

Argao's La Torta Dance Festival: A Culture Mix of Colonial and Indigenous Elements

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Received: 11 December 2015 Accepted: 3 January 2016 Published: 15 January 2016

Abstract

This study determined the embedded elements of the LaTorta Dance Festivals. It sought to answer these objectives: (1) trace the festival's origin and epitomized ethos, (2) describes the festival's dance steps, props, costumes, music, and courtship, and (3) extrapolate themes and values from the key informant's testimonies of faith. The study employed an ethnographic design in a holistic cultural system. There were 15 informants in the study: 5 key informants (KIs) who were elderly aged 65 and above and a resident of Argao, and 5 casual informants (CIs) who are choreographers, dancers, artists, and local government officials, who represented as the emic group, and 5 general informants (GIs) who were foreigners and other local tourists and witnessed the festival, to represent the etic group. Argao's La Torta Dance Festivals is a culture mix of colonial and indigenous elements as depicted in the dance steps, props and costumes, music and courtship. Its origin epitomized townspeople's ethos in the light of cultural dualism. The torta remains an expression of gratitude and a shower of blessing, which united the townspeople through a colorful festival as a symbol of faith to the patron saint as a protector of life. It is recommended that aspiring composers, arrangers and choreographers may continue the festival and encourage going beyond their imagination to improve its future choreography, without altering the essence of its unique origin.

Index terms— ethnography, torta, social mutualism, cultural dualism.

1 Introduction

ebu is a culture laden and a historically rich island for tourist destinations, in Central Visayas region, Philippines. Her shores have always been opened not only to the beating of the sea waves that strike her pristine white beaches; but also with cultural influences that unceasingly wash ashore for several centuries of her heritage list. One of her precious heritage lists is the celebration of colourful vibrant festivals, which offer a unique window to the island's cultural landscape. Adding to the vivacity of her festivals is the creative beats and rhythms of the sounds of drums, bugles, and lyres that create ethnic music. Music is the universal language of mankind and plays an important role in our daily living away from the clutches of desolation and loneliness. It is used for many functions like: therapies, burials, lullabies, weddings, occupations, and anniversaries. To many, "music shrivels when it departs too far from the dance." This simply means that music and dance are inseparable with each other. Rhythms provide artistic projections through the dance as an expression of passion, love, and desire -an important function in stabilizing a culture through social celebrations like her festivals.

According to Panaguigon, Paulma, Chan, Dimaala, Mondejar, and Ibabao (2015), festivals are usually a commemoration of patron saints, reenactment of local historical events, and celebration of bountiful harvest. On the other hand, Buted(2014) accentuates that festivals can be also used to build communities through its collective efforts and experience. Director Romulo A. de los Reyes of the Department of Tourism's Office of Special

3 B) REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

43 Projects, as quoted by Baños (2015), rejoins that "cultural festivals are big vehicles to promote the legendary
44 Filipino hospitality and an arena to promote closer kinship and family ties". Major festivals in the Philippines
45 have drawn a considerable number of local and foreign visitors and the number keeps on growing every year as
46 Haguisan, Barato, Linaugo, Mendoza, and Montes (2013) point out. Felsenstein and Fleischer (2014) say that
47 "local festivals are increasingly being used as instruments for promoting tourism and boosting the economy of
48 the region".

2 a) Objectives of the Study

50 This study determines the embedded elements of the La Torta Dance Festivals. It seeks to answer these objectives:
51 (1) trace the festival's origin and epitomized ethos, (2) describe the festival's dance steps, props, costumes, music,
52 and courtship, and (3) extrapolate themes and values from the key informant's testimonies of faith.

