Negotiating Peace and Faith
Jesuit Mediators in the Inter-Polity Relations between Christians and Muslims in the 17th-Century Philippines

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Abstract: In the overlay of Muslim and Christian geopolitical interest zones in the early modern Philippines, the missionaries of the Society of Jesus got to play a unique role as cultural intermediaries. This article analyzes some outstanding episodes of Jesuit diplomatic activities between the Spanish colonial government and the rulers on the islands of Mindanao and Jolo. In the setting of the Southeast Asian world, Spain found itself in a hostile environment in which the Muslim polities were a permanent factor. Slave raiders from both islands threatened the coastal villages of the Spanish Visayas, while on the other hand, Spanish imperial plans compromised the sovereignty of the sultans. By investigating Jesuit chronicles and additional contemporary sources, this study focuses on the Spanish side of this relation. It will contextualize the role of the Jesuits as ambassadors and, at the same time, as promoters of their own missionary interests. Thereby, it will assess the geostrategic considerations of the Jesuit order and their similarities with and differences from those of the colonial government in Manila. This article argues that in spite of a general overlap of interests, discrepancies existed and increased over the years, eventually effecting the outcome of negotiations.

Keywords: Jesuits, Muslims, 17th century, Philippines, Maguindanao, Sulu, Spanish Empire, colonialism, diplomacy

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Introduction

In recent years, diplomatic history has gained much ground by incorporating new areas of research and tackling innovative perspectives.[1] Additional actors have taken the stage and long-ignored regions have come into view. In particular, in the field of intercultural diplomacy, this development has led to a boost in the number of studies, linking to the ever-growing discipline of global history.[2] This article intends to contribute to that growing field of intercultural diplomacy by investigating the diplomatic relations between the Spanish colonial government in the Philippines and the sultanates of Sulu and Maguindanao in the course of the 17th century. Thereby, it is the agents who were involved in the negotiations that are in the center of analysis, especially the Jesuit missionaries, who played a distinctive role in the establishment of the Spanish presence in the south of the Philippines. Concentrating on the Spanish side of these relations, the focus will be laid above all on the question of how much Jesuit ideas were aligned with the geopolitical concerns of the colonial officials in Manila and how emerging discrepancies were likely to affect the outcome of the diplomatic negotiations.

In the early modern times, the missionaries of the Society of Jesus frequently fulfilled tasks of ambassadors and negotiators for Catholic monarchs in overseas territories.[3] It was, in particular, their language skills and their general versatility

[1] This article was written in the course of the project "Dealing with the Infidel: Hispanic Diplomacy with Muslim Powers (1492-1708)" (PGC2018-099152-B-I00). A first take on that subject can be found in Eberhard Crailsheim, "Religiöse Aspekte interkultureller Diplomatie: Die Beziehungen zwischen Spaniern und 'Moros' auf den Philippinen, 1565-1764," in *Audienzen und Allianzen: Interkulturelle Diplomatie in Asien und Europa vom 8. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, eds. Birgit Tremml-Werner and Eberhard Crailsheim (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2015). Special thanks goes to the two anonymous evaluators and their valuable comments.

[2] A recent result of this boom in diplomatic history is, for example, the launch of the journal *Diplomatica. A Journal of Diplomacy and Society* in 2020, which highlights the processes-character of diplomacy by applying interdisciplinary methods and focusing on the diversity of actors and their habitats. Other relevant publications include the special issue in *The International History Review* 41.5 (2019), *Transformations of Intercultural Diplomacies. Comparative Views on Asia and Europe (1700 to 1850)* by the guest editors Nadine Amsler, Henrietta Harrison, and Christian Windler, and a series of special issues in *The Journal of Early Modern History*: 19.2-3 (2015), ed. by Maartje van Gelder and Tijana Krstić, 20.1 (2016), ed. by Nancy Um and Leah R. Clark, 20.4 (2016) ed. by Toby Osborne and Joan-Pau Rubiés, and 23.5 (2019), ed. by Birgit Tremml-Werner and Dorothée Goetze.

[3] By way of example, Jesuits negotiated in the 16th and 17th centuries for the Portuguese and Spaniards with the rulers of Japan and China, for the French king with the chiefs of the Iroquois, and even for the Chinese with the representatives of the Russian Empire. Justine Vincin and Adam Clulow, "Jesuit Diplomacy," in *The Encyclopedia of Diplomacy*, ed. Gordon Martel (Oxford, UK: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2018); Birgit Tremml-Werner, "Audienzen und Korrespondenzen: Japan und das spanische überseeische Imperium in der Frühen Neuzeit," in (eds), *Audienzen und Allianzen: Interkulturelle Diplomatie in Asien und Europa vom 8. bis zum 18. Jahrhundert*, ed. Birgit Tremml-Werner and Eberhard Crailsheim (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2015), 77; Jacques Monet, "The Jesuits in New France," Nicolas Standaert, and M. Antoni J. Üçerler, "The Jesuit Enterprise in Sixteenth- and

that enabled them to successfully act as makeshift diplomats in oftentimes extreme circumstances, becoming agents of the proto-globalization in areas of intercultural contact. The Portuguese Empire was at the forefront of this development, taking advantage of the Jesuits' potential as crucial personnel in their expansionist endeavor in the 16th and 17th centuries in Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, Ethiopia, India, China, and Japan. In that process, the interests of the Portuguese crown and the Jesuit order were clearly aligned, because the Society of Jesus also intended to push the boundaries of its missionary work and to spread the gospel all over the world.[4]

In the Spanish Empire, the Jesuits likewise were important agents in the course of the colonial expansion. Also in the Spanish overseas territories, the strategic interest of the crown and the expansionist zeal of the Society of Jesus were well aligned.[5] Proselytization was seen as intrinsically linked to the overseas enterprise and tantamount to the consolidation of colonial power in America as well as in the Philippines, where Spain had founded its first Asian colony in 1565.[6] Evidently, missionaries of other religious orders also fulfilled tasks as intercultural mediators – like Martín de Rada, OSA, in China or Juan Cobo, OP, in Japan – but the Jesuits, in particular, stood out as representatives of the Manila government in the Muslim reigns at the southern border of the Spanish colony, which is in the center of this study.

Seventeenth-Century Japan," all in Thomas Worcester (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Jesuits* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2008); Vladimir S. Miasnikov, "Ferdinand Verbiest and His Role in the Formation of Sino-Russian Diplomatic Relations" and Hao Zhenhua, "Ferdinand Verbiest and Sino-Russian Relations" both in *Ferdinand Verbiest, 1623-1688: Jesuit Missionary, Scientist, Engineer and Diplomat*, ed. John W. Witek (Nettetal: Steyler, 1994).

[4] Jonathan Wright, *God's Soldiers: Adventure, Politics, Intrigue, and Power* (New York: Doubleday, 2005), 65–132; Peter C. Hartmann, *Die Jesuiten* (Munich: Beck, 2008), 43–59; Thomas F. Banchoff and José Casanova, eds., *The Jesuits and Globalization: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Challenges* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016); Charles R. Boxer, *The Church Militant and Iberian Expansion: 1440-1770* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978); Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, its Empire, and Beyond, 1540-1750* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1999); Teófanes Egido, Javier Burrieza Sánchez, and Manuel Revuelta González, *Los jesuitas en España y el mundo hispánico* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2004); Claudia von Collani, "Die Ära der Jesuiten in der Chinamission," in *Im Zeichen des Kreuzes: Mission, Macht und Kulturtransfer seit dem Mittelalter*, ed. Bernd Hausberger (Vienna: Mandelbaum, 2004).

[5] Bernd Hausberger, "Die Mission der Jesuiten im kolonialen Lateinamerika," in *Im Zeichen des Kreuzes: Mission, Macht und Kulturtransfer seit dem Mittelalter*, ed. Bernd Hausberger (Vienna: Mandelbaum 2004).

[6] Horacio de la Costa, SJ, *The Jesuits in the Philippines, 1581-1768* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2014); René B. Javellana, SJ, "Historiography of the Philippine Province," *Jesuit Historiography Online* (2016); Eduardo Descalzo Yuste, "La Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas (1581-1768): Realidad y representación" (PhD thesis, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona, 2015); Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, "'No es esta tierra para tibios': La implicación de los jesuitas de Manila en la conquista y evangelización de Mindanao y Joló (siglo XVII)," *História Unisinos* 23/1 (2019); Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, "Políticas geo-estratégicas y misionales en el sur de Filipinas: El caso de Mindanao y Joló (siglo XVIII)," *Revista de Indias* 89/277 (2019).

Islam had reached the islands of Jolo and Mindanao since the late 13th century and enabled the formation of more solid state structures than anywhere else on the archipelago.[7] Hence, when the Spaniards arrived, they were faced with their old nemesis from the Mediterranean world.[8] Consequently, the Jesuit missionary-mediators had to operate in a highly complex and very insecure contact zone,[9] carrying out the role of intercultural brokers between very diverse and often opposing parties.[10] They had to be sympathetic with or at least fathom several different viewpoints. In order of familiarity, these were their position as Jesuit missionary, the views of the Spanish colonial government, the perspective of the natives that had been converted or were prospect converts (mostly "heathen"), and finally the position of the Southeast Asian Muslims, as the diplomatic counterpart.

In the following, this article will present specific cases in which Jesuit missionaries became diplomatic agents of the Spanish Empire in Jolo and Mindanao in the 17th century, while simultaneously advancing their missionary objectives. The major sources that were consulted in this study are the chronicles of the Jesuit Fathers Francisco Colín (1663), Francisco Combés (1667), and Pedro Murillo Velarde (1749). Each of them is a rich mine of documentary evidence but, at the same time, it has to be taken into account that each chronicler had his own very particular intentions when collecting and presenting his data. Overall, these consisted mainly of highlighting the contribution of the Jesuit missionaries in the development of the colony, its evangelization, and the integration of the natives in the Spanish Empire, hence, underlining the importance of the Society of Jesus for the geostrategic designs in Madrid. The Jesuit propagandistic and hagiographic publicity plan stressed above all the significance of their work in the Muslim frontier zone, as this was perceived as their most outstanding added value for the colony.[11] In that communication process,

[7] Cesar A. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 2nd edition (Diliman, Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 1973), 63; Isaac Donoso Jiménez, "El Islam en Filipinas (siglos X-XIX)" (PhD thesis, Universidad de Alicante, 2011).

