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Fred Eggan and E. D. Hester

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# The Povedano Manuscript of 1572

FRED EGGAN and E. D. HESTER

THE events leading to the recovery and presentation of the Encomendero Diego Lope Povedano's early work, in short title, "La Isla de Negros y las Costumbres de los Visayas," have been summarized, as they were then known, by Mr. E. D. Hester in the *Introduction* to "The Robertson Text and Translation of the Povedano Manuscript of 1572" (Transcript No. 2, Philippine Studies Program, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1954). It may be recalled that Dr. H. Otley Beyer, in his bibliographic note quoted by Hester, points out that the parchment map of 1572, published in *RENACIMIENTO FILIPINO* in November, 1913, aroused the interest of Dr. James A. Robertson, then Librarian of the Philippine Library, and led to the obtaining some time between 1913 and 1917, of "a transcript of Povedano's 1572 manuscript (49 small pages) written to accompany the map to be part of his report to His Majesty the King of Spain on an exploratory trip around the island of Negros." Beyer goes on to say that "either the original or a manuscript copy of the document existed in the Philippine National Library before the war. . . . The Library was entirely destroyed, and the only present possibility for the survival of this document is that Doctor Robertson had a personal copy which may yet be found among the papers in possession of his widow or those turned over to Duke University after his death" (*Introduction*, pp. iii-iv).

The senior author visited Duke University in March 1954 and through the kindness of Dr. Benjamin E. Powell, Librarian,

woods, production of paper from local materials, wood and forest products utilization, standardized pulping, charcoal and briquetting, are among the research works undertaken in the Forest Products Research Institute.

#### OTHER SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

The foregoing survey does not include all the scientific research activities accomplished during the years 1956 through 1959. There are others found in various annual reports. Individual scientific and technical research papers were also published in scientific and technical journals issued in the Philippines during the period.

and Miss Mattie Russell, Curator of Manuscripts, was able to examine the University's valuable Robertson Collection of Filipiniana. The major results of this search were the discovery of photographs of the entire Povedano manuscript of 1572, including the parchment map mentioned above, and a native calendar. These had been listed in the accompanying catalogue, Section III, item No. 35, as: "3 photostats of Moro or earlier papers. Photostat of pre-Spanish calendar or horoscope and 27 photostat pages accompanying, mostly in Spanish." The three photostats mentioned are not Moro but are of documents written or etched on bark in the old Bisayan syllabary.<sup>1</sup> The twenty-seven photostats, or photographs, however, portray — mostly two to the sheet — the forty-nine small pages mentioned by Doctor Beyer, including the title pages, map and calendar. The photographs suggest that the pages are of parchment rather than paper; whether the writing is that of Povedano or a copyist can possibly be determined by future research. Doctor Robertson's statements are not definitive (see below) but it is clear that he believed the manuscript to be in the handwriting of Povedano or to be a contemporary copy. We believe this manuscript is clearly the source from which Doctor Robertson secured his manuscript and from which he made his translation of Povedano 1572.

Additional light on the acquisition of the Povedano and other early manuscripts by Doctor Robertson is contained in his typewritten Report to the Philippine Library Board for the fiscal year covering the period of January 1 to December 31, 1914, a copy of which is available in the Duke University collections. Under the heading of *Manuscripts*, after noting various additions to the Provincial papers, he continues as follows:

Several very important additions to the manuscript wealth of the library were received from Mr. Jose E. Marco, who has proven a good

<sup>1</sup> We are indebted to Doctor Beyer for a copy of the PHILIPPINE HISTORICAL QUARTERLY of September 1919 containing an article by the late Justice Norberto Romualdez offering a transliteration and Spanish translation of the three documents. Justice Romualdez sets forth strong arguments against a pre-Spanish date for the documents.

friend to this institution on many occasions. These consist of the following:

1. *Historia de la Isla de Negros* by the Encomendero Diego Lope Povedano, 1572, written on parchment. This is an exceedingly valuable manuscript for the pre-Spanish history of the Philippines, for besides items of historical and ethnological interest, it contains a key to the transcription of the old Bisayan characters in use at the time of the Spanish discovery.

