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# “Against Muhammad’s Perfidy”: The Jesuit Francisco Combés and His *Relación de las islas Filipinas* (c.1654)

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## Abstract

This article analyzes the centrality of the Jesuit missionaries as indispensable agents in re-establishing negotiations with the Muslims of Mindanao and Sulu. In doing so, I discuss an unpublished Jesuit report: the *Relación de las islas Filipinas* (Manila, 1654) by the Jesuit Juan Francisco Combés (1620–65), which willfully conflated religious conversion with military intervention and conquest in the interests of securing a permanent base of operations in the southern Philippines. Spanish hegemony in the region was always contested. Therefore, Jesuit superiors strove to convince the civil authorities of Manila, and particularly the governor of the Philippines, don Sabiniano Manrique de Lara (in office 1653–63), to leave definitively the military strongholds in the Moluccas and instead to reinforce the military *presidios* located in the southern islands of Mindanao as the best way to stop the Muslim raids. Finally, the postscript analyzes the martyrdom of the Jesuits Alejandro López (1604–55) and Juan de Montiel (1632–55) as a propagandistic tool to cement the Jesuit contribution to the Spanish conquest and identify it with Catholic evangelization.

## Keywords

Society of Jesus – Francisco Combés – Philippines – Mindanao – Islam – Spanish hegemony – Alejandro López – Juan de Montiel

## 1 Introduction

On February 2, 1637, in compliance with the royal decree of King Philip IV (r.1621–65), dated in Madrid, February 16, 1635, Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, governor and president of the Manila court (1635–44), unconditionally supported by the Jesuits,<sup>1</sup> left Manila with an army of eleven *sampans* (flat-bottomed Chinese and Malay wooden boats) to Magindanao (present-day Maguindanao) to confront Muhammad Dipatwān Qudrāt (or Kudarat, better known in Spanish sources as Cachil Corralat, 1581–1671), in central Mindanao, which brought him fame and a good number of slaves.<sup>2</sup> As already noted, Governor Corcuera’s military campaigns positioned the island of Mindanao as the new southern Philippine border.<sup>3</sup> The interest of the governor and captain general of the Philippines, Don Sabiniano Manrique de Lara (1653–63) and his predecessor, Don Diego Fajardo Chacón (1644–53), was not to continue the wars against the “Moors”<sup>4</sup> but to establish diplomatic and commercial relations with the southern islands.<sup>5</sup> However, the objective of the Jesuits, and in particular, of Juan Francisco Combés (1620–65), was to convince the civil authorities of Manila and its governor Manrique de Lara to maintain and reinforce the military *presidios*, like that of San José de Zamboanga, in their fight against “Muhammad’s perfidy.”

In this essay, I want to introduce an unpublished and little-known report: the *Relación de las islas Filipinas* (Report of the Philippine Islands; Manila, 1654). A report written by the Jesuit Francisco Combés together with the *Discurso*

1 Ostwald Sales-Colín Kortajarena, “Intentos de fortalecimiento español allende Filipinas: Moluco, Matheo e isla del Norte, 1605–1653,” *Estudios de Asia y África* 50, no. 2 (2015): 355–94, here 370.

2 Ana M. Rodríguez-Rodríguez, “Old Enemies, New Contexts: Early Modern Spanish (Re)-Writing of Islam in the Philippines,” in *Coloniality, Religion, and the Law in the Early Iberian World*, ed. Santa Arias and Raúl Marrero-Fente (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2014), 150.

3 Alexandre Coello de la Rosa, “No es esta tierra para tibios: La implicación de los jesuitas en la conquista y evangelización de Mindanao y Joló (siglo XVII),” *Historia Unisinos* 23, no. 1 (2019): 47–61.

4 The first to define the Malaysian peoples of the lowlands or coastal areas of the Philippine islands as “Moors” was Miguel López de Legazpi (1503–72) (Wesclesao Emilio Retana, “Notas” to Antonio de Morga’s edition of *Sucesos de las islas Filipinas*. Critical and commented edition and preliminary study of Patricio Hidalgo Nuchera [Madrid: Polifemo, 1997], 40). Those “Moors” came from an ethnic mix of Indonesians and Arabs. For a critique of the use of the term “Moor,” see Jaume Górriz Abella, *Filipinas antes de Filipinas: El archipiélago de San Lázaro en el siglo XVI* (Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo, 2010), 14–15.

5 Eberhard Crailsheim, “Trading with the Enemy: Commerce between Spaniards and ‘Moros’ in the Early Modern Philippines,” *Vegueta* 20 (2020): 81–111, here 87.

*político del gobierno maluco* (Political discourse of the Molucas' government; Manila, 1654), which offer an excellent overview of the Jesuit engagement in an imperial Spanish and global context. The reason for writing both reports was none other than urging Governor Manrique de Lara to leave the fortress of Nuestra Señora del Rosario (Our Lady of the Rosary), on the island of Ternate.

One of the reasons for keeping it was the exploitation of cloves.<sup>6</sup> However, the maintenance costs from Manila (and thus, from Acapulco) were high, and therefore, the Jesuits, in line with Governor Corcuera's views, were asked to abandon the Moluccas and instead divert resources to fight against the Muslims of the southern Philippines.<sup>7</sup> Combés was not a "minor chronicler," as historian Eduardo Descalzo Yuste suggests, but one of the "reputable" fathers of the Society of Jesus in the *Poniente* archipelago.<sup>8</sup> Combés was a highly erudite Jesuit, versed in the classics and literary styles (conceptism, culterism, Gongorism) of the time, as can be seen in his other works, such as the *Encomio al discurso parenético* (Praise of paraenetic discourse; Manila, 1657)<sup>9</sup> and the much better known *Historia de Mindanao, Joló y sus adyacentes: Progressos de la religion, y armas catolicas* (History of Mindanao, Sulu, and the surrounding Islands: Progresses of the Catholic religion and weapons; Madrid, 1667), a posthumous work on the natural and moral history of the southern Philippines.

## 2 Francisco Combés, Jesuit Missionary in the Philippines

The arrival of Francisco Combés in the Philippines took place in a context of deep crisis. He was born on October 5, 1620 in Zaragoza, Spain. At the age of twelve, he entered the Jesuits at the school of Tarragona and after six years of studies, he asked to be part of the expedition led by the procurators Diego de Bobadilla (1590–1648) and Simone Cotta (1590–1649)<sup>10</sup> that was heading

6 Sales-Colín Kortajarena, "Intentos de fortalecimiento español allende Filipinas," 381.

7 Hubert Jacobs, S.J., "The *Discurso político del gobierno maluco* of Fr. Francisco Combés and Its Historical Impact," *Philippine Studies* 29 (1981): 309–44; Sales-Colín, "Intentos de fortalecimiento español allende Filipinas," 382–83; Antonio Carlos Campo López, "La presencia española al sur de Filipinas durante el siglo XVII: Estudio del asentamiento español en las islas Molucas y su influencia en los territorios circunvecinos" (PhD diss., UNED, 2021).

8 Eduardo Descalzo Yuste, "La Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas (1581–1768): Realidad y representación" (PhD diss., UAB, 2015), 379.

9 Jacobs, "The *Discurso Político*," 320; Jorge Mojarro, "Un alegato a favor del indio filipino: El *Encomio al discurso parenético* (1657) del padre Francisco Combés," *Guaraguao* 65 (2021): 199–206.

10 Horacio de la Costa, S.J., *The Jesuits in the Philippines, 1581–1768* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 611.

for the Philippine Islands (1642). Before departing, Combés was ordered to travel to Mexico, where he joined a contingent of missionaries.<sup>11</sup> Finally, on July 7, 1643, he embarked on the expedition commanded by Bobadilla to the Philippines, arriving in Manila on August 6.<sup>12</sup> This was an express request from Marcelo Francisco Mastrilli (1603–37),<sup>13</sup> who had written a letter to King Philip III asking him for forty missionaries to spread Catholicism in the Philippine Islands.

This petition was a great success. For those forty-one young Jesuits who integrated the 1642 expedition, the objective was to continue the missions that the Navarrese Francis Xavier (1506–52) had carried out in the territories of China and Japan (and extended by the Italian Jesuits Matteo Ricci [1552–1610] and Alessandro Valignano [1539–1606]).<sup>14</sup> In 1645, after completing his theological studies at the college in Manila and being ordained a priest at the church of San Pedro and Pablo Viejo in the town of San Pedro Makati, Combés was assigned to the Zamboanga *presidio*, a strategic point founded on June 23, 1635, on the island of Mindanao. His ability to learn languages enabled him to work with fellow Aragonese Alejandro López (1604–55) as a missionary, informal diplomat, and translator.<sup>15</sup>

From 1645 onward, the state of “continuous harassment” of Spanish possessions in the Pacific marked, as Sales Colin pointed out, the decline of the

11 Francisco Zambrano, S.J., *Diccionario bio-bibliográfico de la Compañía de Jesús en México: Siglo XVII (1600–1699)*, 16 vols. (Mexico City: Jus, 1965), 5:728–35.