[8] Melchor de Ávalos, "Dos cartas al rey contra los moros de las Filipinas: Por el Lic. Melchor de Avalos (20.6.1585)," in *Cuerpo de documentos del siglo XVI: Sobre los derechos de España en las Indias y las Filipinas*, ed. Lewis Hanke (México D.F.: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1943); William H. Scott, "The Mediterranean Connection," in *European Entry into the Pacific: Spain and the Acapulco-Manila Galleons*, Dennis O. Flynn, Arturo Giráldez, and James Sobredo (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); Eberhard Crailsheim, "Wandel und Ambivalenz der Darstellung der 'Moros' auf den kolonialspanischen Philippinen (16.-17. Jahrhundert)," *Saeculum: Jahrbuch für Universalgeschichte* 64/1 (2014); Ana M. Rodríguez-Rodríguez, "Old Enemies, New Contexts: Early Modern Spanish (Re)-Writing of Islam in the Philippines," in *Coloniality, Religion, and the Law in the Early Iberian World*, eds. Santa Arias and Raúl Marrero-Fente (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014).

[9] Mary L. Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992).

[10] Clifford Geertz, "The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2/2 (1960); Sebastian Jobs and Gesa Mackenthun, eds., *Agents of Transculturation: Border-Crossers, Mediators, Go-Betweens* (Munster: Waxmann, 2013).

[11] Rodríguez-Rodríguez, "Old Enemies, New Contexts"; Coello de la Rosa, "No es esta tierra para tibios"; Coello de la Rosa, "Políticas geo-estratégicas y misionales en el sur de Filipinas."

the agencies of other actors of great significance, such as the involved natives, the Spaniards, and even the Muslim allies, are often less prominently depicted to underscore the Jesuits' merits. For the research topic, however, these Jesuit texts were essential and hence studied with particular care. By reading them against the grain, above all bearing in mind the specific intentionality of their narrative, this article will attempt to approach the diplomatic enterprises of three different Jesuit missionaries. It will analyze their diplomatic ventures, their courses, characteristics, and outcomes, and reflect on the peculiarity of Jesuit missionaries as negotiators in Muslim dominions in the early modern Philippines.

Spaniards and Jesuits in the Philippines

Jesuits as negotiators for the Spanish Empire

Some Jesuits in the Philippines took a liking in diplomacy and politics since the very beginning, such as Father Alonso Sánchez, one of the first two Jesuit priests to come to the islands in 1581. Soon Sánchez got involved in the regional politics and the diplomatic relations with China. In the political turmoil regarding the succession of the Spanish king to the Portuguese throne, Manila needed to send an emissary to the new Portuguese subjects in their colony in Macao to inform them of the political shift and to secure their orderly submission. Based on the high opinion of Bishop Domingo de Salazar, OP (r. 1579-1584), of Alonso Sánchez, the government chose him for the task. On his voyage to Macao, the vessel was intercepted by an imperial Chinese fleet and Sánchez showed his accreditations, which evidenced his status as ambassador of the "mandarin" of Luzon to negotiate friendship and commerce and the establishment of a trading post at the Chinese coast. They were given free passage and when Sánchez arrived in Macao, he delivered the news from the union of the crowns. While the Macao government was fast to assure the ambassador of its allegiance to the new sovereign, trade relations with China could not be reinforced at that point. Upon his return to Manila, China continued to be on the mind of the Spaniards and audacious plans started to circulate to conquer the Celestial Empire or, alternatively, to intensify commerce with the Chinese. In the end, the Spaniards would go for the more reasonable option.

In 1583, Alonso Sánchez was again sent as emissary to Macao. This time, he was to accompany the royal Spanish factor and to negotiate the release of a Spanish ship in Macao that had gotten illegally into Chinese waters. This time, the Jesuit provincial, Antonio Sedeño, the direct superior of Sánchez, opposed the new diplomatic assignment, being of the opinion that it wasn't a missionary's task. Yet, the supplications of Bishop Salazar and Governor-General Diego Ronquillo (r. 1583-

1584), made him yield. The matters of the ship were swiftly solved with the Chinese authorities. Yet, Sánchez' second objective, i.e. to obtain permission to establish a Spanish trading post in China, failed again and he returned to Manila in 1585, only partly successful.

The next year, another assignment awaited Alonso Sánchez. The municipal assembly of Manila appointed the restless missionary as procurator general for the residents of the Philippine colony to go to Madrid and Rome and represent the concerns of the citizens to the king and the pope back in Europe. Again, Father Sedeño opposed such a political mission for one of his subordinates but, once more, he ceded against the pressure of the elites of the colony.[12]

Another Jesuit who was entangled in political affairs since the late 16th century was Brother Gaspar Gómez. He was working for the Spanish government and entrusted frequently with secret documents, containing military intelligence, which he even carried from Manila to Madrid and back. He also acted as spy for the Manila government in preparation for a later attack on Ternate. He collected sensitive information about the military strength of the sultanates of Ternate and Tidore and delivered it back to the capital. His report would later be of use in the Maluku campaign of Governor-General Pedro Bravo de Acuña (r. 1602-1606). When the colonial government finally decided to dispense with his services – much to the delight of his superiors – he was complaining and found it difficult to return to the chores of a humble missionary brother.[13]

The brief examples of these two missionaries show that, since the very beginning, the Jesuits were involved in the high politics of the colony – not without inner disagreements – and stood out as intermediaries between different cultures.

The Spanish relations with the Muslim polities

The relation between the Christian Spaniards and the Muslim Malays was strained from the outset.[14] When Legazpi started to take possession of the archipelago

[12] Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 5-8, 36-55, 80; Domingo de Salazar, *Sínodo de Manila de 1582*, ed. José Luis Porras Camúñez (Madrid: Centro de Estudios Históricos del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1988), 117-140. Manel Ollé, *La empresa de China: De la Armada Invencible al Galeón de Manila* (Barcelona: Acantilado, 2002).

[13] Archivo General de Indias (AGI) Filipinas 1, N. 48, Consultas sobre Terrenate (1591-1602); AGI Filipinas 1, N. 59, Consulta sobre vuelta de Gaspar Gómez a Filipinas (6/10/1603); Consejo de Indias. "The Terrenate Expedition: Council of the Indies, San Lorenzo, August 5 and 15," in *The Philippine Islands 1493-1803*, vol. 14, eds. Emma H. Blair and James A. Robertson (New York: Kraus Repr., 1962), 175-177. Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 129, 217, 245.

[14] Royal Officials of the Philippines, "Letter of the Royal Officials of the Philippines to the Royal Audiencia of Mexico: Accompanied by a memorandum of the necessary things to be send to the colony; Guido de Labeçares and others, Cebu 1565," in *The Philippine Islands 1493-1803*, vol. 2, eds. Emma H.

in 1565, he quickly perceived the Muslim dominance in the inter-island traffic of the Philippines as an obstacle in his scheme to establish the colony. Thus, between 1570 and 1582, the Spaniards successively drove the Muslim merchants back and blocked their expansionist politics.[15] In 1578, Spanish troops under Captain Esteban Rodríguez de Figueroa sailed for the Island of Jolo and made the sultan of Sulu formally accept the sovereignty of the Spanish king, while the Maguindanao (on the Island of Mindanao) were forced to agree on Spanish terms for peace. Even some tribute payments were collected in these years. However, neither of these realms was effectively subjugated.[16]

In 1591, following the traditional Spanish model of the *capitulaciones de conquista*, established in America, Rodríguez de Figueroa made a contract with the Spanish king.[17] In exchange for a series of royal favors, he committed himself to conquer and colonize the Pulangi River Delta, the center of the political power in Mindanao. In 1596, he set out for the campaign with fifty vessels, 214 Spanish troops, 1500 native allies, and some Jesuit priests. Yet, only five days after his arrival, he was killed in a battle and the venture came to nothing. Alarmed by these Spanish acts of conquest, the Muslim leaders of the Great River Delta overcame their internal differences and agreed upon a confederacy. Together they began to organize systematic raids into the Visayan Island, starting an even more violent phase of Spanish-Muslim confrontations in the Philippines.[18]

Spreading the Christian faith among Muslims

The Jesuits had only arrived in 1581 to the Philippines, later than other orders. Therefore, they had to find their place in an already preconditioned setting. The

Blair and James A. Robertson (New York: Kraus Repr., 1962); Eberhard Crailsheim, "Trading with the Enemy: Commerce between Spaniards and 'Moros' in the Early Modern Philippines," *Vegueta: Anuario de la Facultad de Geografía e Historia* 20 (2020), 84-86.

[15] William H. Scott, "Crusade or Commerce? Spanish-Moro Relations in the 16th Century," in *Cracks in the Parchment Curtain: And other Essays in Philippine History*, ed. William H. Scott (Quezon City: New Day Publ., 1985), 47.

[16] Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas* (City of Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2007), chapter 2.

[17] For the intentions of the crown and the theoretical considerations in regard to the "just war" against the Muslims in the Philippines, see Coello de la Rosa, "No es esta tierra para tibios."

