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## **The Coats of Arms of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdictions in the Philippines:**

### **Part III. Visayas and Mindanao\***

Most Rev. Mariano Madriaga D.D.

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# The Coats-of-Arms of the Ecclesiastical Jurisdictions in the Philippines

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MOST REV. MARIANO MADRIAGA D.D.

## Part III. Visayas and Mindanao\*

**O**F the twenty-six suffragan jurisdictions in the Philippines, six are in the Visayas, divided between the ecclesiastical provinces of Cebu and Jaro. Suffragan to the metropolitan see of Cebu are the dioceses of Calbayog (Samar), Palo (Leyte), Tagbilaran (Bohol) and Dumaguete (Negros Oriental). Suffragan to Jaro are Bacolod (Negros Occidental) and Capiz (Panay Island).

\*When we requested His Excellency, Bishop Mariano Madriaga of Lingayen-Dagupan to write an article describing the coats-of-arms of the various ecclesiastical jurisdictions in the Philippines, he was most gracious in accepting our invitation and most prompt in sending in the various installments of his manuscript. It had been the original intention to publish the entire manuscript all at once in one issue, but due to technical difficulties (mainly the difficulty of getting the colored cuts made in time) this plan had to be abandoned. We have had to resort to serial publication instead. Two installments have already been published: the first was on the six metropolitan sees (PHILIPPINE STUDIES June 1957); the second (December 1957) was on the fourteen suffragan jurisdictions in Luzon and adjacent islands. The remaining twelve suffragan jurisdictions will be dealt with in the present article.

—*Editor*

Of the remaining six jurisdictions, five are in Mindanao and one in the Sulu archipelago. All six are in one ecclesiastical province, with the metropolitan see at Cagayan de Oro.

Of these, two are dioceses with residential bishops, namely Zamboanga and Surigao. Three are *praelaturae nullius*, whose prelates however are actually bishops. These are: Cotabato, Davao and Ozamis, the last named jurisdiction comprising the two civil provinces of Misamis Occidental and Lanao. The Sulu archipelago is a prefecture apostolic, with headquarters at Jolo.



#### ARMS OF THE SEE OF CALBAYOG

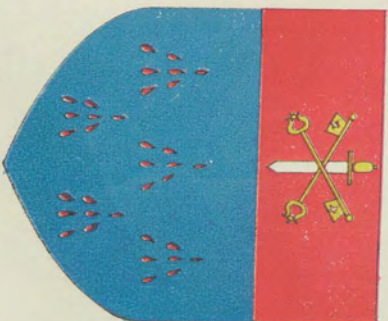
On chief, red, are two gold keys crossed debruising a gold-hilted sword drawn palewise with blade downwards. On a blue field are five bleeding wounds.

The crossed keys and sword are the symbols of the princes of the apostles, Sts. Peter and Paul, the titular patrons of the cathedral. Etymologically, the name of the island (Samar) which comprises the territory of the diocese comes from *samad* meaning a wound. Since the missionaries that worked hard in the evangelization of Samar were Franciscans, the promoters of the devotion to the Five Wounds of our Savior, five bleeding wounds are blazoned on the shield.

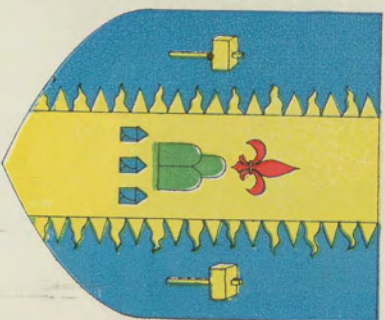
#### ARMS OF THE SEE OF PALO

Between two blue fields is a pale rayonné, gold. On each of the blue fields is a gold mallet. On the pale is a green mountain of three peaks drawn in the Italian heraldic style and surmounted by a red fleur-de-lys. At the base of the mountain are three tents in blue drawn likewise in the Italian style.

