

Local History from Below: The Pulahanes of Masbate, Philippines (1898–1905)

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Abstract

In 1898, two years after the outbreak of the Philippine revolution in Manila, the people of Masbate, through the Pulahanes, fought the Spanish colonizers in Masbate and Ticao Islands. First led by Pedro Kipte, and later on by younger leaders, the Pulahanes liberated Masbate from Spanish colonial rule. This article chronicles their armed struggle in Masbate from 1898 to 1905. Anticolonial resistance in the province in the 1890s emerged from below and featured peasants as the agents of revolution. In this respect, the paper offers an intervention in the debate over the class origins of revolution in the late nineteenth-century Philippines.

Keywords: Masbate, Masbateños, Pulahanes. Pedro Kipte, Philippine Revolution, Filipino-American War

Masbate in Philippine Historiography

The scholarly literature on Masbate's history during the 19th and early 20th centuries has been relatively sparse (Pelorina 2018, 50). The first (of two) volumes of Elias Ataviado's *The Revolution in the Bicol Region* (1999) devotes only a few pages to the province. Ataviado discusses the role of the Pulahanes—peasant rebels—in the revolution and their victory against the Spaniards in August 1898. He also covers the arrival of the Tagalog military expedition not long afterwards, describing their objectives and their encounter with the Pulahanes. Ataviado, however, did not elaborate on the alliance between the Tagalogs and the elite families. The second volume of Ataviado's book, which focuses on the American occupation in the Bicol region, excludes Masbate altogether.

If there is indeed a paucity of literature on Masbate itself, the Pulahanes of the province have received much less. Ataviado (1999) discusses them only in several pages in his two-volume work, and the secondary literature pertains to scattered references, as does the Historical Data Papers (HDP).¹ I have attempted to fill these lacunae in my own work (Pelorina 2018, 50–83), which discusses, in more detail, “Emilio Aguinaldo's politico-military government” in the province from 1898 to May 1900. The present paper, in contrast, focuses more on the Pulahanes. I enrich Ataviado's Pulahanes narrative, which ends in 1898, and extend the story up to 1905. Relying on the aforementioned sources and other contemporaneous sources, such as the Reports of the Philippine Commission and Taylor's Philippine Insurgent Records, I paint a composite picture of the Pulahanes' resistance from the 1890s to the early 20th century. In citing the HDP, I use the format, “(HDP + Barangay/Town Name)” for in-text citations. In cases where there are two names, HDP + A + B 1952, A refers to the barrio and B refers to the town or municipality. All HDP references pertain to Masbate. In 2009, I also conducted interviews with elders in the locality and with the descendants of Pedro Kipte in the towns of Cataingan, Cawayan, Mobo, Pio V. Corpuz, and Placer, and in Masbate City.

Masbate in the 19th Century

Masbat or Masbad was the old name of Masbate Island. It was occupied in 1569 by the Spaniards led by Captain Luiz Enrique de Guzman (Pelorina 2018, 52, citing Blair and Robertson 1903-1909, 41: 213). “Initially, the island was administered by the Augustinian missionaries from Cebu” and later, in 1688, by the Recollect missionaries (Pelorina 2018, 52–53). Proselytization was “carried out under the Bishopric of Nueva Caceres” (53, citing Blair and Robertson 1903-1909, 41: 217). It was made the Corregimiento de Masbate after the “conquest of Southern Luzon and the Bikol region” (Dery 1997, 72). In 1636, the island was subsumed under the *Corregimiento de Ybalon* and Catanduanes. Along with Catanduanes, Masbate was “restored as [a] separate administrative unit[s]” in 1846 (72). “With Guiom (also known as San Luis) as its capital, which was situated on the Asid Gulf,” (National Almanac and Guide of the Philippine Islands 1926, 456), the island was, by 1846, a *commandancia politico-militar* (Buzeta and Bravo 1850-51, 2: 511; Canovas 1859, 62; Robles 1969, 98–99, 101). It was “headed by the politico-military governor” to address security concerns, especially the “periodic Moro raids” in its coastal settlements (Pelorina 2018, 53). Some provinces were reassigned and/or retained in May 1849 (Montero y Vidal 1887-1895, 3: 86, cited in Robles 1969, 98–99, 101).

In the 1840s, Masbate had locust infestations for “seven years...., which could not be exterminated for lack of manpower.” Thus, people had to “abandon agriculture and devoted their time to hunt” (Mallari 1990, 21). Moro raids were said to contribute to the diminishing interest in agriculture.

The whole southern coast of Masbate was in the hands of the Moros. This could explain the inhabitants being a little enthusiastic about work (21)

Writing in the early 1870s, Gregorio Sanciango y Gozon noted that “many pagans live there.” Its agriculture was undeveloped.

