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Francisco Mallari, S.J.

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Muslim Raids in Bicol, 1580-1792

FRANCISCO MALLARI, S.J.

The Philippine "Moro Wars" have left to this day a lasting legacy of suspicion, hostility and disunity between the Muslims of the south and the Christians of the north. This legacy could not be otherwise. For true to their policy of *Divide et Impera*, the Spanish conquistadores gave the Muslims and the Christians disparate identities. They branded the Islamized inhabitants *Moros* with the pejorative connotations of pirate, savage, bandit, etc., and the Christianized inhabitants — *Indios* — ambivalently denoting hispanized, Christianized, therefore, civilized, but in snobbish Spanish society, servile, poor, ignorant and indolent.¹

Against this backdrop, I would attempt to unravel some historical events that transpired from about 1580 to 1792 in a relatively remote region known as Bicolandia. These events consist mostly of the Bicolano's response to the recurrent incursions of Muslim raiders upon their peaceful shores. How did the Bicolanos defend themselves against Muslim attacks from about 1580 to 1792? Their responses were as varied as their needs but easily fall under clear categories.

Bicolandia is an irregularly shaped peninsula stretching down the southeastern extremity of the island of Luzon, including the islands of Masbate, Ticao and Burias on its southwestern side, the

1. Rosalina Miravite, "Historical Background of the Moro Problem," *Mindanao Journal* 3 (Oct.-Dec. 1976): 39. A Muslim writer claims that though there are Filipino Muslims who prefer to be called "Muslim," the name "Moro" has now become "a badge of acceptability, if not of honor." Abdullah Madale, "Educational Implications of Moro History," *Mindanao Journal* 3 (July-Sept. 1976): 89, 97, Cesar Majul, "The Role of Islam in the History of the Filipino People," *Asian Studies* 4 (August 1966): 306.

island of Catanduanes and other outlying islets on its eastern flank. Bicolandia in 1580-1792 was peopled by Agtas, the highlanders; Dumagats, the strand dwellers; and Malay descendants, the lowlanders. The region was once called *Tierra de Ibalon*, a land of once happy, free and industrious people reputed to be the bravest and best armed in these islands.² By the 1590s through the zealous efforts of Franciscan missionaries, many of them had been Christianized. Administratively, Bicolandia consisted of only two provinces: the Province of Camarines comprising the *Partido* or Districts of Iraya, Rinconada, Bicol and Camarines Norte and the Province of Albay comprising the *Partido* of Lagonoy, Tabaco, Sorsogon and Catanduanes.

Why did the Muslims attack Bicolandia? In the absence of relevant documents, oral or written, from the Muslims—the Tausogs, Iranuns, Balanguingui, Magindanaos, Maranaos, Yakans and other Muslim groups one can only make risky assumptions and generalizations. If the Muslims came to Bicolandia only for plunder, it was a losing venture. Bicolandia might have been rich in natural resources but so was Mindanao and Sulu, perhaps even to a greater degree. The majority of Bicolanos who were coast dwellers, occasionally suffered shortages in staples, for the region has the misfortune of lying within the tropical typhoon belt and has only a limited land along the coast fit for tillage.³ In such critical times, it was the perennial abaca that took up the economic slack but only parts of the region were given to its cultivation. Furthermore, like other marketable commodities, it was subject to unpredictable price fluctuations. Norman Owen who did a study of the nineteenth century socioeconomic changes in the region said, around 1810, cordage works, a major abaca product, were hardly mentioned and “may have actually disappeared.”⁴ The much-talked about mining industry in Paracale and Mambulao was never profitably productive and was in a sad

2. Jose Castaño, “Breve noticia acerca del origen, cultura, religion y creencias y supersticiones de los antiguos indios del bicol,” *Archivo Bibliofilo Filipino*, ed. M. E. Retana (Madrid: n. p., 1895), 1:3; and Emma Blair and James A. Robertson, eds. *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1893* (Cleveland: Arthur A. Clarke, 1903), 34:286-87.

3. PNA *Memoria de Albay*, fols. 1-3. For abbreviations used see p. 285.

4. Norman Goodner Owen, “Kabikolan in the Nineteenth Century: Socio-Economic Change in the Provincial Philippines” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1976), xvi.

state in the eighteenth century and the mining populace living a miserable life.⁵ A coasting trade flourished on the eastern coast of the region and even an export trade to Manila, but "the total volume of trade was small."⁶ The prosperous part of the region was in the rice-producing, extensive plains sprawling on the western, southern and eastern sides of Mt. Isarog which was a wide river basin fertilized by the alluvial overflows of the famous Bicol river and nutrient-laden waters cascading down the sides of Isarog.⁷ But this rice granary was deep inland, in the heartland of Bicolandia, and ordinarily not visited by hit and run raiders. If the Muslims launched expeditions against Bicolandia for military, religious and slave-raiding motives, these were highly rewarding enterprises. Bicolandia had shipyards, churches, religious ministers, many Christianized and pagan inhabitants: certainly, a rich source of "strength and aid" not only to Spain but also to Sultans and Datus.⁸

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE MORO WARS

A foretaste of the coming Spanish-Muslim relations occurred on March 1565. Miguel Lopez de Legazpi dispatched the *patache* San Juan to procure information about cinnamon and trade. In Butuan, the Spaniards encountered Muslim traders whom they wanted to attack for their gold, and near Bohol, a Bornean trading vessel which they attacked and captured.⁹ From such encounters (there were several), the Spaniards realized that it would be dif-

5. MN Ms. 312, fols. 81v-82; Ms. 2228, fol. 27v. AFIO D-10/22, Ms. 1823, Antonio Siguenza, *Extensa descripcion de las provincias de Camarines Norte y Sur*, fols. 116-120. Rafael Diaz Arenas, *Memorias historicas y estadisticas de filipinas y particularmente de la grande isla de luzon* (Manila: Imprenta del Diario de Manila, 1850), fol. 2v.

6. Owen, "Kabikolan," p. 300.

7. AFIO 93/19. Ramon Gonzalez Fernandez, *Anuario filipino para 1877* 2a ed. (Manila: Establecimiento Tipografico de Plana y Cia., 1877), p. 367, and PNA *Memoria de Camarines Sur*, fols.

8. For a commentary on the Spanish and Muslim motives for launching the "Moro Wars", see Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Manila: St. Mary's Publishing, 1978), p. 344. Anne Lindsay Reber, "The Sulu World in the 18th and Early 19th Centuries: A Historiographical Problem in British Writings on Malay Piracy" (M.A. dissertation, Cornell University, 1966), p. 206. Bicolandia's population in 1792: Albay 53,047; Camarines 92,217; in 1805: Albay 73,002; Camarines 104,872; in 1810: Albay 103,935 indios and 2,398+ mestizos; Camarines 159,900 indios and 2,398+ mestizos. UST AR Libros: Tomo 229, n.p. Tomas de Comyn, *State of the Philippines in 1810*, trans. William Walton (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1969), p. 145.

9. Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine*, 2:118, 206-9.

ficult to gain a foothold and then a monopoly of the islands' trade, unless they got rid of Muslim and Bornean competitors who far excelled them as traders. This is evident in the letters sent by Governor Guido de Lavezares to New Spain and by Melchor de Legazpi to Madrid.¹⁰ We do not have any evidence documenting the reaction of the Muslims. They must have also realized the necessity of counter-measures to protect their trade from new intruders worse than the piratical Portuguese. Their retaliation, was not long in coming. In 1569 they attacked Spanish possessions for the first time. Muslims and Borneans raided coastal settlements in the Visayas and engaged Martin de Goiti in a naval skirmish.¹¹

In previous encounters with Muslims, the Spaniards had not considered subjugating Mindanao and Sulu. Primarily motivated by his expansionist dream of Spanish domination but cloaked under the guise of punishing what the Spaniards called "pirates," Governor Francisco de Sande adopted a plan to do just that. But first, he had to put an end to Brunei's influence in the islands. For the Spaniards, the die was cast.

In 1578 Governor Sande attacked Kota Batu, the capital of the Brunei Sultanate. That same year, with the "reduction of Sulu into a vassal state" as the primary reason, Esteban Rodriguez de Figueroa at the head of an expeditionary force overwhelmed Jolo, forced Sultan Pangiran to surrender and sue for peace terms.¹² This signalled Spain's first full-scale attack against the Sulu Sultanate and the opening salvo of Spain's offensive against the Islamic states in the archipelago. The long and bloody Moro Wars started, a period of attacks and counterattacks, of treaties made and treaties broken, of terror and bloodshed motivated by varying interests.

