

Ethnographical Description of the inhabitants of Batanes Islands in 1784

Introduction

A bit of Geography and History. — The archipelago of Batanes lies north of the Babuyan Islands between 20° and 21° north latitude. These two groups of islands are separated by the channel of Balintang, and all together form, extending from south to north, something like a chain that links the northern coast of Cagayan with the southern shores of Taiwan.

The Batanes group consists of three main islands: Basay or Batan, Sabtang (formerly called Seminanga) and Itbayat, totalling, all together, an area of approximately two hundred square kilometers.

The Ivatans — as their inhabitants are named - have a language of their own, different from the one spoken in Cagayan and the Babuyanes.

Although not the largest one, Basay is the main island of the group, having Basco as its capital, and on its northernmost tip there rises a high mountain covered all over with thick vegetation and often with fog, too. The rest of the terrain is hilly, and broken at intervals by narrow valleys fit for cultivation.

The towns of Basay are four; the already mentioned Basco, which is located at the foot of Mount Iraya, towards the northwest; Mahatao, about the center; Ivana, south of Mahatao and like it, facing the China Sea; and finally Uyugan, the southernmost and the smallest of them all.

Southwest of Basay and quite close to the town of Ivana, there lies the island of Sabtang, with one municipality and three barrios; and farther west that of Ibujos, which is practically uninhabited and serves the purpose of cattle-raising.

Itbayat is situated north of the island of Batan, at a distance of twenty-five kilometers and is the largest of the group. Seen from afar, it looks like a cliffy plateau, as in reality it is, with its coasts rising thirty

meters high all the way around above the sea and, as a result, it does not present any suitable beach or cove for the anchorage of boats, no matter how small. Somebody has compared the whole island to a cheese floating above the water and, like some cheese cakes, perforated all over by a number of underground caves, one of which crosses the island from one extreme to the other, while several others reach only as far as its center.

This island offers better soil conditions than the others for agricultural purposes and abounds in good forests, from which good timber for constructions may easily be obtained. In spite of these advantages, its population has been below that of the other two islands.

North of Itbayat and close to parallel 21°, there lies another island, named Yami and inhabited by still unconverted people, who, even though speaking the same language as the rest of the Ivatans, have little or no communication with them.

Let us now give a brief account of how the light of the Gospel reached the Batanes islands.

It is a well-known fact that the Dominican Fathers arrived in the Philippines in 1587 and that from their Convent of Santo Domingo de Manila they fanned out to those provinces whose conversion to the Christian faith had fallen to their lot. These provinces were: Bataan, Pangasinan, and Cagayan in the 16th century; Nueva Vizcaya and the Babuyan Islands in the 17th; and in the 18th Isabela and Batanes. By way of exception and for a briefer period of time, they also ministered in Zambales, La Union, and in some towns of the Visayas, Cavite and Laguna de Bay.

From Cagayan, where they arrived in 1594, the Dominicans jumped into the Babuyan Islands in 1618; and from here, in the passing of the years, they made three unsuccessful attempts to establish themselves in Batanes, that is, in 1686, 1719 and 1754. Finally (in 1783) with the King's blessing and the generous financial and military backing of the Manila Government, they were able to gain a permanent foothold in these islands, and in them they were to stay, save for a brief interruption during the Philippine Revolution (1898-1900), until the present times.

Attempt of 1686 — The saintly and zealous Father Mateo González, having been appointed Vicar of Babuyan in 1680, soon learned from traders that beyond the sea towards the north, there lay a group of islands, whose inhabitants had never been visited before by the heralds of the Gospel; and, impelled by his apostolic zeal, he decided

to visit them himself. And so, in 1686 he personally requested Father Provincial in Manila for permission and assistance to make his dream a reality. Accompanied by three Religious, he went back to Babuyanes, from where, after leaving two of them for the spiritual ministration of the islanders, he proceeded with the third, Father Diego Piñero, to Batanes. They were warmly welcomed by its natives, who manifested in several ways their willingness — even eagerness — to embrace the Christian faith. The trip, however, was only exploratory and for the purpose of finding out the possibilities of establishing a permanent mission.

With this end in view, Father González made a second trip to Manila. He needed more personnel, provisions and beads. As a result of his favorable report, the Provincial Chapter in 1688, approved the idea and even assigned one more priest for the undertaking. His name was Father Juan Rois, a former missionary in Zambales.

Having arrived in Batanes, the two with the aid of Father Piñero, who by this time was quite conversant in the language of the natives, began in earnest the work of conversion. "But," as an early chronicler writes, "whether it was due to the intemperate climate or to the little care the Fathers took of themselves, paying scant attention to either sun, rain or water," the fact was that after two months of their arrival, Frs. González and Rois died and Father Piñero, finding himself alone for a second time, returned to Cagayan, not without promising the Ivatans that he would return with some companions, and not without leaving with them as a pledge his personal belongings. However, the scarcity of personnel that was felt everywhere in its Missions, prevented the province of Our Lady of the Rosary from providing at that time for the spiritual needs of the Batanes people, and thirty years had to pass before the promise of Father Piñero could be fulfilled.¹

Second attempt in 1719—This time it was Father Juan Bel, Vicar of the Babuyan mission who, spurred by his apostolic zeal, tried to spread the Good News among the almost forgotten Ivatans and, as a consequence, in 1719 he made an excursion to their islands, disembarking in Ivana, where he was enthusiastically received by its inhabitants.

