitated some native cooperation with the colonial government.

The people's religiosity and respect for authority facilitated adjustment to Spanish leadership patterns. Eighteenth-century reforms introduced the *principales* or local elite into local office. The *gobernadorcillo* or town mayor was selected from 12 electors who were of this class and who were preferably well versed in Spanish. To assure full and timely collection of taxes, Simon de Anda's 1781 decree stipulated that *cabezas de barangay* or barangay heads be wealthy. Such posts that were exempt from tribute and forced labor were much coveted and this gave way to election anomalies.

Kinship continued to play significantly in local colonial politics. Political rivalry came between influential native clans, like the families Hernandez and Abrantes in Donsol, and Calmosa and Ubaldo in Matnog. Many of these families later led Bicol's revolutionary efforts.

The Bicol were described by some Spanish chroniclers as very fierce warriors. Thus their history comprises many battles against foreign incursions. Sorsogon participated in Samar's Sumuroy Revolt in 1649. Over 400 suspected rebel sympathizers were massacred in Pilar, and some local friars exiled. In Camarines, minor rebellions occurred contemporaneously with the Sumuroy rebellion and during the British occupation of Manila between 1762 and 1764.

The natives resisted the Spaniards mainly through armed confrontation, or an ingenious system of alarm signals when overwhelmed by the opposition, or failing these, a run to the hills. Mount Isarog became the refuge of rebels, the *remontados* or those who had gone back to the mountains and *cimarrones* or runaway slaves. Defying an order to speak only Naga Bicol, the natives continued to use 15 different dialects as an act of rebellion.

Bicol's delayed immersion in the 1896 Revolution can be attributed to harsher Spanish rule in other parts of Luzon. Nevertheless, from September to December 1896, some citizens of Bicol were tried, deported, or executed on grounds of subversion. Very few of those deported to Africa returned after the change of regime. Ildefonso Moreno founded the Katipunan (revolutionary movement) wing in 1897 but their uprising failed. The *tribunal de cuchillo* (military court) of the province killed about 500 natives to prevent future uprisings. The governor of Albay and Sorsogon and Bicol's church officials issued other counterrevolutionary measures. Hundreds of Bicol volunteers were shipped to Manila in 1897 to reinforce the Spanish army in Luzon. Naga's bishop forewarned the ministers of his diocese and the vicar-forane of Sorsogon, Father Jorge Barlin, instructed his parish priests to engage in surveillance. In 1897 eleven Bicol martyrs, three of whom were priests, were executed in Bagumbayan (Luneta). However, all these failed to hold back Sorsogon's shipyard workers from revolting in Panlatuan, Pilar, Sorsogon in 1898.

Following the resurgence of rebel activity in the region, revolutionary governments were established under Vicente Lukban and Antonio Sanz in Camarines Norte and Anacleto Solano in Albay. Domingo Samson, Justo Lukban, Marcial Calleja, Tomas Arejola, and Mariano Abella represented Bicol in the 1898 Congress in Malolos, Bulacan, and Abella sat in the constitution-drafting committee. Thereafter, several Bicol towns continued to enjoy autonomy under governments sanctioned by General Emilio Aguinaldo.

On 18 September 1898, Elias Angeles and Felix Plazo led the mutiny that ended Spanish dominion over Naga. Vicente Zardin, the last provincial governor of Ambos Camarines, signed the capitulation document. Albay's governor, Angel de Bascaran, turned over the government to Anacleto Sison after the Spaniards surrendered to Ramon Santos on 22 September 1898. The Spanish officials in Sorsogon remained there until the end of their rule. When they abandoned the province, no provisional government was set up before the arrival of Aguinaldo's expeditionary force headed by General Ananias Diokno.

After the Spanish defeat, the Philippine revolutionary government approached the Chinese for financial support, although it was more difficult to solicit from the Sorsogon Chinese whose generosity had been abused by Diokno's soldiers. General Jose Ignacio Paua, the only Chinese revolutionary governor, claimed that between November 1898 and October 1899, he raised 400,000 pesos from Bicol's Chinese community. Spanish laws prevailed during these revolutionary years, particularly in the selection of town officials from the principalia, e.g., Diokno staffed Sorsogon's provisional government with its illustrious citizens.

The role of the frailocracy in the first phase of the Bicol revolution is uncertain. An antifriar movement could have resulted in the 1897 execution of the Bicol martyrs. It is equally possible that Bicol's revolutionaries were not as antifriar as the rebels of other regions, since most of Bicol's parishes were under the Filipino secular clergy (Schumacher 1981). The Spanish Franciscans and Vincentians were well treated when war broke out in Naga, and the Franciscans willingly departed with their fellow

Spaniards from Albay. However, clerics were later persecuted by Vicente Lukban and Wenceslao Viniegra, and certain revolutionary government policies pressured Antonio Guevarra and Estanislao Legaspi to take a firmer stance.

Problems of financing the revolution persisted on through its second phase, the anti-American campaign. For instance, Colonel Amando Airan in Sorsogon and General Paua in Albay were not sufficiently armed. When the Philippine-American War erupted in Bicol, the troops of Colonel Felix Maronilla and Captain Policarpio Ruivivar confronted the Americans under Colonel Walter Howe in February 1890. William Kobbe landed a military expedition in Sorsogon in June of the same year to sever Aguinaldo's links with his army there and to gain American control of the abaca industry. This was countered by Generals Vito Belarmino and Paua in Albay but not by Colonel Airan in Sorsogon. The latter was subsequently relieved of his command by Belarmino. In February 1900 General William Bates met fierce retaliation in Camarines. Revolutionary combat escalated under Colonels Elias Angeles and Ludorico Arejola. Later in March, Arejola, Angeles, and Colonel Bernabe Dimalibot consolidated Bicol's guerrilla forces. These 20th-century fighters revived the use of the tirador (slingshot) and anting-anting (amulets).

To entrench themselves in the region, the Americans encouraged native collaboration. However, collaborators like Claro Muyot and Anastacio Camara of Sorsogon were condemned by the local revolutionaries for accepting American posts. The Partido Federalista formed in late 1900 would become instrumental in ending resistance, such as that of Colonel Emeterio Funes in Sorsogon. Where the rebels rejected peacemaking overtures, the Americans returned to force: burning, pillaging, and killing. In addition to conventional battle and mass arrests, many war atrocities were committed throughout the region; strategic areas were blockaded, such as Burias Pass and Ticao Pass. The capture of Burias' rebel leaders deprived the Sorsogon and Albay forces of their last main supply source in the region. Arejola capitulated on 31 March 1901, and declined the governorship offered by General William Howard Taft. In Albay, even after Belarmino's and Paua's surrender, Simeon Ola prevailed until 1903. Ola was the last Bicol general to submit to the Americans.

In April 1901, the American military government was replaced by provincial civil governments under the Philippine Commission. Bicol's economic development helped to bring it closer to the nation's mainstream in and around Manila. With the introduction of popular education, a new curriculum was established although Spanish remained the medium of instruction until the 1920s.

Fifty-three American Thomasites arrived in Bicol to help execute the First Philippine Commission's policy on public instruction in the first decade of the century. Later, they were replaced by American-educated pensionados or scholars. American government and education, however, did not immediately erase the Spanish presence in the region. Until the 1920s, Spanish remained the medium of instruction. But like all other provinces in the country, the Bicol were soon transformed by an American education that taught Anglo-American language and culture. Similarly, Bicol towns and

provinces adopted the local government structures imposed by the Americans.

On 12 December 1941, Japanese soldiers landed in Legaspi, and two days later marched into Naga. They met negligible resistance since most of the USAFFE (United States Armed Forces in the Far East) forces in Bicol were serving in Bataan.

The first guerrilla forces against the Japanese in the Philippines were organized by Wenceslao Vinzons of Camarines Norte in December 1941. The rebels recaptured Naga in May 1942. Vinzons attacked Daet, Camarines Norte while Constabulary Sergeant Faustino Flor and Governor Salvador Escudero staged their own offensives in Naga, Camarines Sur and Sorsogon, respectively. In July 1942 Vinzons was apprehended and reportedly executed. His patriotism was later immortalized by his birthplace, Indan, which was renamed Vinzons.

Lieutenant Francisco “Turko” Boayes took up Vinzons’ fight against the Japanese. He was joined among others by two large forces, the Tangkong Vaca Guerrilla Unit (TVGU) and the Camp Isarog Guerrilla Unit (CIGU). The TVGU ambushed General Takano, the chief military Commander of the Japanese in the Philippines in November 1942. In 1944 all the guerrilla units in the region merged into the 158th Regimental Combat Team of the US Army. It was divided into two regiments: the first stationed in Legaspi under Major Eladio Isleta, the second stationed in Naga under Major Licerio Lapuz.