ASSAULT ON SHIPYARDS

From folk memory, the earliest known raid in Bicolandia was in the late sixteenth century around 1580. Slipping through

10. Ibid., 159; 183-87.

11. Jose Montero y Vidal, *Historia de la pirateria malayo-mahometana en mindanao, jolo y borneo* (Madrid: Imprenta y Fundacion de Manuel Tello, 1888), 1:136-37.

12. Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine*, 4:174-75; Thomas M. Kiefer, "Tausog

Lagonoy gulf, Magindanao marauders attacked a settlement presently known as barrio Kinalansan, San Jose, Camarines. The reputedly "bravest and well-armed" Bicolanos met them with bolos, knives, bows and arrows. The siege lasted for a month. Food became scarce, and the Bicolanos took to butchering any animal around. Nothing is known about the conclusion except that in a skirmish at Sabang Kawayan, southeast of San Jose, the Bicolanos came out victorious under the leadership of a certain Tintin Bandoy.¹³

Allegedly to punish the Magindanaos, Esteban Rodriguez de Figueroa led another expedition in 1596 into Mindanao, the first Spanish attempt for its conquest and pacification. He failed with dire consequences. Aroused to a greater fury by the realization that their independence and faith were threatened, the Magindanaos built stronger defenses and more ships, desirous of vengeance.¹⁴

Major developments cooperated in fulfilling that desire and opening Bicolandia to devastating raids. First, the withdrawal in 1597 of the Spanish garrison at La Caldera, at the tip of Zamboanga peninsula, allowed the Magindanao fleets to sail out of Moro Gulf, round the peninsula, and race towards the Visayas and Luzon. Horacio de la Costa said it was like removing the stopper from a bottle and releasing a malignant *djinn*.¹⁵ Second, Governor Pedro Bravo de Acuña's peace overtures to the Magindanaos failed. Third, the Manila Chinese revolt in 1603 tied down badly needed resources to fight the Muslims. Fourth, the Dutch began their series of attempts from 1600 to 1648 to wrest control of the Philippines and for a while allied themselves with the Muslims.¹⁶

With mounting Dutch attacks, Governor Juan de Silva stripped the forts and outposts of the islands to prepare a mighty fleet to drive out the Dutch. But the Dutch eluded Silva's powerful fleet, sailed to Jolo and invited the Muslims to join them in attacking

Armed Conflict: The Social Organization of Military Activity in a Philippine Moslem Society" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1969), p. 12.

13. PNL HDP Camarines Sur, IV-29, pp. 58-59.

14. Najeeb M. Saleeby, *The History of Sulu* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1963), pp. 58-59. John L. Phelan, *The Hispanization of the Philippines* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press 1959), p. 137; Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine*, 19:216-17.

15. Horacio de la Costa, "A Spanish Jesuit Among the Magindanaus," *Comment* No. 12 (1961): 23.

16. Montero, *Historia de la piratería*, 1:153; Gregorio F. Zaide, *Philippine Political and Cultural History* (Manila: Philippine Education Company, 1957), 1:255-68.

Manila. As Spanish attention was focused on the Dutch, the Muslims wisely attacked shipyards in the provinces, the sources of Spanish naval vessels, and took workers and persons of rank as captives and exacted large sums for their ransom.¹⁷

Bicolandia was the site of major naval shipyards which the Spaniards established in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. One of the biggest was at Pantaon (present Pantao) on the western coast of Camarines, at the bend of a bay. It was a good site for a shipyard. Nearby were forests of high quality ship timber, like molave, narra, guijo and palo maria, trees so huge that a thousand men were needed to drag one. The region had abundant abaca, one of the most, if not the most durable cordage for ships. Encompassed by steep shores, the bay was deep, the right place for floating deep-draft vessels. Its waters rested on a bed of sand in some parts and silt in other parts. Its only disadvantage, if it could be called that, was its exposure to the winds from the north and the *collas* or storms blowing from the southwest.¹⁸

On October 1616, probably emboldened by their Dutch allies, a fearsome fleet of 80 *caracoas* (a short, light craft propelled by a sail and 80 to 100 rowers) of raiders silently sailed through Burias Pass and stormed the Pantaon shipyard. Notwithstanding the big number of shipyard workers, the guns and garrison, they succeeded in burning a galleon and two *patache*, the barracks, offices and other buildings with the damage and the loot calculated at a million pesos. Loaded with captured shipyard workers and distinguished personages, the raiders sailed to Manila Bay, burned the Cavite navy yard, and carried away some Spaniards for ransom.¹⁹

In the same year, Magindanaos sacked Calaguimit to extinction, a village believed to be at the eastern part of the island of

17. Juan Delgado, *Historia general sacro-propana, politica y natural de las islas del poniente llamadas filipinas* (Manila: Imprenta de El Eco de Filipinas de D. Juan Atayde, 1892), pp. 195-96; Emilio Bernaldez y Fernandez de Folgueras, *Reseña historica de la guerra al sur de filipinas* (Madrid: Imprenta del Memorial de Ingenieros, 1857), p. 60. Horacio de la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines: 1581-1768* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1967), p. 320. Saleeby, *The History*, p. 64; Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine*, 19:204-5.

18. PNA *Memorias de Albay*, fol. 35b. MN Ms. 2237, doc. 10, fols. 83-83v.

19. Vicente Barrantes, *Guerras piraticas de filipinas contra mindanaos y joloanos* (Madrid: Imprenta de Manuel G. Hernandez, 1878), p. 10 Majul, *Muslims*, p. 123. Montero, *Historia de la pirateria*, 1:153-54.

Bagatao at the mouth of Sorsogon bay where a shipyard operated for the construction of galleons, one of which was the Nuestra Señora del Buen Socorro, the largest and best galleon built in the islands. This shipyard met what William Schurz called the three requisites for the site of a dockyard: a safe port, abundant supply of ship timber and native labor. The raiders seized the missionary, Fr. Alonso de la Soledad, and brought him with them on their return journey. While at sea, a great storm arose. They offered to sacrifice the priest, and the storm subsided. After beating him cruelly for continuously preaching to them the Christian faith, they cast him into the sea. Swimming for dear life, the missionary reached for the side of the vessel but his captors cut off his hands. The poor man sank into the depths.²⁰

After the Calaguinit raid, there seems to be no more Bicolandia raids on record till Governor Juan Niño de Tabora's term in 1625-32. The Magindanaos were too preoccupied with their dynastic wars, and Katchil Qudarat, one of the contending princes, had allied himself with the Spaniards for his cause. If the Magindanaos had thought of ceasing Bicolandia raids for the meantime, other Muslims had not. Datu Ache who was humiliated and robbed by the Spaniards when he headed a Sulu embassy to Manila in 1624 had a score to settle.²¹

He made his first move. Rajah Bongsu led a squadron of 2,000 men in more than thirty caracoa to Bicolandia in 1627. On the way, they captured two vessels: one loaded with iron, cannon balls and fuses for the rebuilt and reenforced Pantaon shipyard; the other, with sixty Indios and two Spaniards on their way to cut wood for the shipyard. Through interpreters, the raiders found out the shipyard's location. Before dawn, they attacked unexpectedly, catching the Spanish garrison off guard. They killed two Spaniards and many others while those who were not wounded or captured fled. They loaded their ships with an enormous amount of booty: artillery, ammunition, iron, and many things of value. Then they burned the dockyard, the unfinished ships,

20. Felix de Huerta, *Estado geografico topografico, estadistico, historico, religioso de la santa y apostolica provincia de San Gregorio Magno* (Binondo: Imprenta de M. Sanchez, 1865), p. 589. Mariano Goyena del Prado, *Ibalon* (Manila: General Printing Press, 1940), pp. 105-06. William Schurz, *The Manila Galleon* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1939), pp. 195-96.