[18] Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, 22-23, 52-53, 82; Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 116; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 151; for the formations of alliances with the Maguindanao, see Ariel Lopez, "Kinship, Islam, and Raiding in Maguindanao, c. 1760-1780," in *Warring Societies of Pre-Colonial Southeast Asia: Local Cultures of Conflict Within a Regional Context*, ed. Michael Charney and Kathryn Wellen (Copenhagen: Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, 2018). Raiding was not a new phenomenon in the Southeast Asian world but its features changed with the arrival of the Spaniards. Laura L. Junker, *Raiding, Trading, and Feasting: The Political Economy of Philippine Chiefdoms* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1999).

pastoral care for the Spaniards and most natives in Luzon was already organized by the Franciscans and the Augustinians and did not belong to their proper field of work anyway. Therefore, the Jesuits, besides a few residences in Luzon, turned southward in 1595, and created new missions in the Visayas, above all, on the islands of Samar, Leyte, and Bohol. These missionary stations were dispersed and far from the capital, large settlements barely existed, and the natives spoke different languages, all of which made the proselytization very difficult. Yet, the biggest challenge emerged when the slave raids of the Maguindanao and the Buayan from Mindanao started after 1596 and the native parishes fell prey to raids and plunder, leading to abandoned villages, razed churches, and several killed or captured natives and missionaries.[19] Organizing the safeguard of the Visayas from these raids became the highest priority of the Jesuit order in Manila. For that objective, they lobbied vehemently after 1603 when the raids intensified even more.[20]

Another one of their projects was the proselytization in the sultanates. Yet, spreading the faith among Muslims was a particularly challenging endeavor because the doctrines of the two religions are very close and the main arguments of the missionaries could not fully develop their persuasive power. In Europe, Christian-Muslim relations mostly ranged between harsh conflict and uneasy cohabitation. Against this backdrop, the Jesuits on the Old Continent, usually advocated a military advance against Muslims states, not bothering too much with their conversion.[21] In the course of their missionary undertakings in Asia, however, the conviction that Muslims were unable to convert was diluted and two ways of dealing with Islam deemed possible. Firstly, the Muslim population in the peripheries of their realms was considered to be only superficially Islamized and hence easier to convert. Secondly, the missionaries attempted to convince and convert the political overlord, trying a top-down approach to secure a patron for the proselytization of the territory.[22]

In the Philippines, all three strategies (military push-back, bottom-up, and top-down) were attempted – all of them with limited success. First, the Jesuits

[19] Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 56-74, 157-168, 276-298; Lucio Gutiérrez, OP, "The Formative Years of the Archdiocese of Manila: 1565-1850 (Part One)," *Philippiniana Sacra* 46/137 (2011), 470–473.

[20] Coello de la Rosa, "No es esta tierra para tibios," 53.

[21] Daniel A. Madigan, "Global Visions in Contestation: Jesuits and Muslims in the Age of Empires," in *The Jesuits and Globalization: Historical Legacies and Contemporary Challenges,* eds. Thomas F. Banchoff and José Casanova (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2016), 77; Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, *La imagen de los musulmanes y del Norte de Africa en la España de los siglos XVI y XVII: Los caracteres de una hostilidad* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 1989).

[22] Madigan, "Global Visions in Contestation," 83-84; Markus Friedrich, *Die Jesuiten: Aufstieg, Niedergang, Neubeginn* (Munich: Piper, 2018), 433.

constantly pushed for military campaigns of the government against the Philippine "moors" (*moros*). These were perceived as essential to defend their flock and to demonstrate to the enemies the power of the Spanish troops and their God. Second, with Muslim religious and political influence waning at the fringes of their realms, the Jesuits dared converting Muslims and "heathen" in these frontier zones, above all in northern Mindanao. Finally, approaching the Muslim rulers in the heart of their reigns for diplomatic purposes gave them the opportunity to familiarize also the ruling class with Christianity and to try the top-down approach.[23] In the course of the many centuries of Christian-Muslim cohabitation in the Early Modern period, however, none of these strategies would bear sustainable fruit. As in other settings, the Jesuit missionaries' arguments mostly felt short to convince or convert educated Muslims, frustrating repeatedly their endeavors in Mindanao and Jolo. Nevertheless, the Society of Jesus would not stop trying to defend their Visayan posts and expand their missions in Mindanao. Their tasks as negotiators for the colonial government has to be seen in this context.

Melchor Hurtado, 1603-1606

On June 17, 1599, a twenty-eight year old, allegedly very handsome and dedicated Spanish Jesuit named Melchor Hurtado joined the Jesuit vice-province in the Philippines. He was born in Toledo, Spain, a son of noble parents. At the age of twenty, he entered the Society of Jesus and went to New Spain soon after. Due to a vow, he asked to be transferred to the most distant of all Spanish colonies, the Philippines. He sailed to Manila together with a Jesuit inspector (*visitador*), Diego García, another priest, Francisco González, and Brother Diego Rodríguez, being reinforcements for the vice-province. Shortly after, on October 15, 1599, when the *visitador* set sail to the Visayan Islands, Melchor Hurtado, three more priests, and four lay brothers went with him. By January 1600, the *visitador's* inspection tour was completed and a process of restructuring the Visayan mission started, whereby Hurtado was assigned to Dulag, the capital of Leyte, to carry out extended mission tours in the hinterland.[24]

[23] Crailsheim, "Wandel und Ambivalenz der Darstellung der 'Moros' auf den kolonialspanischen Philippinen (16.-17. Jahrhundert)"; Eberhard Crailsheim, "Polarized Enemies: The Christian-Muslim Dichotomy in the Early Modern Philippines," in *Philippine Confluence: Iberian, Chinese and Islamic Currents, c. 1500-1800*, eds. Jos Gommans and Ariel C. Lopez (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2020); Rodríguez-Rodríguez, "Old Enemies, New Contexts."

[24] Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 177-180; Francisco Colín, SJ, *Labor evangélica de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús en las Islas Filipinas*, 2nd edition. Ed. by Pablo Pastells, SJ. (Barcelona: Imprenta y Litografía de Heinrich y Compañía, 1902), vol. 3, 154-158 (book IV, chapter XI). For the whole life of Melchor Hurtado, see Horacio de la Costa, SJ, "A Spanish Jesuit Among the Magindanaus," *Comment* 12/October (1961).

In August of 1603, word spread that a Maguindanao fleet of fifty vessels under their ruler, Buisan (r. 1597-1619), was underway to pillage the eastern shores of Leyte, as he had done the previous year in Balayan. The Spanish *alcalde mayor* of Cebu, responsible for the defense of the Visayas, sent troops and gave orders to fortify Dulag. On the whole, thirteen Spaniards and additional native troops gathered in the city and waited for two months for the attack, which did not materialize. Eventually, when the residents got tired of waiting, the defenses were dismantled and the foreign troops sent home. On October 28, the Jesuits gathered in the town and on the following day, Buisan attacked. The whole city was ransacked and the inhabitants that could not escape were taken as slaves.[25] Most Jesuits managed to flee but one was discovered by the attackers, namely Melchor Hurtado. As a particularly valuable prisoner – missionaries could render high ransom money – Hurtado was treated with special care by Buisan and did not have to suffer the same hardships as the native Visayan captives. After a long and hazardous journey of five months around Mindanao's eastern coastline, the returning armada was warmly welcomed at the Pulangi River Delta. Hurtado and other Spanish prisoners were lodged in a proper house and even had their own slaves and servants, not missing anything they needed. Moreover, Hurtado was invited frequently to Buayan to see Rajah Sirungan (Silongan), who was, at that time, the most powerful of the Mindanao rulers. There, they discussed matters of religion and Hurtado even started to learn the Maguindanao language.[26]

In the meantime, Sirungan sent an ambassador to Governor-General Pedro Bravo de Acuña, accompanied by a Spanish captive, Ensign Cristobal Gómez Miño, to negotiate the ransom for the prisoners and general terms for peace. The envoi was courteously welcomed in Manila and, after hearing his message, Gómez was again designated as ambassador and sent back to Sirungan. He should express the governor-general's desire to establish peace and to make the people of Mindanao the Spanish king's vassals under Sirungan as their overlord. All rulers of Mindanao should be friends with the Spaniards, prisoners should be exchanged, the spoil restored, and the preaching of the gospel and conversions should be allowed. Moreover, the Mindanao rulers should join forces with the Spaniards against the sultan of Ternate for an upcoming military campaign. Aware of the complicated nature of Mindanao high politics, the governor-general mandated that these terms not should be presented only to Sirungan but also to the other leaders of the Pulangi Delta. In that

[25] Buisan seized the occasion to meet with the chiefs (*principales*) of Leyte and propose an alliance against the Spaniards, which was celebrated by many with a blood compact. Later however, the Spaniards reassured the *principales* of the strong position of the Spanish government.

[26] Colín, *Labor evangélica*, vol. 2, 376-386 (book III, chapter XXVIII), 505-506 (book III, chapter XXXVI); Francisco Combés, SJ, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló* (Madrid: Imprenta de la viuda de M. Minuesa de los Ríos, 1897), 95; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 289-293.

endeavor, Father Hurtado should support Gómez, entrusting him hence with his first diplomatic task.

Shortly after, the rulers of Mindanao gathered and discussed the proposed terms of peace, yet, they did not come to a clear accord. Buisan, who was Kapitan Laut, i.e. the naval commander of the Pulangi confederacy, explained that he demanded a Spanish swivel gun (*falcón*), as ransom for Father Hurtado, while the other captured Spaniards could be exchanged for Mindanao prisoners that had been captured earlier. The other terms of the peace proposal caused more troubles, in particular, the request for a military alliance against Ternate, which was a powerful old-time friend of the Mindanao. Both were linked through religious, commercial, and even military connections[27] as well as strong family ties between the Maguindanao and the Ternate aristocracies. Therefore, the Mindanao rulers excused themselves, by stating that without concrete Spanish protection such an alliance would be unfeasible. To transmit these concerns to the governor-general, a relative of Sirungan, Dalucman (or Dalumaban), was appointed ambassador, together with Ensign Gómez and Father Hurtado. Sirungan would personally guarantee to Buisan the outstanding ransom of Hurtado (the swivel gun or 1100 reales) and four Spaniards would remain as hostages with Buisan. On their last evening in captivity, the Spaniards in Buayan were invited by the wife of Sirungan – who was not present herself – to an opulent banquet with thirteen courses. Sirungan himself bestowed upon Hurtado a complete new suit of clothes to express his affection, and on September 17, 1604, after a year of captivity, they left for Manila. With them, they took many holy vessels, some liberated Christian Visayan natives, and Sirungan's presents for the governor-general and the archbishop.[28]

In Manila, Governor-General Bravo de Acuña was pleased with the events and Father Hurtado's performance. However, at that moment his mind was not set on Mindanao but occupied by another task, namely the pending conquest of the Maluku Islands. Just recently, the Portuguese – since 1580 ruled by the Spanish kings – had been driven out of their Maluku strongholds by the sultan of Ternate with his Dutch allies and, hence, had requested help from Manila. The rich "Spice Islands," had long been in the focus of the Spanish governor-generals, and now, finally, Bravo de Acuña was able to seize this opportunity. He was preparing one of the greatest armadas ever seen in the Philippines, composed of five galleons, four galleys, and

[27] For the military support of Ternate for Mindanao, see for example AGI Filipinas 35, N. 51, Testimonio de Gallinato sobre ayuda del rey de Terrenate a Mindanao (4/6/1602).