12 Archivum Romanum Societatis Iesu [hereafter ARSI], *Philipp.* 04, fol. 18<sup>r</sup>.

13 Mastrilli accompanied Governor Don Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera (in office 1635–44) in the military campaign against Kudarat, in Mindanao, under the promise of sending him to Japan. He died on October 17, 1637 as a martyr on Mount Unzen, in Nagasaki (Japan), after serving as a missionary in Mindanao (Ignacio Stafford, S.J., *Historia de la celestial vocación, misiones apostólicas, y gloriosa muerte del Padre, Marcelo Francisco Mastrilli, hijo del Marques de S. Marsano, Indiatico felicísimo de la Compañía de IHS a Antonio Telles de Silva: Por el P. Ignacio Stafford de la Compañía de Jesús* (Lisbon: Imprenta de Antonio Álvarez, 1639); Juan Eusebio Nieremberg, S.J., *Vida del dichoso y Venerable Padre Marcelo Francisco Mastrilli* (Madrid: Imprenta de María de Quiñones, 1640); Daniello Bartolli, S.J., *Compendio della vita, e morte del O. Marcello Mastrilli della Compagnia di Giesù* (Naples: Imprenta de Luc'Antonio di Fusco, 1671).

14 Andrew C. Ross, “Alessandro Valignano: The Jesuits and Culture in the East,” in *The Jesuits: Cultures, Sciences, and the Arts, 1540–1773*, ed. John W. O'Malley, S.J., Gauvin Alexander Bailey, et al. (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2000), 336–51; Ulrike Strasser, *Missionary Men in the Early Modern World: German Jesuits and Pacific Journeys* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 79–112.

15 ARSI, *Philipp.* 4, fol. 20<sup>r</sup>.

island's maritime forces in the Philippines.<sup>16</sup> The shortage of soldiers, supplies and ships, which made the arrival of assistance impossible, forced Governor Fajardo to reduce the military campaigns of his predecessor and to take diplomatic actions. The Jesuits, thanks to their personal network contacts and skills to move between different social and cultural contexts, were often employed as diplomatic agents and mediators in the resolution of the conflicts.<sup>17</sup>

Indeed, on June 24, 1645, Governor Fajardo sent the governor of Zamboanga, Don Francisco de Atienza Ibáñez (in office 1640–46), along with López, who had been the rector of the residence since 1639, to sign a peace treaty with Kudarat, in central Mindanao.<sup>18</sup> This treaty proved to be very advantageous to the Spanish. First, it authorized Jesuit missionaries to settle in Mindanao to preach the gospel, allowing them to build a residence and church in Simuay, where the court of Kudarat was located, which would eventually facilitate not only evangelization but also the reestablishment of trade relations.<sup>19</sup> And secondly, because in order to prevent the Dutch from capturing the galleons coming from New Spain, Governor Fajardo had ordered them to unload at Caraga, in the northeastern part of Mindanao, where the Spanish maintained a small fort, so a peace treaty with Kudarat would preempt the Malayan-Mahometan attacks (see Figure 1).<sup>20</sup>

It was clear, then, that the constitution of a political space in the southern territories depended on the Spanish capacity to be on good terms with the Muslims. However, establishing diplomatic relations with the Sultan of Sulu (in Spanish sources, Jolo) was much more complicated than in Mindanao. On June 27, 1645, two Dutch warships under the command of Captain Lucas Albertsz were stationed off the island of Sulu to intimidate the Spanish.<sup>21</sup>

16 Oswalt Sales-Colín, "Apuntes para el estudio de la presencia 'holandesa' en la Nueva España: Una perspectiva mexicano- Filipina, 1600–1650," in *Memorias e historias compartidas: Intercambios culturales, relaciones comerciales y diplomática entre México y los Países Bajos, siglos XVI–XX*, ed. Laura Pérez Rosales and Arjen van der Sluis (Mexico City: Iberoamericana, 2009), 166–67; Sales-Colín, "Negritud y esclavitud aeta: Cooperación en el fortalecimiento hispano en Filipinas, 1565–1650," in *Relaciones intercoloniales: Nueva España y Filipinas*, ed. Jaime Olveda (Zapopan: El Colegio de Jalisco, 2017), 161.

17 De la Costa, *Jesuits in the Philippines*, 442–49; Ana M<sup>a</sup> Rodríguez-Rodríguez, "Retorno a Zamboanga: Estrategias imperiales ante el Islam en las islas Filipinas," *eHumanista* 40 (2018): 373–88, here 378.

18 De la Costa, *Jesuits in the Philippines*, 442.

19 Pedro Murillo Velarde, S.J., *Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de Jesús: Segunda Parte que comprehende los progresos de esta provincia desde el año de 1616 hasta el 1716* (Manila: Nicolás de la Cruz Bagay Press, 1749), fols. 149<sup>r</sup>–153<sup>v</sup>.

20 Sales-Colín, "Apuntes para el estudio," 167–68.

21 Díaz-Trechuelo, cited in Sales-Colín, "Apuntes para el estudio," 165.



FIGURE 1 Mapa de la isla de Mindanao, donde se fundó el presidio de Zamboanga  
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Immediately, Prince Salicala (or Salikula) went to Batavia to solicit the support of the United Provinces of the Netherlands “to shake off the violent rule of Spain.” The Dutch came to the prince’s aid, but were defeated.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the Spanish decided to abandon their military post in Sulu and sign a peace and friendship agreement with Muwallil Wasit I, also known as Raja Bongsu

22 Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas*, fol. 149<sup>v</sup>.

(r.1610–50),<sup>23</sup> dated in Lipir, April 14, 1646, by which the sultan agreed to pay an annual tribute consisting of “three joangas [large-sized karakoas], eight fathoms long, filled with rice and placed in Zamboanga in his forces, in gratitude and as a sign of brotherhood, for the good heart he has had in giving him and leaving him the said island,” thus reactivating trade between Muslims and Spaniards in the *presidio* of Zamboanga.<sup>24</sup>

In 1646, Francisco de la Roa (1592–1660), Jesuit superior provincial of the Philippines, expressly entrusted Combés, who was then assigned to the Leyte shipyard, with the task of evangelizing the Suban natives from the village of La Caldera to the coast of Siocon in place of the deceased Juan del Campo. His work was intense, as set out in the annual letters of 1646 and 1649, taking care to eradicate gentility and encourage devotion to the blessed souls in purgatory.<sup>25</sup> Of Alejandro López, rector of the residence at Zamboanga, the annual letters noted that he had “special grace to win over these Moors and Gentiles,” which favored not only the preaching of the Gospel but also the expansion of commerce “through whose lands the Fathers pass and the seas sail safely.”<sup>26</sup> Despite the agreements signed with Kudarat, largely thanks to the efforts of López, “whose words are heard as oracles,” the Muslims, traditional enemies of Christianity, were reluctant to accept missionaries into their domains.<sup>27</sup> From the Zamboanga *presidio*, the Spanish, assisted by six Jesuits, had made considerable progress in conversion, although Kudarat’s opposition to Christianity was firm.<sup>28</sup> According to the annual letters of 1646 to 1649 written by Superior Provincial Francisco de la Roa,

A prince of Mindanao, one of the most influential of the kingdom, sent an embassy to one of our fathers so that when he went to speak at Cor-

23 He was the nephew of Sultan Batara Shah Tengah (1596–1608). On Sultan Bongsu, see Robert Nicholl, *Raja Bongsu of Sulu: A Brunei Hero in His Times* (Kuala Lumpur: Council of the Malaysian Branch of Royal Asiatic Society, 1991); R. Joel de los Santos, Jr., “Reflections on the Moro Wars and the New Filipinos,” *Mindanao Journal* 3, no. 1 (1976): 22–34, here 26.

24 “Capitulaciones asentadas con el Sultán Rey de Mindanao por el capitán don Francisco de Atienza Ibáñez, alcaide y gobernador de las fuerzas de Zamboangan, el día 24 de junio de 1645” (Arxiu Històric de la Companyia de Jesús a Catalunya [hereafter, AHJC], FILHIS–024, E.II, b–088, Booklet 161a, fols. 170<sup>v</sup>–179<sup>r</sup>).

25 ARSI, *Philipp.* 07–2, fols. 689<sup>v</sup>–690<sup>r</sup>.

26 ARSI, *Philipp.* 07–2, fols. 688<sup>v</sup>–689<sup>r</sup>.

27 Francisco Combés, S.J., *Historia de Mindanao, Joló y sus adyacentes: Progressos de la religion, y armas catolicas*. Critical and commented edition of Wescleslao Emilio Retana with the collaboration of Father Pablo Pastells, SJ. (Madrid: Imprenta de M. Minuesa de los Ríos, [1667] 1897), 427.

28 ARSI, *Philipp.* 4, fol. 20<sup>r</sup>.

ralat, and was before his chiefs, *he would not speak of the Christian religion or say anything to him*, because it was feared that the King would forbid him to deal with the fathers, if he found that he was fond of the things of the faith.<sup>29</sup>

The continuous raids of the Malayo-Muslims—better known as “Moors”—threatened to invade the Bisayas (or Pintados) together with the Dutch from Batavia (now Jakarta).<sup>30</sup> Between 1645 and 1646, the Dutch *Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie* (officially founded in 1602) prepared four fleets with which they intended to besiege the capital, block the arrival of the galleons at the port of Cavite, and later on, expel the Spanish from the East. However, in April 1646, Governor Fajardo, counting on the few available, managed to expel the “Dutch heretics” in the famous battle of Playa Honda.<sup>31</sup> Not surprisingly, that year Governor Fajardo wrote a letter to King Philip IV deeply regretting that the shipments of soldiers sent from New Spain consisted of “boys that the eldest is not more than twelve years old who cause only trouble and expense.”<sup>32</sup>

In June 1647, the Dutch attacked Cavite with a new fleet of twelve ships under the command of Admiral Martin Gertzen, which cost his life. They penetrated the Sulu Sea to Manila Bay, attacking the port of Cavite (where the galleons were usually built) and plundering the coastal towns of Mariveles (the “Boca Grande” of Bataan), Abucay, and Samal, in the province of Pampanga.<sup>33</sup> Once again, Spanish and Filipino sailors managed to drive them to their possessions in Batavia, where they arrived battered and with many casualties.<sup>34</sup>

After the peace treaties signed with The Hague (Treaty of Westphalia, 1648), Spain recognized the independence of the Netherlands. However, the attacks of the United Provinces, although they diminished from the following years, had left a desolate panorama because of the paralysis of the trade of the

29 ARSI, *Philip*. 07–2, fol. 69r. Italics are mine.

30 On the analysis of Muslim military threat, see Eberhard Crailsheim, “¿Fortalecer la cohesión interna?”: El “peligro moro” en las Filipinas coloniales en la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII,” in *Filipinas, siglo XIX: Coexistencia e interacción entre comunidades en el imperio español*, ed. M<sup>a</sup> Dolores Elizalde and Xavier Huetz de Lempis (Madrid: Polifemo, 2017), 393–425. More recently, see Eberhard Crailsheim and M<sup>a</sup> Dolores Elizalde, *The Representation of External Threats: From the Middle Ages to the Modern World* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

31 Lucio Gutiérrez, *La historia de la iglesia en Filipinas (1565–1900)* (Madrid: Mapfre, 1992), 186.

32 Ostwald Sales-Colín, “La Inquisición en Filipinas: El caso de Mindanao y Manila; Siglo XVII,” *Inquisición novohispana* 1 (2000): 255–70, here 265.

