

Maranao Oral Literature: In Search of Historical Sources

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ABSTRACT

This modest paper attempts to show that Maranao oral literature is indeed a source of historical data and information. Maranao oral literature not only serves as a vehicle of history but also reflects the culture of the people and their institutions. It is their own ethnography which gives a penetrating picture of their way of life. To understand the Maranaos is to understand their literature. Dealing with them also necessitates a knowledge of their literature which embodies their laws, norms and conduct, behavior, origins, beliefs, practices, and rituals. It is the basic reference to explain events and other social and political activities which are believed to be the legacies of the past. In other words, the oral literature of the Maranaos is the basis of any attempt to reconstruct their history, culture, and society because all things Maranao come real deep from that literature.

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KEYWORDS

Salsilah, *Darangen*, Maranao literature, *Radia Indarapatra*, Lanao, folklore, and oral history.

INTRODUCTION

This paper starts with the comment that in Cesar A. Majul's book *Muslims in the Philippines*, the Maranaos are not given equal space or treatment vis-à-vis their Tausug and Maguindanaon counterpart. Allegedly, such downplaying sprang from the fact that when Majul was in Marawi doing his research for the said book, the Maranaos did not allow him (together with Dr. Mamitua Saber of the Mindanao State University) to look into the so-called original *Tumbaga sa Butig* salsilah/tarsilah (genealogy).

Nobody has seen this legendary genealogy except the family that keeps it, but everybody talks about it. It is believed to have been written or etched in "copper plates" when Butig was *piamaloy* ("enchanted"). Enchantment could mean a fortuitous event like an earthquake or volcanic eruption, etc. There were earthquakes or volcanic eruptions in Mindanao recorded by M. S. Maso in his *La Seismologia En Filipinas* (1895) from the 17th century (1637) to the 19th century (1873). William Dampier mentioned the 1763 volcanic eruption of Mt. Makaturing in Lanao.

Tumbaga sa Butig is considered "sacred" and well-guarded because mentioned in the genealogy are: (1) families whose origin can be traced to slave ancestors; (2) families with *balbal* (*aswang*, vampire) background; (3) families whose reputations are marred by social disgrace; and (4) families with hereditary defects—mental or physical. Therefore, it is but morally logical

that said genealogy be restricted to the public for possible future abuses.

Any request to look into this original genealogy is always denied, even if it is for academic purposes. In fact, not all members of that family have ready access to it. If ever a request is granted, the conditions set forth by the family are quite prohibitive or discouraging. First, one must be a well-known genealogist himself; second, one must not use it politically and socially for personal motives and ambitions; third, one must know Arabic because it is written in Arabic script; fourth, it carries with it some curses of which researchers are never informed; and fifth, just to open it (even without reading it), one must be inside a mosquito net even during the daytime and sacrifice a carabao as offering. These requirements symbolically imply privacy.

The conditions and the reasons for its “sacredness” prompted one leading Maranao sociologist to remark that this genealogy simply does not exist. In addition, the identity of the family that keeps it is quite difficult to establish. Even when identified, that family can easily deny it. Moreover, most, if not all of those who sought it, have not seen it. Researchers have seen other genealogies but not the original. Further inquiry has led to some information revealing that there exist not only one but several “original genealogies” which, nonetheless, are still inaccessible for the same or similar reasons earlier cited. So, a tentative conclusion is that there is either only one *Tumbaga sa Butig* as claimed, or there are several, or there is none at all.

A well-known scholar like Majul is unlikely to fabricate an original genealogy for the Maranaos just to be included in his book or to give them equal space or treatment during the Spanish period. That is simply impossible because the Lake Lanao region was historically and geographically isolated during that period whereas the Tausugs and Maguindanaons were practically in

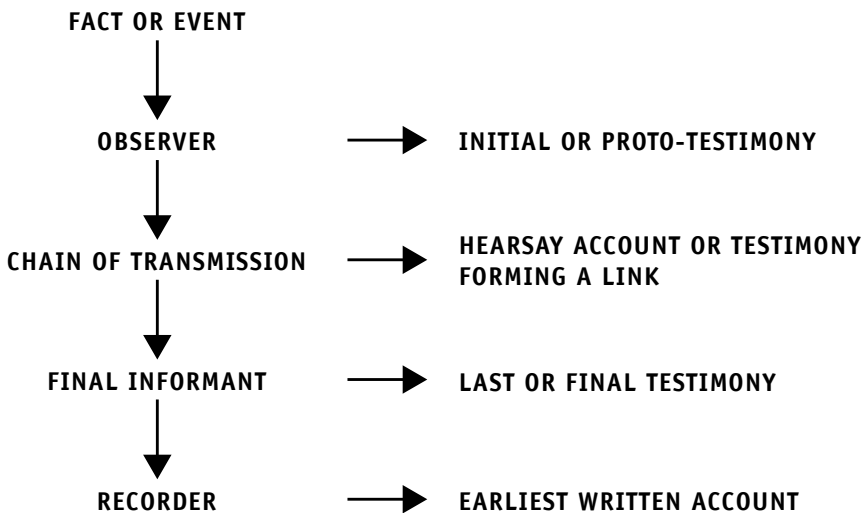
constant contact with the Spaniards with, of course, some space of respite.

The Spaniards, however, penetrated the Maranao region twice: first, during the 17th century (April 1639) led by Capt. Francisco de Atienza and the Portuguese-Recollect Fr. Augustin de San Pedro known as *Padre Capitan* and second, during the 19th century (August 1891 and March 1895). The 1891 expedition was led by Gov. Gen. Valeriano Weyler while the 1895 expedition was headed by Gov. Gen. Ramon Blanco. The first expedition was exploratory in nature and the second, military. These expeditions made no attempt to permanently occupy the region—a basic military tactical error.

VANSINA'S MODEL FOR ORAL HISTORICAL METHODOLOGY

The region's relative geographical isolation and historical circumstances greatly contributed to the development of a rich body of oral literature which the Maranaos claimed and believed to be the source of their history, culture, and institutions. Note, however, that the Maranaos in general have no historical sense. First, they do not write down their own history (*totolan*) and second, their genealogical accounts contain meager historical data, that is, no dates are given, and the descent line of personages and their respective names are emphasized than the events surrounding them. Their history is genealogical in nature which includes folklore, especially the *Radia Indarapatra* narrative and the *Darangen* epic. In short, history to them is nothing more than a mixture of genealogy and folklore.

In relating folklore with history, it is quite relevant at this point to cite Jan Vansina's (1965, 25) model for oral historical methodology as far as the historical consciousness of a given people or of an event is concerned:



Briefly, this model explains that from a particular fact or event to the recorder, both the people's actual experiences and the narrator's fertile imaginations are injected (or deleted) in the course of time particularly the way events, perceptions, or ideas are orally transmitted from one generation to another. In other words, what may have remained in the minds of the people is their historical consciousness of an actual event that may have occurred at one point in time but is now embellished with fantasies and finally becomes a myth, legend, or something similar. Citing Bosswell, Macmod Maguindanao stated that before writing was invented, "all human knowledge and achievement, including spoken language, were stored in human conscious knowledge, which is part of folklore" (Maguindanao 2001, 97). This is probably the reason why, in the words of Juan Francisco, the history of a people "as individual ethnic groups is woven in their legends and myths—ancient or even contemporary, for these are manifestations of a growing culture, a dynamic culture not enveloped in statism" (Francisco 1980, 3).