In March and April 1945, Douglas MacArthur’s Sixth Army, aided by Filipino guerrillas, defeated the Japanese in the region. The Commonwealth government in Bicol was restored, and the US Armed Forces maintained a military base in Panay Island. **Economy**

Geography defines the region’s traditional occupations, agriculture, and fishing. Bicol’s agricultural sector contributes 60 percent to the gross regional domestic product, with the services and industrial sectors contributing 30 and 10 percent. Rice, coconut, and abaca are major crops. About half of the farming land cultivates coconut while 20 and 10 percent are planted to rice and abaca, respectively. Bicol ranks second to eastern Visayas in abaca production. Rice, the staple, is supplemented with corn and root crops. Bicol is currently the largest producer of sweet potato, and the third largest producer of cassava and calamansi. Coffee and cacao are also grown. Camarines Sur has the biggest livestock and poultry production and is the region’s main source of carabao, duck, and chicken. Hogs and goats are mostly raised in Masbate, also the region’s leader in cattle production, although this is controlled by wealthy families. In the region, Camarines Sur is the overall largest fish producer; Masbate, the best inland fish producer; and Camarines Norte, the most efficient commercial fish producer. The growth of the local population has diminished the supply of fish, such as *dalag* and *hito* which were sold in Manila before World War II. *Tabios*, the world’s smallest fish, and a delicacy, is found in Buhi. Bicol’s long coastline provides rich fishing grounds: the Lagonoy Gulf, Lamon Bay, Ragay Gulf, Visayan Sea, Samar Sea, and Sibuyan Sea.

Region V has the most iron reserves, comprising 57 percent of the national total. Its

nickel and gold reserves make up 38 and 43 percent of the national total, respectively. Camarines Norte has 90 percent of Bicol's metals, and in the region, has the largest deposit of titaniferous magnetite sand, followed by Sorsogon. In the country, Camarines Norte has the largest gold and copper deposit, the third largest laterite iron deposit, and with Zamboanga holds the only lead deposits. In the region, Camarines Sur has the most limestone resources and the only chromite deposit, 3.44 percent of the national total. Substantial coal reserves can be found in the Batan Island and Albay and in Catanduanes, Sorsogon, and Masbate. Except for clay, Bicol's nonmetallic minerals are often sold as raw materials.

Kaingin or slash-and-burn cultivation, and even more than this, the lumbering industry, has eroded Bicol's mountains. As in the region's mining industry which is dominated by such firms as Benguet Corporation and ABCAR-PARACON, a few corporations have monopolized large capital investments in lumbering. Local furniture making has also suffered from the loss of timber. Several other industries sustain Bicol's economy.

Most communities engage in abaca craft, machine or handmade novelties, like wall decor, mats, rugs, hats, slippers, made from strands of plaited abaca material. These fibercraft are exported to the United States, Japan, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Bicol's exports also include gifts, toys, and houseware made from coconut, minor forest materials, and seashells. Tiwi's clay, especially from the hill areas of Putscham and Bolo, is used for decorative items, like flower pots and water jugs, and construction materials such as clay and bricks. Large deposits of red and white clay gave rise to a ceramic industry which targets the domestic market. Tabaco, Albay's cutlery which includes scissors, bolo, knives, razors, and chisels, is the region's second largest cottage industry. Camarines Norte—the gold-rich Paracale-Labo-Panganiban area—is the center of Bicol's gold jewelry making industry specializing in handcrafted filigree. The *lasa* grass of Catanduanes is used for brooms and dusters. Bicol's marble sold here and abroad comes from Albay (Taysan, Lamba, and Liboa), Camarines Norte (Paracale), Camarines Sur (Mobo), and Masbate (Mobo). Cement manufacturing in the region is based on the shale and limestone of Camarines Sur (Balatan-Sipocot-Cabusao) and Catanduanes (Manamrag and Tibang). Seaweed culture and processing for food, cosmetic, and pharmaceutical purposes have been developed in Sorsogon since 1960. Other regions patronize Bicol's various food products, e.g., pili nuts (Sorsogon and Albay), meat (Masbate), and seafood (Camarines Norte and Catanduanes).

Bicol's tourism industry is another source of income. Among the more popular sites are the perfect cone-shaped Mayon Volcano, Lake Buhi, Pasacao Beach, Nats Beach, and San Jose Beach in Camarines Sur, Bulusan's mountain lake, Tiwi's geothermal plant, and Cagsaua beach. The Philippine Tourism Authority is developing the Marinawa falls in Bato, Catanduanes into a nature park and resort. Also to be developed in Catanduanes are the Capitol Park in Virac and the Luyang Caves in San Andres, and in Camarines Sur the Consocep Falls and Atulayan Beach.

In 1991 Bicol's labor participation rate of 69 percent was the third highest during the period and its employment rate was 94.9 percent. However, these figures can be

misleading. Despite its resources and opportunities, Bicol remains one of the country's most economically depressed areas, with the lowest income recorded among the regions. In 1988 the average family income was 26,570 or only 66 percent of the average national family income. On an income basis, Albay is the richest province, and Masbate the poorest. Out-migration, 0.9 percent in 1976, indicated a major disparity between population and resources. In 1970 unemployment was 7.7 percent compared to the national average of 7.2 percent; urban-rural distribution was uneven with 28 percent of the total population concentrated in urban areas and 72 percent in rural areas; low productivity resulted in 53 cavans of rice average yield per hectare per crop as against the potential 85 to 115 cavans.

Agricultural support infrastructure is inadequate, e.g., Bicol averaged a mere 0.33 kilometer of road per square kilometer of arable land as against the national standard of 1 kilometer per square kilometer. As of 1990 Bicol's road network spanned only 8,924 kilometers, mostly barangay gravel roads. The Department of Public Works and Highways recently constructed Quirino Highway in Camarines Sur to run through Del Gallego, Ragay Rupi, and part of Quezon province. Also completed were the spillway from Santo Domingo to Legazpi in Albay, the Balatan-Tandaay Road in Masbate and the Nursery-Ibingay road section. The Manila-Bicol railway, currently under construction, will reduce travel time between Manila and Naga from 10 to 6 hours. The region has seven airports and 58 ports, the most vital of which are in Legaspi. In Albay, Tiwi's three-plant geothermal field produces steam for two 55-megawatt-generating plants that supply Luzon. Bicol also has two hydroelectric plants.

Located in the typhoon belt which subjects the region to about 12 storms yearly, Bicol has had annual floods inundating 42,000 hectares of prime land for one month with an estimated damage of 20 million pesos. Undernourishment continues to be a problem. A history of volcanic eruptions and a small landholding system have also contributed to Bicol's underdevelopment.

The Bicol River Basin Development Program was created in 1973 under Executive Order No. 412 "to reverse the downward transitional trend" of the region, and in 1978 was expanded to cover Camarines Sur, Albay, and Sorsogon.

Political System

Some national executive offices and constitutionally mandated bodies have regional branches in Legaspi. Bicol is served by three Regional Trial Courts and four Municipal Circuit Trial Courts. In Congress, Bicol is represented by 11 members (1991): four from Camarines Sur, one from Camarines Norte, two from Masbate, two from Sorsogon, and two from Albay.

As of 1991 each Bicol province had a governor, a vice-governor, and 6 to 8 provincial board members. There were 17 mayors and 14 vice-mayors in Albay, 12 mayors and 12 vice-mayors in Camarines Norte, 35 mayors and 34 vice-mayors in Camarines Sur,

11 mayors and 11 vice-mayors in Catanduanes, 21 mayors and 20 vice-mayors in Masbate, and 16 mayors and 16 vice-mayors in Sorsogon. Legaspi, Naga, and Iriga each had 9 to 19 council members.

Among the currently notable political names in the region are Imperial, Sarte, Lagman, Borceos, Rayala, Bichara, Ziga, Sabido, Marcellana, and Aytona of Albay; Padilla, Pamotes, Unico, and Pajarillo of Camarines Norte; Fuentebella, Cea, Villafuerte, Andaya, Roco, Pilapil, Alfelor, Velarde, Villanueva, del Castillo, and de Lima of Camarines Sur; Alberto, Tapia, Almojuela, Verceles, and Arcilla of Catanduanes; Escudero, Gillego, Frialdo, Lee, Michelana, and Diaz of Sorsogon; and Espinosa, Fernandez, Bacumana, Bantiling, Yaneza, Ortiz, Aquino, Guyala, and Medina of Masbate. Dynastic politics continue to color the local scene, and the region is affected by communist insurgency.

Social Organization and Customs

Naming children according to their attributes or the conditions marking their birth was a regional custom; hence names such as Macusog (strong) and Magayon (beautiful). The practice may still exist among Bicol's rural groups.

Traditional courtship, usually prearranged, progressed in several stages: *lagpita* or *palakaw-lakaw*, the initial acquaintance through an intermediary; *psonco*, the examination of the prospective match by both parties; *pag-agad* (*panilbihan* in Tagalog), the rendering of service by the groom to the bride's family; the prewedding negotiations setting the *dote* (dowry), *pagdodo* (gift to the bride's mother), *sinakat* (gift to the bride from a relative attending the wedding), and in some cases, *ili-nakad* (extra fine if the bride was not the eldest in the family). After *sayod* or the drawing of the marriage covenant, both parties undertook the *tronco*, a genealogical tracing to prevent incestuous alliances, and finally witnessed the *pagcaya*, the wedding feast, and the *purukan* or *hurulungan*, the bestowing of gifts. Extravagant weddings continued on to the colonial period, although they have always been smaller and simpler for the poorer folk. The *pamalaye* (wedding agreements meeting) is observed today with greater simplicity, stripped of many of its old formalities. In modern times, Bicol weddings are no longer arranged as familial alliances.