¹Vicente de Salazar, *Historia de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario de Filipinas*, Manila: Collegii Sancti Thomae, 1742, p. 525; Hilario Ma. Ocio, *Monumento Dominicano*, MS in APSR (Archives of the Province of our Lady of the Rosary), Section "Ministerios," Vol. I, pp. 141-143.

From here he proceeded to Sabtang, being welcomed by the Sabteños with similar proofs of affection.

In the small island of Ibujos, which he visited afterwards, he was overtaken by a delegation sent by the chiefs of Mahatao and Manañioy,² in Basay, requesting him to visit their places also.

Deeply impressed at seeing the excellent dispositions of the Ivatans towards Christianity, he sailed for Manila to plead before his Superiors the re-establishment of the Batanes mission. And that his pleadings did not fall on deaf ears was shown by the fact that the Provincial Chapter of 1720 assigned five priests and one brother to take charge of both Babuyanes and Batanes. The five priests, besides Father Bel, were: Frs. Vicente Riesgo, Tomás Fernández, Alonso Amado, Francisco Mejía and José de Jesús. After entrusting the flock of the Babuyan Islands to the other three, Father Bel proceeded to Batanes with Father Amado as his socius, setting foot this time in Mahatao.

In 1721 Frs. Francisco Mejía and José de Jesús went over from Babuyanes to Batanes. About this time there was a plan afoot to transfer some Ivatans to Calayan and, for this reason, when departing for Manila in order to attend as Vicar the sessions of the Provincial Chapter, Father Bel took along Father José de Jesús with the end in view of leaving him in Calayan in charge of the projected settlement.³

Those who stayed behind had also to leave soon after due to a powerful typhoon which had wreaked destruction on the crops and brought untold misery upon the wretched islanders. Father Amado arrived safely in Calayan, while Father Mejía and the brother, on the other hand, who sailed in another boat with twenty-eight Ivatans, ran into a strong typhoon off the coast of the island, all perishing except two.

²Ocio, *Op. cit.*, pp. 122, 143-146.

³Father José de Jesús founded in Calayan the mission station of San Juan Bautista, which was accepted by the Provincial Chapter of 1722. However, in 1724 it was decided to transfer all the Babuyans and Ivatans then residing in the island to Cagayan, and, as a result, the mission was closed. Re-established in 1754, as stated in the text, it lasted for only two years, due to the death of two of the missionaries. In the year 1873, the zealous missionary of Batanes, Fr. Crescencio Polo, started to visit Calayan where he built a church under the advocacy of San Bartolomé. It was provisionally approved by a Royal decree in 26 February 1885, due to the insistent requests of Father Polo — who perished in one of his trips from Itbayat to Calayan — and *in perpetuum* by another Royal decree dated 27 November 1896. The province of Our Lady of the Rosary had appointed as its missionary Fr. León Yague in the same year. All came to an abrupt end due to the Philippine Revolution, and the mission was not to be restored again until 1951 (Cfr. Ocio, pp. 140-141).

In view of the famine then prevailing in Batanes, and the remoteness and difficult accessibility of these islands, Father Bel conceived the idea of settling in Calayan as many Ivatans as were willing to transfer there, thus eventually improving their living conditions and sparing, besides, the missionaries the troubles of living in a mortiferous climate and in the midst of countless hardships and privations.

Taking into account the limited resources of the province of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, the realization of such grandiose plan was clearly beyond its reach and, consequently, it turned its eyes to the civil authorities in quest for the needed permission and financial assistance. In answer to its request, the King granted in 1728 a subsidy of 5,398 pesos to be charged against the treasury of the Vice Royalty of Mexico.

On the other hand, since the climate of Calayan had time and again proven so inimical to the health and life of missionaries and natives alike, the Dominican Provincial requested the Government of the Islands to approve the transfer of the settlement from Calayan to Cagayan, using the King's money for this purpose. The petition having been granted, all the authorities concerned began to work feverishly on the transfer, not only of the colony of Calayan, but of all the people in Fuga, to a site opposite Camalaniugan, on the left bank of the Ibanag river, called Babayuan (1741).⁴

But it so happened that this praiseworthy project, started under the best auspices, ended in an almost total failure, for the colonists, not finding the new place very much to their liking, began to scatter in all directions. Some moved to other towns of the Cagayan Province; others migrated to Ilocos and the remainder began to return slowly and stealthily to Babuyan. The Dominican mission in the islands was not reopened until the closing years of the 19th century, and this time not in Fuga, where it was before, but in Calayan.⁵

Third attempt (1754-1756) — In 1754, the government agreed to approve the yearly stipends of two missionaries stationed at Calayan to

⁴For details about the transfer of the Babuyans of Fuga to Cagayan, cfr.: APSR, MSS, Section "Cagayan," Vol. 14, Doc. 15.

⁵The mission of Fuga, abandoned in 1741, has not yet been restored, and only the ruins of its ancient stone church remain to this day as a reminder of its glorious past.

attend to the spiritual care of the Batanes. These were Frs. Vicente García and Joaquín Martín. Soon, the latter died, although he was strong and young, because of the unhealthy climate. In view of this, Father Raimundo Favón volunteered to help and relieve the two missionaries.

Sometime later, Fr. Vicente García returned, on orders of the Provincial Superior, to Calayan, to help Father Favón who had fallen sick, and to collect the latter's belongings if he had died. At this instant, Fr. José Tomás Marín bravely risked his life to help his brothers at Calayan. To this effect, he sailed on a rickety boat on 15 February 1756 for Calayan. There he learned that Fr. Favón, already cured, was returning to Cagayan, and in view of this he followed him a few days later. The people of Batanes who were living in Calayan, however, went back to their home island, or transferred to Cagayan, where they founded a small town near Cape Engaño.

