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Francisco Mallari, S.J.



Nineteenth-century Libmanan, a town of Camarines Sur, was situated on flat terrain on the left bank of the Bicol river, about a league (3.46 miles) from San Miguel bay. It was once a visita of Quipayo till 1586 (de Huerta 1865, 193). On assuming the status of a town, it took control over an extensive territory. Its jurisdiction stretched from the coast of San Miguel Bay to the shores of Ragay Gulf and from the boundaries of Sipocot to those of Magarao and Canaman towns.

Its sprawling territory was a boon to its inhabitants and probably a factor in their lovable disposition. The Libmanenses were said to be light-hearted, lovable, liberal and hospitable to a fault, so much so that their fiestas attracted many, and their customs and culture distinguished them from other Bicolanos (Ruiz 1887, fols. 219-20). At times, however, Libmanan's broad expanse was also a source of woe. Till the nineteenth century, its exposed borders were very vulnerable to Moro attacks. Its defenses were weak, and its population so widely dispersed that mustering organized resistance against hostile invasions was frustrating.¹ All too often, Moro marauders landed with impunity on the northern coast and on the southern coast between Ragay and Pasacao, and invaded the town-proper.²

The Beginning of Trouble

Besides the Moros, the demands of high civil and religious officials on their rich resources also disturbed the peace and tranquility of the Libmanenses. There was a time from October 1826 to April 1827 when Placido Anunciacion, incumbent *gobernadorcillo* of Libmanan, received a series of orders from José Felix Gaztelu, *Alcalde Mayor* of Camarines Sur.³ Writing from the capital, Nueva Caceres,⁴ Gaztelu ordered Anunciacion on various dates to accomplish the following (information here, unless otherwise stated is from PNA EP-CS 1797-1855. fols. 154b-55; for abbreviations used see p.478):

For the work in the *Casa Real*, order the cutting of 100 *palma brava* costing twenty for P1.00; send them to me and payment will be on delivery.⁵

Send to the capital, as soon as possible, 15,000 first class *anajao* leaves to be duly paid for upon receipt.⁶

Send to the capital, in the shortest possible time, 3000 good and large sugar cane tips for planting, to be paid for upon receipt.

Immediately upon receipt of this order, 200 *palma brava* of the most mature and reddish variety, measuring 24 feet long, should be ordered cut for the fencing of the *Casa Real*.

Without any delay send to the visita of Pamplona twenty men with ten carabaos for the immediate relief of the corvee workers there. They are to work under Pamplona's *Teniente* and will be paid at week's end.

Immediately, have 100 *palma brava* cut, mature and straight, 24 feet long, to be sent at once to the capital for the work at the bank of the city's river and to be paid for upon receipt.

Then in 1827 Gaztelu issued simultaneous orders to the three gobernadorcillos of Libmanan, Naga and Camaligan, asking for corvee workers for out-of-town work far from home.⁷ They were as follows:

Immediately upon receipt of this order, prepare to send the customary number of men to do repair work on the dilapidated watch-tower, fortified ramparts and palisades of Cabusao. Try to finish the repair job fast to safeguard His majesty's armaments from any Moro invasion.

Upon receipt of this order, immediately facilitate what the province administrator of the *Real Renta de Tabaco* needs for the repair of a damaged depository of tobacco. Send materials, carpenters and masons; wages and materials to be paid as usual.

On 17 February 1827 Gaztelu singled out Libmanan's Anunciacion and ordered him to collect seventy *gantas* of urgently needed oil for immediate dispatch to the capital.

On 8 March Gaztelu again simultaneously gave orders to the three gobernadorcillos. He reminded them of the obligation of every town to repair the palisade of Pasacao's fort to ward off Moro attacks, and the roads and bridges from Pamplona to Pasacao which were impassable in the rainy season.⁸ He strictly enjoined them to send the required number of men with a week's provision, bolos, axes, shovels, carabaos and other necessary tools. Each group should be headed by reputable and knowledgeable former *capitanes* or *principales*. They

should be at the port of Pasacao on the given date to work under the appointed supervisors. The gobernadorcillos should prepare the same number of men with provisions and tools for the next shift. For such an important work for the good of the province, he warned against trivial excuses and threatened severe punishment for the remiss.

