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## Father Ducos and the Muslim Wars, 1753-1759

Miguel A. Bernad

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# Father Ducós and the Muslim Wars: 1752-1759\*

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MIGUEL A. BERNAD

It is then proposed to proceed to Misamis where a small stone Fort has been built lately to command the Pass of Panguel Lake. This Place is a Station of the utmost consequence...

—"Plan for an Expedition for the Conquest of the Southern Philippines" (Document in the British Museum)

Toda la gente se halla metida en la cota; yo defendiendo mi casa y la de Dios con mi guarnición de cantores, sacristanes, etc.;... aunque la cota puede mantenerse algunos meses, pero Iligan se acaba, si esto no se toma de veras.

—José Ducós, (16 June 1753)

**W**HEN the British conquered Manila in 1762, they already had a definite plan for subduing the rest of the Islands, and in particular the Visayas and Mindanao. That plan had been drawn up after an extensive (and surreptitious) naval reconnaissance undertaken in connection with England's going to war against Spain. The "Plan" called for an alliance between the British and the Sul-

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\* This article is condensed from Section IV of Father Bernad's book, *History Against the Landscape*, to be published this year by Solidaridad Publishing House.

tan of Sulu. Then, through Sulu's mediation, a "confederacy" was to be organized, involving the other Muslims of Mindanao. The British would supply them with arms and ammunition, and then threaten the Christian towns and villages all over the Philippines that unless they accepted British rule the Muslim pirates would be let loose upon them. This (said the author of the Plan) would strike such terror among the Christian native population, as well as among their Spanish missionary parish-priests, that they would have no alternative but to accept British rule: "The General Terror of the Moors will influence as well the Indians as the Padres to submit, when they find that this only can protect them from in truth the greatest of all Calamitys."

#### THE MISAMIS FORT

This "Plan" has been attributed by Blair and Robertson to William Draper. Father Nicholas Cushner S.J., who has examined the original document in the British Museum, considers this attribution unlikely. He believes that the Plan originated not with Draper nor with Lord Anson (in whose handwriting it is) but with Dalrymple. The fact that Dalrymple was well acquainted with the bays and harbors of the Visayas and Mindanao is attested by his sketches which are now in the New York Public Library. But it does not really matter whose Plan it was. Whatever its authorship, it was essential to the Plan for the British to seize and hold three places. They must first take Zamboanga and Basilan, for this would put them in direct touch with the Muslims: this would put them in contact with the Muslims of Malanao. In the "Plan's" quaint spelling:

It is then proposed to proceed to Missamis where a small Stone Fort (has been) built lately to command the Pass of Panguel Lake. This Place is a Station of the utmost consequence as the Possession of it opens a Communication with the Illanon with whom by the mediation of Sooloo the Confederacy must be made.

According to the "Plan" the Misamis fort could be held with a garrison of twenty-five Europeans, supported by a

guard-ship manned by a detachment of thirty men, also Europeans.<sup>1</sup>

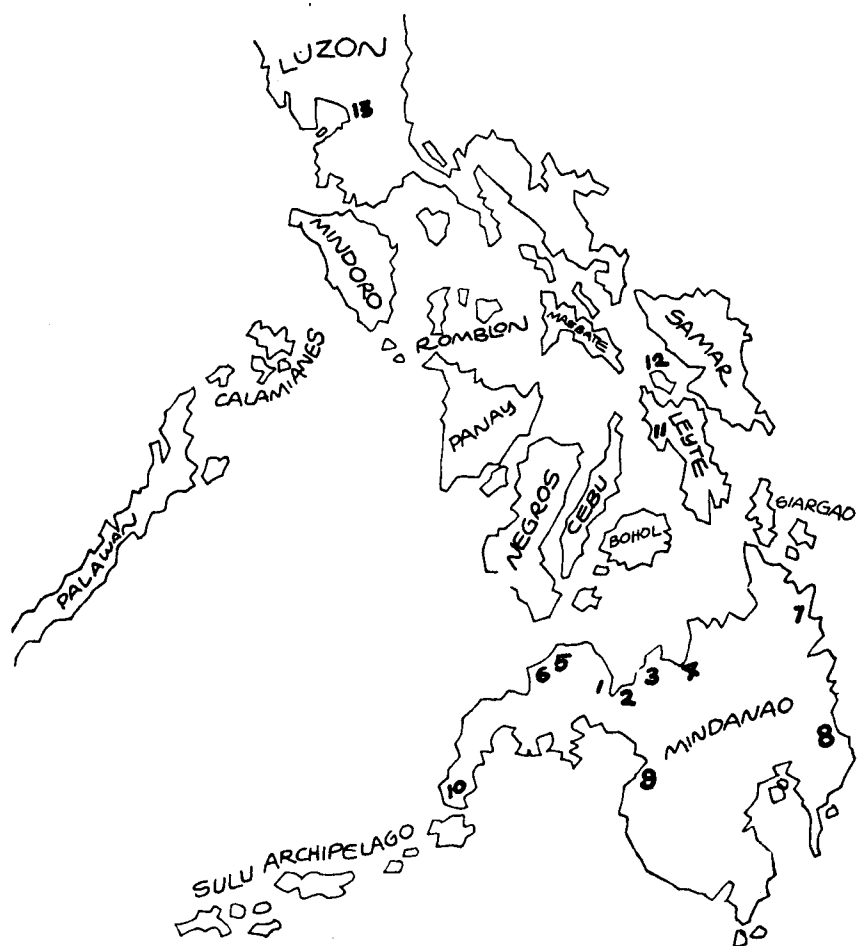
The strategic importance of Misamis had been seen not only by the British but also by the Spaniards. At the urging of a Jesuit priest (Father José Ducós) and of the Spanish military authorities, the central government in Manila in 1755 had finally authorized the construction of the fort and had placed it under the direction of Father Ducós. The fort was strategically located: for it was built upon a tongue of land commanding the entrance to Pangil Bay.

Pangil Bay today is like any other body of water of great commercial value: rich in fish and sufficiently deep to allow the ships to come in and haul away the timber or the copra or the hemp or the rice and corn which are the region's chief products. But in the eighteenth century, its significance was largely military: for it was through Pangil and the rivers that emptied into it that the Malanao Moros emerged periodically in their swift boats, to deal fire and destruction upon the Christian villages of all the Islands, and carry off their population into slavery.

Hence the importance of sealing off Pangil. The British called it a "lake", and in some ways it presented the aspect of a lake, for it was long and narrow like a vermiform appendix, and was hemmed in on both sides by hills and mountains and by a narrow coastal plain. Pangil Bay today divides what are now two provinces: Lanao and Misamis Occidental. About ten miles long and about two miles at its widest, Pangil Bay tapers gradually southwestward until it finally disappears in a large marsh encircled by low hills. Those hills are in the isthmus connecting the Zamboanga Peninsula with the mainland of Mindanao. Cut a canal through that isthmus, and you would have direct sea lanes between the ports in the north (Misamis, Iligan, Cagayan de Oro, Cebu) and those in the south (Pagadian, Cotabato, Zamboanga, Davao).

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<sup>1</sup> In order to avoid footnotes, all bibliographical references (including those related to the British Plan) are in the Bibliographical Note at the end of the article.



- 1 Misamis
- 2 Pangil Bay
- 3 Iligan
- 4 Cagayan
- 5 Dapitan
- 6 Lubungan
- 7 Tandag

- 8 Caraga
- 9 Cotabato
- 10 Zamboanga
- 11 Palompon
- 12 Biliran Island
- 13 Manila

Whether or not such a canal will ever be constructed we can leave to the future. At the moment our concern is with the past, when Pangil swarmed with Muslim boats; when no Christian village in the Visayas or Mindanao or even in southern Luzon was safe; when the Philippine Islands were in their gravest peril, and when the Christian Filipinos were fighting for survival.

## PART I

### A NEW BARBARIAN INVASION

The Muslim raids that had plagued the Philippine Islands from the beginning of Spanish rule, attained almost incredible intensity in the two decades from 1752 to 1773. But it was in 1754 that these raids reached their climax. As Zúñiga puts it, that was the year in which the Muslims made their greatest inroads into the Christianized portions of the Philippines.