The solemnity of Bicol death rites, however, has never been determined by class even if these have tended to be more elaborate for higher ranking individuals. The deceased used to lay in *hagol* (palm tree) coffins. Indigenous funeral rites called *pasaca*, probably near extinct, were comprised of *basbas*, the cleansing of the corpse; *dool*, the dutiful reverence of the deceased; and *yokod*, the recounting of the deceased's life. Mourning consisted of the deceased family's abstinence, displays of grief as in chanting and wailing, and dancing with the *toldan*, a big clay plate containing a dressed chicken without its innards. Before the actual burial, the deceased's nearest kin recited "*Da-y na ma-oland, padayosan mo an simong lacao*" (Tarry no longer; proceed to your journey).

Religious Beliefs and Practices

Bicol religiosity is deeply rooted. Sometimes Christian faith is expressed through indigenous forms, and indigenous beliefs may assume a Christian face.

Some beliefs and customs related to farming, the life cycle, talismans, and divination survive in the consciousness of the contemporary Bicol, even the educated. Special powers are supposedly yielded by ancient witchcraft such as *lumay*, a love potion; *hinaw*, a thief detector; and various anting-anting, like *kibal* which allegedly makes one invulnerable to sharp objects. The techniques of the *para-bulong* or *arbulario* (faith healer) have been passed down. It is said that until today some may succumb to *hilo* (poison), an affliction rendering a tubercular appearance that is believed to be cured only by witchcraft.

Night birds like *kikik* or *tiktik* convey ill omens. Such superstitions have become part of folk religion. For example, dreaming of one's teeth falling forebodes death of a close relative; the deceased's relatives attending the funeral should throw a bit of soil into the grave so as not to be haunted by the deceased; and using the remains of the materials for making the coffin causes bad luck—these are among the belief in Indan (Vinzon), Camarines Norte, although the first and second are not unique to Bicol.

The prehispanic beliefs in the hierarchy of supernaturals ranging from bad to good is to a limited extent preserved. The common expression “*Tabi po, maki-agi po*” (Excuse me please, I would like to pass by) acknowledges the invisible world. The Christian God and heavenly host have replaced the supreme god Gugurang and the minor deities, each of whom had a special function. But the darker side inhabited by witches and monsters seems to live on in the minds of some Bicol Christians. So does ancestor worship in some areas; a postharvest thanksgiving ritual, *sagurang*, is retained by Bicol farmers by way of offering food to the spirits of their ancestors.

Thus religion pervades daily life and becomes ceremonial during occasions. Agricultural rites like *tamoy*, *talagbanhi*, and *rigotiva* combine indigenous and hispanic influences. In Iriga City, *tinagba* is celebrated after the harvest during the feast of Corpus Christi, and formalities observed therein—*pagdalot*, *pagarang*, *simbag*— could be said to have both political undertones and religious overtones. Towns honor their patron saints during *pintakasi*. On the 11th of May, *tumatarok*, a prayer offering and oratory with song and dance, sanctifies a devotion to San Felipe and San Santiago in Minalabac, Camarines Sur. The most popular and distinct manifestation of Bicol faith is the special devotion to Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia, Patroness of Bicol, who is endearingly addressed as “ina” (mother). Her feast on the second Saturday of September is commemorated with the procession of the *translacion* (transfer) and a huge fluvial parade. Perhaps more of superstition than religion inspires the *vivahan*. This is the welcoming of a new year with cries of “Viva sa Bagong Taon!” (Long Live the New Year!) as songs, food, and money are thrown to the streets to bring prosperity to the

new year. The Catholic Christmas and Lenten seasons are observed through prayer and rites. Religious rituals include the *vesperas*, *flores de Mayo*, *lagaylay*, *pastores*, *osana*, *siete palabras*, *soledad*, and *alleluya*, as well as the *pasyon* and the *tanggal*. There is also a preponderance of devotional art and literature. All these influences draw many Bicol youth to the religious vocation.

Architecture and Community Planning

In precolonial times, many Bicol houses were perched on trees for protection from the sun and insects. Towns later grew from settlements established near rice plantations, which were scattered throughout the valley and coastal plains. The villages of Handong, Candato, and Fundado in Libmanan, Camarines Sur are believed to have been the site of “pile villages” or lake homes.

In Sorsogon, towns emerged for various reasons. Dery (1991) cites the repopulation of the coast after the 19th-century Muslim invasions (e.g., Castilla), the establishment of *astilleros* or shipyards which generated employment and assured protection (e.g., Magallanes), the conflict of economic interests (e.g., Barcelona), and the conflict of political interests (e.g., Irosin). By and large, community planning has followed the pueblo layout of most Philippine towns, as seen in Nueva Caceres now Naga City, Old Albay now Legaspi City, and all other towns.

In Naga, a huge stone cathedral looms before a large square. On one side of the cathedral stands the region’s oldest seminary building, Seminario Conciliar de Caceres, with its graceful arched portico. Built in the late 1700s, the Seminario, the only one of its kind remaining in the country today, was one of the few schools of higher learning open to Filipinos in the 19th century. On the lateral side of the cathedral once stood the Palacio, residence of the bishop of Caceres, which resembled the Ayuntamiento in Intramuros. On the ground floor of this Palacio, Mariano Perfecto established, upon the invitation of Bishop Arsenio Campo, the Imprenta de Nuestra Señora de Peñafrancia in 1890. Beside the Palacio is the historic Colegio de Santa Ysabel, one of the first schools for girls in Bicol. In Spanish times, the residences of the Spaniards and wealthier Filipinos encircled this area, while the other locals built their homes in the nearby suburbs.

Churches were erected within 20 years following the arrival of the Franciscans in 1578. Daraga’s present church, overlooking the ruins of the lava-covered town of Cagsaua, Albay, exemplifies folk baroque architecture. It is unique in the country for its solomonica columns, i.e., twisted columns adorned with leaves. Its facade exhibits ornamental flowers, cherubs, medallions, and even the Franciscan emblem done in the popular colonial stucco method.

The style of Naga Cathedral’s facade is even more eclectic; it seems to have variations of the Romanesque (Bunag-Gatbonton 1980), the baroque and neoclassical (Javellana 1992), and the Moorish (Coseteng 1972). The massiveness of the structure itself may

be characterized as “earthquake baroque.” Outstanding are the murals of Naga Cathedral which have been restored several times over the decades. Beside the present Cathedral is a brick tower, a remnant of the old Naga Church.

The Fuentebella house in Sangay, Camarines Sur, stands apart from the church, exhibiting stone carvings of religious themes. A few blocks away from the church, Tabaco’s cemetery is dominated by an old arch and a domed cemetery chapel which is one of the most beautiful in the region. On the other hand, Camalig, Albay is distinguished by its *capillas posas* or outdoor patio altars.

Several ancestral Bicol houses have preserved the architectural features peculiar to the region. The 125-year-old Nuyda house in Camalig, Albay has unusually large Capiz panes measuring 7.5 x 7.5 centimeters, arranged diagonally. A penchant for variety is evidenced in the numerous carving designs, particularly of the balusters and panels. Such houses rarely built identical balusters, although among the more common is the Renaissance-style molave balustrade of the Buenaventura-Pardinas house in Guinobatan, Albay. Likewise, houses often had doors with unique designs. In Camalig, Albay, both the Buenaventura-Pardinas house and the Nieves-Guerriba house display characteristically intricate carvings on their molave door panels. Another regional hallmark was the use of volcanic rock for construction, as in the ground floor of the Honrado house in Camalig.

The Pabico house in Daet, Camarines Norte presents an interesting study in interior design. As in many old Bicol and Southern Tagalog homes, its ceiling is painted with cobwebs to attract insects. Unusual geometric patterns over its windows create shadows in the living room. The tracing on its living room arch outlines the owner’s surname.

In the same city stands the Valdeo (Pimentel) house, another Bicol architectural classic, although not necessarily regional in concept. Gothic arches adorn the doorway and the ceiling. Its grilled *ventanillas* was an 1870s mode, and its use of cast lead decor was popular from the 1890s on till World War II.

The windows are the most practical assets of the Jaucian house in Ligao, Albay. One could look out without being seen from the outside—from behind old-fashioned windows with persianas, Capiz windows, and balusters. The nipa panels when lifted with bamboo stays shield the occupants from the elements. Such ability to fuse the functional and the aesthetic can be seen in the structure of the Lopez-Jaucian and Pardinas-Buenaventura house in Guinobatan, Albay, and the company house of Smith, Bell, and Company. in Tabaco, Albay.

The Fuentebella house in Sangay, Camarines Sur, burned in the 1950s, was a large stone and brick structure linked to a smaller building at the back by a long wooden bridge. Down below was an elegant courtyard with two fountains on each side of the bridge.

The Almeda residence is a landmark along Abella Street. An iron arch above the wide

porch is duplicated in wood with lacy swirls over the grand staircase. Polished narra walls and movable partitions give the spacious house a light and airy atmosphere. An innovation is the front stairway inscribed with the names of the family members on the steps. French windows on the second floor have glass panels. Vents above the graceful arches outside the house serve as ornamentation and coolers. Other notable *bahay na bato* in Bicol are the ancestral houses of the Imperial, Hernandez, Macandog, and Badiong.