It is notable that whenever Gaztelu issued orders to the three gobernadorcillos, he required corvee work. However, on 20 March of the same year, when he communicated with the gobernadorcillos of Libmanan and other northern towns, it was to alert them of the reported sightings of Moro vessels in the northern seas and to give instructions to be followed in case of attack (information in this paragraph and the next is from PNA EP-CS 1797-1855, fols. 156b-58).

Alarmed by Gaztelu's warning, Anunciacion petitioned him to suspend his people's obligation to work on the Pasacao road until they had finished repairing the defensive structures of their town. Usually after the elections, the Libmanenses put up the palisades, but they had not done this. They were occupied in cutting palma brava for the church ceiling, the town hall and other buildings. He promised to fulfill Libmanan's obligation after they had assured the town's security. The military man in Gaztelu immediately reacted. On 23 March 1827 he denied the petition. Besides, he wanted it coursed through proper channels. Without mincing words, he called Anunciacion disorderly and disinterested (information in this paragraph, unless otherwise indicated, is from PNA EP-CS 1797-1855, fols. 149, 158).

Preoccupied with Moro attacks and their alcalde's inconsiderateness, Anunciacion acted just as quickly. On 25 March 1827, he summoned to a council *cabezas de barangay* and other former officials. They put their grievances in writing. They informed Governor Mariano Ricafort in Manila, through their parish priest whom they had unanimously elected as their protector, that the continuous Moro invasions of their town had rendered the corvee labor and other services demanded by Gaztelu onerous. Log-cutting in the forest, pack-animal service on the Pamplona-Pasacao road, maintenance of that road and construction of a palisade in Pasacao had diverted men and animals from Libmanan with harmful effects on the men's health⁹ and livelihood and the town's security. They also complained of the people's dispersal in the hills and distant places to avoid corvee labor, the difficulty in assembling them at the sound of alarm for invading Moros, the laborious collection of tributes, and, among

other things, the small compensation for the cutting and transporting of palma brava to the capital, (Gaztelu paid only P8.00 for the 200 palms which he ordered for the Casa Real on 28 November 1826).

But, adding salt to a fresh wound, Gaztelu ordered Anunciacion to send, on 27 March, twenty men with ten carabaos to Pamplona to transport cables to Pasacao which the Royal Finance Ministry had urgently asked for. They should present themselves to Don Antonio Clemente, *Teniente* of Pamplona, who would pay them as usual.

As the Libmanenses waited for relief from the governor, the northern seas began to seethe with Moro activity (information in this paragraph and the next, unless otherwise indicated, is from PNA EP-CS 1797-1855, fol. 157). The season of the "pirate wind," or southwest monsoon, that sent raiding ships scudding across the Visayan, Sibuyan and Bicol seas on slave-raiding expeditions, was still more than a month away, but there were already frequent reports of sightings of Moro vessels.

One of the reports came from Capalonga in northern Camarines. In obedience to Gaztelu's previous instructions, Josef de la Torre, the *gobernadorcillo* of Capalonga, notified other town heads of more than forty Moro vessels sighted in Capalonga waters. The reported sightings were real. Moros tried to assault Libmanan, but Anunciacion was not caught napping. He had assigned patrols along the exposed coastal areas and roads and placed his town on alert. The Moros must have sent a scout, for the mounted patrol captured an armed Moro whom Anunciacion dispatched to Gaztelu.

The Priest Versus the Alcalde

Moros or no Moros, Gaztelu sent another order to Libmanan on 25 April 1827. He wanted 400 palma brava cut, 36 feet in length or any length, for the new cathedral, to be paid for as usual.¹⁰ But there would be no way of immediately fulfilling this order. The harassed Anunciacion wrote back that four Moro *panco* were sighted in the morning at Cape Manocnoc and another three in the afternoon.¹¹ With drumbeats and a cannon volley, he had summoned the men with their arms and deployed them in watchtowers and strategic places (information in this paragraph, unless otherwise indicated, is from PNA EP-CS 1797-1855, fols. 156-57b).

Judging from his official acts, Gaztelu appeared insensible to Libmanan's plight. It was the common case of an official far removed

from his people. The opposite was true of the parish priest, Fr. Francisco Valverde, OFM, who could not contain himself. No sincere pastor could have. On 26 April 1827, he wrote Gaztelu a letter.¹² It was short, quite impassioned and, in the light of the century's accepted norms, very informal. Its tone and form jolted Gaztelu.