FOLKLORE: FACT-BASED OR FANTASY-BASED?

Oral literature, a field of folklore, consists of epics, folktales, fables, folksongs, legends, myths, proverbs, riddles, and the like. There are literally hundreds of them under Maranao oral literature alone which cannot simply be included in this modest paper. Even the titles are too long to enumerate. What can be done is to cite only a couple of them as examples but before that, it must be explained first how folklore can be used as a historical source.

There are four functions of folklore according to folklorist William R. Bascom: first, for entertainment; second, for validating culture in “justifying its rituals and institutions to those who perform and observe them;” third, for its role in “education, particularly, but not exclusively, in non-literate societies;” and fourth, for “maintaining conformity to the accepted patterns of behavior” (cited in Manuel 1976, 17).

It is within this context that Bascom states: “Folklore, like language, is a mirror of culture and incorporates descriptions of the details of ceremonies, institutions, and technology, as well as the expression of beliefs and attitude.” Then, he goes on to say that “It is, in a very real sense, their ethnography which, if systematized by the student, gives a penetrating picture of their way of life” (Manuel 1976, 16-17).

The *Radia Indarapatra* narrative or the *Darangen* epic functionally fits this view. In fact, either the narrative or the epic “can play a major role in the writing of history because it is, first of all, a historical narrative which shows popular perception of events, institutions, movements, personalities, etc. It also contains certain amount of social data and thereby, serves to a limited extent, as a vehicle of history” (Jose 1978, 4-5).

Ernesto Constantino asserted that in general “our oral literature is more closely related to and oriented towards our pre-historic and pre-colonial life and culture from which it must have developed.” He added that “our written literature developed as a result of the colonization of our country and is consequently more closely related to and oriented towards our colonial life and post-colonial life and culture.” Consequently, our oral literature “is more traditional or authentic and more ancient or original than our written literature” (Constantino 1980, 3). Speaking of Philippine epics or ethno-epics in general, Arsenio Manuel made this observation: “The stimuli and materials for these epics appear to be of native and pre-Spanish vintage. The bases for this view are as follows: Firstly, all of these epics have local heroes which are not Iberian nor Anglo-American in derivations. Secondly, the exploits of these heroes are not of the type that could be identified with contaminating cultures. Thirdly, the epic verses, with the exceptions of *Hinilawud II*, have no regularity which are unlike the literary creation of the historic period. Fourthly, these epics are mostly found among pagan and Muslim peoples who were never in reality brought under complete subjection by either Spanish or American rule” (Manuel 1963, 60).

These epics serve as a validating mechanism for the beliefs, customs, ideals, or life values of the people. Furthermore, Manuel explained: “The characteristics of the Philippine folk epics show that these ethno-epics are narratives of sustained length, based on oral tradition revolving around supernatural events or heroic deeds in the form of verse, which is either chanted or sung with a certain seriousness of purpose, embodying or validating the beliefs, customs, or life values of the people” (Manuel: 1963, 3).

Aside from being a “genealogical account of the mythological history of the Maranao” (Francisco 1969, 188), the *Darangen* has variously been described by some authorities as a sophisticated oral literature, or “higher literary levels” among

other forms of Maranao oral literature. It “has great beauty” (Saber 1961, 42-48); it “possessed beauty and dignity, hence, it might yet be studied for its aesthetic values alone” (Laubach 1930, 339-373); and it is the “centerpiece of Maranao literature” (Macaraya 1977, 14).

THE ANDANG SA MUNA AND ANONEN A RAWATEN CONCEPTS

In a seminar lecture, Dr. Mamitua Saber, a Maranao sociologist from the Mindanao State University in Marawi City, stated that Maranao literature (oral or written) represents the Maranao’s intellectual treasure—a part of their glorious history. Along with history, literature is a potent influence in the formation of ideas, values, and attitudes which when held in common, forge harmony among the people and their institutions (Saber 1980, 2). It is precisely in this respect that Dr. Nagasura T. Madale’s two Maranao concepts of *andang sa muna* and *anonen arawaten* are analyzed, particularly in relation to the *Radia Indarapatra* narrative and the *Darangen* epic.

As defined, *andang sa muna* (*andang*, old; *muna*, first) means “the ways of the ancestors.” The word “ancestors” here refers to the characters in the *Indarapatra* narrative, in the *Darangen* epic, and the founding fathers of *Pat a Pengampong ko Ranao* (Four Sultanate states of Lanao). The present-day Maranaos believe that their ancestors did really exist and live as portrayed in both the narrative and the epic. This claim is supported by their genealogy or chain of descent lines, which links the present generation of Maranaos to the characters in the narrative and the epic on the one hand, and to the Sarips Kabungsuan and the Alawi on the other hand. Not only are the narrative and the epic considered as *salsilah* but they are also regarded as genealogical accounts of the peopling of the area.

Anonen a rawaten means “the height of emulation.” Literally, *anonen* means “harmony.” When there is harmony, there is organization (as in the case of the *pengampong*, the indigenous traditional socio-political and territorial organization of Lanao); when there is organization, there is order (as in the case of *taritib* or *atoran* which binds the entire *pengampong*); and when there is order, there is unity (as in the case of Maranao homogeneity and brotherhood in Islam). *Rawaten* means “model” or “that which is to be emulated.” In this context, the ways of the ancestors of the Maranaos from *Radia Indarapatra* and the characters of the *Darangen* and the founding fathers of the *pengampong* to the Muslim missionaries are all *anonen a rawaten*. In this light, the literature is also referred to in anthropology as “charter.” Literature, charter, or *anonen a rawaten* is a reflection of the *andang sa muna* or the ways of the ancestors. In short, there is a continuity of historical consciousness from *Indarapatra* to the present.

So far, the most extensive study on *Radia Indarapatra* is Prof. Madale’s Ph.D. dissertation (1980). According to him, the *Indarapatra* story contains the record of the beginning of line of descent of the Maranaos. As such, the story is believed to be the earliest account of the ancestors of the Maranaos and considered also to be the beginning of the history of the people. This becomes the basic reference in the tracing of one’s descent line from *Indarapatra* down to the present. At the same time, it is also a mechanism to validate one’s rightful claim to any title in the traditional leadership or hierarchy.

Furthermore, Madale stated that the narrative as a document “validates their very existence as a group in the Maranao social structure” and that the “events believed to have happened in the past and recorded in the narrative are the bases for the explanation of events and ceremonies in present Maranao society—all of which are traced to the narrative. In this respect,

the narrative is *anonen a rawaten*—"height of emulation." This analysis is also applicable to the *Darangen*. Besides, Madale also claimed that the narrative is to some extent etiological in character in the sense that "it recounts the mythical origins of places which are traced back to *Radia Indarapatra*" and this serves as a link between the people and the past.