[28] Colín, *Labor evangélica*, vol. 2, 506-509 (book III, chapter XXXVI); Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 300; Jean-Noël Sánchez Pons, "Misión y Dimisión: Las Molucas en el siglo XVII entre jesuitas portugueses y españoles," in *Jesuitas e imperios de ultramar, siglos XVI-XX*, eds. Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, Javier Burrieza Sánchez, and Doris Moreno Martínez (Madrid: Sílex, 2012), 88.

twenty-seven smaller ships, carrying 1400 Spanish soldiers and another 1695 native troops.[29] At the same time, however, the governor-general was aware of the situation in Mindanao and knew of the raiders that lurked at the shores of Mindanao, waiting to attack the vulnerable Visayas in the absence of his armada. To keep them at bay, he plotted a scheme to occupy the leaders of the Pulangi confederacy and leave them unaware of his plan to conquer Mindanao in the near future. To that avail, he asked Father Hurtado to return to Mindanao and buy him time by engaging them in further peace negotiations. According to Francisco Colín, SJ, Father Hurtado understood very well the critical situation for the colony and its Christian inhabitants and hence was willing to risk his life and liberty again. Thus, he obeyed happily, as Colín states, for the service of God, for the king, and for the good of the islands.[30]

Melchor Hurtado, and his companion, Brother Diego Rodríguez, left Manila on April 24, 1605, on a Chinese sampan. They arrived at the mouth of the Great River of Mindanao, on August 4, and were welcomed right away by Kapitan Laut Buisan and the Rajah Muda, the heir apparent of Maguindanao.[31] Both accompanied the delegation to Buayan, where Sirungan was awaiting them. During the following audience, Hurtado explained that the governor-general was planning to re-conquer the "rebellious" people of the Maluku Islands, which was his legitimate claim, as they were part of the Portuguese segment of the empire. Hurtado further pointed out that the governor-general had no intentions to attack Mindanao but to negotiate for peace. Only in the worst of cases, the armada would pass by in Mindanao on its way back. As token of friendship, Hurtado handed over presents for the rulers. Sirungan received a bull, three cows, two saddles, one Melaka bed with its furnishings, and bolts of taffeta cloth, while the other rulers received presents of less value. Angered by this apparently unjust distribution of presents,[32] Buisan gave an angry speech in which he expressed his doubt about the existence of any great armada and said that the Spaniards were just trying with any means, flattery, and intimidation, to evade the Mindanao raids. Moreover, as Hurtado's ransom had not yet been paid, he threatened to sell the father off to a Ternate slave trader. Infuriated, he left with Rajah Muda for Maguindanao. Sirungan, however invited Hurtado to stay in Buayan and continue their negotiations.

[29] Jean-Noël Sánchez Pons, "Tiempos Malucos: España y sus Islas de las Especias, 1565-1663," in *Andrés de Urdaneta: Un hombre moderno*, Congreso Internacional Ordizia, 25 y 28 de noviembre de 2008 (Ordizia, Guipúzcoa: Ayuntamiento de Ordizia, 2009).

[30] Colín, *Labor evangélica*, vol. 2, 509-518 (book III, chapter XXXVI); Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 301.

[31] According to C. Majul, Buisan effectively controlled the Rajah Muda, who was his nephew, the son of Dimansankay. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 28, 114.

[32] For the importance of diplomatic gifts in that setting, see Jose M. Escribano-Páez, "Diplomatic Gifts, Tributes and Frontier Violence: Circulation of Contentious Presents in the Moluccas (1575–1606)," *Diplomatica* 2/2 (2020).

After a month, on September 5, Father Hurtado and Rajah Sirungan came to an agreement. On the one hand, Spain was to recognize him as paramount ruler of the Great River region. On the other hand, he would become a vassal of the Spanish king. He would not conduct any offensive war against other fractions in the region, procure a stop of the raids against Spanish territories, return all Christian captives and plundered church property, support Spanish military campaigns, entertain no alliance with enemies of Spain, and lastly, allow his subjects to convert to Catholicism if they so desired. Shortly after, Buisan and the other rulers of the Great River Delta returned to Buayan to see Hurtado and question him, because their scouts had indeed found the armada that Hurtado had spoken of. To ease their growing discomfort with the Spanish request for an alliance against Ternate and their allies, the Dutch, Hurtado said that they should not fear the Dutch, as they were just merchants and not conquerors. Having said that, the discussion took a sharp turn and the rulers started questioning the intentions of the Spaniards themselves – obviously being conquerors and not merchants – and their trustworthiness. The outcome of these talks was not positive for the Spanish emissaries. Melchor Hurtado and Diego Rodriguez were put under house arrest and the diplomatic achievements that had been reached so far were nullified.

About six months later, on March 2, 1606, Bravo de Acuña's great armada was on its way to Ternate and paid a visit to the Great River Delta. However, the coast was deserted as the Maguindanao were fearful of the Spanish ships. Several invitations for a meeting with the Muslim rulers remained unanswered, and after some days, the armada continued its way southward, leaving a swivel gun ashore, the promised ransom for Father Hurtado.[33]

The Maluku campaign was a resounding success for Spain. Bravo de Acuña's companies quickly occupied Tidore and attacked Ternate on April 1, 1606. The few Dutch troops that were present were quick to abandon the islands and ten days later, the sultan of Ternate, Said Dini (Said Barakat Shah, r. 1583-1606), capitulated and the Spaniards took full control of the island. According to Francisco Colín, it was the Jesuit fathers that carried out most of the negotiations between the Maluku rulers and the Spanish governor-general.[34] After the victory, the sultan and the most eminent nobles were taken prisoner and the armada returned to Manila on June 6.[35]

[33] Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 303–305; Colín, *Labor evangélica*, vol. 3, 43 (book IV, chapter IV); Hubert Jacobs, SJ, ed., *Documanta Malucensia. Vol. 3: 1606-1682* (Rome: Jesuit Historical Institute 1984), 16.

[34] Colín, *Labor evangélica*, vol. 3, 44–56 (book IV, chapter IV).

[35] According to Colín, Bravo de Acuña even sent the galley with the confined Ternate nobles on board to the delta, informing everybody of the victory, and advising Hurtado to leave as soon as

The rulers of the Great River Delta were deeply impressed by the Spanish victory and asked Father Hurtado to deliver a very submissive letter to Manila. Sirungan, Rajah Muda, and Buisan declared to be standing in awe before the victor of the mighty Ternate sultan and asked for pity and forgiveness for any former errors, assuring the governor-general that all of Mindanao was at the mercy of the Spanish king. On his way to Manila, Hurtado was accompanied by thirteen released captives, arriving in Manila in September 1606.[36]

By then, however, Bravo de Acuña had passed away, most likely due to intoxication, leaving the colony for three years without proper commander. The highest court of justice in Manila (*audiencia*) took over the government affairs, and its judges (*oidores*) tried to follow up.[37] In a writing from October 1606, referring to the aforementioned acquiescent letter of the Mindanao rulers, the judges accepted their apologies and granted pardon in the name of the king. Highlighting the Spanish victory in the Maluku Islands, they demanded an end of the raids on native villages and set an ultimatum (May 1607) for the Mindanao rulers to come to Manila. Melchor Hurtado, in the meantime, had fallen sick and was not able to continue as intermediary, as had been the explicit whish of the Mindanao rulers. In the end, the mandatory visit did not take place and the advantageous situation could not be seized for the expansion of Spanish influence in Mindanao.[38] In 1608, the raids from Mindanao resumed and the situation returned to the status quo antes. Leyte and Samar villages were repeatedly sacked and natives were taken as slaves in the hundreds.[39] Hence, while Spanish attempts to get a grip on the Maluku Islands had a good start, the control of the Great River Delta in Mindanao was not archived, mainly due to unfortunate circumstances and possibly the diplomatic slip of Father Hurtado. However, when in August 1608, Hurtado, who had been assigned to the

possible for Manila, as his ransom had been paid and his service was no longer necessary. Distrustful of the Mindanao rulers, Hurtado and Rodriguez left head over heels for Manila. Colín, *Labor evangélica*, vol. 3, 56-62 (book IV, chapter IV). The chronicler Colín makes no secret of his opinion that the rulers of Mindanao had a traitorous nature and could not be trusted. Colín, *Labor evangélica*, vol. 2, 509 (book III, chapter XXXVI).

[36] The Spanish reply to that letter included a follow up of Hurtado's negotiations from September 5, 1605. Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 120.

[37] AGI Filipinas 1, N. 82, Consulta sobre victoria en Terrenate (3/4/1607); Colín, *Labor evangélica*, vol. 3, 79-80 (book IV, chapter IV).

[38] AGI Filipinas 19, R. 8, N. 116, Respuesta a los reyes de Mindanao para que vengan a Manila (24/10/1606). The Manila government even encouraged the Mindanao rulers to start trading with Manila, above all with wax.

[39] AGI Filipinas 7, R. 3, N. 37, Capítulo de carta de la Audiencia de Manila sobre daños de Mindanaos (8/7/1608). Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 305-307; Sánchez Pons, "Tiempos Malucos." For the conquest of the Maluku Islands, see the accounts of Antonio de Morga, *Sucesos de las Islas Filipinas*, and Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola, *Conquista de las Islas Malucas* (Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo, Miraguano Ediciones, 2009).

mission station in Iloilo, died, the message was delivered to the three rulers of the delta and all of them, according to Francisco Colín, expressed their respect for the "good Father."[40]

During these years of initial confrontation between Muslims and Christians, the Jesuits had not yet developed a solid interest in the proselytization of Mindanao, as they were still only beginning to establish their Visayan missions. Even though, the whole island of Mindanao had been assigned to the Jesuit order by the cathedral chapter in Manila as early as 1596,[41] their main interest in the negotiations between Manila and the Great River Delta in these early years of the 17th century resided still in their hope for peace and less raids against their missions in the Visayan Islands. However, in later years, also due to Father Hurtado's missionary and diplomatic activities on the island, the Society tightened its grip on the Great Island of Mindanao and started to establish more permanent missions there – after all, even the first global Jesuit missionary, Francisco Xavier (1506-1552), was believed to have set foot on that island in the middle of the 16th century.[42]

Pedro Gutiérrez, 1629-1639

Between 1614 and 1634, the Mindanao realms underwent a process of internal restructuring and focused less on external affairs. However, Sulu had become more powerful and the infrequent raiding turned into a full-fledged war against the Spaniards. In alliance with the Dutch, the Sulu raiders deliberately destroyed shipyards and intensified slave raiding in the Visayas and southern Luzon.[43] Together with Archbishop Miguel García Serrano, OSA (r. 1618-1629), the Jesuits repeatedly petitioned the Spanish government to become more active in the protection of the Christian natives of the Visayas, instead of putting energy in the defense of the Maluku Islands. Yet, the governor-generals at that time were too busy fending off the Dutch attacks on Spanish and Portuguese possessions in Southeast Asia. Only when the Dutch intensified their approaches to the Maguindanao and Sulu, fostered their friendship, and proposed alliances, the Manila government got concerned, shifted its strategic interest, and took a stronger stance against their southern neighbors and their raids.[44]

[40] Colín, *Labor evangélica*, vol. 3, 153, 157 (book IV, chapter XI); Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 309-310.