3 b) Review of Related Literature

54 One of the most vibrant festivals in Cebu is the La Torta in Argao. This festival replaces the Pitlagong Festival in
55 2011. Similar to the Pitlagong, La Torta is a celebration of Argao's cultural heritage. As a cultural colonial town
56 in Southern Cebu, Argao derives its name Torta Festival focuses more on the Spanish tradition of baking torta (see
57 photos in Figures 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5), a popular cake with fresh tuba popularly known as lina, palm wine without a
58 tungog (*Excoecaria agallocha*), which Brogan (1979) calls it as powdered mangrove tree bark (coloring to tartan
59 its taste). This mangrove grows abundantly in the town's shoreline, as an indigenous ingredient. Although the
60 production of tuba through the pitlagong, as a cleaning brush of a tuba bamboo pitcher called sugong, is more
61 indigenous, La Torta certainly brings a classy, festive, and more colorful dance showdown in Argao. The festival
62 serves as a thanksgiving in honor of St. Michael the Archangel, Argao's patron saint. The celebration also depicts
63 the history, cultural practices, and folklore of Argao's townspeople. Common to the pitlagong and the la torta
64 is the depiction of Argao's picturesque landscape of tropical palms that provides the production of tuba or palm
65 wine, swine for native oil, and eggs of the manuk bisaya or native chickens (*Gallus gallus domesticus*). The supply
66 of eggs, for the egg white (albumen), is used in the construction of buildings and in the baking of torta (egg
67 yolk) many centuries ago. Joven (2013) enumerates the process of baking the exotic torta, which comprises the
68 following steps: (1) pour the purified tuba or lina into the flour and add salt. Mix well, (2) add the sugar gradually
69 into the egg yolks while beating well, (3) add the oil and blend well, (4) put the mixture into a pan lined with
70 paper and greased with butter or oil and add anise, (5) wait for 7 hours before baking (to allow the butter to
71 rise). However, if the weather is cold, wait for 8 hours before baking, and (6) bake at 325 degrees Fahrenheit
72 until baking is done. During the Spanish occupation in the Philippines (1565-1898), the construction of Catholic
73 churches all over the islands is needed to fulfill their Catholic mission. In Cebu, one of the major elements in the
74 construction of churches is a massive piling of tinableya or rectangular bricks of corals, which the Indios (poor
75 Filipino masses) are deputized to work through hard labor. The building of the Catholic churches symbolizes
76 the mighty power of Spain and her slavery among the Filipinos during the three centuries of colonization, for the
77 sake of wider Christianization. The Encyclopedia of Philippine Art (2015) validates the oral lore that plants sap,
78 molasses, and even eggs are mixed into the mortar to make the building construction more durable or binding.

79 In order to strengthen its foundation, Villalon (2014) laments "that hundreds and thousands of chicken eggs
80 are beaten regularly", in order to utilize the albumen in mixing with a naturalized lime, as paste, that fixes the
81 said construction. With the yellow egg yolks left to waste; the villagers in Argao, mostly women find a way to
82 make this egg material functional through the baking of the torta. With the passage of time, the celebration of
83 the La Torta Festival has improved. As a result, the festival has attracted tourists to come to the Philippines
84 and witness the festival. The need to study the La Torta Festival, in its wholeness, is a paramount importance to
85 cultivate love and appreciation of Cebu's unique and vibrant cultural heritage.

86 The review of related studies traces the culture, tradition, and beliefs of different festivals around the
87 Philippines. Aquino (1978) states that "the Filipinos are lovers of music and dancing as a part of recreation,
88 the only way to express their ideas through dancing as cultural and recreational activity which lies in the
89 spiritual satisfaction and the preservation of the people's culture". With this, the La Torta Dance Festival is a
90 microcosmic representation of Cebu's response for merry-making as an expression of faith. This study focuses
91 on the uniqueness and the embedded ethos of the dance festival, as an important feature of Argao. Highway in
92 sub-urban areas; while the central portions are mountainous and very steep. These town's landscapes are covered
93 with tropical palms called coconuts (*coco nucifera*), upon which one of the villagers' means of living is dependent
94 on. Three fourths of their livelihoods are sourced from tuba (palm wine) in Figure 1, through pananggut (palm
95 wine extraction), panlulukay (coconut fronds gathering) for the weaving of several puso (rice pouches), and other
96 related coconut products. These products are one of the lists of Argao's homegrown industries like the torta,
97 weaving, vinegar and pickle making, tuba, which all exist today according to Newman (2015). Ramos quotes
98 Sales (nd) that "the weaving industry in Argao is as old as the town itself", describing women as busy tejedoras
99 (weavers) or hiladoras (spinners). Like these homegrown activities, baking of torta is basically associated with
100 women, while the pananggut is associated with men. This means that work among Argao's townspeople, during
101 colonial times, are highly gendered.