Undoubtedly, the *Darangen* fits perfectly into Madale's socio-cultural analysis of the *Indarapatra* narrative. In fact, minus Indarapatra himself, or the narrative itself, Madale would have been analyzing *Bantugan* and the *Darangen*. Though the following quotation refers to *Indarapatra*, it could also refer to *Bantugan*. He wrote:

The characteristics that the hero possesses become the "ideal" and the "model" that a Maranao hopes to emulate and achieve. For indeed, there is no other personality that has influenced the thinking and ideology of a Maranao than the hero himself. Every Maranao for that matter claims that he is a hero, adored by everyone, just like Radia Indarapatra. The hero as an ideal and model personality combines all good attributes and belongs to all realms; thus, he is *anonen a rawaten*—"height of emulation" (Tawagon 1983, 50).

Similar to what Madale wrote in his study of the *Indarapatra* narrative, some social activities mentioned in the *Darangen* are revived during important social occasions in the Lake Lanao region. In short, these activities are based (*riawat*) on the *Darangen*. In addition, a great number of beliefs, practices, and rituals which are now prohibited by the religious have their origin in the *Darangen* and occasionally re-lived and/or reflected by the people during important social activities. As Madale pointed out in his study:

In spite of Islamization, however, a great number of beliefs and practices which may be “pre-Islamic are still allowed to persist to this day because they are considered ‘*andang sa muna*,’ (the ways of the ancestors). All derived and are believed to have their origin in the narrative which is viewed as an embodiment of beliefs, practices, norms and other activities be it social, political, cultural and religious (Tawagon 1983, 50).

Just as in the *Indarapatra* story, the *Darangen* characters are also believed to have lived and existed and the events to have actually happened. It is known that the peopling of Lanao started with the arrival of Radia Indarapatra and his marriage to the water nymph of Lanao named Potri Raina Laut. Their sixth-generation descendants were believed to be the founding rulers of Bembaran. In this case, the founder and first ruler of the Kingdom of Bembaran was Diwatanda o Gibon whose descendants dominated the entire scene of the *Darangen*. One of these descendants was Bantugan, the leading character, who belonged to the third generation of the four generations from Diwatanda o Gibon to Botowanen Kalinan. Kalinan fled to Lanao after the destruction of Bembaran, married there, and his children became the founders of the *Pengampong ko Ranao*.

It must be noted that the *Darangen* is a “non-Islamic epic, though now profoundly Islamized.” It is still “the source of many themes of popular non-religious entertainment” and “the major source of wisdom and life models among the Maranaos...” (Francisco 1969, 188). Francisco (1969, 656) added that the *Darangen*, at least before the Qur’an was introduced as a foundation of a new faith, was “the primary source of wisdom, an article of faith which validated all actions of the society. It still functions as a social control, and at the same time a record of all that is to be emulated by the society...” He clarified:

The introduction of the Qur'an as a new faith does not necessarily mean that the *Darangen* no longer exists as a "source of wisdom and emulation." In fact, it functions much in the same manner as the Qur'an and still respected as a record of the ways of the ancestors, *andang sa muna*. The Qur'an only revitalized these records, being itself also considered *anonon a rawaten* and *andang sa muna* (Francisco 1969, 656).

Like the *Radia Indarapatra* story, the *Darangen* is also the source of wisdom and inspiration for Maranao conduct of behavior, thinking, decision and judgment, value systems and beliefs, practices and history, society, and culture (Tawagon 1980, 68). The concept of Maranao datuship, for instance which chiefly revolves around the political, social, and economic aspects of this system, is believed to have originated from the *Darangen*. Dr. Mauyag Tamano, a former president of the Mindanao State University in Marawi City, commented: "In the past, the datu's power, authority, and rank in the Maranao society constituted a style of life based on the legendary culture of the 'lost civilization of the city-state of Bembaran,' the pre-Islamic kingdom from which Maranao royalty is believed to have sprung" (Tamano 1969, 64).

For Saber, the *Darangen* as an ancient document "includes evidence, though obscure and difficult, to interpret of the history of the Moros and other Filipinos (see Tawagon 1983, 52). As a popular folk literature appealing to the emotions and ideas of the present-day Moros, it is evidence of the ideals and ideology that guides Moro behavior" (Saber 1961, 327.) The *Maranao Progress*, the capitol organ of public information in Marawi City (dated April 30, 1960, 4-5, 7) reported that the *Darangen* is "an interesting document to study the life and culture of the people during a period of a thousand years or more. Social psychologists could explain past and present behavior of the people through

evaluating the ancient morality taught by the epic. Students of literature could also appreciate the sharp imagination of Maranao epic singers by observing the beautiful poetic imagery of the classical Iranun language. To modern moralists, however, a great part of the entire composition bears lusty and war-like themes which are inconsistent with the modern desire for a tranquil and peaceful order of life.”

Once more, Francisco observed: “In traditional societies like the Maranaos, the literature—both oral and written functions in various ways. The *Darangen* as a body of tradition, apart from the story that it presents, has more or less functional as a bond that has stabilized Maranao society through the vicissitudes that it underwent in its history. It serves as a bible in which faith in their own continuity was anchored, for it was, and is still respected as a record of *andang sa muna*, “the ways of the ancestors.” At present, the epic stands side by side with the Qur’an as rock-foundation of Maranao culture (Francisco 1969, 188).” Finally, according to Prof. Batua Macaraya (former dean of the College of Education at the Mindanao State University in Marawi who also did research on the *Darangen*), since the Maranaos believe that the *Darangen* characters are their ancestors, the *Darangen* per se serves as a source material of their history, culture, and society (Macaraya 1977).

It is quite interesting to present at this juncture what Sultan Marmai Rasuman of Balindong said in an interview (October 1979) regarding Bembaran’s contact with other territories. He identified and named them as follows: *Komedegedeg a Ig* (Cebu), *Dagowatan a Orai* (Iloilo), *Madarab a Kalinan* (Leyte), *Lowakatan a ‘Ndao* (Samar), *Bagumbayan a Lena* (Luzon), *Natengcopan a Ragat* (Mindoro), *Minilalansai a Lena* (Palawan), *Solog* (Sulu), *Guindolongan a Marogong* (Borneo), *Bogabong a Komara* (Formosa), and *Diondian a Tina* (China).

The Sultan seemed to have no basis for identifying these places except, perhaps, his knowledge of geography. Common knowledge of things may not necessarily be facts themselves but that is what he believed them to be, to the best of his knowledge, places so far identified. On the other hand, Francisco called this exercise a game-guessing theory. But at least somebody for the first time had tried to identify those places and his attempt in doing so poses a challenge to scholars.