2. Map of Negros (1572) by Povedano, on parchment.

3. *Las antiguas leyendas de la Isla de Negros*, by Fr. Jose Maria Pavon, who was stationed at Mamamaylan, in Occidental Negros, 1338-1839. In two leather-bound volumes 16 x 11 cm. of 267 and 394 pages respectively. These volumes are most valuable for the early history and stories of Negros. Pavon seems to have had access either to Povedano's work above mentioned or to the work of another writer who had access to it. The first volume contains the only ancient written criminal code of the Filipinos which has yet come to light and it is claimed that this was taken from an old Bisayan ms. of 1433.<sup>2</sup>

4. *Brujerias, y los cuentos de fantasmas*. By Pavon, 1837. A fragment of six leaves, 22 x 16 cm.

5. *Los cuentos de los indios de esta isla [de Negros]* by Pavon, 1838. Leather bound book of 103 pages, 16 x 11 cm. Contains a transcription and translation of an old Bisayan document said to date from the 13th century. Very valuable.<sup>2</sup>

Respectfully submitted,  
Librarian, Philippine Library

Despite the differences in the listing of the title of Item 1, this is undoubtedly a reference to the same manuscript that we have been considering. There is also further confirmation that the Povedano 1572 was secured from Mr. Jose E. Marco during 1914, and that it was written on parchment. A letter from Marco to Dr. Luther Parker, written from Pontevedra, Occidental Negros, and dated November 18, 1913 gives additional information as to the history of the Povedano map of 1572 and the accompanying manuscript. This letter was sent through Robertson's office; the copy which he made of

<sup>2</sup> For translations see "The Robertson Translations of the Pavon Manuscripts of 1838-1839," in Transcript No. 5. Parts A, B, C, D, Philippine Studies Program, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1957.

the letter is in the Duke University Robertson Collection. After mentioning that good historical documents are scarce and rare, Marco goes on to say:

Most of those remaining are either stolen or robbed during the war periods and very well hidden. For instance I found the old servant of late governor Manuel Valdivieso y Morquecho 1850-53. In one of the Moro raids he stole all the valuable papers of the Governor, among them a very rare and unique parchment map of the Isle of Buglas (Negros) made by an Spanish Encomendero by the name of Diegvos Lope Povedano made in 1572. He, I suppose, gave it to a German by the name of C. Boysen, then stole it again in 1898 during the Spanish American War. With it accompanies a curious little Ms. book which reads as follows on the front page:

La Isla de Negros, y las costumbres de los Visayos y Negritos Indios hay ase ser una explicasion de todo lo mas curioso y estraño &c. &c. — 1572 años de la era del Señor.

This is a very curious relic as it contains the following:

Describense el nombre de los antiguos sitios y poblaciones.  
 Como Bino sus nombres.  
 De sus Sociedades economicas y sociales, sitios y ceremonias.  
 Su educacion intelectual y moral.  
 Hystoria Natural.

The letters are very hard to read as they differ quite a bit from ours today. The map which accompanies it Dr. Robertson has a photo of it. They are mostly all Latin. I am not familiar with Latin. There is a valuable feature in the old name. It has pictures of fishes and others such as birds etc. On the back of the map is a writing made by March 23, 1833, and it is signed Manuel Valdivieso y Morquecho, Jn. Doroteo Mariguay, and Gto. Hilisiang. This tells how the map and booklet was found. It is, I suppose, what they call an "Acta."<sup>3</sup>

We intend to buy this old map and the booklet for 35 pesos to the owner and frame it for our library here. We have now a small circulating library. Doctor Robertson is also interested in this map. But I have my heart set on it....