102 The Department of Tourism reports that there are over 1,000 festivals in the Philippines. These festivals reflect
103 the unique traditions in terms of: faith, bountiful harvest or product, remarkable trait, appeasement for unity,
104 art, thanksgiving, legendary hero, and other cultural elements that define the Filipino identity. As substantiated,
105 Wendt (1998) mentions that "festivals can disseminate the new faith, values and ways of life". In terms of faith,
106 Bajos (2013) recounts that the sinulog, a dancing to imitate like a sugor sulog (a river water current) in Cebu,
107 traces its historical and religious origin when the Portuguese explorer Fernando Magallanes arrives and plants
108 the cross for Christianity on the shores of Cebu, claiming the territory for Imperial Spain. He presents the image
109 of the Holy Child Jesus, El Señor Santo Niño de Cebu, as a baptismal gift to Raha Amihan, Raha Humabon's wife,
110 who then later named the Queen Juana, in honor of King Carlo I's mother. Among the rulers of the island, some
111 800 natives are also baptized to the Roman Catholic Church (Bajos, 2013).

112 Defining a unique Filipino trait, Buted (2013) laments that the Tinapay Festival in Cuenca, Batangas puts the
113 spotlight on the hardworking bakers or panaderos of the place, the reason why the town is dubbed as a "Home of
114 the Bakers". This title defines the assiduous trait of the Batangueños in the Philippines. Another exemplification
115 of a Filipino trait in terms of thanking for bountiful farm harvest is the Pahiyas Festival of Lucban, Quezon, where
116 the townfolks celebrate a thanksgiving in honor to San Isidro Labrador, the farmers' Patron Saint (Rosaroso and
117 Rosaroso, 2015). This claim is also supported with the Dinagat Festival of Cordova, Cebu, where the townfolks
118 participate in the street dancing and the fishing rituals of a bountiful catch of the sea, more especially the bakasi
119 or moray eel (*Anguilla japonica*) in honor of Señor San Roque, the town's Patron Saint (Rosaroso, Abao, Daygibil,
120 Macan, Pogoy, and Cardillo, 2013).

121 As regards to appeasement of the battle, in the interior highlands of Mindanao, the province of Bukidnon
122 celebrates the Kaamulan Festival. Dr. Carmen Unabia, who conceptualizes Bukidnon's famous Kaamulan
123 Festival in 1974, stresses the need for research on "The Roots of Filipino Culture and their significance in Filipino
124 Festivals" (Baños, 2015). The Kaamulan starts a conflict solving of the seven warring tribes of Bukidnon,
125 Higaonon, Talaandig, Manobo, Matigsalug, Tigwahanon, and Umayamnon to have the amul (a gathering for
126 reconciliation). To ease tensions of the conflicting parties, dances and songs are included in the gatherings, in
127 order to achieve unity. Similar to the Kaamulan, is the Sanduguan Festival of Bohol, which symbolizes a blood-
128 sealed peace treaty between the natives of Bohol, which is represented by Datu Sikatuna and the Spaniards,
129 represented by Spanish conquistadores Miguel Lopez de Legazpi, in March 16, 1565 (Festivals and Fiestas of the
130 Philippines, 2010).

131 In terms of thanksgiving, festivals and fiestas in the Philippines identify the people of Baguio to celebrate the
132 Panagbenga Festival, as a month-long annual flower festival as a celebration of life to rise from a killer quake
133 devastation in 1990. The term is of Malayo-Polynesian origin, meaning "season of blooming". The festival every
134 February includes floats that are covered mostly with flowers. The festival highlights street dancing clad in
135 flower-inspired costumes that are inspired by the Bendian and Ibaloi dance practices of the Cordilleras (Festivals
136 and Fiestas of the Philippines, 2010).

