

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

Magindanao, 1860-1888: The Career of Datu Uto of Buayan

Review Author: John N. Schumacher

Philippine Studies vol. 20, no. 4 (1972): 661–665

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

additional foreign investment, it is secondary to the importance of keeping the foreign investment already here.

Usher's paper deals chiefly with trade relations and with what can be expected after 1974, when the present trade agreement loses force. The Philippine panel has requested continued *special* trade preferences; the American side appears committed to the *generalized* trade preferences espoused by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. Generalized trade preference would grant tariff discrimination in favor of the manufactures of all the underdeveloped countries, not just those of the Philippines.

The final paper is an exercise in futurism (What will tomorrow bring?) by Thomas R. McHale, formerly Executive Vice President, Victorias Milling Company. McHale concluded wittily that "we look at the evolving Philippines with faith and hope—but not clarity."

MICHAEL MCPHELIN

MAGINDANAO, 1860-1888: The Career of Datu Uto of Buayan (South-east Asia Program, Department of Asian Studies, Data Paper No. 82). By Reynaldo Clemenña Iletto. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University, 1971. xiv, 82 pages.

The monograph under review, based on the author's M.A. thesis at Cornell University, is welcome from more than one point of view. It is an addition to the still small but growing body of historical studies focusing their attention on different regions of the Philippines, each of which has had to a certain extent its own distinct development. Much more is this true, of course, of the Muslim regions of the south, never fully incorporated into the Spanish colonial system, but possessing a social, cultural, and political experience quite different from other parts of the country. The current Muslim-Christian conflicts in Mindanao have only served to accentuate the need for a fuller understanding of that historical experience. Only such an understanding will make it possible to get to the root of the cultural barriers which make possible or even inevitable these conflicts. Finally, as Iletto emphasizes, there is a need for non-Muslims to try to understand Muslim society on its own terms rather than simply to repeat the generally unsympathetic views of nineteenth-century Spanish writers.

The monograph focuses on the rivalry between the two Magindanao power centers—the sultanate of Magindanao (around modern Cotabato City) and Buayan (modern Dulawan or Datu Piang). The coastal sultanate of Cotabato was associated with the lower valley—*sa ilud*—exercising power over the delta of the Pulangi and extending it to the sea; that of Buayan, on the other hand, exercised power over the upper valley of the Pulangi—*sa raya*. Iletto attempts to show—successfully in my

opinion—the competing existence of these rival centers of power in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, rejecting or modifying the more usual presentation of the theoretically sovereign sultanate of Cotabato as the sole power center of Magindanao.

It is in the context of this interpretation of earlier Magindanao history that the rise to preeminence of Datu Uto of Buayan in the latter part of the nineteenth century should be seen. As the Cotabato sultanate fell more and more under Spanish influence and control, the ruler of Buayan, Datu Uto, gradually created around himself a network of dyadic alliances which made him the center of the anti-Cotabato and anti-Spanish forces among the Magindanao. Though Spanish control of the sea with the advent of the steamship in mid-nineteenth century had eroded the base of wealth and power of the Cotabato sultan, sa-*raya* became the source of slaves, now taken from among the Tiruray, for Sulu and other areas of the Malay world. Through the Sarangani bay outlet, slaves were exported in exchange for the gold and firearms needed by Uto and the sa-*raya* sultans. It was Uto's wealth in gold and slaves as well as the system of dyadic alliances he had built up through marriages of his family that made it possible for him to assume the leadership of sa-*raya*.

From about 1878, when Datu Uto seems to have reached the peak of his power, to about 1884, there was relative peace between Uto and the Spaniards. The situation began to worsen in 1885, and after the establishment of a Spanish garrison at Bakat in the heart of Uto's territory, open war broke out in 1886 between the Spaniards and allied datus of sa-*ilud* on the one hand and the forces of Uto on the other. Uto's military defeat was accompanied by the cutting off of his source of arms by Spanish control of the Sarangani bay and the desertion of numerous datus. With the rise of the rival pro-Spanish Datu Ayunan of Taviran in the delta, Uto declined into insignificance in the succeeding years.