33 Pablo Pastells, S.J., *Catálogo de los documentos relativos a las islas Filipinas existentes en el Archivo General de Indias (AGI)*, 9 vols. (Barcelona: Compañía General de Tabacos de Filipinas, 1938), 9: lxxix–lxxx.

34 Gutiérrez, *Historia de la iglesia*, 187.

galleon of Acapulco.<sup>35</sup> At the beginning of 1650, Manila's defenses, reinforced by Governor Corcuera in 1642, were precarious or neglected, with the religious having the task of mobilizing the inhabitants of the islands to defend themselves from the continuous attacks of the Muslim "pirates."<sup>36</sup> The explorations and conquests of the Dutch admirals had ruined trade and threatened communication with the Viceroyalty of New Spain, with its epicenter in Acapulco, which, together with the earthquakes, typhoons, and shipwrecks (November 30, 1645), desolations, and internal revolts, made the islands of the West an unattractive scenario.<sup>37</sup>

Governor Fajardo, a knight of the Order of Santiago, who at first had shown serious reticence regarding the "particular way of proceeding" of the Jesuits, ended up praising them, especially Alejandro López, who convinced him of the importance of strengthening the presence of the Jesuits in Zamboanga. Combés perfectly embodied this compromise of the Jesuits to the evangelization of Mindanao. In 1651, he replaced the renowned Jesuit Pedro Gutierrez (1593–1651)<sup>38</sup> as rector of the Dapitan residence (1652–55). Gutierrez's reputation was such that according to his confrère, Diego de Oña, the Suban natives "were so fond of him" that they wrote to the governor of the Philippines to never leave his side.<sup>39</sup> Later, Combés was transferred to the residence in Cebu as an "Indian and Spanish" father, where on July 2, 1654, he made the solemn profession of four vows in the presence of Pedro Diaz Carlos (1619–1701), who acted as rector.<sup>40</sup>

35 In 1646, the captain ship *San Luis de Francia* was lost in the province of Cagayan, and with it, the Philippine *situado* (Juan Gil, *Mitos y utopías del descubrimiento*, Vol. 2: *El Pacífico* [Madrid: Alianza, 1989], 2:234).

36 As Ollé rightly points out, "the use of the pirate label in historical sources is loaded with conceptual confusion, patriotic subjectivity and strategic will to delegitimize competitors and enemies." Manel Ollé, "El factor europeo en la dialéctica entre comercio, contrabando y piratería en las costas de China de los siglos XVI y XVII," in *Tribute, Trade and Smuggling: Commercial, Scientific and Human Interaction in the Middle Period and Early Modern World*, ed. Angela Schottenhammer (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2014), 55; Stefan Eklöf Amirell and Leos Müller, "Introduction: Persistent Piracy in World History," in *Persistent Piracy: Maritime Violence and State Formation in Global Historical Perspective*, ed. Amirell and Müller (Palgrave, Basingstoke, 2014), 1–23.

37 Pastells, *Catálogo de los documentos relativos a las islas Filipinas*, 9:xcviii.

38 Alexandre Coello and Verónica Filiu, eds., *Diego de Oña, S.J., Labor Evangélica: Ministerios apostólicos de los obreros de la Compañía de Jesús; Progresos de las islas Filipinas; Segunda Parte* (Madrid: Sílex, 2020).

39 Oña, *Labor evangélica*, fol. 779<sup>r</sup>; ARSI, *Philipp.* 07–I, fol. 375<sup>r</sup>; ARSI, *Philipp.* 07–II, fols. 698<sup>r</sup>–707<sup>r</sup>.

40 Combés was stationed in Cebu (and Mandaue) together with Fathers Domingo López, procurator, Pedro de la Cueva, and Domingo Ezquerra, who was appointed as rector until 1653 (ARSI, *Philipp.* 04, fol. 28<sup>r</sup>).

As Jorge Mojarro pointed out, the position of ecclesiastical chronicler was generally designated as the responsibility of an order’s confrère with the most aptitude for study and writing.<sup>41</sup> The expertise he accumulated as a competent missionary among the Lutaos and Suban natives served Combés to conclude the *Relación de las Filipinas* probably as a proof of the aptitude required of the professed fathers in letters.<sup>42</sup> He remained there until 1656,<sup>43</sup> when Combés occupied the chair of theology at the college and university of San Ignacio de Manila (1656–59), where he wrote a *Encomio al discurso parenético* (Manila, 1657).<sup>44</sup> A eulogy or dissertation that Combés attached to the controversial *Discurso parenético* in defense of the natives of these islands, asking for the regulation of the unpaid personal services (Manila, August 22, 1657), by don Salvador Gómez de Espinosa y Estrada (1610–60), in which the *oidor* (judge) of the Audience of Manila criticized the religious orders for not complying with the royal decrees prohibiting personal and royal services, denouncing the undue burdens on the natives, as well as their excessive mistreatment and abuse.<sup>45</sup>

### 3 The Conquest and Evangelization of the Philippines, an Unfinished Project?

The *Relación de las islas Filipinas* clearly shows the circulation of missionary knowledge in those peripheral areas, forming part of what has been called a “topography of Jesuit knowledge.”<sup>46</sup> The first part, composed of four chapters, deals with the natural conditions of the islands, that is, the fruits, vegetables, herbs, and riches of the land. The second part, composed of three chapters, deals with the native population, with special emphasis on the peculiarities of religion, customs, and traditions. Some chapters, like the second one, entitled

41 Jorge Mojarro Romero, “Colonial Spanish Philippine Literature between 1604 and 1808: A First Survey,” in *More Hispanic Than We Admit*, ed. Jorge Mojarro, 3 vols. (Manila: Vibal Foundation, 2020), 3:435.

42 Santiago Arzubialde, Jesús Corella, and Juan M<sup>a</sup> García-Lomas, S.J., ed., *Constituciones de la Compañía de Jesús: Introducción y notas para su lectura* (Bilbao: Universidad Pontificia de Comillas & Mensajero & Sal Terrae, 1993), 53, 59.

43 ARSI, *Philipp.* 04, fol. 39<sup>v</sup>.

44 Combés, *Encomio al discurso parenético* (ARSI, *Philip.* 11, fols. 353<sup>r</sup>–357<sup>r</sup>). On Combés’s *Encomio*, see the recent work of Mojarro Romero, “Un alegato en favor del indio filipino.”

45 Gómez de Espinosa, “Expediente sobre trabajo de los indios” (Archivo General de Indias [hereafter AGI], Filipinas, 22, R. 9, N. 51).

46 Steven J. Harris, S.J., “Mapping Jesuit Science: The Role of Travel in the Geography of Knowledge,” in *The Jesuits*, ed. O’Malley, 214.

“Sects and Superstitions,” were integrated into the first book of the *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, supporting essentially the same arguments about the “atheism” of the Philippine “Moors.”<sup>47</sup>

The third part, composed of eleven chapters, is the most extensive in Combés's *Relación*. In this concluding part, he reviews the Spanish work in the Philippine islands from the arrival of the first conquerors in Manila to the foundation of the Zamboanga presidio, confirming his interest in political history in the line of the Spanish chroniclers of the fifteenth century, in particular Hernando del Pulgar (*Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*)<sup>48</sup> and Andrés Bernáldez (*Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católicos don Fernando y doña Isabel*, 1513),<sup>49</sup> who inaugurated a providentialist vision of the Spanish reconquest against the Islamic presence in the Iberian peninsula (fifteenth century). An interpretation with messianic and imperialist overtones, which would explain the conviction and moral strength of all those Jesuits who, like Combés, believed in a providentialist interpretation of the role of the Society of Jesus in the evangelization of the Americas and the Philippines.<sup>50</sup>

Writing (and printing) reports and stories became, in Palomo's opinion, another way of carrying out the mission, of perpetuating it, and also of expanding it in written form.<sup>51</sup> In 1604, Pedro Chirino (1558–1635), a follower of José de Acosta (1540–1600), published his *Relación de las Islas Filipinas i de lo que en ellas an trabajado los padres de la Compañía de Iesús* (Report of the Philippine islands and what the fathers of the Jesuit order have accomplished there; Rome, 1604).<sup>52</sup> Employing Chirino's unusual direct style, not very common in baroque times, the Andalusian Jesuit provided Combés with the narrative model he needed to carry out his historiographical project.<sup>53</sup>

47 As Rodríguez-Rodríguez points out, “Combés oscilará continuamente entre estas dos posiciones, infravalorando al Islam y su implantación en Filipinas, pero presentándolo simultáneamente como el principal obstáculo para la cristianización de los indígenas y el control español del territorio” (Rodríguez-Rodríguez, “Retorno a Zamboanga,” 381–82).