137 The Filipinos celebrate art through the art of tattooing, as evidenced in the Boxer Codex. Pintados (tattooed
138 people), whose title is derived from *pinta* or *tattoo* serves as a status symbol, much like a general's badge of today
139 (Agoncillo and Mangahas, 2010). It marks courage, rank and strength most especially during a successful battle
140 in the early times. The bravest warriors are heavily adorned with tattoos which cover every inch of their bodies,
141 head to foot. Indeed, these men are in fact such an unusual sight that the western missionaries consider them
142 frightening and uncivilized upon their first glimpse in these warriors (Festivals and Fiestas of the Philippines,
143 2010).

144 4 II.

145 5 Methods and Materials a) Research Design

146 The study employed an ethnographic design, which described the elements of the La Torta Dance Festival in a
147 holistic cultural system. Focus group discussions (FGDs) among Argaos' selected informants were conducted.
148 There were 5 key informants and 5

149 Year 2016 casual informants in Argao, who represented as the emic group. To Pelto and Pelto as quoted
150 by Whitehead (2004), an emic approach attempts to understand components of a cultural system from the
151 perspective of the group being studied. Another 5 general informants were chosen outside of Argao, who were
152 foreigners and other local tourists to represent the etic group. An etic approach analyzes a cultural system
153 with research paradigm brought by the researcher outside of those systems (Whitehead, 2004). This is done
154 to avoid bias in the results and discussions of the study and to explain further the similarities and differences
155 regarding their own culture and customs. Participant observation and in-depth interviews are conducted in order
156 to analyze and interpret the informants' narratives. In connection to such study, it is observed and learned that
157 the behavior, customs, and faith in God of the Argawanon (Argao's townspeople) are boundless.

158 6 b) Selection of Research Informants

159 The five key informants (KIs) were selected using these criteria: (1) elderly who ages 60 or beyond, (2) or a
160 resident of Argao. The five casual informants (CIs) were selected La Torta choreographers, designers/artists,
161 dancers, and music experts. Another five from local government officials of the town and tourists were selected

162 as general informants (GIs). These KIs and CIs represent the emic or inside views regarding the ethnography of
163 the La Torta Dance Festival. To provide a balance perspective, the GIs were selected, in order to provide the
164 etic or outside views of the festival. GIs are selected based on these criteria: (1) local and foreign tourists, (2)
165 residents from the neighboring towns of Argao who heard about the festival.

166 7 c) Ethical Considerations

167 The researchers and the informants established a rapport to determine the most convenient time for the interviews
168 and participant observations were conducted. Names of the informants were withheld in order to maintain utmost
169 confidentiality.

170 8 III.

171 9 Results and Discussion

172 a) The Festival's Origin Argao's La Torta Festival is coined from an exotic torta, a sponge cake, the town's famous
173 product. With it, there are arguments encountered that La Torta should not be a festival name because festivals
174 are believed to have religious connections; but because Argao is really known for a delicious torta for centuries, as
175 attested by residents, tourists, and celebrities. The town mayor, commission heads, and department heads have
176 approved the La Torta Festival. On the other hand, the replacement of the Pitlagongas the first festival name
177 to La Tortais based on popularity that a tortais widely known in Argao-making it unique from other places.
178 CI-4 shares that:

179 "Because of former Governor Gwen Garcia's project 'Pasigarbosa Sugbo' (Showcasing Cebu), which promotes
180 a product in support with the Department of Trade and Industry's "One town, One product" or OTOP policy.
181 Pitlagongis not a product is not widely known as a popular product, unlike the torta". With it, they believe that
182 pitlagong has to be replaced; because it is used to clean the sugong or the tuba pitcher, which the mananangot,
183 palm oil gatherer commonly uses, before the wine is placed in the biggalun (decanter) or banga (jar), as a
184 permanent container. During the drinking session, usually attended among male comrades in the village, the
185 hungot, coconut shell is used as a traditional wine glass to perform a tagay, social drinking, which they can
186 consume more than one garapun (a liter) to one decanter or even a jar as the tagay continues. Though tagay has
187 formed a social significance of barkadahan, comradeship, which the pitlagong has shaped, it creates a distinct
188 culture of the Cebuanos in the south; however it might bring a bad image of excessive drinking among the other
189 sectors, thus, it is replaced with the La Torta.