Another interesting point the Sultan had raised involved the names of the months in the *Darangen*. They are as follows: *Nagoinid* (January), *Sialin* (February), *Dagankahoy* (March), *Daganluan* (April), *Kilin* (May), *Inanapon* (June), *Kanai* (July), *Tagalain* (August), *Irapon* (September), *Manaholsol* (October), *Diraohan* (November), and *Katimegan* (December).

The Sultan further said that those were their months of the year and they had disappeared when the Spaniards came and changed them to *Enero*, *Febrero*, *Marso*, etc. In Mindanao and Sulu, because the people were not ruled by the Spaniards, the Sarips changed them to *Muharam*, *Sapar*, *Rabioawal*, etc.

Loarca's "Relation of the Filipinas Islands" in Blair and Robertson (Vol. 5, 165) mentioned the lunar calendar of the Pintados and the names of their months which had some similarity to those of the Sultan's. They were *Ulalen*, *Dagancabuy*, *Daganenan bulan*, *Elquilin*, *Ynabuyan*, *Cavoy*, *Yrapun*, *Manalulsul*, etc. How they happened to be similar is quite difficult to establish. Probably, the Sultan read Loarca's "Relation..." because he used to go to Manila accompanying former Senator Alawiya Alonto during the American period as well as during the Commonwealth period. The Sultan might not have bothered himself reading the Blair and Robertson book either. He did not know that there was this monumental 55-volume work. In an interview conducted at his residence in

Dansalan, Marawi City, he claimed he was 90 years old and had no higher formal education. He was a traveler, businessman, and story teller.

If myths are rationalizations of one's own existence, then they must have some elements of historical truth. In this connection, the Sultan said the people of Bembaran originated (descended) from their primitive ancestors. They had one *bangensa* (social rank or state; ancestry or a genealogical connection with a certain family from a certain place) from Radia Indarapatra and another *bangensa* (Muslim *bangensa*) from Sarip Makhdum, Sarip Alawi, Sarip Kabungsuan, Sarip Bong, Sarip Katiladupo, and Sarip Ali (Majul 1978, 1-78). He said that Sarip Katiladupo was the ancestor of the Tagalogs; Sarip Bong, the ancestor of the Borneans; the people of Tagoloan in Misamis Oriental traced their *bangensa* from Sarip Alawi; and the *bangensa* of the Maguindanaons and the Maranaos was traced to Sarip Kabungsuan (see Tawagon 1987, 37-40).

RANDOM SAMPLINGS FROM ORAL LITERATURE

FROM THE *DARANGEN*

On dressing up - The episode *Kap'lumna* describes in detail how the costumes looked like during that period. With regard to the wearing of this special costume or dress known as *dalano*, this episode vividly describes how Lumna, son of Bantugan, was going to wear his *dalano* from feet to head. Each detail was accompanied with the best of descriptions, movements, and acts. Wearing a *dalano* has to follow an order or a certain rule. As a rule, it should not start from the head down but the other way around. Lumna, for instance, began to wear first his tight-fitted trousers, then his belt, sash, and headdress (head gears?). Then, he took up his *koyang* (kampilan) and *klong* (shield) in that order.

Each part of his *dalano* had a special name and each part was assigned a movement.

On beauty – The *Kapagapiran* or *Apiran* episode describes the captivating and voluptuous beauty of Apiran in great detail, including her nose, eyes, lips, eyebrows, cheeks, hair, etc. Even the way she walked and moved gracefully, the way she dressed up, and many more were well-equally described.

On personal “cold war” – The *Kapagondoga* or *Kap’minoyod* episode describes a misunderstanding between Bantugan and Minoyod. This led to personal grudges between the two. For quite a long time, they were not on speaking terms.

On adoption of things physical – The *Darangen* talks of things physical being adopted by the Maranaos. For example, there is the *kapengipen* or putting gold around each selected tooth. Baratamai Lumna, or Lumna for short, had his teeth inlaid with gold. *Lamin* is a very special room reserved for young virgin ladies, especially for the royal family. This room is sometimes built or constructed high above the roof, or adjacent to a side of a house or just within the house but interiorly well-decorated. It is described in the phrase *So manga raga sa lamin* – “Ladies who lived in the tower,” lines 22 and 43 of *So Kiyaprawa-a ko Lawanen* or “The Abduction of Lawanen.” This is also titled *Kap’mabaning* or “The Story of Mabaning.” (*Darangen* no. 8, vol. 3, 241-341). The *torogan* (a large royal house or palace), just like the *lamin*, is occasionally mentioned in the same episode cited above. *Kapamalong* is the wearing of *malong* or cloth especially designed for various uses. A *malong* is made of three- or four-yard cloth stitched together leaving both ends open. It is used as a blanket, unisex skirt, basket, underwear, etc. *Kakinikini* is a graceful movement while walking in public. The swinging of right hand has to follow a certain angle and distance; the left hand has the special task of holding the *malong*. The buttocks

also swung a certain way. These moves are evident among the old-timers. Other practices include the use of *adimat* (charms, talisman, anting-anting); the *kambema* which blackens the teeth (chewing together of betel nuts, tobacco leaves, lime, *torsi* or blackening ingredients and others); and the giving of names such as Bantugen, Lumna, Mabaning, Lawanen, etc. is an obvious physical influence of the *Darangen*.

On things social – The *sagayan* or Moro war dance has been corrupted by modern sagayan dancers. Only a handful of Maranaos can do the best recreation or performance of the dance as described in the *Darangen*. Some kinds of games are also listed such as *kakoti* (playing of toy tops) and *kasipa sa manggis* (kasipa or sipa means “kickball”). Ordinarily, the ball is made of rattan. The game is part of Maranao special ceremonies such as wedding, enthronement of a sultan or *bae a labi*, and other similar feasts. The *kasipa* is played by a skillful team with their colorful team costumes. In the *Darangen*, the ball was usually a stone. *Manggis* refers to a rectangular or square box; inside it are prizes either in cash or in kind. There are other smaller things in varying forms that are hung around the big one. These are also prizes. All these are hung up on bamboo poles. To get the prizes, one should break or cut the strings or ropes that are tied to the prizes through the rattan ball. The prizes fall down by hitting the strings or ropes with the *sipa* with great force. Cutting this rope—in the case of the big one—or string—in the case of the smaller one—is done before with the help of some *tonong* or spirits. *Maratabat* (or self- or group-pride, esteem, loss of face, etc.) is also found in *Darangen*. Daranda, one of the characters, was always associated with displaying this pride. Slavery was only possible because of captives as a result of war or raids. Polygamy is a common practice among the *Darangen* characters. Bantugen alone had many wives and married women from almost all the places he visited.

Incest and intermarriages among close relatives (first degree cousins) were known in the *Darangen*. Lumna was the son of brother-sister Bantugen and Lawanen. The offspring of this incest is known as *noni*, which from the Maranao point of view, means “pure” in a sense that it is not “polluted” by another blood. Even Sarip Kabungsuan, according to tradition, was believed to have unintentionally or accidentally married his sister referred to as the *mimbet’lak sa tam’lang* (“born out of a bamboo”). Their descendants were also known as *noni*. At any rate, whether incest was consciously or unconsciously practiced, “nonism” as far as some Maranaos are concerned is a symbol of purity; hence, a pride and prestige.