[41] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 157; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 153.

[42] Peter Schreurs, "Did Saint Francis Xavier Come to Mindanao?" *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 22 (1994).

[43] Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 318–319.

[44] Ibid., 325-347; Coello de la Rosa, "No es esta tierra para tibios," 54, 57.

During these years, the Jesuits started their expansion on the Island of Mindanao properly. In 1608, twelve years after the island had been assigned to the fathers of the Society, the Jesuit missionaries started their activities in Dapitan, northern Mindanao. But only in 1628, Governor-General Niño de Távora (r. 1626-1632) granted them permission for a permanent residence there. It was Father Pedro Gutiérrez, who laid the foundation for the mission in 1629; two years later, he became its first superior.[45] Gutiérrez was a native from Colima, New Spain, who had studied theology in Mexico. At the age of twenty-nine, in 1622, he came to the Philippines, where he learned the Visayan language. Before establishing the mission in Dapitan, he had been assigned to Leyte and Cebu, where he had worked as a priest for the Spaniards and local natives.[46]

The permanent threat of Sulu raiders to the coastal villages was a heavy burden on the Jesuit endeavor to proselytize the people of the Visayas and Northern Mindanao. In February of 1635, the provincial called upon the two veteran missionaries Diego Patiño and Pedro Gutiérrez to come to Manila to elaborate a plan for the protection of the natives of the Visayas. Highlighting the inefficiency of the Spanish naval squadrons in Cebu and Iloilo, the best solution deemed them to establish another garrison at the tip of the Zamboanga Peninsula in Mindanao. Its strategic location would enable it to intercept raiders in a bottleneck before they could enter Visayan waters or at least send boats to alert the other garrisons much earlier than before ("sirve de freno y atalaya"[47]). Moreover, such a garrison could be the base for the further proselytization of the Island of Mindanao. The Jesuit assessment supported the view of the colonial government and Interim Governor-General Juan Cerezo de Salamanca (r. 1633-1635) swiftly organized the implementation of the plan. In June of 1635, the cornerstone was laid for the new fort, called Real Fuerza de San José. The two priests Melchor de Vera and Pedro Gutiérrez came as chaplains with the expedition, and while the first stood out as engineer and architect of the fort, the second became known for his diplomatic skills. During his assignment in Zamboanga, Gutiérrez met with the Sulu queen, Tuan Baluka, who was impressed by the father and bestowed a banner upon him that would keep him safe from Sulu raiders. Later, Gutiérrez went to visit Jolo and got to know many high-ranking chiefs (datus), above all, chief minister Datu Ache – an infamous corsair in the eyes of the Spaniards – and even the sultan, Rajah Bungsu[48] (r. 1610-1650). Twice, Father Gutiérrez was able to

[45] Pedro Murillo Velarde, SJ, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús: Segunda parte que comprende los progresos de esta provincia desde el año de 1616 hasta el de 1716* (Manila: Imprenta de la Compañía de Jesús, 1749), 77r; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 152-153, 309, 318, 445.

[46] Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús,* 199r.

[47] Ibid., 77v.

[48] Alternative writing "Bongso", i.e. Sultan Muwallil Wasit I. See Najeeb M. Saleeby, *The History of Sulu* (Manila: Bureau of Printing, 1908).

change the plans of the Sulu armada and prevent raids on Spanish territory, rerouting them once toward the island of Borneo. On another occasion, when Gutiérrez came to Jolo, he was able to free a large number of Christian captives, including a Recollect priest.[49]

Pedro Gutiérrez was also in touch with Sultan Kudarat, the ruler of Maguindanao (Muhammad Dipatuan Kudarat, called Corralat in most Spanish sources, r. 1619-1671), who was the son and heir of the aforementioned Kapitan Laut Buisan. Gutiérrez visited him at his court in Lamitan and, in Gutiérrez' eyes, they even became close friends, calling each other "brothers." Kudarat intended to give him gold, slaves, and other gifts but the Jesuit refused. He only accepted Kudarat's personal banner, which he bequeathed upon him as a token of friendship and which would protect him against Maguindanao raiders.[50]

Despite the good relation between Gutiérrez and the Muslim rulers, the raids continued and the tensions persisted. To put an end to this unstable situation, Governor-General Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera (r. 1635-1644), who had been called the Philippines' "last conquistador" by Filipino historian Horacio de la Costa, set out in 1637 with an armada of eighty ships to "pacify" (which had come to replace the term "conquer") the Muslims of Mindanao. Within three months' time, Maguindanao and Buayan were under Spanish control and Sultan Kudarat was severely wounded and on the run.[51] On March 25, 1637, Corcuera, on his way back to Zamboanga, encountered an armada of forty vessels with 1200 Visayan warriors that had volunteered to support the Spaniards against the Maguindanao, Pedro Gutiérrez was with them. Corcuera ordered them to continue their journey and to join forces with Major Pedro Palomina in Maguindanao.[52]

The following year, Corcuera appeared with his armada before Jolo and started to besiege Rajah Bungsu in his citadel. One of the six Jesuits that were with the expedition was Pedro Gutiérrez, who was to play a considerable role in the conquest. Shortly after their arrival, a Muslim prisoner showed Father Gutiérrez important passages and hidden routes over the islands that helped the Spaniards find their way

[49] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 212-213, 222-226; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 77r, 200r-201r; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 320, 323-324; Saleeby, *The History of Sulu*, 176.

[50] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 209-211; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 200r.

[51] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 238-54; Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 132-168; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 373-398.

[52] Ibid., 381. According to Pedro Murillo Velarde, this Visayan armada was then ordered to circumnavigate the whole Island of Mindanao and subjugate all resisting villages ("entrar a sangre y fuego los Pueblos que se resistiesen"), on which occasion Father Gutiérrez drew the first quite accurate complete map of the Island of Mindanao. Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 86r, 201r.

around. Later, in the negotiations that ensued after some weeks of siege, the different Muslim parties in the citadel repeatedly tried to get in touch with Father Gutiérrez as first contact point, being a valuable intermediary for them. The Jesuit chronicler Francisco Combés, at times a negotiator himself,[53] was full of praise for his co-religious and wrote in glowing terms that for the besieged Muslims, Gutiérrez was an "angel of peace and firm prophet of the truth."[54] When peace envoys came down, they only wanted to talk to him and no one else. They brought him to the citadel, where he met with Rajah Bungsu and negotiated terms for peace. However, these terms did not please the Spanish commanders, which left the father without leeway. Gutiérrez hence had to withdrew from the negotiations. The siege ended shortly after, when the allies of the Sulu abandoned the citadel – having negotiated free withdrawal with Father Gutiérrez beforehand – and Rajah Bungsu fled with his retinue to the interior of the island.[55] Even if the Jesuit legate was not particularly successful as negotiator during these operations, the events still demonstrate the respect shown by both parties and his value as intermediary in the middle of a siege.

When Corcuera returned from Jolo to Manila – for his second triumphal entry – he left clear instructions for the follow-up in Mindanao and the preservation of a stable peace. However, the situation got out of hand and Mongkay, the rajah of Buayan, started an open war against the Spaniards. Kudarat, who in the meantime had recovered from his injuries, was able to gather his forces and in 1639, he besieged the fort in Sabanilla, which was a Spanish bastion and advanced post close to the Mindanao heartland. By then, Father Melchor de Vera, who again had helped the Spaniards to build the fortress there, had been replaced as chaplain by Pedro Gutiérrez. After a cunny maneuver by Kudarat, a brigantine with twenty-five Spanish musketeers fell in his hands and it was Gutiérrez who went to negotiate with Kudarat the release of the prisoners. The talks started unexpectedly, with Kudarat taking him prisoner. Yet, soon, Gutiérrez managed to resume negotiations and learned of Kudarat's intention to drive the Spaniards out of Mindanao for good. Nevertheless, talks continued for quite some time and when Gutiérrez pretended that a Spanish armada was coming to attack, Kudarat agreed to let the prisoners go and make peace with Spain. This peace in the Pulangi River Delta, which seems to have been Gutiérrez last achievement as negotiator, would hold until 1644. By then, however, Kudarat's power was fully restored and Spain's influence in Mindanao had diminished drastically.[56]

[53] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 471, 543.

[54] Ibid., 361. Francisco Combés was one of the Jesuits who was recruited specifically with the purpose to spread the faith in Mindanao, which is reflected in his writings, where he tends to glorify the actions of Jesuit missionaries. Rodríguez-Rodríguez, "Old Enemies, New Contexts," 141.

[55] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 349-365; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 201v; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 383.

[56] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 302-312; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 113r, 202r; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 389, 393-394.

Recapitulating these years, the driving force behind the Spanish military expansion in the late 1630s was the need to ward off the Dutch and their constant attacks to defend Spanish and Portuguese possessions in Asia. The military threats of the Muslim raiders and their incursions in native villagers were only of secondary importance to Madrid and only when their alliances with the Dutch became threatening, Manila took actions. Booty of war, including Muslim slaves, were another incentive for Spanish officials to engage in a war in the southern Philippines.[57] The Jesuits, who were the most active religious order in the Eastern Visayas and in Mindanao, contributed most chaplains to the Spanish military expeditions.