<sup>3</sup> Probably some time before his letter to Parker, Marco sent the parchment map or, possibly, a tracing of it, to RENACIMIENTO FILIPINO which published it in the issue of Nov. 21, 1913, along with a note regarding the circumstances of its recovery and quotation of the endorsement ("Acta") signed by Doroteo, Hilising, and Morquecho. See *Frontispiece and The Povedano Map of 1572* in Transcript No. 2, Philippine Studies Program, Department of Anthropology, University of Chicago, 1945.

I do not think it is easy to get that wooden calendar Father Pavon speaks of. I heard of others in existence over in the towns of Panay but failed to get hold of them thus far. Another Pavon MS. is said to exist but I did not see it yet. The older I get the more interested I am about the History of the "Filipinas".

(Sgn.) Jose E. Marco

Sent through courtesy of Dr. Robertson

In addition to the insights furnished as to the fate of manuscripts in the Philippines during the troubled times of the nineteenth century, the detailed description of the title page of the accompanying "curious little MS. book" makes it clear that this is the same document as Robertson's Povedano 1572. Except for the insertion of the word "indios," Marco's title fits Robertson's transcript exactly — in fact goes further and fills in elements which Robertson had to guess at. The addition of "Indios" seems to be a contribution of Marco's since the photograph of the original manuscript shows no such word; on the other hand Marco's fuller data as to the title suggests either greater ingenuity or an acquaintance with the manuscript in a less damaged condition. For example, Doctor Robertson's rendering:

"HAY AS [SI A?] SER VISTO [Y?...MS. worn] DE  
TODO LO MAS CURIOSO [RARO?]..."

Is given by Marco as:

"HAY ASE SER UNA EXPLICACION DE TODO LO  
MAS CURIOSO Y ESTRANO..."

The transcription "UNA" for "VISTO" is clearly correct; however, only "EXP..." is presently legible for "EXPLICACION" and "ESTRANO," if once present, had been eaten away by the time the Robertson Photographs of the manuscript were made.

The Povedano 1572 was listed in the PHILIPPINE LIBRARY BULLETIN Vol. 2, No. 11 (July 1914), pp. 223-24, reading as follows:<sup>4</sup>

121. POVEDANO, DIEGO LOPE. *La isla de Negros y las costumbres de los Negritos*. 17 p. [sic] MS. Donated to Philippine Library by Jose E. Marco in 1914.

<sup>4</sup> Cited from Bernardo, Gabriel A. "Bibliography of the Old Philippine Syllabaries," Quezon City, 1953.

The author reproduces an old Visayan calendar and gives the Roman equivalents of the old Visayan alphabet... From the key furnished by Povedano, it will be possible to transcribe the three Visayan manuscripts in the Philippine Library...

An article by Doctor Robertson was published as an editorial in the same issue of the *BULLETIN*, pp. 223-24, in which he gives a fuller description and estimate of the Povedano 1572. It reads:<sup>5</sup>

#### SOME RECENT GIFTS AND EXCHANGES AND THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Gifts and exchanges have recently brought some remarkable documents into the Philippine Library, each of which has an important bearing on Philippine history. It is possible that many similar documents are to be found in various parts of the Archipelago, but such material comes to light very seldom. Much will doubtless be destroyed by the "ruthless tooth of time," by accident, or in devious other ways, as already has happened to much that would be valuable in the reconstruction of Philippine history from the side of the Filipino. Hence the items about to be described below have great value.

From Mr. Jose E. Marco, of Pontevedra, Occidental Negros, have come three articles. The first is a parchment manuscript map of the island of Negros, dated 1572. The inscription on the map is as follows: "DESCRIBENS ERIGO RAE ILLE INVICTUS ENCOMENS DIEGUS LOPE POVEDANO DE BUGLAS INSULIS ET LITUS SIBI MACESTUM REX ET HISPANIA FACTUM IN NOSTRI TERRESTER ITER ET NAVIGATIO INTRA ILLE, ANNUS 1572." The map measures 23 by 41 centimeters and is fairly accurately drawn. The island of Negros appears under its former name of Buglas. Somewhat out of position are shown the island of Siquijor, which was formerly called Anunipay, and a portion of the island of Cebu. On the island of Negros, few of the mountains are laid down, but the prominent volcano of Canlaon is located, although somewhat out of place. It is possible to identify many of the present towns. Thus the town of Pontevedra, evidently a place of some size in 1572, is given under its old name of Mara-yio. Hinigaran appears as Jinigaranan. The map will prove useful for comparative study. Accompanying the map is a relation by the same Diego Lope Povedano. This is written on 27 pages of parchment, each measuring 17 by 17-1/2 centimeters. It is entitled "La isla de Negros y las Costumbres de los [Visayos?] y Negritos." This manuscript is in the antiquated chirography of the