At that time the Dominicans had no further plans to work and sacrifice themselves for the Batanes Mission, despite the interest of Fr. Marín, the desires of the government and an express order of the Master General dated 13 December 1757, which forbade the abandoning of the Batanes Mission without his express licence. So much sacrifice, notwithstanding, for the conversion of those people could not be fruitless. And so, we shall now see the felicitous success of a last attempt to evangelize them.⁶

The start of the Mission — In a report dated 1771, the Provincial council of Manila petitioned the king, Charles III, to aid the Dominicans as they undertook once more the conversion of the Batanes Islands.⁷ Thus, on royal mandate, the Government of the Philippines and the Royal Treasury discussed the matter and took the proper means to collect the needed revenue. At the same time, His Majesty ordered the Provincial, Fr. Manuel Gutiérrez, to assign two friars to start the mission. But, when a few years later the government advised Fr. Cristobal Rodríguez, then Provincial, that the documents for the evangelization of the Batanes were already properly processed, the

⁶Here are the words of the Master General: . . . *Illas a Provincia deseri aut relinquere non possint ullo tempore sine praevia ac speciali nostra vel successorum nostrorum licentia.* . . . "They (i.e. the Batanes missions) can never be abandoned or relinquished by the Province (i.e. the province of Our Lady of the Rosary) without the previous and special permission of Ours or of our successors" (Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section "Maestros Generales," Vol. 3, Folder 4, p. 376).

⁷Cfr. "The Ivatan Mission" in *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. XVIII, No. 53, May-August 1983, p. 224, footnote 27.

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missionaries assigned to the mission had already undertaken other ministries. Undaunted, Fr. Rodríguez issued a circular to all the missionaries in the Philippines, asking for volunteers for the Batanes Mission.

He chose, of those who presented themselves, two men of solid virtue, Fr. Baltasar Fernández Calderón, minister of Asingan, Pangasinan, and Fr. Bartolomé Artíguez, pastor of Aringay, Ilocos (now La Union).

The two left for Batanes in 1783. After a few months spent in learning the local dialect, they began to preach the Gospel, giving new life to many, through the waters of Baptism, and grouping together in bigger and better organized towns the people who till then had been living in small ranches. From the very first, they strenuously sought to to extirpate, before admitting the adults to Baptism, the vices especially of drunkenness and divorce as far as it was humanly possible.

With the new Christians they successively founded the towns of Basco and Ivana in the island of Basay, which the Provincial Chapter of 1794 accepted as ministries of the Order, and two years later that of Mahatao in the same island.⁸

PABLO FERNANDEZ, O. P.

University of Santo Tomas

Manila

⁸Joaquín Fonseca, O.P., *Historia de los PP. Dominicos en las Islas Filipinas y en sus misiones de Japón, China, Tung-Kin y Formosa*, Madrid, Estereotipia de M. Rivadeneira, 1871, Vol. V, pp. 229-236; See also: Julio González, O.P., "The Batanes Islands," in *Acta Manilana*, June 1966, No. 2, pp. 1-37.

In order to round off the above-given ethnographical description we thought it fit to offer to our readers the following notes extracted from an old manuscript: "The soil for the most part is very good and produces whatever is sown in it, but the typhoons by constantly blowing over it, allow only the growth of tubers, and these not always in abundance. Few are the years in which famine is not felt, and this happens in those years when the storms do not blow in full fury.

"The native's temperament is gentle and quiet, and never or rarely are they seen quarrelling in a very angry tone or coming to blows, even if they happen to be very drunk. They are very talented, and in some one can easily detect a superior intellectual ability. As rule, they easily grasp what is taught to them, showing, besides, a skill for the arts, specially for music and painting.

"Neither are they too steeped in their vices. The most common ones are drunkenness and incontinence; the first one is only found in the chiefs and not in excess, for one sees rarely anyone drunk to the point of losing consciousness, and there are a few who seldom drink the beverage fermented from sugar cane juice.

"As far as incontinence is concerned — a vice quite widespread in the Indies — I shall not say that it is a rarity in Batanes, but, as a rule, married couples who have children, are no longer its victims, and they endeavour to observe mutual fidelity. Seldom are they a source of scandals, since they are cautious and know how to hide their lapses."

(Tomás Sánchez, O.P., "Descripción de las islas de Ibatan o Basay, y la del Santísimo Rosario de Itbayat, con sus adyacentes." Cfr. APSR, MSS, Section of "Batanes," Vol. 13 pp. 188-190). For some additional data on the Ethnography of the Ivatans, see: Frs. Francisco Fernández y Francisco de Paula Esteban, O.P., "Conquista espiritual y temporal de Batanes," in APSR, MSS, "Batanes," Vol. I, Doc. 26, fols. 1-14.

Descripción Etnográfica

de los habitantes de Batanes en 1794,
por el P. Fr. Baltasar Calderón, O.P.
(noviembre, 1783, marzo 2 de 1784 y marzo 25 de 1784)

M.R.P. Provincial de la Provincia del Smo. Rosario,

Fr. Calderón Rodríguez:

M.R.P.N.

Me alegraré goce de perfecta y cabal salud; yo me hallo bien, a Dios gracias, y así mi compañero.