Some historians of the Muslim wars (notably Juan de la Concepción and Joaquín Martínez de Zúñiga) have been somewhat naive in putting all the blame for these raids upon the Sultan of Jolo. The Sultan at the time was Bantilan who had usurped the sultanate from his brother Ali Muddin in 1749. Ali Muddin had sought asylum in Manila and had been given not only hospitality but a royal welcome, with all the pomp and pageantry due to a monarch. After the festivities and the pageantry were over, the Dominicans had taken him in hand and had taught him Christian Doctrine and the devotion of the Rosary. In due course they had baptized him, giving him the new name of King Ferdinand I. At this juncture a new Governor General, the Marquis of Obando, had arrived and had found Ali Muddin on his hands. Partly to put an end to Moro piracy, and possibly also to escape from domestic troubles in Manila (for Governor Obando had promptly fallen afoul of both the Archbishop and the friars) Obando had raised his sights towards the South and had decided to send a large expedition to restore Ali Muddin to his sultanate in Jolo.

That expedition had been a disaster. Part of the fleet was lost. The other part was repulsed by the guns of Ban-

tilan. Ali Muddin himself, accused of duplicity, was brought back a prisoner to Manila and thrown into Fort Santiago. Subsequent expeditions had fared better, including a colorful visit to Jolo by Ali Muddin's daughter Fatima. But the fact that the Spanish fleet had been initially repelled by the Jolo defenses was the reason (said the historians) for the intensified piratical activity.

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.... Then the seas of the Visayas were seen covered with little fleets of Moros who carried desolation everywhere. Nothing was heard of, save plundering, the burning of villages, the seizing of vessels, captivities, and atrocities which the Moros committed....

That is the way Zúñiga puts it. But was all this fury really due merely to the influence of Bantilan? What was it that moved, at one and the same time all the Muslim tribes of Jolo, Cotabato, Tobuc, and Lanao to take to the seas and attack the Christian villages in the fiercest raids on record?

There was (as we shall see) an economic motive behind all this piracy. But there is also in the history of nations some mysterious force — a *zeitgeist* — that at one given moment impels whole nations into a similar course of action. How else explain the Crusades, or the spread of Islam, or some of the spectacular marches of Empire, or (to come to our own day) the great blind movements of Hippiedom? It would be naive to explain such widespread movements merely by economic forces or merely by the influence of one man. Was it Attila alone who drove the Huns westward? Chesterton's lines have been branded as "rhetorical", but they describe accurately the inner nature of the Barbarian invasions from East and North, when (as he puts it) "the ends of the world waxed free":

For the end of the world was long ago  
When the ends of the world waxed free,  
When Rome was sunk in a waste of slaves  
And the sun drowned in the sea.

When Caesar's sun fell out of the sky  
And whoso hearkened right  
Could only hear the plunging  
Of the nations in the night.

When the ends of the earth came marching in  
To torch and cresset gleam.  
And the roads of the world that lead to Rome  
Were filled with faces that moved like foam,  
Like faces in a dream.

Could it not have been some similar mysterious force that suddenly — in the decade of the 1750's — unleashed all the Muslim tribes of Mindanao and Sulu and sent them in large marauding parties in a persistent and determined effort to destroy the Christian communities of Mindanao and the Visayas and Luzon?

#### THE SLAVE MARKET

But there was also an economic motive, and it was a very strong one: namely, the demand for slaves in the slave-markets of Cotabato, Jolo, and eventually Batavia. The wholesale depopulation of the Visayan Islands — and with it the decrease in the Royal Treasury (as Barrantes puts it) — compelled the Spanish Court to lodge a protest with the Court in Holland over the fact that the Dutch colonial government in Batavia was tolerating the sale of Filipino slaves in the Dutch East Indies. The slaves were gathered in Jolo and Mindanao, and from there they were shipped to the Dutch East Indies. Sometimes the slaves were not sold for money but were exchanged for arms and ammunition.

As a result of these raids the population of the Visayas and Northern Mindanao dwindled perceptibly. During one raid on the village of Odiongan in Romblon, 101 of the inhabitants were captured. The population of that village dropped from 230 to 70. In Banton, 67 persons were taken in one raid. In Mindoro, the Moros anchored in the Piloto River near Bongabon and ravaged the area, capturing 150 of the natives: 100 from Bongabon and 50 from Bulalacao and Manao.



Where exact figures are lacking, the decline in population was reflected in the decrease in the annual tribute. In the seven-year period between 1750 and 1757, the number of persons paying tribute in Kalibo decreased from 1174 to 549. In Butuan, the number of tribute-paying persons dropped from 800 to 130.

The most frightful depopulation was caused in northern Mindanao in the districts of Butuan and Caraga (now in Davao Province), and on the island of Siargao off the Surigao coast. Almost all the towns in the three districts were sacked and reduced to ashes, leaving the entire area a desert. Only the little military post of Linao was left, which was too far inland and up the river to be attacked. From Butuan district, three hundred persons were taken into slavery. Two thousand persons from Caraga and 1600 from Siargao were either slain or taken captive. The few survivors fled to the hills, unwilling (understandably) to return to the towns. The once-flourishing gold mines of Surigao were abandoned.

#### THE VISAYAN RAIDS

But if the depopulation of Mindanao was frightful, that of the Visayas was equally so.

Among the islands hardest hit was Leyte. That island had always been a target for Moro raids through the decades: but in 1754 they came several times, first in March, then in June, then in July. The two largest towns in the island—Sogod and Maasin—were sacked and burned. Smaller villages (like Hinundayan, Cabalcan, and Liloan) were likewise reduced to ashes.

Some modern writers, lacking historical perspective, have called in question the wisdom (or even the integrity) of the missionaries who built such large massive churches of stone or brick, reinforced with even more massive buttresses, which must have taken the townspeople many years to build. What these writers have forgotten is that these churches were built at a time when the people, with their flimsy houses, had no other refuge except the church. The church was not only

a place of worship (and as such it had to be large enough to hold all the people of the region on the great feasts); it was also a place of refuge—large enough for all the town to live in, and strong enough to withstand the battering and the cannonading of a determined enemy. How useful such a church was in time of need may be seen in the case of Hilongos, where the townspeople fled to the church and stood a siege by two thousand Moros which lasted eleven days. Another example was the siege of Palompon.

The details of the siege of Palompon (related by Juan de la Concepción in his thirteenth volume) have come down to us from the accounts of the Jesuit missionaries who had charge of the missions of Leyte. On the 9th of July 1745, twenty-five boats anchored off Palompon and over one thousand Moros disembarked. The boats had come in brave style, with flags and pennants flying. The townspeople, in great confusion, fled from their dwellings to the church. The initial confusion helped the Moro invaders, who were able to set fire to the rectory and the sacristy, despite the fact that the latter was defended by two bulwarks.

After the initial confusion was over, the people settled down to the grim task of defense. The Moros outside had ringed the church with trenches and breastworks, and had set up their cannon (*lantakas*) and other weapons. The firing lasted two days, and it was so fierce that the defenders in those two days suffered seventeen casualties: seven dead, and ten wounded. Besides cannon balls, the Moros hurled flaming darts in an effort to set fire to the woodwork inside the church. Several fires were in fact started, but were promptly put out by the defenders. The task of putting out fires fell largely to the women whose main function was to cook for the men and to fetch water from the well.

On the third day the firing was abated somewhat and the Moros began preparing to storm the church. Two moving towers were constructed (like Roman tortoises) upon each of which a gun was mounted that could shoot directly into the interior of the church. Ladders were brought to the church windows in an effort to force an entry. Not only were these

attempts repelled, but the Christian defenders actually emerged in a brave sortie that caused confusion and a certain amount of havoc among the Moros.

This type of warfare continued for two more days. On the fifth day of the siege, after one more sortie by the *Leyteños*, the Moros decided to give up the attempt. They retired to their boats and sailed away in the direction of Carigara. At least fifty Moros had died in the five-day battle.

The townspeople now emerged from the church, doubtless grateful to be alive: but they were in no holiday mood. They had nothing to eat and no place to live in. Their houses had been burned, their crops destroyed, their boats and even their tools were gone. They could neither farm nor fish for lack of implements, and the women could not weave, for lack of material.

Such was the devastation of a Moro attack in a town brave enough to defend itself and fortunate enough to have a strong church or fort. But not all towns were as fortunate. In the neighboring island of Biliran, for instance, the entire population was carried away into slavery.

The Calamianes were particularly unfortunate. Some places, like Culion, were well defended and could repel the invaders. But other islands were defenceless. Linacapan was attacked repeatedly. One place—Busuanga—was invaded ten times in the space of three months, between June and August 1754.