Valverde blandly wrote what he thought of the 400 palma brava ordered. He said his people were harvesting rice which, day and night, they were transporting to town for safety from the Moros, and that he had received a warning from the parish priest of Sipocot about the presence of four Moro panco in Anib, a visita of Libmanan. Thus he asked:

Why should a seaside town be punished with tasks like that when there are towns in Bicol [district] that could do them? I would not want to know the reason. It could get my goat.

He said day and night there were men at sea (probably fishermen or crew of fighting ships) who could not work. People were assembled nightly and worked in the daytime in their coconut groves (extracting tuba and fermenting wine). Though they would be paid for cutting palma brava, they could not carry out the order. The fee of P4.00 for a hundred would not even pay for their meal. He boldly stressed, "This is a way of killing the people," and ended strongly by daring Gaztelu, "You may make use of this letter in any manner you wish, but for my part, I'll send a report to the Superior Government, including your orders."

Four days after Valverde's letter (of 30 April 1827, found in PNA EP-CS 1797-1855, fols. 163-68b), Gaztelu wrote lengthily and emotionally to the governor, refuting Valverde's allegations. He said he acted on the Bishop's verbal message asking 4,000 bamboo poles, 30,000 rattan stems and 400 palma brava and relayed this message to Libmanan, Bula and Bato. The two complied with his orders, but not Libmanan whose gobernadorcillo could not act on his own without the parish priest's approval. He promised to send the letter which he had received from Valverde. After portraying Valverde as an arrogant person whose mindless meddling in affairs of state would only lead to turmoil and subversion of the established order, he projected himself as an aggrieved, vituperated, decorous, loyal servant of the King.

Gaztelu claimed that Anunciacion confided to him his helplessness to do anything without Valverde's approval, and that Valverde

had infused terror in his parishioners. His order for palma brava was not directed to Valverde and, therefore, he should not meddle with Anunciacion who knew how to read Spanish. Carried away by his hurt feelings, Gaztelu asked:

Why did the parish priest have to read my order and hold it as though it were not from a legitimate authority and full of blasphemies? Did the Alcalde Mayor perchance intrude into the affairs of the parish priests?

Then he refuted Valverde's allegations point by point as follows:

Libmanan's palay has been harvested and ordinarily women do that work. If it is brought to the interior to save it from Moros, that will be true. But the news about 40 pancos is not true. It exists only in Fr. Valverde's imagination. . . . Neither does the piece of news from the Padre of Sipocot seem to me to be true, for Sipocot's gobernadorcillo has not communicated to me anything about this.

Giving free rein to his anger, Gaztelu lashed out:

What punishment has been imposed on the town of Libmanan? Is it possibly a punishment to ask its gobernadorcillo 400 palms at the current price? Is it a punishment to give employment to a town of more than 5,000 souls with which 20 men . . . in half a dozen days work for their own benefit; who actually desire to be employed freely in felling [palma brava] and not to live as enslaved subjects under tyrannical feudalistic laws?

He enumerated what he unjustly thought were the real punishments visited on the hapless Libmanenses, like the "arbitrary and unjust constructions and repairs of the church and the house called convento" and others. He rightly accused Valverde of a geographical blunder in calling Libmanan a seaside town. In a faulty sweeping statement, he declared Libmanan the only place with palma brava which Valverde prohibited to be cut by outsiders. He asked why the people should be exterminated by felling palma brava and not by Valverde's works. What was certain, he claimed (probably erroneously), was that many residents left their town to escape from Valverde's endless chores which regularly weighed on the helpless.

Accepting Valverde's challenge to make use of his letter as he (Gaztelu) would want, Gaztelu (possibly choking with rage) threw

down the gauntlet. In conclusion, he defended his right and honor, declared his motive for working in Camarines and asked the governor's judgement on a parish priest's defiance of temporal authority.

What transpired after Gaztelu's letter is not known except that, on 14 May 1827, Valverde made good his threat to report Gaztelu to the Governor (Valverde's report of 14 May 1827 is in fols. 158b-60b). He described the sufferings of his people like the yearly attacks on Libmanan, the extensive damage to life and property, and the captives taken.¹³ He related the state of the town defenses, their strategy and reliance on their own resources because the isolation of their town precluded any outside succor.