48 Hernando del Pulgar, *Crónica de los Reyes Católicos*, ed. Juan de Mata Carriazo y Arroquia (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1943).

49 Andrés Bernáldez, *Memorias del Reinado de los Reyes Católico*, ed., Manuel Gómez-Moreno and Juan de Mata Carriazo y Arroquia (Madrid: RAH, 1962).

50 Alexandre Coello, Javier Burrieza, and Doris Moreno, “Introducción,” in *Jesuitas e imperios de ultramar (siglos xv–xx)*, ed. Coello, Burrieza, and Moreno (Madrid: Sílex, 2012).

51 Federico Palomo, “Corregir letras para unir espíritus: Los jesuitas y las cartas edificantes en el Portugal del siglo xvi,” *Cuadernos de historia moderna: Anejos* 4 (2005): 57–81.

52 Pedro Chirino, S.J., *Relación de las Islas Filipinas*, trans. Ramón Echevarría (Manila, Historical Conservation Society, [1604] 1969).

53 Descalzo Yuste, *Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas*, 388–89; Mojarro, “Colonial Spanish Philippine Literature,” 436.

The *Relación*, completed in 1654, was written to inform Governor Manrique about the particularities (ethnographic, geographic, botanical) of the Philippines, as well as its potential riches (natural, moral), in order to help him design the policies to be followed. The first concern of a ruler was the “art of governing” through strategy or political arithmetic based on empirical knowledge and legal sanctions, especially at the margins of the Philippines.<sup>54</sup> The *Relación* is inscribed in a context of production and dissemination of imperial/colonial knowledge, which was also part of a global program of evangelization. It was meant to be didactic and informative, useful to the government of the Philippines as *lux veritatis, vita memoriae, magistra vitae* [the light of truth, the life of memory, the teacher of life].<sup>55</sup> Gone were the historical fantasies, myths, and legends, inherited from the patristic and the Plinian *topoi*. What it was all about now was to present a detailed report on the riches of the land for the “strengthening,” not the consolidation, of the Spanish seat in the Philippines, especially in Mindanao and Sulu, not yet under the monarchy’s control.<sup>56</sup> To this end, it was necessary to evaluate the economic resources offered by the Philippine archipelago, including the character and nature of its inhabitants as well as the number of tributaries.

Since his arrival in Manila on July 22, 1653, Governor Manrique had denounced the militarization of the last stage of his predecessors in office, endorsing Acosta’s insights of the dangers of prioritizing military occupation over gentle and peaceful methods of conversion.<sup>57</sup> For this reason, and because of the “dire state” of the Philippines, as he had written in 1652, it was necessary to gather information on the political, ethnic-social, and economic reality of Southeast Asia.<sup>58</sup> Combés’s *Relación* fully met that objective, although as we shall see, it prioritized military intervention against the enemies of the Christian-universal order over diplomacy. At this point, it is worth remembering that Combés was consistent with the thought of Ignatius of Loyola (c.1491–1556), who in numerous letters to his brethren (Diego Laínez [1512–65]

54 Ann Laura Stoler, “Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 87–109; Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 2.

55 Cicero, *De oratore*, II, 32, 1.

56 For a critique of the so-called “Spanish consolidation,” see Sales-Colín, “Negritud y esclavitud aeta: Cooperación en el fortalecimiento hispano en Filipinas, 1565–1650,” in *Relaciones Intercoloniales: Nueva España y Filipinas*, ed. Olveda, 164.

57 Brandon Bayne, “Converting the Pacific: Jesuit Networks Between New Spain and Asia,” in *The [Oxford] Handbook of Borderlands of the Iberian World*, ed. Danna A. Levin Rojo and Cynthia Radding (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 6.

58 Sabiniano Manrique de Lara, “Petición (1652) (AGI, *Filipinas* 330, L.4, fol. 271<sup>v</sup>).

and Jerónimo Nadal, [1507–80]) had expressed a belligerent attitude against Islam. His fiery defense of a naval force, the “Holy League,” against the Turks in the Mediterranean, as well as of the “just war” against Islam, was connected with Combés’s proactive thinking against the sultanates of the southern Philippines.<sup>59</sup> The wide experience of the Jesuits as priests and missionaries in those borderlands supported them.

However, it is also important to note that not all Jesuits shared the same views regarding the Constantinian model of forced conversion of the Philippine “Moors.” The attitude of López, who was much more of a negotiator, does not seem to have influenced Combés. This contradictory nature of the Jesuit order can be understood in the light of the tragic events that took place throughout the seventeenth century, namely: the martyrdom of Jesuit ambassadors and missionaries at the hands of the “Moors.”<sup>60</sup> In this sense, it is difficult to think, as Rodríguez argues, that all Jesuits would agree to apply the thoughts of the Granada-born Ignacio de las Casas (1550–1610), a converted Muslim and Jesuit, to the Muslim population of the Philippines.<sup>61</sup> These thoughts defended, in addition to evangelization in the Arabic language, the peaceful conversion of the Moors who inhabited the kingdom of Valencia.<sup>62</sup>

Although the Spanish still considered the Filipinos of the south as gentiles, and not as real Muslims,<sup>63</sup> there was not a real consensus regarding the application of “the soft law of Christianity,” especially after the military campaigns

59 Emanuele Colombo, “Even among Turks: Tirso González de Santalla (1624–1705) and Islam,” *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 44, no. 3 (2012): 36–41.

60 I refer especially to Juan de las Misas (Bisayas, d. October 10, 1621), Tomás de Montoya (d. June 14, 1627), Juan del Carpio (Bisayas, d. December 3, 1634), Francisco de Mendoza (Mindanao, d. 1642), Juan Aresius (d. April 10, 1645), Francisco Paliola (Mindanao, d. January 27, 1648), Miguel Ponce (Ibabao, d. October 15, 1648), Vicente Damián (d. November 11, 1649), Juan del Campo (Bisayas, d. January 27, 1650), and Juan Bautista de Larrauri (Near Mindanao, d. September 27, 1663). Alonso de Andrade, S.J., *Varones ilustres en santidad, letras y zelo de las almas de la Compañía de Jesús*, 6 vols. (Madrid: Joseph Fernández de Buendía, 1667): 6:64–66; 385–89; 590–94; 647–48; 648–80; 692–98; AHPCJC, FILPER-05, “Mártires de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de Jesús. Manila, 12 de mayo de 1903.” E1/b-9/6/1-7.

61 Ana M<sup>a</sup> Rodríguez-Rodríguez, “Mapping Islam in the Philippines: Moro Anxieties of the Spanish Empire in the Pacific,” in *The Dialectics of Orientalism in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Marcus Keller and Javier Irigoyen-García (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 93.

62 Francisco de Borja Medina, S.J., “La Compañía de Jesús y la minoría morisca (1545–1614),” *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 57 (1988): 3–136; Youssef El Alaoui, “Ignacio de Las Casas, jesuita y morisco,” *Sharq Al-Andalus* 14–15 (1997–98): 317–39.

63 It is worth noting that these ethnic categories were constructed on the basis of a religious, not an ethnic, classification. Ana M<sup>a</sup> Prieto Lucena, *El contacto hispano-indígena en Filipinas* (Córdoba: Publicaciones de la Universidad de Córdoba, 1993), 235.

of the “very strong and invincible captain” Hurtado de Corcuera.<sup>64</sup> For Combés, the coordinates of historical thought must necessarily revolve around the obligation to report on the real experiences of the protagonists and not on the basis of events of dubious “truth.” And the truth could only be told by those eye witnesses—the autopsy—who, like Combés himself, had lived—and suffered—the experiences narrated.

The first part of the *Relación* consisted in describing the geography, fauna, and flora of the Philippines, highlighting its most notable characteristics, such as its “impetuous currents” and “the power of *baguios* and hurricanes” (part one, chap. 1), as well as the quality and availability of strategic materials, such as wood for shipbuilding. No less important was the “abundance” and “curiosity” of the fruits of the earth, such as the coconut or palm, of excellent flavor, “whose flesh competes with almonds” (part one, chap. 2), or the *tuba*, “a delicate and very smooth liquor” obtained from the distillation of this fruit. As an eyewitness, Combés drew up a complete catalogue of the fruit and its qualities in relation to its appearance, color, taste, size, abundance, and even its ease or difficulty of digestion. The aim was to evaluate if the Spanish religious and soldiers would have the necessary food to survive in these new “spiritual gardens,”<sup>65</sup> and eventually, the rational optimization of the existing resources with a view to their exploitation. In the same way, Combés stressed the power of poisonous herbs and all kind of poisons, but also those of a medicinal nature, which clearly shows that he was not only there, but that he had known the properties of most of them (part one, chap. 3).

