

THE ERA OF THE KRIS: MORO RAIDS IN SORSOGON AND KABIKOLAN AND THEIR IMPACT ON PHILIPPINE HISTORY, 1571-1896

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Introduction

The Spanish era in the Philippines could also be called the era of Spanish-Moro wars. These wars were not just a history of both of the combatants. Downplayed in the writings by various historians was the role of the inhabitants in the places of conflicts, the psychological and physical impact of these conflicts on their lives and, more significant, the effect of these conflicts, on the development and history of the Philippines.

Spanish writers like Montero y Vidal and Barrantes highlighted the destructiveness of the Moro raids and the heroism of the Spaniards. On the other hand, Muslim writers like Saleeby and Majul emphasized the destructiveness of the Spaniards against the Moro homelands and the heroism of the Moros in warding off Spanish attempts to conquer them. This paper shall show other aspects of the conflict which Spanish and Muslim historians neglected to emphasize.

For more than two centuries, the Moro raiders left many lasting mementoes of their activities in Luzon and the Visayas. In Kabikolan, more than halfway into the 20th century, mothers still invoked the dreaded raiders' name, their saying "*hala, iya-on na an mga Moros* (now there, the Moros are coming) being sufficient to send their recalcitrant children scurrying home. In Sorsogon, remains of many *baluartes* and *intramuroses* (fortified enclosures) where people sought refuge and protection when the raiders came still dot the coasts. The various churches are also mute witnesses to the fire and fury that raged around them. Their thick walls were so made to serve as ramparts for those inside to fight the raiders. Nowhere in the Philippines than in Sorsogon and Kabikolan could one find so many churches, facing the coasts, with very tall *simburios* (churchtowers) built by the people to serve as lookouts for the feared raiders from the south. Local places even got their names because of the raiders. One is the town of Gubat, Sorsogon so named by the inhabitants because when some Spaniards came around asking for the name of the place, the people shouted "*gubat, gubat*" (raid, raid) for the Moro raiders happened to be around. Even the local dialects were enriched by the raiders. Natives of Sorsogon would describe a brash, troublesome, and undisciplined person as "*may pagka-Moros*" (like a Moro).

Various factors prompted the Moro raids. European inroads in the Far East saw the Dutch and the Spaniards, in particular, competing for further expansion of their colonial holdings. By the 16th century, Moro leaders were discomfited to see their homelands circumscribed by the Dutch, Portuguese, and British in the south and by the Spaniards in the north. The expansionist policies of these European powers, notably the Spaniards, impressed in the minds of the Moro leaders the matter of their survival in their own lands. Mindanao and, later, Sulu sought to stem this dangerous trend by undertaking internal consolidation and offensive operations against the Spaniards.

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The long, mournful sounds of the *budyong* (conch shell), the fierce peelings of church-bells, and the series of smoke signals coming from burning patches of cogon heralded the presence of the Moro raiders. Their practice of attacking at dawn, when the inhabitants were in deep slumber, accentuated the terror and the chaos that accompanied their attacks. They came at the onset of the *vendavales* (southwest monsoons) and left when the *amihan* (northern monsoons) set in. The *vendavales* aided their sea crafts in travelling from their southern lairs to their northern destinations in the Visayas and Luzon and the *amihan* in propelling them back to their bases.

The first major attacks occurred in 1590-91 when fifty *caracoas*¹ of Mindanaos and Joloans devastated Cebu, Negros, and Panay. Their depredations so terrified the inhabitants that many of them abandoned their coastal settlements and retired into the security of the hinterlands.²

They came again in 1599-1600. In 1599, fifty *pancos* of some 3,000 Mindanaos, Joloans, and Camucones attacked Panay and Negros. They left loaded with booty and some 800 captives. Datus Sali and Silongan, the raiders' leaders, returned in 1600 with about 8,000 men in seventy *caracoas* and devastated Panay. In 1602, forty-eight *caracoas* of Moros raided Cebu, Tayabas, and Batangas. In Mindoro, they sacked its capital town, barely missing the incoming Governor General of the

¹Bartholomew Leonardo Argensola, *The Discovery and Conquest of the Molucco and Philippine Islands* (London: 1708), p. 17, distinguished the *caracoa* and the *joanga*. The *caracoa* was a sea craft which uses oars, is open and bigger, steered by two rudders, one ahead and the second astern. The Ternatans called the *caracoa* as *joanga*, except that the *joanga* differ "in having two half-moons of wood, painted or gault, rising above the keel at the head and poop. About 100 men row in each of them, to the sound of a tabor and a bell. They carry 20 soldiers and six musketeers. The rest are employed about four or five brass guns. Both the men that row and the soldiers are armed with *campilanes*. . . and shields, and abundance of *calabays* and *sagus*, being along canes burnt in the fire to harden them, which they throw without tacking, as the Moors do their darts."

²Vicente Barrantes, *Guerras Piraticas de Filipinas contra Mindanaos y Joloanos* (Madrid: Imp. de Miguel G. Hernandez, 1878), p. 9.

Philippines, Don Pedro de Acuna, who was aboard a small ship accompanied only by two *champans*.³

In 1616, Governor General Juan de Silva led an ill-fated expedition to Malacca. In so doing, he depleted the Spanish forces in the Islands. The Mindanaoans and Joloans exploited this weakened state of the country and raided many places, reaching as far as Batangas. In this year, too, occurred the first major raid against Sorsogon. Sixty *caracoas* of raiders surprised the Spanish garrison in Bagatao Island on October 18, 1616, destroying a galleon and two *pataches* being built there, killing 200, and capturing another 100 inhabitants plus 30 Spaniards. More than one million pesos worth of guns, artillery, property, and supplies were taken or destroyed by the raiders.⁴

The Joloans again raided the Bagatao shipyard in Sorsogon in 1627. They carried off much booty besides throwing to the sea some 1,000 *fanegas* of rice which they could not carry. From Bagatao, the Joloan raiders proceeded to Romblon and Leyte. They carried away more than 300 captives.⁵

In 1634, eighteen *caracoas* of 1,500 Mindanaoans and Joloans attacked Leyte, Cebu, Sorsogon, Albay, Camarines, and Tayabas. In Tayabas, they got the Alcalde Mayor of the province and almost got the Archbishop of Manila, Fr. Miguel Garcia Serrano, who was then conducting his diocesan visits.

The following year, Datu Ache raided the Gulf of Sorsogon, destroying again the rebuilt Bagatao shipyard, including many nearby towns. The two years' booty of Datu Ache's raids was reputedly immense: 2,000 ounces of gold, an equal amount in silver, numerous firearms, and 1,500 inhabitants captured, and 30 Spaniards killed (five of them friars).⁶

Samar province was plundered in 1636. In 1646, Sorsogon Gulf was devastated, resulting in the destruction and death of the villages of Ibalon and Duma-

³Fr. Jose Torrubia, Orden de S. Francisco, *Dissertacion historico-politica y en mucha parte geografica de las Islas Philipinas, extension del Mahometismo en ellas, grandes estragos que han hecho los Mindanaos, Joloes, Camucones y Confederados de esta Secta en nuestros Pueblos Christianos, 1753*. (m.s.), pp. 13, 21-23.

⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 30-31; "Informatory Memorial addressed to the King. Juan Grau y Monfalcon, Madrid, 1637," Emma Blair and James Robertson, *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898* (Cleveland, Ohio: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1903-1909), Vol. 27, p. 195 (henceforth to be cited as BR); "Relation by Capt. Sebastian de Pineda, May 26, 1619," BR, Vol. 18, p. 182.

⁵"Relation of 1627-28. Unsigned, July 1628," BR, Vol. 22, pp. 203-210; "Historia de la Orden de San Agustin, Juan de Medina," BR, Vol. 24, p. 139.

⁶Jose Montero y Vidal, *Historia general de Filipinas desde el descubrimiento de dichas islas hasta nuestros dias* (Madrid: Est. Tip. de la Viuda e Hijos de Tello, 1894), Tomo I, p. 190; Diego Diaz de la Carrera, *Sucesos felices que por mar y tierra ha dado N.S. as las armas Espanolas en las islas Filipinas contra los Olandes, por fin del ano de 1636 y principal del de 1637* (Madrid: 1639), ms.; "Events in Filipinas. Fr. Juan Lopez, Cavite, July 23, 1637," BR, Vol. 27, pp. 314-5; "Corcuera to Felipe IV. Manila, August 20, 1637," BR, Vol. 27, p. 350; "Moro raids repulsed. Manila, 1755," BR, Vol. 48, p. 50.

naog. In 1662-1663, many Visayan provinces, especially Leyte and Samar,⁷ suffered a similar fate.