On things cerebral or literary – From the *Darangen*, the Maranaos also learned the manner of delivering speeches, and engaging in conversations, etc. using quotations, proverbs, parables, puzzles, and riddles. If examples are necessary to illustrate some traits, qualities, and the like, speakers, peacemakers, lovers, etc. resort to and cite such examples from the *Darangen*. This suggests that in some aspects, the Maranaos have learned, developed, and applied the reasoning and thinking as embodied in the *Darangen*.

Kasekesakeb can literally mean “doublet” or “duologue.” *Sakeb* means “one facing the other,” hence, it is a problem-solution or question-answer statement. Today, as in the case during the *Darangen* period, the *kasekesakeb* is so common that people argue or debate through it, speak on various topics with citations from it, use it as part of their leisure hours or recreation, and apply it in the process of courtship, etc. Usually this *kasekasakeb* is long. One cannot speak or talk on something without giving any response, contrast, compliment, or the like. An example of this in the *Kap’lumna* episode is the *sampiri-nori* relation. The *nori* (a parrot) should be mentioned once the *sampiri* (another bird) is said. Likewise, in courtship, once

a lover or suitor speaks of love, someone in the house of the girl responds with a counterpart of his statement.

This kind of intellectual activity can go on deeper and deeper. The loser, needless to say, is often the one who has limited knowledge of the *Darangen*. It is also a measurement of one's ability and understanding of the *Darangen* and Maranao culture. Otherwise, one cannot participate in the *kasekesakeb*. Thus, the *Darangen* serves as a guideline for public speaking, oration, *bayok* (songs), and other literary activities and performances as well as a guideline for knowing Maranao society and culture. As Saber pointed out:

These themes and actions to which the Maranao today respond provide important clues to the understanding of Maranao behavior, for they are crystallizations or symbolic representations of the underlying imagery and ideology of Maranao society. As we observe and understand those things at which men applaud, those characters of the heroes after which the children pattern themselves—as we see what these are, we learn about the kinds of themes which can be used in speaking to the Maranao (Saber 1961, 329).

On beliefs and practices – There are a lot of cultural beliefs and practices of the Maranaos originating from the epic period which are still observed and practiced in rural places today. One cannot divorce the *Darangen* influences in molding and shaping the behavioral pattern, thinking, and attributes of the Maranaos. The *Darangen* contains incidents related to these beliefs and practices involving the characters.

The Maranaos strongly believe that these beliefs and practices were handed down to them by the *Darangen*. The *Darangen* personalities exhibited strong belief and always relied

on their *tonong* (whether water spirits, hill/mountain spirits, or above-the-ground spirits) for help in times of emergency, famine, epidemic, illnesses, actual or cold war, etc. These *tonong* could be used for and/or against anything or anyone depending on the situations or the persons who called for them. On the other hand, the *tonong* were always present and ready to obey the persons to whom they owed allegiance and respect. Sometimes, the *tonong* of the rival factions were the ones fighting for the *Darangen* characters and kingdoms.

The *Katonong-tonong* (divination, incantation) is widespread among the Maranaos of today. This can be seen in many practices such as offering chicken and food to the water spirits; mysteriousness of the balete trees; *apo* (a tornado-like waterspout); burning of incense at planting or harvesting time; belief that the sick are possessed by spirits; doing certain destructive practices such as *pantak*; and many more.

Pantak (sorcery, witchcraft, black magic) is a practice which refers to the killing of one's enemy or betraying one's own friend by the use of spirit. This is usually done by using an orange stuck with needles around it and attached to a bamboo stick with a long wig as tail. At night, when the *pamamantak* (one who practices *pantak*) is ready, he sets the *pantak* to the direction where his enemy or intended victim is. Carried by a spirit, the *pantak* flies in a form similar to a shooting star which disappears quickly from one's sight. (This author had seen one a long time ago which, for sure, was not a shooting star but a *pantak*). Natives say that it would be more dangerous for the *pantak* to disappear and fall into the ground from where it goes unnoticed towards the would-be victim who, once struck would suddenly die. However, there is an antidote to this.

From the point of view of the Maranaos, this *katonong-tonong* really originated from and influenced by the *Darangen*.

Undeniably, however, this practice has been a part of the Filipino belief system. It must be acknowledged that in some respect, some practices are found in other places and some are not. There are some similarities, differences, or modifications of the same practices in different localities depending on local conditions.

Related to this is the belief in the *inikadua* or twin-brother in spirit form. This *inikadua* in the present belief can only be seen by the *pendarpa-an* (medium) who is believed to have exceptional power to communicate with and see spirits. This *inikadua* sometimes requests the *pendarpa-an* or even the *pamomolong* (quack doctors) to cure its real/material/earthly brother or cousin when the latter is sick or in dire need to be cured.

On the other hand, the *inikadua* of the *Darangen* characters were in *pepayag* form. The *inikadua* physically appeared and communicated directly with their brothers, sisters, cousins, etc. In short, these *inikadua* were directly involved in the affairs of their twins.

The *pepayag inikadua* of the *Darangen* and the not *pepayag inikadua* of the present lead us to question the cause of the change that has taken place from the *Darangen* period to the present. From the Maranao point of view, the present *inikadua* have not physically appeared since the destruction of Bembaran because, accordingly, man became corrupt and “polluted” as well. This implies then that as far as the paganism of the *Darangen* is concerned, the present Maranao society and culture are no longer pure. This impurity causes the *inikadua* not to directly involve themselves with their brothers. Besides, this impurity may be associated with paganism by the Islamic faith. Since Islam is strongly opposed to beliefs such as *katonong-tonong*, *inikadua* and most of Maranao beliefs and practices, it is presumed that these spirits cannot withstand the pressure exerted

through the active participation and penetration by Islam into the hearts and minds of the people. As a result, these spirits are afraid to physically and directly engage in and make contact with the “corrupted/polluted” and Islamized people.

The *Darangen* is also replete with beliefs about *pamamaloya* (enchantments). Every enchantment encountered was challenged by the inherent extraordinary power of the *Darangen* characters or their *inikadua* or *tonong*. It should be noted that the said characters can call their *tonong* any time for help. For instance, Lumna, in an impossible test, was helped by his *tonong* to reverse the flow of Guindolongan River, changed tree leaves into clothes, etc. (See *Lanao Progress*, vol. 1, no. 16: 1938, 8-9).

This belief in *pamamaloya* is still prevalent among the Maranaos. In short, it is deep-rooted, in spite of the fact that no one or no place had actually been observed, as enchanted or turned into something else except as the Maranaos claim and believe to have happened. Examples are the cases of *Botowanen*’s companions who turned into stone (in the municipality of Bubong) and water spirit; a horse (near the mouth of the Caloocan cove in Caloocan, Marawi City), a dog and a pig (in Tuca a Marinaut, Marawi); or a sala set (in Gadungan mountain, Ragain Ditsa-an municipality). Sometimes, this sala set is not there. According to oral accounts, the monkeys used to play there, etc. In any case, die-hard believers can point to some things or places being enchanted. It is also interesting to note that the source of this belief also includes Maranao legends, short stories, fables, and other folktales.