Lastly, Combés devoted special attention to emphasizing, on the one hand, the laziness and indolence of the natives, and on the other, the riches of the land, especially the mines of gold and pearls, civet, wax, cinnamon, cotton, amber, ivory, wool or hemp, as well as various dyes and exotic woods in abundance, such as *palo colorado* or *sibucão*, better known as brazil, pointing out that on the island of Cebu the galleons could carry this genus of which “the natives make little use” (part one, chap. 4). For Combés, there was no doubt that the two issues were directly related. Unlike the Moluccas, where the Spanish had lost all option of controlling spices, the Philippines, and in particular those islands of Mindanao, Basilan, and Sulu, were also shown to be rich and abundant in other goods. The natives were unable to exploit them because of their “laziness” and “lazy ambition” (part one, chap. 1). Clearly, Combés

64 ARSI, *Philipp.* 07–11, fol. 688r.

65 I have borrowed the concept of “spiritual gardens” from Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Católicos y puritanos en la colonización de América* (Madrid: Fundación Jorge Juan & Marcial Pons, 2008), 249.

viewed Western knowledge as vastly superior to that of the ignorant and naive Filipinos that any potential intervention was justified (part one, chap. 1). Thus, due to the limitations of native knowledge, Combés encouraged the conquest and evangelization of Mindanao through the viability of the exploitation of all its riches, with proper management. In a kind of *translatio imperii* (transfer of power or authority), the Jesuit offered what was God's to the emperor, and from the emperor to Governor Manrique.<sup>66</sup>

Part Two is an ethnographic gem that was later replicated in numerous passages of *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*. It describes the three nations that populated the islands. The first two were the “Negritos,” which included diverse ethnic groups, such as the Aetas of Luzon, and lived without “government or *policía*”; and the natives, which included peoples of different names according to the provinces and islands and were the object of Spanish domination. The objectification of these human groups was based on the negative nature of their customs, which were considered inferior to the Christian ones. They were not only concentrated in villages, or reductions, in order to optimize their evangelization, but also to avoid uprisings and to benefit from cheap labor force. A “missionary ethnogenesis,” to borrow Guillermo Wilde's words, which gradually modified their subsistence strategies.<sup>67</sup>

Finally, the Samales or Lutaos, who lived mostly in the Zamboanga region in far western Mindanao, earned their livelihood through fishing. They were seafarers and therefore in great demand by the “Kings of Mindanao” for their knowledge of navigation.<sup>68</sup> Combés stood out for his observation skills, describing in detail the attire of the men and women of the Bisayas and the southern islands. He emphasized the variety of their languages and customs, but also the mixtures, religious syncretism, and transculturation that were produced as a consequence of inter-cultural contact, such as, for example, “the *ladínez* [deceiving attitude] of the Tagalogs, who have become so accommodating to our hats” (part two, chap. 1). However, his opinion about them was quite negative.<sup>69</sup> Of the Bisayas and Tagalogs he highlights their modesty and simplicity of character, while of the natives of Mindanao and Sulu he underlines,

66 In 1636, Governor Corcuera advocated self-sufficiency for the Philippines through the exploitation of its own natural resources (Sales-Colín, “Intentos de fortalecimiento español allende Filipinas,” 357).

67 Guillermo Wilde, “De las crónicas jesuíticas a las ‘etnografías estatales’: Realidades y ficciones del orden misional en las fronteras ibéricas,” *Nuevo Mundo/ Mundos Nuevos Debates* (2011), <https://doi.org/10.4000/nuevomundo.62238> (accessed October 30, 2021).

68 Colin, *Labor evangélica*, fol. 81<sup>r</sup>.

69 The *Historia de Mindanao y Joló* likewise contains these moral disqualifications of Muslims (Rodríguez-Rodríguez, “Old Enemies, New Contexts,” 146–47).

besides the slavery of relatives, tyranny and extreme greed, excessive ostentation and the existence of moral transgressions, such as “the nefarious sin” and incest. This logic or theology of colonization, to borrow Subirats’s words, was the result of deeply rooted axiological parameters that placed the ethnographic discourse in a clear opposition between (Christian) and (Muslim) civilization.<sup>70</sup>

Inasmuch as the Spanish missionaries and theologians were not mentally prepared to develop an ethnological task so far, that is, “thick,” proto-ethnographic methodologies clearly revealed discordant parameters that made cultural relativism impossible.<sup>71</sup> In this sense, the differences between the native groups were not expressed in ethnic-racial but in religious terms, classifying them as “Gentiles” and “Moors.”<sup>72</sup> Combés expressed himself in the same vein as the *Adelantado* Miguel López de Legazpi (1503–72), who in 1572 recognized without ambiguity that “the natives of this island of Luzon, which we Spaniards commonly call Moors, they are not, because in truth they do not know the law of Mohammad, nor do they understand it.”<sup>73</sup> As a result, Combés made an effort to highlight the gentleness of the natives, presenting them as false followers of the Koran (part two, chap. 2). They were not, therefore, real Muslims, since they were “the most highly educated” and the majority of the population was gentile (part one, chap. 2). An opinion that coincided with the positioning of the Jesuit provincials, for whom “gentilism is considered plebeian, and since the plebeian is always more numerous in the kingdoms than the noble, hence it is that there are few Moors in it compared to the many mobs of gentiles that surround and inhabit it everywhere.”<sup>74</sup>

All of these opinions, like those of the Audience of Manila, Don Melchor de Avalos, reflected an irreconcilable vision between Christianity and Islam.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, Combés stressed the moral superiority of Christianity, noting that the natives of Mindanao were subject to the laws of greed, which became the central mole of their culture. This greed was reflected, as an

70 Eduardo Subirats, *El continente vacío: La conquista del Nuevo Mundo y la conciencia moderna* (Madrid: Anaya and Mario Muchnik, 1994), 73.

71 As Geertz put it, “culture is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly—that is, thickly—described.” Clifford Geertz, *La interpretación de las culturas* (Barcelona: Gedisa, [1973] 1992), 14.

72 Rodríguez-Rodríguez, “Mapping Islam in the Philippines,” 85–87.

73 López de Legazpi, cited in Isaac Donoso, *Historia cultural de la lengua española en Filipinas: Ayer y hoy* (Madrid: Verbo, 2012), 93.

74 ARSI, *Philipp.* 07–11, fol. 687<sup>v</sup>.

example, in the buying and selling of women by the husbands, thus denying the free will of the children with respect to the marriage established in the Tridentine Council (Part Two, Chap. 3).<sup>76</sup> Because of their “natural laxity,” the Mindanaos were also devil worshippers. For this reason, the Jesuits persecuted the native healers and sorcerers, who embodied, according to Combés, the pact with the devil, their deceptions and superstitions being observed in many other islands of the Philippines.

Regarding their eating habits, Combés noted that many natives “don’t want to eat cow, because they say it stinks. Rare is the one who likes cheese, and everyone has a horror of milk.” Likewise, the native authorities, especially the older ones, “are disgusted with eating home-made pork because they see the filthiness of its taste and the stench of its food,” but instead they like wild boar, or wild pigs (part two, chap. 3). The circulation of knowledge and information about the diet of the natives had a clear objective: to transform their eating habits into more “civilized” ones. It would be, therefore, not only a project of spiritual conquest but also a gastronomic one.<sup>77</sup> With all these arguments, Combés wanted the governor to support the evangelizing project of the Society of Jesus in Mindanao to the detriment of other unviable or failed projects, such as the Moluccas.<sup>78</sup>

Part three begins precisely by recalling that the conquest of the Philippines was not premeditated, but a consequence of the “strayed Moluccas” (part

75 In 1585, the lawyer Melchor de Avalos wrote two letters to King Philip II in which he also proposed to organize a punitive expedition against the Moluccas (Lewis Hanke, *Cuerpo de documentos del siglo XVI sobre los derechos de España en las Indias y las Filipinas* [Mexico: FCE, 1943], 72).

76 Jesús Ma Usunáriz, “El matrimonio y su reforma en el Siglo de Oro,” in *Temas del barroco hispánico*, ed. Ignacio Arellano and Eduardo Godoy (Navarra-Madrid: Universidad de Navarra, Iberoamericana, and Vervuert, 2004), 293–312.

77 Verónica Peña Filiu, “Alimentación y colonialismo en las islas Marianas (Pacífico occidental): Introducciones, adaptaciones y transformaciones alimentarias durante la misión jesuita (1668–1769)” (PhD diss., Universitat Pompeu Fabra, 2020).

78 In this sense, Combés was in line with the arguments of the general procurator of the Philippines since 1635, Don Joan Pau Grau i Montfalcó (d.1643), who in his *Justificación de la conservación y comercio de las islas Filipinas* (Madrid, 1637) already warned of the high cost that the maintenance of the Moluccas had not only for the Royal Treasury, but for the security of the Philippines. Juan Grau y Monfalcón, “Justificación de la conservación y comercio de las islas Filipinas” (Madrid, 1637) in Antonio José Álvarez de Abreu, *Extracto Historial del expediente que pende en el Consejo de Indias a instancias de la ciudad de Manila y demás provincias* (Madrid: Juan de Ariztia, 1736), 64–78. See also Juan Grau y Monfalcón, “Memorial dado al Rey en su Real Consejo de las Indias por D. Juan Grau y Monfalcón, Procurador General de las islas Filipinas, sobre las pretensiones de la ciudad de Manila y demás islas del Archipiélago en su comercio con la Nueva España,” in Luis Torres de Mendoza, ed., *Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista y*

three, chap. 1). Combés here makes a summary of the most significant events that took place in the discovery and conquest of Manila, as well as the heroic actions of its protagonists, from Ferdinand Magellan (1480–1521) to Miguel López de Legazpi, using a warlike discourse. He then relates the particularities of some of the provinces and jurisdictions of the Philippines, placing special emphasis on their location, defenses, the quality of their inhabitants, the wealth of the land, and the number of tributaries, as well as the religious who administered them. It focuses on the province of Cebu, but also on the nearby islands of the Bisayas, such as Negros, Otto (or Iloilo, island of Panay), Calamianes, Mindoro, and Leyte, and further south, Mindanao and Sulu, reflecting the expansive character of the Society of Jesus.