In the succeeding years the unrelenting fury of the Moro raiders was shown. Scattered records mentioned continuous raids. A 1695 account noted that Bacon and its visita, Sorsogon, had only churches and habitations made of nipa and bamboo because they were routinely destroyed by the Camucones and Mindanaoans (*por quemarlas muy ordinario el enemigo Camucon y Mindanao*).⁸ According to local historians like Mariano Goyena del Prado, the Moros came to Albay in 1730 and "in two years captured a total of 200 Christians." Many towns in Sorsogon Gulf were raided in 1737, 1740, 1746, 1749, and 1781.⁹ Likewise, the natives of Ligao, Albay in their 1772 petition to build *baluartes* along the town's coast, mentioned a village that was destroyed by a Moro raid in 1736.¹⁰

The 1740 raid in Sorsogon Gulf must have been so severe that in 1742 the Spanish transferred the capital of *Provincia de Ibalon* from the town of Ibalon to the town of Albay Viejo. Located at the Gulf of Albay opposite the Gulf of Sorsogon, Albay Viejo is away from the routes of the Moro raiders.

The bloodiest Moro raids occurred during the decade of the 1750's. The immediate cause was the Spanish colonial government's decision to conquer once and for all the Sultan of Sulu. At a *Junta de Guerra* (Council of War) in October 1751, a war of fire and blood (*guerra a fuego y sangre*) was declared against all the Mindanaoans, Joloans, Tirones, and Camucones. An expedition under Col. Antonio Ramon de Abad invaded Jolo in 1752 but was "disgracefully beaten." The Joloans retaliated and "invaded the Philippines in their turn, and successfully desolated and laid waste the Spanish provinces for a period of three years."¹¹

Beginning in late 1752, sixty-eight *joangas* of Moros desolated Kalibo, Aklan; thirty-eight razed Ilog, Negros; fifty-seven sacked Banton Island; twenty-five besieged Palompon, Leyte; seventeen pillaged Calapan, Mindoro; two thousand

⁷Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, Tomo I, p. 322; Fr. Casimiro Diaz, *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas* (Valladolid: Imp. Libreria, Heliografia y Tallar de Gravados de Luis N. Gaviria, 1890), pp. 637-9.

⁸"Entrada de la Serafica Religion de Nuestro P.S. Francisco en las Islas Filipinas, 1695," Wenceslao E. Retana, ed., *Archivo del Bibliofilo Filipino* (Madrid: Imp. de la Viuda de M. Minuesa de los Rios, 1895), Tomo I, p. 13.

⁹Mariano Goyena del Prado, *Ibalon: Ethnohistory of the Bikol Region*, tr. by Ma. Lilia F. Realubit (Legaspi City: AMS Press, 1981), p. 50.

¹⁰*Ereccion de Pueblos-Camarines Sur, 1781-1833*, Folio 300-308b. Consulta del Alcalde mayor de Camarines en que acompaña la presentacion del Gobillo y comun de praes del pueblo de Ligao solicitando se les conceda licencia para construir dos baluartes en los sitios nombrados Marigondon y Panganiran para defenderse de los Moros. Camarines Sur, 18 de Enero 1810.

¹¹John Crawford, *History of the Indian Archipelago* (Edinburgh: Archibald Constable and Company, 1820), Vol. 2, pp. 471-472.

Maranaos besieged Iligan, Mindanao for two months, etc. Of the eighteen towns of Mindoro, only two (Nauhan and Calapan) escaped total destruction. No less than 160 *joangas* of Moros were reported to have made Mindoro as their base in raiding nearby islands.

The Iranuns and Maranaos came next in 1753 and repeated the same scenes of pillage and desolation. Various places in Mindanao, were raided such as Iligan, Initao, Caraga, Layauan, Tagoloan, Lubungan, and Iponan. In July 1753, the raiders destroyed Surigao, Higaquet, Pahuntungan, and the entire district of Butuan. In the Visayas, they attacked Camiguin, Romblon, Tablas, Banton, Simara, and Sibuyan. Ticao Island was sacked while Calapan, Mindoro and Calavite, Marinduque were destroyed. Perhaps the Moro killer of the *padre ministro* of Calavite expressed the fury of the Moros against the Spaniards and their native allies when he said: "*Español mato a mi padre, yo tambien mato Español!*" (A Spaniard killed my father, I will also kill a Spaniard). The raiders attacked even faraway Masinloc and Sta. Cruz, Zambales.¹²

The same acts of pillage and plunder were repeated in 1754, also a sad year for Sorsogon. In March 1754, the Leyte towns of Hinundayan, Cabalian, Liloan, Sogod, Maasin, and Biliran were destroyed by the raiders. Two months later, most of the towns in Panay were raided. In June, the town of Bacon, Sorsogon was destroyed. In July, the *Santissima Trinidad* anchored at Ticao carrying the incoming Governor General, Manuel de Arandia. He dispatched a *caracoa* carrying the parcels of letters from Acapulco to be sent to Manila. Approaching the Gulf of Sorsogon, the messengers were overcome by the Moro raiders. Had Arandia landed with his men, the Moro raiders could not have asked for more – a Governor General for a captive.¹³

In August 1754, the towns along the shores of Sorsogon Gulf were attacked. Macalaya, Donsol, Sorsogon, and adjacent towns were despoiled.¹⁴ The raids so terrified the people of Donsol that they abandoned their coastal site and transferred to an interior one which was a day's travel to the coast. In September, the raiders occupied the capital of Albay Province, Albay Viejo. It took the Spaniards and residents of nearby towns three days of fighting to retake Albay Viejo.¹⁵

¹²Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, Tomo I, pp. 508-539; Juan de la Concepcion, *Historia General de Filipinas* (Madrid: Agustin de la Rosa y Balagtas, 1788), Tomo XIII, pp. 1-36, 190-224.

¹³Juan de la Concepcion, *ibid.*, Tomo XIII, p. 232; Goyena del Prado, *op. cit.*, pp. 115-6.

¹⁴*Ereccion de Pueblos-Albay, 1800-1858*, Tomo III, Folio 402b. Sr. Alcalde mayor, El Goblo, Capitanes pasados, cabezas de barangay y demas vecinos principales de esta cabecera, reunidos. . . relativo al puerto de Putiao. Albay, 26 de Septiembre 1830.

¹⁵Juan de la Concepcion, *op. cit.*, Tomo XIII, pp. 19-191.

By 1755, the Moro raiders had entrenched themselves in nearby islands, like Marinduque, using them as their bases for raiding and seriously threatening the entire western coast of Luzon.¹⁶

The year 1756 continued to witness the persistent Moro raids. Communications of provincial colonial officials with Manila mentioned the continued Moro raids against the various provinces and islands in Luzon and the Visayas.¹⁷

In 1757, the fiercest of the Moro leaders, Datu Salicala, came and struck fear in the hearts of the Christianized peoples of Luzon and the Visayas. The ferocity of his raids which brought him as far as Manila Bay, was such that the mere mention of his name sufficed to send people scurrying to the interior. He left with more than a thousand captives.¹⁸

In 1759, the Fathers Provincial of the various religious orders reported to the Governor General the sad state of affairs in their respective jurisdictions. The Fray Capellan of Imus, Cavite, reported that the *contra-costa* of Mindoro was a major Moro base from which the raiders had inflicted immense damage on unsuspecting travellers passing through the island.

The Father Provincial of the Augustinians also reported the various Moro depredations against Panay, Capiz, Iloilo, Cebu, and Batangas. He mentioned that in 1758 the Moros raided the towns of Taal and Batangas, four towns in Capiz, and the entire province of Iloilo.

The Father Provincial of the Franciscans gave a similar gloomy picture for Tayabas and Kabikolan. The Tayabas towns of Mayaboc, Polillo, Gumaca, Mauban, Atimonan, Pagbilao, and Binangonan de Lampon suffered heavily from Moro raids. In Camarines, the towns of Ragay and Lupi were destroyed while the towns of Oas, Libon, Guinobatan, Libmanan, Calabanga, and Cagsaua were miserable because the raiders often destroyed their croplands. The Father Provincial estimated that in 1758 alone more than 280 persons in Kabikolan died fighting off the raiders and the population decreased due to captivity, deaths, or dispersions in the mountains.¹⁹

The Moro raiders came almost every year. Until the British occupied Manila in 1762, the Spanish colonial authorities were fully preoccupied with the Moro menace. A series of natural calamities also occurred on the eve of the British occu-

¹⁶*Cedulario, 1756-1771*, Folio 66-67. Real orden del 1^o de Septiembre de 1756 manifestando quedarse enterado el Rey del desembarco de los moros en Balayan, cometiendo destrozos y de haberse libertado de los mismos la Ysla de Marinduque. Madrid, 1^o de Septiembre de 1756.