In spite of their precarious situation, Valverde said Libmanan took part with the other twelve towns in putting together the Casa Real, public prison, Tobacco Administration building, serving in the Fathers' hospital, and in many other corvee works demanded by the *alcaldes*. In demanding men for such works, Fr. Valverde lamented the lack of consideration for the tilling or harvesting season, weather conditions and the presence or absence of Moros. He said Moros were nearby when Gaztelu ordered 400 *palma brava* on 25 April, and it took 400 men and 800 *carabaos* to haul those palm trunks. When men were indiscriminately taken away from their work, he recalled the irreparable damage to their trade like coconut wine-making which required daily attention.

Valverde stated that great harm resulted from the diversion of *carabaos* from farm work to draft duty in Pamplona and Pasacao, and the farmers' abandonment of their farms to cut *palma brava* in the forest. Compensation for their work did not pay for their upkeep. Besides, the palm trees were located by the sea where *carabaos* and men ran the risk of capture by the Moros. Thus the town council authorized the *gobernadorcillo* to ask for muskets for the cutters' protection. But Valverde faulted the *alcalde* for not responding.

He also described the difficulty in gathering the palm trunks. To get to a palm tree, one had first to clear much brambly undergrowth, then cut deep into the palm core to see if it was the reddish variety ordered. If it was not, it meant a loss of time and labor. To cut the exact number and quality ordered took a long time, and to haul them to town took a day for a man and a *carabao*, two days to make the rafts and three days to travel from Libmanan to the capital. Upon arrival, men carried the palm logs on their shoulders to the ap-

pointed place. After eleven days of absence, the men returned home with the meager pay of P4.00 per hundred palma brava, hardly enough to support a man for all the days he worked.

Valverde mentioned a certain town (its name is in a torn part of the manuscript) much nearer the capital than Libmanan where palma brava grew plentifully, the cutters were safe from capture, and the river current was favorable for transport to the capital. In concluding, he called attention to the pitiful situation of his parish. It had a considerable population and a number of tributes, but there were people who did not want to live in town. They abandoned their plantations and preferred living in very remote places. Since they paid no tribute, Cabezas had to pay for them. He affirmed that some Libmanenses registered themselves in other places and lived there with their families, while other outsiders were not desirous of registering themselves in Libmanan although they were residents. He revealed the town's strategy of daily assigning 46 battle-ready men to guard against surprise Moro attacks, and the rest to repulse those who had broken through.

To solve their problems, Valverde said the leading citizens unanimously agreed to seek His Excellency's help, believing that the Governor alone would be interested in their welfare. In the name of his people, he begged the Governor to grant what they were asking.

The following month, after having studied the case, the Fiscal submitted his opinion to the Governor (the fiscal's communication of 26 June 1827 to the Governor is taken from PNA EP-CS 1797-1855, fols. 169-171b). He was a little hard on the priest, though the alcalde did not escape unscathed. By and large, the Fiscal was prudent and fair. He pronounced Valverde's petition to dispense Libmanan from out-of town works as inadmissible. Like the other towns in the district, Libmanan was obliged to take part in public works. But for the people's welfare, he required much consideration of the time or season in ordering materials, except when there was public need. Even so, he wanted them paid for according to the price agreed upon by appointed experts, not by the old and unjust scale of prices that pegged the price of palma brava at P4.00 per hundred.

He requested the Governor to stop the abuses committed in this matter. He wanted the price of materials ordered for public works determined by a scale wisely established by the suppliers, parish priest and Governor. He viewed Gaztelu's complaint of Valverde's

lack of civility as very strong and reported Gaztelu's brag that he would keep out of Libmanan's affairs until the Governor had decided the case.

He saw no sufficient grounds for the empty threat but justified Gaztelu's complaint against Valverde's "vulgarity" and lack of deference to the province executive. He then asked the Governor to write to the Franciscan Provincial to advise Fr. Valverde on the observance of decorum in future communications with the *alcalde*.

Taken in by Gaztelu's unwarranted accusation, he forbade the "arbitrary and unjust repairs" of Libmanan's convento and church. The administrator must pay for the materials and workers' wages from the allocated funds. Only when funds were insufficient should the people take part in such works, with the knowledge and approval of the *alcalde*, who should be responsible for checking the abuses in this matter. He cited Gaztelu's error in blaming Valverde for Libmanan's abandoned town hall and dilapidated watchtowers over which Valverde had no authority. In conclusion, the Fiscal requested the Governor, for the sake of law and order, to consider what he had recommended.