Ileto distinguishes two Spanish approaches to the problem of establishing control over Magindanao in the nineteenth century, the military policy and the "policy of attraction." The latter envisaged the peaceful conquest of the Magindanao by making them realize the advantages of cooperating with the Spanish establishment and making work and trade rather than slavery the basis of wealth. The sultans and datus who submitted to Spanish law would retain titles and authority over their subjects, but slavery would be abolished. A key feature in the policy of attraction was the Jesuit establishment of Tamontaka, where *libertos*, slave children ransomed from the Magindanao, were educated and helped to set up a Hispanic-Christian community engaged in agriculture. By the 1880s the Tamontaka experiment was proving increasingly successful in attracting Tiruray of the hills, slaves, and Muslims alike to the Spanish system. The author describes this policy in some detail, and indicates its success in undermining the power of Uto by

provoking "defections" of his slaves to Spanish protection and by persuading numerous Magindanao datus of the advantages of cooperation with the Spanish, attracted by the educational system set up in Tamontaka. However, his later assertion that "liberal" espousal of this policy was abandoned in favor of a "conservative" military policy seems not to be substantiated. Whatever the validity of the categories of "liberal" and "conservative" with regard to Spanish colonial policy towards the Christian Filipino nationalist movement, it was as a matter of fact the "liberal" Governor-General Terrero who led the military expedition against Uto, while the "conservative" Jovellar only became active in Magindanao in the last year of his term. Moreover, the measures recommended by Jovellar were not offensive but defensive—the maintenance of forts, hospitals, and stores of munitions in proper fashion, not military action against Uto. Such a Spanish military presence to give protection to those who took refuge under the Spanish establishment had been a part of the "policy of attraction" from the beginning, as the author himself had outlined it.

It would seem more correct to say that three, rather than two, Spanish policies were operative in Magindanao—military conquest, the policy of attraction (accompanied by a Spanish military presence sufficient to keep peace), and what might be termed a "*laissez-faire* policy." It was against the latter that Jovellar reacted in 1884 in ordering the establishment of a fort in Bakat, a defensive rather than offensive measure. Hence the contrast drawn between Governor-General Jovellar, espousing a "conservative" and "militaristic" policy as opposed to the "liberal" "policy of accommodation" of Governor Serriña of Mindanao (pp. 50-52) would seem to be incorrect. A closer reading of Pastells and the Jesuit letters cited by Iletto seems clearly to demonstrate agreement of both Father Pastells and Father Juanmartí with Governor Serriña. It was rather Governor Roldán of Cotabato who promoted an aggressive policy against Uto, not merely to establish a fort at Bakat, but to take offensive military action against him. It was against this militaristic policy that the Jesuits argued, not only Father Juan Ricart, the Superior of the Philippine Mission (incorrectly cited as Superior of Tamontaka on p. 56, n. 67), as Iletto concedes, but also Father Juanmartí, the Superior of Tamontaka, as a reading of the whole of his letter to Ricart cited in n. 68 seems clearly to show. Similarly a closer reading of the letter of Pastells cited in p. 53, n. 47 gives a somewhat different view of the outbreak of hostilities between Uto's men and the Spaniards and their Magindanao allies, than the abbreviated version in the text.

My other criticisms can be stated more briefly. The author rightly points out that the Jesuit and Spanish government policy of undermining the slave base of Magindanao society inevitably eroded Uto's base of power and led him to open hostilities. He also points out correctly that slavery among the Magindanao ought not to be equated with European and American chattel slavery, but included both *olipon*, or debt-

peons, and *baniaga* who, though chattel-slaves, had opportunities for bettering their lot. Two observations might be made. The first is that though it is understandable that Uto viewed the existence of a slave society as desirable, possessing some four to five thousand slaves as he did, other Magindanao leaders had come to accept, or were in the process of doing so under the influence of the Spanish policy of attraction, the prohibition of slavery. Secondly, though the effort to understand Magindanao society in its own terms is indeed desirable, and the historian may wish to abstain from making value-judgments on a social system which included forms of servitude, there seem to be at least implicit value-judgments present in the monograph, justifying such a slave society. Whatever may be said of debt-peonage in the historico-cultural context, the lot of the *baniaga*, most frequently torn from their families, and until Spanish power prevented it, sold to Sulu and elsewhere, can only with difficulty be presented in the almost bright colors found here (pp. 36-37). Otherwise it is hard to understand the desperate resistance of the Tiruray to such enslavement, nor the efficacy of the attraction of Tamontaka among them.