21. de la Costa, *The Jesuits*, p. 322.

and threw into the sea the rice they could not take. They tarried a few days, eating and drinking, then sailed away with about 300 captives, among them Doña Lucia, a Spanish lady, who became the Sulu Sultan's favorite. Such was Datu Ache's revenge, a letter left behind informed the Spanish government.²²

The wounded pride of Datu Ache was not completely healed. In 1629 the Datu led thirty-six caracoa seeking an engagement with the Spaniards. Having met no enemy squadrons, he swept through the coastal settlements in Camarines, Samar and Leyte, plundering, devastating cultivated fields, looting churches of sacred vessels and ceremonial ornaments before razing them to the ground, and capturing inhabitants not fortunate enough to flee on time to the hills with their fellows and religious ministers.²³

At the coming of the seventeenth century, as a defensive move, the Spaniards penetrated Mindanao to protect the Visayas and "neutralize Mindanao and Jolo in the Hispano-Dutch war, for the Muslims frequently cooperated with the Dutch against the Spaniards."²⁴ Until the establishment in 1630 of a *presidio* (garrison) and construction of a fort in Zamboanga under the direction of Fr. Melchor Vera, S.J., the Mindanao, Visayan and Sibuyan seas were Moro lakes. The Magindanaos, Iranuns, Camucones and Ternatans cruised on these waters and attacked settlements and towns at will, intimidating native populations not only incapable of organized defense but also left defenseless by the civil government. In the Visayas and Christian provinces in Mindanao, coastal villages were plundered and burned, grain fields razed or ravaged, churches desecrated, missionaries and inhabitants killed or captured and sold in slave markets down south as far as the Moluccas. By 1621 there were about 10,000 Christian captives in Mindanao.²⁵ The Spaniards sent squadrons in pursuit of marauding fleets but were helpless and made a mockery of by the swift, light cruisers. Such a pathetic predicament of the natives and their Spanish masters bequeathed to history, in the words of Emilio Bernaldez

22. Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine*, 22:204-5; Majul, *Muslims*, p. 126.

23. Pedro Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de philipinas de la compaña de jesus* (Manila: Imprenta de la Compania de Jesus, 1749), pp. 43-44. Majul, *Muslims*, p. 127.

24. Phelan, *The Hispanization*, pp. 137-38.

25. Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine*, 19:264.

y Fernandez de Folgueras, an officer of the army engineer corps and veteran of the Moro wars, "bloody and mournful pages."²⁶

In the administration of Governor Cerezo de Salamanca in 1633-35, the country experienced diverse natural calamities: volcanic eruptions, plagues of locusts and bad harvests with resultant scarcity and starvation.²⁷ Swarms of locusts plagued Bicolandia and, on February 1614, Mayon erupted, which was followed by renewed raids. In 1636 the Magindanaos obliterated the old village of Iguey, south of the entrance of Sorsogon bay, fronting the island of Bagatao, and captured a majority of its inhabitants, including its minister, Fr. Francisco de San Ildefonso, whom they mangled and cast into the sea.²⁸

Two years later, a large fleet of Magindanaos assaulted the settlement of Pantao, the site of a new productive shipyard, now a part of Magallanes. The assault must have been overwhelming, for although it was defended by a garrison furnished with artillery, Captain Rodrigo Arias Giron, the chief of construction work, fled to the nearby forest where he and a fellow officer, Captain Juan Pimentel, were killed by the pursuing pirates. Fr. Domingo de los Martires directed the defense of the dockyard but in the face of a superior enemy, his men took to the mountains where they were captured after three days of fierce fighting. The raiders then burned the vessels, destroyed the dockyard, church, houses and carried whatever they could including the priest.²⁹

To stem the rising tide of Muslim depredations and respond to the clamor in Manila for punitive action, Governor Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, an accomplished strategist, brought the war to the enemy strongholds. He crushed the formidable Sultan Qudarat of Mindanao in 1637 and occupied Jolo in 1638. The next year, Governor Pedro Almonte of Zamboanga followed up with an extermination campaign in Jolo, killing every Muslim he could find and liberating Christian captives.³⁰

After Almonte's departure, encouraged by the arrival of some Dutch warships, the Muslims broke the treaty of peace and launched

26. Bernaldez, *Reseña*, p. 60.

27. Jose Montero y Vidal, *Historia general de filipinas* (Madrid: Establecimiento Tipografico de la Viuda e Hijos de Tello, 1895), 1:191.

28. Huerta, *Estado*, p. 589.

29. Goyena, *Ibalon*, pp. 103-14.

30. Miguel A. Espina, *Apuntes para hacer un libro sobre Jolo* (Manila: Imprenta y Litografia de M. Perez Hijo, 1888), pp. 61, 64-65. Saleeby *The History*, p. 67.

marauding incursions into the Visayas and Camarines in 1646.³¹ They attacked the shipyard in Bagatas, Camarines, set fire to an unfinished galleon, took some captives including a Lay Brother, the nurse of the shipyard and the confessor, Fr. Domingo de los Martires, who was ransomed in Mindanao two years after his capture at Pantao. They cruelly beat the priest when he baptized the newly born baby of a fellow female captive. And to calm the storm that endangered their lives, the raiders sacrificed the Lay Brother to their god.³²

Between 1640 to 1649, raiders attacked the Franciscan missions along the coast of Albay. Frequent raids by Magindanaos and Camucones reduced the *visita* of Sorsogon and the villages of Bacon and Malinao to tiny communities of bamboo huts with bamboo churches. The Dutch attacked Albay town and razed its church and friary. Since the town was a busy port where the King's ships tied up to collect the *bandalas* and tributes, the government built a fortified stone house, a wall and a watchtower. The Dutch, Magindanaos and Camucones did not spare nearby Tabaco either which afterwards the people fortified with a small fort.³³

THE TURBULENT YEARS, 1653-63

Governor Corcuera's victories went to naught like the empty celebrations in his honor. Tomas Comyn, General Manager of the Compañia Real de Filipinas for eight years, claimed the Spaniards had put too much trust in the peace treaties which the Sultans of Sulu and Mindanao only used as ploys.³⁴ But the Spaniards had also broken faith. In Manila, Religious Orders were engaged in bitter controversies. On the Governor's seat was a man of little practical sense, Sabiniano Manrique de Lara. In the whole country anarchy reigned. In this state of affairs, two recalcitrant datos, the Datu of Jolo and the Datu of Tawi-Tawi, set out on a pillaging and slave-raiding expedition in 1655 with thirteen vessels along coasts of Bohol, Leyte and Masbate. When they returned with

31. Saleeby, *The History*, p. 67.

32. Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine*, 35:316.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 284-87.

34. Comyn, *State*, pp. 116-17.

much booty and eighty captives, the Sulu Sultan returned the captives and punished the datos, for peace with the Spaniards at that time was beneficial to his cause.³⁵

Folk recollection in Masbate still remembers stories of seventeenth-century Muslim raids in places in Masbate and Ticao, like barrio Magdalena, town of Baleno; sitio Enambacan, town of Palanas and the town of Mandaon. The raiders took captives to be sold to the "Terongs" [Tirones] whom Masbateños believed to be people with tails, feasting on human flesh.³⁶ Nearby is a mountain named Guinhanayan where, according to belief, the raiders hung the intestines of captives and killed those who could not be brought to Mindanao.

The ports of San Jacinto and Ticao, the barrios of Benetinan and Buyo of the town of San Fernando in Ticao island were also Muslim targets. The Muslims were intent on putting the two ports out of use and exterminating their people, for the galleons from Manila on the way to Acapulco stopped at these ports to escape heavy monsoon rains before the coming of a typhoon or stack up firewood and fresh water, and waited for the strong south-westerlies to blow to propel them through the treacherous currents and dangerous shoals off the Calantas and Naranjos islands towards the Strait and open Pacific.³⁷

As though the fear of the Muslims were not enough, a great panic seized Manila in 1662. After driving the Dutch out of Formosa, the powerful Chinese pirate Koxinga demanded homage and tribute from the Philippines.³⁸ The public coffers were empty, and the forces at hand were not more than 600 soldiers.³⁹

35. Montero, *Historia de la piratería*, 1:244.

36. The Tirones were also called Camucones, a savage piratical people on the north-east of Borneo where they were known as Orang Tedong. They certainly had no tails but it was rumored that they ate human flesh. Capt. Thomas Forrest said he was told that these people "will in certain cases eat human flesh." Thomas Forrest, *A Voyage to New Guinea and the Moluccas, from Balambangan: Including an Account of Magindanao, Sooloo and Other Islands* (London: G. Scott, 1779), p. 375.