Only after nine months, did the fiscal's recommendation reach the Governor's desk on 5 March 1828. Surprisingly, the next day, without the customary procrastination which was the bane of Spanish bureaucratic system, Governor Ricafort handed down his decision (his verdict on 6 March 1828 is in fols. 177-78b). With minor emendations, he confirmed the fiscal's recommendation.

After receiving the Governor's ruling, Gaztelu wrote back, on 3 May 1828, notifying His Excellency of his full accord. He assured the Governor that he, Fr. Valverde, and the Libmanan officials would carry out His Excellency's order to establish a set scale of prices for the *palma brava* and other materials. On 16 June 1828, Valverde wrote to Gaztelu. Unlike the letter that infuriated Gaztelu, this was couched in civility and respect. He explained the difficulty in forming the desired scale (information in this paragraph and the next is from fols. 182-82b, 184-85).

On 12 August 1828, Libmanan had a new *gobernadorcillo*, Pedro de San Pablo Alcantara, who wrote an unaddressed letter (information in this paragraph is from fols. 192, 195). Very likely it was intended for Gaztelu. Like Valverde, he mentioned the difficulty of setting a tariff or price scale. As a solution, he recommended that the materials ordered for public works should be brought to town where the men who gathered them, the government commissioners,

with the help of the parish priest and some leading citizens, would meet to set a just price and the transportation fee.

In the same year of 1828, Libmanan also had a new parish priest. Fr. Valverde was transferred to Oas. Apparently he cared very much for his former parishioners. He wrote to Gaztelu on the 19th of August. Adding to Alcantara's proposal, he did not want the gobernadorcillo to intervene in the negotiation, so that the log or palma brava cutters could speak freely. If they could not agree, then the parish priest should inform the alcalde and ask if he could propose another measure.

On 27 September 1828, Gaztelu sent the governor another letter (dated 27 September 1828 found in PNA in fols. 196-98). He enumerated the causes of the difficulty in formulating the suggested price scale. If the desired materials were not available except in a place like Libmanan, he proposed the adoption of Fr. Valverde's proposal.

Reflections

Meager data stand in the way of a thorough understanding of the nature and conclusion of this squabble. However, that should not be a hindrance to making some plausible guesses by inference from Kabikolan's known past. It can probably be surmised that Valverde's transfer to the parish of Oas was the result of the letter to his Superior, who perhaps perceived salutary results in assigning his man to a new place. It can also be surmised that Gaztelu and Valverde had been reconciled, judging from their courteous communications to each other after the Governor's verdict on their wrangling.

Readily seen, the squabble was brief and seemingly a mere childish flare-up of Iberian tempers. But recalling Kabikolan's past, it was a matter more serious than the inflamed personal sensibilities of the priest and the alcalde. It rested, primarily, on the socioeconomic difficulties forced on the Bikolanos by a colonial rule and, secondarily, on the paternal concern of a caring priest. To an outsider, it may seem an isolated incident, but viewed again in the perspective of Kabikolan's Spanish history, it was not so. It occurred in a region that had been the battleground of petty and grievous quarrels of Church against State, clergy against clergy, local official against townspeople, parishioners against parish priest and the like. These are attested to by ample documents.

In controversies like this, usually it was the common people who suffered most. They were the unfortunate pawns in a power struggle. (I do not imply that the friar was after power. His was an honest effort to protect his parishioners from the *alcalde's* cruelly overbearing demands). Unless their *gobernadorcillo* were a man of strong character to whom they could turn, their sad lot was to suffer patiently or apathetically and wistfully wait for a change in the fortunes of their quarreling masters, or to flee to the mountains. By his behavior, Anunciacion, their *gobernadorcillo*, appeared to be a weakling. Generally, for a weak official caught in a dilemma, it was not unusual to resort to sycophancy. Native officials had often deftly employed that defensive device. In some cases, they also played their Spanish masters against each other, either to court political patronage or escape from a humiliating thrashing or repay an election debt.¹⁴ Hence if Anunciacion really confided to Gaztelu his parish priest's authoritarian behavior in Libmanan, he knew it would not only ingratiate him with the *alcalde*, but also pit one against the other.