In the Spanish and early American colonial periods, the less privileged lived in native huts located some distance from the center of town, in coastal or inland barrios. These dwellings had wooden posts and were elevated about 1 to 2 meters above the ground. Their framework and floor were made of bamboo; their walls, flap windows, and steep hip roof of leaves of nipa or cogon grass. These one-room houses, which usually had no divisions, had minimal furniture, like a bench, a low table, and chests for storage of clothes. On a separate platform connected to the house was a place for water jars.

In the contemporary period, most native huts have been replaced by American-type one-story bungalows or two-story houses with the sala, kitchen, and toilet below, and the sleeping quarters on the second floor. These houses are usually made of hollow blocks and cement. Wood is used for the second floor of two-story houses. Roofs are of galvanized iron; windows either slide or are of the louvre or vertical-flap types. **Visual Arts and Crafts**

Paracale, “the golden country” in Camarines Norte, has grown to be the center of a jewelry-making tradition. Although the art has declined since colonial times, some antique styles have survived the centuries like that of the *agrimon* (also known as the *alpajor* and *alakdan*), the flat necklace chain of the 18th century, and the *tamborin*, the intricate golden bead necklace of the 19th century. Ely Arcilla, “Manlilikha ng Bayan” Awardee for 1990, continues this Bicol legacy using old tools and methods and the finishing process called *sinasapo* which produces a reddish patina.

The Kalanay pottery specimens dug up in Masbate have 15 different patterns combining triangles and scallops among other designs. Today, this tradition of earthenware making is preserved mainly by women in Bigajo Norte in Libmanan, Camarines Sur, and in Bolo and Baybay in Tiwi, Albay.

In Bigajo Norte, the women use the *gayangan* or pivoted turntable. The men make larger pots like water jugs by a complex forming method including slab molding and coiling. The men also use the turntable to position or support their jars when being paddled, and in turnmolding their rims. Other tools used are the *hurmahan*, a cylindrical tin mold used in forming slabs for jar bodies; *pambikal*, the paddles; *gapu*, the anvil stone; *hapin*, the top part of a broken jar wrapped in a mat or sack; and polishing tools, like the *lagang* from a mollusk or small glass bottles called *pambole*. The pottery is decorated in three ways: first, shaping of the *sulpo* clay of Tiwi; second (only for *tibut-tibur* storage jars), resin coating using the almaciga resin of Sipocot, Camarines Sur while the vessel is still hot from firing; and third (only for *tibut* water

jars), cementing with pure Portland cement on the exterior and only rarely on the interior of the newly fired jars. As in Tiwi, the Libmanan firing technique is simple. Vessels stacked mouth down on bamboo laid on the ground are covered with grasses, husks, and bamboo, then burned with kerosene.

Baybay specializes in novelties and toys called *kawatan*, which are sold near the town church of Nuestra Señora de la Salvacion. Bolo, like Bigajo Norte, produces standard items like *kurun*, cooking pots; *gripo*, unit faucet water jars; *kaldero*, kettlelike pots; *gulgurek*, pitchers; *pugon sa uling*, charcoal burning stoves; *masetera*, flower pots, and others. The molding sequence in Bolo is much like that of Bigajo Norte. Producing Baybay's clay novelties, however, requires a special tool kit. The most essential tool is the *hurmahán* which can be a suitable item or a model made of an item out of clay. All these molds are initiated by the owners for identification. Other molding tools are the *sarik*, a pointed piece of bamboo used to bore holes, scrape edges, and so forth; the *pako* or nail which can also be used as the *sarik*; *barasan*, a flat tin used to hold powdered shreds; and *baras*, the powdered shreds which prevent the clay from sticking to the mold. After firing in the usual method, the novelties are coated with commercial enamel paint applied by brush and/or spray gun.

A pious congregation, Bicol has always excelled in the carving of religious statues. Present masters of the craft are Barcenas of Naga and Neglerio of Nabua, Camarines Sur, although there seems to be a sculptor of religious images in every town. Favorite subjects are the Virgin, San Antonio, San Isidro Labrador, the Santo Niño, and Christ on the Cross.

The art of abaca weaving has been long developed in Albay and Camarines Sur, although the art has given way to commerce in what has become a lucrative industry. The weaving of traditional textiles of cotton is still found in a few towns of Bicol, notably Buhi, Camarines Sur.

Literary Arts

The *patotodon* or riddles reveal a concern with the familiar and material. Here the abstract is made concrete. The first part is a positive metaphorical description. The second part introduces an element meant to confuse. For example (all translations of poems are by L.F. Realubit):

*An magurang dai naghihiro
An aki nagkakamang,*

The mother does not move
The child crawls. (Squash plant)

*Aram mo pero dai mo masasabotan
Dai mo nasasabotan pero aram mo*

You know but you do not understand
You do not understand but you know. (Death)

Old riddles are still learned but riddling has ceased to be a hobby in Bicol today.

The linguistically sophisticated proverbs called *kasabihan*, *arawiga*, or *sasabihan* emphasize values like independence, honor, and humility. The human condition is the central concern of these proverbs. They may be abstract or may use images from nature such as plants, animals, and the human body. For example:

Kono ano an mawot, iyo an inaabot

Whatever you choose is what you get.

An bayawas dai mabungang tapayas

The guava tree will not bear papaya fruits.

The Bicol culture hero Handiong in the epic *Ibalon* may have been named after the barrio Handong. Also, there was in the early times a variety of rice called *inandong* or *inandiong*. Of uncertain authorship, the epic was handed down by Father Jose Castaño in Spanish. It was first published in 1895. To date, texts similar to Handiong have been found and sung by an old man in Bato, Camarines Sur. Father Bernardino Melendreras, who served as parish priest in Bicol from 1841 to 1867, was said to have published an anthology entitled *Ybal*, containing *Ibalon*, the folk epic.

This epic of 60 stanzas speaks of the adventures of Baltog, Handiong, and his companions. In the beginning, Bicol was a fertile land, where lived the first man, Baltog of Botavara of the race of Lipod. His gabi plants (taro) were the biggest in the land, except that they were often destroyed by the wild Tandayag boar. Angry, Baltog hunted the boar down and tore it apart with his own arms.

Soon after, Handiong arrived in Bicol. For many months, he battled and conquered the beasts with one eye and three throats, winged sharks, wild carabaos, crocodiles big as boats, and finally, the elusive Oriel, whose body alternated between snake and woman. Having freed the land of all the monsters, Handiong taught the people how to plant gabi and rice, and how to build a boat, while his companions, Curimantong, Divahon, and Sural invented the plow, the household utensils, and the Bicol syllabary in stone, respectively. Handiong and his men also built towns and houses perched on trees to escape the heat, insects, and wild animals. Laws were created to protect life and honor, and define relations of slave and master.

A great deluge came and destroyed the towns. Three volcanoes erupted, and caused Pasacao to rise from the sea. Mountains, islands, and lakes were formed; whole tribes perished in the disaster.

Finally, Handiong sent his young warrior, Bantong, to kill the half-man half-beast

Rabot, who could turn people into stone. Bantong attacked the sleeping Rabot and cut its body in two. The warrior then brought the pieces of the monster back to Handiong, who was stunned by the sight.

In precolonial times, the natives wrote many ballads with catchy rhythms about battles, a hero's exploits, massacres, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, and other natural catastrophes. In this tradition, the "Romance Bicol" tells about the 1814 eruption of Mayon Volcano. It was composed by a native, then translated by Father Melendreras.

Precolonial lyric poetry is divided into *awit* and *rawit-dawit*, also called *orog-orog* or *susuman*. By comparison, the *awit* is more sentimental and difficult to improvise. *Rawit-dawit*, the more popular form, is spontaneously composed with 6 to 8 syllables to a line, 4 to 8 lines to a stanza, and with full or alternate rhyme scheme. Like the ballads, most of these poems have been lost. What remain at present are developed skills in punning, a breadth of themes from the mundane to the profound, and a partiality to songs. Espiñas (1983) has noted some general characteristics of Bicol folk songs: a preference for old melodies with relatively new lyrics including a few Spanish words; a tendency to be risqué (often for comic effect); a constant allusion to nature's beauty; and an abandonment to love's whims in serenades.

Social life is enlivened by toasts called *tigsik*, *kangsin*, or *abatayo*. These are four-line verses occasioned by happy gatherings whether around a *sari-sari* or variety store or during feasts. Toasts can be made on any subject, from religion and tradition to love and sex, and the *tigsikan* ends when the participants become too inebriated for poetry. For example:

*Tinigsik ko ining lomot
Sa kahoy, sa gao minakapot.
An daragang idudusay an buhay sa pagkamoot
Nungka nanggad an kalayo sa daghan minalipot.*

I toast to this moss
That clings on tree and stone.
A maiden who gives herself away for love
Will never cool the fire of the heart.

In the old days, a champion emerged from such contests of wit as a *poliador*, who then would roam about like a wandering minstrel.

As in other regions, the Spanish missionaries in Bicol used poetry for conversion. Soon the native poets were reciting *loa* (poems of praise) to begin and end dramatic performances and *corrido*, poetic romances of legendary-religious or chivalric-heroic origins. Many *corrido* were originally in Spanish and then translated into Bicol by local writers. Interestingly, several *corrido* evolved from Bicol folktales. *Mag-amang Pobre* (Poor Father and Child) and *Doña Matia asin Don Juan* (Doña Matia and Don Juan) directly relate to the Juan Osong tale, mainly the episode of Juan's exile.