#### THE ATTACKING PARTY

These raids were not carried out by small or stray bands of pirates. They were large flotillas of several hundred warriors—sometimes numbering as many as two thousand men. They were, in fact, a whole nation on the attack. They went in sixty-eight boats against the town of Kalibo in Panay. Thirty boats attacked the town of Ilog in Negros. On the island of Banton, the Moros in fifty-seven boats landed up the coast and attacked the town by land.

The one thousand men that had attacked Palompon had come in twenty-five boats, which gives an idea of the size of these vessels. Each one could carry from forty to fifty warriors with their weapons and *lantakas*, and still leave room for captives and the booty that they captured.

#### THE MISSIONARY'S ROLE

In these raids, the role of the missionary was often crucial, for it was the missionary in many cases who upheld the people's will to fight. In general it might be said that a town could defend itself if three things were present: (a) if the town had adequate defences; (b) if the people were brave enough to fight; and (c) if the missionary himself had certain qualities of leadership. Where one or more of these factors were lacking, the townspeople suffered, and the missionary with them.

Among the distressing cases on record is that of two Recoleta missionaries in Caraga who at the approach of the Moros had taken to the hills. They were wandering about in the rough terrain for four days until overtaken by the Moros. One was captured and taken away as a slave to Lake Lanao. The other managed to escape, and eventually turned up at the military post in Linao: but he had gone insane and was taken to Manila where he died demented.

Other missionaries suffered grievously. In Calavite and in Siargao, the parish priests were killed. In Ticao, the missionary was captured and taken from island to island, until he was ransomed. In Mindoro, an error of judgment of the *corregidor* caused untold suffering. The Moros had landed in a river some distance away from Calapan, and the *corregidor*, expecting the attack to come from the sea, ordered the artillery brought to the shore. But the Moros had left their boats and had walked cross-country, attacking Calapan from the land. The entire town was razed to the ground. Many of the inhabitants were taken captive, including the Recoleta prior who was too old to run. His fellow priest, a younger

man, was able to flee with the *corregidor* across the Verde Island passage to Batangas.

#### SOUTHERN LUZON

But Batangas itself was not safe—nor, for that matter, were many of the towns and villages in southern Luzon. In June 1745, Balayan and Batangas town were both attacked.

The following month (July 1754) the town of Catana-wan in Tayabas province was burned to the ground. Many of the inhabitants were taken captive, and one government *champan* was captured.

In June 1754 (the same month as the Batangas raids) several towns in Albay were attacked and destroyed. The Muslim attacks went as far north as Masinloc in Zambales, causing a general alarm in the coastal provinces.

Mariveles itself, at the gateway to Manila Bay, was attacked (in 1757) by a small armada of eleven boats. The people put up a token resistance (*una resistencia débil*) and fled to the hills. The fact that such raids could be made, almost within sight of Manila, was proof of the powerlessness of the government to extend protection to the Christian communities outside of the city walls. There was little, in fact, that the government could do. No place was safe, unless it defended itself. No succor could be sent, for the day of the fast-moving steamships had not yet arrived. "When help sailed from Manila" (says one chronicler) "the Moros were already on their return trip in their fast boats, loaded with spoils and ready to invade another island."

But there was more than just apathy that was responsible for this helpless stance of the islands. Father Ducós in his letters complained bluntly that the Moros could be effectively contained if the government officials were not so anxious to carry on a profitable trade with them. Another missionary put the matter in an even worse light: "And at times, while the pirates were devastating one island, in the next

island the leaders of the squadron sent to pursue them were peacefully exhibiting their merchandise for sale."

#### THE PERIL OF THE SEAS

Some of the expeditions sent out from Manila ended in disaster. One expedition was sent to Palawan to establish a fort there. An epidemic broke out: 170 persons died; the rest, sick or weakened, returned to Manila. The expedition had produced nothing but 170 deaths and a loss to the treasury of nearly thirty-seven thousand pesos.

In November 1753, one expedition (the first under the command of the unfortunate Miguel Gómez Valdés) was sent to the Visayas and Mindanao. It never got beyond Mindoro. Leaving Mindoro, one of the *galeras* sank with twenty-one men drowned. Another vessel also sank, though without loss of life. Other vessels lost their masts. The net achievement of the expedition was to collect the survivors and bring them back to Cavite. Yet despite this disaster (which, according to the historians, was not entirely without fault on the part of Valdés), another expedition was fitted out by Obando and placed under the same commander: this was the expedition to Iligan in 1754, to which we shall return.

Needless to say, the seas during all this time were unsafe for navigation. In April 1755 a merchant-ship sailed from Zamboanga under Captain Juan de Molina. It was boarded by the Moros, who killed the captain and sacked the ship. Two years previously, the *galera* "Santiago" had set out from Zamboanga to patrol the Mindanao coast. At midnight in October, the ship ran into some enemy vessels. By day-break it was surrounded by a large flotilla of Moros, consisting of thirty-three boats. Ironically, the Moro flagship had belonged to the Government. This was the *galera* "Santa Rita" which the Muslims had captured in Palawan. Another ship, the *falua* "San Ignacio", had also been captured by the Moros in Palawan. Finding himself hopelessly surrounded, the captain, Francisco Rodriguez Figueroa, decided to scuttle ship. He set fire to the magazine; the ship exploded, killing Figueroa and his crew of fifty-two men. The Moros who had boarded

the ship were likewise blown up, as well as some of the smaller Muslim craft that had come too close. It was a heroic death, which the Government in Manila rewarded by granting life pensions to the widows of Figueroa and his crew.

#### THE FALL OF TANDAG

In a year filled with tragic events, it would be difficult to find any one event more tragic than the fall of Tandag in Surigao. Tandag was a small town on the eastern coast of Mindanao, to which was attached a stone fort, garrisoned by two companies of soldiers: one company of Spaniards, and one of Pampangos.

It was in mid-July 1754 that the Moros came to Tandag. They were Maguindanao Muslims from Tamontaca, led by the Datu Dumango. The helpless people of the town naturally fled to the fort for refuge, which increased the population inside the fort without increasing the food supply. The Moros ringed the fort about in a formal siege, and eventually the food supply gave out. Reduced to starvation, some of the people began to talk of surrender, which the commandant was barely able to prevent by threatening to kill anyone who attempted to surrender. But it was a lonely fight. No help came. Tandag was doomed.

On the first of December, on a rainy morning, the Moros finally stormed the fort. They captured one of the bulwarks and thus were able to turn the fort's own guns against the defenders who had retreated to the magazine room and the chapel. At last, finding no hope of escape and unable to face the prospect of slavery, the commander of the fort (a Spanish lieutenant) slew his own wife with a cutlass (*chafarote*), and, thus armed, went out to meet the enemy, who promptly dispatched him. Many Moros died in the fray, as did also the entire garrison: Spaniards as well as Pampangos. The native population tried to run away but were all captured and taken as slaves, including the Recoleta missionary who had tried to escape by hurling himself from the bulwark to the shore below.

It was six weeks later, on the 13th of January 1755, that word got to Father Ducós in Iligan that Tandag had fallen. He had just finished a letter to Manila, but he added a postscript: "*Acabo de tener carta con la noticia de que Tandag se perdió: ergo...*" It fell to Father Ducós to ransom the Recoleta missionary and to rebuild the Tandag fort. He gave it a garrison of one hundred Boholanos. In subsequent years the Moros returned and attacked the fort of Tandag: each time, the Boholano garrison sent them away.

#### THE SIEGE OF LUBUNGAN

But there were compensations, even in that dreadful year of 1754. One of these was the victory of the little town of Lubungan on the western coast of Mindanao, not far from Dapitan and Dipolog, in what is now called the Province of Zamboanga del Norte. The experience of Lubungan was a proof of what a determined population could do, even when faced with impossible odds.

Lubungan was situated on a river, a few miles inland from the coast. It was not a large town: merely a few flimsy houses, with a few hundred inhabitants, and a church and rectory staffed by a Spanish Jesuit missionary. The whole town was surrounded by a stockade. There was no military garrison. In case of attack, the little town had to defend itself, with its own men and boys, under its own native (civilian) leaders.

On the 9th of July 1754, a Moro flotilla sailed upriver and landed within sight of the town, but out of range of the stockade's *lantakas*. There were thirty-six large boats and many smaller craft. The defenders estimated the attacking force at about two thousand men.

The next day, having cleared the approach to the town, the Moros advanced in single file. It was a long line, lancers ahead, *kampilan*-wielders behind. The idea (presumably) was to get close to the town, and then rush the gates until they gave way. But a volley from the stockade broke up the invading line, and the Moros retired out of range.