A local leader and his people also had to reckon with another authority, the parish priest. In his analysis of the Philippine situation, Phelan observed that in a town, the parish priest was all powerful, for he was the King's "petty viceroy" (Phelan 1959, 126). In general, this was true in Kabikolan where often the priest was the *de facto* authority in the town, not the *gobernadorcillo*.¹⁵ Though usually he was the only Spaniard in a community of *Indios*, the people's reverence for him or the holy fear he had instilled in them through religious teachings and, in some instances, caning or *bastonazo*,¹⁶ (I have no evidence that such was the case with Fr. Valverde), made him an object of, primarily, profound respect, and in exceptional instances, hatred. It also gave him an influence that reached deep into their intimate lives.

This was not always true of the *alcalde* whose influence was hardly felt, especially in remote settlements and towns where no *alcalde* ever set foot. Libmanan was only some three hours from the capital on a fast *baroto*, but in my limited research I have not come upon any information about an *alcalde's* visit to this town. For the *gobernadorcillo*, gratitude or reverence or religious fear could compel him to side with the priest, the more familiar and more accessible of the two officials. Thus when Anunciacion convoked a council of former leaders which protested against Gaztelu's burdensome

orders, it was possible that he did so either out of one of these motives or his belief in the righteousness of his parish priest's cause.

One of the deviations from colonial exploitation in Kabikolan was the absence of large Spanish landholdings unlike Latin America (Haring 1963; Phelan 1959, 126). This factor contributed to the easy exploitation of the Bikolano Indios by unscrupulous clerics and *alcaldes*. Spanish landlords could have deterred them, though not for unselfish reasons. They would not have allowed the disruption of production by what Gaztelu irresponsibly called the arbitrary repairs in the church and *convento* and other forms of personal service.¹⁷ If there were no Spanish landlords in Kabikolan, then local leaders or *gobernadorcillos* should have been the logical protectors. Sometimes they were, but not always.

Even under the Spanish administration, the paternalistic influence which they had exercised as *barangay* leaders continued effectively over their followers who retained a high respect for their old customary laws. Thus they could have effectively protected or led their constituents to defy higher authority had they cared to, as they did in Sorsogon.¹⁸ But frequently they were the oppressors of their own people, when selfish interest took the better of them, and there was no concerned parish priest like Fr. Valverde.¹⁹

Philippine history books, for the most part, have not been kind to the friars. Yet it was mostly these much-maligned Religious who protected the people from abuses of their fellow Indios and Spaniards. They had their failings. The truth, however, was there were many good friars.²⁰ In fact, though, it would not be easy to sift fact from fable in biased documents written by Spanish officials, foreign visitors and the friars themselves, an open-minded study of the Franciscan history in Kabikolan could help reduce a good part of the publicized friar abuses to bigoted propaganda and isolated cases.

The story of these hardy Religious in Kabikolan is replete with dedication and sacrifices for their flock. Friar religious orders had amassed riches in the form of landed estates commonly called friar lands. The sons of St. Francis in Kabikolan were an exception. Like his well-known brothers in the cloth—Fr. Francisco de Tubino and Fr. Francisco Aragonese—to cite a few—Fr. Valverde lived and died a poor man.²¹ It would not be an exaggeration to say that when he took Gaztelu to task for his oppressive orders, he did so out of a genuine priestly spirit. As a witness to his people's suffering from the ill-considered impositions of *alcaldes* like Gaztelu, he took it

upon himself, as any sincere shepherd of his flock would, to protest and try to liberate his people from their distressing hardships.

If there were Spanish officials in the region who openly engaged in self-enrichment, they were the *alcalde-traders*.²² In disregard of their people's distress, not to say captivity or death at the hands of Moro pirates, they took full advantage of their privilege to trade, neglecting their duties to protect them from Moro raids and to lift them from ignorance and misery.

Notes

1. Jose de Eguia and Antonio de Zuñiga, former *alcaldes* of Camarines, in informing Governor Mariano Fernandez de Folgueras in 1819 of the situation in Libmanan, wrote of the Libmanenses' dispersal in coconut plantations, fermenting coconut wine, and their indifference so that they would not move a foot though the Moros were in sight. PNA EP-CS 1797-1852, fol. 146b.

2. In 1818 citing the testimonies of escaped captives about the threat of Moro piratical raids, *gobernadorcillo* Pedro de San Pablo Alcantara, petitioned the governor to succor Libmanan with arms and munitions. Ibid. fols. 111-12. PNA EP-CS 1791-1891, fols. 193b-94. 1797-1855, fols. 104-5. AGI Filipinas 490.