37. PNL HDP Masbate, No. 58, p. 1; No. 59, pp. 1-4; No. 60, pp. 1, 12. PNL MF Ramo: Filipinas, Reel 3, Tomo 5, Exp. 3, fol. 197. Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga, *An Historical View of the Philippine Islands* trans. John Mayer (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1966), p. 427.

38. Domingo Abella, "Koxinga Nearly Ended Spanish Rule in the Philippines in 1662," Paper presented to the International Conference on History, Kuala Lumpur, August 1968; Koxinga's letter carried to Manila by a Dominican missionary appears on pp. 17-18.

39. Francisco Combes, *Historia de mindanao y jolo* (Madrid: Imprenta de la Viuda de M. Minuesa de los Rios, 1897), p. 167.

The measure agreed upon by Governor de Lara and the General Junta whose members were without experience of war or memory of past piracies was to abandon the southern forts and *presidio* and concentrate all forces in Manila to the vehement objections of the Jesuits.⁴⁰ If the withdrawal of the garrison at La Caldera in 1597 was like removing the stopper from a bottle, this measure, it was believed, would not only remove the stopper but also knock the bottom off the bottle. The imagined death and destruction to follow was intensified by the raids in the Visayas, Capul island and Guinobatan in Camarines by a fleet of sixty vessels led by the Datus of Jolo, Tawi-Tawi, Pacay Lacay and Tuptup who took advantage of the turmoil in Manila.⁴¹

The expected "doomsday" did not materialize. Koxinga's death before he could carry out his threat and Qudarat's peaceful behaviour and death were decisive factors. Except for the damage done to the Catholic missions in Mindanao and a few scattered minor raids by non-Muslims, the Camucones, the islands experienced a relative peace for the next fifty years till the re-fortification of the Zamboanga fort in 1718.⁴²

One of those minor raids was the sacking of Albay and Camarines by Borneans in 1636. In two years, the littoral settlements of Albay lost about 1,500 Bicolanos to the raiders. In retaliation, the Spaniards armed two *sampan* at the port of Albay town. Manned by the *Alcalde Mayor*, Frs. Francisco de San Diego, Juan Iranzo, Bernardo de San Marcos and Agustin de San Francisco (Curates of Libon, Polangui, Oas and Camalig respectively). Juan de San Gregorio and Juan Cervera (two Lay Brothers), five Spaniards and some inhabitants of Albay who were skilled in maritime fare, they left in search of the raiders. They came upon them at the mouth of Sulat bay, north of Albay port, and attacked them. After an intense engagement of two hours, the raiders lost nine

40. Ibid., pp. 619-22. Agustin Santayana, *La isla de mindanao, su historia y su estado presente, con algunas reflexiones acerca de su porvenir* (Madrid: Imprenta de Alhambra y Compania, 1862), pp. 26-27. Montero, *Historia de la pirateria*, 1:245-49.

41. Blair and Robertson, *The Philippines*, 41:312-13.

42. The Camucones were not Muslims but pagans. They were despised by Tausogs and Magindanaos who considered them vile and barbarous. At one time, Alimuddin I joined the Spaniards in an expedition against them in 1769. Forrest, *A Voyage*, pp. 16, 335, 374-75. Saleeby, *The History*, p. 197. Juan de la Concepcion, *Historia general de Philipinas* (Manila: Imprenta del Seminario Conciliar y Real de San Carlos, 1788-1792), 12:97.

vessels, sixty dead and various wounded. On the Spanish side, two natives and one Spaniard died. Juan Cervera died from wounds days later. The raiders fled to the island of Cagraray opposite the town of Bacacay where they were attacked by Pedro Estevan and his armed group who were on garrison duty there. The survivors sailed for San Bernardino Strait and ran into a strong storm near Masbate which destroyed every vessel and crew.⁴³

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY RAIDS

It will be noticed from the following events that the Muslims shifted their target from naval shipyards to settlements which was the beginning of relentless raids characterized by mass attacks on population centers. For reasons I have not come upon, sometime in the 1700s, the government closed down the shipyards in Bicolandia. In the absence of military targets, population centers came next. There was so much destruction of villages and towns, burning of churches and houses and other things of value that the Muslims gave the impression they were on a *jihad* or holy war.

With the reestablishment of the fort at Zamboanga, the Magin-danaos and Sulus perceived a provocative act on the part of the Spaniards and a new threat to their security. In 1721 a combined Magindanao-Sulu armada of 104 vessels and about 3,000 men besieged the fort but were repulsed. The Spaniards counterattacked with armed expeditions resulting in the Sulu Sultan's suing for terms in 1726.⁴⁴

The Sultan's followers broke the treaty in 1730 by a series of raids in the Visayas. Even as the country was expecting peace after the accession of the shrewd, controversial Sultan Alimud Din I who was trying to lead his Sultanate to peace and progress by cooperating with the government, his usurper brother, Bantilan, was plundering the Visayas. In Bicolandia, raiders sacked the coastal towns of Donsol and Sorsogon. The years 1737, 1740, 1749 and 1781 were Sorsogon's most tragic and saddest years. Raiders razed the town and carried men, women and children to captivity. In a bloody battle with the raiders in 1740, Sorsogon suffered twenty-six inhabitants killed and twenty-eight women

43. Goyena, *Ibalon*, pp. 81-82.

44. Montero, *Historia de la pirateria*, 1:256-59; Majul, *Muslims*, pp. 191, 193-94.

and children captured. In 1746 the frequently razed village of Gate, former visita of Bulusan, notwithstanding its 12 kilometer distance from the sea, was assaulted. After killing Don Crisanto, the *Cabeza de Barangay*, who fought before the eyes of his people, the Muslims put the church and almost all the houses to the torch and took into captivity men, women and children.⁴⁵

In the face of the mounting fury of the Sulu, Magindanao and Bornean marauders, the government could find no appropriate measures to check them. Criminal negligence and corruption were responsible. Provincial executives diverted fighting ships from defense duties to their own commercial enterprise and employed fort personnel for their own personal services. At this stage, Francisco Jose de Obando, an admiral of the Royal Navy, took over the office of Governor General in 1750. On his appointment, he was in Lima, Peru when a killer earthquake devastated Callao. It seemed to be a premonition of his coming tumultuous rule.⁴⁶

Right away, he ordered an inquiry into the state of war vessels, which were found in a sorry state. He had innovations made on the firearms. Then in 1751 he issued a proclamation of merciless extermination of raiders with fire and sword. He capped these preliminaries with an expedition to Jolo in 1752 which ended in disaster.⁴⁷

The aftermath of the defeat was more disastrous. The Muslims realized that the Spaniards could be beaten after all. Only a spark was needed to set the eruption of a raiding activity unmatched in fury ever since the Spanish conquest. Bantilan provided the spark. As Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga described it:

45. Goyena, *Ibalon*, pp. 107, 184. Huerta, *Estado*, p. 593.

46. Santayana, *La isla*, p. 31. Montero, *Historia de la piratería*, 1:290, 291; *Historia general*, 1:497. The evils arising from the Alcalde's license to trade are mentioned in Sinibaldo de Mas, *Informe sobre el estado de las islas Filipinas en 1842* (Madrid: n.p., 1843), 2:4; Barrantes, *Guerras*, p. 158; Jean B. Mallat, *The Philippines* trans. Pura Santillan Castrence (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1983), p. 224; PNA EP-A 1799-1964, vol. 2, fols. 1171-117b; 1772-1836, fol. 171b.

47. Concepcion, *Historia*, 12:179. Santayana, *La isla*, pp. 31-32. Montero, *Historia general*, 1:577-78. The Governor General issued a declaration of war against the Muslims of Jolo and Borneo in 1752. UST AR Libros: Tomo 81, fols. 218-20.