¹⁷*Cedulario, 1756-1771*, Folio 259-260. Real orden de 17 de Octubre de 1757 manifestando quedar enterado el Rey de la carta sobre las irrupciones de los Moros en provincias. Madrid, 17 de Octubre de 1757.

¹⁸Juan de la Concepcion, *op. cit.*, Tomo VII, p. 4.

¹⁹*Cedulario, 1758-1768*, Folio 89-239. Real cedula de 1^o de Noviembre de 1758 Su Magestad previniendo al Gobernador de Filipinas lo que debe executar para contener los insultos y excesos que cometen los Moros Joloanos y otros confinatos en aquellas Islas.

pation dispiriting the country and its inhabitants. Thus, what the British found when they came was a prostrate country people which Fr. Juan de la Concepcion graphically described as "*un desmayado cuerpo, sin Espiritu y sin Sangre.*"²⁰

The British occupation left the Moros in full control of the seas. And even after the British left in 1764, it took many more years for the Spaniards to rehabilitate their war measures against the Moros. In the meantime, the latter raided with impunity areas as far as Palanan, Cagayan where they captured a Dominican friar and a Spaniard on January 7, 1771.²¹ Two years earlier before, they raided various towns in Mindanao and the islands of Cebu, Camiguin, Panay, Sibuyan, Mindoro, Iloilo, Leyte, Negros, Samar, Albay, and Masbate. They reached up to Bataan where they razed the towns of Mariveles and Cabcaben. The raiders had become so confident that in the island of Inangpolongan, in the strait between Iloilo and Negros, they built a *tangcal* (a corral or enclosure) where they gathered all their captives in their raiding sorties before transporting them to the slave markets in Jolo or Borneo.²²

In October 1772, Manito, Albay was raided. Two raids hit nearby Putiao town in 1772-1774 causing its inhabitants to abandon the town.²³ The Moros raided again various towns in Sorsogon, Albay, and Camarines in 1782, 1786, 1796, and 1799. The 1796 raid must have been heavy for the raiders wiped out the town of Himoragat, Camarines Sur.²⁴

The raiders came again in big numbers in 1805. On May 28, they captured the goleta *San Vicente* loaded with the entire 1804 tributes collected from Albay Province (consisting of 2,332 pesos and 512 cavans of rice).²⁵ Elsewhere, the town

²⁰Juan de la Concepcion, *op. cit.*, Tomo VII, pp. 3-11.

²¹Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, Tomo I, p. 259; *Consultas-17th Century*. Consulta del Lugar Theniente Justicia Maior en que da cuenta se haverse avistado quatro imbarcaciones de Moros. Vigan, 6 de Julio 1760.

²²Barrantes, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-56; Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, Tomo I, pp. 231-260.

²³*Ereccion de Pueblos-Albay, 1856-1897*, Tomo VI, Folio 184-191b. Expediente en que participa haber resuelto que los Naturales residentes en el sitio nombrado Manito pasasen al monte Capuntucan por las razones que expresa. Albay, Enero 27 de 1772; *Ereccion de Pueblos-Albay, 1800-1858*, Tomo III, Folio 402b. Sr. Alcalde mayor. . . . (see footnote 14).

²⁴*Ereccion de Pueblos-Camarines Sur, 1781-1883*, Folio 99-104. Expediente creado a Consulta del Alcalde Mayor de Camarines del antiguo pueblo de Himoragat, de la formacion de un baluartillo para colocar un falconete y de la libertad de tributos por dos anos. Camarines, 1803.

²⁵*Varias Provincias-Albay*, Tomo XI. (testimonio de) Don Slavador Jose de Ybarra para conducir 512 cavanes de arroz limpio al Real Almacenes de Manila abordo de goleta San Vicente, Cabecera de Albay, 19 de Mayo 1805; Testimonio de las diligencias practicadas por la goleta San Vicente apresada por los Moros en la ensenada de Botag cargada de Reales intereses el 29 de Mayo 1805; Carta del Gobernadorcillo de Bulan Don Juan Camposano (to) Alcalde Mayor de Albay Don Manuel Garay, 31 de Mayo 1805; Carta de Gobernadorcillo de Sorsogon Don Juan Silverio, 1º de Junio 1805; Declaracion del grumete del goleta San Vicente Don Juan Ynocencio, 3 de Junio 1805.

of Mambulao, Camarines was attacked and fifteen fishermen were captured by the raiders. During their stay, they effectively blocked travel and trade between Mauban, Tayabas and Sorsogon.²⁶

In 1810, the parish priest of Bulan, Sorsogon reported that during the previous year the town was raided by the Moros.²⁷ In November 1810, the Bishop of Nueva Caceres reported that one of the grave problems of overseeing his diocess was the extreme dangers posed at sea by the Moros. An example he cited was the raid in October 1810 by some 170 *pancos* of Moros from Sorsogon and Catanduanes. Their raid in Libmanan, Camarines Sur was unforgettable for its inhabitants. Not only did they take 100 of them in captivity, the Bishop noted, but they disrobed all the women, made their *tapis* into sacks for the palay they got and forced the naked women to carry the palay to their *pancos* before leaving.²⁸

The Moros made another big raid in 1818. As early as February, the *armadillas* of the provinces of Albay were alerted of the presence of 170 *pancos* of Moros in the vicinity of Indan and Polillo Island.²⁹ By July, the Moros had already inflicted serious damages. On July 2, near Rapu-Rapo Island, they captured two armed *paraos* of the towns of Tiui and Tabaco and the *falua* of Albay Province. On July 6, they sacked Sangay, Camarines Sur capturing 84 of its inhabitants, including the town parish priest and *governadorcillo*. On July 9, they captured the entire tributes of Catanduanes and sacked the towns of Talisay and Indan, Camarines Sur.

By August, the Spanish colonial authorities had fitted twenty vessels to fight the raiders. On August 7, fifty *pancos* of raiders again occupied Indan. The Albay *armadilla* could not give aid because of the presence of thirty-one *pancos* of raiders which landed at Magdalena, Masbate Island. Another group of raiders, numbering some 3,000, was sighted heading towards Palapag, Samar about the end of August 1818.

The heavy presence of the Moro raiders from Samar to Catanduanes and the frenetic preparations made by the Spaniards and the local inhabitants made a major

²⁶*Ereccion de Pueblos-Camarines Sur, 1799-1820*, Folio 79-87. Partes sobre el arribo de varios *pancos* de Moros en en los pueblos de Mambulao y Ragay de Camarines, 1805; *Ereccion de Pueblos-Albay, 1799-1864*, Tomo II, Folio 106-119. Oficio del Alcalde Mayor de Albay participando hallarse cruzando sobre las costas de Sorsogon y Casiguran 40 *pancos* de Moros que han apresado un Pontin; Alcalde Mayor de Albay Don Domingo Navea (to) Gobernador General, Albay, 23 de Noviembre 1806.

²⁷*Santa Visita*, Box 4-A-2, Folio 188-193. Santa Visita del pueblo de Bulan, 1810.

²⁸*Gobierno Obispados Sufraganeos, 1697-1893*, Box 4-E-13, Folder 1741-1918. Obispo de Nueva Caceres (to) Sr. Don Antonio de Zulaybar, Arzobispo de Manila, Nueva Caceres, Noviembre 4 de 1810.

²⁹*Ereccion de Pueblos-Albay, 1772-1836*, Tomo I. Partes del Alcalde Mayor de Albay sobre los incursiones de los Moros piratas en los pueblos de su provincia, robando y cautivando sus habitantes, y de los combates sostenidos por sus armadillas contra dichos piratas. Albay, 1818-1821.

battle inevitable. The ceaseless reconnoitering of the seas by the defenders finally paid off. A battle ensued between the Spanish forces and the Moro raiders near the Encenada de Pitogo, Tabogon Bay on the night of October 25. The battle resulted in the loss of fourteen *pancos* besides forcing some five hundred of the raiders to flee on land.