The Moros now dug trenches and put up breastworks to the north of the village and placed their guns in position. All the while, the firing was kept up on both sides, which continued through the night and the next day in spite of the heavy rains—for July is a rainy month. By the morning of the 12th, the breastworks on the north were completed, and the Moros began to dig trenches to the east of the village. This would have completely sealed off the village from any possibility of help from Dipolog or Dapitan, as it would close the "backdoor"—i.e. the mountain paths. As the foodstores were getting low, the Jesuit missionary decided that the only hope for Lubungan was to prevent the completion of the eastern breastworks by attacking the workers.

Accordingly, two small bands of "Lubunganons" emerged from the stockade from two directions simultaneously. One of these groups (composed of boys and young men—"*eran jóvenes de pocos años*") had a comparatively easy time. The other party had a more bloody encounter. Armed with spears, javelins, and bow and arrows, they inflicted heavy casualties on the Moros.

This sudden attack forced the Moro besiegers to change their tactics. They gave up the attempt to dig trenches to the east, and concentrated their forces in the north. All that night was spent in feverish activity, cutting down coconut trees and setting them up as gun turrets to command the enclosure. By daybreak, one of the turrets was completed and ready for use: and from his coign of vantage, the Muslim gunner could look directly into the interior of the stockade and aim his gun accordingly. Unfortunately for him, he had no periscope and no Sperry bombsight: he had to raise his head each time in order to aim. One of the cool-headed citizens of Lubungan, biding his time, waited for just such a moment: then he fired at the gunner's head—rendering the turret useless for the rest of the daylight hours, for no one could climb up to the turret safely within sight of the fort.

With one gun turret out of commission and the other not completed, the Moros now turned (on the 13th) to psy-

chological warfare. They set up a horrifying din, with blood-curdling yells accompanied by much brandishing of swords and lances, obviously intended to intimidate the defenders in the stockade. The following day (14 July) the shouting was resumed. But by this time the Christians had learned the game and they began to raise a tumult of their own. Not content with shouting, the Lubungan defenders made noise by beating the drums and ringing the church bells. To show their defiance better, they waved improvised flags made out of their neckerchiefs and bandannas with holy pictures pasted on them. Two such flags were hoisted above the town: one from the church tower, another from a gun-emplacement: one banner carried a picture of St. Francis Xavier; the flag from the church tower had the name of Jesus and pictures of St. Francis Xavier and St. Ignatius Loyola.

All the Moros' shouting was preliminary to the actual attack, for they now decided to take the town by storm. All during the 15th and the 16th of July, the Moros were busy constructing machines of various kinds needed for the assault. Twenty-eight moving-towers were constructed, each one on four wooden wheels. Ladders and other implements were made ready. It seemed merely a question of time before Lubungan would be destroyed.

But at sundown of 16 July, with the Moros still feverishly at work, the longed-for aid finally arrived. The people of Dapitan and Dipolog could hear the cannonading all through the previous days and the Jesuit superior in Dapitan decided to organize a relief party to bring food to the Lubungan defenders. They could not come either by sea or through the plain as the Moros were in possession; they had to come by a round-about route through the mountains. As the relief party emerged from the mountain paths and rushed through the back door into Lubungan, the Moro sentinels saw them and raised the alarm. Actually, there were only fifty men in the relief party: but the Moros in the poor light thought that a large relief force had come. The Moros decided to abandon the siege. They retired to their boats and to their stockade by the river that night. The following day they sailed away,

some southward towards Zamboanga; others northward, presumably then veering east towards Pangil Bay. But it is possible that some of this attacking force of two thousand men were among the Moros who attacked Tandag, for it was about this time that the Tandag siege began.

The departure of the Moros and the arrival of the relief party were celebrated at Lubungan with tremendous rejoicing. The *Te Deum* was sung; and the next day they went out to inspect the breastworks and stockades which the Moros had constructed. The Moros had left almost everything behind, except their weapons. They had also left behind some unmarked graves, and some evidence of cremation—at least of clothing (although the chronicler counted three shirts, drenched in blood, which had not been burned).

The victory of Lubungan showed a number of things. First, it showed what a small but determined population could achieve. Second, it showed the importance of having several missions close together for mutual support. Finally, it showed the power and influence that a priest had in time of crisis, and the great trust that the people reposed in him.

The Lubungan victory occurred on 16 July 1754, a day sacred to the Blessed Virgin Mary, and in Spanish dominions a day commemorating the "Triumph of the Cross". On that same day, in Iligan, another fighting priest—Father Ducós—formally assumed command of the fleet that would eventually turn the tide against the Moros.

## PART II

### FATHER DUCÓS AND THE WAR

The previous year, Iligan had been besieged by two thousand Malanaos. The siege lasted two months.

Three factors saved Iligan. Like Lubungan in north-western Mindanao, or like Hilongos and Palompon in Leyte, Iligan was inhabited by a brave people who refused to surrender. On the other hand, unlike the towns mentioned, it had a stone fort with a regular garrison of thirty Spanish

soldiers and ten Pampangos. Actually, Iligan's defenses were dreadfully inadequate, being short of ammunition and especially of small arms; but these deficiencies were made up by a third advantage: the presence of a fighting missionary who kept up the morale of the citizens.

In the case of Iligan, the missionary also had the advantage of knowing something about military affairs. The historians are unanimous in attributing to Father José Ducós, S.J. the chief credit for Iligan's successful defense. Even Juan de la Concepción who did not like Jesuits and made no secret of that fact, and who resented Father Ducós' strong influence with the Government in Manila, gave him generous praise: "The fort was well defended under the direction of Father Ducós, a man of valor and spirit, which he had undoubtedly inherited from his father who was a brave colonel."

During the siege and despite the blockade, some of the Iligan defenders had been able to sneak out and sail by native banca to Cebu to beg for aid. The Commanding General in Cebu promptly responded and dispatched a flotilla to Iligan, consisting of one champan and nine native boats carrying three hundred Boholanos. But even the most prompt action in those days would have involved a delay of some weeks, and by the time this modest flotilla arrived in Iligan, the siege was over.

The flotilla, however, was useful for bringing the war into enemy territory. Unfortunately, it had eventually to go away, leaving Northern Mindanao unprotected and in greater danger than before.

#### THE ILIGAN PROPOSAL

It was in view of this increased danger that the *corregidor* at Iligan, Don Felipe Carvallo, had sent an appeal to Governor Obando in Manila, asking that the Iligan fort be strengthened. In the first place (he said) Iligan was the most exposed outpost, being accessible to the Moros by land as well as by water. In the second place, the fort in Iligan was poorly

garrisoned and very poorly equipped. In the third place (he argued) Iligan was of strategic importance, being a short distance from Linamon and only a few miles away from the mouth of Pangil Bay. These were the principal exits for the Moros on their raiding expeditions. This appeal was seconded by Father Ducós in a separate letter.

Obando had referred the appeal to the usual channels where it had received the usual replies. Briefly (had Polonius the drafting of it) the reply was: "'Tis true 'tis pity, and pity 'tis, 'tis true." No one denied that Iligan was in grave peril: but to augment its defenses would have been costly, and Iligan was not worth the expense. The fact that the Christian communities were exposed to Muslim attack was a pity: but how much revenue did Iligan contribute to the royal coffers? In modern terms, to defend Iligan would have been economically unprofitable.

But the military advisers did point out one thing: if Pangil Bay was really so important, then it must be sealed off, not by strengthening Iligan, but by building a fort at the very entrance to Pangil Bay, namely at Misamis. Such a fort, in conjunction with that in Iligan, would be more effective than one fort in Iligan alone.

The military officials who made this suggestion had not themselves visited the area (as they themselves admitted); but they may have gotten the idea for the Misamis fort from Father Ducós. It was the priest's subsequent success against the Moros and his continued insistence in subsequent months that eventually moved the Government to authorize the building of the fort. To this we shall return.

While the Iligan proposal was being sent from desk to desk, fresh reports were coming of renewed attacks by the Moros in many places. It was then that Obando decided to take matters into his hands. The historians have not been kind to the memory of this Governor General, the Marquis of Obando, and doubtless he had made many mistakes. He quarreled with the Archbishop; he had antagonized some of the friars; above all, he was not always

fortunate in his choice of commanders—as in the case of Valdés for the Iligan expedition. But Obando did see the importance of saving Iligan; and he heeded the urgency in Father Ducós' letter: "We are now under siege; the fort can last several months, but the town of Iligan is doomed unless our plight is taken seriously in Manila." Obando took the matter seriously. He sent two expeditions to Mindanao: one to Zamboanga, the other to Iligan.