Por la que escribí recién llegado a estas islas quedaría V. R. enterado del estado bien trabajoso en que quedábamos, y cuán distinto era lo que se hablaba allá de lo que encontramos acá; pues, pensado encontrar unos indígenas muy dóciles, como se decía comúnmente, hallamos ser muy al contrario, como verá por la dicha, y verá mejor por lo que se dirá en esta.

Para dar alguna noticia de todo, diré aquí alguna cosa de la tierra, su gente y sus costumbres.

Son cuatro islas; la más principal es la de Batan que tendrá como ocho leguas a lo largo, y tres cuartos de legua a lo ancho; se entiende para andarlas, aunque por el aire puede que no llegue a seis leguas de largo y media de ancho, porque es tierra toda montuosa, de altibajos y lomas, a excepción de una cañada que hay desde este pueblo de Basay hasta la contracosta, y per dichas lomas es más tierra de lo que parece.

Tiene esta isla como gentío de tres mil tributos, para el cual gentío hay sobrada tierra; era tanto el gentío que tenía ahora como cinco años

Ethnografical Description

by Fr. Baltazar Calderón, O.P.

(November 1783, March 2 of 1784 and March 25 of 1784)

The Very Reverend Father Cristóbal Rodríguez, Provincial of the Province of the Most Holy Rosary:

Most Reverend Father:

I shall feel happy if Your Reverence would enjoy a perfect and complete health; I find myself in good shape, thanks be to God, and so is also my companion.

Through the letter that I wrote to Your Reverence when I was newly arrived in these Islands, Your Reverence is surely well informed about the laborious condition in which we found ourselves, and of how different was what was being reported over there from what we found here. We had expected to meet very docile natives, as commonly reported, but we soon realized that it was just the opposite, as Your Reverence may have seen through the said letter, and may still better see from what I shall report in this one.

In order to furnish Your Reverence with a fair account of everything, I shall jot down here something about the land, its people and their customs.

The islands are four: the main one is Batan, which may measure about eight leagues in length and three fourths of a league in width. This is to be understood in terms of walking distance, since in straight line the measurements may not exceed six leagues in length and a half a league in width, inasmuch as this terrain is very hilly with its ups and downs, excepting a narrow valley, which runs from this town of Basco as far as the *contracosta* (i.e. the opposite coast of the island), its hilly terrain being more extensive than what it appears at first sight.

The island has a population of about three thousand tributes, and for it there is enough land. So numerous was the population that it had

que no cabían ya en la isla ni tenían tierra suficiente para su cementerio y así andaban muy alcanzados. Este gentío se minoró por las viruelas que hubo cinco años ha, en tan excesivo número que dicen ellos que fue más la gente que murió que la que quedó; y, según las cuentas que ellos echan, parece ser así, porque dicen que muchas casas quedaron todas desocupadas de gente; en otras, si había diez personas, bueno si quedaban tres o cuatro; y, en donde había cinco, bueno si quedaban dos.

Estas viruelas tuvieron mucho en qué se cebar porque, según parece, había muchos años que no las había habido y sólo algunos viejos las habían tenido.

Este gentío está repartido por toda la isla en una máquina de pueblos que pasan de veinte, aunque muchos de ellos son pueblecillos pequeños. Los principales pueblos e independientes son: Basay, Ibaná, Itbur, Manonyei y Itayan; los demás pueblos todos son dependientes de estos cinco, en esta conformidad que los cabezas de estos cinco tienen cada uno sus pueblos, en donde ponen sus tenientes que hagan sus veces y algunos de estos pueblos chicos están repartidos en varios principales de los grandes, a quienes reconocen y por quienes se gobiernan, por medio de dichos tenientes, sin que ningún principal se meta en el gobierno de otro ni ningún *cailian* se pueda substraer de su principal y arrimarse a otro, sino según ciertas leyes que tienen para ello, que son, en primer lugar, dar cierta cantidad de oro al principal que quieren dejar, parte para él y parte para comprar *basi* que beben todos sus *cailianes*; en segundo lugar, queda la casa y tierras que tengan a la disposición del cabeza, que se suele quedar con parte, y parte da a otros *cailianes*; y en tercer lugar, los frutos que a la sazón tengan sus tierras quedan por el común del barangay, que cada uno a su arbitrio va a sacar camote, etc., a dichas tierras hasta que se acaba, quedando después las tierras del modo que dije, y, observando estas cosas, se pueden mudar de unos barangayes a otros; y, no siendo así, tienen pena de morir a lanzadas o puñaladas.

La gente es de muy bella fisonomía, y estatura mucho más superior que la común de los demás indígenas de las provincias, y mucho

some five years ago that the island was too small for it and the people did not have enough ground even for burial places and, as a result, they found themselves in dire need. This population decreased due to small-pox that afflicted them five years ago to such a degree that, as they say, those who died exceeded the ones who stayed alive. And, according to their reckonings, it seems to have been so, since in some houses nobody was left; in others, out of ten persons dwelling in them, good enough if three or four were left, and, where there were five, well and good if two remained.

This small-pox found in them a fertile ground to feed on, for, as it seems, many years had passed without the people experiencing it, and only some old women had fallen a prey to it.