Darkness enabled the rest of the raiders to escape while the Spanish forces regrouped under the leadership of Don Pedro Estevan, *ex-governadorcillo* of Tabaco, Albay and overall commander of the Spanish *armadillas*. At dawn of October 26, they intercepted another forty *pancos* of raiders led by no less than "Prince Nune, the son of the Sultan of Mindanao." After thirteen hours of battle, the heat of the fight taking place from eight in the morning to four in the afternoon, Estevan's forces captured another nine *pancos*, sunk twelve, and freed thirty captives. Prince Nune, however, escaped capture when one of his leaders, Datu Gampon, returned to the battle scene and spirited him away. Two weeks after his October 25-26 encounters, more than sixty corpses of the raiders were washed out on the shores of Caramoan and another fifty-nine captives freed while some 1,000 raiders fled to the mountains of the said towns. Until late December 1818, remnants of the Moro fugitives continued to be captured or killed by the local inhabitants.³⁰

The 1818 Battle of Tabogon Bay was very significant not only to the Bikolanos but to the local colonial authorities as well. Thereafter, the Moro raiders were no longer as intrepid and daring in conducting their attacks. Their defeat at Tabogon Bay impressed the raiders with the stiffened and organized resistance against their pernicious raids. Reports after this 1818 battle showed that the Moros were reduced to preying on fishermen or isolated travellers while hiding in the numerous isolated coves or islets; or capturing those who happened to cross their paths; or raiding isolated and sparsely-populated *visitas* or settlements.³¹

There were still sporadic raids – the last taking place in 1896, according to local accounts in Sorsogon – but for the Moros their era of raiding and destroying Luzon and the Visayas with impunity was forever gone. By the last half of the 19th century, it was the turn of the raiders to be progressively on the defensive as the onslaught of the Cross against the Crescent mounted.

³⁰*Ibid.*, see Folios 256-351.

³¹*Ereccion de Pueblos-Camarines Sur, 1831-1883*, Folio 168-193. Partes de Moros, Camarines Sur, Junio 5 – Septiembre 15 de 1834; *Ereccion de Pueblos-Camarines Sur, 1785-1837*. Informe sobre todos los acontecimientos de Moros en la Provincia de Camarines Sur durante el año 1835; *Ereccion de Pueblos-Albay, 1841-1894*, Tomo IV, Folio 40. Partes de Moros. Albay, 1841; Folio 194 – Alcalde Mayor de Albay Jose Velarde (to) Gobernador Gral, Albay, 22 de Septiembre 1847; *Cartas, 1847-1860*. Gobernador General Narciso de Claveria (to) Sr. Secretario de Estado. . . y Gobernacion de Ultramar, Manila, 20 de Octubre 1847; *Piratas* – Bundle II. Albay, Año de 1860. Comunicaciones sobre de aparición de piratas en las aguas de dicha provincia.

The Effects of the Moro Raids

"This unending war with the Moros overburdened our Government and every governor general," the Spanish historian Vicente Barrantes thus summed up the effects of Moro resistance and counter-attacks against Spanish colonial expansionism. The Moro resistance had so affected the Spanish authorities that no less than Governor General Marquina commented that the wars with the Moros was an evil without remedy (*era un mal sin remedio*).³² To the Spanish colonial authorities, the Moro raids were not only detrimental to their interests in the Philippines but they were also the root cause of the depopulation of many coastal areas and of their lack of commercial and agricultural growth, especially in the Visayas.³³ Governor General Basco y Vargas, in 1778, attributed the decadence of the Islands to the continuous Moro raids which disrupted peace and order, stopped inter-coastal trade and commerce, destroyed many towns and fields, and carried many inhabitants to captivity.³⁴

One of the obvious effects of the raids was the substantial number of captives taken from the various coastal towns of Luzon and Visayas. In 1621, Fr. Hernando de los Rios Coronel mentioned the "more than ten thousand captives" taken during the past decades.³⁵ In 1634, Archbishop of Manila Fr. Miguel Garcia Serrano wrote the Spanish king that during the first thirty years of the 17th century more than 20,000 Christians were captured by the Moro raiders.³⁶ Vicente Barrantes cited a report by the Father Provincial of the Recollects that in Paragua (Palawan) alone no less than 10,000 were killed or taken captive during the years 1719 to 1751.³⁷

The decades of the 1750's, during which time the heaviest raids were recorded, saw a greater population reduction of many coastal areas. Panay was reduced from 1,500 tributes in 1750 to only 500 in 1757; Romblon, from 1,370 to 995; Aklan, from 1,164 to 549; and Banga, from 1,020 to 754. Ibahay lost 229 tributes and Tibiao 200 tributes.³⁸ In Mindoro, from 1752 to 1766 more than 1,000 in-

³²Barrantes, *op. cit.*, p. 139.

³³Ildefonso de Aragon, *Plan general de defensa de las Islas Filipinas con su plano hidrografico y topografico, ano de 1829* (ms.), pp. 189-190.

³⁴*Spanish Manila* — Bundle V. Armadillas corsarias contra Moros. Bando del Sr. Basco de 22 de Agosto de 1778 sobre formar armadillas en las provincias para la persecucion de los Moros y privilegios que se conceden a los voluntarios que quieran hacer el corso. Real Palacio de Manila, 22 de Agosto 1778.

³⁵"Memorial y relacion para su Magestad. Hernando de los Rios Coronel, Madrid, Fernando Correa, 1621," BR, Vol. 19, p. 265.

³⁶Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, Tomo I, p. 165; Barrantes, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

³⁷Barrantes, *ibid.*, p. 232.

³⁸Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, Tomo I, pp. 541-2; Juan de la Concepcion, *op. cit.*, Tomo XIV, pp. 325-6.

habitants were killed and another 1,300 captured, four of them friars.³⁹ Fray Manuel Matos, Bishop of Nueva Caceres, wrote the Spanish king on June 29, 1758 that around 8,000 inhabitants of Kabikolan were captured by the Moro raiders in 1757.⁴⁰ The Spanish historian, Jose Montero y Vidal, estimated that an annual average of 500 persons were taken captive by the Moros from the various places that they raided.⁴¹

Undoubtedly, a substantial number of inhabitants were either taken or killed by the Moro raiders every year, although it is difficult to confirm the figures given by the friars. Even the Father Provincial of the Franciscans admitted in 1759, that it was difficult to determine the exact number of persons captured or killed in their jurisdictions in Tayabas, Camarines, and Albay. However, he was certain that the *padrones de almas* (population lists) in the various towns they administered showed many members missing or unaccounted for and that definitely they were either captured or killed, or had taken refuge in the mountains. The Franciscan Father Provincial was sure that the above were the reasons for the depopulated towns in their jurisdictions.⁴² In other words, the number of captives taken by the raiders was not the sole cause for the depopulation of many coastal towns. The destruction, desolation, and terror that the raiders instilled in the hearts of the inhabitants drove many of them away from their coastal habitations into the interior. Consequently, this evacuation was reflected in the growth of settlements in the interior and in the reduced number of tributary populations manifested in the *padrones de almas* of the various coastal towns.

Abetting the Moro's successes was the Spanish colonial policy of prohibiting the inhabitants from carrying any form of arms which the latter could have used for self-protection. The prohibition was intended to control the vagabonds and *tulisanes* (bandits or robbers) who had become daring and destructive, too. However, this policy did not affect the vagabonds and *tulisanes* as much as the general inhabitants, especially those in the coastal areas, who were rendered helpless before the Moro raiders. Only after the destructive Moro raids of the 18th century was the ban to carry arms eased by the Spanish colonial authorities as they passed

³⁹*Cedulario, 1760-1768*, Folio 79b-83. Memorial de Fr. Juan de San Agustin, Procurador y Comisario de Provincia de San Nicolas de Augustinos Recoletos Descalzos. Manila, 11 de Noviembre 1766.

⁴⁰Domingo E. Abella, *Bikol Annals* (Manila: n.p., 1954), p. 106.

⁴¹Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, Tomo I, p. 369.