Owing to the attitudes of the natives, I consider the uncultivated and royal lands in this district of no value. In general, they are hilly and covered with thick forests and clearing them will be very costly. At present very few are engaged in farming and seriously no one. As soon as they find out that the lands would cost them money, whatever gradual increase in farming there might be would disappear. (Sanciango y Gozon 1975, 152–53)

The existence of “virgin” forest in Masbate up to the second half of the 19th century was largely due to the neglect of agriculture and to the Spanish government’s forest preservation policy. In 1863, the *Inspección de Montes* was created to “protect the Philippine forests and regulate timber cutting” (Pelorina 2015, 58; cf. Bankoff 2004, 327). In 1868, this policy was reversed. The *Junta de Agricultura, Industria y Comercio* “advocated for timber cutting....to raise agricultural production and revenues” (ibid., see also De Bevoise 1995, 150–52). Consistent with the Junta’s objective, along with the need to control the malaria epidemic, Jose Guevedo, the head of the Agronomical Commission in Bicol, “offered a bold plan for Masbate” (De Bevoise 1995, 152). Backed by provincial governors, it entailed timber cutting to such a “considerable magnitude” (Pelorina 2015, 58) that it resulted in the “almost total cutting of trees in this island” (Guevedo quoted in De Bevoise 1995, 152). Eventually, forest clearing “led to the change in Masbate Island’s landscape” from having forests to being a “broad expanse of grassland” (Pelorina 2015, 55).

With its “extensive grassy plains [that] afford excellent grazing ground,” Worcester (1899, 336) notes that “raising live-stock is the chief industry” in 1880s Masbate. About five percent of its total land area was devoted to cattle raising, which was particularly prominent in the town of Cataingan, a name which comes from the word “kataihan,” meaning “a place of manure” (HDP Cataingan, Masbate 1952, 6–7).²

The Rise of the Pulahanes

The Pulahanes represented the Masbateños' incipient political agitation against the Spanish colonial government. They emerged from groups that have been collectively labeled *Dios-dios*, but were essentially religio-political organizations in many Philippine provinces (Marco 2001; Schumacher 1981, 145n34). In Masbate, the Pulahanes "originated in barrio Malobago" in Cataingan (Ataviado 1999, 87), the biggest town in Masbate Island and the nearest to Samar, which was a hotbed of Pulahan activity. They were led by Pedro Kipte, a resident of barrio Tanque originally from Tuburan, Cebu.^a

The name 'Pulahanes' was derived from the Visayan word '*pula*,' meaning "red" (Cullamar 1986, 2). It was believed that the color symbolized courage ('*katapangan*'), willing self-sacrifice ('*kahandaang mamatay*'), and readiness and capacity to fight ('*kakanyahang makipaglaban*') (Gealogo 1994, 15). Also known as the "Secret Society of Indihinas or indihinas" (indigenous) (HDP Palanas, Masbate 1952, 2–3), the Pulahanes identified themselves with the Katipunan, the revolutionary organization of Andres Bonifacio (Talde 2001, 181; Ataviado 1999, 157). The "major cause of the Pulahanes uprisings" in Samar was the "general discontent of the masses in the mountains and backwoods due to the oppression by the lowlanders" (Arens 1959, 361). In Masbate, the haciendas of the Spaniards enriched only a few, while many languished in poverty. In Cataingan, for instance, one hacienda "constituted an impediment and draw back to the economic progress of the people" (HDP Cataingan, Masbate 1952, 2). Indeed, three big haciendas comprising about 35,000 hectares—owned by the Valdez (28,000 hectares), Martinez (5,000 hectares), and the Moñus families (HDP Cataingan, Masbate 1952, 6; Ching 2009, n.p.)—were devoted to cattle grazing in Cataingan. They were located in Placer (which became a town in 1948), Casabangan, and Cataingan town proper. Sheltering thousands of cattle, carabaos, and horses, they covered most of the town's total land area. The cattle were kept in what is now the town's present site before

