

# philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

---

## **A Britisher in Southern Philippines**

Review Author: Carlos Quirino

*Philippine Studies* vol. 19, no. 4 (1971): 741–743

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

---

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at [philstudies@admu.edu.ph](mailto:philstudies@admu.edu.ph).

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>  
Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

The Persatuan group served Islam well in providing excellent religious texts in Bahasa Indonesia and adequate religious education in the years before World War II. But its solutions to ethical problems raised by advances in technology never went beyond the superficial and incidental. In an era when social questions cried out for answers, its followers specialized in juridical speculation on matters of worship and ritual washings. At the same time they clung to the kind of outmoded concordism that twists words to find all of contemporary science in the Qur'ān, including cross pollination, viruses, bacteria, and modern genetics and astronomy.

Today the group no longer seems to be in control of its own destinies. Instead of the elite corps of leaders that it was in the 1930's, it is now on the way to becoming a politically docile ghetto organization. Ultra-conservatives of any cast will get a better view of the weakness of their position by reading this objective and revealing study.

If the work is published later in more permanent form a few slight modifications might be in order. The author states in Chapter I that traders from Gujerat on the west coast of India brought Islam into the Malay area. Cambay in Gujerat was one of the sites from which Islam came to Indonesia, but more important sources would seem to be the Malabar coast and the southern Tamil regions. Confirmation of this might be the fact that the Malay area, like south India, belongs to the Shafi'ite school of jurisprudence, while Gujerat follows the Hanafite rite. It might be well to make it clear too that "lay" is being used in the sense of "non-specialist" when it is juxtaposed to 'ulama on page 181. Otherwise readers unfamiliar with the subject may conclude that Islam has a clergy in the Christian sense. Finally, all works mentioned in the footnotes should be listed alphabetically under their authors and completely identified in the bibliography. Examples are von Grunebaum's *Unity and Variety in Muslim Civilization* (cited on pp. 41, 60, and 246), Margoliouth's *The Early Development of Mohammedanism* (cited and misspelled on p. 54), and Schacht's *The Origins of Muhammedan Jurisprudence* (cited on p. 54), all of which are missing from their places in the list of background and comparative materials on pp. 235-247.

THOMAS J. O'SHAUGHNESSY

## A BRITISHER IN SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES

ALEXANDER DALRYMPLE (1737-1808) AND THE EXPANSION OF BRITISH TRADE. By Howard T. Fry. Ontario: University of Toronto Press, 1970. xxvii, 330 pp.

Little known to Filipinos is the fact that Alexander Dalrymple, the first to be named hydrographer to the British Admiralty, was mainly responsible for the separation of the islands of Balambagan and Banguay from the Sulu archipelago some two centuries ago. Dr. Howard T. Fry, lecturer in Southeast Asian history at the James Cook University of North Queensland, has just published a biography of the British explorer under the auspices of the University of Toronto Press, which traces the voyages of this Scotsman in the eastern seas.

As a clerk in the service of the East India Company in Madras, young Dalrymple (he had just turned 21) passed up his chance to become Secretary of the Fort of St. George (the company's headquarters) in order to board the ship *Cuddalore* for an exploratory trip to the Spice Island south of the Philippines in 1759. On his way to Malacca, he met Lieutenant Colonel William Draper aboard another ship, the *Winchelsea*, which was then on its way to Madras from China, and to whom he furnished extracts from Spanish history books, notably Fray San Antonio's *Crónicas de la Apostólica Provincia de San Gregorio*, published in Manila in 1738-44, and considered at that time as the best and most accurate account of the island colony. Draper was most probably mulling over the plan to attack and seize Manila because the Spaniards were about to side with France in the war against England. But if Draper did already have such a plan, he confided in no one aboard the ship about it, and Dalrymple certainly had no inkling of the proposal.

Dalrymple had convinced his superiors in the Company that the shipping trade with China could best be developed by establishing a trading post somewhere in Sulu. The site was just right to take advantage of the monsoon winds for sailing vessels. The Portuguese had Macao, while the Dutch kept jealous guard over the Indonesian archipelago against foreign incursions. The British had not yet settled in Singapore or Hongkong.

In January 1761, Dalrymple concluded a treaty of commerce and friendship with Sultan Bantilan of Sulu, who had deposed his older brother Alimud-din. He was to find out, however, that the agreement did not amount to much because he had not secured the approval of the *bichara*, or council of influential datus. After the trip to Macassar, Dalrymple journeyed by way of Zamboanga to Manila, where he made a survey of Manila bay that caused Archbishop Rojo and leading Spanish officials to regard him with distrust. Nevertheless, Dalrymple proceeded to Palawan where he made soundings all along the western coast. He returned to Madras in January of 1762 after an absence of nearly three years. This was the first voyage of an English ship to the eastern isles, and although the trading venture in Sulu was not a success, it pointed the way to the later settlements at Penang, Singapore and in north Borneo. When Baron Overbeck secured the lease of north Borneo from the

Sultan of Sulu a century later, the islands of Balambang and Banguay were included in the contract. and the Philippines thus lost sovereignty over them.

On September 12, 1762, a month before Colonel Draper and Admiral Cornish sailed into Manila bay, Dalrymple obtained the cession of Balambagan from Sultan Bantilan. This time, the Englishman made sure that the *bichara* concurred in the transfer. He took formal possession of the island when he landed there on his return to Madras, on January 23, 1763. But the actual settlement of Balambagan as a trading center for European commodities did not take place until a decade later. Two years later, Muslims from Sulu raided the place, put to the sword a great many of the garrison of Chinese and Malays, and razed the fort to the ground. Colonel Farquhar attempted to re-establish the post in 1803, but the British East India Company believed it to be too expensive a fort to maintain, and accordingly abandoned it in 1804. Why the British did not ask for the cession of Sulu after the capture of Manila in October 1762 has never been ascertained. Since they could not occupy the region outside of Manila because of the opposition of the natives led by acting Governor Simon Anda, they probably felt that the same difficulty would be encountered if they tried to assume sovereignty over the warlike Muslims.

Dalrymple succeeded in restoring Alimud-din to his throne, vacated by the earlier death of Bantilan. When Dawsonne Drake, the British governor of Manila, resigned because of differences with the British East India Company which had planned and financed the Manila invasion, Dalrymple was named to take his place just before the British left Manila on April 16, 1764. Dalrymple stopped in Jolo where he secured a cession of the northern part of Borneo to his Company. By this time, his principals in Madras had lost interest in his scheme, and he continued on to London in 1765 to try and convince the Company's directors but without success.

Subsequent events in the life of Dalrymple, his disappointment at not being appointed to command the *Endeavor* in its fact-finding trip to the Pacific Ocean—James Cook was named captain and gained world renown for this and subsequent voyages—his sponsorship of a colonizing mission to Cochin China, the search for a northwest passage from the Aleutian side, and, finally, his appointment as chief of the hydrographic office in the British Admiralty, are related with a great deal of understanding by Dr. Fry.

This is a book that every Filipino conscious of the history of his country should read, for it reveals little-known events that transpired in a corner of the archipelago some two centuries ago.

CARLOS QUIRINO