A certain number of minor errors need to be mentioned. Blumentritt can scarcely qualify "among the most reliable observers of the Magindanao scene" (p. 36 and elsewhere), inasmuch as he never set foot in the Philippines and was totally dependent for his information on published Spanish accounts and principally the Philippine Jesuits, either through their published *Cartas de Mindanao* or his private correspondence with them. The Father H. Ignacio Larrañaga cited on p. 20, n. 54 is rather Brother (H. for *Hermano*) Ignacio Larrañaga. The mention of a lack of Muslim "monasteries" in Mindanao seems strange, as it is not clear what Muslim religious institution could be so classified. Finally, the method of listing two-part Spanish names in the bibliography is not the accepted one.

In spite of the disagreements and reserves expressed in this review, the merits of the monograph should likewise be acknowledged, particularly its use of considerable unpublished Spanish materials, chiefly from government or military officials, not hitherto exploited. Though the author himself emphasizes that further knowledge of Muslim materials and fieldwork as well are needed for a more accurate account (it might be added that both Spanish government and Jesuit archives contain additional material), the monograph is surely the most substantial work on Magindanao which has appeared, at least since Saleeby. The author has made use of the insights into Muslim society contained in the more recent work of Majul (dealing mostly with Sulu), and anyone interested in the history of Mindanao or of Philippine Islam will find much to profit from. If this reviewer has found the interpretation of the Jesuit sources inadequate in some respects, he is nonetheless gratified to see them made use of in English. For though allowance must obviously be made for their biases and lack of perspective in certain respects, they

remain the major source in Western languages at least, for the history of nineteenth-century Mindanao in general and of Muslim society in particular. It is to be hoped that this study may arouse further interest in a badly neglected part of Philippine history.

JOHN N. SCHUMACHER

SPAIN IN THE PHILIPPINES: From Conquest to Revolution (IPC Monographs, No. 1). By Nicholas P. Cushner, S.J. Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila, 1971. xi, 271 pages, maps, plates.

The author makes a preliminary remark that the formation of the Philippines from a "geographical entity into a nation" implied a dilemma of loyalties: one to the pre-Hispanic family or clan group, the other to the suprafamilial political unity slowly forged by the Spanish government in the Philippines. This dilemma was resolved by armed revolution at the end of the nineteenth century, following a complicated process of peaceful propaganda and armed uprising, which factors have not all been studied yet. There is no claim to analyze these factors through 271 pages of the monograph under review; but the observation, made early in the book (p. 5), has led this reviewer, at least, to expect more than what is actually discussed in the book.

This is unfortunate, since Fr. Cushner's study is a notable contribution to Philippine historiography. Based mostly on hitherto unused manuscript sources in Spain and elsewhere, the book summarizes the activities of Spain which have helped develop "attitudes and social conventions [that still remain] part of the fabric of Philippine society" (p. 229).

A brief introduction is followed by three chapters on the voyages of discovery and conquest that brought Spanish politics and religion to the Philippines. Most of this material is common knowledge to Filipino school children, but Fr. Cushner's is a clear and fresh narrative that recreates the characteristic daring and energy of the Spanish *conquistadores*. The rest of the book (chapters 4 to 9) is a study of the individual facets of the Spanish colonial program in the archipelago: the missionary work of the Catholic Church; the colonial economy based on the galleon trade, supplemented by the tribute and forced labor; the colonial bureaucracy; the Bourbon reforms in the eighteenth century with emphasis on the economic self-sufficiency of the colony; and the Propaganda Movement that eventually led to the armed revolution of 1896.

Fr. Cushner is to be congratulated for this extremely readable book. His familiarity with the manuscript and printed sources of Philippine history is evident in almost every page. He is especially well informed on the economic history of the early colonial period, of the