Indeed, Combés devoted the last chapters to the Spanish-occupied provinces in Mindanao, emphasizing military confrontation over the evangelizing project. In line with the second (owned) governor of the Philippines, Don Francisco de Sande (in office 1574–80) and the theses of the Jesuit Alonso Sánchez (1547–93), a staunch defender of the war against China,<sup>79</sup> the bellicosity of the “Moors” led Combés to affirm that Christianity should be introduced in the same way as in the Americas: first with the conquest by arms and then with the preaching of the Gospel. But that theology, now made universal, meant nothing other than a reductionist ethic that had to do with the debate over the *bellum iustum* (just war) in Mindanao and Sulu.<sup>80</sup> If the “infidels” committed any injustice against newly converted Christian natives, desecrated the images in the churches, taking away the chalices, jewels, and other sacred ornaments, or resisted peaceful preaching, could they be legitimately enslaved? In this context, Combés’s *Relación* praised the military intervention of Corcuera, “the last conqueror,” as well as the defensive disposition of his forts and *presidios* as a strategy of religious conversion. Such a fundamentalist Christian ideology had nothing to do with the model of cultural mediation or *acomodatio*—an intellectual apostolate, as Antonella Romano would say<sup>81</sup>—advocated by his

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*Colonización de las Posesiones Españolas en América y Oceanía, sacados, en su mayor parte, del Real Archivo de Indias*, 42 vols. (Madrid: Manuel B. Quirós, 1866), 6:345–483.

79 Manel Ollé Rodríguez, *La invención de China: Percepciones y estrategias filipinas respecto a China durante el siglo XVI* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2000), 22–23; 130–36; Ollé Rodríguez, *La empresa de China: De la armada invencible al galeón de Manila* (Barcelona, Acantilado, 2002), 74–49.

80 Coello, “*No es esta tierra para tibios*,” 47–61.

81 Antonella Romano, “Conclusiones: Un espacio tripolar de las misiones: Europa, Asia y América,” in *Órdenes religiosas entre América y Asia: Ideas para una historia misionera de los espacios coloniales*, ed. Elisabetta Corsi (México, DF: COLMX, 2008), 262.

confrères, Ricci and Michele Ruggieri (1543–1607), in Ming China, or Valignano, in Japan.<sup>82</sup>

The presence of the Jesuits in Mindanao was scarce, being reduced to three strategic regions: first, the province of Caraga, which stood out more “for the gallant daring of its natives, than for the interest it yields, not because it lacks them, but because its rebelliousness has made them costly” (chap. 9). The spiritual care was the responsibility of the secular clergy and the Augustinian Recollects. However, the Jesuit Fabricio Sarsali (1568–1645), “who in the past had worked on their conversions, came to calm the bellicose Caragas, because according to Combés, the natives retained the spirit and will of their first [Jesuit] fathers” (chap. 9).

Secondly, the province of Iligan, jurisdiction of Dapitan, where the Jesuit missionaries “every year experienced with the delay of Christendom, the raids of the joloes.”<sup>83</sup> For Combés, Governor Corcuera achieved peace through an inevitable armed confrontation. However, the Jesuits were by no means safe. As the annual letter of 1646–49 certified, “the roads are so infested with Moors that one cannot walk on them without risking one’s life.” The existence of the strategic forts, such as Caraga and Iligan, where there were a hundred men, served to contain the attacks of the “Moors.”<sup>84</sup> For this reason, the governor ordered the relocation of the fort on the Malanao lagoon near the port, but Combés regretted that this force, which was built of stone, had been reduced to a brief company of barely thirty soldiers under the command of the interim governor, Don Pedro Durán de Monforte, lacking any deterrent capacity (chap. 10).

Finally, the province of Zamboanga was established to stop the attacks of the “Moors” from the south (Borneo, Sulu). One of the first benefactors of the Society of Jesus in the Philippines was the first to deal with the conquest of Mindanao and Sulu: the renowned Captain Esteban Rodríguez de Figueroa (d.1596), one of the veterans of Legazpi.<sup>85</sup> From then on began what Caesar A.

82 From an Augustinian perspective Acosta claimed that the only way they could achieve salvation was through the imposition of faith, while the “intellectual apostolate” of Ricci and Valignano defended that faith was implicit and that it was through reason that Eastern civilizations could come to a knowledge of God’s law (Joan-Pau Rubiés, “The Concept of Cultural Dialogue and the Jesuit Method of Accommodation: Between Idolatry and Civilization,” *Archivum historicum Societatis Iesu* 74, no. 147 [2005]: 257–58).

83 Oña, *Labor evangélica*, fol. 583<sup>r</sup>; Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas*, fols. 109<sup>v</sup>–113<sup>r</sup>.

84 ARSI, *Philipp.* 7–11, fol. 698<sup>r</sup>; ARSI, *Philipp.* 0023.3.5, Doc. 22, fol. 25<sup>r</sup>.

85 Descalzo Yuste, *Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas*, 130–32.

Majul defined as the second stage of the wars against the "Moors."<sup>86</sup> As I wrote elsewhere, the hagiographers and official Jesuit historians (Alonso de Andrade [1590–1672]; Matthias Tanner [1630–92]; Francisco Combés [1620–65]; Pedro Murillo Velarde [1696–1753]) consolidated a dichotomous image between antagonistic cultures that not only justified the presence of the Jesuits in the southern Philippines, but also concealed the existing commercial relations between Spaniards and Muslims. Their tragic death promoted a theology of conversion that justified the *bellum iustum* (just war) against the "Moors" of the southern Philippines.

Unlike the *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, which features Jesuit missionaries transformed into heroes of Christianity,<sup>87</sup> the *Relación* extends to praise the courage of Governor Corcuera and his captains and generals, who fought victoriously against the "perfidious Corralat." Paradoxically, the heroes are not the Jesuit missionaries but the (Spanish) soldiers who defended the Spanish forts in the southern islands, without making any reference, of course, to the native contingents without which it would not have been possible to defeat him.<sup>88</sup> The continuous attacks by the "Moorish" Camucones, killing and enslaving the Christianized natives, desecrating the images of the churches, and stealing the chalices, jewelry, and other sacred ornaments and vessels, forced the Jesuits to become directly involved in the defense of the Jesuit missions in the Bisayas.<sup>89</sup>

In sum, missionary experience was therefore instrumental in mapping out geopolitical peripheries from the economic, political, and military center of Manila. Additionally, the *Relación* reflects the technologies of taxonomic homogenization of Jesuit knowledge, which undoubtedly affected the constitution of Spanish imperial knowledge production in seventeenth-century Philippines. In this vein, Combés's *Relación* has much to do with Iberian imperialism and commercial strategies to confront Dutch and Muslim expansionism. More precisely, his report reveals the interest of the governors of Manila, mainly Don Diego Fajardo and Don Sabiniano Manrique de Lara, in (re)establishing diplomatic and commercial relations with the Moors of southern islands.

86 Cesar Adib Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines* (Diliman, Quezon City: Philippines University Press, [1973] 1999).

87 Rodríguez-Rodríguez, "Old Enemies, New Contexts," 144.

88 Stephanie Mawson, "Philippine *Indios* in the Service of Empire: Indigenous Soldiers and Contingent Loyalty, 1600–1700," *Ethnohistory* 63, no. 2 (2016): 380–413.

89 Oña, *Labor evangélica*, fols. 48<sup>r</sup>–49<sup>r</sup>; 261<sup>r</sup>–262<sup>r</sup>.

#### 4 Postscriptum: The Blood of Martyrs in Mindanao (1655)

What was Governor Manrique de Lara's reaction upon his arrival in Manila? Was he convinced by Combés's perception to apply the American war-mongering model in the Philippine context? Certainly, as Brandon Bayne pointed out, this debate went beyond the missionary networks in China, Japan or the Philippines, reaching the metropolitan centers of Madrid, Lisbon, and Rome.<sup>90</sup> However, it could be said that this Constantinian model of forced conversion did not completely seduce the governor, especially in a context of scarce resources from Acapulco.<sup>91</sup> Quite the contrary. In November 1653, Governor Manrique de Lara sent Magino Solá (1604–59)<sup>92</sup> as diplomatic agent to the port of Macao to subject the city to the obedience of the Spanish king.<sup>93</sup> Since 1650, the collapse of the extensive Portuguese maritime empire in the East—the so-called *Estado da Índia*—was a fact. Portugal and the United Provinces resumed conflict and the blockade of Goa was reestablished in 1652.<sup>94</sup> The Macau authorities received no news from the capital; however, the Portuguese enclave still remained strategic for trade and access to other “spiritual fishing grounds,” such as China, Cambodia, and Siam.<sup>95</sup> The *Carreira da Índia* had ceased to be operational because of the Dutch military offensive, so the governor of Manila and the Jesuits took the initiative.<sup>96</sup>

The military conquests or “entradas” in the Philippines cannot be understood without the double equation of the “conversion” of goods and the

90 Bayne, “Converting the Pacific,” 6.

91 Sabiniano Manrique de Lara, “Traslado de la carta del 9 de diciembre de 1662 de Sabiniano Manrique de Lara, al gobernador de las fuerzas de Terrenate, comunicándole la decisión de retirar las fuerzas que guarnecían aquel presidio para resistir a Cogsenia, tirano de las costas del reino de la China y dándole instrucciones sobre las diligencias que había que hacer con el gobernador holandés de Malayo para garantizar la propiedad y dominio español sobre esos puertos y plazas...,” 6 de mayo de 1667 (AGI, *Filipinas*, 9, R.2, N. 34, fols. 363<sup>v</sup>–364<sup>v</sup>).

