

Revisiting the Historical Narratives of the Old Churches in Albay, Bikol Region, Philippines

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Abstract : As cultural heritage reflects the historical origin of a certain group of people, it reveals their customs, traits, beliefs, practices and even values they hold on for years. One of the tangible examples of cultural heritage is the physical structures including the old churches. The study looked-into the existing historical narratives of the century Old Catholic churches in the Province of Albay, Bikol Region, Philippines: NuestraSeñora de Salvacion in Joroan, Tiwi, Albay; the Our Lady of the Gate in Daraga, Albay; the San Juan de Bautista in Tabaco City and the St. John the Baptist in Camalig, Albay. The historical narratives were analysed in terms of validity and reliability of the secondary documents with reference to the elements of history revealing consistency and adequacy of historical facts. The contents were examined using a modified Checklist of Historical Documents. The historical narratives were likewise submitted to the content expert for validation as regards historical authenticity and accuracy. The contents of the narratives were scrutinized according to the following codes: (1.1) the Patron Saints;(1.2) factors that paved to their constructions; (1.3) the people responsible for their constructions; (1.4) the misconceptions about their constructions; and (1.5) their contributions to Bikol heritage. Based on the codes, themes were identified as: (2.1) Marian Devotees and Christ-centered Patron Saints; (2.2) geographical, socio-political and cultural factors; (2.3) church and government officials; (2.4) misconceptions on the dates of constructions and original sites; and (2.5) popular pilgrim sites and well-admired architectural designs.

Keywords : historical narratives, old churches, cultural heritage, historical validity and reliability, elements of history

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