The expedition to Zamboanga was the larger one. It was under a double command: the ships under Antonio Faveau, the soldiers under Cesar Fallet. The smaller fleet, intended for Iligan, was placed under the command of Miguel Gómez Valdés.

#### VALDES' EXPEDITION

Valdés had already bungled one expedition in the past. He now proceeded to do the same with the present. His fleet left Manila in January 1754 and (having received only moderate buffetings from wind and waves) arrived in Cebu safely, but in need of repairs. The repairs took time as new masts and other timber had to be procured from Bohol. Time was also needed for the military officials in Cebu, in compliance with Obando's orders, to recruit men and native boats to augment Valdés' fleet. It was a sizable fleet when it was finally assembled. There were three major ships (*galeras*), named the "San Phelipe", the "Santo Niño" and the "Triunfo". These had come from Manila together with champans and other smaller craft. These were augmented in Cebu by native boats with the new recruits from Bohol. The total complement of the fleet appears to have been in the neighborhood of 700 men: 500 Filipinos (mostly from Bohol) and 200 Spaniards.

The fleet was ready to sail by the beginning of April, but still Valdés lingered on in Cebu. He did send the bulk of the fleet ahead to Iligan under Pedro Alcántara Pérez, consisting of the three *galeras* and the Boholano boats. They weighed anchor off Iligan on the 25th of April, and their

arrival was received by the citizens with great rejoicing, particularly when it was learned that this was only the advanced party, and that the commander of the fleet, with his other vessels, was still in Cebu. But rejoicing soon turned to dismay: for April ended and May came and went, and still no sign of the commander's arrival. Meanwhile the fleet remained in the harbor, unable to do anything without orders from its absent commander.

A well-known sentence comes to mind: *Dum Romani tempus terunt, Saguntum obsidebatur*. In this case, while the combined Spanish and Filipino fleet was waiting in Iligan, the Moros were busy with their depredations in northern Mindanao and in the Visayas. Lives were being lost, villages put to the torch, and captives were being taken by the hundreds.

Perhaps Obando in Manila, despite his trusting nature, was not entirely blind to the faults of Valdés: for he had written several letters (to the military authorities in Cebu and Iligan, to the Jesuit Rector in Cebu, and to Father Ducós in Iligan): their chief import was that the campaign against the Moros was to be undertaken "with the advice of Father Ducós and under his direction" ("*con consejo y dictamen de el Padre Ducós*").

It may have been the receipt of this letter which encouraged the *corregidor* at Iligan, even in the absence of the fleet's commander, to convoke a council of war to determine the strategy of the campaign. When Valdés finally arrived on the 2nd of June (six months after he had left Manila and three months after his fleet arrived in Iligan) he was informed of what had been decided. He agreed to abide by it. Accordingly two days later, at daybreak of the 4th of June, the fleet finally went into action. The campaign had begun.

#### THE CAMPAIGN UNDER VALDES

At daybreak of 4 June, the "Triunfo" under Captain Alcántara Perez, and the "Santo Niño" under Captain Lá-

zaro de Elizavera, set sail towards the Linamon River. These two major ships were accompanied by several of the Boholano *sacayans* and by one banca from Iligan in which Father Ducós rode. The Moros, at sight of the advancing fleet, raised red flags and fled into the interior, leaving their boats behind. The Christians captured 35 Moro boats in the Linamon River that day, and 20 more in another river, the Magoong.

Although no Moros were killed in that operation (and in fact no battle was fought), the operation itself was important: henceforth possession of the Linamon was assured and its use by the Moro raiders prevented. The Linamon River is not large. But it is deep and therefore important to a sea-faring nation like the Malanaos.

With the Linamon thus sealed off, Father Ducós on the next day sailed in the Iligan banca to Misamis, escorted by the *galera* "San Phelipe". The objective was to reconnoitre the Misamis harbor and the entire Pangil Bay. Only one Moro craft—a fishing boat—was seen.

Meanwhile, other craft sealed off the Liangan and Langaran Rivers.

With these maritime avenues thus sealed off, Father Ducós now decided on a land operation. The citizen army of Iligan under Pedro Tamparong, together with the Bukidnon tribesmen, made a surprise raid on the Moro village of Lupagan, a well fortified place some two leagues inland. At daybreak on the 24th of June, the Iligan-Bukidnon contingent attacked the village. Ten Moros were killed in the encounter. The rest fled into the interior towards Lake Lanao.

#### FATHER DUCOS ASSUMES COMMAND

The campaign, so long delayed by Valdés' procrastination, was barely a month old when on orders from Manila Valdés was relieved of command. The bulk of the fleet was to remain in Iligan: but Valdés himself was to sail to Zamboangan (Zamboanga) and join the other fleet under Faveau



and Fallet. Valdés showed these orders to Father Ducós on the 5th of July. On the 15th he sailed away, taking with him his second in command, Pedro de Alcántara Pérez, who also was being relieved. They sailed on board the *galera* "Santo Niño", accompanied by the *champan* "San Miguel". The remaining vessels of the fleet were left by Valdés under the command of the senior officer, Lázaro de Elizavera, who now took command of the *galera* "San Phelipe". The other major vessel, the "Triunfo", was placed under Captain Nicolás Afriano.

With the departure of Valdés, it was now possible to exercise effectively the "special commission" which Governor Obando had laid upon Father Ducós. This was to the effect that he should "direct by his counsel and influence" the operations of the Armada. Obando had given it simply as a "special commission" (*el especial encargo de el Superior Govierno*): his successor, Governor Arandía, who took over the government in July 1754 (and who had known Colonel Ducós, the Jesuit's father) translated the "special commission" into an actual military command, giving Father Ducós the title of "Captain General" of the fleet.

The date on which Father Ducós assumed command was not without significance, for it was the eve of a great feast in all the territories under Spanish rule. In the ecclesiastical calendar of the time, there were three feasts celebrated yearly in honor of the Cross. Two of these feasts were observed in the universal church: one was in May (the Finding of the Cross); another was in September (the Exaltation of the Cross). The Spaniards added a third, in July, to be celebrated in Spain and all Spanish territories. This was the feast of the Triumph of the Cross (*el Triunfo de la Cruz*), commemorating the great victory won in the thirteenth century by the combined Christian armies against the Moors in the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa.

#### THE CAMPAIGN INTENSIFIED

Upon assuming command, Father Ducós decided to intensify and systematize the campaign. The important thing

was to prevent the Moro pirates from going out on their pillaging expeditions; or, if already out, to catch them on their return. For this, it was necessary to seal off their main exits. The main ones were Pangil Bay and the two rivers—Linamon and Liangan—on the Lanao coast. Accordingly, the fleet was divided to cover all three. The flagship “San Phelipe” and the boats from Iligan and Initao were assigned to cover Linamon. Four Boholano boats were assigned to the mouth of the Liangan River. The “Triunfo” with several smaller craft (some manned by Spaniards and others by Boholanos) were assigned to Misamis to guard the entrance to Pangil.