Among the earliest religious pieces are found in *Platicas para todos los evangelios de las dominicas del año 1864* (Sermons for All the Gospels of the Sundays of the Year 1864) by Pedro de Avial and Francisco de Gainza's *Coleccion de Sermones en Bicol* (Collection of Sermons in Bicol), 1866. In the 1860s Bishop Gainza commissioned Tranquilino Hernandez to translate the 1814 Tagalog *Pasyong Genesis* into Bicol. Soon after, the *Pasion Bicol* was published under the title *Casaysayan can mahal na pasion ni Jesucristo Cagurangnanta, na sucat ipaglaad nin puso nin siisay man na magbasa* (History of the Holy Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ that will Inflamm the Heart of the Reader).

Both priests and laity wrote poems of praise, invocation, and prayer. Some of the first priest-poets in Bicol were Simeon Oñate, Severino Diaz, Joaquin Abad, Remigio Rey, and Pantaleon Rivera. Laymen like Manuel Salazar of Bonbon, Camarines Sur and Antonio Salazar of Malinao, Albay contributed to religious poetry. Rosario Imperial, former mayor of Naga City, still uses the corrido form to translate English works like Shakespeare's classics into Bicol. Moreover, religious playlets like the lagaylay, *aurora*, and *kagharong* are in poetic form.

After the execution of the Bicol priests, Fathers Severino Dias, Inocencio Herrera, and Gabriel Prieto in 1897, Bicol poetry departed from religion and took on patriotic themes. Mariano Perfecto's "Padre Severino Dias" was published in *Kalendariong Bicol* in 1898. Rizal's poems were also translated into Bicol.

The extant poems in Spanish by Bicol poets are few. Besides critical essays, Angel Fernandez de Celis wrote poems in Spanish. Numerous works composed by Manuel Fuentebella and Bernardo Garcia were published in 1963. A book entitled *Al pie de Mayon, Poesias* (At the Foot of Mayon, Poetry) anthologizes some of the poems which appeared earlier in *La Vanguardia*, *El Ideal*, *El Debate*, and *El Renacimiento Filipino*.

Modern Bicol poetry can be classified as personal or social, the latter based on the rawit-dawit style. Two names are prominent in social narrative poetry. Lorenzo Rosales alias "Siling Layas" (Wild Pepper) and Zacarias Losino. An excerpt follows from "Sadang na Katigbak" (Small Katigbak) an interesting narrative poem by Juan Nicolas:

*Sa kusog nin labyog si sagna nadakop
Sadang na Katigbak, si balagon kapot,
Sa taga nin sundang si payo na pugot
Mangirhat na sawa, nagadan nasayad.
Alagad ta sayang idtong pagkahulog
Huling si lalake, gadanang nahulog,
Si bulong sa [bote] dai na nagdolot
Huling pagtiloka, guinhawa napatod.*

With a strong shake he caught the branch
Small Katigbak, the vine he clutched,
With one bolo's strike its head fell off

And the fearful snake fell dead.
But then efforts were vain
The man fell down dead.
The cure in [the bottle]— it did not serve
With the snake's choke, he lost his breath.

Noted writers of personal poetry are Manuel Fuentebella, Angelo de Castro, Valerio Zuñiga, Mariano Goyena del Prado, Ben Frut, Antonio Salazar, Agapito San Antonio, Clemente Alejandria, Fortunato Reyes, Juan Peñalosa, Cirilo Salvador, and Adolfo Caro. Rafael Grageda wrote "Vulcan Mayon" (Mayon Volcano). An excerpt:

*Pakpak ning panahon bagsik ko inagaw,
Daena maka tukod daena maka dalaw
Pigtanaw ko ika sa harayong lugar
Puso ko nalamos sapagka lipungaw.*

The wings of time snatched by strength
No longer can I climb, no longer can I visit you,
I watch you from a distant plain
My heart is drowned in longing pain.

Recently published Bicol poetry have been authored by Luis Cabalquinto, Jazmin Llana, Rudy Alano, G.E. Calleja, Gabriel Bordado, Victor Velasco, Jose Leveriza, Agapito Tria, among others. Francisco Peñones Jr. won the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Creative Writing Grant for Poetry (Bicol) for 1991, while Carlos Ojeda Aureus received the CCP Creative Writing Grant for Drama (Bicol) for 1992.

A simple if not naive world view is conveyed in most Bicol anecdotes. Animal stories abound, involving either tricksters or ungrateful animals. The monkey seems to be a favorite. Heroes and heroines, adventures and misadventures, good and bad spirits animate Bicol's fairytales. The more renowned figures are the *onglo* who seeks the dark, the *taong-lipod* or *engkanto* who assumes many forms, and the *tambaluslos* who pesters the traveller.

Outstanding in folklore is the tale of Juan Osong, counterpart of the Tagalog Juan Tamad. Narrated in some 50 different versions, Juan's life depicts the common man's travails and choices when confronted with various challenges. Juan is born to an old couple. Thumb sized at birth, he grows to be a pygmy with a huge appetite. His impoverished parents drive him away from home. He later fights and defeats two giants who become his servants upon defeat. He saves a kingdom from a dragon then marries off its princess to one servant. He saves a second kingdom from a fatal odor then marries off its princess to his other servant. He becomes emperor of these united kingdoms. He frees a third kingdom which had been imprisoned by a wicked giant, then marries its princess. Among Juan's numerous adventures are those with strong men, a magic hat, a monkey, a goat, a linguist, a dead girl, a governor, and his mother.

Other subjects of Bicol folktales are local heroes such as those in the Aeta tales, patron

saints such as those who helped deliver the towns from the Muslims, and “miracle” men such as “Lola” from Joroan in Tiwi, Albay.

Bicol’s creation myths trace the beginning of the universe and man and woman. There is a characteristic dichotomy between the divine and the human, and a frequent use of the bird as a key figure. In one instance, it is the bird who opens the bamboo and brings forth man and woman, thus: On the land, Tubigan planted a seed which grew into a bamboo tree. One day a bird flew up the bamboo tree and as it alighted on the branch the bamboo shook. Angry because it was moved, the bamboo whipped at the bird in retaliation. As it did, out came from its internodes a man and a woman.

Some of the myths are similar to those of Sabah and Borneo, especially the Sorsogon myth which says that man and woman came from a dog’s tail. Moreover, the hispanic influence appears in some later myths of Albay and Camarines featuring a strong man called Bernardo Carpio.

Combat myths portray the eternal battle between good and evil as in the fight of the gods Gugurang and Bathala versus their evil foes, Aswang and Kalaon; god and the people as in the victory of Maguindanao, god of fishes, over the people; and goddess and man as in “Irago and a Young Man,” one of Bicol’s most captivating stories.

Legends enrich the region’s oral tradition. There is a fascination with giants and bells. Kolakog, the giant, appears in both the origins of Catanduanes and of Ginsa, a riverside place near Pasacao, Camarines Sur. In these legends, Kolakog is a bridge, e.g., his wife crosses over his legs to plant in the far side of the field; the natives cross over his extended genitals to flee the Muslims.

The bells have a historic backdrop—the Muslim invasions, for which they were endowed with magic. Generally, Bicol legends deal with cause and effect. Things are said to originate as a result of the people’s defiance of nature.

Folklore provided the basis of early Bicol fiction. Valerio Zuñiga, for instance, borrowed much from the Bicol fairytale. The 1920s and 1930s, however, produced maudlin and undeveloped pieces centering on love. Later storywriters could not seem to veer away from the same romanticism. An exception is Rogelio Basilio whose contemporary themes echoed society’s ills, e.g., political aberrations, landgrabbing in Albay, and Manila’s pressures on a provincial person.

Nicolasa Ponte de Perfecto and Juan Nicolas are acknowledged as Bicol’s pioneers in the genre, while Ana Calixto is considered the most prolific. Calixto wrote moralistic love stories, portraying the ideal man and woman. Other fiction writers in Bicol include Apolinario Buban, Patricio Janer, O.N. Morato, and Anastacio Angeles.

Today, there are very few fictionists in Bicol. Among the more notable are Carlos Ojeda Aureus whose stories, such as the “Cathedral,” are landmarks in Bicol fiction, and Remigio Laguno, known for his “The Carolers.”

Apolinario Buban, Victoria Victorio, and Patricio Janer wrote novels in the vernacular. Bicol novels, however, have yet to fill their inadequacies in theme, structure, and style. They are called novels because of their length but are more appropriately “extended stories.” Essays in Bicol generally have not been too accomplished, with the exception of the works of Mariano Nicomedes and Mariano Goyena del Prado, whose interpretations of reality approximate the literary. Several natives wrote historical pieces and language treatises in Spanish, among them Mariano Perfecto, Ambrosio Calleja, Jesus Calleja, Manuel Calleja, Pedro Sabido, Manuel Abella, Cirilo Austria, Wenceslao Vinzons, Luis General, and Pascual Azanza.