While the Jesuit missions in the Visayas had already begun in the 1590s, its mission in Mindanao, started in earnest only in 1629. Both regions, however, needed a secure environment, which Spain was not able to provide until the fortress in Zamboanga was established in 1635. The Jesuits main objective in the Philippines was to extend their zone of influence and promote the conversion of the natives, "heathen" and Muslims alike. As the majority of the inhabitants of Mindanao was not considered to be "real" Muslim (i.e. only having adopted some Muslim habits), their conversion was still possible in the eyes of the Jesuits.[58] Therefore, they intensified their proselytization at the fringes of the Muslim reigns and even, cautiously, among the ruling class. The presence of the Jesuits in Mindanao, the diplomatic activities of Father Gutiérrez, and his connectedness to several groups of natives in Mindanao (Dapitans, Lutaos,[59] and Subanos, but as well Basilans, Sulu, and Maguindanao) must be understood in this context.[60] Yet, while the grand design of the Jesuit expansion would continue and even solidify, the Spanish strategy would change in the years following Corcuera's pacifications.

[57] Regarding the discussion on enslavement in the Philippines, see Ávalos, "Dos cartas al rey contra los moros de las Filipinas"; Coello de la Rosa, "No es esta tierra para tibios"; Patricio Hidalgo Nuchera, "¿Esclavitud o liberación?: El fracaso de las actitudes esclavistas de los conquistadores de Filipinas," *Revista Complutense de Historia de Amércia* 20 (1994); William H. Scott, *Slavery in the Philippines* (Manila: De La Salle Univ. Pr., 1991); Tatiana Seijas, *Asian Slaves in Colonial Mexico: From Chinos to Indians* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Jean-Noël Sánchez Pons, "Autour d'une source: De l'esclavage aux Philippines, XVIe-XVIIe siècles," *Source(s). Arts, Civilisation et Histoire de l'Europe* 7 (2015).

[58] "[N]i son Moros, ni Gentiles, ni Christianos, sino barbaros Ateístas. Corralat, que ha puesto su tierra en alguna policía, tiene su mezquita, y haze acudir á ella; pero en saliendo de su pueblo, cada qual viue como quiere, menos algunos principales, que a exemplo del Rey, han hecho punto de honra, el parecer Moros. Pero la gente comun, es cierto, que haze poco caso de todo." Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 43.

[59] The term "Lutao" refers to the Samal-Bajau.

[60] The Jesuit chronicles give ample evidence of the progress of their missionary activities in the Visayas and in Mindanao. A status report on Jesuit missions of the year 1656 can be found in Colín, *Labor evangélica*, vol. 4, (apéndice), 671-827, in particular on 796-817. In the district of Zamboanga alone, for example, 800 Christian Lutao families were living, while the district of Dapitan was home to 200 Christian Subano families.

Alejandro López, 1641-1655

During the last years of Corcuera's government, the Spanish drive southwards diminished. On the Maluku Islands, Spain (separated from Portugal since 1640) could barely participate in the lucrative spice trade in Mindanao, the garrisons struggled with an unstable peace with Kudarat, and in 1640, the Sulu entered in an alliance with the Dutch East India Company (VOC). The Dutch – besides attacking the Spaniards directly – imposed themselves over the years as a decisive external element in the relations between Manila and its Muslim neighbors. Moreover, it was a time of decline for the transatlantic trade, which diminished the interest that Madrid and Mexico had shown previously for the affairs of the Philippines.[61] This clear alteration in Manila's standing and outside perspective can be perceived in a shift from an offensive approach in external politics to a defensive one, based on a more defensive doctrine and engaged in careful diplomatic negotiations. Such a type of government was practiced by Governor-General Diego Fajardo Chacón (r. 1644-1653) as well as by his successor Sabiniano Manrique de Lara (r. 1653-1663), both of which sought a more peaceful approach to the Muslim rulers of Jolo and Mindanao, including a commercial rapprochement.[62]

One of the most eminent negotiators for Spain in these years was the Jesuit Father Alejandro López (1604-1655), who was from a noble Aragonese family. In 1623, he crossed the Atlantic Ocean to join his uncle in Mexico, and at the age of nineteen he started to study *artes*. His uncle got in contact with the newly appointed governor-general of the Philippines, Juan Niño de Tavora (r. 1626-1632), on his way to Manila, and hence, the idea was born to participate in the rich Manila trade. In 1626, he sent his nephew to the Philippines to conduct his business there. After successfully sending back the returns of the trade, however, Alejandro López decided to stay in Manila and quit his uncle's business. For five years, he studied theology in the Colegio de San José, where the later chronicler Francisco Colín was rector, and in 1631, López became *maestro de artes* and joined the Jesuit order. The following year, he took over the position of procurator of the college and worked as priest of the parish of Santa Cruz among the Chinese-native mestizos. His desire, however, was to work among the natives of Mindanao, an undertaking that was strongly encouraged by the famed Father Marcelo Mastrilli, SJ. In September 1637, he thus went to Zamboanga, where he was to serve as a missionary for fourteen years. Right away, he started to learn the regional dialects and wrote a dictionary. In anticipation of his missionary activity among Muslims, he also put in writing a treatise against the commandments of Mohammed.[63] Together with Father Pedro Gutiérrez, he

[61] Coello de la Rosa, "No es esta tierra para tibios," 55-56.

[62] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 430-433, 443-447; Crailsheim, "Trading with the Enemy."

[63] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 549-554; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 238v-247v. Murillo Velarde states that he used much of Combés

was one of the missionaries that accompanied Governor-General Corcuera when he took the Jolo citadel in April of 1638 and he was to remain in the Jolo garrison with Father Francisco Martínez, when the others returned to Manila.[64] In 1643, he was appointed rector of the Zamboanga mission.

López' talent as a negotiator became manifest, according to Francisco Combés, as early as 1641, when, after several unsuccessful attempts by others missionaries, he managed to redeem Spanish hostages from Sulu imprisonment and even reduce the amount of their ransom.[65] But there are many more diplomatic episodes, handed down by Combés. In 1649, López was called upon by the ruling family of Sulu to help resolve internal quarrels over the throne, because of his reputation to be the "best peace negotiator," and indeed, he was able to solve the conflict with sure instinct, even coming back with forty freed Lutao prisoners.[66] In 1654, López soothed the strained relations with Datu Datan in Sibugay, a local ruler who was an ally of the Spaniards. The *datu* was unsettled as his daughter had to live as a hostage amongst the Spaniards and was about to turn on them. López, however, convinced the Spaniards to return his daughter and, hence, Datu Datan changed his mind and remained a Spanish ally.[67]

Between López and Sultan Kudarat of Maguindanao, whom López met several times over the years, a correspondence ensued. In one instance, the sultan even justified himself for an attack on Spanish troops in 1642, writing that it was only the provocative remarks of a Spanish captain that forced him to attack, even though, he actually wanted to avoid a confrontation ("contra todo su deseo").[68] Following up on that incident, López traveled to the court of Kudarat, where he achieved the release of the captured natives and Spaniards. In his letters, Kudarat, addressed López as "his brother," and showed him the same respected as Father Gutiérrez.[69]

López' greatest diplomatic achievements were probably two major peace agreements with the powerful sultans in Mindanao and Sulu, Kudarat and Bungsu. In 1644, the new governor-general, Diego Fajardo Chacón, reached the Philippines with clear instructions from the Spanish king to resist Dutch aggression in Asia

report for his account of the life of Alejandro López, but he discloses also additional sources, above all the hagiography of Father Alonso de Andrade (1590-1672) and the martyrologies of Johannes Nadasi (János Nádasi, 1614-1679) and Matthias Tanner (1630-1692). Javellana, "Historiography of the Philippine Province"; Alonso de Andrade, *Varones ilustres en santidad, letras y zelo de las almas de la Compañía de Jesús* (Madrid: Ioseph Fernandez de Buendia, 1667), 649-681, 692-698.

[64] Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 383-384.

[65] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 419.

[66] Ibid., 477-478; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 152v.

[67] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 338.

[68] Ibid., 330-331.

[69] Ibid., 323, 334.

and break any alliance between the Dutch and the sultans. For that purpose, it was decided to negotiate a truce with the Muslims. The officer in charge was the new governor of Zamboanga, Francisco de Atienza Ibáñez, who asked the two-time rector of the Zamboanga residence, Alejandro López, to act as intermediary and chief negotiator. López accepted to help procure the peace, as he said, to better be able to proselytizing "his Lutaos." Thence, López asked Atienza to get his troops in motion to unsettle Kudarat and raise his suspicion in regard to a possible Spanish attack. In the following step, López sent a friendly letter to Kudarat, offering to mediate peace negotiations with the Spaniards. Thereupon, he was invited in very kind words to Kudarat's court in Simuay, where he arrived with a small escort on February 6, 1645. They were welcomed by the hereditary prince, called Tiruley,[70] with great pomp, many ships, artillery, and music. During the time López spent with the royal family, in particular the princes and the queen, he used to talk about religion and even deliver a sermon, which was received with great interest. Many datus and theologians (panditas), however, were less happy with the father's proselytization. In parallel, preliminary negotiations of peace started and an agreement was reached. Once the negotiations were completed, López went back to Zamboanga where he informed Governor Atienza. Soon after, both sailed to Simuay where they were received again with great pomp. On this occasion, Kudarat was very forthcoming and let numerous Christian slaves go. Moreover, when it came to drawing the borders between his territory and the Spaniards', he was very generous, leaving the land from Zamboanga to Sibugay and from Caraga to the River Hijo in the Bay of Tagaloc to the Spaniards. On June 24, 1645, Kudarat and the other rulers of the River Delta together with Alejandro López and Governor Atienza signed the conclusive peace treaty.[71] The treaty defined the new frontiers and contained a guarantee to keep the peace. It assured mutual assistance in conflict situations and enabled commerce between both realms. In addition, it stated that freedom of religion was to be implemented in Mindanao (also for former Muslim renegades) and that there should be a house, a church, and a priest of the Jesuits in Simuay, who was allowed to spread the Christian faith ("persuadir publicamente") and to ransom Christian slaves at a fixed price.[72]

[70] According to Pablo Pastells, SJ, "Tiruley" is a malapropism of the title "future raja." Ibid., 738–739.