<sup>5</sup> Copy kindly furnished by Doctor Bernardo in a letter dated Feb. 9, 1957.

sixteenth century and is difficult to read. Some words have become obliterated and a few have been lost through the crumbling of the parchment, which was evidently exposed to damp. Here is related much of value to the present-day student. The author reproduces an old Visayan calendar, and gives the Roman equivalents for the letters of the old Visayan alphabet. The manuscript appears to have been used by Father Pavor, a friar established in Negros in the first half of the eighteenth century, and whose two-volume manuscript history of Negros is now in the library. From the key furnished by Povedano, it will be possible to transcribe the three Visayan manuscripts conserved in the Philippine Library. The third item sent by Mr. Marco consists of a few pages of a manuscript book by Father Pavon, entitled "Brujerias, y los cuentos de fantasmas," dated in 1837 at Jimamaylan, Negros. The rest of this manuscript appears to have been lost; at least all search for it has been unavailing.

The next mention of the Povedano 1572 by Doctor Robertson was in connection with the Pavon manuscript in his "The Social Structure of, and Ideas of Law Among Early Philippine Peoples..."<sup>6</sup> The pertinent paragraph reads:

Pavon's manuscript, which will be published entire in the near future, is entitled, *The ancient legends of the Island of Negros...* It was sent to the Philippine Library at Manila by Mr. Jose Marco, whose zeal and enthusiasm in the preservation of historical materials relating to the Philippines is most commendable, and also, only too rare... What little was preserved by early Spanish writers, such as the layman Povedano (an *encomendero* whose account of 1572 has recently been discovered and will soon be published), Loarca, and Morga, and the Augustinian Rada, the Franciscan Plascencia, the Jesuit Chirino, and other religious, is very valuable to the student of Philippine history.

Mr. Hester has checked the photographs against the Robertson transcripts which he used in making his translation and finds that they match page by page. The photograph of the Povedano 1572 map of Negros in the Robertson Collection in Duke University is undoubtedly from the original parchment sheet recovered at Himamaylan in 1833; the print sent by Doctor Beyer and used as *Frontispiece* in Transcript No. 2 is clearly a copy of this original. It is signed at lower left margin "Juan Comunhing Rigay" and should be known as the "Rigay" copy or tracing.

<sup>6</sup> Stevens, H. Morse and Herbert E. Bolton (eds.). THE PACIFIC OCEAN IN HISTORY, New York, 1917, pp. 160-61.

The calendar found in the Duke University photograph series is also definitely part of the Povedano 1572 manuscript, since the upper portion of the later page is clearly evident. In Robertson's transcription Povedano writes, "On the reverse of this sheet I have drawn one of the pieces which are used to reckon the years, days, and months. I have copied it with great exactness and it is thus:". Unfortunately Robertson did not include the sketch with his text and translation and until finding the Duke University photographs we had presumed it irretrievably lost in the destruction of the Philippine National Library. This fortunate find enables us to return the calendar to its rightful position. We have not as yet transcribed the Bisayan syllabic characters on the calendar, but it is probable that they refer to the sequence of months.