Local print media have periodically featured literary accomplishments. *An Parabareta*, a newspaper launched in 1933, published “Balosbalos Sana” by Eustaquio Diño alias Tax Cinco. After the paper was resurrected in 1954, it printed the poetry of Valerio Zuñiga and Gaudencio Bataller. The compositions of Mariano Nicomedes, Nicolas Perfecto, and Mariano Salazar reached the public through the widely circulated *Sanghiran nin Bikol*, founded in 1972. Sometimes there was a place for literature in the magazine *Almanaque* or *Kalendario* of the 1920s, and certainly for Perfecto’s stories and Salazar’s poems. The *Bikolandia* magazine encouraged creative writing by awarded writers in Bicol, notably Mariano Goyena del Prado and Zacarias Lorino. **Performing Arts**

In precolonial times, people were often judged by their ability to sing or create new songs which would be accompanied by the community on musical instruments which the singers themselves made. Among Bicol’s ancient instruments were the *tultugan* (bamboo cymbal), *agong* (metal drum), *bangsi* (bamboo flute), *kudyapi* (bamboo guitar with five abaca strings), and *talasang* or *baringbaw* (lyre).

Many native songs marked an occasion or a ritual: *abiyabi* (happy songs), *ambahan* (leisure songs), *angoy* (sad songs), *kundiman*, *harana*, and *panawagan* (love songs), *kunigrat* (triumphant songs), *daniw* (drinking songs), *horasa* (songs commemorating a natural catastrophe), *hudlo* (hauling or rowing songs), *homolu* (songs when putting out to sea), *panayokyok* (lullaby), *panambitan*, *tagulaylay*, *katumba*, and *ulaw* (songs for the dead), *kulintang* (songs of disenchantment), *kurigat* (howling songs), *dumago* (songs to ancestors), *sorangue* (songs of the priestess and the women to the god Gugurang), *sinalampati* or *salampati* (wedding songs), and *tigay* (priestess’ songs to cure the sick).

Most of these songs are gone. However, the *ologolo* (songs for the dead) is still sung in some rural areas of Albay. Songs of varied themes called *kutang-kutang*, including work songs, domestic songs, humorous songs, children’s songs, and erotic songs have survived; so have courtship songs like the *harana* or serenade and the *kundiman*. For years, music was the highlight of social gatherings like the *sorompongan*, a song contest between males and females, usually courting couples, held customarily by moonlight; and the Spanish-influenced *tertulias* during which conversation, poetry, and music filled the parties of the affluent of Naga, Daraga, and Legaspi. Early Bicol vocal style was tense and nasal.

The religious folk dramas in Bicol which center on Catholic beliefs and liturgy, also contain musical elements. There are songs in the *aurora*, *lagaylay*, *santakrusan*, *panjardin*, *panharong-harong*, *perdon*, and *pasyon*. Similarly, songs were sung in churches in Spanish, Latin, and Bicol. Students also learned music among other things from the Bicol priests in the Seminario-Conciliar de Nueva Caceres in Naga, while parish priests trained singers and musicians for church functions in smaller towns.

The Bicol composers trained in religious music eventually wrote secular pieces as well. The multi-instrumentalist, Potenciano V. Gregorio of Lib-og, Albay was first taught music by Father Jorge Barlin. Aside from religious music, Gregorio composed secular pieces, like the famous “Sarung Banggi” (One Night), a Bicol trademark which is now considered a folksong, “Pusong Tagob Nin Saguit” (Heart Full of Pain), and “Matis mo Daw” (Can You Resist?). Other church-trained musicians were Valentin Janer and Mariano Ripaco who wrote the orchestral and vocal music of Asisclo Jimenez’s *sarswela* and Jose Figueroa’s *sarswela* ***An Matamiagñon na Agom*** (The Neglectful Wife). The Napays of Camalig, Albay composed the music of Justino Nuyda’s *sarswela*. Still actively composing is Everardo Napay who writes dramas and songs.

In the contemporary repertoire, there are new folksongs which refer to local history and geography, sometimes ridiculing politicians like the barangay captain, the mayor, the election candidates. The themes are broader in protest than nationalistic songs. Whatever the content, serious or nonsensical, these songs generally have a simple structure and a free form. The lines vary from 6 to 12 or 15 syllables with or without end rhymes. Popular songs can have as many as nine versions, with variation achieved by introducing new lyrics to a standard tune or a new tune to a popular set of lyrics. Bicol melody uses two-tone scales with a slow tempo, a simple chanting, and movement in ascending and descending order. The minor mode is used in serious songs, especially those on love. Almost always, happy songs like those for children are in the major mode.

Contemporary musical composers are Marcial Briones, who arranges the music of Bicol folksongs; Raul Fabella, who is known for notation and arrangement of songs; Apolonia T. de Vera, who wrote *kundiman* like “Aire Bicolano” (Bicol Melody); Bonifacio N. Cristobal, whose short compositions were published in the ***Filipino Educator***; and Meriem R. Palacio, who composes full scores like that of ***La Roca Encantada*** (The Enchanted Rock).

The development of instrumental music led to the organization of town bands and orchestras. In the prewar era, the Camarines Sur School Band was under the direction of Marcial Paronea. Composed of 100 teenage members this mother band broke into splinter groups, the Little Symphony and the Dance Orchestra bands. Other bands were the Ocampo Band, Orchestras of Camarines Sur, and the P. Wee Band of Albay. The Combancheros, the Gerry Latumbo group, the Steve Cabigao Combo, Lino Aldecoa and Family Players, and the Armando Ordoñez Orchestra have been among Bicol’s most popular musical groups these past few decades.

The Bicol Music Circle has been responsible for enlivening the cultural scene of the past decades. Among the nationally recognized performers are Nonito Arroyo, Monica Lorenzo Clemente, Carmen Felipe Cervantes, Ramon Felipe, and singer-actor Nora Aunor.

In Bicol, the dances are often associated with ritual. The *tarok* step was originally a movement that belonged to the ancient ritual, *atang*. Quick marching steps were executed by the priest or priestess before the god of good, Gugurang, or by the tribal women before the moon goddess, Haliya. A step that has come to be identified with Bicol, it was also integrated into the ceremonial dance, *hinarupan*, of Vinzons, Camarines Norte; the thanksgiving festival dance, *boa-boahan*, of Nabua, Camarines Sur; the sinalampati of Albay; and even the opening and conclusion of a *komedya* scene and in the introduction of the *contradanza* or swordfight.

The *sinisiki* (literally, “feet”) step of Albay is another typical dance movement. Formerly a “hop, step, close, step,” in time it became a “brush, step, close, step.” In some areas of Sorsogon, Masbate, and Catanduanes, “sinisiki” steps could be improvised. Long ago, immigrants from Samar brought the dance to Prieto Diaz, Sorsogon where it now features undirected foot movements as the two-part music quickens toward the end of the dance. In the *tacon y punta danza* of Oas, Albay, similar footwork concentrates on the heel and toe in 2/4 time. The free and natural swing of the arms characteristic of Bicol dance is featured in the sinalampati, meaning “to dance like doves,” in which the arm can be placed on the waist. Another arm position, the *hayon-hayon*, requires the dancer to place one forearm in front and the other at the back in the *jota camarines* dance of Camarines Norte. To do the *salok* is to swing the arm downward, then upward front in a scooping action.

Authentic paraphernalia is used in ethnic Bicol dances. In the *hinarupan*, the *herbolario* (the main dancer) props up four big banana plant stalks in the center as an altar on which are placed 12 pieces of betel nut, 12 cigarette sticks, one bottle of gin, one cooked chicken, and 50 centavos. The *boa-boahan*, performed since the 13th century, recalls with gratitude the god Balahala’s intervention in a flood. The dancers composed of the entire community wear pieces of red, yellow, and green coconut shells strung together and headpieces of *agas* grass with chicken feathers and eight pili nut shells. Each dancer holds a *boa*, a meatless and waterless young coconut, on a pole or stick. Tree hollows used as gongs serve as musical instruments. The use of the chicken in such dances is symbolic. In Bicol folklore and song, the bird or chicken is a ritual animal which may be killed but without noise, picked up but not held, and allowed to fly but not to go free. The ritual betel nut is substituted by the pili nut in Bicol.

Mimesis is another object of Bicol occupation dances. “Pabirik” means “to turn.” The *pabirik* dances of Camarines Norte is named after the turning motion of the gold panner’s container. Barefoot partners equipped with shallow pans and stones dance to two-part music, often the folk song “Ano Daw” (What is it?). As mimetic as the *pabirik* is an older dance, the *pinuhag*, which comically recreates the stinging of a honey gatherer by a hiveful of bees.

The dance component of Bicol religious ritual was retained in colonial times. On the feast of San Felipe and Santiago in May, in Minalabac, Camarines Sur, men carry the saints' images and *estandartes* or bamboo towers, while the children in costumes that change annually, dance the *tumatarok* (literally, "rice planters"), clicking their castanets and singing verses of praise to the twin patron saints and imploring their help for the officials and members of the community. In Canaman, Camarines Sur, the *katapusan* or climax of the May santakrusan includes a hearty meal and the performance of the *lagaylay*, a long ceremony where a girl representing Santa Elena leads several girls all dressed in white in song and dance for the Holy Cross. Following the *aurora* or early novena said in April and May is a dance from Bongoran, Oas, Albay: the *paseo de Bicol*, which shows a young couple strolling or doing the *paseo* around the church. During the Christmas season, the *pastores* represent shepherds visiting the manger. The *pastores* are played by adults or children, male and female, usually numbering 12, and led by a *capitana*. Festively dressed with bands and wide-brimmed hats, they sing Christmas carols in Spanish and Bicol, executing different dances with arches, castanets, or tambourines. They are accompanied by string instruments and drums as they go from house to house, asking for alms.