The haughty Bantilan who ruled the kingdom of Jolo in the absence of his brother, undertook to induce, by the victory he had gained over the Spaniards, the men of Mindanao to break the peace which they were observing with us and to harass us as much as they could; and he urged all the pirates to take up arms against the Spaniards.⁴⁸

Raids erupted in 1752 to last until the 1770s. But 1754 was the bloodiest year. The Mindanao, Visayan, and Sibuyan seas were plowed by pillaging prows on their way to plunder and destroy towns, kill priests, Spaniards, natives, and take thousands of captives, sometimes the entire population of towns, into slavery. Many settlements and towns were repeatedly raided, and some of them disappeared from the map. The government was practically helpless. The few navy ships afloat were either rotting or in need of careening, while the treasury had almost empty coffers.⁴⁹

In the history of Muslim raids in Bicolandia, the series of raids in the 1750s stand out as the most savage and most destructive. The long absence of raids lulled the Bicolanos into neglecting security measures. Antonio de Sigüenza, an officer on the army staff and author of an extensive description of the Camarines provinces, even went as far as attributing the capture of Bicolanos to their stupidity and cowardice. Worse yet, they were described as insensible to the loss of their wives and children.⁵⁰

The wary, however, knew the dangerous months. When the "pirate wind" blew, as the southwesterlies were called, from April to well into October, they scanned the horizon for signs of massed sails of silent and swift *vinta*, *panco*, *joanga*, *caracoa* and *salisipan* scudding through San Bernardino or Samar sea or Sibuyan sea on a mission of death and destruction usually on time for the harvest.⁵¹

The attacks in the 1750s might appear wanton. They were not. They were well planned. Shifting their targets from well populated pueblos where resistance was strong, they pounced on unarmed or lone trading vessels, defenseless visita and settlements of twelve to twenty scattered houses.⁵² In the 1750s, a fleet of

48. Zuñiga, *An Historical View*.

49. Ibid., p. 167. Montero, *Historia general*, 1:510-11. Santayana, *La isla*, p. 32.

50. MN Ms. 1823, fol. 436. PNL MF Ramo: Filipinas, Reel 3, Tomo 5, Exp. 3, fol. 195.

51. Montero, *Historia de la piratería*, 2:51b. PNA EP-Masbate/Ticao, fol. 110b.

52. PNL MF Ramo: Filipinas, Reel 3, Tomo 5, Exp. 3, fol. 195.

Iranun vessels raided a *sitio* or Limbuan, Masbate and killed those who resisted capture. Those who escaped organized themselves and, though poorly armed, tried to drive away the raiders unsuccessfully. The raiders left after a week.

HEIGHT OF MORO FURY

The year 1754 was particularly hard in Mindanao. The harvests were bad. The raiders, therefore, went for Christian captives as well as food. They swooped on the Recollect missions on the islands of Tablas, Ticao and Masbate in Bicolandia, carrying away about two-thirds of population and left no inhabitants on the islands of Maestre de Campo and Burias.⁵³

In June while the inhabitants of Bacon, Partido of Sorsogon, were out in their fields, 900 Maranaos invaded the town-proper. They killed those who fought, captured thirty-eight persons, looted the houses and the church, taking with them sacred vessels, jewelry and ornaments before burning them. The panic-stricken people sought safety by flight to the hills and shunned a defenseless community life, many of them dying without the Sacraments.⁵⁴

In July seven large Muslim vessels attacked a King's galiot opposite the town of Donsol. The galiot appeared an easy prey. The attackers fought it for three hours but the swift little ship was not outfought. It kept up an intense fire, sank two and so damaged the others that they could hardly retire to join the rest.⁵⁵

In September, after raids in Samar, Muslims invaded the town of Albay. They pillaged and burned it, killed eight persons and captured twelve. The Albayenos did not submit like sheep. They killed ten invaders and having run out of powder, the Alcalde Mayor retreated with his people to Cagsaua, a town at the foot of Mayon volcano. With a reenforcement of Camarines Bicolanos, the Alcalde counterattacked. After three days of fighting, they dislodged the invaders who fled, leaving behind the spoils. Totally

53. Francisco Gainza, *Memoria y antecedentes sobre las expediciones de Balangui y jolo* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipografico del Colegio de Santo Tomas, 1851), p. 30. Barrantes, *Guerras*, p. 53.

54. Quoting P. A. Paterno, *Historia de Filipinas*, tomo 7, p. 16, Goyena said it was in July, not June. Goyena, *Ibalon*, p. 186. Concepcion, *Historia*, 13:190. Montero, *Historia*, 1:516.

55. Concepcion, *Historia*, 13:190-91.

terror-stricken by the ferocious marauders, the victory did not prevent many from lugging their children and belongings and dispersing in the mountain fastnesses, subsisting on roots.⁵⁶

Shortly afterwards, one early dawn, forty-one *joanga* (large, heavily armed vessels manned by 150-200 men) were seen heading for Albay port. When the Muslims landed, they found Albay town deserted, for the inhabitants had fled to the mountains. The Albayños could have fought back again but their four falconets were short of munitions and powder. The Muslims looted the town, set the houses on fire, then pursued the fleeing inhabitants. Burdened with their children and belongings, the pursued made little progress, and the pursuers could have caught up with them had they not come upon a place with food and drinks, probably left by the fleeing people. They indulged in eating and drinking till nightfall, enabling the people to make good their escape. Those Muslims were probably the same intruders who attacked the nearby town of Cagsaua at a time when the *principales* were proposing to erect a *castillo* (watchtower) at the port of Putiao at the western coast of the province which could be another entrance for raiders.⁵⁷

Around this period, Muslim marauders attacked the sitio of Sta. Cruz in Caramoan which was so named to commemorate the Spaniards' landing and planting of the Cross. People in that area love to recount their *guerra de halos* (war of pestles). Their ancestors did not have any arms for defense but they fought back with pestles, locally called *halo*, for pounding palay. The other towns of Albay and Camarines, like Caramoan, Camalig, Guinobatan, Libon, Bacacay, Malinao and Tiwi were not lucky. They were also raided and razed.⁵⁸

Catanduanes island had its share of raids. In 1754 Muslims suddenly struck a defenseless settlement on the northern coast and carried away many persons into slavery. The survivors moved inland and formed a community for mutual protection. They named their new place Payo. The Muslims came again and took captives. Once more, the terrified people transferred to a safer

56. *Relacion de la valerosa defensa de los naturales bisayas del pueblo de Palompong* (Manila: Compania de Jesus, 1755), p. 13. Concepcion, *Historia*, 13:191. Montero, *Historia general*, 1:518.

57. PNA EP-A 1800-1858, fol. 391b. PNL HDP Albay, III-4, p. 170. It will be noticed that as the Muslims shifted their target from shipyards to population centers, they also shifted to the *joanga*, a large boat faster and more spacious than the *caracoa*.

58. PNL HDP Camarines Sur, p. 1. Goyena, *Ibalon*, p. 81.

place, three kilometers away, on a hill overlooking the approaches and named the new site Cabanua. With the end of Muslim marauding, they went back to their original coastal home and established the present town of Panganihan.⁵⁹

The year after, one early morning, the usual time for attacks, ten large vessels anchored silently between Minalatoy and Pandanan points, present site of the port of Virac, Catanduanes. Francisco Calumpad, the popular and courageous ex-*gobernadorcillo*, in company with two equally courageous ex-*gobernadorcillo*, Apolonio Valenzuela and Diego Manlagnit, gave battle to the raiders while the people fled to the forests. The outnumbered inhabitants retreated to Elihan in barrio Banicop, Virac, luring the Muslims into an ambush. It is not certain whether Calumpad was killed at the initial fighting or at Elihan but they found his headless body.⁶⁰

Manlagnit was elevated as *gobernadorcillo*, a move that boosted the morale of the fighting men. They defended Elihan stubbornly and finally repulsed the attackers. The Muslims retired to the town-proper. Finding it deserted, they sacked it and reduced the houses, town hall and church to cinders. They did the same to Calolbon, Caramoran, Bagamanoc and almost all maritime villages. As *gobernadorcillo* from 1756-60, Manlagnit began reconstructing the town-proper. He persuaded the people to come back to what is now Virac. The people returned and gratefully gave him another term. Under his leadership, they constructed trenches reenforced with bamboos called *marorogue*.⁶¹

In the same island in June of 1756-57, eight joanga went on a rampage. As the raiders entered the settlements, they met some resistance from the populace some of whom fled to the mountains. Those who stayed defended themselves in their churches which the raiders did not hesitate to attack and sack. They also ravaged the visita of Ibalon, other settlements, the towns of Virac and Bato and took only some captives as most of the people had run into the forests.⁶²

In October eight other Iranun joanga besieged Mobo, Masbate. Fortunately government galleys in charge of fortifying the town

