

philippine studies

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

Towards Understanding the Moro: Mosque and Moro

Review Author: Eric S. Casiño

Philippine Studies vol. 12, no. 3 (1964): 533–536

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.

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

object of the power of the Church to teach and sanctify enjoy priority over the object of the power to govern, is a distinct note sounded in the context of these papers which are largely juridical in preoccupation. The author affirms that the power to teach does not formally involve jurisdiction; but the authentic magisterium is a juridical power, although not a social power to rule. The power of jurisdiction comprises the acts proper both to the power of teaching and to the power of sanctifying.

12. "La misión canónica y el apostolado de los seglares" (Mons. N. Jubany Arnau) is probably the most contemporary in its subject-matter. The essay follows Congar on various points, and affirms with Pius XII that the laity should be aware not only of belonging to the Church but of being the Church. The concept of "mission" is developed in its juridical sense. The essay explores the limits of lay participation in the *potestas dominativa publica* of the Church.

While the essays in this book are mostly concerned with questions that are merely marginal to theological ecclesiology, they are nevertheless a noteworthy contribution towards clarifying the juridical dimensions of Church authority.

PEDRO S. DE ACHÚTEGUI

TOWARDS UNDERSTANDING THE MORO

MOSQUE AND MORO. A Study of the Muslims in the Philippines. By Peter G. Gowing. Manila: Philippine Federation of Christian Churches, 1964. ix, 120 pp.

Muslim Filipinos have always loomed as an important and problematical segment of the peoples of the Philippine Archipelago. The geographical position and the historical experience of the Muslims are largely responsible for this distinction. But strangely enough, despite the urgency and uniqueness of the "Moro Problem", no major, sustained study on them productive of understanding has ever been done. Misunderstanding is still the characteristic atmosphere between Muslim and non-Muslim Filipinos. Peter Gowing's *Mosque and Moro* is an attempt to remove or at least lessen the cloud of misunderstanding. This it does by trying to create a more accurate image of the Muslim Filipino.

The author, Rev. Peter G. Gowing, a Doctor in Theology, is an Associate Professor of Church History and Christian Doctrine, College of Theology, Silliman University; he is also a Missionary of the United Church Board for World Ministries. His doctrinal and missionary interest in the Muslim Filipinos is consequently understandable. Disclaiming being an authority on Filipino Muslims, he

has based the greater part of his book (which he calls a series of impressions) on the writings and "wisdom of those in a far better position to know," as well as on his own observations in his travels in Moroland.

The first two chapters provide the usual descriptive sketches orienting the reader on the geographical, "racial," and historical determinants of the Muslim Filipinos of today. The Muslims are one people only in their religion, but in other respects they are a heterogeneous mixture of nine cultural-linguistic groups totalling nearly two million people spread over Western Mindanao (Zamboanga, Basilan, Lanao, Cotabato, Davao), and most of the Sulu archipelago, and parts of Southern Palawan.

A very enlightening part of the book is entitled "Fact and Fancy about Muslim Culture and Society," in which the author takes up one by one the many stereotype images people have of the Muslim Filipinos, e.g. juramentados and maratabat, polygamy and divorce, slavery and piracy, etc., and tries to show that many of these impressions are either fanciful and groundless or much exaggerated. Moreover, Gowing believes that it is more accurate to speak of Islamized Filipino cultures than of a Philippine Muslim Culture. The peoples of Mindanao and Sulu had their own distinctive ways of life which Islam only partly modified but never wholly reshaped. Much of the pre-Islamic practices and beliefs has persisted up to the present so that one can speak as much of folk Christianity as Folk Islam in the Philippines. But the modification wrought by Islam is clearly seen in the institutional structures found in Muslim Filipino society—the Sultanate, the Datu system, the Agama court, the Imam, Pandita, Panglima, and other subordinate jurisdictional offices both political and religious.

Chapter four outlines the resurgence of Islam in the Philippines, a repercussion of a world-wide Muslim revival. More and more Muslim leaders and educators are taking greater interest in Islam and the Islamic world. The activities of the Muslim association of the Philippines with its policy of inviting well-known personalities from the Muslim world; the establishment of Madrasa (Islamic or Koranic schools) like the Kamilol Islam College and the Institute of Islam Studies in Marawi City; the appearance of publications on Philippine Muslims, the *Crescent Review* for example; and finally the increasing number of pilgrims to Mecca — all these are clear indications of a resurgent Islam in the Philippines.