Among the secular dances, the *engaño*, a graceful sway, and the waltz step are of Spanish origin. Boys and girls dance Albay's *inkoy-inkoy* to three-part music, *sagurang* being its oldest Bicol version. The *jota Bicolana* is lively as the Spanish *jotas*. Any number of mixed pairs dance to four-part music. The *jota rojana* of Nabua, Camarines Sur, resembles the *Ilongo arrena*. It is danced mostly in wedding and baptismal parties and is traditionally opened by the elders who are later joined by the youth. Another social mixer, the *lubilubi* is performed to four-part music by couples who sing "Lubi-lubi Rinkoranay," a jovial recitation of the names of the months. The males and females sing alternately as the females open and close their fans and the males clap their coconut shells. Other hispanic dances in Bicol are the *española* of Camarines Norte and the *chotis*, *pandanggo rinconada*, *corateja*, and *minuetto yano* of Camarines Sur. These dances combine folk and social steps and formations including the *mazurka* and can be used for ballroom affairs.

In Latin fashion, Bicol dances can be romantic. The natives of the lumber village of Tablon, Oas, Albay, choreographed a courtship dance to three-part music called *saguin-saguin*, *kunwari*, or *hele-hele*. Supposedly about a timber yard owner who falls for the daughter of his worker, this dance is basically a waltz with a *habanera* interlude where she mimes "no" and then "yes." The courtship dance, *curacha*, is also performed in Bicol although it is more popular in the Visayas. In Camarines Sur, there is a dance honoring a girl, *esperanza*. And in Camarines Norte, the *bulakeña* depicts a pleasant side of the Bicol marital relationship. A love story, the *cariñosa* is danced by males and females, alternately kneeling and facing each other. Handkerchiefs are held perpendicularly between the dancers' faces and inverted up and down. The dancers move back to back as though playing hide and seek. When dancing the *surtido*, the male throws his female partner a kiss to the delight of the audience.

The *pantomina* or sinalampati is the most famous of the courtship dances. A wedding couple dances while being showered with coins or gifted with money placed on plates on the floor. The shy couple is given wine or *tuba* (coconut wine) to drink. Only part of this dance is choreographed, the rest improvised. The dancers are costumed as in Tagalog and Visayan dances—in the *kimona*, balintawak, patadyong, maria clara, or terno for the females; and the camisa de chino, morona, or barong tagalog for the males. The occasion of the dance dictates the style of dress.

Indigenous theater may be found in early Bicol rituals and customs which are mimetic. During the atang, a ritual seeking divine protection from evil, the *soraque* was sung. Then the community cried, ran, and stomped in supplication until they fell in fatigue. Similarly, farmers performed the *pakikimaherak* when they begged their ancestors to rid their fields of pests and pleaded in low tones to the pests themselves. Burials were highlighted with incantations, songs, and dances as in the *lungkasan* (burial ceremony) of the Agta in Ragay, Camarines Sur where the men prayed by dancing the *lidong* and the women mourned by singing the *ulaw*. In the *pamamalaye* or *pasangko* stage of courtship, the encounter between parties sought to settle the bride-price and dowry. Spokesmen called *bahon* or *tagapagtaram* were engaged by the *taglalaki*, the boy's party, and the *tagbabae*, the girl's party, for an elaborate "bargaining" conducted on a symbolic level and in highly metaphorical language.

The dramas associated with Catholic beliefs may be grouped according to the liturgical calendar. Christ's nativity is the subject of the debate among elderly men known as the *coloquio*. In December the panharong-harong or kagharong (literally "going from house to house") reenacts the search by Joseph and Mary for an inn in Bethlehem. Costumed as Mary and Joseph, a rural couple sings verses of supplication accompanied by a guitar, from house to house.

In May there are several activities in honor of Christ—such as the Santo Cristo—and the Virgin Mary—such as the *despuerta*, aurora, and flores de Mayo. The santakrusan, the nationwide popular May festival commemorating the discovery of the Holy Cross features a procession of biblical personages, which is not as lavish in Bicol as elsewhere. The panjardin and *kinorubong* are shorter forms of santakrusan. Also celebrating the Holy Cross are the *dotoc* and lagaylay. Verse recitations, songs, and a dialogue between chorus and soloist comprise the dotok, a novena to the Cross. Some barrios and towns reenact the search for the Cross by marking the ground in several places. The dotoc is a preparatory ritual to the lagaylay.

In Canaman, Camarines Sur, the lagaylay is usually a 12- to 13-hour ceremony performed in May. From high school students, both male and female, fulfilling a graduation requirement or a *panata* or vow, the director selects the main performers months in advance. Although there is a preference for attractive single girls who sing well, qualified matrons can make up for the lack of young talents. Elena, the queen, leads all others in singing and dancing, and the highlight comes when she offers her crown to the Cross. The affair is elaborate and the participants have several changes of clothes. However, the intention remains simple and sincere: flowers are offered to the

Cross as a prayer of petition, thanksgiving, or repentance. Violin music has been replaced by the organ. The Saba Sica and Juan Nuñez arrangements were used until Carlos Salcedo Sr. introduced musical variations for the same lyrics. Although the old song and dance numbers have sometimes been modified and modernized, the dances and the lyrics remain unchanged. The most important dance is that which executes several letter formations, which climax in a cross image.

The *perdon* is a ritual sung and performed in all Bicol. A choral group singing “Perdon, Dios Mio, Perdon” (Forgive, My God, Forgive) during a midnight procession for nine successive Friday nights is a special prayer for an urgent need. It is traditionally performed in order to prevent the recurrence of an epidemic that once plagued the barrio during Spanish times.

Bicol Catholics embrace and cherish the Lenten season, called *kuaresma*, *kamahalan*, or *pagsakit*. It commences on Ash Wednesday with *pangorus* (placing the sign of the cross with ashes on the forehead), and is observed by the singing of the pasyon which narrates the passion and suffering of Christ. The next big religious event is Palm Sunday’s *palaspas* (palms), when the palms are blessed and Christ’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem is reenacted. In the procession held at dawn, young girls in angelic white dresses walk around the town singing, in front of the priest. A mass follows the procession. The *sinakulo*, a dramatization of Christ’s life and death, is staged. The musical drama, *opisyo*, is performed in some remote barrios. In some areas, *kubol* or small thatched structures in barrio street corners enthrone the stations of the Cross, where people may stop to pray and meditate.

The village of Tambo in Buhi, Camarines Sur is well known for its interpretation of the *tanggal*, a three-day passion play sponsored by the townfolk. While the adults chant the Bicol *pasyon* and other episodes from the Creation of the World to the Search for the Holy Cross, the younger participants dramatize the events being narrated on stage and on the streets of the town. Dressed in costumes resembling those worn by the sacred images of Lent, rural folk chant the dialogue and enact the scenes of the *pasyon*, using special effects for the creation of the world, the Resurrection of Christ, the Descent of the Holy Spirit, and the Coronation of the Virgin Mary in heaven. Here the devil and Judas provide comic relief to the long dramatic episodes.

On Good Friday, the *siete palabras* (seven words) represents Christ’s agony on the cross during the last three hours of his life. In Santa Elena, Buhi, Camarines Sur, laymen speak on Christ’s last words before a wooden image of the crucified Christ. After Christ “dies,” at three o’clock, men playing Joseph and Nicodemus remove the image from the cross and lay it on a bed, where a woman playing Mary weeps over the dead Christ. After the procession of Good Friday, another procession called *soledad* dramatizes the search of the grieving Mary (Mater Dolorosa) for the corpse of her son. In Baao, Camarines Sur, the image of the sorrowful Mother is paraded around the town together with the images of Peter, John, Magdalene, and other saints on their respective floats or *carros*. The procession, accompanied by young musicians called *estudiantina*, stops before several houses, where Mary is “comforted” with songs performed by

young ladies.

On Easter Sunday, Mary and Jesus meet in the playlet called *saklot*, *alleluya*, *salubong*, *pagsabat* or *pagtonton*. This begins with two dawn processions, one of males accompanying the image of the Risen Christ, and the other of females, accompanying the Mater Dolorosa. The two processions meet at the *castillo*, a tower constructed for this occasion, where little girls playing angels are lowered and lifted with pulleys. The climax comes when the principal angel descends from the castillo and removes the black veil of the Virgin to signify the end of her mourning.

All throughout Lent, the devoted undergo the *penitencia* (penance) to fulfill their *panata* or vow to Christ. The *tapatan*, another Holy Week activity, involves a competition between two groups that tests their mastery of the Bible and the *pasyon*.

The *komedya*, a play in verse about princes and princesses in European Medieval kingdoms, began to be staged in Bicol by the early 1700s. By the 19th century, it was popular fiesta fare, being performed from three days and nights to one month on open-air, two-level stages, to the accompaniment of a native band. As in most other Christianized regions, the *komedya* in Bicol featured convoluted plots set in fantastic kingdoms, colorful European-inspired costumes, marches and choreographed battles, usually between the Christians of Europe and the Moros of Turquia and Persia.