The population is scattered all over the island in a conglomerate of more than twenty villages, although many of these are insignificant hamlets. The main and independent villages are: Basay, Ivana, Itbud, Manañiuy and Itayan. All the other villages are dependencies of these five and each of their chiefs has a village of his own, for which he appoints a lieutenant who takes his place (i.e. governs it for him). Some of these small hamlets are allotted to various chiefs, under whose jurisdiction they place themselves and by whom they are governed by means of the said lieutenants, on condition that no chief meddles in the affairs of another chief and that no *cailian* (commoner) detaches himself from his chief and renders allegiance to another except by observing some laws that they have to this effect. These are: in the first place, to give a certain amount of gold to the chief he is parting ways with; some for him and the rest for purchasing *basi* to be consumed by all his *cailianes*. In the second place, the house and whatever lands he may possess, are to be placed at the chief's disposal, who keeps a portion for himself and gives the other portion to the other *cailianes*; and, in the third place the fruits that the land is producing, must be turned over to the barangay to become the community's property (*común*, a term used in the Philippines to signify a land set aside for the benefit of the community), so that each one may draw off, at will, camote, etc., from the said lands until all is finished, while the lands remain in the way already stated (i.e., public lands). By following this procedure one can shift from one barangay to another for, otherwise, he runs the risk of being speared or stabbed to death.

The people are of a very beautiful physiognomy and in their height they surpass that of the average native of the other provinces; are much

más blancos, y a lo que parece, mucho más capaces. En una semana se aprende una batana todo el rezo y catecismo, si quiere, como se ha experimentado, y, hablando en común, no puedo menos de decir que es gente que, una vez sujeta, será muy humana y dócil, porque, en medio de las pependencias que llevo dichas, se traslumbra en ellos esta humanidad y docilidad que, a no ser esto de jurisdicción y libertad, que se les hace muy cuesta arriba el perderla, y a no ser su desmedido beber y su desenfrenada codicia, se haría lo que se quisiera de ellos, pues, aun en medio de las turbulencias que llevo insinuadas, no ha dejado de echarse de ver en ellos una bella índole e inclinación a lo bueno y afecto a los Padres.

Es gente extremadamente pobre y miserable, que se mantiene sólo de raíces de *camote*, *gabe*, etc., de que tienen en bastante abundancia; de animales sólo hay cabras y puercos de que comen poco por no tener mucho. Pescado hay también poco, porque no hay ningún río ni laguna, y pescan a anzuelo cuando la mar está para ello; y los principales suelen tener alguna cosa de oro y, cuanto más tienen de esto, son de tanta más categoría. La gente común apenas alcanza unos trapos con qué cubrir lo más preciso, que se reduce a un taparrabo los varones y las mujeres su refajo de dos cuartas de ancho y de largo, en cuanto llega y no sobra, en dar vuelta a la cintura. Alguno que otro suele tener alguna cosilla de oro.

Las mujeres tienen grande vanidad en sus abalorios, de que se ponen grandes sertas a la cintura, más o menos y de mayor o menor calidad según su poder, de forma que se conocen por estas sertas las que son o no principales. Estas sertas están en disposición y hechura de cincha de caballo, y hay mujer que trae dos a tres de distintos calibres y de distinto grandor de abalorios; y estas sertas y una especie de polainas, también de abalorios, que se ponen en las piernas, es toda la vanidad de las mujeres. Alguna que otra suele traer una especie de orejeras de abalorios, y de estas orejeras sólo usan en fiestas grandes.

whiter and, seemingly, more intelligent. In a week, an Ivatan woman learns, if so she chooses, all the prayers and the Catechism, as proven by experience. Speaking as a whole, I cannot but say that they are kind of people that — once reduced — will become humane and docile, inasmuch as in the midst of the already mentioned quarrels, one cannot but detect in them such humaneness and docility, in such a wise that, were it not for their proneness to self-governance and freedom - which they find very hard to abdicate - and were it not for their unbridled tendency to drinking and unrestrained covetousness, it would be easy to handle them at will, inasmuch as in the midst of the disturbances already referred to, I could not but discover in them a beautiful natural disposition and a tendency to what is good and an affection for the Fathers.

They are extremely poor and miserable people who live only on camote, gabi and tubers, etc. of which there is a relative abundance. [Speaking] of animals, they have goats and pigs, of which they eat little because they do not have much. They have little fish since there is not any river or lake and they only go pole-fishing when the condition of the sea allows it.

The chiefs usually have golden artifacts, and the more they have of these the more prominent they are. The commoners barely manage to have a rag with which to cover that which must be covered by all means. Such a rag merely consist in a loin-cloth (g-string) for men, and for women a sort of skirt (*refajo*) three quarters wide and barely long enough to wrap it around the waist. [There may be] one or other who occasionally has something made of gold.

The women pride themselves of their beads which they wear strung as a belt around the waist, and these are more or less numerous or of greater or lesser quality in proportion to their social rank, to such an extent that by these bead belts one may come to know who of them are of high rank. These bead belts are made of in a manner to a horse's cinch, and there is a woman who wears two or three of these of various calibers and of different sizes. And all the vanity of the women is limited to the wearing of these bead belts and a sort of leggings (*polainas*), also of beads which they put on their legs. One or other wears a sort of earhoops, [adorned] with beads, and these they wear on their great feasts.

Duermen comúnmente todos sobre unas tablas desnudas sin petate, ni almohada, ni manta, más que una especie de capote que hacen de hojas de plátanos para defenderse del agua y del sol, dispuesto en tal modo que parece un cuero de carnero con su vello, y este se ponen encima para dormir cuando hace mucho frío.

Sus casas son bajitas y muy inmediatas unas a otras. Sus pueblos, en especial cuando llueve, apestan por sus secretas y por sus zahúrdas. La situación de los pueblos es en vericuetos, y algunos tan encumbrados que a fuerza de socabar y a fuerza de paredones que mantengan la tierra han podido fundar en ellos, y los han fundado así para defenderse en sus guerras.