⁴²*Cedulario, 1758-1768*, Folio 105-107. Fray Francisco de Santa Rosa, Provincial de San Francisco (to) Fr. Miguel de Espeleta, Manila, Junio 15 de 1759.

on to the native population in 1799 the burden of conducting the wars against the Moro raiders.⁴³

The raiders succeeded in surprising their preys in many of their attacks by using Christian renegades to guide and pinpoint to them rich areas which were least defended. A native of Bulusan, Sorsogon named Martin Sto Domingo was one of the well-known renegades who aided the Balanguigui raiders. He was, in fact, an influential member of the group headed by *Panglima* Taupan, the chief of the Balanguiguis. Convicted to life imprisonment, he was later pardoned on June 30, 1859 and allowed to return to Bulusan after serving the Spaniards as an interpreter when the *Rajamuda* of Siocon was being investigated.⁴⁴ Besides using renegades, the raiders also used captured Spanish flags to camouflage their real identity or masquerade as fishermen or traders.⁴⁵

Facilitating the raiders' successes against many coastal towns was their establishment of various bases and settlements in many islets which were located right at the backdoors of the Christianized towns. In the islands of Mindoro, Burias, Samar, Leyte, Masbate, Polillo, and Paragua were many Moro settlements which served as bases and rendezvous points for the raiders in attacking nearby islands or coastal areas.⁴⁶

What truly terrified the coastal inhabitants was the Moro raiders' tactic of attacking at dawn when the people were in deep slumber, or their practice of burning the town, the church, and the croplands. One account described Moro raids thus:

The villages which they had ravaged were pitiful to see, being either burned to the ground or abandoned or deserted; for the inhabitants who

⁴³*Spanish Manila* – Bundle VII. Mayo 16 de 1740. Bando. Armas Prohibidas. Bando de Don Gaspar de la Torre prohibiendo llevar armas ofensivas como son cuchillos, punales, almaradas, bayonetas, trabucos, pistolas de faltriguerra, flechas y otros semejantes. Governor Manuel de Arandia also issued a bando on March 18, 1755 and on September 27, 1756; Governor Basco y Vargas issued one, too, on February 27, 1783; Governor Basco y Vargas issued one, too, on February 27, 1783, Governor Marquina on March 5, 1789; and Governor Aguilar on January 31, 1799.

⁴⁴*Mindanao y Sulu* (unclassified bundle). Julio de Tolosa, Secretario de Estado de Gobierno Superior Civil, Manila, Junio 15 de 1859 and Junio 21 1859; *Mindanao y Sulu, 1859-1861*. Julio de Tolosa, Secretario de Gobierno, Manila, Septiembre 8 de 1859.

⁴⁵*Piratas* – Bundle II. Piratas y Cautivos. Acuerdo del Oficio del Consul de Singapur de unos pancos piratas y aprehension en poder de los mismos de una bandera Espanola, 12 de Junio 1862; Albay, ano de 1860. Comunicacions sobre de aparicion de piratas en las aguas de dicha provincia, [May-October 1860].

⁴⁶*Ereccion de Pueblos-Samar, 1769-1798*, Tomo I. Razon de lo todo lo acontecido a Don Juan Miguel del Castillo en el tiempo que estuvo cautivo entre los Moros. Manila, Febrero 17 de 1775; Expediente en que el alcalde Mayor [de Samar] pide licencia para perseguir a los Moros que and an infestando aquella provincia. Joseph Santos Sanchez Diaz, Catbalogan, Septiembre 5 de 1770.

were able to escape from the hands of the enemy hid themselves in the thickets of the mountains/and even/ the gospel ministers were compelled to flee in this same way Even thus they were not always able to flee, for some, cut to pieces, fell into their hands; others were captured and ransomed at great cost, or died of ill-treatment in their captivity. Those barbarians did not spare the churches, but rather plundered them with an infernal fury; burned them, and trampled under foot the ornaments; broke the images and profaned the vessels; and impiously clothed themselves with the sacred vestments. The most unbearable thing of all was to see all those evils unchecked, or friends disheartened, the enemy unresisted, and the villages defenseless.⁴⁷

From Manuel Matos' February 24, 1757 circular to the religious ministers of the towns of Lagonoy, Malinao, Tabaco, Albay Viejo, Sorsogon, Casiguran, Donsol, and Bulusan gives an idea of the state of affairs in the Bikol region, as well as of the impact of the Moro raids on the region. Fray Matos rebuked the towns' religious ministers for the neglected state of their parishes and the dispersed inhabitants of these towns, many of whom lived in the mountains without the benefit of the "*Santos Sacramentos*." In very strong words, Fray Matos told them that —

The Indios have their synagogues, the Moros their mosques, the Gentiles their temples, the heretics their churches — all except the Christian Catholics of my Bishopric do not have theirs.

Except for their roofs, Fray Matos added, the churches in Kabikolan could be likened to a snake-pit (*madrigueras de culebras*) or to the hut of an *indio cimarron*, as most of them were poorly-built structures (*malformados camarines*).⁴⁸

The Moro raids also caused the decline or death of many coastal villages especially in Sorsogon. The June 1754 raid against Bacon erased the town from the Bikol map for two decades. The town appeared again in the Nueva Caceres' *Estado General de Almas* (General Population List) in 1781.⁴⁹ Also, the August 1754 raids against Macalaya, Donsol, and Sorsogon drove the terrified inhabitants of Donsol from their coastal site to a place which was a day's travel to the coast.

⁴⁷"Fortunate successes in Filipinas and Terrenate, 1636-1637. Unsigned, Madrid, 1639," BR, Vol. 29, p. 116.

⁴⁸*Gobierno de Obispos Sufraganeos*, Box 4-E-13, Folder 1741-1918. Fr. Manuel, Obispo (to) Sres. Curas de los partidos que al margen se especifican. Nueva Caceres, Febrero 24 de 1757.

⁴⁹*Cedulario, 1771-1829*, Folio 213. Plan de Tributos y almas segun sus estados y clases que al presente se numeran en las provincias, pueblos y misiones que en el Obispado de Camarines estan al cuidado y cargo de los Religiosos Descalzos de N.S.P.S. Francisco de la Provincia de S. Gregorio de estas Islas con expresion de sus nombres, y hedades. Fecho por el Ministro Provincial de dicha Provincia y ruego y en cargo del Illmo. Sr. Obispo Don Fr. Juan Antonio Gallego con arreglo a las Liquidaciones ultimas del año inmediato pasado de 1778.

The Donsol folks returned to their coastal site only in 1822. The same case was true of Albay Viejo town. Occupied for three days by the raiders in September 1754, many of its inhabitants refused to return even after the raiders had already been driven away.⁵⁰ The town of Manito, opposite Albay Viejo, was relocated by its inhabitants to a mountain site, away from its exposed location at the Gulf of Albay.⁵¹

Two successive raids against the town of Putiao in 1773-1774 led to its abandonment by its inhabitants. Putiao was resettled only in 1799 when some residents of Albay Viejo reestablished the townsite in a new place called Inang, which was further inland.⁵² Moro raids forced the inhabitants of Bulan, Sorsogon to relocate their townsite half a league inland (one league is equal to three miles).⁵³ Pantao and Macabogos, early sites of the Spanish shipyards in Sorsogon and destroyed by the massive Moro raids in 1616, 1627, and 1635 remained abandoned until the 1820's when there were sustained efforts to rehabilitate them.⁵⁴ The local accounts of Gubat, Sorsogon mentioned that its inhabitants moved the townsite four times in different places in the interior due to frequent Moro raids.⁵⁵

Other settlements in Sorsogon were less fortunate. Ibalon, Dumanaog, Yguey, Bontugan, Macalaya, Gate, Otabi, Busaingan, and Boton failed to recover their pre-Moro raids prominence when most of their inhabitants refused to return and rebuild them. Ibalon, the former capital of Albay Province, became a mere *sitio* of Casiguran by 1781. Some of these settlements, however, were repopulated during the late half of the 19th century. Among these were Yguey which became part of the new town of Magallanes and Busaingan which became the new town of Santa Magdalena.

Many other places adjacent to Sorsogon were deserted, if not depopulated for many years. As late as 1824, despite the Spanish authorities' effort to repopulate Burias and Masbate, the former remained largely deserted while Masbate had only few and poor inhabitants (*con muy corto de pobres habitantes*) because the said islands were frequently used by the Moro raiders and by the bandits from the southern Tagalog provinces as their hideouts.⁵⁶ The sea separating Burias from

⁵⁰Juan de la Concepcion, *op. cit.*, Tomo XIII, pp. 190-191.

⁵¹*Ereccion de Pueblos-Albay, 1856-1897*, Tomo VI, Folio 184. Expediente en que participa haber resuelto que los Natureales residentes en el sitio nombrado Manito pasasen al monte Capuntucan por las razones que expresa. Albay, Enero 27 de 1772.

⁵²See footnote 14.

⁵³*Memoria de Albay, 1844*, see entry for Bulan.

⁵⁴*Memoria de la Provincia de Camarines Sur, 1826*, Folio 16.

⁵⁵Isaias Estropigan, Jr., *Historical Background of Gubat* (n.d., n.p.).

⁵⁶*Bandos y Circulares - Bundle XII*. Sobre la repoblacion de Burias y Masbate propuesta por Don Gregorio Cordero, 14 de Mayo 1824.