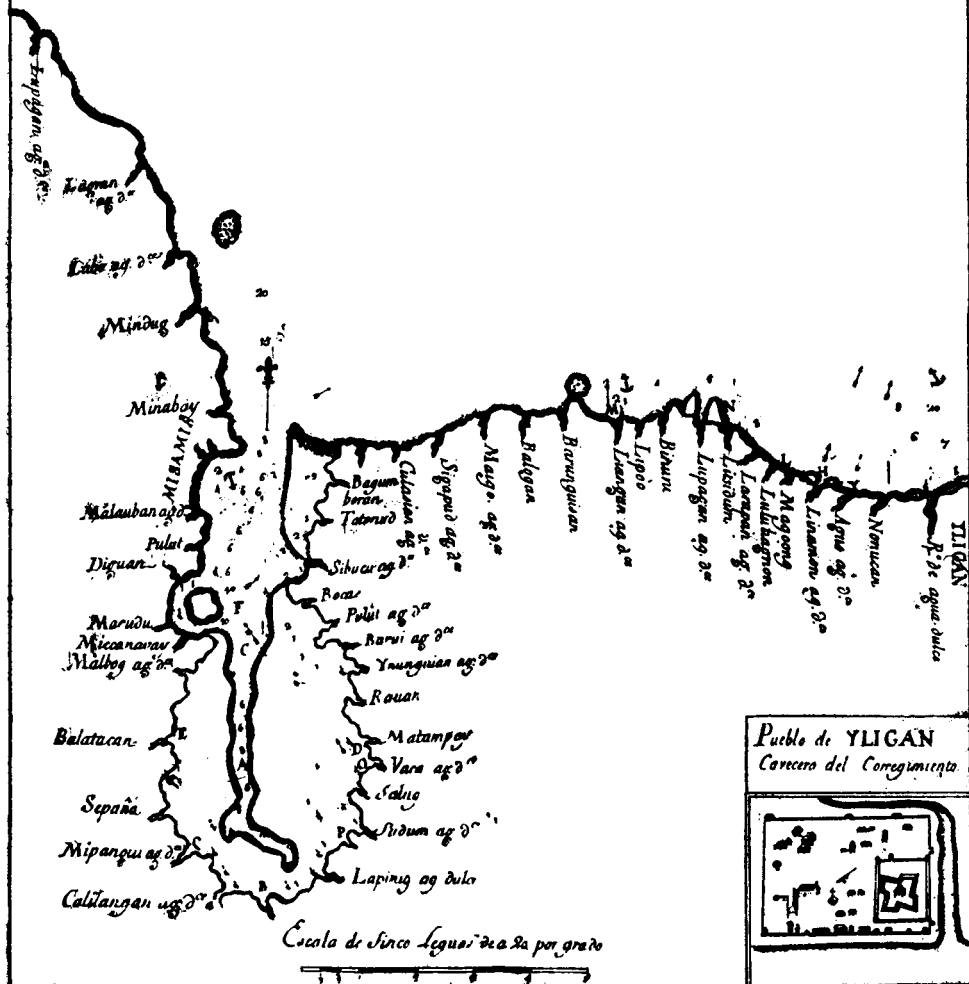
While other boats were sent to reconnoitre in the other rivers and coves, Father Ducós himself set up his quarters with the Iligan men at the Linamon, from which he could set out to various places wherever he was needed. One of the tasks he set for himself at this time was to have a map drawn of the entire Pangil Bay. He went there in an Iligan boat, taking along Father Paver who had come with the fleet as chaplain and who had apparently some knowledge of map-making. He was now put to work on a map of the coastline. Father Paver’s map, of which the original is in Chicago, is reproduced in these pages.

#### THE PUBLISHED ACCOUNT

Of the conduct of the campaign itself, we have some of the details from a contemporary account, published in Manila in 1755. This account was the original source from which the historians of the period (De la Concepción, Zuñiga, and Montero y Vidal) drew their data. The pamphlet was printed at the Jesuit press by the Filipino printer, Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay; and it bore a title couched in the flamboyant style of the era, which might be translated as follows:

A Summary Account of the Victories which—to the great glory of God and the honor and renown of the Royal Catholic Arms of His Majesty [the King of Spain]—were won in the defense of these Christian communities and of the Visayan Islands, over the Moham-

*Delineacion hydrographica de la  
Ensenada de Panguil en la Isla  
de Mindanao*



**Father Paver's Map of Pangil Bay 1754**  
(Courtesy of Newberry Library, Chicago)

medan enemy, by the Armada assigned to the fort of Iligan, in battles fought along the coasts of the Island of Mindanao in the year 1754, during the administration of His Illustrious Lordship, Don Pedro Manuel de Arandia, Captain General of the Philippine Islands and President of the Royal Audiencia.

Flambuoyant as the title may sound, the 23-page pamphlet is itself a sober and factual account of the campaign, beginning with the appointment of Valdés and his departure from Manila in January 1754 and ending with the celebration held in Manila in honor of Father Ducós' victories in January 1755. On its own admission, it is an incomplete account: "for the encounters were so many and the action so continuous that it would be impossible to chronicle every detail."

We are fortunate to have a check on the pamphlet's accuracy: for a copy of it had been sent to Father Ducós and in a letter written in August 1755 (from Tandag) he had called attention to one or other inaccurate detail, but approved the rest as accurate.

#### THE MISAMIS CAMPAIGN

Captain Nicolas Afriano, stationed at Misamis with the "Triunfo" and several smaller vessels, did not content himself with merely guarding the entrance to Pangil. He also sent his smaller boats to scour the entire Bay and to enter its rivers. Wherever Moros were found, his men landed and pursued the Moros, destroying their dwellings, capturing their boats which were beached on the shores, or destroying them if they were not worth capturing. In one such raid (on 15 October 1754) the reconnaissance party found thirty-one Moro boats beached on the river bank, a day's journey up-river. They took the best boats, setting fire to the rest. In another raid (7 November) Afriano's men found nineteen boats, took the four best, and burned the rest.

Some of the fiercest battles of the campaign were fought in Pangil Bay, within what is today the harbor of Misamis. The first of such battles on record was fought on the night of the 7th of August. Under cover of darkness the Moros

had come in twenty boats and had anchored within the Misamis harbor. With the "Triunfo" and with three smaller boats (a small *vinta* manned by Spaniards and two *sacayans* manned by Boholanos) Afriano closed in on the Moro fleet. The battle began at about nine o'clock at night and lasted about four hours. The havoc that was wrought upon the Moro fleet was not fully realized until the following morning when the sea was discovered strewn with corpses and with the floating timber of broken boats. Only six of the twenty Moro boats had been seen escaping farther into Pangil Bay. Perhaps a few more had been able to escape without being seen. But the majority of the boats had certainly been destroyed, and there was no telling how many Moros had died. The hero of this particular action was the young Spanish lieutenant, Juan de Echevarría, who commanded the *vinta*. With such a light and easily maneuverable boat, he went in and out among the enemy ships, his swivel gun (*pedrero*) firing away. His gunner actually kept count: the gun had been fired 72 times in the battle.

Another engagement was fought near Misamis at the end of that month. On 30 August three Moro boats (*pancos*) were sighted, and Afriano closed in. One boat was captured. Another was found empty (its occupants had apparently jumped into the sea). The third was able to escape into Pangil Bay. Later that same day, two other Moro boats (*caracoas*) were sighted. They were returning from a piratical expedition for they had Christian captives aboard. The *vinta* and the Boholano *sacayans* went off in pursuit. The Moros headed for land, the Christians pursuing. Reaching land, the Moros were able to escape, leaving behind their boats and their twenty-one Christian captives. The captives who were fortunate to be thus rescued were Christian Visayans from the island of Capul near Samar. Among them was their village chieftain (*Maestre de Campo*).

Other captives had come an even longer distance. Only a few days later, on the 5th of September, a boat carrying Christian captives was wrested from the Moros and the

captives rescued. These Christians had been captured in Sorsogon.

The following day (6 September) the Misamis contingent rescued twenty-three more Christian captives in an encounter with two Moro boats, in which the Moro occupants of one boat were killed.

Three days later, on 9 September, an all-night battle was fought with twelve Moro *pancos* near the Misamis coast. After a desperate fight, three of the Moro boats were finally captured. Only three of the Muslim crew were able to escape by hurling themselves into the water. The rest had died in a brave and desperate defense.

On the 18th and 19th of September, another fierce battle was fought near Misamis in which over a hundred Moros perished. In this action the heroes were the Boholanos from Malabohoc, who boarded one Moro boat and fought hand to hand with the occupants. All but seven of the Moros perished. The seven were able to escape to the shore, but the Boholanos pursued them, killing four of them with spears.

It was—like all wars—a bloody campaign, in which no quarter was asked and none was given. The Christian communities were fighting for survival: they had to destroy their enemies or be themselves destroyed. In the three months between 15 July and 15 October, the Moros did not win a single encounter.

But towards the end of October, an engagement was fought which the Moros almost won. Part of Father Ducós' fleet was sailing towards Cagayan when, off the coast of Initao, they saw a Moro flotilla of twenty-three boats. The Christians were outnumbered, and in the encounter one of their boats was almost sunk. Three of the Filipino Christians died and many were wounded. The Moros actually had the upperhand and could have finished off the rest of the Christian flotilla: but for some reason they did not follow up their advantage, but instead fled towards Pangil. The Chris-

tians decided to pursue. Within Pangil Bay, the Christians were reinforced by Afriano's contingent. The Moros lost the battle, with three of their boats captured.