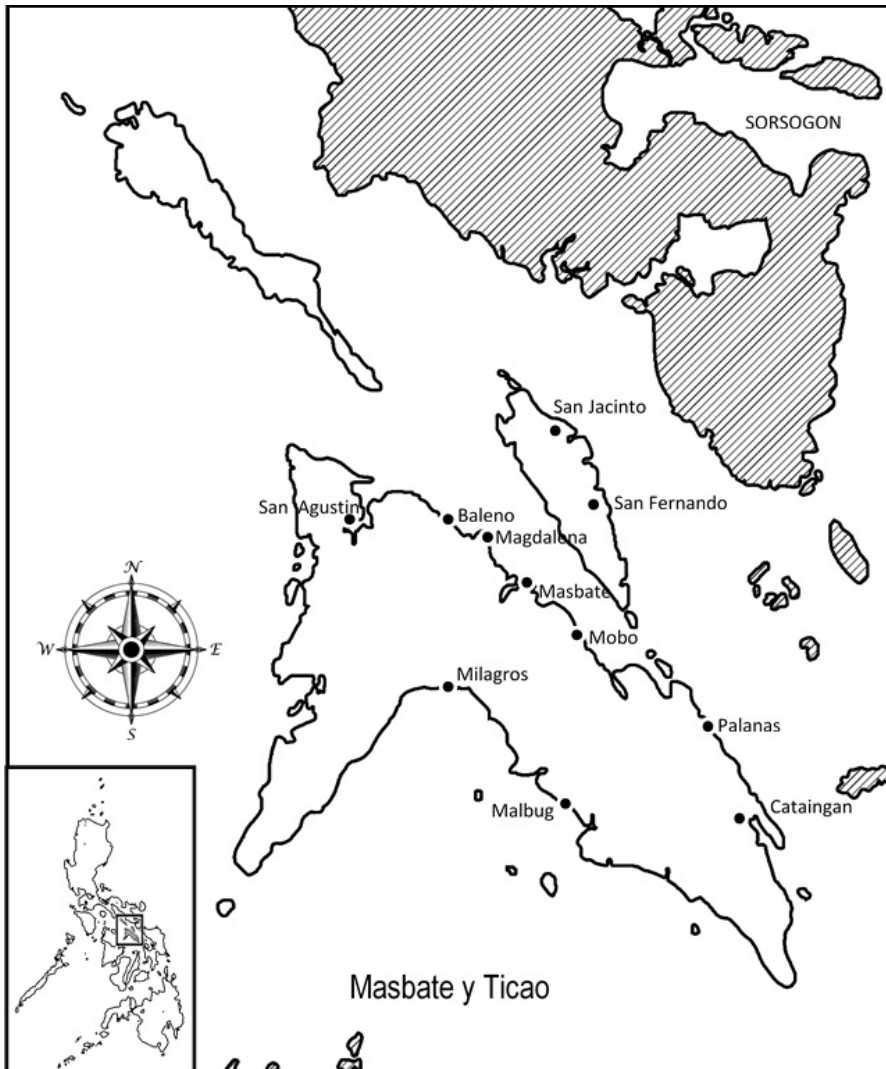


Figure 1: Masbate Province Circa 1900 (By Tirso Arreza)

they were delivered annually to Manila, Cebu, and Leyte (HDP Cataingan, Masbate 1952, 2). The Valdez hacienda in Cataingan was particularly controversial. The “owners” had the lands registered with the Bureau of Lands during the American colonial period, but met the protests of more than 1,000 claimants (HDP Cataingan, Masbate 1952, 2). The case still had not been resolved in the early 1950s.

The Pulahanes Drive Out the Spanish from Masbate in August 1898

Initially, the Pulahanes did not pose a serious threat to the Spaniards. Cataingan, the base of Kipte’s movement, was roughly 75 kilometers from Masbate (now Mayngaran),³ the capital of the island and the seat of colonial power. It was not until the end of 1897—presumably riding the revolutionary wave in Manila and elsewhere and noting Spanish weakness—that they began to strengthen their ranks and prepare for battle. Kipte built camps in southern and northern Masbate, particularly in Cataingan, Uson, and Mobo. From Tanque, they moved north and camped in Malobago in northern Cataingan. Another camp in the town was in *sitio* Puro in Nainday (now a barrio of Placer), the birthplace of his second wife, Maria Santa Rosa. In Uson, the Pulahanes’ main camp was in Dapdap.^b

Viewed as a *gamhanan* (powerful), Pedro Kipte attracted a mass following. He was believed to possess an *anting-anting* (amulet) (HDP Marintoc, Mobo, Masbate 1952, 18) that made him bulletproof (HDP Guiom, Cawayan, Masbate 1952, 3). He was also one of the “most dexterous fencer and wrestlers” (HDP Tagboan, Cataingan 1952, 71). Kipte was referred to as a “courageous general” (HDP Guiom, Cawayan, Masbate 1952, 3) and was addressed as “señor” or “capitan.”^c

The Spanish government in Masbate, who had monitored the Pulahan, got wind of their presence in Malobago, about ten kilometers from Cataingan. The plan to attack the group, however, was not immediately carried out due to distance and communication difficulties. As noted earlier, Cataingan is located about 75 kilometers from the capital.

The only way to Masbate then was from Mayngaran (site of the old capital town) near the Lumbang River to the town of Milagros. It did not link the rest of the towns of the island. “The towns and villages on or near the coast carry on intercourse by water or native craft (known locally as *baroto* or *casco*)” (U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1902, 650).

Finally, in June 1898, Spanish Governor Don Luis Cubero y Rojas decided to send a group of *tercio policia* (police force) to attack the Pulahanes in Malobago, but before they could do so, Kipte and his men ambushed them in sitio Gahit in the same town (Ataviado 1999, 87).^d Outnumbered by the Pulahanes, the police asked for reinforcements from the capital town. None came, either because Governor Cubero had a limited police force or because transportation and communication proved difficult. An undetermined number of government forces perished, and the survivors fled in panic (ibid.)^e Kipte’s men from Mintac and Domorog were instrumental to this victory (HDP Mintac, Cataingan, Masbate 1952, 50–51; HDP Domorog, Cataingan, Masbate 1952, 15). Only one Pulahanes—Lorenzo Sagrada from Mintac—was wounded. The Historical Data Papers identifies Kipte’s men from Mintac who fought in Malobago: Santiago Abilong, Anacleto Bentor, Lorenzo Sagrada, Basilio Abilong, Eduardo Francisco, Donato Losanto, Anacleto Colongon, Lorenzo Dignos, and Marcos Abilong (HDP Mintac, Cataingan, Masbate 1952, 51).