Sorsogon was just a half-day's navigation and the people of Sorsogon called Buriás Pass a perennial lair of the Moros (*madriguera perenne de los piratas Moros*).⁵⁷

As late as 1826, Fr. Francisco Aragoneses, friar-curate of Oas, Albay, observed that the western coasts of Kabikolan from Putiao, Albay to Pascao, Camarines Sur were deserted although their interior was full of various types of inhabitants, living freely and not paying tributes.⁵⁸ Mindoro was described as depopulated (*punto despoblado*).⁵⁹ Samar, several decades after the destructive raids of the 1750's, continued to be inhabited by terrified people. It was miserable and its *caja de comunidad* in 1819, according to its Alcalde Mayor, contained not even a single *cuarto*.⁶⁰

Moro raids not only encouraged the inhabitants to settle in the interior, but they also forced the Spaniards to resettle people. Relocation or reconcentration of the inhabitants of isolated coastal towns or *visitas* was also the reason why a good number of towns or *visitas* vanished from the map of Bikol, especially in Sorsogon, during the 18th century. On February 13, 1735 the Spanish king approved a proposal by the Governor General to relocate the inhabitants of isolated *visitas* to prevent them from being helpless preys of the Moro raiders.⁶¹ When Moro raids intensified during the 1750's, this measure was reiterated by Governor General Manuel de Arandia on October 18, 1755, who ordered that isolated towns or *visitas* being defenseless, all their inhabitants should be reconcentrated in their respective capital towns where they could expect adequate security. Thus, by March 1757 all the inhabitants of Mindoro's twenty-two towns, *visitas*, and *rancherías* were integrated into only seven towns.⁶² The same thing happened in

⁵⁷*Ereccion de Pueblos-Albay, 1800-1858*, Tomo III, Folio 135-139. Año de 1828 a 1831, Expediente instruido a solicitar del Gobernadorcillo y Principales del pueblo de Donsol, la Provincia de Albay, en que piden permiso para trasladar aquel pueblo al sitio de la Barra en donde tiene una visita, así mismo piden también que se les reserven de pagar el tributo por un año y que se les faciliten armas para fortificar los tres Baluartes.

⁵⁸*Memoria de la Provincia de Camarines Sur, 1826*, Folio 23b.

⁵⁹*Ereccion de Pueblos-Mindoro, 1784-1878*, Oficio del Sr. Comandante General de Marina de V.S. [Gobernador General] Manila, 23 de Noviembre 1829.

⁶⁰*Ereccion de Pueblos-Samar, 1749-1848*, Tomo T. Sobre la intranquilidad de los habitantes de Samar por la multitud de los pancos de Moros que se presentan en las costas de la ensenada así mismo sobre la falta de fondos de los naturales para construir faluas, también sobre tanorias, etc. Samar, 1819.

⁶¹*Cedulario, 1734-1739*, Folio 289-296. Real cedula de 13 de Febrero de 1735 aprobando la providencia que dio sobre la reduccion apoblado de los naturales que se hallaban dispersos.

⁶²*Cedulario, 1756-1771*, Folio 187-189. Real orden de 12 de Marzo de 1757 aprobando las providencias que dio para la reunion de los pueblos y tributantes dispersos de la Ysla de Mindoro y ordenandole aplique las correspondientes para la habilitacion de las Yglesias destruidas en ella, por los Moros, y quede cuenta de su importe y ejecucion, en la forma que se espresa. Buen Retiro, 12 de Marzo 1757.

Albay, Romblon, Burias, and Masbate where many of the isolated settlements were merged with their respective capital towns. By October 1755, the inhabitants of Burucan, Palanog, Baleno, and Burias were reconcentrated in Mobo, Masbate. All the inhabitants in Ticao Island were reconcentrated in the port of San Jacinto. The inhabitants of Macalaya were resettled in Sorsogon, Sorsogon; those of Ibalon in Casiguran; those of Matnog in Bulusan; and those of Marigondon and Pola in Donsol.⁶³

The relocation order was immediately carried out in Albay Province so that before the end of 1755 the province had only ten towns.⁶⁴ Two years later, the province was further reduced to only eight towns.⁶⁵ Only after twenty years did the relocated inhabitants return to their former towns or *visitas*.⁶⁶

The raiders' dominance of the seas literally ended interisland trade and travel during the 18th century. On November 12, 1779 the Governor General wrote the Spanish king that for the past ten years, the inhabitants of Samar and Leyte could not trade with Manila because of Moro infestation of the seas.⁶⁷ A similar situation was described by the Franciscan Father Provincial who wrote the Governor General on January 26, 1770 that the inhabitants in Tayabas, Camarines, Albay, and Sorsogon were very poor because they could not trade with other places due to Moro dominance of the seas (*los pueblos estan muy pobres por no haber traficar sus generos a causa de los Moros*).⁶⁸

⁶³*Spanish Manila* – Bundle VII. Poblaciones. Bando circular de 18 de Octubre (1755) para que los Alcaldes Mayores de estas Islas ordenen y dispongan en las respectivas jurisdicciones sus pueblos, haciendose junten y establezcan sus naturales, no permitiendo rancherias ni casas dispersas.

⁶⁴*Cedularios, 1755-1756*. Año de 1755. Expediente formado en virtud de Superior Providencia sobre que el Excellentissimo maior de este Superior Gobierno ponga testimonio del expediente sobre la baja del Real Situado en Mexico e igualmente Oficiales Reales certifiquen el caudal que componen el cuerpo de la Real Hacienda con distincion de ramos y rentas, gastos y consignaciones para el conocimiento del recidio anual.

⁶⁵See footnote 48.

⁶⁶*Bandos y Circulares* – Bundle XIV. Bandos. Julio 28 de 1775. Estadística de todos los pueblos de estas Yslas con distincion de provincias y almas que administran cada una de los ordenes religiosos.

⁶⁷*Cartas, 1778-1857*. El Gobernador de Philipinas da cuenta con testimonio de los motivos que han tenido los Naturales de las Provincias de Catbalonga, Leyte y Samar en las Visayais para no haber venido en diez años al trafico y comercio en la Capital, reducidos a los insultos de los Moros, y haberse determinado traer en 43 embarcaciones frutos y efectos mediante aque por la armadilla que esta en continuo curso, experimentado por este medio la abundancia y abaratur de frutos en esta republica. Manila, Noviembre 12 de 1779.

⁶⁸*Cedulario, 1766-1778*, Folio 148-183. Real cedula de 31 de Julio de 1766 en que S.M. repite el encargo de que procure contener los insultos y exesos que cometen los Moros Mindanaos, Joloanos y otros confinantes a estas Islas.

In 1826, the Governor General commented that unless the raiders were contained, inter-coastal trade and commerce would cease.⁶⁹ As late as 1838, the Alcalde Mayor of Albay reported that half of the annual palay harvest of Catanduanes Island was taken away by the Moro raiders.⁷⁰

The Moro raids likewise exacted very substantial damages against Spanish colonial finances. The destruction wrought by the raiders upon many coastal towns always left the inhabitants in dire circumstances making them unable to pay their tributes to the colonial government. Moreover, the longer the raids lasted, the greater the extent of destruction brought upon the besieged towns. Such was the case for the towns of Cuyo, Calamianes; Palompon, Leyte; and Gasan, Marinduque. Consequent to the prolonged attacks by the Moros, the three towns successfully petitioned the colonial government for a dispensation from paying their tributes. While the dispensation meant relief for the inhabitants of these towns, it meant no income to the colonial coffers.⁷¹

The Moro raids drained the colonial treasury. As early as 1722, the colonial authorities in Manila noted the heavy financial exhaustion of the government treasury in maintaining or repairing churches and government institutions routinely burned and plundered by the Moro raiders. The central government enjoined the provincial officials to exert extra efforts (*asiste tarde y mañana*) in the collection of tributes to ease the heavy financial drain.⁷² On July 14, 1755 the Governor General anxiously petitioned Madrid for additional aid because the finances of the Philippines were exhausted by the continuous Moro raids, by the eruption of Taal volcano which destroyed many nearby towns, and by the other needs of the country which required equal urgent attention.⁷³

The situation remained unchanged in the following years. On November 7, 1769 authorities reported to Madrid that from 1762 to 1769 Manila received from Mexico a total financial aid amounting to 489,662 pesos. Of this amount, 245,025 pesos was spent for the construction of two *frugatas* (light, fast-sailing warship)

⁶⁹*Cartas, 1825-1826*, Folio 206. Gobernador General de Filipinas (to) Sr. Secretario del Despacho de Marina, Comercio, y Gobernacion de Ultramar. Manila, 4 de Febrero 1826.

⁷⁰*Varias Provincias-Albay*, Bundle VII, Provincia de Albay, 1838. Copia del expediente seguido sobre el convenido de los pueblos a dar de los fondos de arbitrios por Cabecera 3 p. 5 res. y un cuartillo para ayuda de gastos de Faluas a fin de su buena organizacion. Jose Maria Peñaranda. Sorsogon, 10 de Marzo 1838.