#### THE CAMPAIGN ELSEWHERE

While the Misamis contingent were thus kept busy in Pangil Bay, the other contingents also had their hands full. Actually one of the earliest engagements in the intensified campaign was fought at Liangan. It was a heart-breaking fight because, although the Christians won the battle, they were not able to rescue the Christian captives. At daybreak on 24 July, Father Ducós, who was at the Linamon, heard shots in the direction of Liangan: obviously a battle was on. He hurried thither in a light Iligan boat, accompanied by two other boats: one of Boholanos and one of Initao. Arriving at the Liangan River, they found the four Boholano boats that had been stationed to guard its mouth, engaged in fierce battle with a flotilla of fourteen Moro boats who were returning from one of their raids, loaded with booty and with Christian captives. The Moros, outfought by the Boholanos and by the men from Iligan and Initao, abandoned their boats and their booty, threw their weapons into the river, and fled by land into the interior. Unfortunately, they were able to take their captives with them. Among the things that the Moros did leave behind were a native cannon (*lantaka*) and a church bell. The Boholanos who fought against the Moros in that action were men from the four towns of Tagbilaran, Malabohoc, Inabagan, and Baclayon.

Not all the events of the campaign were glorious. On the 17th of August, Father Ducós sent a contingent of 220 men into the interior to attack the Moros in their own territory. The leaders were a Spanish lieutenant and a Spanish ensign; the men with them were a mixed group: Visayans, Bukidnons, and Spaniards. Their objective was the village of Anonan, four leagues inland on the Larapan River. They walked half a day, encountered a house with three Moros. One was killed, the other two escaped. And having

accomplished nothing in particular the contingent retired to the coast.

#### FATHER DUCOS STRICKEN

If the fighting on land was not always heroic, the sea-battles were spectacularly so. One, which almost proved fatal to Father Ducós, was fought on 23 August 1754. The priest had been exploring the Pangil Bay area (with Father Paver drawing a map of the coastline) when word was received that there were Moros in the Layauan and Langaran area. Father Ducós ordered the "Triunfo" to the scene, together with eight of the boats from Bohol and Iligan. At the Langaran River they came upon a flotilla of sixteen Moro boats. The *galera* was not always useful for close fighting: in this particular case, it could not maneuver for lack of wind. The fighting therefore had to be left mostly to the native craft; and it was again a bloody battle, lasting seven hours: from seven in the morning till two in the afternoon. Some three hundred Moros were killed in the action. The hero of the fight was Pedro Tamparong with his men from Iligan, who were able to sink one Moro boat with all hands killed.

But in this case the Christians had to pay a heavy price, for several Christians were killed and many were wounded, including Father Ducós. The priest was near a *pedrero* (or perhaps he himself was firing it) when the gun exploded (from overcharge or from overheating) knocking him unconscious. He remained unconscious for hours and it was feared that he would die. This fact became immediately known to the fleet, and it affected the battle. Many Moros were thus able to escape.

Eventually Father Ducós recovered consciousness: but his right hand had been shattered and his left eye permanently blinded. After the battle, the "Triunfo" returned to Misamis; Tamparong and the Iligan men went back to the Linamon; the Boholano boats returned to their respective stations: but Father Ducós was brought to Cebu for treatment.



## NET RESULTS

Meanwhile, Afriano in Misamis continued sending his scouring expeditions into the interior of Pangil Bay. So many Moro boats had been destroyed or captured either in battle or in these scouring expeditions that the rumor was abroad (reported by a friendly Moro chieftain) that the Moros had no more boats left. It is possible that such rumors were deliberately circulated by the Moros to persuade the Christians to relax their vigilance: but it is also possible that there was truth to the rumors. A partial estimate of the boats captured by the fleet includes a total of 159 Moro boats. Most of these were captured in Pangil Bay or in the Linamon area.

Also captured were innumerable weapons: *kampilans*, *krises*, lances, etc. The pamphlet published in Manila in 1755 also listed, among the material recaptured from the Moros: 16 lantakas, 4 swivel guns (*pedreros*), 3 chalices, 3 patens, and some altar stones. Father Ducós (in the letter already referred to) corrected these figures. The number of *pedreros* recaptured (he said) was only two, not four. On the other hand, the number of chalices and patens recaptured was not three but many more. (He had not, he said, kept a strict inventory: but if a list was to be printed, let it be as close to the truth as possible.) Much jewelry of course had been thrown by the Moros into the sea and could not be recovered: and these probably also included chalices, monstrances and ciboria.

More important than the material recovered were of course the Christian slaves rescued from the Moros. Between July and December 1754, over 500 Christian captives were rescued. Most of these, presumably, were from the Visayan Islands.

The casualties inflicted on the Moros were extremely heavy. The Malanaos living around Lake Lanao (as reported by the friendly Datu Mana) believed that they had lost over two thousand men. On the other hand, the Christian casualties were remarkably light. Among the fifty wounded was

Captain Afriano of the "Triunfo" who had been hit by a bullet in the leg.

The published report took care to cite the persons of humble rank who distinguished themselves by their valor. The list included: (a) Ignacio Clemente, captain of the town of Labog; (b) Pablo de Guzman, a soldier from Cebu; (c) Lorenzo de la Cruz, a sailor of the *champan* "Trinidad"; (e) Andres de los Santos, a Christian who had been rescued from slavery and who subsequently fought with valor.

#### REJOICING

In the slow mail system of those days, the news of these victories did not reach Manila until 27 January 1755. Governor Arandía immediately informed the Archbishop of Manila, and a civic and religious celebration was held the following day, the 28th of January. A solemn *Te Deum* was sung in the Manila Cathedral before the Blessed Sacrament exposed. Present at the ceremony were the Governor General, the members of the Royal Audiencia, and all the civil and military authorities. Present also were the Archbishop, the Cathedral clergy, and the heads and representatives of the religious orders.

It was a great day in Manila: for the city had long been starved for good news of any kind. There had been news aplenty of towns raided and burned, of priests and people killed or taken into slavery, of government expeditions ending in disaster. But here, for once, was a fleet that in six months had defeated the Moros in almost every encounter; that had recaptured 500 Christian captives; and that was actually on the way to destroying forever the Muslim threat to the Visayas and Mindanao and even to Luzon.

It was a fleet, moreover, commanded by a priest and composed of Spaniards and Filipinos. It was also an economical fleet which did not have to be kept supplied with men from Manila or Luzon. The Filipinos in the fleet were local people, recruited from Bohol and Mindanao. They were like a citizen militia, fighting for their own homeland.

Of course a large fleet such as this had to be maintained with money and provisions, the money coming from Cebu and Bohol. But nobody objected for a while to supporting an armada that actually won battles, and that promised to rid the Islands forever of the Muslim terror.

Another cause for rejoicing was the fact that the non-Christian tribesmen from Bukidnon had been attracted to the Christian side in the fight against the Moros. If they were so friendly to the Christians and to the Christian missionaries, was there not great hope that they would also willingly accept the missionaries into their own villages and thus be brought to the Faith? Such at least was Father Ducós' own hope, expressed in a letter from Iligan.

#### MILITARY MEASURES

Nothing succeeds like success. The proposals and pleas made by *corregidor* and priest in the days when Iligan was doomed had not been listened to with great interest by the fiscal and military authorities in Manila. Now, those same proposals, made by the same priest in the hour of his victory, were readily accepted and implemented.

Father Ducós' chief proposal was that the stone fort (previously recommended) be built in Misamis, at the mouth of Pangil Bay. This was approved. The fort (named the "Triunfo" after the ship) was built and placed under his over-all command. There is reason to believe that it was completed in 1756.

Father Ducós' other proposal was that the fleet be permanently maintained at Misamis. The fleet in its later development consisted of two *galeras* and twelve *vintas*. A statute of regulations was drawn up for its government. And the senior officers were Pedro Tamparong of Iligan and Ignacio Cabiling of Dapitan.

Father Ducós himself was confirmed in his over-all command. The title of "Captain General" which Arandía had bestowed upon him, was confirmed by the military council in Manila, pending royal approval. The Royal Gov-

ernment in Spain, asked to confirm this appointment, did so in a puzzled manner. They approved it for the time being, but demanded a report by return mail on whether or not the Jesuit priest had enough knowledge of navigation to command a naval squadron!

#### THE ARMADA SUPPRESSED

Thus matters continued for another five years. As long as the Armada was stationed in the Bay of Pangil, the piracy of the Malanao Moros could be minimized. (There was of course still the problem of piracy from the Moros of Cotabato, Tobuc and Sulu.)