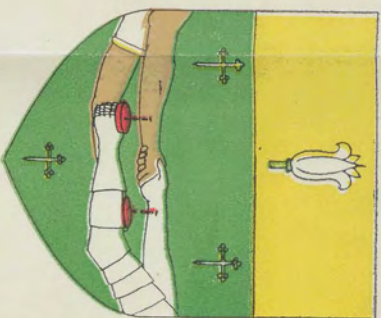
The pale is called *palo* in Spanish; a mallet is also called *palo* in Visayan: both are a play on the name of the diocesan seat (Palo, Leyte). Since the titular feast of the cathedral is that of the transfiguration of Our Lord, rays are placed at each edge of the pale (pale rayonné or a glorified pale). The green mountain represents Mount Tabor believed to be the site of the transfiguration. The red fleur-de-lys represents His



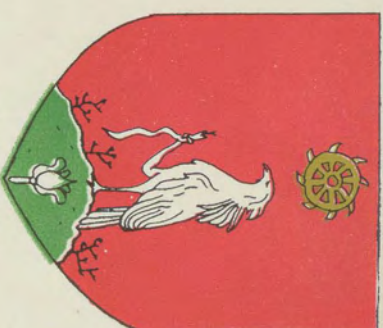
CALBAYOG



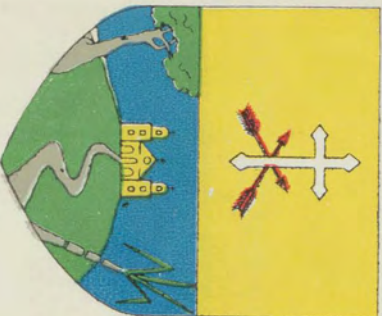
PALO



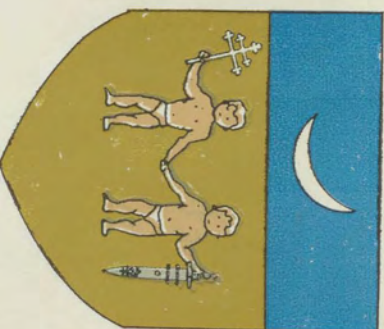
TAGBILARAN



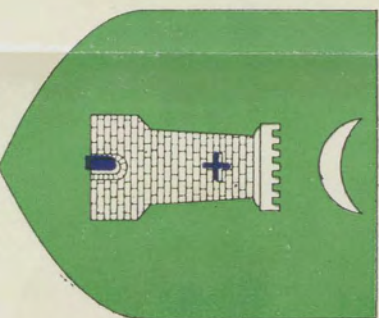
DUMAGUETE



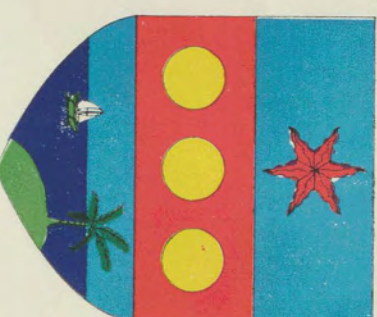
BACOLOD



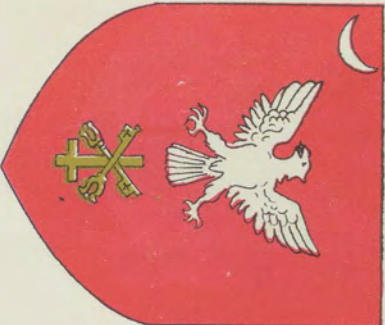
CAPIZ



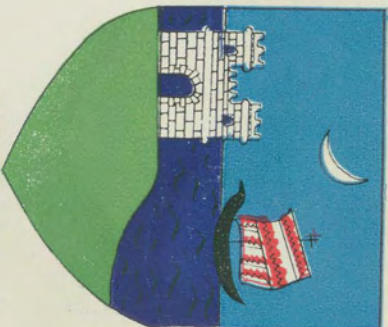
ZAMBOANGA



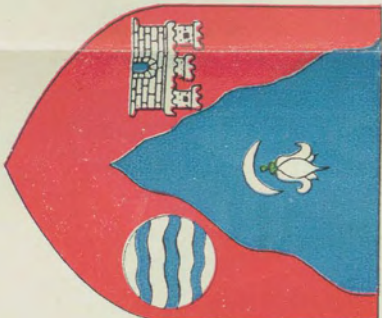
SURIGAO



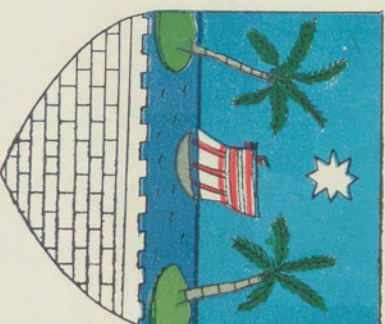
DAVAO



COTABATO



OZAMIS



SULU

humanity which became glorified.<sup>1</sup> The three tents below the mountain suggest the three tabernacles proposed by St. Peter: "one for thee, one for Moses and one for Elias."<sup>2</sup>

#### ARMS OF THE SEE OF TAGBILARAN

On chief, gold, is a longstemmed lily, symbol of St. Joseph, titular of the cathedral. On base, green, between three crosses fitché are two pairs of human arms, the right ones clasped in friendship while the left ones hold drinking glasses collecting blood from the other's wrist. The arms on the dexter side are bare and brown in color, the right one at the sinister side is bare and tinted pink while its left is armored. The arms at the dexter side represent the arms of Sikatuna while those at the sinister side are those of Legaspi. The whole symbolizes the blood-compact between the two which marked the beginning of the true and thorough Christianization of the Filipinos.