La tierra es muy fértil al parecer, que me parece que producirá cuanto se la eche.

Como beben tanto *basi* estos indígenas, tienen ocupada con caña mucha tierra, y así casi no se ve sino sementeras de caña dulce. No obstante, hay muchísima tierra desocupada y baldía; aunque beben mucho de este *basi* no se privan (sic) pero charlan por los codos. La tierra la trabajan toda a mano con estacas de palo.

Hacen sus fiestas estos indígenas al anito, que llaman, a quien piden que les dé larga vida y les multiplique sus haciendas. Adoran al Dios de lo alto, que ellos dicen, a quien le representan sus trabajos con ciertas coplas que tienen y cantan en sus aflicciones, como cuando se han quedado huérfanos.

También adoran a un dios que llaman Mayo, que fue, parece, un anacoreta de ellos, que se fue a vivir solo al monte grande de Batan.

Tienen muchas vanas observancias, como todo gentil, de que hasta el presente no me he enterado bien por no saber suficiente lengua para ello.

Comienzan el año por el mes de noviembre, que es cuando comienza el invierno y, a últimos de octubre, hacen la despedida del año con tres días de fiesta seguidos, en la que todos matan su puerco o, si es muy pobre, mata aunque sea un cabrío. En estos días no trabajan ni beben *basi* y sólo se ocupan en comer, conversar y bailar al son de sus cantos, porque no tienen ninguna especie de sonaja.

Son aficionados a cantar y bailar, por lo que es muy frecuente entre ellos este ejercicio, y suelen bailar varones con varones y mujeres

They ordinarily sleep on bare boards, without a mat, or pillow or blankets, covering themselves only with a kind of cloak (*capote*) which they make of banana leaves, so as to protect themselves from the rain and the sun, designed in such a wise that it looks like the skin of a sheep with its wool, with which they keep themselves warm when it gets very cold.

Their houses are very low and very close to one another. Their towns, especially when it rains, stink, due to their water closets and pigsties. Their towns are located in a devious terrain and in such steep slopes that only by dint of diggings and putting up bulkheads (*muros de contención*), so as to prevent the soil from falling, they have been able to build houses in them, and also as a means of defense in their wars. The soil seems very fertile, and I am of the opinion that it will produce whatever is sown in it.

As these natives drink so much *basi*, they have most of their land planted with sugar-cane and, as a result, one sees nothing else than plantations of said sugar-cane. In spite of this, there is still left a good deal of uncultivated and unproductive land. Although they drink much of the sugar-cane beverage, they do not become dazed, instead they become talkative. They inevitably work the soil with pointed wooden sticks.

These natives hold their feasts in honor of the anitos, whom they beg to grant them long life and an increase of wealth. They worship a supreme God (the God from on high, as they call him) to whom they bare their trials by means of some couplets which they have and sing in their afflictions, as when they have been orphaned. They also adore a God whom they call Mayo, who was, it is reported, a hermit of theirs who withdrew to live alone in the mountain of Batan.

They have many vain observances, as every heathen has, about which I have not obtained much knowledge so far for not being acquainted with their language sufficiently well to do so. They begin the year by the month of November, that is, when winter sets in and, at the end of October, they take leave of the year by holding a feast for three consecutive days, during which all kill a pig and, if they are very poor, at least a goat. During these days they do not work nor drink wine, busying themselves only with eating, chatting and dancing at the sound of their songs, as much as they do not have any timblers. They are very fond of singing and dancing and, as a result, they find themselves very often engaged in this occupation. As a rule, men dance with men and

con mujeres, y también hombres con mujeres, pero muy honestamente.

El canto de los varones es un canto que parece salido del infierno; el de las mujeres es también bastante soso y desabrido, pero no tanto como el de los varones, y son de distinta tonada los cantos de los varones de los de las mujeres.

Su bailar es ponerse en dos filas, cara a cara, levantado todos una pata al compás del canto y dando una patada fuerte en la tabla, todos muy acordes y a una. Con los brazos hacen también sus meneos, muy pausados, que se reducen a levantarlos y bajarlos como un maestro de capilla, y no hay más meneos que estos, ni se mueven de su sitio, y siendo ello todo, como dije, muy soso. Para ellos no hay mejor cosa y les gusta mejor que nuestras músicas. En habiendo alguna riña entre ellos, para quitarse cualquiera rencor, echan un canto con su baile, y con esto quedan satisfechas las partes de que no quedó rencor alguno.

Ellos, entre sí, se van con tiento en robar porque se castiga de muerte a no tener con qué redimirla; pero en orden a los extranjeros procuran robar todo lo que pueden, de que ya dije bastante atrás.

También castigan el adulterio con pena de muerte; pero así por latrocinio como por adulterio rara es la muerte que hacen, porque lo componen todo con rescates. De cuando en cuando suelen ajusticiar de muerte a algún pobre desvalido que no tiene quien le valga: en especial este de adulterio no se castiga con rigor, y así hay bastante entre ellos, de que de cuando en cuando se suelen originar muchos divorcios.