A very old *komedya* is *Comedia famosa de conde Juan Damalillo en un gracioso condado de Barcelona* (Famous Comedia of Don Juan Damalillo in the Gracious Countship of Barcelona), written and produced by Guillermo Manlangit in Catanduanes in 1860. This five-act play with 6,126 lines is set in Hungary (Realubit 1983:219):

. . . King Teodosio of Hungary holds a tournament in order to find the bravest man for his daughter Fidelina. Damalillo, of three contenders, wins the fight. But the Moro Prince Gallarte's dissatisfaction with the triumph of Damalillo complicates matters. He wages war against King Teodosio, pitches the entire Moro army against the Hungarians, and orders Fidelina's imprisonment and execution. Damalillo, however, tries to save her from the executioner's cutlass. But the confusion arises as the Christians hack at the Moros who are fierce fighters. Eventually the Moros are overpowered; Damalillo wants to kill all of them but the Italian Prince Floserfino, who has fallen in love with Gallardina, the sister of Gallarte, intercedes. To this, Damalillo agrees provided the Moros receive baptism. Inevitably the mass baptism preceding the wedding ceremonies for Damalillo and Fidelina, and Floserfino and Gallardina ends the play.

Other Bicol *komedya* are focused on the "lives" of Don Alejandro and Don Luis, Prince Grimaldo, Prince Igmedio and Princess Gloriana, the Doce Pares de Francia, the Prince Felismelo, Don Juan Teñoso, Don Gonzalo de Cordova, and Pastora Jacobina. Writers of the *komedya* include: Leon Camba of Tabaco, Albay; Juan Guan of Sorsogon; Mamerto Coreces, Jorge Ordas, and Canuto Adea of Camarines Norte; Domingo Salazar of Naga; and Vicente Ramirez, Nicolas Arrieta, Policarpio Latumbo, Juan Miraflor, and

Leon Borela. Notable is Sabas Armenta, who wrote *Comedia ni Hadeng Grimaldo sa Reinong Irlanda* (Comedia of King Grimaldo of the Kingdom of Ireland), which criticizes the abuse of authority and the system of favoritism, and praises the Moro who are not as quarrelsome as the Christians. The sarswela, a play in prose with songs, was first introduced in 1892 to Bicol by Spanish zarzuela troupes from Manila, like that of Alejandro Cubero and Jose Carvajal. By the beginning of the 20th century and to the outbreak of World War II, playwrights created sarswela in Bicol. These were often performed on stage using *telon* (backdrop) to signify the setting of particular scenes, and all manner of lighting from gas lamps to electric bulbs. A small orchestra accompanied the songs and dances. Usually presented at fiestas, the sarswela was sponsored by the town and performed by professional groups like the Compañia Zarzuela Bicolana headed by Justino Nuyda.

An early sarswela is *An Maimbud na Aquí* (The Gentle Child), written by Nicolasa Ponte Perfecto in 1920. The story revolves around the theme of obedience to parents and filial piety (Realubit 1983:228):

...Miang ... gambles away her tailor-husband's earnings while husband Ote is an inveterate drinker and gambler. When the couple find themselves in need of gambling money, they run to Kiawa, a Chinese merchant, whom they want to marry Cande, their only daughter. Things become complicated when Cande reveals her preference for Braulio, and Kiawa bolts out cursing the couple and crying for justice. Miang and Ote quarrel but they are eventually corrected of their vices when Cande makes a scene and appeals to her parents for sobriety and sense of duty.

In Legazpi, among the noted sarswelista of the pre-World War II era were: Nicolasa Ponte Perfecto, who also wrote *An Marhay na Sorogon* (The Good Servant) and *An Pag Oring Mahamis* (Sweet Maltreatment); Eusebio Tallada, who produced two plays, *An Magitinang Binarayan* (The Abandoned Mother and Children) and *Magimbo Mo Man Daw* (Do You Think You Can Do It?); and Eusebio Tiño, to whom is attributed *Pinapagtios sa Pirit* (Forced to Suffer), the story of a girl, Didang, symbol of the Philippines, who is forced to marry a man she does not like.

In Camalig, the best-known sarswelista is Justino Nuyda, who wrote his own original plays like *Tabon-Tabon* (To Come), about a philandering husband who is cured of his "malady"; *An Pag Ca Moot sa Pirac* (Love of Money), about Flora who tests the sincerity of her three suitors; *An Daragang Baragohon* (The Fickle-Minded Girl), about a girl obsessed by money; *An Lataguing Osbawon* (The Braggart), about a man who boasts of the women he "conquers"; *An Panahon Bulawan* (Time is Gold), about a gambling wife; *Ma Isag sa Ma Talao, Ma Talao sa Ma Isag* (The Brave to the Coward, the Coward to the Brave), and *An Caogmahon Tumang sa Pirac* (Happiness is Against Money), about Facundo who plays around with many girls; and *Teniente Amado*, about Amado, a Filipino officer in the Spanish army during the revolution against Spain.

In Sorsogon, four sarswelista are well known: Asisclo Jimenez, Jose Figueroa, Valerio

Zuñiga, and Bonifacio Baeza. Asiselo Jimenez's 26 plays are on religious practices, the follies of love, the superficiality of the komedya, the silliness of certain social customs, and nationalism. Satires on religion are *An Diwang Pagtubod na Sukbali* (Two Wrong Beliefs) and *An Fiscal Mayor sa Simbahan* (The Chief Fiscal of the Parish Church). Love situations between husbands and wives, and ladies and their suitors, are dramatized in *Apat na Cami* (Now We Are Four), *An Nagkasurudiaan* (Liars Exposed), *An Sarayaw sa Salon* (Dance in the Cabaret), *An Naubusan Kuta* (There Would Have Been None at All), and *An Pangako nin Daraga* (The Promise of a Young Woman). Plays that criticize the komedya are *An Paalingan ni Lucas* (The Leisures of Lucas) and *Barogkos sa Kabikoan* (United in Crooked Ways). Gambling is attacked in *An Lupit sa Payo* (The Scar on the Head). Nationalistic is Jimenez's only full-length play, *Pagkamoot sa Banuang Tinoboan* (Love for the Native Land), about a husband, Alfredo, who goes to fight with the revolutionaries against Spain, and his wife, Conchita, who is pestered by the *guardia civil* (local police), but who ingeniously arranges for the massacre of all the Spaniards upon Alfredo's homecoming.

Other Sorsogon sarswelista are: Jose Figueroa of Juban, who wrote *Longaran an Sadiri* (Take Care of Your Own), which centers on the problems of miscegenation, and *An Matamiagnon na Agom* (The Lazy Wife), which exposes the evils of the card game *panguingue*; Valerio Zuñiga, who wrote *Angelina*, about Angelina who loses her sweetheart Manuel to the revolution; and Bonifacio Baeza, who wrote 10 sarswela, among which are *An Pagmawot nin Cayamanan* (The Desire for Wealth), *Luha nin Sarong Ina* (Tears of a Mother), and *Mapognao na Capaladan* (Unhappy Fate).

Other sarswelista are Benito Olmigo and Simeon Gio of Masbate, and Gregorio Loyon and Arcangel de la Rosa of Catanduanes.

Music for the Bicol sarswela was composed by musicians like Mariano Ripaco, Valentin Javier, Daniel Juanesca, and Juanito Napay, the last being the director of the Napay Orchestra which accompanied Nuyda's sarswela.

The drama, or play in prose without music, also had its practitioners in Justino Nuyda, who wrote *Anti-Cristo* (Anti-Christ), which dramatizes the confrontation between a brave young girl Felizberta and an old, lecherous friar, Fray Agustin, who tries to rape Felizberta but is instead killed by her; Antonio Salazar, who wrote *Tonog na Gukan sa Langit* (Voice from Heaven); Mariano Nicomedes, who wrote drama on the poor, like *Gusto Ako Maging Ayam* (I Want to be a Dog); Valerio Zuñiga, who wrote plays on youth, like *An Saruyang Caaquian* (Our Children); Bonifacio Baeza, who did social satires and protests, as in *An Gobernadorcillo* (The Mayor), *An Paalingan ni Beday* (The Leisures of Beday), and *Si Doctora Atang* (Doctora Atang); and Catalina Rubio, who wrote *Drama*, a play about the tragic death of Margarita, who comes from the lower class and becomes the victim of the colonial and elitist relatives and friends of her husband Arturo.

Contemporary plays were done by school-based groups such as: The Cathedral Players organized in 1949 by James Reuter SJ at the Ateneo de Naga, the Holy Rosary

Academy Dramatic Club, the Caceres Players Guild, and The University of Nueva Caceres Plastique Playhouse.

Many plays presented by theater groups from the 1950s to the present are translations and adaptations of both foreign plays and Filipino plays in English and Tagalog. Notable, however, are the original plays in Bicol, which pursued two main themes: the mythological, as seen in *Handiong* by Orfelina O. Tuy and Fe V. Ico; and *Iyan Kitang Bikol* (This is the Way We Bicol Are) by Victor R. Cruz; and the romantic and social, as typified by Everardo Napay's *Mga Burak sa Hardin nin Pagcamoot* (Flowers in the Garden of Love) and *An Patintero* (The Tuba Vendor). • M.P. Consing and M.L.F. Realubit/Reviewed by F.A. Datar.

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