

# Conquest of panay and other islands

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Legaspi's Cebu settlement had three important problems. First, there was a shortage of food and what the natives were used to eat was different from Spanish food. Second, misfortune struck the settlement. On November 1, 1565, a fire of unknown origin broke out in the settlement. Some twenty Spanish houses and the hut where masses were celebrated were burned. Third, the Spaniards were displeased with Legaspi's order that no Spaniard should take anything from the Filipinos without paying for it. This, together with the shortage of food, led to a conspiracy on November 27 under the leadership of Pablo Hernandez. The captain of the San Pablo revealed the plot to the master-of-camp, Mateo de Saez. The latter immediately warned Legaspi, who lost no time in arresting the conspirators. Hernandez was beheaded—those were times of harsh justice—but the rest of the conspirators were pardoned. And fourth, Legaspi was also faced with the hostility of the Portuguese who did not enjoy Legaspi's settling in Cebu. They sent ships to Cebu to spy on Legaspi's activities. In 1568, and again the following year, a Portuguese captain, Gonzalo de Pereira, blockaded Cebu in order to starve the Spaniards. With the aid of the Cebuanos, however, Legaspi withstood the blockade and succeeded in forcing Pereira to lift the blockade and leave the Philippines. In the midst of all these problems, the first reinforcements from Mexico arrived in Cebu on board the galleon San Geronimo on October 15, 1566. This made Legaspi happy, for it brought not only the news that Urdaneta had safely arrived in Mexico but much-needed soldiers from Mexico as well. Later two more galleons from Mexico arrived in Cebu on August 20, 1567, bringing additional reinforcements and supplies. They were commanded by two young grandsons of Legaspi's—Felipe de

Salcedo, 20 years old, and Juan de Salcedo, 18. With these reinforcements, Legaspi sent out various explorations to the neighboring islands for the purpose of securing more food and establishing friendly relations with the datus of the other islands. Later Legaspi received the information that food was abundant in one of the islands in the north. In 1569 he directed his men to sail to Panay. There, on the banks of the Panay River, Legaspi founded the second Spanish settlement in the Philippines. As in Cebu, he won the friendship of the Panay inhabitants by his policy of attraction. Many of these inhabitants were converted to Christianity by Augustinian missionaries. After that, Legaspi never encountered the problem of food shortage, for the natives brought the needed provisions to him. Legaspi was now ready to spread the rule of Spain to the other islands in the archipelago. With Cebu and Panay as bases, he ordered his men to explore the other Visayan islands. Captain Luis Enriquez de Guzman explored and conquered Masbate, Burias, and Ticao and claimed these for the Spanish crown. He got as far as the Bicol region, then known as Ibalon. In January 1570 Legaspi sent his warlike grandson, Juan de Salcedo, on an expedition farther to the north. With forty Spanish soldiers and some 500 Visayans, Salcedo landed at Ilin Island, just south of Mindoro, and took it for the king of Spain. From Ilin he sailed to another island, Lubang, northwest of Mindoro and close to the mouth of Manila Bay. There he met stiff resistance from Muslim defenders. Salcedo subdued them and finally captured Mamburao. This brought the Spaniards almost to the entrance of Manila Bay. Salcedo then returned to Panay to report to his grandfather what he had done.