59. PNL HDP Catanduanes, p. 3.

60. Ibid., pp. 7-8. Goyena, *Ibalon*, p. 81.

61. Goyena, *Ibalon*, p. 81. PNL HDP Catanduanes, pp. 7-8.

62. PNL MF Ramo: Filipinas, Reel 3, Tomo 5, Exp. 3, fols. 196b-197.

arrived and put the besiegers to flight. The raiders stormed the town of Ticao in Ticao island which was weakly defended by palisades and some arquebuses. Fray Manuel de Sta. Catalina fled with his flock into the interior towards the opposite coast where they hoped to embark for Masbate. Meanwhile the raiders amused themselves by looting the town-proper, convento and church which they burned afterwards. They pursued the fugitives. Unable to keep up with his people, the Padre hid himself, but the barking of his pet dog gave him away. He gave himself up meekly. As they sailed for the south, the Padre induced his captors to call at Masbate for his ransom. Before the fort, they negotiated for a ransom of 500 pesos: partly in silver, partly in goods. About ten men left the fort with the ransom. Ten raiders landed, taking the Padre with them. While some took charge of settling the ransom, the others jumped on the Christians. Those carrying the ransom were stunned. The raiders captured them including those who did not flee in time and herded them to their vessels. Fearing for the Padre's life, the fort held its fire as the raiders sailed away with their rich booty. In Lanao, in Mindanao, a Muslim prince purchased the Padre and brought him to his court where the priest stayed till a certain *Commandante* Pedro Gaztambide came in a galley and ransomed him for 800 pesos.⁶³

All in all, between 1750 to 1758, in Albay province alone, the Muslims had destroyed and razed eighteen churches, and killed and captured many including three priests. With Albay province, Camarines came under attack in 1756-57. Thirty joanga approached the port of Pasacao, dropped anchor at the bay and stayed for three days. At this port, there was a royal ropery operated by the Ministry of Finance and protected by the guns of the fort. Four joanga tried to come near but retired when the fort fired at them. The next day, all the joanga disappeared.⁶⁴

Raiders landed near the visita of Calampinay (former name of Barceloneta), Libmanan in Camarines, on 12 September 1757.

63. Ibid., fol. 197. Concepcion, *Historia*, 13:18-20.

64. PNL MF Ramo: Filipinas, Reel 3, Tomo 5, Exp. 3, fol. 196. The Muslims seemed not too keen in keeping Spanish captives. Bishop of Nueva Caceres, Fray Juan Antonio de Orbigo informed Governor Jose Basco y Vargas, in 1785, that a Muslim vessel came near the port of Pasacao on the supplication of two captives; one Spaniard, the other a mestizo, on the hope that the Bishop would take steps for their ransom. When the Spaniard was ransomed, the Muslims left hurriedly fearing the Christians might attack them. PNA EP-CS 1785-1837, fol. 14.

Then they proceeded to the mission of Lupi where they looted the church, the outlying houses and killed many Christians. The mission was almost defenseless because its Padre had left with his people to help Fray Juan de Silva who previously was expecting his own town to be invaded. To respond to the *Capitan* of Libmanan's petition for help, the *Alcalde Mayor* of Camarines ordered 200 men with their officers to march to Lupi to attack and exterminate the Muslims. A detachment assigned to search the mountains killed a solitary Muslim on the highway who was fleeing to join the main body of marauders that had already embarked. It was not the last raid on Libmanan. This town was raided repeatedly in 1757, 1759, 1801 and 1810, losing many inhabitants to slavery and the survivors reduced to misery. Raiders usually made their way through the northern coast and Barra de Cabusao and through points between the port of Pasacao and the mission of Ragay.⁶⁵

What the Bicolanos could not do to the Muslims, the elements did. In November violent northerlies lashed the Pacific coast of Camarines. From the 20th to the 28th of the month, in various points, hulls of wrecked Muslim joanga, church vestments and a mutilated sacred statue were washed ashore. Personnel of the fort of San Fernando which was erected on the northern shore to protect the mines of Paracale and Mambulao captured eight Moro survivors who gave the information that all the seventy-two joanga of Datu Paridin of Magindanao that sacked Catanduanes and other places foundered in the angry sea.⁶⁶

The intensity and destructiveness of the raids in 1757 in the diocese of Nueva Caceres alone are apparent in Bishop Manuel de la Concepcion y Matos' letter to the King, on 29 June 1758, in which he described them as "undoubtedly greater than at any other time" ten towns and two missions completely destroyed; ten churches looted and burned; about 8,000 Indios captured or killed; one priest killed, two captured; and the capital, Caceres, was under alert one night for a raid.⁶⁷

65. PNA EP-CS 1797-1852, fols. 111-12. Concepcion, *Historia*, 13:316-17. Libmanan's territory was extensive then. It stretched from the northeast to the southwest, from the coast of San Miguel Bay to the shore of Ragay gulf. Huerta, *Estado*, p. 195.

66. PNL MF Ramo: Filipinas, Reel 3, Tomo 5, Exp. 3, fols. 197b-198.

67. Domingo Abella, *Bikol Annals* (Manila: n.p., 1954), 1:105-06.

With Spain's involvement in the Seven Years War, the British invaded Manila on 6 October 1762. Taking advantage of British presence and friendship, Muslim raids and encounters increased till 1818, as Muslims went on a rampage from end to end of the archipelago and carried out in Bicolandia "a pattern of tragedy so recurrent as to become almost tedious," especially after their major defeat in Mamburao, Mindoro when they launched their assaults with red-hot vengeance.⁶⁸

A great fear reigned in the coastal settlements of Bicolandia as the news spread that the Muslims had penetrated the very bay of Manila, appearing like fishermen. They disembarked at the docks of the city, captured many, and even went up to Malate where they captured twenty persons who were returning from a funeral in Pasay.⁶⁹

The Bicolanos' fear was not imaginary. Fleets of raiders proceeded to Bicolandia, burned all the towns in Masbate, Burias, Maestre de Campo and captured five Recollects, three Augustinians, one Franciscan, besides killing two Franciscans. They plundered and burned the towns in Ticao island and "captured a Religious who had to be ransomed twice." They insolently and daringly assaulted the missions of Mt. Isarog in Camarines, killing a Franciscan friar and a missionary for the *remontados* and *cimarrones*. They seized eight trading vessels returning from Albay to Iloilo with precious cargo and over 200 persons.⁷⁰

Describing the terror these marauders aroused in the populace as well as the Religious, Vicente Barrantes wrote:

They waged war not only with bladed weapons but also with muskets which they possessed in large quantity so that at the shout of *Moros* the people fled to the mountains. The Religious themselves, so courageous and resigned, came to fear the total destruction of the country notwithstanding the fortifications which they themselves devised and the arms and munitions which they knew how to obtain for themselves. But these Indios were terrified and were hardly useful for anything.⁷¹

68. Owen, "Kabikolan," p. 39. Barrantes, *Guerras*, p. 51.

69. Espina, *Apuntes*, p. 118. Montero, *Historia de la pirateria*, 1:336.

70. Montero, *Historia de la pirateria*, 1:335, 336. Barrantes, *Guerras*, pp. 52, 53, 55-56. For information on the *remontados* and *cimarrones* of Mt. Isarog, see Manuel Crespo, *Memoria sobre la reduccion de monteses del isarog en camarines sur* (Manila: Establecimiento Tipografico de Ramirez y Giraudier, 1881), pp. 7-80.

71. Barrantes, *Guerras*, p. 54.

That they were hardly useful for anything is a bit exaggerated but the people did feel an intense fear which triggered a domino-like effect on their life resulting in demographic dislocation, commercial and agricultural retardation in Bicolandia till the nineteenth century.