The triumph in Malobago added “prestige” to the Pulahanes and swelled their ranks (Ataviado 1999, 87). Kipte thought the elite would also change their loyalties. However, they belittled his call for support.

But not espousing any noble and lofty ideal, the movement failed to win the support of the intelligentsia of the province contrary to the expectations of the Pulahan chief. This indifference, bordering on hostility, on the part of the educated Filipinos of Masbate, provoked the Pulahanes to wage war on them, the Pulahanes considering them even worse enemies than the Spaniards. Confident of overcoming the small government force on the island, Pulahanes did not conceal their intention of decapitating these Filipinos as soon as they came within the reach of their bolos. (Ataviado 1999, 87–88)

Despite the lack of elite support but emboldened by their success, the Pulahanes inched towards the capital. They passed through Marintoc, where “so many young men joined his group to fight against the Spaniards... Agustin Esquillo, Martin Bagalijog, Bibiano Andaya, Santiago Macadat and others” (HDP Marintoc, Mobo 1952, 18). They proceeded north to Mobo—about seven kilometers from the capital town—and reached Pinamalatican. There, another encounter—where the guardia civil was defeated—broke out (HDP Pinamalatican, Mobo 1952, 36).

At any rate, amidst the Pulahanes resistance, “Governor Cubero confined himself to taking the best possible defensive measures” (Ataviado 1999, 88). At some point, he “asked General Rios (in Iloilo) for a ship to transport the Spaniards and loyal Filipinos who desired to evacuate” (132). But even though they had the upper hand, the Pulahanes did not attack the capital. They stayed in Mobo for “a few weeks” to recruit more (132), and received food and financial assistance. They used the *casa tribunal* (municipal building), the Catholic Church, and some houses as their barracks; they “burned [,] the house of the Spanish judge” and commandeered his “cattles [sic], sheeps [sic], ducks, and chickens” for food (HDP Mobo, Masbate 1952, 18). The elite families from the ten other towns of Masbate had already evacuated to the capital (see Rueda 1966, 167 for the town of Baleno; General et al., 1972, 109) and “took refuge” in the San Antonio de Padua Church,⁴ which was “tightly guarded by government forces” (Pelorina 2018, 59). Overcoming Spanish resistance, the Pulahanes sacked and burned the capital on 19 August 1898 (Ataviado 1999, 132). The Spaniards, priests and their supporters fled to Capiz, on board a ship sent by General Rios of Iloilo. Thus transpired the “Spanish exodus” from Kabikolan (Dery 1991, 162–63). It was the first province in the region to have been freed from the Spaniards.

Aguinaldo's Military Expedition to Masbate

Despite their triumph, the Pulahanes were set aside by the expedition sent by Emilio Aguinaldo to Masbate, which was under the command of Mariano Riego de Dios (Ataviado 1999, 153). This was one of the several expeditions to occupy the Visayas and Bicol provinces. General Vicente Lukban was sent to Bicol; General Ananias Diokno to Burias Island, Sorsogon, and Panay; and General Leandro Fullon to Panay. Aguinaldo needed Masbate cattle for the revolutionary army in Central Luzon (153). Learning of the Pulahanes' triumph, Riego de Dios met with Kipte and his men who "believed themselves to be part of the revolutionary forces from the day of their presentation in Masbate" (157). But the feeling was not mutual. He thought Kipte's men were fanatics, whose "large armed forces" was "unnecessary and even dangerous" (ibid.). For some reason, Riego de Dios "persuaded Quipte to disband them, but retaining only a small group for the latter's personal bodyguard" (ibid.). Kipte, meanwhile, was "absolved of all crimes of banditry and pillage and was allowed freedom" (HDP Masbate, Masbate 1952, 5). Riego de Dios then asked him to do an errand, but the latter never came back (Ataviado 1999, 158). Instead, he "returned...to Cataingan and joined his men after they had been 'disarmed' and 'disbanded' by the Tagalogs. For the Pulahanes, General de Dios' military expedition in Masbate was an 'invasion force' that led to their humiliating defeat....This defeat in the hands of their fellow Filipinos, however, did not dampen the spirits of the Pulahanes..., they returned to the woods and resisted the Tagalogs" (Pelorina 2018, 61).⁵

Meanwhile, Riego de Dios set up the "politico-military district of the insurgent government" on 9 November 1898 (Fernandez 1968, 132) in collaboration with the returning Masbate elite (Pelorina 2018).⁶ Capt. Vicente Trivinio Lardizabal y Borda, a Tagalog from Marinduque and "former adjutant to Emilio Aguinaldo," served as military governor (The Manila Times 1900, 2 (184): 1). The alliance was mutually beneficial. The elites saw the Pulahanes as a threat, while the revolutionary army protected

the elites, who in turn supplied Luzon with cattle (68). The new government outlawed the Pulahanes, who had “turned bandits” (HDP Province of Masbate 1952, 5). Some were convicted by the elites who served as town chiefs and judges under “Rule 18 of Aguinaldo’s June 20 Decree” (Pelorina 2018, 69). At the same time, Aguinaldo’s men committed abuses against the Masbateños (70–71), which elicited anti-Tagalog sentiments among the people. Thus, though the politico-military government in Masbate was in power for more than a year, Trivinio did not obtain popular support.