3. Gaztelu, a captain in the armed forces, was an efficient *alcalde mayor* of Bataan in 1808. When stirrings of rebellion were felt in Bulacan, he was appointed *alcalde mayor* of that province. On 8 September 1826, he took possession of the province executive's office in Camarines Sur. Manila's archbishop and Nueva Caceres' bishop, Fr. Bernardo de la Concepcion, OFM, testified to his uprightness and efficiency. AGI Filipinas 697.

4. The names Nueva Caceres and Naga raise some confusion. The "city" of Nueva Caceres was a small community where the cathedral church, episcopal palace, and seminary were located. Its founder, Pedro de Chaves, named it after Governor Francisco de Sande's home province of Caceres, Spain. Its original name was "Ciudad de Caceres." The Bikolano historian, Domingo Abella, explained how it became "Nueva Caceres". The three pueblos of Sta. Cruz, Tabuco and Naga constituted its suburbs. Naga was then situated across the river in the present district of Lerma. Nueva Caceres and its three pueblos officially became Naga City by virtue of Republic Act No. 305 in 1948 (Abella 1954, I: 5-6; 243-45; Martinez de Zuñiga 1893, II: 44-45).

5. The palma brava tree grows in the forests of the islands. It is known scientifically as *Livistona rotundifolia* (Lam.) Mart., locally as *anahaw*, in Spanish as *palma brava* and in English as fan palm. Its trunk which is about 20 centimeters in diameter has many uses like pillars of houses, and when its hard outer part is removed and split—as flooring, walking sticks, and spear and arrow shafts (Brown 1951, I: 211, 212, 312).

6. Anajao are the fan-shaped leaves of the palma brava which were principally used for roofing. PNA VP-AC, fol. 1. (Delgado 1892, 674-75).

7. Information in this paragraph and the next, unless otherwise indicated, is from PNA EP-CS 1797-1855, fols. 155-56. Till late in the nineteenth century, the custom of using corvée workers (*polistas*) for religious or government work continued. Travell-

ers from Nueva Caceres to nearby Milaor crossed the Bicol river on rafts manned by polistas. Bishop Francisco Gainza is reported to have asked each province to send polistas for the construction of a lepers' hospital in Caceres (Reseña 1875; Puya Ruiz 1887, 115).

8. The five-mile Pamplona-Pasacao road was the most important road in Camarines, but was never completed over the years even up to Feodor Jagor's travel in Bicol in the last half of the 19th century. From about 900 to 1,000 corvee workers labored annually for repairs, enduring much suffering and even death. AFIO D-10/22, fol. 7. (Jagor 1875, 168). PNA EP-A 1800-1858, fol. 190; EP-CS 1797-1855, fols. 258-58b. For the complaints of many Camarines towns against the forced labor on this road, see PNA EP-CS 1781-1883, fols. 416-16b.

9. Pasacao was a very unhealthy place. In July and August, there was a high incidence of fevers but no infirmary or hospital for the sick. PNA Memoria de Camarines, fol. 91-91b.

10. When Bishop Bernardo de la Concepcion, OFM, arrived in Nueva Caceres, he saw the devastation of the cathedral and the episcopal palace from the strong temblors of 1811. He laid the foundation of this new cathedral in 1816 and commenced work in 1820. AGI Filipinas 1033. (Abella 1954, 147-48).

11. A panco is a light slave-raiders' vessel, 80 to 90 feet long, propelled by a sail and two to three tiers of oars. PNA Piratas, 1: 1, 3, 10; 2: 4-4b, 17; 3: 1b, 6. PNA EP-S 1749-1848, fols. 137-37b. Santiago Patero, a navy commander in the Philippines for ten years, who fought in the Moro wars, wrote about the panco and other types of vessels (Patero 1872, 7).

12. Fr. Valverde's letter of 26 April 1827 is in fols. 161-61b. Valverde was born in San Roman del Valle, diocese of Astorga, Spain, on 4 March 1783. After a stint in Manila, he was assigned in Libmanan, then Oas where he died on 26 January 1831 (Gomez Platero 1880, 638).

13. After one of the several raids, the people's report to their alcalde summed up their sufferings, "The many and grave harms done to our life, our families, our homes as well as our few possessions, farmlands and plantations are already intolerable. . . ." PNA EP-CS 1797-1855, fol. 103.