Whether the *Darangen* characters are conscious or aware of the existence of heaven or not is a matter of speculation. According to the theory of cultural diffusion or stimulus diffusion, the *Darangen* belief on the existence of heaven may have been influenced by Indian literature and philosophy or

indirectly by Islam through India, Malaysia, or Indonesia before Islam actually arrived in the Philippines. On the other hand, this belief may have evolved independently based on the notion that since the *Darangen* itself was independent of its own development, the *Darangen* characters had likewise developed this entirely on their own initiative without external factors. This is what anthropologists call cultural or ethnographic parallelism.

These, of course, are quite difficult to establish because both theories could be plausible. But the point is that the *Darangen* has something on such a belief. The existence of heaven is found in the episode *Kap'natengkopan a Ragat* (Lena). Here, Bantugen died and his soul was brought to the seventh heaven where it was kept inside a bottle, locked, and placed among many other bottles of the same kind and purpose. Each bottle contained a soul guarded by the Angel of Death. With much difficulty in passing the door of each heaven, *Madali* and *Mabaning* in their magic/flying shield finally got into the seventh heaven and with a hint, *Madali* succeeded in rightly taking the bottle where *Bantugen's* soul was kept. *Madali* and *Maabaning* immediately returned down to Bembaran, opened up the bottle and the soul came out and entered into the remains of Bantugen. Thus, he came back to life. This event was timely because the enemies of Bembaran were already on their way to storm the kingdom.

The *Darangen* also talks about pre-destination. This belief is found in the following line in the *Kap' lumna* episode: *makabulog ta koris a initanda sa palad na di ta a matag midalong o di ta kapanagadi*. The line simply means that people cannot escape what is written in their destiny. The Maranaos, thus, believe in fate.

On isa ka labo ai – Literally, *isa ka labo ai* means “one set of flags” displayed during special social occasions. This includes, according to Madale, the following: *sarimanok*, *pasandalan*,

sambolayang, paying-payong, dopo, pamanai, shabandar, panangan, gada-gada and kamentai.

This set of ground flags is found in three *Darangen* episodes: *Kapamandi*, *Paramata Selegen* and *Natangkopan a Ragat*. In relation to the *sarimanok* in particular, *Darangen* chanters of these episodes interchangeably use the *mera a bolawan* (golden peacock), *sarimanok* (“roaster”), and *nori* (parrot). Usually, this featherly creature is placed on top of the *sambolayang* flag or on top of the Rinamentao Mapalao ship from Bembaran.

On special occasions in the 1950’s and 1960’s, the Maranaos used to display this set of flags among motorized launches and *bancas* (canoes) around the lake. In the 1970’s and up to this day, this some sort of “fluvial parade” rarely takes place. And worse, the making, selling, and displaying of *sarimanok* is being discouraged by the religious.

FROM OTHERS

On the Battle of Bayang – An expression: *Lalis den sa Balintaw, korisek den sa Maguing* (“Shouting in Balintaw, loud weeping in Maguing”) is no longer heard and its meaning has long been forgotten. This phrase refers to the Battle of Bayang in Lanao in May 1902 between the Maranaos and the Americans where 400 Maranaos were killed in just one day or one night. As a result, the event was considered “the fiercest battle ever fought throughout the Philippine insurrection.” Balintaw and Maguing were places near Bayang.

On pangayaw and kalilang – Another common expression often cited in the *Darangen* and during the Spanish period is *pangayaw* (n. sailing). In Maranao, it is used in *mangayao* (v.) *tano* (“Let’s go sailing”) or *miangayaw* (v.) *siran* (“They are sailing”). Sailing here includes adventure, trading, slave-raiding, piracy

and attacks across the seas. From the early 1970's to this day, the term *pangayaw* has been replaced by another term: *kalilang* (n.) which means a festival of music, songs, dances, orations, recitation of genealogical accounts, Qur'an reading contest, and games. Especially, when the Maranaos say *mangalilang* (v.) *tano*, they mean "Let's go to the festival and play games." Playing games means "to attack," "to ambush," "to raid," or just simply "to engage in war" or "to join forces with the MNLF or MILF already engaged or about to engage in some encounters against the military."

On Ponga and Pengao – There is one story that is not so widely told. In fact, it is unknown to many. It is the story of Ponga who was portrayed as dumb because of his ignorance or innocence of practically everything. The story is "humorous in its treatment of theme and has a happy ending." The Maranaos have an expression: *Ba ka ri Ponga?* Meaning: "Are you dumb (or ignorant)?" Now, the term is replaced by *boda* ("dumb"). This is similar to the Pengao story. *Pengao* means "inarticulate person due to defects in speech apparatus." It is also a humorous story with a lot of Pengao's misadventures together with his friends who happened to be misfits of the society. Socially, the Maranaos do not want to be influenced by the likes of Ponga and Pengao. In short, they are not as popular as the Pilandok story.

On Pilandok – In one of the lectures of Dr. F. Landa Jocano that this author attended more than three decades ago, he said that of all the Moro ethnolinguistic groups, the Maranaos were the most "manipulative" and insisted on something they would like to have. There was no way of knowing whether these "manipulativeness" and "insistence" were based on his research or on Maranao folktales such as the Pilandok or not. But the fact remains that Pilandok, the main character, was described as very tricky. The *Pilandok* folktale historically or rather culturally has conditioned the Maranao mind in practically all his dealings and

encounters with others—Maranaos and non-Maranaos alike. In fact, almost all *Pilandok* stories deal with trickery or cleverness and perhaps including deception. The phrase *miamilandok* (v.) *peman siran* (“They are tricking others again”) is often heard. A lot of one's friends can be addressed as *Pilandok*.

On the origin of Lake Lanao – Long before, there was no Lake Lanao. Instead, there was the Kingdom of Mantapoli. To make the story short, due to the steady increase in population of the kingdom, the world tilted to the east because of its weight. The angels got worried and approached God, who ordered them to transfer the kingdom somewhere so that the world's equilibrium would not be affected. So, they uprooted the entire kingdom and transferred it. The place where the kingdom once stood looked like a basin. After centuries or millennia, the basin was finally filled up with rain water (now called Lake Lanao). However, the rising water threatened to submerge some newly established communities. Again, the angels noticed this new problem and after consulting God, they were ordered again to command the four winds to make an outlet now known as Agus River.

Two German scientists studied the geological origin of Lake Lanao in the 1960's. They stayed at the Dansalan campus in Marawi City. Briefly, their findings revealed that the formation of the lake was due to the movement of the plates that created mountains surrounding an area which looked like a crater or basin. Consequently, this basin impounded water. Further, they said that the age of the lake is 10 million years and the river is 4 million years old. Their finding contradicted the commonly held view that the lake is volcanic in origin.