The American Occupation of Masbate

Trivinio’s government would rule Masbate until May 1900, when they surrendered to the Americans (Pelorina 2018; U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1900). The surrender was said to have been partly influenced by a Spanish merchant, Juan Echevarria (Taylor 1971, 5: 663), a resident of barrio Naro (now Dimasalang) in Palanas (U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1903, 204; U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1904, 854). The extent of Echevarria’s influence on Vicente Trivinio and Bonifacio Serrano (who served as military commander of Masbate appointed by Riego de Dios), however, is not clear. Echevarria was from Palanas, and Serrano hailed from barrio Armenia in Uson. Both towns are not far from each other; and the two men must have been friends since they were from elite families. As a merchant, Echevarria could have likely influenced Serrano and Trivinio to surrender to avert bloodshed and protect his business from the vicissitudes of war (Pelorina 2012, 250).

At any rate, on 18 March 1901, the civil government was established in the province. The town presidents (town mayors), as well as Bonifacio Serrano, who was appointed Governor (Williams 1913, 180), met with the members of the Philippine Commission, including “Worcester, Wright, Ide, Moses, and the presidents.” The town presidents and tenientes who represented the big settlements (towns and barrios) of Masbate were: Don

Francisco Baldemoro (Baleno), Don Marcos Acuesta (Cataingan), Don Jose de la Rosa (Magdalena), Don Galicano Pelino (Malbug), Don Perfecto Azuero (Mandaon), Don Gazpar Zurbito (Masbate), Don Pedro de Jesus (Milagros), Don Andres Ramirez (Mobo), Don Juan Alvarez (Palanas), Don Narciso Guevara (Palanog, former capital), Don Edmigio Celera (Placer), Don Calixto Libol (Uson), Don Valentin Caparina (San Agustin, now Aroroy), Don Bonifacio Dominguez (San Fernando), and Don Juan Altarejos (San Jacinto) (U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1901, 69–71). All of them agreed that Burias Island, a separate commandancia politico-militar created in 1831 under the province of Camarines Sur, should be included in Masbate and Ticao Islands in the Province of Masbate (Cavada y Mendez de Vigo 1876, 53; Hawaiian Gazette 1901, 7, Image 7). March 18 is celebrated today as Masbate's Foundation Day.

The Pulahanes Continue to Resist

Bonifacio Serrano surrendered to the Americans in May 1900. He had 300 men, and 250 others joined him. The rest must have flocked to the Pulahanes, whose support base, the masses, remained hostile to the new colonial power. An American correspondent observed that “there were no amigos to be seen anywhere” (The Manila Times 1900, 2 (172): 1). The Pulahanes—branded by the Americans as “*ladrones*” (thieves)—scattered, harassed, and engaged them in intermittent battles in Baleno, Cataingan, Milagros, Mobo, and Palanas. “It is said that there were about three hundred well-armed insurgents (Pulahanes) strongly posted in Mobo, four miles away from Palanoc (Palanog), waiting for the Americans” after the Tagalog-led government surrendered (ibid.).

At this point, Pedro Kipte was no longer involved in the anti-American resistance. His name does not appear in the American Commission reports from 1900 to 1905. He retired to a private life in sitio Casia, Camayabsan (formerly part of barrio Nainday and now a separate barrio of Placer) in Cataingan, where he was buried after he died from an

unknown illness not long after the Americans occupied Masbate.^{b,d,e,7} Without Kipte, several younger Pulahan leaders, or at least members, emerged from the different towns of Masbate: Eugenio Gallardo of Baleno; Bernardino Baldomar, Bernardo Manlambus and Crisostomo Concordia of Cataingan; Pedro Bandol of Uson; and Leon Arco, Melchor Ablinde (also known as Melchor De la Cruz), and Dionesio Hamas of Palanas.

General Vicente Lukban, whose command included Samar, Masbate, Burias, and Ticao Islands, supported the Pulahanes against the Americans (Imperial 1983, 104), supplying them with “ammunition experts...as well as armorers and soldiers to assist the military activities” (91) in those provinces. Sharing a common enemy, Lukban and the Pulahanes forged an alliance and “worked as one” (290, n73; 1996, 1) after the task of defending the island was moved from the Department of Southern Luzon to the newly created Department of the Visayas, with General Miguel Malvar as the Commander-in-Chief.

Lukban sent two military expeditions to Masbate. The first one reached the island in mid-August 1900. They went to look for the “chiefs and officers who surrendered in May last” (presumably including Serrano and Trivinio) and killed Juan Echevarria (“an old Spanish merchant”) (Taylor 1971, 5: 663) who had facilitated the surrender, as well as his family in Naro in August 1900 (U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1903, 204; U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1904, 854; Arellano 1902, 1–5). Their bodies were hacked and thrown into the sea. A news report described the incident as a “terrible wholesale butchery” (The San Francisco Call 1900, 11). The Lukban expedition also engaged the “American detachment in Palanog.”