⁷¹*Cedulario, 1756-1771*, Folio 110-112. Real orden de 4 de Septiembre de 1756 aprobando la dispensa de tributos concedida a los pueblos de Cuyo en Calamianes, Palompon en Leyte y Gasan en Marinduque por la defensa que hicieron contra la invasion de los Moros, y el arrendamiento de los tributos de la provincia de Tondo. Madrid, 4 de Septiembre de 1756.

⁷²*Cedulario, 1706-1722*, Folio 100b-101. Decreto del Superior Gobierno sobre que asiste tarde y mañana los Oficiales mayores y menores. Manila, Agosto 14 de 1722.

⁷³*Cedulario, 1756-1771*, Folio 124-126. Real orden del Septiembre de 1756 manifestando haberse recomendado al Virrey de Nueva España atiende a las urgencias de estas Yslas. Madrid, 6 de Septiembre 1756.

and three *galeras* for the Moro wars. The rest of the 489,662 pesos was spent in the war against the British, the repairs of Manila's fortifications, payment of salaries, etc.⁷⁴

From 1778 to 1793, the colonial government spent another 1,519,209 pesos for the salaries, ships, and expeditions sent against the Moros. The amount "demonstrated the extraordinary cost of the incessant war against the Moros since the start of Spanish rule in the Philippines."⁷⁵ By 1826, the colonial government was annually spending 50,000 pesos in the war against the Moros, an excessive amount according to the Governor General's report in 1826 to Madrid.⁷⁶

The enormous amounts expended by the Spanish colonial government did not include those spent by the parish priests and the inhabitants who, without much help from the colonial government, took it upon themselves to build the *castillos* (watchtowers), *baluartes* and *intramuroses* (fortified or *paraos* (small, fast-sailing vessels) in defending themselves against the Moros. They also excluded the value of destroyed towns, churches, properties, and croplands; the captured funds and goods (like the capture of the entire 1804 tributes collected from Albay Province and the entire 1818 tributes collected from the island of Catanduanes); and the broken families and orphaned children of those killed or taken captive by the Moros. Finally, there was also the substantial amount of supplies and services annually shouldered by the inhabitants (following the colonial government's decision in 1799 to pass on to them the burden of defense) in maintaining and provisioning the coastal naval forces ordered formed by the colonial authorities and which the people themselves constructed and manned through the *polos y servicios*.⁷⁷

It is important to point out that the expenses mentioned did not include those shouldered by the inhabitants of Mindanao and Sulu and the destruction suffered whenever the Spanish colonial authorities retaliated against the Moros.

⁷⁴See footnote 68.

⁷⁵Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, Tomo II, p. 369; Barrantes, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155.

⁷⁶*Cartas, 1825-1826*, Folio 206. Gobernador General de Filipinas (to) Sr. Secretario de Estado y del Despacho de Marina, Comercio, y Gobernacio de Ultramar, Manila, 4 de Febrero 1826.

⁷⁷*Varias Provincias-Albay*, Tomo I. Expediente a Consulta del Alcalde Mayor de la Provincia de Albay sobre exencion de tributos de la tripulacion de las cuatro lanchas y seis faluas que componen la armadilla de otra provincia, Albay, Agosto 11 de 1828; *Ereccion de Pueblos-Albay, 1799-1864*, Tomo II. Juntas celebradas por los Gobernadorcillos y Principales de la Provincia de Albay. . . para perseguir a los Moros y contener sus hostilidades. Albay, 15 de Mayo 1799; *Spanish Manila-Bundle V*, 1778 Bandos. Armadillas corsarias contra Moros. Bando del Sr. Basco de 22 de Agosto de 1778 sobre formar armadillas en las provincias, para la persecucion de los Moros y privilegios que se conceden a los voluntarios que quieran hacer el corso.

and three *galeras* for the Moro wars. The rest of the 489,662 pesos was spent in the war against the British, the repairs of Manila's fortifications, payment of salaries, etc.⁷⁴

From 1778 to 1793, the colonial government spent another 1,519,209 pesos for the salaries, ships, and expeditions sent against the Moros. The amount "demonstrated the extraordinary cost of the incessant war against the Moros since the start of Spanish rule in the Philippines."⁷⁵ By 1826, the colonial government was annually spending 50,000 pesos in the war against the Moros, an excessive amount according to the Governor General's report in 1826 to Madrid.⁷⁶

The enormous amounts expended by the Spanish colonial government did not include those spent by the parish priests and the inhabitants who, without much help from the colonial government, took it upon themselves to build the *castillos* (watchtowers), *baluartes* and *intramuroses* (fortified or *paraos* (small, fast-sailing vessels) in defending themselves against the Moros. They also excluded the value of destroyed towns, churches, properties, and croplands; the captured funds and goods (like the capture of the entire 1804 tributes collected from Albay Province and the entire 1818 tributes collected from the island of Catanduanes); and the broken families and orphaned children of those killed or taken captive by the Moros. Finally, there was also the substantial amount of supplies and services annually shouldered by the inhabitants (following the colonial government's decision in 1799 to pass on to them the burden of defense) in maintaining and provisioning the coastal naval forces ordered formed by the colonial authorities and which the people themselves constructed and manned through the *polos y servicios*.⁷⁷

It is important to point out that the expenses mentioned did not include those shouldered by the inhabitants of Mindanao and Sulu and the destruction suffered whenever the Spanish colonial authorities retaliated against the Moros.

⁷⁴See footnote 68.

⁷⁵Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, Tomo II, p. 369; Barrantes, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-155.

⁷⁶*Cartas, 1825-1826*, Folio 206. Gobernador General de Filipinas (to) Sr. Secretario de Estado y del Despacho de Marina, Comercio, y Gobernacio de Ultramar, Manila, 4 de Febrero 1826.

⁷⁷*Varias Provincias-Albay*, Tomo I. Expediente a Consulta del Alcalde Mayor de la Provincia de Albay sobre exencion de tributos de la tripulacion de las cuatro lanchas y seis faluas que componen la armadilla de otra provincia. Albay, Agosto 11 de 1828; *Ereccion de Pueblos-Albay, 1799-1864*, Tomo II, Juntas celebradas por los Gobernadorcillos y Principales de la Provincia de Albay. . . para perseguir a los Moros y contener sus hostilidades. Albay, 15 de Mayo 1799; *Spanish Manila-Bundle V. 1778* Bandos. Armadillas corsarias contra Moros. Bando del Sr. Basco de 22 de Agosto de 1778 sobre formar armadillas en las provincias, para la persecucion de los Moros y privilegios que se conceden a los voluntarios que quieran hacer el corso.

Reasons for the Prolonged Moro Raids

The war between the Cross and the Crescent spanned almost the entire period of Spanish rule in the Philippines. Why, it may be asked, did it take the militarily superior Castilians more than two centuries to finally neutralize the southern kin of the Tagalogs and the Visayas?

Part of the reason for this prolonged conflict lay on the Spaniards themselves. They were chronically plagued with scarcity of funds to maintain the war and pursue it to its logical end. Moreover, the Moros were not their only enemies. These conditions were aggravated by the Manila colony's utter dependence on financial aid from Mexico. The dependence was so critical that the sinking of the galleon carrying the aid was enough to spell disaster for the colony. The lack of funds thus prevented the colonial government from sustaining the farflung areas with arms and ammunition. The lack of arms and gunpowder pervaded throughout the era of the Moro raids and was constantly reiterated in almost all of the petitions by the coastal inhabitants to the colonial government.⁷⁸

There was also the inescapable problem of graft and corruption among the colonial officials tasked to enforce the measures against the Moros. It is important to point out that many, if not most, of the Spaniards who came to the Philippines were guided by less patriotic motives. Many of the Alcaldes-mayores of Tayabas, Camarines, and Albay were repeatedly censured by the colonial government for neglect of their duties.

Montero y Vidal sarcastically commented that during the destructive raids of the 1750's the naval forces sent to pursue the Moro raiders were themselves engaged in smuggling while the Moros were destroying a nearby island.⁷⁹ Barrantes also noted that the alcaldes-mayores during the 18th century used for their business interests the *armadillas* designated to pursue the Moros and even sold the arms and artillery destined for defenses of the coastal areas.⁸⁰ In fact, the major reason for the 1799 decision to transfer the responsibility of defending the coastal towns from the alcaldes-mayores to the gobernadorcillo, with the *cura parroco* as guarantor, was in the irrefutable finding that the former did not use the arms and vessels for their destined purposes.⁸¹

⁷⁸*Ereccion de Pueblos-Albay, 1799-1864*, Tomo II. Juntas celebradas por los Gobernadorcillos y Principales de la Provincia de Albay. . . . Albay, 15 de Mayo 1799. See, for instance, the various petitions of the towns in Albay for firearms and gunpowder; *Ereccion de Pueblos – Camarines Sur, 1797-1852*, Folio 107-149. Defensa contra Moros: Nuevo plan de defensa contra Moros propuesto por el Alcalde Mayor de Camarines, 1819, see also the various petitions of the towns of Camarines for firearms and gunpowder.