We hope to present all of the photographs of the Povedano 1572 in a definitive publication, but with the permission of the Duke University Library we have selected for these notes four plates to illustrate various aspects of the manuscript. Plates I and II illustrate the title pages which are on the obverse and reverse of the first sheet; Plate III illustrates the manuscript opened to pages two and three; Plate IV illustrates the calendar which apparently follows page 32 of the text. A copy of the map, Rigay tracing, has already been presented as the *Frontispiece* of Transcript No. 2. The photograph of the presumed original shows it to have been folded once in both directions, possibly for placing in the small lead box in which it was said to have been found. Its shape suggests that it was not bound into the present manuscript but was probably prepared to go along with it. It is not specifically mentioned by Povedano in his 1572 account.

Although the search of the Robertson papers at Duke University was not exhaustive, nothing was found regarding two manuscripts attributed by Marco to Povedano, "Mi Xornada y Peregrinacion en las Yslas Filipinas/1577" and "Las Antiguas Leyendas de los Indios, Jarayas, Jiguesinas e Ygneines de Esta Ysla de Buglas/ 1578." Mr. Marco supplied typed transliterations of these manuscripts to the Philippine Studies Program in 1954 and sold the presumed originals to Mr. Mauro

Garcia, editor of the PHILIPPINE JOURNAL OF SCIENCE and a leading Philippine archivist. Mr. Garcia has analyzed "Mi Xornada..." and a fourth alleged Povedano manuscript, "Lexico de los Primitivos Ydiomas Jiguesina, Jaraya y Igneine.../1579" and has concluded that internal evidence casts doubt on their having been written by Povedano.<sup>7</sup> On review of the typescripts in the files of the Philippine Studies Program we share Mr. Garcia's doubts regarding the "Mi Xornada..." We also share Mr. Garcia's anxiety to trace the true provenience of Marco's transcripts and copies, especially of the extensive document, "Las Antiguas Leyendas..." which presents a notably well organized and apparently consistent content.

We are convinced that the 16th century Spanish orthography on roughly finished parchment evident in the photographs preserved in the Duke University Library, the consistency of these photographs with the Spanish transcripts, English translation and notes in our collection of Robertson papers, and Doctor Robertson's early reports clearly attest his acceptance of the Povedano manuscript of 1572. In view of the almost certain destruction of the original, the photographs appear to establish, so far as may now be possible, the authenticity of the manuscript.

Duke University Library has preserved, in its Robertson Collections, one of the earliest ethnological accounts pertaining to the Philippines—the earliest ethnological account of the island of Negros in the center of the Bisayan group. We would like to express again our appreciation of their kindness in making the Robertson Collection available and in allowing the Philippine Studies Program to quote from some of their documents and to reproduce the photographs of the Povedano 1572 manuscript.

<sup>7</sup> Postscript in "Minutes of the 74th Meeting of the Bibliographical Society of the Philippines," Nov. 28, 1959.

<sup>8</sup> With the author's permission the Philippine Studies Program reproduced as Transcript No. 3, Rebecca P. Ignacio's translation of Marco's transcripts of Povedano's "Las Antiguas Leyendas..." Transcript No. 3 was multilithed as a limited edition for local student use.