En esto de divorciarse hay mucha facilidad, y así está todo muy entramado de matrimonios nulos; *immo*, que se puede dificultar si hay algún matrimonio válido. Se quitan fácilmente unos a otros las mujeres. Si alguno se enferma de alguna enfermedad contagiosa, como sarna, lepra, etc. se divorcia el otro sin más motivo que no querer que se le pegue la enfermedad de la consorte.

women with women, and also the men with the women but in a very decent manner. The singing of the men is a singing that seems to have originated in hell; that of the women is also very unpleasant and disagreeable, yet not as much as that of the men, and the songs of men follow a tune different from those of the women. Their way of dancing is by arranging themselves in a double line, facing each other, raising a leg at the sound of a song, while kicking strongly a board, in a very uniform manner and all at once. With their arms they also make their slow gestures (movement), and these consist in raising and lowering them, as the choir leader does. They do not make any movements aside from these nor do they leave their places. All those that dance and sing follow the same tune and rhythm, and all being, as I have said, very uninteresting. For them, there is nothing better and more appealing than our music.

Whenever any quarrel arises among them, in order to suppress any ill-feeling, they start singing, with the concomitant dancing and, by doing this, both sides begin to feel at ease to be free from any animosity.

Among themselves, before stealing they proceed with utmost cautiousness, because it is penalized with death in case no ransom is forthcoming; but in regards to foreigners, they try to steal as much as they can [from them] about which I have said enough already in another place.

They also punish adultery with capital punishment; yet, for theft as well as adultery, seldom is anyone condemned to death, inasmuch as everything is settled by means of ransoms. Every now and then, they use to execute some poor wretched one, who has nobody to come out in his defense. More in particular, adultery is not so rigorously punished and, as this often occurs, many divorces follow therefrom.

In matters of divorcing they are easy going and, consequently, the whole island is plagued with null marriages; even more, there are good reasons to doubt whether there is any valid matrimonial union at all.

They easily grab others' women. If anyone contracts an infectious disease, like itch, leprosy, etc., the other party easily divorces himself without any other motivation than that of not willing to get infected with the disease of his/her consort.

Supongamos que se amancebó una con otro; si lo sabe su marido, pide rescate del agravio y envía a su mujer noramala, y luego él se casa con otra; y el mancebo suele dejar a su mujer para (ya que ha pagado) casarse con la manceba, si es que tiene ganas de casarse con ella; y, aunque no se sepa cosa mala, si se enamoran dos casados con cada cual, y tienen con qué componer las partes, se casan, dejando sus primeros consortes.

Siendo la mujer estéril, la dejan y se casan con otra, y, cuando se quieren divorciar sin gastar, se convienen los dos mutuamente y cada uno se va por su lado. Si tienen algún hijo, y es pequeño, va con la madre; si es grande va con el padre, y, cuando no tienen qué comer en una parte se van a la otra, y así andan los hijos de uno en otro hasta que ellos por sí pueden buscar qué comer.

Los más de los casamientos se hacen de chiquillos. Aun están mamando y ya sus padres tratan de casamiento, pero regularmente no se juntan hasta ser un poco grandes; pero algunos aun no tienen diez años y ya los juntan. Necesitan algunos gastillos para estos casamientos, y así hay mucha gente grande que pasan toda la vida sin casarse, tanto de varones como de mujeres.

Por la que hace a lo exterior, se tratan comúnmente con grande recato y honestidad, salvo la desnudez que por lo común no se hace alto en ella, ni ofende, *immo* que ofenden más a la vista las nuevamente vestidas por no ser suficiente vestido.

Por lo que hace a su porte exterior no se verá ni en ellos ni ellas ninguna cosa que escandalice, como entre los cristianos, en quienes suele haber muy poca vergüenza, y los de nuestra expedición van ya enseñando a las batanas, que no dejan de ir aprediendo, y así hay ya mucho malo dentro de nuestro Real; por lo que suelo yo decir que las maldades del Real son los enemigos que yo más temo, y he predicado mucho contra ello. Dios quiera que esto pare en bien.

Let us suppose that a woman began to live in concubinage with a man. If the husband comes to know about it, he asks for a ransom for the offense and dismisses her in disgrace, and at once gets married to another; and the paramour usually leaves his wife (for he has already paid the ransom) to marry the concubine, if he is truly willing to marry her. [On the other hand] even though nothing bad maybe rumored about them, if two persons [already] married [to another] fall mutually in love and they have the means to pay the ransom, they marry each other, relinquishing their former partners.

When the woman is barren, they relinquish her and take another; and when they want to get divorced without spending, both come to a mutual agreement and each one goes his/her way. In case they have any child, and he/she is still very young, he or she goes with the mother; if grown up, with the father; and when they do not have any thing to eat with one of them, they go to the other, and in this way the offspring keeps going from the one to the other until they are able to provide themselves with what to eat.

Most of the marriages are arranged [when the contracting parties are] very young. They are still sucklings and already their parents start laying down plans for their marriage; but, as a rule, they do not live together until they become somewhat bigger. Some, however, are not yet ten years old when [their parents] bring them together.

For these marriages they have to make some expenditures and, as a result, there are many grown ups — men as well as women — who live without marrying throughout their lives.

As far as externals are concerned, they deal with one another in a very prudish and decent manner except for their half-nakedness which because of its commonness is not regarded improper or offensive; rather more offensive are the newly dressed for being insufficiently dressed.

Regarding their bodily deportment, one cannot see in them, men as well as women, anything which may be an occasion of scandal, as happens among Christians, who seem to have little shame, and those of our expedition are a source of bad example [with their evil ways] to the Ivatans. These follow their example, and thus there is much evil in our Camp. This is why I use to say that evil examples [shown] in Camp are the enemies that I fear most, and many a time I have raised my voice against it. Would to God that this may have a good ending!

Este pueblo de Basay es el pueblo que hay de mejor situación. Está en una cuesta no muy encumbrada, y así se puede andar por todo el pueblo sin especial dificultad.