92 Not to be confused with Magino Solà “the elder” (1644–96). Our Magino Solà was born in 1604 in Girona. He arrived in the Philippines in 1632 and was stationed in San Miguel in 1655 before embarking as procurator to the court in Madrid (1656) (Descalzo Yuste, *Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas*, 607; 617; 722). They were probably related, but we do not know the degree of kinship. De la Costa confuses the two so that in his *Catalogue of Members of the Mission, the Vice-Province, and Province of the Philippines, 1581–1768*, he only mentions one, Magino Solà “the elder” (De la Costa, *Jesuits in the Philippines*, 664).

93 Oña, *Labor evangélica*, fol. 1373<sup>r</sup>.

94 Dauril Alden, *The Making of an Enterprise: The Society of Jesus in Portugal, Its Empire, and Beyond, 1540–1750* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 187–90.

95 Oña, *Labor evangélica*, fols. 1371<sup>r</sup>–1373<sup>r</sup>.

96 Charles Ralph Boxer, *The Great Ship from Amacon: Annals from Macao and the Old Japan Trade, 1555–1640* (Lisbon: Centro de Estudos Históricos Ultramarinos, [1960] 1963), xi; 361.

conversion of souls (*negotium crucis*).<sup>97</sup> Historians Bunes Ibarra (1989) and Martín Corrales (2001) have drawn attention to the construction of a stereotyped and negative image of monolithic blocks confronting each other in the Mediterranean of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This antagonism between Christians and Muslims, with a touch of the past, was in fact concealing the existing commercial exchanges between the Spanish ports and those of the various Muslim powers (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Tripoli, and the Ottoman empire).<sup>98</sup>

Historians Ruurdje Laarhoven, and more recently, Eberhard Crailsheim, have made the same arguments about the relationship between war and trade in the Philippines.<sup>99</sup> The role of Jesuits as non-state actors in the practices of cross-cultural negotiations and exchanges was highly valued. For this reason, they became indispensable diplomatic agents in reestablishing commercial negotiations between Christians and Muslims. Not surprisingly, on his arrival to Cavite (July 1653) Governor Manrique de Lara recommended the end of hostilities but especially the reopening of trade relations with the "peripheral" kingdoms of Macasar (or Makassar), Cambodia, Tidore, Calonga, and Manado (north of Sulawesi, in today's Celebes), and last but not least, with the islands of Mindanao and Sulu, as the best way to curb trade relations between the sultanates of Ternate and Magindanao and spread faith among the Mohammedan kingdoms of Southeast Asia.<sup>100</sup> On April 16, 1653, the sultan Cachil Kudarat

97 Alain Milhou, quoted in Fernando Ciarmitaro, "Política y religión: Martirio jesuita y simbolización monárquica de las Marianas," *Convergencia: Revista de ciencias sociales* 78 (2018): 195–225, here 200, <https://doi.org/10.29101/crcs.v25i78.10221> (accessed October 30, 2021).

98 Miguel Ángel Bunes Ibarra, *La imagen de los musulmanes y del Norte de África en la España de los siglos XVI y XVII: Los caracteres de una hostilidad* (Madrid, CSIC, 1989); Bunes Ibarra, "El Islam en los autos sacramentales de Pedro Calderón de la Barca," *Revista de literatura* 53 (1991): 63–83; Bunes Ibarra, "Felipe II y el Mediterráneo: La frontera olvidada y la frontera presente de la monarquía católica," in *Europa y la monarquía católica: Congreso Internacional "Felipe II (1598–1998), Europa dividida, la monarquía católica de Felipe II (UAM, 20–23 de abril de 1998)*," ed. José Martínez Millán (Madrid: Parteluz, 1998), 97; Bunes Ibarra, "Fronteras del Mediterráneo," in *Las fronteras en el mundo atlántico (siglos XVI–XIX)*, ed. Susana Truchuelo and Emir Reitano, 2 vols. (La Plata: Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación Universidad Nacional de La Plata, 2017), 1:196; Eloy Martín Corrales, *Comercio de Cataluña con el Mediterráneo musulmán (siglos XVI–XVIII): El comercio con los "enemigos de la fe"* (Barcelona: Bellaterra, 2001).

99 Ruurdje Laarhoven, *Triumph of Moro Diplomacy: The Maguindanao Sultanate in the 17th Century* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1989); Crailsheim, "Trading with the Enemy," 81–111.

100 Sabiniano Manrique de Lara, "Petición (1652) (AGI, Filipinas 330, L.4, fol. 271<sup>v</sup>); Manrique de Lara, "Libro de cartas (1654), (AGI), Filipinas, 285, N. 1, fols. 12<sup>r</sup>–13<sup>r</sup>. See also Sales-Colín, "Intentos de fortalecimiento español allende Filipinas," 385–86.

(or Nasir ud-Din) invited the Dutch to trade with his kingdom, either directly or through Chinese mediators.<sup>101</sup> As a result, the perception of the Jesuits was that the evangelization of the great southern island was seriously threatened by the continuing alliances between Kudarat and the Dutch. It should come as no surprise, then, that Combés, on the initiative of his superiors, wrote the *Relación* to remind the governor of his duty to protect the Christian Lutaos who had embraced Catholicism in the southern Philippines, especially since he had probably been one of their parish priests.

From their outposts in the Bisayas, Jesuit missionaries became indispensable agents in reestablishing negotiations with the Muslims. The chosen ones were Alejandro López and the Neapolitan Juan (or Giovanni) de Montiel (1632–55), who acted as diplomatic agents at the court of Kudarat. Their evangelizing work in the region, accredited by their knowledge of the language, qualified them as ideal mediators—in the sense of cultural brokers given to them by Clifford Geertz<sup>102</sup>—to conduct this type of negotiations. Their violent death in 1655, as well as that of the seventeen Spaniards who accompanied them, confirmed several things.<sup>103</sup> Firstly, the involvement of the Jesuits in the extirpation of the “false religion of Muhammad,” the only obstacle that prevented the completion of the evangelization project in the Philippines, as well as the opening of new trade routes.<sup>104</sup> Secondly, the importance of martyrdom as a culmination of the missionary experience, which became part of a complex process of occupation of the border areas in the southern Philippines. Finally, the confirmation that the *dar al-Islam* (Islamic world), and in particular, the figure of Kudarat, represented a threat to national security, which undoubtedly contradicted the Spanish underestimation of Filipino Muslims.<sup>105</sup>

As De la Costa noted, Governor Manrique de Lara aimed at taking advantage of the long-standing friendship between the Jesuit Alejandro López and Cachil Kudarat, first by dispatching a group of emissaries in 1653 to soften the blow after the incursions of the Caraga military post, whose greed “unsettled Corralat’s spirits,”<sup>106</sup> and then by sending an embassy headed by the Jesuits

101 Laarhoven, *Triumph of Moro Diplomacy*, 46.

102 Clifford Geertz, “The Javanese Kijaji: The Changing Role of a Cultural Broker,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 2 (1960): 228–49, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S001041750000670> (accessed October 30, 2021).

103 Manrique de Lara, “Traslado de una carta,” fol. 363<sup>r</sup>.

104 Coello, “Diplomáticos y mártires jesuitas en la corte de Corralat (Mindanao, siglo XVII),” 323–46.

105 Rodríguez-Rodríguez, “Retorno a Zamboanga,” 381–82.

106 Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas*, fol. 153<sup>r</sup>.

in November 1655 to reopen trade relations in southern Mindanao. López’s project was to build an episcopal see in Zamboanga, and for this he needed not only the authorization of Rome but also that of Kudarat.<sup>107</sup> In this sense, López appealed to the Dominican Francisco de Vitoria’s (1486–1546) principles on *communitas naturalis orbis* (natural community of the globe) a theoretical argument that recognized the inalienable right of people to move with total freedom outside their country of origin, to establish themselves and to trade, as long as the common good of societies was not threatened.<sup>108</sup> It was also a question of validating the economic interest of the Spanish in *algalia* (a musky-smelling, creamy substance, similar to musk, which, as Chirino noted, was obtained from Bengali cats, civets or viverrines),<sup>109</sup> wax and cinnamon from the southern islands, but at the same time claiming an ethical-moral precept: communication symbolized an act of liberation because it represented a diffusion of knowledge and the normativity of laws against superstitions and obscurantism of all kinds. Trade and diplomacy should therefore prevail. However, in order to do so, certain rules had to be respected.

From Zamboanga they sailed with three well-equipped boats to the court of the sultan, arriving on December 8, 1655. After a cold reception, on December 13, López and Montiel delivered a letter from the governor to Kudarat asking him for the “satisfaction to his lordship’s complaints about his poor treatment,” that is, to send one of his slaves, named Banua, son of a captive Tagalog, instead of a *datu*, chief or head of barangay, as his representative or ambassador, urging him again to build a church to attend the Christians of the region. Otherwise, the governor’s letter indicated that he “would make war upon him, and loose his lions that were eager to use their vengeance, and would bring it all to fire, and blood.”<sup>110</sup> Kudarat was offended by the arrogance of the Spanish governor and the Jesuits, particularly López, in the face of the imperative need to convert to Christianity, “for he was at the end of his life, and it was time to look after his soul.”<sup>111</sup> For this reason, he ordered to execute him at the hands of some lancers in the house of Balatamay, rajah of Buhayen and nephew of Kudarat himself.<sup>112</sup>

107 De la Costa, *Jesuits in the Philippines*, 445–47.

108 Francisco de Vitoria, O.P., *Relictio de Indis* (Madrid: CSIC, [1539] 1989).

109 Pedro Chirino, S.J., *Relación de las islas Filipinas y de lo que en ellas han trabajado los padres de la Compañía de Jesús* (Rome: Esteban Paulino, 1604), fol. 81<sup>r</sup>.