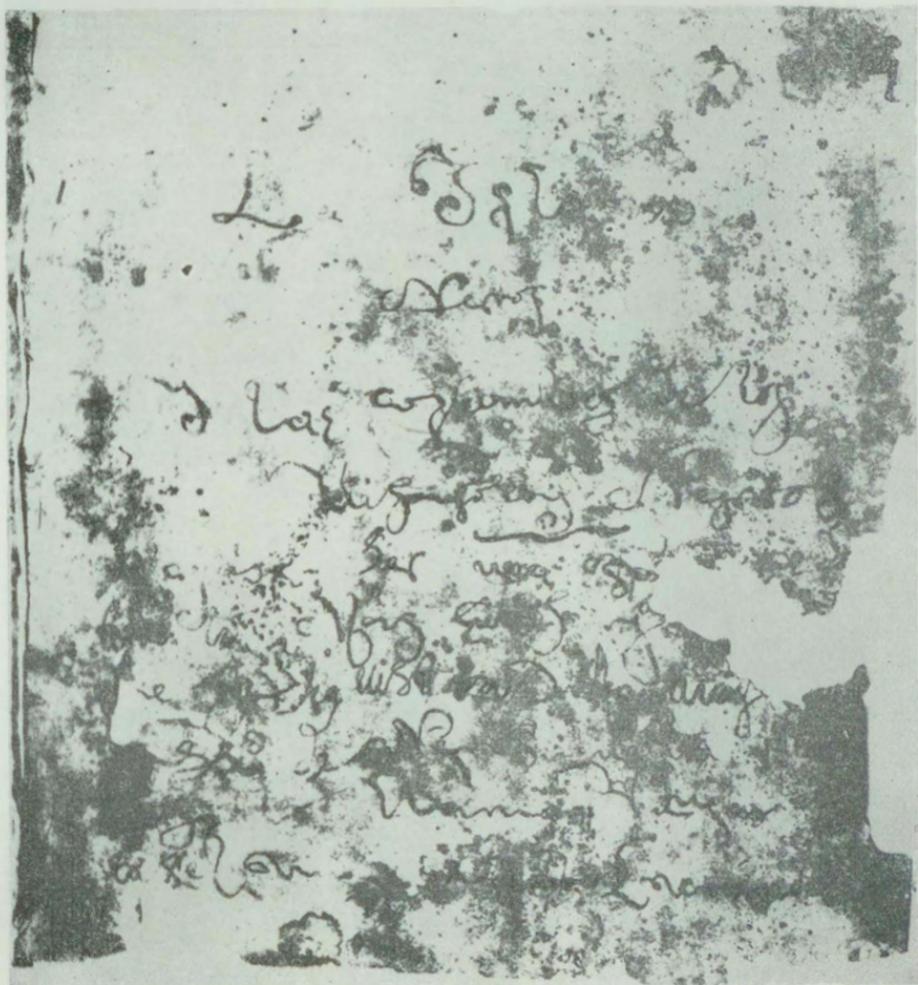


Plate I.—First title page of the Povedano manuscript of 1572.