14. In a report to Gov. Pascual Enrile, Jose Ma. Penaranda mentioned the influence of an alcalde in the election of a gobernadorcillo. MN Ms. 2237, doc 17, fols. 109-13. In Catanduanes, a local candidate favored by the parish priest in an election was a sure winner. Before the ballots were sent to the alcalde mayor, the priest had inspected and tampered with them. PNL HDP Catanduanes, p. 15.

15. In the town of Ligao, now in Albay province, F. Jagor observed how his host went to the town hall twice and requested carabao carts to carry Jagor's things and was given the "run around" treatment, but at the parish priest's command, the gobernadorcillo obeyed immediately (Jagor 1875, 191). Many more documented instances are available.

16. The Padre of Naga was a notorious "caning Cura" who at one time inside the town hall of Tabuco beat up the drummer of the Infantry Regiment of Fernando VII. The gobernadorcillo of Tabuco filed a complaint against him and Alcalde Manuel Esquivel of Camarines Sur reported him in 1835 to the Governor. PNA EP-CS 1789-1838, fols. 189-213b. Probably there were more over-zealous friars like him but their influence and authority were undeniable. In the 19th century, even the most antiderical Spanish government recognized this and supported them. See a mature treatment of this topic in Schumacher (1991, 199).

17. Phelan implies that such landlords somehow protected their peons in Latin America (Phelan 1959, 120-21). I suspect that what Gaztelu called "arbitrary repairs" were purposely done by Valverde to occupy his people in more creditable works to protect them from the alcalde's unjust demands.

18. An example was in Sorsogon when the native leaders led their fellow Indios to rebel against construction work on the Bulusan bridge. PNA EP-A 1841-1894, fols. 26-31, 33. As long as they made no public declarations of rebellion, Manila authorities did not interfere militarily in local disturbances, but left them to the discretion of provincial authorities. See Owen (1974, 22: 297-324).

19. Examples of gobernadorcillo and other town officials' extortions, bribe-taking and other forms of exploitation of their fellow indios are in MN Ms. 2237, doc. 17, fols. 109-12; Ms. 2228, fol. 71. AGI Filipinas 357, 590. PNA EP-CS 1799-1820, fols. 324b-25. PNA VP-A XVI, fols. 1-4.

20. Proof of this was in the revolution. Atrocities were committed against friars, but there were many manifestations of respect and sympathy for them, even by those who had reason to be extremely anti-friar like Filipino priests (Schumacher 1981, 103-04; 1973, 271-72).

21. Fr. Francisco de Tubino, OFM, led 300 parishioners to Panganiran after their parish, Guinobatan, was destroyed by Mayon's eruption in 1814. Attacked one night by a thousand Iranun pirates, he fought side by side with his people until the enemy sailed away in defeat. AFIO 281/2, fols. 54-55.

Fr. Francisco Aragones, OFM, was the heroic parish priest of Cagsawa when the volcano's eruption of 1814 obliterated it. He begged in Manila for his people and tried to resettle them in Putiao far from the destructive range of the volcano. In 1829, together with the alcalde of Camarines, he undertook the development of Pantaon port for the progress of the province. PNA EP-CS 1789-1838, fol. 42b; 1817-1898, fol. 13. AFIO 94/43; 281/2.

22. One of the several letters to the King from Kabikolan was written by the bishop of Nueva Caceres, Manuel de la Concepcion y Matos, OFM, on 18 May 1760. He reported the Moros and the alcaldes as the two most destructive enemies of his people. Of the two, the bishop said, the most harmful were the alcaldes and their minions whose greed was insatiable. AGI Filipinas 682. Of course there were exceptional alcaldes like Jose Ma. Penaranda. A short and so far the only known biography of this one-time progressive alcalde of Albay is in *Revista de Filipinas* (Julio 1875) I: 49, 68. Some information is also in Jagor (1875, 100) and Blair and Robertson 1903-09, 51: 55-56)

Abbreviations Used

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| AFIO | Archivo Franciscano Ibero-oriental (Madrid) |
| AGI | Archivo General de Indias (Sevilla) |
| MN Ms. | Museo Naval (Madrid) |
| PNA | Philippine National Archives |
| _____ | EP-A Ereccion de Pueblos - Albay |
| _____ | EP-CS Ereccion de Pueblos - Camarines Sur |
| _____ | EP-S Ereccion de Pueblos - Samar |
| _____ | VP-A Varias Provincias - Albay |
| _____ | VP-AC Varias Provincias - Ambos Camarines |

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