The Americans sent soldiers to the town and retaliated. They “suffered no casualties,” killed 15 rebels, and obtained eight rifles (The San Francisco Call 1900, 11). Among those captured were Melchor Ablinde and Leon Arco—Pulahanes leaders from Palanas—while the rest escaped. After a trial in the Masbate’s Court of First Instance, they were proclaimed guilty of murder and theft “because they have stolen everything there was in the house of Echevarria” (Arellano 1902, 1–5). Six were hanged (U.S.

Bureau of Insular Affairs 1903, 204). The second expedition of General Lukban came in early 1901 under the command of Major Claro Pimentel (Taylor 1971, 5: 682), who conducted military operations in Masbate against the Americans. However, little is known about the extent and accomplishments of these campaigns.

The setbacks for the Pulahanes continued. On 1 June 1900, the American detachment of the 29th Infantry in Milagros—composed of “27 men of Company B”—“received the surrender of 12 insurgents, who turned over 12 Mauser rifles and 310 rounds of ammunition” (U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1900, 217). On 11 June, Lieutenant Miller and the 29th Infantry “surprised a band of 21 ladrones (thieves)” under the command of Captain Jose Santiago (also known as Jose Tagalog), who was killed, together with 13 of his men. Three were wounded, and another three were captured. Only two escaped (*ibid.*; HDP Mandaon 1952, 4). Because of American propaganda and Filipino collaboration with the colonizers, many accepted the new regime, which provided education (HDP Cataingan 1952, 8), health, and sanitation (HDP San Jacinto 1952, 7) to help win over the Filipinos. Later on, a U.S. colonial official reported that “the people are very friendly and law-abiding” (U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1903, 204). The masses were originally supportive of the Pulahanes, but suffering from privations and hunger, they gradually softened their stance against the Americans. “On 1 February 1901, the insurgent commander in the island of Masbate wrote to Lukban that all the people in the islands, rich and poor, had become adherents of the Americans and had even gone so far to form bodies of spies to find out and report the movements and plans of the insurgents” (Taylor 1971, 2: 445). The Pulahanes did not help their own cause, and grew unpopular. They “...ordered the confiscation of all the property of those who did not abandon their homes and take refuge with them...everyone in Masbate demanded the shooting of these men....” (446).

The Pulahanes ransacked the barrio of Bara in Milagros on 16 March 1901 (HDP Bara, Milagros, Masbate 1952, n.p.), two days before the establishment of the civil government. But their resistance continued to

weaken amidst the persecution of local officials—the provincial governor and town presidents—who helped the Philippine Constabulary track, survey, and arrest the rebels (U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1904a, 854). On 14 July 1902, Pablo Salano, a *cazador* (hunter) from Leyte, was captured “in full uniform” by the Philippine Constabulary in Limbuan (now Pio V. Corpus), Cataingan. During the investigation, he said he came to “learn the sentiments of the people regarding the organization of a Partido de Cazadores.” Two days later, the “teniente” of the barrio of Alegria [also in Cataingan] arrested a cazador agitator and turned him over to the authorities.” The following day, the Philippine Constabulary “discovered and burned a ladron cuartel (Pulahanes camp) in [the] mountains of Cataingan.” By October 1902, “the last organized band” of Pulahanes “surrendered at Palanas” while on 5 January 1903, “two notorious ladrone leaders from Samar were captured in Cataingan....[they had] letters addressed to “Emilio Aguinaldo, Presidente politico-militar de las islas Filipinas” (U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1904b, 96). On 30 June 1903, Governor Bonifacio Serrano reported that Bernardo Manlambus, Bernardo Baldomar, and Crisostomo Concordia—young Pulahanes leaders of Cataingan—had been captured [in December 1902] by the Philippine Constabulary in Mintac with the help of Charles Babst, the town president. They were “brought to the capital town and placed in the provincial jail on the 25th of December 1902” (U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1904, 854). Earlier that year, on 10 January 1903, Governor Serrano “received a telegram from Governor Julio Llorente, of Samar, asking me [him] to send Manlambus, Baldomar, and Concordia to the town president of Calbayog, Samar who was to make a preliminary investigation against them for they have committed depredations in the mountains of Calbayog” (ibid.). Since no steamer bound for Calbayog was available at that time, Serrano kept the prisoners in jail until 24 February. On the same day, however, six of them escaped: Manlambus, Baldomar, Concordia, Melchor Ablinde, Leon Arco, and Andres Villasis—Pulahanes leaders of Cataingan, Milagros, and Palanas. The provincial authorities could not track the fugitives (ibid.). On 2 April 1904, Constabulary Sergeant Moscare and his men, accompanied by Charles Babst, town president of Cataingan,

“captured 5 Cebu ladrones, including its leader, Marcos Negapatan, who was killed while attempting to escape” (U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1905, 86).