⁷⁹Montero y Vidal, *op. cit.*, Tomo I, p. 508.

⁸⁰Barrantes, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

⁸¹*Cedulario, 1758-1768*. Real cedula de lo de Noviembre de 1758 S.M. preveniendo al Gobernador de Filipinas lo que debe executar para contener los insultos y exesos que cometen los Moros Jaloanos y otros confiantes que aquellas Yslas, see Folios 120-129.

Other factors further hindered the Spanish anti-Moro efforts. Jagor noted in 1860 that the smoke of the Spanish ships amply warned the Moro raiders to evade or avoid them and escape. Moreover, some Spanish squadron commanders did not really comply with orders to pursue the Moro raiders; they simply came "to show the distressed provinces that their outcry was not altogether unnoticed."⁸² No less than Governor General Narcisco de Claveria complained to Madrid in 1846 about the lack of zeal and discipline among the men of the government's naval forces in performing their duties. At one time, he was outraged when he learned that his orders to the naval squadrons in Cavite and Cebu to pursue the Moro raiders were deliberately disobeyed. What the two squadrons did, according to the Governor General, was simply to cruise along (*los dejaron pasearse*) thereby permitting the Moros to escape.⁸³

Notwithstanding the many defects that hindered the anti-Moro campaign, the Spanish objective to end the destructive Moro raids was realized in 1848 when Governor General Narcisco de Claveria destroyed the Balanguiguis' stronghold in Sulu and, in 1858, when Governor General Norzagaray garrisoned Balabac — an island right in the heart of Moroland.⁸⁴ Also, Spanish use of steamboats in the 1860's effectively neutralized Moro naval threat. Then, in 1864, the prohibition imposed on the Joloanos and Samals against building any big seacraft (as to do so would have meant their treatment as ordinary pirates and prisoners of war) deprived the southern natives the last means by which they could continue their defiance of the Spaniards.⁸⁵

Conclusions

The centuries of Moro raids deeply affected the inhabitants of Kabikolan and many parts of the Philippines. The Moro raiders came, as Cesar Adib Majul conclusively showed, in retaliation against Spanish efforts to subjugate their homelands. They raided Spanish-held territories to offset Spanish plans to conquer them.

⁸²Feodor Jagor, *Travels in the Philippines* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1875), p. 225, see footnote.

⁸³*Cartas, 1846-1855*, Folio 160-167. Gobernador General Narcisco de Claveria (to) Sr. Secretario de Estado del Despacho de Marina, Comercio y Gobernacion de Ultramar. Manila, 14 de Noviembre 1846.

⁸⁴*Cartas, 1847-1848*. Gobernador General Narcisco de Claveria (to) Sr. Secretario de Estado y del Despacho de la Gobernacion del Reyno. Zamboanga. 28 de Febrero 1848; *Cartas, 1858-1861*. Folio 176-189. Gobernador General (to) Sr. Ministro de Estado y Ultramar, 21 de Febrero 1858; Folio 377-392 — Gobernador Militar y Politico de Balabac (to) Gobernador General Norzagaray, 24 de Marzo 1858.

⁸⁵*Piratas* — Bundle III, part 2. Consejo de Administracion. Pirateria, 1860 a 1869. Gobernador Politico-Militar de Mindanao (to) Sr. Presidente de Consejo de Administracion, Manila, 2 de Junio 1864.

The raids destroyed the bases or sources of support for Spanish expansionism. What was more significant, insofar as Sorsogon and the Bikol region were concerned, was the impact of their retaliatory raids. The effects were incalculable — in terms of numerous towns destroyed, thousands of persons killed or sold to slavery, and the immense expenses incurred by all those involved. The raids also altered the course of Philippine history by dividing the inhabitants into two camps — Christians and Moros — a division which continues to haunt the present generations. It could further be said that, in the light of the tremendous expenses shouldered by the Spanish colonial government and the immeasurable destructions of Spanish-held territories, the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu succeeded in making the Spaniards pay dearly for the efforts to conquer their homelands.

The psychological impact of the Moro raids on the sub-consciousness of the people must have been devastating, too. More than halfway into the 20th century, mothers in Kabikolan still invoked the dreaded memories of the fierce raiders to discipline their recalcitrant children. Documentary sources mentioned three important near-misses by the raiders. They almost captured an Archbishop of Manila and two incoming Governors-General. One wonders what could have been the impact on Spanish colonial rule in the Philippines had the raiders captured these symbols of Spanish power.

Hidden behind the popular view that Moro raids were destructive were, in fact, several significant contributions by the raiders. One was the raids led to the consolidation of the interior with the coastal areas of the provinces. It is true that Moro raids forced many coastal inhabitants to relocate their habitations deep into the interior. However, the dissipation of the raids also led the inhabitants who evacuated to the interior to return to their former coastal settlements. Not all of the evacuees, though, joined these back-to-the-coast movements. Those who remained consolidated the interior with the coastal areas of the provinces for they served as the core or pioneer settlers of the interior areas of the said provinces (as in Sorsogon). And this was the reason why *visitas* and *barrios* proliferated in the hinterlands.

The Moro raids also forced the Spanish colonial authorities to undertake various infrastructure projects, such as roads and bridges, as part of their defensive measures particularly to facilitate communication between towns in jointly combatting the Moro raiders. These roads and bridges also served as conduits among the inhabitants of the various towns of Sorsogon and Kabikolan in performing other essential human activities, especially trade.

The heroes of the Moro raids or Spanish-Moro wars, as colonial historians like Barrantes and Montero y Vidal as well as Saleeby and Majul would lead us to believe, were supposedly the Spaniards or the Moros themselves. Not so, as documentary sources would reveal. The Spaniards, for instance, got all the accolades because they were the colonial masters and they did not allow any native to command any military expedition against the Moros of Mindanao and Sulu. Definitely, the Spaniards and the Moros did not have a monopoly of courage and bravery.

In fact, records showed the Spaniards several times engaging in activities to enrich themselves rather than pursuing the raiders.

In Kabikolan, many natives outshone both the Spaniards and the Moros and performed almost superhuman feats in combatting the raiders. They were the unsung *gobernadorcillos* and *falueros* who led and manned the provincial naval forces (*armadillas*) to make the coastal areas safe against the raiders. Foremost of these forgotten local heroes was Don Pedro Estevan, *gobernadorcillo* of Tabaco, Albay whose exploits became legendary to the inhabitants of eastern Kabikolan. Because of his feats he was, perhaps, the only anti-Moro campaigner among the natives and the Spaniards who was awarded by the Spanish king a medal of valor (*medalla de las del premio al valor*).

Of greater import of the Kris' impact on the Bikol inhabitants was that it prevented them from pondering on the broader but crucial issue that they were the unwitting and helpless tools of the Spaniards in the latter's war of conquest against the Moros. Unrelenting Moro pressures prevented the Bikol inhabitants from entertaining thoughts about overthrowing Spanish rule in the region, as did their counterparts in the Tagalog or Ilocos provinces. Proof of this was the fact that the Bikolanos did not even initiate a revolt against Spanish rule throughout the Spanish era. Apparently, the fury against the Moro raids drove the inhabitants to side with their colonial masters. Of course, there were instances of native resistance against the Spaniards. However, these instances did not reach the stage of armed rebellion largely because colonial exactions and Moro pressures kept the inhabitants perennially preoccupied with how to cope with these twin adversities. To survive, even if they had to live with colonial impositions and Moro raids, strengthened the will to live of the Sorsoganos and the Bikolanos. Apparently, they stoically accepted the idea that, like the devastating typhoons that they suffered annually, they could not escape from these two forces – the Spaniards who ruled the land and the Moros who prowled the sea.

The dissipation of the Moro raids provided the setting for the revival and growth of the Sorsoganos and the Bikolanos during the 19th century, demonstrating their innate capacities to develop. But, as during the era of Spanish rule and Moro raids, they were not the ones who enjoyed the fruits of their labors. It was to be, as aptly described by Norman Owen, a period of "prosperity without progress."