ANDA'S DEFENSE POLICY

Some modicum of defense was adopted when Simon de Anda was prevailed upon by a grateful Charles III to come back to the Philippines and assume for the second time the office of Governor General in 1770. Upon assumption of office, he ordered the walls of Manila repaired and fighting ships constructed, believing that the British would attack the Philippines again.⁷²

But raids in Bicolandia continued. In 1771, the town of Masbate had 230 tributes. After Iranuns sacked its visita named Bulacan and captured men, women and children, only 120 tributes were left. In the same year, Iranuns destroyed and burned Calolbon, Catanduanes, and took 102 captives.⁷³ Early in the morning of 7 December 1774, raiders pillaged the visita of Talisay in Minabac, Camarines, killing, wounding and capturing some seventy or eighty persons. After this disaster, the inhabitants abandoned their visita for fear of Muslims, since a road linked it to the sea.⁷⁴ These raids did not all originate from the mangrove-enclosed inlets of Iligan Bay and Illana Bay, the well-known raiders' lairs of Tunkil, Balangingi and Jolo, and the remote islands of Pilas, Panguturan and Basilan. Raiding expeditions from these places were not two-or three-day affairs. They were of long duration, one to two years, at great distances almost impossible for heavily-laden, frail sailing craft and their crews and human cargo to negotiate without midway refitting stations for careening vessels, staging raids, depositing booty and landing captives for recuperation before the long voyage to the slave markets of the south. The raiders in Bicolandia could not have carried out their mission of destruction with such frequency and intensity, and sometimes

72. The description and names of the ships appear in Montero, *Historia general*, 2:236-37.

73. AFIO 92/23, fol. 26; 92/28, fol. 31.

74. AFIO 92/23, fol. 13-13b.

out of season, if they did not have refitting posts within or near the region from which squadrons of raiding ships set out.

On record were the Muslim satellite establishments in the islands of Capul, Leyte, Tayabas, Camarines and Albay from where they staged attacks on neighboring islands and repaired their ships.⁷⁵ Thomas Forrest, an English sea captain who visited the archipelago in the eighteenth century wrote:

These [Iranuns] within ten years before 1775, have done much mischief to the Spaniards . . . and at this time, they possess an island in the very heart of the Philippines called Burias, where there has been a colony of Illanos [Iranuns] for many years, men, women and children.⁷⁶

Northwest of Burias lies a little island called Templo. On its western coast is a sitio named Ki-Moros which Iranuns who plundered the maritime towns of the Bondoc peninsula in Tayabas (now Quezon province) used as a "temporary home."⁷⁷ Muslim marauders established settlements or fortified points in Masbate, like the sitio of Bagtingon in the town of Aroroy, where they deposited their captives, repaired their vessels, left their capital ships and with their auxiliary vessels attacked nearby towns and seized small ships they encountered at sea.⁷⁸ Atulayan island in Lagonoy Gulf was a Muslim base in 1800. As late as the second half of the nineteenth century, marauders had established themselves in Catanduanes and other outlying islets which were their jump off points to raid pueblos and take prizes at sea.⁷⁹

Whatever improvements in defense Governor Anda introduced suffered a serious setback at the return in 1775 of Datu Tenteng, a cousin of the Sulu Sultan, and his raiders after they captured Balambagan, a place of deposit of the British East India Company near Borneo. They brought home enormous spoils consisting of artillery, muskets, munitions, merchandise and valuables nearly 400,000 pounds sterling in amount.⁸⁰ The Spaniards rejoiced at

75. PNA Mindanao/Sulu, 1770-1897, fol. 2b.

76. Forrest, *A Voyage*, p. 302.

77. PNL HDP Masbate, No. 60, p. 2.

78. PNA Mindanao/Sulu, 1770-1897, fols. 56-56b. PNL HDP Masbate, No. 58, p. 1.

79. F. Jagor, *Viajes por filipinas*, trad. del Aleman por Sebastian Vidal y Soler (Madrid: Aribau y Cia., 1875), p. 164.

80. Edward Belcher, *Narrative of the Voyage of HMS Samarang* (London: Reeve, Benham and Reeve, King William Street Strand, 1848), 1:289-91; Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the U.S. Exploring Expedition in Travel Accounts of the Islands (1832-1858)* (Manila: Filipiniana Book Guild, 1974), p. 111.

the blow dealt their British rival but the captured guns and munitions would soon be used against them and their local allies.

BASCO'S *MARINA SUTIL*

When Jose Basco y Vargas took office as Governor General in 1778, a big step forward in defense was taken. As an Ensign of the Royal Navy, he knew the importance of a strong fleet. Yet he was also convinced that armed force alone was not enough. He, therefore, adopted the "carrot and stick" policy by cultivating good relations with Azim ud-Din II, the Sulu Sultan, and at the same time employing force against Muslim marauding.

He declared a privateering campaign against the raiders in 1778 and increased the number of anti-piracy vessels. Convinced that deep-draft vessels were no match for the swift, light ships of the raiders, he formed the *Marina Sutil* or Light Navy consisting of four divisions, six ships to a division, of light-armed, outriggered vessels called *vinta* which he stationed in Cebu, Iloilo, Calamianes and Zamboanga for fast reaction against Muslim attacks.⁸¹ He ordered the captain, Jose Gomez, to dislodge the Muslims from Mamburao, Mindoro, a long-time lair and launching point of raiding expeditions. Till 1782 Gomez's squadron scoured the waters off Burias island where he seized some enemy ships and sank others.⁸²

Such aggressive measures contained Muslim depredations for a while. The Sultan of Sulu sued for peace in 1781. A feeling of relief pervaded most parts of the country and commerce improved. Basco formulated a general plan for the development of agriculture, commerce and industry, backed up by prizes and awards. Even in the fight against marauding, he conferred awards and obtained some good results.

The Iranuns met some punishing defeats in places like Albay. With its meager defense resources, this province was tyrannized at will by Datu Panco who lorded it over the littoral settlements and Albay waters with his fleet of seven joanga. The Alcalde

81. Espina, *Apuntes*, p. 41. Bernaldez, *Reseña*, p. 34; Montero, *Historia general*, 2:307-08. James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898* (Singapore University Press, 1981), pp. 149-97.

82. Barrantes, *Guerras*, p. 132; Montero, *Historia general*, 2:308.

Mayor commissioned Pedro Estevan, a principal of Tabaco and a plucky Muslim fighter, to command two ships and seek out Datu Panco. It did not take Estevan long to encounter the enemy. A hardfought, six-hour engagement ensued. Estevan chased away five joanga and captured two, including the Datu with seven companions and some arms.⁸³

For his zeal in behalf of the royal service and as an incentive for future feats, Governor Basco awarded Estevan, on 8 November 1782, the rank of Provisional Navy Captain of these islands with all the honors, privileges and prerogatives appertaining to it. Three years later, the King not only confirmed his naval rank but, in addition, conferred on him the Medal for Valor through the hands of the Bishop of Nueva Caceres. As for the fate of the captured Muslims, Governor Basco ordered a full investigation into the Datu's raiding activities and excesses so that corresponding penalties could be meted out, and the seven others sent to the capital to receive what they deserved.⁸⁴

In Governor Basco's time, the Iranuns did not spare Camarines. One of its towns, Minalabac, was frequently raided. In one raid in 1783, about 170 raiders attacked it, on 25 November, at one o'clock past noon. They could not have found a better occasion, for the men were away clearing their fields. But unlike previous raids, the few men left behind fought the raiders. With no fire-arms, they killed one raider but lost four including the *Teniente Mayor*. The raiders set three houses on fire and carried into slavery eleven girls, four women and two men.⁸⁵

In the second assault, about 600 raiders attacked at eight in the morning. The inhabitants, however, had prepared themselves with arms recently obtained from Naga. The fight lasted for two and a half hours. Though outnumbered, the defenders allegedly suffered no casualties, which is doubtful, but killed eight raiders, captured two good muskets and other spoils and forced the enemy to abandon the town. After such an experience, the people through their Alcalde, Don Vicente Alejandro, petitioned the government for arms, munitions and exemption from some services which were many due to their proximity to Caceres, the capital. Exemption would enable them to maintain four lookouts at sea, six

83. PNA EP-A 1772-1836, fols. 266-266b; Montero, *Historia general*, 2:308.

84. PNA EP-A 1772-1836, fols. 267b-268b, 269.

85. AFIO 97/10, fol. 1.

wooden watchtowers with sentinels every night and erect three wooden watchtowers for defense at the people's expense.⁸⁶

Successes against Muslim raiders in Governor Basco's time were short-lived. His conquest of the Batanes, a group of storm-swept islands, for that moment valueless to Spanish interest, seemed to have been a major blunder. Anti-piracy squadrons were weakened to strengthen the invading force up north, leaving the southern soft underbelly of the Visayas and Luzon enticingly exposed. The Muslims were not slow to react as the harrowing lessons of 1785 illustrated well the proverbial Muslim ability to spring back with greater vigor after every crushing defeat. Raiders' sails once again dotted the southern seas. They swooped on coastal towns in the Visayas that had yet to recover from past incursions and "swarmed about the coasts of Mindoro, Burias and Masbate, plucking prizes along their course, and even frequented the esteros of Manila Bay."⁸⁷ Provinces that suffered most were those that had neglected their defenses for too great reliance on the anti-piracy forces, aggravated by the laxity of their Alcaldes Mayores. But the anti-piracy vinta were immobilized by rough weather and were too few for guarding imperilled waters.⁸⁸

Although by this time, Bicolandia had *lanchas* for defense, many of its towns were laid waste. Some towns did not have enough crews to man their fighting ships while others had crews but no munitions for lack of funds.⁸⁹ Nevertheless in the face of defeat or misfortunes, the Bicolanos seemed to have the knack of rising to the occasion when presented with appropriate incentives. Governor Basco's measures to induce his subjects to exemplary service to Crown and Cross drew Pedro Estevan away from his farm and engaged him in privateering against Muslims.