Exodus to Samar and Leyte

By 1904 to 1905, the remaining Pulahanes leaders had fled to one of the islands between Masbate and Samar (*ibid.*). They joined the movement’s pioneers in Samar and Leyte, and chose Andres Villasis as their leader. A mestizo and a college graduate from Milagros, Masbate, he was a captain and was once assigned to the Artillery Division of the revolutionary forces (Hurley 1985, 240). He used two pseudonyms: Enrique Villareal in Leyte and Enrique Dagohob in Samar (233; cf. U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1905, 28–29). As the most respected Pulahanes leader in the two provinces, he acquired the title, *Jefe Principal de Pulajanes de Samar y Leyte* (Chief of the Pulahanes in Samar and Leyte) (Hurley 1985, 242). He and his men were known as the “Army of Cazadores (hunters or mountain men) of Leyte and Samar” (Hurley 1985, 238; cf. Tan 2002, 145–46). His exploits in 1904 are briefly discussed in a report of the Philippine Commission (U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1905, 28–30).

Villasis led the successful siege of Catubig, Samar against the Americans. He was a prominent fighter, holding the latter at bay in several battles. After several attempts to capture him dead or alive, the Americans chanced upon him napping in his main camp in the mountainous barrio of San Vicente, Catubig, Samar in September 1905. He and his 93 men were killed by the combined forces of the Philippine Constabulary, Philippine Scouts, and the American Regular Army (The New York Times, 1905; cf. Hurley 1985, 244–45). With their death, the Pulahanes’ resistance against the Americans ended. If few of them escaped and survived, it was already impossible to continue the resistance.

From the American arrival in May 1900 until “the provincial jail at Masbate was under constabulary jurisdiction from 5 March 1903 to April 1905,” there were “thirteen convictions” based on the records of the court

of first instance of Masbate. “A total of 36 prisoners have been confined therein during the year, none of whom have escaped” (U.S. Bureau of Insular Affairs 1906, 72). The number of deaths was not mentioned. However, based on the scattered figures from a number of encounters, it could be safely estimated that about 30 Filipinos died during the Philippine-American War in Masbate (Pelorina 2012, 333).

On the Historiography of the Anticolonial Struggle

The paper contributes to ongoing efforts to move away from a Manila-centric historiography of the Philippine Revolution and the Philippine-American War. In this respect, the study joins the works of Guerrero (2015) on the Tagalog provinces, Scott (1986) on Ilocos, Mojares (1999) and Cullinane (1998; 2014) on Cebu; and Abinales (2000) and Hawkins (2013) on Mindanao, among many others. At the same time, the present study makes a modest intervention in post-war scholarship on the class origins of the Philippine Revolution of 1896 and other anticolonial movements in the late 19th century.

Teodoro Agoncillo viewed the Philippine Revolution of 1896 as a class struggle between the elite and the masses. He theorized that it was a revolution “from below,” fought by the “masses,” “plebeians,” or “proletariat” under Andres Bonifacio, while the “upper” or the “aristocratic class” supported and sided with the colonizers (Agoncillo 1956, 45–120). He reiterated this argument in *Malolos: Crisis of the Republic* (1960). He emphasized that the upper class (*ilustrados*) took charge of Aguinaldo, went over to the Americans who were winning the war, and betrayed the revolution of the “have-nots” (Agoncillo 1960, 305–35).

In contrast, Constantino (1975, 61) propounded that Bonifacio and the “original leadership of the Katipunan” was “lower to middle-middle class,” which included clerks and nonetheless had close affinity with the working class to be “plebian” (163). Writing on the “political and economic revolution in the nineteenth century,” Fast and Richardson (1979) seconds

Constantino's view. Schumacher (1998, 5: 144) also states that the Katipunan was "not a mass organization," but "one chiefly made up of middle class employees in the city and local municipal captains in Cavite and some other Tagalog provinces," a point with which Guerrero concurs (1998, 5:151, 153–54). Likewise, Cullinane (2014) illustrates how the participants in the 3 April 1898 revolt in Cebu came mostly from the middle class, serving as municipal employees and municipal officeholders, including *gobernadorcillos* and *cabezas de barangay*.

Even so, the revolution in Masbate, however, illustrates an anticolonial struggle that did come from below, as Agoncillo had imagined the Katipunan to be. In Masbate, the masses fought the Spaniards and the Americans, with whom the elite collaborated and supported. In this sense, the anticolonial struggle in the island differed from, say, those in Central Luzon, Cebu, Cavite, and other (semi-)urbanized provinces. In a highly rural environment, peasants, not the salaried employees or the lower middle class, fought the colonizers and freed Masbate from Spain's oppressive rule. In many ways, the present study recuperates an instance of an "underside" (Ileto 1998, 29) in Philippine history that has otherwise been silenced and labeled "history-less, superstitious, manipulated masses, the so-called "pobres y ignorantes" (31).

Concluding Remarks

Pedro Kipte and the Pulahanes hold a special place in Philippine history because they defeated the Spaniards without any reinforcements from Luzon, Bicol, or Visayas. Today, many Masbateños, especially the older generation, can still vividly recount their struggles. During National Heroes Day, the Masbate Provincial government invites Kipte's descendants to the festivities, and they are often at the head of the parade in honor of their ancestor's heroism (Kipte 2009). At present, Kipte has no statue in Masbate; only a street in Cataingan is named after him.⁸ But the people now recognize him as a great Masbateño leader who eventually freed the people from colonial bondage.