#### ARMS OF THE SEE OF DUMAGUETE

A red field. On chief, a gold St. Catherine's wheel with silver spikes. On a rocky mountain covered with sharp spines is a secretary bird drawn in natural colors throttling a snake with its right talon. On base is a white long-stemmed lily.

St. Catherine of Alexandria is the titular of the cathedral; she is represented by her wheel. St. Joseph is the secondary patron saint of the diocese. He is symbolized by the long-stemmed lily.

The name Dumaguete is represented by the secretary bird throttling a snake on a spine-covered mountain. For the word *Dumaguete* comes from the word *manalaguit*, a word which has the same meaning in Moro, Tagalog and Cebuano. It means to swoop down on a prey. *Dumaguit* therefore means "it snatched its prey." The old serpent, the devil, the enemy of human nature, must be always placed under control by the ministers of the Lord. To represent this idea, there is no

<sup>1</sup> Webber *Church Symbolism* p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 17.4; Mark 9.5.

better symbol than a secretary bird throttling the snake, its mortal enemy in nature.

The secretary bird is an African bird of prey variously called scientifically *Serpentarius secretarius*, *Gypogeranus serpentarius*, *Sagittarius serpentarius* and *Serpentarius serpentarius*. It is the only example of the family Serpentariidae. Fossil remains of this bird have already been found. It reminds one of both the eagle and the crane because the head is that of an eagle while its long legs look like those of the crane. In the distance, it can easily be confounded with the latter. It is about four feet long and moves solemnly but it can run with the speed of a horse and will fly when forced to do so and may soar to a considerable height. Its eyes are big and clear, the eyelids projecting. Its color is blue gray with black wing quills, thighs, abdomen and bars on the tail. It is called secretary bird because of its occipital crest of erectile feathers which can be raised or depressed at pleasure and which has been fancied to resemble a bunch of quill pens stuck behind a clerk's ear. Its food consists of small animals, vermin, and especially snakes whether venomous or not. For this reason it is domesticated in South Africa. It kills its prey with a powerful forward kick, or if the first stroke is not effective, repeats it with feet and knobbed wings, actively dodging the serpent's lunges until the reptile is disabled or killed.<sup>3</sup>

We think the symbol to be most fitting for another reason, containing as it does an allusion to the first incumbent of the see of Dumaguete, Bishop Surban, the first bishop to "swoop down" upon the newly created see: an eagle by his high position and office, an ex-soldier, tall and solemn and dignified in his ways, and at one time secretary to Archbishop Rosales of Cebu.

The rocky and spine-covered mountain represents Mount Canlaon, also called Mount Malaspina after Alejandro Malaspi-

<sup>3</sup> Espasa 55:552; *The Columbia Encyclopedia* (1941) 1598; *Encyclopedia Americana* (1946) 24:518-519; *New American Encyclopedia* (1951) 1223. See also the following dictionaries: Webster's *Illustrated* (1953) 591 col. 1; *American College* (1951) 195 col. 2; Webster's *Universal* II:1501; Funk and Wagnalls' *Desk Standard* (1928) 763.

na, a Sicilian sailor and scientist under the employ of Spain who made scientific excursions among the Islands.<sup>4</sup> The Malaspina family in Italy, especially the Dello Spino Secco branch, has a leafless thorn branch in its coat-of-arms.<sup>5</sup>

#### ARMS OF THE SEE OF BACOLOD

The shield is divided fesswise into two fields. On chief gold are two crossed arrows debriused by an upright Latin cross, the symbols of St. Sebastian, Martyr, titular of the cathedral. On a knoll (Bacolod) is a church and sugar cane, the latter symbolizing the most important industry of the province of Negros Occidental.

#### ARMS OF THE SEE OF CAPIZ

The chief is blue, the base gold. On chief is a silver crescent; on base is a pair of chubby little twins, the one at the dexter holding a patriarchal cross botonné while the one at the sinister holds an ancient ceremonial sword of command.