190 The origin of the La Torta Festival is creatively organized by the town mayor, commission, and the department
191 heads. They conduct a meeting to replace the Pitlagong Festival into something new because of its product is
192 commonly produced in most towns of the country. With that conference, they brainstorm with different names
193 even naughty names as combinations of their unique products in Argao. Suddenly, at the middle of their meeting,
194 an unknown woman stands up and shouts "La Torta". Another conference is conducted and finally, they have
195 defended La Torta with the majority's support among the townspeople. This narrative is supported by Woosnam
196 and Aleshinloye (2015), that "a festival is created in an effort to attract tourists; rural communities promote their
197 festivals that are unique to the area and local culture". One casual informant supports it that a:

198 "torta is more famous and known than the pitlagong and qualifies as important product for DTT's OTOP".
199 -(CI-4)

200 Figure ?? : La Torta's Gasa steps Provenance: Piccio (2015)

201 The approval of the La Torta as a new festival of Argao constitutes a certain form of social mutualism, a
202 collegial decision transcendent with the local government policy. After La Torta has been approved, the town
203 joins the Pasigarbosa Sugbo (showcasing the best for Cebu) in 2011. For the first time, it leads them to become
204 more famous because of their awards received during performance like Best in Showdown Competition that
205 garners the following awards as: 3rd Place, Best in Festival Jingle, Best in Street Dance Competition and many
206 others to mention a few.

207 10 i. The Festival's Epitomized Ethos

208 The La Torta Dance Festival uses the casa real, a typical colonial Spanish house, as backdrops. It represents
209 the preservation of their fabulous culture inherited from their Spanish colonizers during a celebration a town's
210 fiesta in honor of the town's patron saint, Saint Michael Archangel. The colonial casa real represents an affluent
211 social life of an ilustrado, the rich and famous in the town, with sweet smiles as sweet as their torta. The festival
212 is typically a Spanish dance using the basic steps of: paso, gasa, and polka. These dance steps indicate the
213 adaptability of the villagers' kinesthetic artistry as shown in the actual dancing.

214 11 ii. La Torta Dance Steps

215 Figure ?? shows the paso execution. Paso is a dance step that progresses a movement forward in any direction.
216 The hand is in the second position of the fundamental arm position also known as lateral position. In performing
217 the paso, La Torta dancers march on the dance floors with confidence, incessant smiles, and enthusiasm to
218 entertain the crowd.

219 **12 iii. Cebuano Enduring Hospitality** ”This dance step is
220 performed gracefully and signifies hospitality to welcome the
221 villagers’ visitors during the fiesta celebration” -(CI-3).

222 A Cebuano enduring hospitality is symbolic through the movement of the hands that shows thanksgiving of
223 nature’s bounty such as the produce of the town’s highlands and lowlands, the picturesque of a peaceful town
224 facing towards the vast immensity of the sea, and the divine assistance of the patron saint. Another dance step in
225 Figure ??by Piccio (2015) is the gasa, which means to scoop, or swing the arm upward and downward, projects
226 animated rejoicings and vivacious attitudes throughout the dance.

227 **13 iv. Mystical Tradition of Faith** ”This dance step signifies the
228 praising and offering as their thanksgiving to their patron
229 saint-a gift of profound love to Saint Michael the Archangel”
230 -(CI-2).

231 This mystical tradition of faith shows how the Argao villagers share their blessings to their visitors, as a unique
232 form of pride. Such mysticism is rooted from their animist tradition before the beginning of the Spanish
233 colonization, which is maintained to flourish by the Spanish religious authorities through the use of religious
234 images of saints. Lastly is the polka in Figure 8 (Piccio, 2015), a dance step that begins with standing from
235 Right to Left or from Left to Right directions, a preliminary hop and a step forward on a free foot. This dance
236 step projects merry-making in a social celebration. The polka symbolizes the expression of inner peace through
237 the dance. The feeling of solitude, being blessed by God, through the intercession of the patron saint, St. Michael
238 Archangel, protects the townspeople and the town from the destruction of natural calamities.