Según la numeración que se ha hecho, parece de quinientos tributos, poco más o menos, aunque yo no créo en esta numeración, en especial por lo que hace al pueblo de Basay, que yo presencié. Para mi entender, se quedó mucha gente por empadronar.

Gobiernan dicho pueblo cinco principales, independientes uno de otro, y cada uno se entiende con su barangay. Llámense dichos principales Naitdan, D. Carlos, *alias* Bunao, Aman Cuden, Fayon grande, Fayon pequeño, Yalat, Este último es de aún ocho años y gobierna su padraastro el barangay. El primero es el de más poder y el más retobado (sic) y opuesto a nosotros, y por él no se rinde todo lo demás, y pienso que por sólo el Naitdan habrá de haber boruca para sujetar esto. Al modo de gobierno de este pueblo son los demás, de que ya dije atrás.

Por lo que hace a las otras tres islas no puedo añadir cosa especial. La una se llama Seminanga, muy inmediata a la de Batan, que se puede al parecer una hora la travesía, tomándola del pueblo de Ibaná.

Tras de esta hay otra que llaman Bugos, también de muy corta travesía, desde la de Seminanga; y entre estas dos islas hay como mil tributos, poco más o menos. La otra está a la banda del Norte de la de Batan, de cinco leguas de travesía, de la cual sólo sabemos haber en ella siete pueblos. Según dicen, es toda acantilada; pero, sea como fuere, los indígenas de allí y los de las otras islas van y vienen frecuentemente a sus comercios. Llámase esta isla Itbayat, la cual se ve bien de las cuestas de Basay y parece casi tan grande como la de Batan.

Parece ser esta isla de Itbayat la mejor de todas, y es la que da el oro y algodón que corre en las demás. También parece tiene buenas maderas, de que casi carecen las demás; aunque las otras, para lo que es hacer sus casillas y sus embarcacioncillas, no les faltan maderas, y aun cuando se quieran hacer conventos e iglesias saphade (sic) tablas.

This town of Basay is the best situated. It is on an up-hill, not too elevated, and thus one can walk all over the town without any special difficulty.

According to the already made census [its population] seems to consist of five hundred tributes, more or less, although I do not believe in this census, especially in regard to the town of Basay, because I was present when it was made and, in my opinion, many people were not listed at all.

The said town is governed by five chiefs, independent from one another, and each of them being concerned with the affairs of his barangay. The names of the said chiefs are; Naitdan, Don Carlos, alias Bunao, Aman Cuden, Fyen the Older, Fyen the Younger, and Yalat. The last one is only eight years old, and his step-father governs the barangay. The first is the most powerful, and is the most untamed and inimical to us, and because of him, not everybody has surrendered; and I think that all it takes is (artillery) noise to conquer him.

Concerning the three other islands I have nothing special to add. One of them called Sumnanga (Sabtang), very close to Batan, which may be reached in an hour's navigation, departing from the town of Ivana.

Next to this there is another by the name of Vujos, a very short distance from Sumnanga. [The population] of these two islands is something close to one thousand tributes, approximately. The other is located towards the northern side of Batan, five leagues distant by sea, of which we only know that there are seven villages therein. They say that it is clifty all around; yet, be as it may, its natives and those of other islands travel back and forth very often for trading purposes. Its name is Itbayat, and is seen well from the heights of Basay, and it appears to be as large as that of Batan.

This Itbayat island seems to be the best of them, and is the one from where come the gold and cotton that are traded in the others. It is also apparent that it grows good timber that is so scarce in the others, although these ones are not lacking in timber, if need be, for the building of their houses and light vessels, and even for the construction of convents and churches. The rest will be found there, for there will not

Lo demás todo se podrá componer acá, porque no deja de haber palitroques muy bonitos para quiles y soleras, y hay de bueno que la piedra así de cal como de las demás está a la mano.

Han venido aquí los de Itbayat a decir que también ellos quieren Padres, y se ofrecen a llevarlos a su tierra; dicen que su lengua es distinta de la Batán, aunque se da mucho la mano con ella. La Isla Hermosa se ve también de las cuevas de Basay muy clara, y desde Itbayat a ella no creo haya diez leguas.

En todas estas islas no hay ningún puerto bueno para embarcaciones grandes. Para las pequeñas hay dos puertecillos, uno en Magatao y otro en la de Seminanga. En toda esta isla de Batán no hay ningún río, pero hay muy buenas fuentes de buenas aguas; sólo el pueblo de Basay la tiene mala y lejitos, pero aquí no bebemos otra, y no nos hace daño. Y es cuanto puedo informar de Batanes.

De V. R. humilde súbdito,
Fr. Baltasar Calderón

be lacking small sized logs for the posts and entablatures (*soleras*). In addition, there is an easily available stone for the making of lime, besides other materials.

Those of Itbayat come here to say that they also wish to have Fathers, offering themselves to carry them to their land. They say their language is different from that of Batan, although not quite dissimilar. The island of Formosa is fairly well seen from the uplands of Basay, and I think that from Itbayat to there the distance should not be more than ten leagues.

In all these islands there is not a single good harbour for large ships. For small ones there are two very insignificant coves: one in Mahatao and the other in Sumnanga. In this whole island of Batan there is not a single river, but there are many springs of water. Only the town of Basay has a bad one and somewhat distant; yet, here we do not drink any other water and [this] has not done us any harm. And this is all I can report on Batanes.

Your Reverence's Humble Subject
Fr. Baltasar Calderón, O.P.