[71] While Jesuit hagiographies remember these details well, they did not seem to have played a major role in the career of Francisco de Atienza Ibáñez. In the consideration of his services for the Spanish king, it was rather the battles that were in the foreground not so much the peace negotiations. AGI Filipinas 49, N. 68, Confirmación de encomienda de Dalaguete, etc (6/6/1647); 50, N. 17, Confirmación de encomienda de Libmanan etc. (16/10/1649); 347, L. 3, fols. 168v-170v, Confirmación de encomienda a Francisco de Atienza Ibáñez (27/6/1647), 269v–271v, Confirmación de encomienda a Francisco de Atienza Ibáñez (2/11/1649).

[72] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 425-433; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 149, 242r-243r; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 426-437.

Precisely during that time, the Dutch, who were eager to establish commercial bonds with the Sulu, were called upon by the rebellious Sulu Prince Salikala (Sarikula) and attacked the three Spanish forts in Jolo. After three days, however, the Sulu troops felt back – not without stealing some Dutch artillery – and the Dutch decided to withdraw. Yet, the Spanish also had suffered many losses and were in no position to repel another possible Dutch attack. Hence, the governor-general in Manila decided to recall his troops and abandon the garrisons in Jolo. Before doing so, though, a peace agreement should settle the situation and ensure clear relations between both polities. Governor-General Fajardo asked Father López to supervise the diplomatic negotiations and ordered the Zamboanga officers to accord their actions with Father López, to secure the peace. Sultan Kudarat of Maguindanao was very supportive in that matter and sent his messengers to López with a letter for the Sulu, full of recommendations for the Jesuit father. The Mindanao emissaries consisted of Kudarat's nephew and the admiral of his fleet, which gave much emphasis to López' mission. With Kudarat´s support and much confidence, Father López told the Spaniards to withdraw their troops from Jolo. Then he went right away to see Sultan Bungsu of Sulu with only three Spanish officers and the Maguindanao envois. Seeing so few Spaniards, the Dutch ships drew nearer and the Sulu got suspicious and fled to the hinterland. López ascended the mountains and managed to persuade the sultan to come back and negotiate with Governor Atienza. When the Dutch arrived a little later, the Sulu sent them away and on April 14, 1646, the peace treaty between Spain and Sulu was signed by all involved parties. The articles were similar to those of the treaty with Kudarat and included peace, mutual assistance, and agreements regarding the punishment of lawbreakers. Besides, once a year, the Sulu armada should accompany the Zamboanga fleet to hunt for Camucones and other "pyratas" that raided the Philippine Islands. Moreover, there should be freedom of religion in the Sulu realm and the Jesuits were allowed to proselytize and ransom Christian captives.[73] With this agreement the Dutch influence was broken in Jolo. After the completion of the treaty, according to Combés' report, López was celebrated by all and especially by the envois from Mindanao who alleged that "a priest is worth more than any Spaniard. He has achieved in one day what the Spaniards had not been able to do in many years. His skills are worth more than all the force of the Spaniards."[74]

In the following period the situation in the south of the Philippines developed rather peacefully. Sultan Kudarat was able to expand his power to unprecedented dimensions. Militarily, he was at peace with Spain and had the support of the other rulers of the Pulangi River Delta, the sultanates of Sulu and Brunei, and even of the

[73] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 433-447; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 149v-150v, 243; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 437-438.

[74] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 442. Once more, the hagiographic program of Combés' texts is clearly visible, styling López as a Jesuit hero and an exemplary missionary.

Dutch. When in 1649, skirmishes broke out at the eastern border with the Spanish troops from Caraga, López visited Kudarat at his court and was able to smoother the waves and renew the peace. In the course of this visit, López started proselytizing again, much to the displeasure of the *datus* and *panditas*. Nevertheless, he was able to baptize Kudarat's second son (who would not live long) and one of his most important ministers, Orangkaya Ugbo, who later would become commander of the Lutao troops in the Spanish service.[75]

By 1655, the situation became again very tense and rumors spread that Kudarat was about to break the alliance with the Spaniards. In this situation, Kudarat sent an ambassador called Bauna (or Banua) to Manila. Bauna was a slave and as such already an affront to diplomacy – ambassadors of Mindanao were customary of the highest aristocracy or even family members of the sultan. In addition, the citizens in Manila were convinced that Bauna, who was very aggressive and little diplomatic, was more of a spy for Kudarat than his ambassador. As the number of Spanish troops was extremely low in Manila at that time, this was considered particularly delicate, as Kudarat would promptly know of the low military potential of the Spaniards to prevent or counter any raids. Moreover, the conditions that Bauna presented for the prolongation of peace were strangely demanding and very unrealistic – constituting a prelude to the coming aggravation of the relations. In reaction to Bauna's mission, Governor-General Manrique de Lara sent Alejandro López with a letter and presents to Kudarat, to set things straight and get back to a feasible path to maintain the peace.

Alejandro López, who in 1653 had returned to Manila and become secretary of the Jesuit provincial, living in the province of San Pedro Macati, was petitioned again to carry out the peace mission and he accepted happily. However, this time, his personal agenda was more serious than usual, as he was eager to thoroughly remind Kudarat of the first peace treaty of 1645 and of his commitment to build a mission house and a church in Simuay, the heart of the Maguindanao sultanate. For that purpose, he asked Juan de Montiel, a Jesuit from Naples of about twenty-five years, to accompanied him, to become the first permanent missionary in the Maguindanao realm.[76]

When the two Jesuits arrived on three *joangas* with some troops under Captain Claudio de Ribera, Bauna had already made land. In contrast to previous encounters, their reception was extremely frosty. At first, Kudarat did not even want to see them but only to be given the letters. Only after they insisted, they were invited

[75] Ibid., 483; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 151v, 153r, 224r-v; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 441.

[76] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 531-542; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 234r-235r, 245r; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 441-443. For the life of Juan de Montiel, see Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 564-569; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 247v-249r.

to appear before the sultan. The meeting went probably not as López had hoped for. Three points were dominant: firstly, the complaint of the governor-general against the lowly status and bad behavior of Bauna; secondly, Kudarat's unrealistic demands to restitute long forgotten canons and slaves; and thirdly, the unfulfilled commitment from 1645 to build a church for the Jesuits. To put emphasis on the issue of the church, López read the exact words from the governor-general's letter that he would "unleash his bloodthirsty lions" to drown everything in "fire and blood."[77] Kudarat was clearly not pleased by such threatening words, which did not reflect at all the position of power in which Kudarat (not mistakenly) perceived himself to be in. López managed somehow to appease the sultan's anger, only to upset him anew when he proclaimed that Kudarat, "at the end of his life," should strongly consider getting baptized by him. That statement, however, was the straw that broke the camel's back. Enraged, Kudarat threw his fan at López and if it was not for the presence of the sultana, he would have assaulted the Jesuit that instance. Giving away his dagger (*kris*), as a sign of masculinity, to refrain his anger, he asked the father to change the subject if he valued his life. To that, López answered that he was prepared to be a martyr. When Kudarat thereupon asked if he had come as a martyr or an ambassador, López replied that "the true faith" was the central concern of his mission and that, accordingly, he was prepared to go to extremes. Thus, the Spanish emissaries were seen off. López, however, did not leave the court immediately, despite many warnings of his Lutao friends, but held on to the hope of still convincing Kudarat in regard to peace and faith. Some days later, on December 13, 1655, he was actually invited to see the sultana, who was known to be a pious lady. However, the invitation turned out to be an ambush by Balatamay, the ruler of Buayan and a nephew of Kudarat – who most likely was acting on behalf of his uncle. Alejandro López, Juan de Montiel, and most people of their escort were slain that day.[78]

In the aftermath of the massacre of the Spanish embassy, Kudarat, initiated a lively letter correspondence, in which he called the neighboring sultanates of Ternate, Tidore, Makassar, and Sulu to arms, invoking a jihad against the Spaniards. He justified his actions and the call for arms with the threat that the Spaniards posed for them and their faith, because they would not rest until all Muslims in that part of the world were baptized. At the same time, Kudarat wrote a conciliating letter to the governor of Zamboanga, stating that the massacre was Balatamay's doing, who was too powerful to be punished. In another letter, directed at Governor-General Manrique de Lara, he blamed Father López for the events, for having overstepped the etiquette. Kudarat admitted to have violated the privileges of an ambassador, however, he blamed the Spanish troops in Caraga to have started hostilities when, in

[77] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 544; Ana M. Prieto Lucena, *Filipinas durante el gobierno de Manrique de Lara, 1653-1663* (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1984), 107-116.

[78] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 543-549; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 235r.

1649, they had infringed of the peace treaty. All in all, Kudarat pretended to be in a well-balanced equilibrium of wrongdoings and asked for the restoration of the former peaceful conditions. Manrique de Lara – short of troops for an adequate military response – consented. In reality, however, both stalled for time and prepared for war.[79] Hence, with the death of ambassador-missionary Alejandro López, the peace between the Maguindanao and the Spaniards ended, and soon open war broke out – officially declared by Manrique de Lara on December 2, 1656 – in which the Sulu joined the Maguindanao. As Horacio de la Costa puts it: "After an uneasy existence of a decade, the treaty system that Alejandro López had built up died with him."[80]

Reviewing the 1655 failure: Diverging interests of Spaniards and Jesuits

Jesuit missionaries were educated men, well versed in local languages, insightful of many native customs, and well aware of the needs and anxieties of the Spaniards in the Philippines. Moreover, they were typically men of peace and held in respect by Spaniards, natives, and also by the Muslims leaders, who had a high opinion of them.[81] Hence, they seemed to be the ideal delegates to represent the Spaniards in their negotiations with the sultans. The Jesuit chronicler Francisco Combés, who is an important source for many of the events above, made it very clear that in his view, the tasks as missionary and ambassador were fully compatible.[82] Most likely, the majority of his contemporaries shared that opinion.