Then on the 31st of May, 1759, Governor Arandía died. He had been one of the better governors of the Islands, and under him the discipline and morale of the armed services had been restored. (He had insisted, for instance, on an increase of pay for the ordinary enlisted men.) Arandía had been fair in his dealings with the imprisoned Ali Muddin, and had not hesitated to incur the displeasure of ecclesiastical authorities in the effort to obtain justice for the sultan. At the same time, Arandía had given full support to the struggle for survival of the Christian communities in the Visayas and Mindanao against Muslim piracy.

Arandía's death was a grave misfortune for these Christian communities, and it meant the end of all effective efforts to seal off the Malanao pirates. In a contested succession, the Bishop of Cebu, Miguel Lino de Ezpeleta, took over as acting Governor. One of his acts was to suppress the armada of Father Ducós. Apparently one reason was the complaint made by the Recoletos that the Jesuit missionaries had been favored by being protected by a special squadron in Iligan Bay, whereas the Recolecto missions of Caraga and Butuan were not so protected. Bishop Ezpeleta, in suppressing the Iligan-Pangil armada, sent one of the *galeras* to Tandag in Surigao. While this may have been a favor to Tandag, the strategic value of bottling up the Malanao Moros was lost. Montero y Vidal comments drily that the suppression of that

armada by Bishop Ezpeleta "was partly responsible for the depredations caused by the Muslim pirates during his administration."

Even while Father Ducós was sealing off the exits for the Malanao pirates, the Maguindanao and Lutao and Sulu pirates continued their depredations. The years 1756 and 1757, while not as frightful as 1754, were dark years for certain areas of the Visayas. But it was after the Iligan-Pangil armada had been suppressed that the full force of the Moro raids was again felt. It would continue to be felt, as long as there was a ready market for slaves in Mindanao, Jolo, and in the East Indies.

#### ANOTHER TERRIBLE DECADE

In Chesterton's *Ballad of the White Horse*, the Mother of God appears in a vision to King Alfred of England who was battling against the Danes. The Virgin's message to him was that it was the business of Christians to keep fighting, even though they might never really win:

You have wars you hardly win,  
And souls you hardly save.

Such was the war of the Christian Filipinos against the Muslim pirates: battles and campaigns were temporarily won, but the war continued. It continued especially after the British Occupation of 1762. "The detailed account of the violent depredations committed by the Moro pirates in the one decade following the British invasion would fill entire volumes," says Montero y Vidal. Even a summary listing would give an idea of the extent of the disaster:

In Caraga district the Moros burned all the towns. In Iligan district (Misamis) at least five towns were sacked and burned: Iponan, Alilitum, Gompot, Salay, Sipaca. In the island of Camiguin, many people were killed and many others were taken prisoners. In the Visayas, almost all the islands were ravaged: Cebu, Negros, Panay, Leyte, Samar, Masbate, Burias, the Calamianes Group, Ticao, Tablas, Sibuyan. The island of Mindoro was repeatedly attacked. One of the

provinces hardest hit was Iloilo, with 130 Moro boats attacking every cove and river.

The Muslim pirates became so emboldened that they even entered Manila Bay and raided the very suburbs of the City. Twenty persons were captured one night in Malate. "Grave damage" to persons and boats was reported from Parañaque and from Tambobo.

On 7 June 1771, the Moro pirates got as far as Aparri in northern Luzon. They captured many persons, including one missionary who was visiting in Lallo.

The number of missionaries, in fact, who were captured or killed during that terrible decade was fairly large. One missionary was captured in Ticao, another in Calamianes. In Mindoro one missionary was killed, one was captured, the rest fled to the hills. In Sibuyan one parish priest fled to the hills and died there.

But it was the fact that Manila itself was not safe that made Governor Simón de Anda finally take action. He built a watchtower on Corregidor Island at the entrance to Manila Bay, and he restored the Visayan fleet.

But the fleet for northern Mindanao was never restored.

#### A PERMANENT ACHIEVEMENT

But perhaps, in one sense, it did not need to be restored. Its work had been done. For one brief moment—at the height of the Muslim raids in 1754—the Muslim power was challenged and hurled back.

In one sense the Muslim pirates never really recovered from that defeat. They renewed their raids. But the northern Mindanao districts which they had begun to occupy are today Christian provinces. What we know today as the provinces of Misamis Occidental, Lanao del Norte, and Zamboanga del Norte (and even parts of Misamis Oriental) might today have been Muslim provinces, were it not for Father José Ducós and the brave men who fought with him.

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

The story of Father Ducós and of the Moro Wars of the 1750's may be pieced together from the works of four historians: Juan de la Concepción, Joaquín Martínez de Zúñiga, José Montero y Vidal, and Vicente Barrantes.

Concepción's 14-volume *Historia general de Pilipinas* was published in Sampaloc in 1792. The pertinent material is mostly in Volumes 13 and 14.

Zúñiga's *Historia de Philippinas* was printed in 1803, also in Sampaloc. The pertinent material is in Chapters 31 and 32. (Zúñiga was an Augustinian friar, Concepción was a Recoleta.) Excerpts from Zúñiga's work are found in Blair and Robertson, Volume 48: but a translation of the entire work by John Maver was recently published under the title *An Historical View of the Philippine Islands* (Filipiniana Book Guild, Manila, 1966).

Montero y Vidal's *Historia de la piratería malayo mahometana en Mindanao, Joló y Borneo* was printed in two volumes in Madrid in 1888. The pertinent material is in Volume I, Chapters 17 to 20.

Additional material (particularly in regard to fortifications) may be found in Vicente Barrantes, *Guerras piráticas de Filipinas contra mindanaos y joloanos* (Madrid, 1878). The references to Father Ducós in Chapter 5 are brief but important.

Among the primary sources used by the historians were the first-hand reports written by the missionaries. Those by the Jesuits, printed in *Cartas edificantes* included detailed accounts of the siege of Lubungan and of the Iligan campaigns. An account of the siege of Palompon was printed in 1755 in Manila under the title *Relación de la valerosa defensa de los Naturales Bisayas del Pueblo de Palompon en la Isla de Leyte*.

On the Iligan and Misamis fleet the important primary source is the pamphlet which we mentioned in the text (of which a copy exists in the Lopez Memorial Museum in Manila). Its full title: *Compendio de los sucesos que con grande gloria de Dios, lustre y honor de las Catholicas Armas Reales de S. M. en defensa de estas Christianidades é Islas Bisayas se conseguieron contra los Mahometanos enemigos por el Armamento destacado al presidio de Iligan, sobre las costas de la isla de Mindanao, en el año de mil setecientos cinquenta y quarto: governando las de Philipinas el M. Ill. S. Don Pedro Manuel de Arandia, su Capitan Gral. y Presidente de la Real Audiencia. Impresso en Manila en la Imprenta de la Compañía de Jesús por Don Nicolas de la Cruz Bagay. Año de 1755. It is a booklet of 23 unnumbered pages.*

Regarding this last mentioned work, there is an interesting manuscript copy in the Newberry Library in Chicago. Its principal value is the map that it contains and the 8 pages explaining the map. It is possible that this was the map drawn by Father Paver in 1754 in his exploration of Pangil Bay in company with Father Ducós. I have a microfilm copy of that manuscript, obtained for me by Sister Mary Dorita Clifford of Clarke College, Dubuque, Iowa.

Father Horacio de la Costa's book on *The Jesuits in the Philippines: 1581-1768* (Harvard, 1961) contains a one-sentence reference to Father Ducós, which occurs on page 549: "Commanding one of the columns was the Jesuit chaplain of Iligan, Father José Ducós." That is the only mention of Ducós in the text. In the Appendix where biographical data are given on all the Jesuits mentioned in Father de la Costa's text, we find the following entry: "Ducós, José, priest: no information available."

However, Father de la Costa did find in the Jesuit Archives of Toledo three letters of Father Ducós, of which he made microfilm copies for the Ateneo Archives in Manila. I have used these letters in the present article. They are dated: (a) Iligan, 16 June 1753; (b) Iligan, 13 January 1755; and (c) Tandag, 28 August 1755.

The "Plan for an Expedition for the conquest of the Southern Philippines" is in Blair and Robertson, Vol. 49, where it is attributed to Draper. As mentioned in the text the original is in the British Museum "in Lord Anson's hand." Father Nicholas Cushner S.J. informs me that the Plan is believed to be Dalrymple's.

For other information, I have drawn on other sources, including my own limited acquaintance with the region.