The heart of the book may be the chapter entitled "The Future of Muslim Filipinos." Here the author takes up again the long-standing "Moro Problem" and in the process comes up with valuable insights. Gowing is of the opinion that the Moro Problem is at

bottom socio-psychological. His theory is that there is a "Moro image," a living psychological residue in the minds of people regarding the Muslim Filipinos which was generated over four centuries of animosities. It is this Moro image, this unconscious attitude, which largely determines the behavior of other Filipinos toward Muslim Filipinos. Gowing writes:

When all is said and done, however, no one can gainsay that basically the Moro Problem is actually the Moro image—an image born of stormy history; born of the unique character of Philippine Muslim religion, culture, and society; and born, as well, of the fertile imagination of non-Muslims. In the literature, attitudes and sentiments of other Filipinos, Muslims are seen to be an unlovely people, queer folk who practice offensive customs, violent and ignorant folk who bear watching all the time. This is the Moro Problem: the Moro image—an image that is the product of nearly 400 years of human failure in tolerance, acceptance, understanding, communication, patience and compassion. It might be said that the Moro Problem is a social-psychological problem (p. 83).

To compound the problem, there is also a poor "Christian image" among the Muslims. In the mind of many Muslims, "the Christian is a drunkard, a gangster (or at least bully), a sharp dealer and often an adulterer. Just as Christians are fearful of entering Muslim areas, so Muslims are afraid to enter such Christian strongholds as Manila and Cebu."

Unless the Moro image can be changed, all efforts to assimilate or integrate the Muslims into the "body politic" or the "fabric of the nation" will be futile. Furthermore, articulate Muslims insist that assimilations or integration should be such that the essential Muslim identity suffers no loss. In other words, the ideal of national unity should embrace the concept of cultural and religious plurality.

The last chapter, "The Christian Approach to Muslim Filipinos," is a realistic appraisal of the successes and failures of the Christian enterprise among the Muslim Filipinos. There are a number of Protestant and Catholic missionaries who have been working for years in Moroland, but conversions have been rare and far between. But according to Gowing this is no reason to cease from proclaiming the Gospel. A common ground can be found through education in the Christian elements in the Koran and the Christian Bible. Above all, the Christian Church must continue to be a witness by its deeds of service, for the Church is "a union of those who love in the service of those who need." The author finally sounds the note of patience, patience with the slow changing image of the Moro. The wrong image must be dissipated so that we may see the Muslim Filipino as he really is.

A few interesting features in *Mosque and Moro*, in spite of its slimness, is the abundance of quotations from Muslim writers themselves; this places one in immediate contact with the minds of the more articulate Muslims. A few pictures of Muslim art objects and Muslim mosques are a great help to the imagination of those unfamiliar with Muslim material culture. *Mosque and Moro* is a

welcome book, with helpful footnotes and references, for the general public and especially for the student of the religious, cultural, and social frontier that is Philippine Muslims.

ERIC S. CASIÑO

ON THE GREATNESS OF RIZAL

THE FIRST FILIPINO: A Biography of José Rizal. By León Ma. Guerrero. Manila: National Heroes Commission, 1963. xxiii, 549 pp.

There has been no lack of biographers of Rizal, both Filipinos and non-Filipinos, yet very few of them till now have produced a biography which was successful in bringing together the historical facts, and at the same time making these facts come alive in the real human being José Rizal was. The years since the war, moreover, have made many new sources available of writings of Rizal—notably the letters to his family, the *Memorias*, the diaries, and the Rizal documents donated by the Spanish Government. Likewise there have appeared important background studies such as those of Professors De Veyra, Agoncillo, and Majul. The time was ripe then for a fresh biography of Rizal.

Ambassador Leon Ma. Guerrero has brought an extraordinary combination of qualifications to the writing of this biography, which was awarded first prize in the Rizal Biography Contest sponsored by the José Rizal National Centennial Commission in 1961. Guerrero possesses an acknowledged mastery of vivid English prose, a broad, cosmopolitan cultural background, reminiscent of that of his subject, and an intimate acquaintance with the writings of Rizal, born of several years work in the translation and editing of these writings. All these qualifications have contributed to making this biography, as Director of Public Libraries Carlos Quirino, himself outstanding among Rizal's previous biographers, says in the introduction, "undoubtedly the best biography of the national hero of the Philippines."

Guerrero's broad acquaintance with Spanish and Philippine history is supplemented by an often penetrating and imaginative psychological insight in his interpretation of Rizal. Worthy of particular note are his analysis of the motives in the quarrel between Rizal and Del Pilar over leadership of the Filipino Colony in Madrid (pp. 262-270); his reassessment of Governor-General Eulogio Despujol and the latter's deportation of Rizal (332-338); the understanding of the role of the Friar in Philippine history as "The Last Spaniard" (xii-xviii); the analysis and evaluation of Rizal's enmity toward the Friars (134-136).