86. Ibid., fols. 1-1v.

87. Barrantes, *Guerras*, pp. 133-35. Montero, *Historia general*, 2:310. Saleeby, *The History*, p. 84.

88. Warren, *The Sulu*, p. 173.

89. Did incidents like this add up to the compelling reasons that inspired Governor Basco to establish a *Escuela Nautica*? We have no documentary evidence so far but it was possible. In his letter to the Secretary of State and General Affairs of the Indies, Don Jose Galvez, on 15 June 1783, he stated that navigation must be the medium of communications and traffic in the Philippines. But without skilled navigators, navigation could not be carried out. So, the need for a school to train them. L. Gonzalez Liqueste, "The Maritime History of the Philippines and the Old Escuela Nautica," *Philippine Magazine* 27 (July 1930): 81; Barrantes, *Guerras*, p. 135.

One day in 1786 with all the ships under his command accounted for, Estevan sailed to home port from his privateering cruise, towing his booty: one joanga with twelve Muslim captives whom he handed over to the Alcalde Mayor. And on various occasions, he went privateering and escorted vessels freighted with royal merchandise for Bacon and Albay, the capital. He also used his ships to transport similar merchandise from Catanduanes. These highly commendable services were confirmed by principales, *cabeza de barangay*, the Alcalde Jorge Geronimo, and the interim Curate, Teodoro Rodriguez, of Tabaco.⁹⁰

Estevan's captives were very probably not Iranuns or Tausogs, for these people generally observed the peace treaty struck with Governor Basco. They were rather Camucones and Magindanao marauders who took up where the Iranuns and Tausogs had left off.⁹¹ Although the government had spent the amount of 1,519,-209 pesos from 1778 to 1793 to curb "piracy", these marauders still took about 500 captives annually and sold them in slave markets as far as Batavia and Macassar. But the "aged and infirm were inhumanly bartered to the savage tribes of Borneo who offered them up in their ceremonial sacrifices."⁹²

After a long term of dedicated hard work, Governor Basco, one of the liberal-minded governors, resigned in 1787, leaving behind, like his predecessors, the unsolved problem of Muslim raiding. However, his equally dedicated Bicol vassal, Pedro Estevan, opted for a more active service. Till 1788 Estevan held the post of Coast Guard Captain of Camarines and Albay. But his poverty compelled him to petition the new Governor, Felix Berenguer de Marquina, for transfer to the vinta fleet "to enable him to make both ends meet as well as vouch for his love for the King with his subsequent services and his wishes to sacrifice himself for the honor of His Royal arms." Considering his petition meritorious, the Governor appointed him Provisional Navy Captain and assigned him to the vinta Santa Teresa to fill up the vacancy created by the departure from the royal service of Provisional Ensign Francisco Lopez.⁹³

90. PNA EP-A 1772-1836, fols. 270b-273.

91. Saleeby, *The History*, p. 85. A captive Spaniard who was ransomed at Pasacao, Camarines said the Muslims infesting Bicol waters were not from Sulu but Magindanao ... PNA EP-CS 1785-1837, fol. 14.

92. Saleeby, *The History*, p. 84. Montero, *Historia de la pirateria*, 1:71, 358.

93. PNA EP-A 1772-1836, fols. 273-274.



The settlements and pueblos raided in this period appear on this map, including the raiding posts from where the Muslims launched their raiding expeditions.

“AN EVIL WITHOUT REMEDY”

Governor Marquina took office in 1788 and proved to be enterprising and devoted to the country's economic development. Unfortunately, his administration was star-crossed. He was a “Fleet Brigadier,” way above his predecessor in rank, yet in his term, Muslim depredations doubled, forcing the depleted navy into a defensive stance. As though the scourge from the sea were not enough, another scourge on land afflicted the whole country: a terrible smallpox epidemic. And in Sulu, Mahomet Sarpudin, the new Sultan, while publicly avowing his observance of the peace treaty, secretly organized raiding expeditions of Iranuns.⁹⁴ Summing up the Muslim problem, Governor Marquina dejectedly wrote the King in 1789 this celebrated line, “This is an evil without remedy.”⁹⁵

At least in Bicolandia, this “evil” truly seemed to be “without remedy.” A glimpse of life in Bicolandia under the constant threat of Iranun incursions was left on record by some members of the Alejandro Malaspina scientific expedition that landed in Sorsogon in 1792. Leaving Sorsogon for Albay to witness the erupting, world-famous Mayon, the scientists Antonio Pineda and Tadeo Haencke risked Muslim capture in their travel by land and sea. At their stop in Casiguran and Bulusan, they learned a great deal about the daily havoc wrought by raiders and the state of alertness of the Bicolanos.⁹⁶ At a point between Bacon and Albay town, they were sighted by *bantais* or local sentinels who gave the alarm. Armed people rushed to meet them.

Then when the group of Juan Maqueda, a part of the same expedition, reached Puerto de Sisiran at Caramoan peninsula, on 9 May, the inhabitants fled, thinking that their vessels were raiding ships. At night, necessity forced them to so link their three ships together that they could meet an enemy attack from any quarter with intense fire.⁹⁷ In one of their scientific trips to a nearby islet, Maqueda saw the nightmarish relics of marauders' cruelty: two fresh human cadavers whose flesh was undoubtedly eaten. Previous to their trip, about nine *panco* (prows) of marau-

94. Montero, *Historia general*, 2:340-41.

95. Bernaldez, *Reseña*, p. 136. Montero, *Historia de la piratería*, 1:355.

96. MN Ms. 467, fols. 257-258; Ms. 312, fol. 78.

97. MN Ms. 467, fol. 300.

ders repulsed from the town of Pambuhan retired to that islet with their niggardly booty of only two captives.⁹⁸

The members of the expedition found their work in Bicolandia on land or at sea unusually nerve-wracking. The crew, in particular, did not get much needed rest. The constant watch, especially at night time, told on them, for the raiders could hide in any river or cove and come out to harass their quarry by land or by sea.⁹⁹

CONCLUSION

For the Bicolanos, there is no question that the period 1580 to 1792 were convulsive years. It was a time of shattering readjustment to the adverse interests of two unwanted intruders: the Spaniards and the Muslims. In their struggle for survival against Muslim raids, the terrified and disconcerted Bicolanos resorted to flight to the mountains in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. After the danger was over, there were those who returned to start life all over again but others did not. Of those who did not come back, some scattered in the hills as *remontado*, refusing to live again in a community that was Christianized but unprotected, with the resultant harmful effects on their economic and religious life, while others established new settlements in a safe place and continued to live as a community.

Abbreviations used:

- AAM = Archdiocesan Archives, Manila
- AFIO = Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental, Madrid
- AMA MF = Ateneo de Manila Archives, Microfilm
- MN Ms. = Museo Naval, Manuscrito, Madrid
- PNL HDP = Philippine National Library, Historical Data Papers
- PNL MF = Philippine National Library, Microfilm
- PNA EP-A = Philippine National Archives, Ereccion de Pueblos - Albay
- PNA EP-CS = Philippine National Archives, Ereccion de Pueblos - Camarines Sur.
- PNA EP-S = Philippine National Archives, Ereccion de Pueblos - Samar
- PNA VP-A = Philippine National Archives, Varias Provincias - Albay.
- UST AR = University of Santo Tomas Archives

98. Ibid. Presumably the cannibals could not have been Magindanaos or Iranuns or Tausogs who were never known to have practised cannibalism. If Maqueda's report was true, it was possible that they were Camucones. Forrest, *A Voyage*, p. 375.

99. MN Ms. 467, fol. 258.