The silver crescent on the blue chief symbolizes the Immaculate Conception, titular of the cathedral. The twins ("*kapid*" in Visayan) suggest the name of the territory of the diocese, the province of Capiz. The gold field (gold is the most noble heraldic tincture) indicates the unique honor accruing to Capiz from the fact that the highest men in Church and State at the time when the Philippines became a Republic were both from that province: the Most Rev. Gabriel M. Reyes D.D. then Archbishop of Manila and Manuel Roxas, first President of the Republic. Hence the twin at the dexter side holds the patriarchal cross, insignia of an archbishop, while the one at the sinister side holds a sheathed ancient ceremonial sword of command.

#### ARMS OF THE SEE OF ZAMBOANGA

A masoned tower surmounted by a crescent on a green field.

<sup>4</sup> Espasa 32:468.

<sup>5</sup> Vittorio Spreti *Enciclopedia storico-nobiliare italiana* 4:253-258; *Appendice* part II p. 242.

The crescent represents the famous image of the Virgin in the old Spanish fort (represented by the tower). These devices appeared in the coat-of-arms of the late Bishop McCloskey when he was still bishop of Zamboanga.<sup>6</sup> The green color of the field denotes the fertility of the land. A silver bordure appearing formerly around the shield has been removed. The reason is that the diocese of Zamboanga which once embraced the whole island of Mindanao now occupies only the peninsula of Zamboanga.

#### ARMS OF THE SEE OF SURIGAO

On chief, blue, is a red estoile or etoile, that is, a star of wavy rays—a flaming star. On fess, red, are three bezants. On base is a seascape.

The flaming star is the symbol of St. Nicholas of Tolentino, the titular of the cathedral. The bezants on the red field represent the great wealth of Surigao which can be enjoyed only through great industry, riches hidden in its forests and in its very rich mines of coal, iron, nickel. The seascape consisting of a sailboat and a coconut palm reminds one of the coastal scenes of Surigao.

#### ARMS OF THE PRELATURE "NULLIUS" OF DAVAO

A red field. On the dexter canton a silver crescent, at the center a white eagle displayed, at base a gold inverted Latin cross debruised by two gold keys crossed.

The crescent symbolizes the Immaculate Conception, the titular of the prelature's principal church. The inverted cross and crossed keys are the symbols of St. Peter, Prince of the Apostles, the secondary patron saint of the prelature. The eagle symbolizes the territory in whose forest is found what is probably the biggest and fiercest eagle in the world, the monkey-eating eagle ("*Pithecophaga jeffery*").<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *The Ecclesiastical Review* 56 (June 1917) 624.

<sup>7</sup> *The National Geographic Magazine* (Sept. 1948)



## ARMS OF THE PRELATURE "NULLIUS" OF COTABATO

A silver crescent on a blue sky; a silver castle masoned on a green terrain; a Moro vinta on a blue sea.

The silver crescent represents the Immaculate Conception, the titular of the principal church in the prelateure. The masoned silver fortress suggests the origin of the name of the prelateure: *kotta* ("fortress") and *bato* ("stone"), a stone fortress. The Moro vinta represents the sea-fearing Moros who inhabit the province of Cotabato.

## ARMS OF THE PRELATURE "NULLIUS" OF OZAMIS

A silver crescent surmounted by a silver lily on a blue wavy pile. On a red field is a masoned silver fortress on the dexter side and a heraldic spring on the sinister. The lily and the crescent represent the Immaculate Conception, the titular of the cathedral in Misamis, the principal city in the prelateure. The blue wavy pile represents the Iligan and Panguil Bays which cut the territory of the prelateure into two regions (the provinces of Misamis Occidental and Lanao). The silver fortress represents the old Spanish fortress in Misamis which is still used by the Constabulary as headquarters. The heraldic spring symbolizes Lake Lanao.

## ARMS OF THE PREFECTURE APOSTOLIC OF SULU

On chief is a silver eight-pointed star. On fess is a Moro vinta sailing between two islands covered with coconut trees. On base is a silver masoned embattlement.

The star represents our Lady of Carmel, the titular of the principal church of the prefecture. The name Sulu comes from *sulug* which means the tranquil waters in the coves of the islands and in the straits between the islands themselves. Hence the vinta sailing between two islands. The vinta itself symbolizes the Moros who make up the greater part of the population of the Sulu archipelago. The embattlement represents the fortifications built by the Spaniards to protect the Christians from their Mohammedan neighbors.