110 Combés, *Labor evangélica*, fol. 544<sup>r</sup>.

111 Alonso de Andrade, S.J., *Varones ilustres en santidad, letras y zelo de las almas de la Compañía de Jesús* (Madrid: Joseph Fernández de Buendía, 1667), fol. 679<sup>r</sup>.

112 Murillo Velarde, *Historia de la Provincia de Filipinas de la Compañía de Jesús*, fol. 235<sup>v</sup>.

What was Governor Manrique de Lara's reaction after learning of the Jesuits' martyrdom at the court in Balatamay? Did he continue to opt for a less aggressive and more diplomatic policy, following López's advice, or did he support the theology of war advocated by some other Jesuits, such as Combés? After the death of López and Montiel in 1656, the self-appointed sultan Kudarat organized an army under the command of the Balatamay rajah, who was ultimately directly responsible for the death of the Jesuits, which devastated the islands of Basilan, Marinduque, and Mindoro.<sup>113</sup> Diplomacy gave way to the language of violence when Governor Lara sent out military campaigns of punishment. In 1656, the governor declared that the Muslims were "enemies of the Church and of Spain" and that the Spanish had a duty and obligation to punish them for their crimes "in their own nests."<sup>114</sup> In 1657, he sent from Oton, on the island of Panay, "arms, money, and ammunition" to General Francisco de Esteybar (in office 1650–56), the outgoing governor of the Ternate's *presidio*, but a storm and the attack of the "Moors," helped by the Dutch, killed the Spaniards who were transporting aid from the Moluccas.<sup>115</sup> In 1658, they had better luck. However, the scarcity of resources, largely due to the intermittent nature of the Acapulco site, made it difficult to send regular supplies to the *presidios* of Ternate and Zamboanga.<sup>116</sup> Fearful of a potential invasion, on September 24, 1659, Governor Manrique de Lara ordered the permanent abandonment of Lampón as an alternative to the port of Cavite to prevent it from falling into enemy hands.<sup>117</sup>

## 5 Concluding Remarks

In a context of globalization of European wars,<sup>118</sup> the Jesuits expressed this language of violence in the production and circulation of reports, hagiographies,

113 De la Costa, *Jesuits in the Philippines*, 450.

114 Combés, *Historia de Mindanao y Joló*, 582.

115 Manrique de Lara, "Traslado de una carta," fols. 360<sup>r</sup>–362<sup>r</sup>; Campo López, "La presencia española al sur de Filipinas durante el siglo XVII," 190.

116 The concept of "socorro" refers to the Mexican *situado*, which included supplies, clothing, and silver coinage comprising of "pieces (or *reales*) of eight" used to finance salaries for the governor and the troop commander, stipends for the missionaries, payroll for soldiers, and everything related to war expenses of the Spanish possessions in the Philippines (Sales-Colín, "Inquisición en Filipinas," 367). See also Manrique de Lara, "Traslado de una carta," fols. 359<sup>r</sup>–360<sup>v</sup>; 364<sup>v</sup>.

117 María Baudot Monroy, "Lampón, puerto alternativo a Cavite para el galeón de Manila," *Vegueta* 20 (2020): 21–48, here 31, 35.

118 Jean-Noël Sánchez, "A Prismatic Glance at One Century of Threats on the Philippine Colony," in *The Representation of External Threats: From the Middle Ages to the Modern World*, ed. Eberhard Crailsheim and M<sup>a</sup> Dolores Elizalde (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 343–65.

and martyrdom accounts, whose interest was not historical, but didactic and moral.<sup>119</sup> Before 1645, the Jesuits had hardly published any works on martyrdom.<sup>120</sup> From then on, and coinciding with the martyrdom of López and Montiel at the court of Buhayen, in Mindanao, the Society of Jesus projected a martyr mentality or *ethos* in some overseas possessions of great importance for the control of transoceanic trade between the islands of the West and New Spain. Likewise, in the southern Philippines, field experience of Jesuit missionaries such as Combés helped consolidate a dichotomous image between Christianity and Islam;<sup>121</sup> one of antagonistic cultures that, incidentally, lasted until the nineteenth century.<sup>122</sup>

The Society of Jesus did not simply defend the interests of a confessional monarchy and its allies, but rather a corporate model of globalized religious organization for the overseas territories.<sup>123</sup> Its members were actors in a cosmic drama dominated by contempt for the world. The idea of Spain as a tragic and chosen people characterized those "baroque spirits," willing to make the greatest sacrifices to rescue new souls and extend the faith in Christ in the porous spiritual frontiers—or "missionary frontiers," as Manfred Kossok would say—starting with the classic principle of the "common good."<sup>124</sup> The mission policy of the Society of Jesus in the Philippines was to repel the attacks of the Muslims in the south, to consolidate Christianity in the Bisayas, and to initiate a slow but decisive penetration into the Islamic sultanates of Mindanao and Sulu. In a context of political-religious expansion, the evangelization of

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- 119 As Mojarro sharply pointed out, "martyrdoms meant little if they could not be told to the wide audience of Christianity" (Mojarro, "Colonial Spanish Philippine Literature," 433).
- 120 Alejandro Cañeque, "Mártires y discurso martirial en la formación de las fronteras misionales jesuitas," *Relaciones* 135 (2016): 13–61, here 25–33.
- 121 Rodríguez-Rodríguez, "Old Enemies, New Contexts," 152.
- 122 M<sup>a</sup> Aguilera Fernández, "La reimplantación de la Compañía de Jesús en Filipinas: De la restauración a la Revolución filipina (1815–1898)" (PhD diss., UAB, 2018).
- 123 Harris, "Mapping Jesuit Science," 228–33. For a notion of confessional monarchies, see Ute Lotz-Heumann, "Confessionalization," in *Reformation and Early Modern Europe: A Guide to Research*, ed. David M. Whitford (Kirkville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 136–57.
- 124 Manfred Kossok, *La colonización española d'Amèrica: Estudis comparatius* (Barcelona: Avenç & Sociedad Catalana d'Estudis Històrics, 1991), 34. For a reflection on the historiographical concept of frontier as a dynamic area in the Philippines, see the works of Eberhard Craillsheim, "Las Filipinas, zona fronteriza: Algunas repercusiones de su función conectiva y separativa (1600–1762)," in *Intercambios, actores, enfoques: Pasajes de la historia latinoamericana en una perspectiva global*, ed. Aarón Grageda Bustamante (Hermosillo: Universidad de Sonora, 2014), 133–55; and Lorena Álvarez, "Los límites del Imperio hispánico en la confluencia de fronteras del Mar del Sur," in *Las fronteras en el mundo atlántico (siglos XVI–XIX)*, ed. Susana Truchuelo and Emir Reitano (La Plata: Universidad Nacional de La Plata, Facultad de Humanidades y Ciencias de la Educación, 2017), 97–140.

Mindanao obeyed the missionary plan designed by the Society and the Holy See within the framework of the Catholic Reformation.

From Rome it was considered urgent to strengthen the presence and action of the Catholic Church in Asia in the face of the advance of the “heretical enemies” (Protestants, Calvinists) of the doctrine. The missionary ideal of the Jesuits in the Philippines should be placed in a broader context related to imperial geographies. That is, colonial areas where the missionaries, as agents of social change, played a fundamental role in the construction of a political order. One of these agents, Combés, elaborated an ambivalent discourse—an unrealistic image consisting of representing “Moors” as second-class Muslims, and therefore, potential Christians in the near future.<sup>125</sup> A clear example of what Angela Barreto and Ines G. Županov defined as “Catholic Orientalism,” namely, the construction of a colonial imaginary, in this case, for the production of European knowledge of the southern Philippines.

Both the *Relación de las islas Filipinas* and the *Historia de Mindanao y Joló* constituted two cornerstones in the ideological structuring of the peripheral missions in the Philippines. The former, addressed to Governor Manrique de Lara, supported without reservation the military interventions of his predecessors. The latter aimed at a wider audience, defended the missionary identity of the Jesuits as well as the maintenance of the Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zamboanga’s *presidio*, considered the only way to curb “Muslim audacity.”<sup>126</sup> The Jesuits, as apostles of Christ, did not exclude the possibility of spilling their blood.<sup>127</sup> As witnesses of God, López and Montiel were elevated to the category of “distinguished heroes,” making the colonial space sacred where Catholicism was to be imposed. It is clear, then, that the Christian religion constituted an ideological and functional identity factor in relation to the history of cultural encounters generated by the expansion of the Spanish empire in the Philippines that cannot be ignored.

In conclusion, Combés was a Jesuit committed to the universalist character of the Society of Jesus, whose experiences in the Philippines, including the Moluccas, were imbued with a universalist and providential language that justified martyrdom for the sake of a “higher purpose.” In this sense, his work is not only an excellent contribution to ethnographic, botanical, and missionary knowledge, but is comparable to that of other personalities, such as Pedro Chirino or Francisco Colin, yet significantly less studied.

125 Rodríguez-Rodríguez, “Old Enemies, New Contexts,” 154.

126 Combés, *Historia de las islas de Mindanao, Joló, y sus adyacentes*, 640.

127 Blood, as Michel de Certeau put it, is the metaphor of grace (cited in Ines G. Županov, “The Prophetic and the Miraculous in Portuguese Asia: A Hagiographical View of Colonial Culture,” in *Sinners and Saints: The Successors of Vasco da Gama*, ed. Sanjay Subrahmanyam (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 138.