239 a

240 **14 . La Torta Props**

241 The dance is creatively conceptualized in context to the town’s cultural life. The props and the backdrafts (casa
242 real) represent the preservation of Argao’s Hispanic culture heritage as seen as a background in Figure 8.

243 **15 b. The Collective Values**

244 Figure ?? shows a big Torta, as one essential prop is used in the dance, which symbolizes the town’s strength,
245 unity, and sweetness. The golden yellow color contrasts the red color of the suits. The shape of the flower
246 represents the town’s profound love. The form and shape of the delicacy represent an indigenous concept of a
247 typical shape of a batya or basin that looks like a tansan or soda cap, which is commonly used to feed the hogs
248 before these are butchered during the town fiesta. The mantika or pork oil is basically one of the elements in
249 the baking of the torta, which makes the town’s delicacy unique compared to the rest of the other baked torta
250 in the Philippines. The shape of a basin, the pork oil, the egg yolk, the albumen, and palm wine create such
251 unique elements of the indigenous townspeople’s way of life, blending the colonial Christian tradition as a way folk
252 religion. This represents a theme of cultural dualism. Cultural Dualism is the process of blending the two cultures
253 such as the native animistic Cebuano traditions and the Spanish Catholic practices. The torta epitomizes the
254 townspeople’s socio-economic life to be resilient to all the challenges that the town might experience, a sterling
255 vow they commit that they their response to nature (animistic) and to God (religiously colonial). These elements
256 bind them together, being responsible people in the village.

257 **16 c.A Symphony of Love and Devotion**

258 The Guitara or guitar in Figure 10 represents a musical instrument during the Spanish regime and is used for
259 courtship in the dance by the male dancers. The female dancers hold flowers as an offering to the patron Saint.
260 The dance integrates an angel praising in the introduction of the dance, which shows the towns people’s religiosity.
261 The way of courtship during the Spanish regime is also presented during the introduction of the dance. The
262 guitar depicts a social reality of building symphony of love and devotion.

263 ”When a man strums his guitar and sings a harana (serenade) to a woman he loves to grant his heartfelt
264 intention is a metaphor, that is, compared to devotees intention to please Saint Michael Archangel, as protector
265 of the town and shower them with abundant blessings” -(KI-4).

266 **17 vi. La Torta Costumes a. The Female Costumes**

267 Based on the interview of both the choreographer and the designer, the costumes of the dancers are designed
268 according to the nature of the dance, which depicts the cultural practices of the town. CI-1 and CI-2 believe that
269 the mantones (shawl) serves as a cover of their shoulders symbolizes the elegance and conservativeness of Argao’s
270 women during the Spanish regime, which they commonly wear mostly in special occasions like weddings, fiestas,
271 and anniversaries (See in Fig. 11). Their gown has a layered Castilianskirt commonly with ruffles popular in Spain

272 and in Latin American countries. This signifies formality in social convention and social regard for femininity.
273 According to CI-1, the red color symbolizes the villagers' passion, love, and devotion to Saint Michael. It is
274 also a belief among the elderly natives that during the Spanish colonial times, color red symbolizes power and
275 authority. CI-2 has a different interpretation; the dominant red color in the La Torta costumes symbolizes the
276 villagers' love of the tradition. The designers add that the white shoes symbolize women's purity and contrite
277 religious intentions.

278 18 b. The Male Costumes

279 According to CI-4, for male dancers, a red long sleeved with ruffles and black slacks and shoes are flamenco
280 inspired. It signifies that whenever they court a woman, formality should be observed in order to catch the eye
281 of their beloved and also in attending socializations and in formal conventions (See Figure 12).

282 Flamenco is derived from a Latin American term for a music or dance genre. It is flamenco inspired because
283 of Argao's Hispanic cultural influences, during colonial times. Lorenz (2007) expounds that flamenco reflects the
284 spirit of desperation, struggle, hope, and pride of people during the time of persecution of the Gypsies, nomads
285 from India, in Andalucia, Spain. This context is also similar to what Cebuanos have experienced from the abuses
286 of the Spaniards during the colonial times for more than three centuries, vis-à-vis, the La Torta Dance Festival
287 is a projection of pride among Argao's folks, with standing their feeling of desperation and struggle under the
288 Spanish rule. Unique in a flamenco inspired dance, that the male dancers respect gentlemanly the female dancers
289 during the actual dance more especially in the part of the courtship ritual.