It looks like then that there is some similarity between the legendary and scientific explanations on the formation of a basin. Is it merely a coincidence?

On raising many children – The *Two Hundred and Two Children of Loksamama and Loksababai* folktale may have been the basis for the Maranaos on having many children. The couple Loksamama and Loksababai were poor and had no children. They prayed to God for children and their prayer was granted. Loksababai gave birth to 102 children: 101 boys and one girl. The husband complained that they could not feed them all for they were poor. Except for the baby girl, they decided to dispose of them by throwing them into the cliff but instead of being killed, the children instantly became full-grown men. Again, to make the story short, by a twist of fate, luck, and hard work, all their sons and daughter became successful and were re-united happily.

To a Maranao family, having many children is considered an asset rather than a liability. First, having many children commands respect and fear; second, a large population means more votes during election time; third, having many children is an advantage in case of *rido* (family or clan feuds); fourth, there are more to be employed to augment income and help alleviate financial problem; and fifth, it is the family's pride to have the children earn all sorts of college degrees so that their names will be publicly announced through the streamers and their pictures displayed on tarpaulins all over the city and the province. Other families competitively do the same. But how can the family possibly support them all? They say they will find ways.

Of course, the Philippine Population Commission will not be happy about families with many children and the family planning program is admittedly not effective in the Lake Lanao region.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

To understand the Maranaos is to understand their literature. Their literature embodies their laws, norms and conduct, behavior, origins, beliefs, practices, and rituals which date back to the pre-Islamic period. It is the basic reference to explain events, social and political activities, and festivities believed to be the legacies of the past.

It is also important to consider how the Maranaos perceive themselves because these perceptions include the belief: 1) that the events that took place in their literature actually happened; 2) that the personages/characters in their literature were actually real; 3) that the places mentioned in their literature actually existed; and 4) that what they do are basically influenced or conditioned by their literature.

If the Vansina's model is to be used for oral historical methodology, then Maranao literature to some extent has some elements of truth which are predicated on the continuity of human conscious knowledge of the past albeit embellished with fantasies, now called folklore (unless, of course, the dictum that "lies frequently told become truth" is to be believed). Thus, the use of *andang sa muna* and *anonon a rawaten* concepts should be taken into account because they serve as bases for the reconstruction of Maranao history, culture, and society from their folklore.

Finally, since the Maranaos were relatively neglected in historical studies before and during the Spanish period due to historical circumstances and geographical location or isolation, they compensated for their lack of historical time depth by developing or producing a rich body of literature and art considered to be part of their history.

Despite the advances in science and technology which have become indispensable part of their daily life and activities, the Maranaos can never shake off their Maranaoness nor entirely divorce themselves from their folklore. In fact, even Islam has to some extent failed to penetrate the heart of Maranaos. Instead of the Islamization of the Maranaos, it is the Maranaoization of Islam. When confronted with a real-life situation, what prevails is the Maranaoness of the people, which comes real deep from their oral literature.

APPENDIX A

Relation of the *Darangen* to Maranao Life and Activities (Instrumental Values)¹

A. Model or Source Material of Maranao General Culture

1. Song for all occasions – general social songs, *bayok*; songs in formal gathering; songs for all special occasions; romantic songs, *kandongga*, *tobatobad*, *kapagondoga*; children's songs; sing-song storytelling, *kandomana*.
2. Source of other literary forms – parallel meanings or synonyms, *kasekaba*; antonyms; proverbs, *pananaro-on*; figurative speech such as metaphor, simile, allegory, and personification.
3. The *Darangen* as a poem
4. Language of Culture – pattern for mode and style for formal speech, oration, eulogy
5. Folk dances of the people described in the *Darangen*
 - a. Maranao war dance, *sagayan* (male)
 - b. The hand dance, *kakinolangan* (female)

- c. Lady's dance, *kamba'i-ba'i* (female)
- d. Gentleman's dance, *kandatodato* (male)
- e. Sipa dance, *ko'at ko kasipa* (male)
- f. Kolintang dance, *ko'at ko kakolintang* (female)
- g. Another hand dance, *kapangolilat*
- 6. Recreation and Entertainment
 - a. "Kickball," *kasipa*
 - b. Band music, *kolintang, ganding, tagongko*
 - c. Hand drum playing, *gandingan*
 - d. Races of all kinds – horse and other animals, boat, men
 - e. Chess
 - f. Children games

B. Rituals and Ceremonies

- 1. Marriage
 - a. Love and courtship
 - b. The use of go-between in marriage proposal, *pangangakap*
 - c. Bridegroom's dowry to the bride – discussion and presentation; gifts, *siwaka*
 - d. Marriage entertainments and festivities, *kambitiyara*
 - e. Wedding and solemnization, *kakewing*
- 2. Initiation into the warrior class, *pemosogen*
- 3. Infant name-calling
- 4. Investiture (assumption of power – crowning)
- 5. Death rites
 - a. Care of the dead in estate
 - b. Use of gongs, all loud-sounding instruments, cannons to announce death
 - c. Burial
 - d. Mourning and after-burial rituals
- 6. Birth rites
- 7. Fertility rites – vows to gods

C. War and Peace

1. Causes of war – affront or insult, loss of face, aggression, rectification of wrong, revenge, piracy and plunder, initiation of the warrior
2. Emblems of war, of peace
3. The practice of chivalry
4. Horsemanship
5. Military instruction
6. Naval instruction and navigation
7. Looting, captives and hostages, enslavement, vassalage
8. Suing for peace, parleys, treaties, fines and penalties
9. Implements and weapons of war
10. Conduct in war

D. Healing Art and Medicine

1. The medicine man
2. Witchcraft, magic
3. Medicinal herbs and other substances, chants, totem charms, enchantment, talisman, appeasement of the gods
4. The role of the priest or priestess in healing

E. The Arts (Practical or Applied, Fine)

1. Handicraft – embroidery and needlework, woodcarving, designing, coloring, weaving, fashion and style
2. Sculpture and painting
3. Construction and trades – houses, boats, carts and carriages, smithing, carpentry, merchandising

F. Government

1. Absolute monarchy
2. Officialdom, advisors, courts, laws, punishment and penalties

3. Hereditary succession
4. Ruling by consensus
5. Judges, civil servants
6. Operation of customs, traditions, practices, precedents
7. Loss of political power, abdications, forfeiture, banishment, conquest
8. Choice and election, appointment

G. Social Classes and Relationships

1. Social stratification
 - a. The ruling class—royalty, nobility, king, sultan, dato, prince and princesses
 - b. Middle class—landlord, the affluent
 - c. Freeman—artisan, tradespeople, professional
 - d. Slaves
2. Leadership—followership pattern
3. Hospitality
 - a. Reception, treatment, seating arrangement, entertainment of guests
 - b. Serving and betel nut-chewing
 - c. Gifts and other presentation to guests