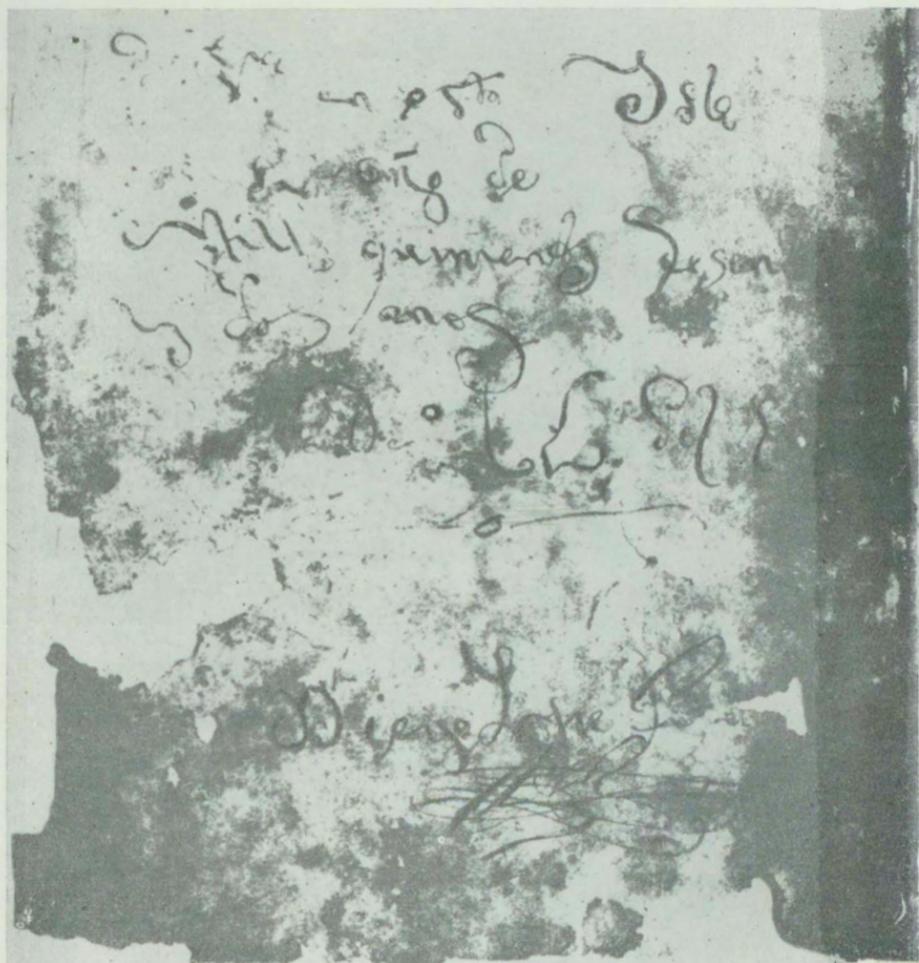


Plate II.—Second title page of the Povedano manuscript of 1572.



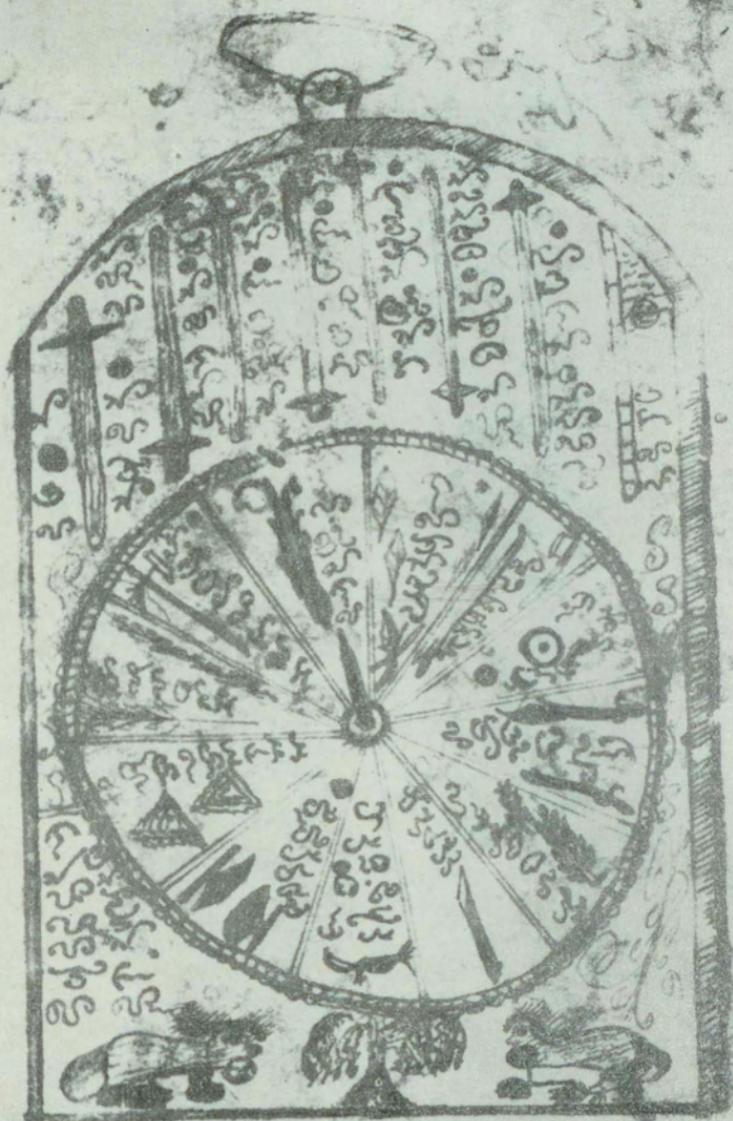


Plate IV.—Sketch of the Bisayan calendar after page 32 of the Povedano manuscript of 1572.