However, the tragic end of Ambassador López and the outbreak of war after his death show that the interests of the Spanish colonial government and of the Jesuits in Mindanao were not always aligned. In spite of the harsh words of his letter, Governor-General Manrique de Lara did probably not intent to infuriate Kudarat and destabilize the mutual relation even more, but indeed to reestablish the peace. This seems even more plausible, considering that the number of Spanish troops was rather low during these years and a peaceful relation with the Dutch – even after the end of the Eighty Year's War in 1648 – was far from certain in Southeast Asia. The Jesuits, on the other hand, saw their opportunity to finally extend their influence on Mindanao and start proselytization not only among the natives at the periphery of the sultan's realm but also in its center. Already in 1646, in recognition of López services during the negotiations with the Sulu, Governor-General Fajardo had given

[79] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 569; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 236r; José Montero y Vidal, *Historia de la piratería malayo-mahometana en Mindanao, Jolo y Borneo: Comprende desde el descubrimiento de dichas islas hasta junio de 1888* (Madrid: Imprenta y Fundición Manuel Tello, 1888), vol. 1, 236.

[80] Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 443.

[81] For a recent gender-based approach on Jesuits in the Pacific world, see Ulrike Strasser, *Missionary Men in the Early Modern World: German Jesuits and Pacific Journeys* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2020)

[82] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 546.

permission to add six more Jesuit priests to the Zamboanga residence.[83] Five years later, during a trip to Manila, López proposed to the congregated Jesuit fathers in Manila to take a further step and establish an episcopal See in Zamboanga, to spread the faith among the Muslims. While at that time the proposal was rejected, this vision was probably at the back of López' mind when he came to Kudarat's court in 1655.[84]

It is not very likely that the construction of a church and the establishment of a mission in Simuay were on top of the list of Governor-General Manrique de Lara. Nevertheless, in the report on the fateful audience, these were the points López stressed the most. And while a baptized sultan in Simuay would have certainly been of benefit also for the governor-general, at that time, it was probably clear to most in Manila that the political constellation in the Great River Delta would have never allowed for it. After all, the sultan was rather a *primus inter pares* than a sovereign in the European sense, which means that he was dependent on the goodwill of the other *datus*.[85] Hence, it is very unlikely that López' strong stance and the insistence on old promises were fully backed by the Manila government or aligned with its geopolitical strategies.[86] It cannot be said with certainty, if López was following orders from the Provincial Miguel Solana (r. 1654-1658) in Manila but considering his personal engagement in the missionary growth in Mindanao (which had been slowed down in 1651 by the Jesuit congregation), it is more probable that his firmness in matters of religion and conversion was a rather personal initiative, against the backdrop of overarching expansionist visions of the Society of Jesus in general.[87] Overall, one might see this discrepancy in line with the growing gap that emerged on a global level between the Jesuit missionary endeavor and the colonial objectives of the European empires. As pointed out above, both viewpoints were initially much aligned but as time passed, each side developed particular interests and was less willing to agree on compromises.[88]

[83] The sources are not clear if the number of Jesuits priest was increased to six (Murillo Velarde) or if six were added to the residence of Zamboanga (Combés).

[84] Ibid., 465; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la provincia de Philipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 151v; Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines*, 439-441.

[85] The top-down approach was a dominant missionary approach of the Jesuit order in the 17th century (Vincin and Clulow, "Jesuit Diplomacy"; Wright, *God's Soldiers*, 91). In the Philippines, this tactic was never really successful (Eberhard Crailsheim, "The Baptism of Sultan Azim ud-Din of Sulu: Festivities for the Consolidation of Spanish Power in the Philippines in the Middle of the Eighteenth Century", in *Image-Object-Performance: Mediality and Communication in Cultural Contact Zones of Colonial Latin America and the Philippines*, eds. Astrid Windus and Eberhard Crailsheim (Munster: Waxmann, 2013)), however, it helps to explain López' actions.

[86] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 570-571.

[87] The geopolitical considerations of the superior general in Rome cannot be addressed here, however, it can be pointed out that the middle of the 17th century saw a crisis of the Portuguese Jesuits in Asia and America (party caused by their conflicts with the Dutch and Japanese), while at the same time, the French Jesuits launched a massive missionary offensive in the Caribbean. Friedrich, *Die Jesuiten*, especially, 400, 408, 429.

[88] Ibid., 438–439.

The failure of López' mission is possibly partly due to his inappropriate diplomatic approach, based on a cultural incommensurability.[89] Cesar Majul is of the opinion that the courtesy which Kudarat showed towards all *panditas*, including Christians missionaries, were interpreted by the Jesuits as a sign of personal friendship, resulting in a distorted view and an all too direct advance by López.[90] Another explanation might be that López purposely aimed so high with his tactic to either yield great results or indeed become a martyr. In that regard, Alejandro Cañeque has pointed out that it was just during these years that the Jesuit order developed a mentality of martyrs, which formerly had been absent.[91] In any case, López was well aware that he was walking on thin ice. In a conversation with Francisco Combés in Cebu, on his way to Kudarat's court, López, repeatedly remarked that the words in Manrique de Lara's letter were too strong for the sultan's disposition. He, hence, mitigated them considerably in the Visayan version that he intended to present to the sultan.[92] Still, knowingly or not, in Simuay, López crossed the line which separates success from utter diplomatic failure.

In regard to Manrique de Lara's desire for a peaceful cohabitation with the Maguindanao, Kudarat's decision to go to war had been made long before López' arrival at the Great River Delta. In spite of clear restrictions on Dutch trade with Mindanao – clear at least from a Spanish perspective –, set out in the Treaty of Munster, Kudarat had invited the Dutch to intensify commercial relations in 1653 and welcomed them warmly, provoking a stern Spanish disapproval.[93] In 1654, Kudarat even sent 400 warriors to the Maluku Islands to directly assist the Dutch and the sultan of Ternate against the Spaniards. Whatever prompted Kudarat to take such an offensive stand one cannot say with certainty but after 1655, "religion" (the defense of the Muslim faith against Spanish missionary efforts) was taken as main pretense and even became the beacon for the other sultans to unite in the war against Spain – with the Dutch joining in happily to defend their "free trade."[94]

[89] Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Courtly Encounters: Translating Courtliness and Violence in Early Modern Eurasia* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Press, 2012), 1–33.

[90] Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 172–174.

[91] Alejandro Cañeque, "Mártires y discurso martirial en la formación de las fronteras misionales jesuitas," *Relaciones* 145 (2016), 28. There were also other Jesuit martyrs in Mindanao during these years. Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines,* 440; Andrade, *Varones ilustres en santidad, letras y zelo de las almas de la Compañía de Jesús*.

[92] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 545.

[93] In the unstable context of a delicate peace with the Dutch, which, in principal, allowed for mutual trade, the Jesuits in the South oftentimes acted as spies for the Manila government. Coello de la Rosa, "No es esta tierra para tibios," 56.

[94] Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló,* 546, 569; Montero y Vidal, *Historia de la piratería malayo-mahometana en Mindanao, Jolo y Borneo*, vol. 1, 236; Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 174; Ruurdje Laarhoven, *Triumph of the Moro Diplomacy: The Maguindanao Sultanate in the 17th Century* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1989), 46-49.

Conclusions

A large overlap existed between the interests of the Jesuits and those of the Spanish colonial government. However, as this article has shown by looking closely at three different periods of diplomatic encounters, at times, there was also a divergence in the priorities. In particular, when Father López, during his audience with Sultan Kudarat, adamantly insisted on the construction of a church in Simuay, the geopolitical objectives were not fully aligned with Governor-General Manrique de Lara, who wanted, above all, peace. The overarching worry of the government in Manila in the 17th century was not the permanent attacks of the raiders or any possible imperialist Muslim designs, but to fall prey to Dutch schemes and VOC offensives. The attitude of the governor-generals in Manila reflect much more the geopolitical concerns at the Spanish court than that of the missionaries in the frontier zones of Mindanao and the Visayas. The skirmishes with the raiders were only of secondary importance to Madrid and Manila. The Jesuits, on the other hand, were mainly concerned with their expansionistic proselytization plans, which led them south. With Japan being less and less open to Christian proselytization (in particular since the 1630s) and China being in the hands of the Portuguese Jesuits, the missionary province of the Philippines could basically only expand southwards, at the expense of their Muslim neighbors.

The three missionaries Melchor Hurtado, Pedro Gutiérrez, and Alejandro López showed a series of similarities in their behavior and their approach to Muslim polities in the Southern Philippines, which are based on their diplomatic activities. They were held in high esteem by Spaniards and Muslims alike, and the leaders of both polities approached them to lead the negotiations for the Spaniards. All three worked closely together with the Spanish military, which provided the necessary infrastructure, protective power, and transportation capacities for the diplomatic endeavor. All three had to fight with glitches in the communication – be it with the Muslim or even with the Spaniards – which made them lose their authority, the negotiations, or even their lives. While Hurtado was still only involved with the proselytization of the natives from the Visayas, Gutiérrez and López were stationed in Mindanao and actively approached the natives in the frontier regions, including Muslims. The intense contact with these natives would be useful also in their dealing with the Muslim polities – be it as auxiliary troops, as escorts, or as transmitters and translators of information. Finally, all analyzed Jesuits unite the three approaches to Muslims mentioned at the beginning. They supported the military advancement to push back Muslim influence, they spread the gospel at the fringes of the sultanates, and they attempted to convert the political elite or at least put it at ease. Yet, each of them put his emphasis on a different aspect. Melchor Hurtado mainly supported the military pressure against the Muslims to protect his flock, Pedro Gutiérrez was

above all proselytizing the Muslim periphery, and Alejandro López most directly approached the Muslim elite for the top-down advance.

In most cases, the overlap of interests between the Spaniards and their Jesuit intermediaries contributed to a successful collaboration, beneficial to both. The depicted differences in their grand strategies, however, caused tensions, which contributed, at times, to diplomatic failures for the Spaniards or setbacks for the Jesuit proselytization efforts. When in 1663, the governor-general decided to withdraw almost all military units from the south, due to strategic considerations based on a Chinese threat scenario,[95] the Jesuits were thrown back in their endeavor to grow and left alone with their expansionist dreams for half a century. Only in 1718, the interests of the Jesuit order and the colonial government would align again and both would venture back to their old posts in Mindanao. PS

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[95] In that confrontation with the Chinese, it was not a Jesuit but a Dominican missionary, Vittorio Ricci, who served as envoi. Prieto Lucena, *Filipinas durante el gobierno de Manrique de Lara*, 123-124, 138-140; Charles J. McCarthy, SJ, "On the Koxinga Threat of 1662," *Philippine Studies* 18/1 (1970).

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