H. Dress and Fashion

1. Body hygiene and sanitation
2. Use of body ornaments and embellishments
3. Style of dress and fashion
4. Hair style
5. Facial make-up and beautification
6. Toiletry, perfumery – taken from animals or plants
7. Use of superpower, magic to enhance looks and attractiveness

I. Education

1. Guided play activities
2. Learning by doing
3. Instruction in social graces for both sexes
4. Instruction in the art of government
5. Instruction in the art of war and peace
6. Instruction in diplomacy
7. Instruction through demonstration and imitation
8. Instruction in behavior under different conditions, respect for elders and other people, behavior in the face of adversity, behavior in the face of triumph, courtship, observance of court rules

J. Activities related to Economics

1. Collection of tribute (usually by force)
2. Piracy and plunder
3. Fishing
4. Booties and captives of war – slaves
5. Trades and handicrafts
6. Merchandising

K. Travels and Journeys

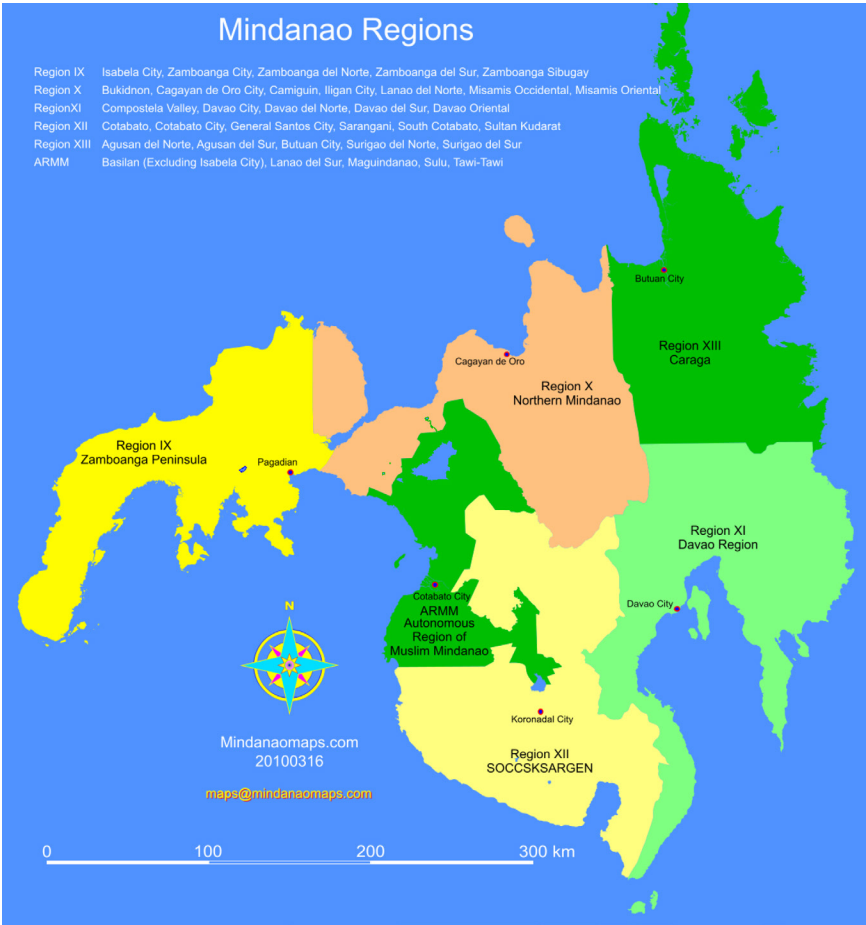
1. Travel by foot – local or foreign
2. Sea travel and navigation – foreign
3. Air travel – foreign

L. Modern Activities Foreseen in the *Darangen*

1. Air travel
2. Space travel and exploration
3. Exploration of the bottom of the sea
4. Exploration of the bowels of the Earth

APPENDIX B

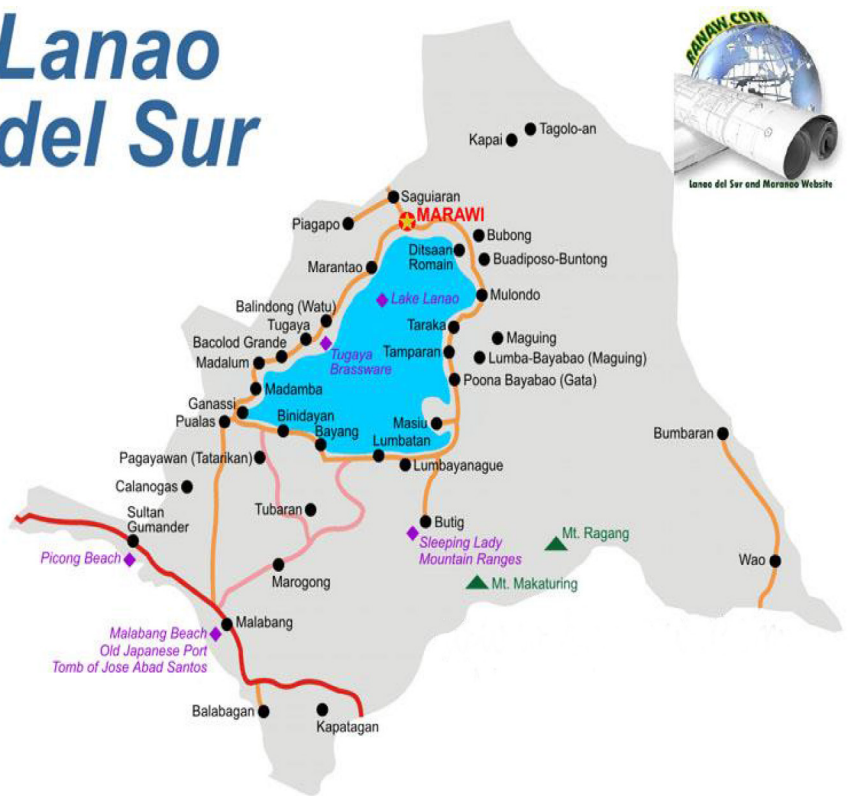
MAPS



Map of Mindanao

Source: www.mindanaomaps.com

Lanao del Sur



Map of Lanao del Sur

APPENDIX C

PHOTOS



Torogan (Front View)

Source: Aga Khan Museum, MSU, Marawi City



Torogan (Side View)

Source: Aga Khan Museum, MSU, Marawi City



Manggis

Source: Aga Khan Museum, MSU, Marawi City



Kickball

Source: Aga Khan Museum, MSU, Marawi City



The kasipa sa manggis game and contest

Source: Aga Khan Museum, MSU, Marawi City



The sipa game

Source: Aga Khan Museum, MSU, Marawi City

NOTE

- ¹ From Batua Macaraya, The *Darangen*, Centerpiece of Maranao Literature, a paper read at the Third Annual Summer Session on Mindanao and Sulu Cultures held on April 18 to May 13, 1977 at the Dansalan College, Marawi City, pp. 6-9.

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