290 19 e. La Torta Music

291 The music of the La Torta Festival is the best festival jingle all over the province of Cebu. This is composed
292 and arranged by Russel Alegado who is a known Cebuano writer and an arranger of Festival songs. The jingle
293 undergoes three changes just to achieve its attraction. It has a quadruple meter and its dynamics is allegro,
294 which means faster that made the song to have an up-beat rhythm and much enjoyable to dance. Its texture is
295 homophonic since it was accompanied by a rondalla together with a soloist. Its structure or form is ternary like
296 all of those common songs in our generation. Ternary form has three different melodies heard in the first, second,
297 and the last part of the music. Lastly, this music is inspired from Latin American genre particularly Flamenco
298 music, which is sounded of group of string instruments specifically the guitar.

299 20 f. La Torta Courtship

300 Alfonso (2012) emphasizes the courtship episode in the La Torta dance festival as depicted in Figure 13. As
301 revealed, the key informants view pangulitawoin Cebuano or panliligaw in Tagalog, which means courtship as
302 very significant in the dance because this reminds the townspeople's values of a man's authentic intention to
303 win the woman's heart, before a formal endearing relationship like that of a romance starts (See Figure 13). A
304 woman in the dance is expected to be pakipot (playing hard to get), as a way to tell the man that he has to work
305 very hard in order to win her love (Business World, 2002).

306 IV.

307 21 Themes and Values a) Testimonies of Faith

308 Culture and religion refer to a complex set of an integrated pattern of people's learned behaviors, shared and
309 transmitted through interaction; their lifestyle, surviving records, and physical results. It is culture that gives
310 people praise and thanks giving to their patron saint.

311 "According to local lore of their ancestors, Argao's townspeople chose Saint Michael as their patron saint
312 happened during the skirmishes between the Spaniards and the locals, when Spaniards are trying to operate the
313 canyons, it has been said that it does not work; but it only gives out "bunot" (coconut husks) instead of bullets"
314 -KI-3. This folklore shapes the culture of Argao's townspeople as regards to their faith to the village patron
315 saint. Since Saint Michael is the commander of all guardian angels (Figure 14), they have chosen Him to be their
316 patron. From then, they are very thankful for the blessings and guidance that he bestowed on them. This faith
317 is based on miracles. These are the testimonies and petitions granted from Saint Michael, which KI-2 narrated:

318 "When I receive a lot of torta orders from customers, I thank St. Michael for the blessings and before I made it,
319 I'll do the sign of the cross and thank Him for the good weather for my ingredients are in good condition. Asking
320 him for a good weather is very important because if the weather is not so good, I b) Expression of Gratitude
321 Firstly, the torta becomes an expression of gratitude, which means that when devotees manifest good intentions
322 and improve their torta business, they owe everything from Saint Michael Archangel. Folks know how to do good
323 because nature provides them the best results, which make the La Torta Dance Festival, a celebration of faith
324 and life.

325 22 Conclusion

326 Argao's La Torta Dance Festival is a culture mix of colonial and indigenous elements as depicted in the dance
327 steps, props and costumes, music and courtship, similar to the Dinagyang Festival of Iloilo, City Philippines,

328 where it depicted a fusion of Roman Catholicism and the indigenous culture of the Panayanons, the people
329 of Panay (Panaguigon, et al, 2015).The La Torta dance steps bestowed an enduring hospitality, a mystical
330 tradition of faith, and an expression of inner peace of the Cebuanos in the South. The props and costumes
331 represented the townspeople's collective values. The torta props symbolized strength, unity, and sweetness
332 equated with the symphony of the guitar nuanced a passion of love. The costumes of the dancers symbolized
333 women's regality and men's chivalric act shaped in a passionate attraction for courtship. La Torta Dance
334 Festivalepitomized townspeople's ethosin the light of cultural dualism, that is, both indigenous and animistic
335 within the townspeople's dependency with nature aided with a strong influence of Castilian heritage left by the
336 Spanish colonizers for more than three centuries in the Philippines (1565-1898). The torta remains a symbolism
337 of the townspeople's testimony of faith, an expression of gratitude, and a shower of blessing, which united the
338 townspeople through a colorful festival as a symbol of faith to their patron saint-the protector of life.