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Conflict of Interest

The author did not declare any conflict of interest.

End Notes

- ¹ The Historical Data Papers is composed of accounts written by public school teachers in 1952, who conducted interviews in their respective towns to document local histories. Undertaken by virtue of Executive Order No. 486 of former Philippine President Elpidio R. Quirino, the HDP sought to preserve historical memories, as most records in libraries had been destroyed during the Second World War. It is now available at the National Library of the Philippines website. I am aware about the ongoing debate on the authenticity/credibility of the HDP. Norman Owen, for instance, has warned/reminded historians to take extra care when using it. I, for one, also found questionable entries in the HDP. Furthermore, the memories of informants who lived during the revolution or, at least their children could have been affected/diminished after several decades following the Philippine revolution. These, at any rate, could be easily detected by scholars who are immersed in the literature of the particular topic they are working on. Even so, there are many parts of the HDP whose credibility could not be doubted. There are many entries in HDP that were confirmed by the American Philippine Commission Reports: dates and personalities like Serrano, Trivinio, Echevarria, Jose Santiago, Enrique Villasis; the names of the many town presidents who met with the Americans during the establishment of the civil government in Masbate; and Milagros as capital of the Tagalog-led government. Moreover, the events mentioned by Ataviado appeared also in the HDP: Malobago as the place of origin of the Pulahanes in Masbate, and where the government forces were defeated; the Riego de Dios expedition; the election; the disbandment of the Pulahanes and many more.
- ² Cataingan was the biggest of the eleven towns in Masbate. These towns during the revolution were: Baleno with (5) barrios, Cataingan (18), Magdalena (3), Malbug (4), Masbate (5), Milagros (10), Mobo (7), Palanas (8), San Agustin (2), San Fernando (3), San Jacinto (5).
- ³ Mayngaran or Maingaran is the current name of the former site of Masbate (now Masbate city), the capital of Masbate Island. It is a barrio of Masbate City today.

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- ⁴ The name of the Catholic Church in Masbate, then and now. It is located in Quezon Street in Masbate City today.
- ⁵ The Pulahanes at this time concentrated in the interiors of Masbate. I had been looking for incidents/armed encounters between them from the documents I used, but could not find anything. I personally believe they resisted the Tagalogs. Unfortunately, this did not appear in the Philippine Revolutionary Papers nor in the HDP. Also, my informants in Masbate did not say anything about it. The Pulahanes' activities surfaced/began to be recorded only when the Americans came.
- ⁶ The influence and political clout of these elites—Bayot, Medina, and Zurbito—have been immortalized. The main streets of Masbate City today are named after them. The century-old house of the Bayot family (known as Villa Bayot) still stands. See Pelorina (2018) for details on their collaboration with the Riego de Dios expedition. Also, before going to Luzon in 1991, I studied at the Osmeña Colleges in Masbate, Masbate (it became a city in 1998), and personally encountered these streets.
- ⁷ Until today, Pedro Kipte's descendants in Masbate still visit sitio Casia, Camayabsan in Placer during All Saints Day, to set up candles and offer prayers under the coconut trees, the spot where Kipte is believed to be buried. I reached sitio Casia on 7 June 2019 and about 15 people accompanied me to the burial spot.
- ⁸ Little has been written about Pedro Kipte. This could have been due to the fact that colonial records are available only for the pueblos, while the mountain communities were left out (Talde 1999, 55–56). This paucity prompted me to look for, and interview, the living relatives of Kipte. According to Pacifico Kipte, the Kipte family was originally from Barrio Olivo in Tuburan, Cebu. Pacifico theorizes that the Kipte family migrated from Cebu to Masbate and settled in Barrio Tanque in the town of Cataingan sometime in the 1870s. But whether or not Pedro Kipte had already been involved with the pulahan organization before the family reached Masbate cannot be ascertained. It is possible that Kipte joined the pulahan organization only after his family reached Masbate. In his study of the Pulahanes in Cebu, Mojares (1976, 233–34) pointed out that the mountainous area of Tuburan town became the center of pulahan activities only in the 1900s, which was already more than a decade after the pulahanes reached Masbate.
- ⁹ The document can be found on page 528 of the PDF, not on the actual document.

Interviews

- ^a Kipte, Pacifico, Personal interview by Renato N. Pelorina. Dalipe, Cawayan, Masbate, 27 November 2009.
- ^b Santarosa, Margarito, Personal interview by Renato N. Pelorina. Puro, Placer, Masbate, 30 November 2009.
- ^c Pelorina, Ciriaca, Personal interview by Renato N. Pelorina. Capis, Luna, Placer, Masbate, 29 November 2009.
- ^d Kipte-Baguio, Teresita, Personal interview by Renato N. Pelorina. Tanque, Pio V. Corpus, Masbate, 29 November 2009.
- ^e Bolandrina, Palabia, Personal interview by Renato N. Pelorina. Tulingin, Tan-awan, Placer, Masbate, 6 June 2019.

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