339 **23 VI.**

340 **24 Recommendation**

341 It is recommended that aspiring composers, arrangers and choreographers may continue the La Torta Festival
342 and encourage going beyond their imagination to improve its future choreography, without altering the essence
343 of its unique indigenous and colonial origins.

VII. ¹



1

Figure 1: Figure 1 :

344



234

Figure 2: Figure 2 :Figure 3 :Figure 4 :



Figure 3:



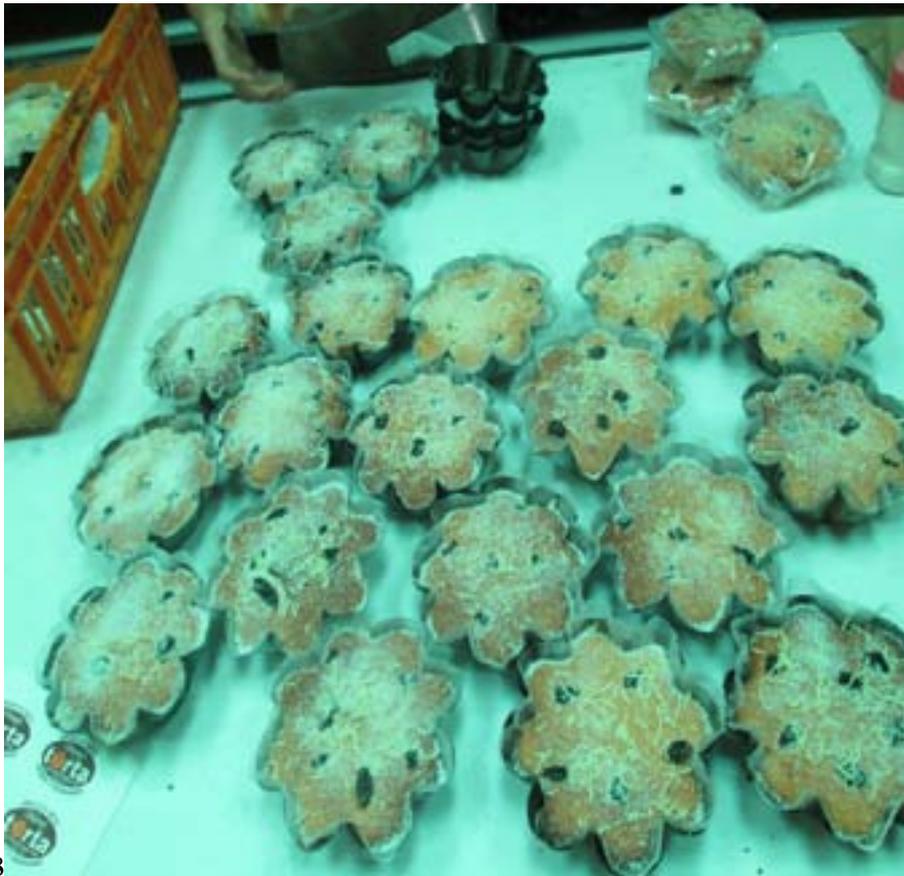
4

Figure 4: Figure 4 :



s7

Figure 5: Argao' s Figure 7 :



8

Figure 6: Figure 8 :



Figure 7: Argao' s



910

Figure 8: Figure 9 :Figure 10 :



1112

Figure 9: Figure 11 :Figure 12 :



s

Figure 10: Argao' s



12

Figure 11: Figure 12 :



12

Figure 12: Figure 12 :



Figure 13:

V.

Figure 14:

345 .1 Acknowledgement

346 Words of acknowledgement goes to Dr. Rufina C. Rosaroso, research mentor, who provided us the opportunities
347 to investigate the festival of Argao and her incessant push to publish this paper, the management and members
348 of the Board of Regents of Cebu Normal University to grant us financial assistance in the publication of this
349 scholarly work.

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