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IN SEARCH OF JULANO TAUPAN: HIS LIFE AND HIS TIME

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PART I. HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND PRELUDE

INTRODUCTION

Spanish colonialism in the Philippines began with conquest of the coastal stretches of Luzon and the central Visayas in the second half of the sixteenth century. During that time, the Spaniards came into direct contact and conflict with various groups professing Islam in the southern part of the Philippines in the Sulu chain of islands and Mindanao. Among the most important of these different people were the Taosug and Samal of the Sulu Archipelago. The Spanish officials and friars called them *moros*, a term that was originally used to describe the Muslim North Africans who, under Arab leadership, ruled the Iberian Peninsula from the eighth to the sixteenth centuries. The term *moro* provided an ideological prelude in the Philippines to the Spanish colonial state's drive (1565–1898) to colonise the Sulu Archipelago and Mindanao. The Spaniards created an image, a composite portrait, of the Muslim Filipino's "character," that became a major intellectual justification for Spanish retaliation and religious incursion against the Muslim south over the ensuing three centuries. One of the most enduring characteristics of three centuries of Muslim–Christian relations and conflict was the susceptibility of non-Muslims in the Philippines to think about the Samal in stereotypes evoked by the term *moro* not only as a religious label but an ethnic one as well; a label for social identity to which cultural behaviours and practises, especially a propensity for "piracy" and slave taking were ascribed.

Balangingi. The name struck fear into the hearts and minds of riverine and coastal populations across Southeast Asia two centuries ago. Recently, ethnohistorical research has also shown that where Balangingi Samal raiding is concerned, old traditions diehard. The terrors of the sudden harsh presence of these well-armed alien raiders lives on in the oral recollections, reminiscences, popular folk epics and drama of the victims' descendants in the Philippines, and Indonesia, to this day. Only in one part of the globe, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, did Europeans find "piracy" flourishing extensively; pursued as a calling, not by individuals, as was the case with most of those who had followed the profession of buccaneering in the West,

but by entire communities and states with whom it came to be regarded as the most honourable course of life—a vocation. Piracy was a term invented by Europeans in the course of their encounters with Malayo-Muslim maritime peoples in Southeast Asia. The term, which first appears in the Malay literature at the end of the eighteenth century, criminalised activities that maritime populations like the Balangingi Samal traditionally considered political and economic in nature. Raiding, *merompak* (Malay), *magooray* (Samal) and *manggayaw* (Taosug), was a major feature of Samal political activity and commercial life, as well as maritime warfare.

Between 1800 and 1858, no one inhabiting the coastal stretches of the Philippines and eastern Indonesia was safe because of the global geo-political drama that unfolded in a series of acts following Britain's late-eighteenth-century entry into the China market, the sudden rise of the Sulu Sultanate as an entrepôt for the Canton trade, and the widespread advent of the Balangingi slave raiders. A Spanish writer described the wholesale misery inflicted over the next 58 years by the Balangingi Samal on the inhabitants of the Philippine Archipelago, as a chapter in the history of the Spanish Philippines, "written in blood and tears and forged through pain and suffering." Rampaging from one end of the archipelago to the other they instigated a "pattern of tragedy so recurrent as to become almost monotonous."¹ They preyed on cargo-laden sailing vessels and colonial merchant ships, disrupting inter-island and regional trade as they turned Philippine waters into a vast Muslim lake.

A REMNANT CULTURE

In 1941, R. Wendover, an American in charge of the "cutch" camps in Zamboanga province, overheard several men and women speaking Ilocano. When he enquired about how they came to speak this central Luzon dialect, one of the women, a second generation elderly Balangingi Samal exile, told her story:

She said her name was No-Jula, the daughter of Kasan, widow of Zalim. She was born in the Echague district about fifty-five years ago. She said her father, Kasan, had been captured by the Spaniards on Balangingi and had been taken along with the others, first to Zamboanga and then to Cagayan. Some of her relatives had escaped from Balangingi and had settled at Taluksangay, which was the reason why she had come here. Those of her group taken to Cagayan were settled near Echague, among the Ibanogs. They were at first put to work on the haciendas and kept under the surveillance of the government. The children were apprenticed to various planters to learn tobacco and corn cultivation. After some years they were given parcels of land and left free to sell their tobacco to

1. Pablo Fernandez O.P., *History of the Church in the Philippines, 1521–1898* (Manila: National Book Store, 1979), 203.

buyers. As they lived in their own communities they were allowed to retain their own religion.²

The Spanish had been quite successful in turning these once formidable maritime people into tobacco cultivators, and from No-Jula's account, they appear to have known nothing about the sea upon their return to Mindanao at the beginning of the twentieth century. Her memories of Cagayan were fond ones. "One could always raise tobacco there and we had money and made a good living. Here [Taluksangay] many of us are landless and living is very hard."³ In 1941, there were about two hundred families of the second, third and fourth generations of displaced Balangingi Samal living on a small island, Taluksangay, near Zamboanga.

Thirty years later, Cesar Majul noted that the descendants of the remaining exiles in the Cagayan valley were still recognisable, and the older ones could remember the Kalimah as recited by their grandparents. This corroborated information given to me in 1974 that small isolated pockets of Muslim Yogads, who were located some distance from Echague, still practised Islam and traced their original settlement to the defeat and deportation of the Balanging Samali in 1848.⁴

The Balangingi, at the time of No-Jula's interview, were a remnant culture. In fact, their ancestors had been hunted down following the end of the second Balangingi war fought between 1848 and 1858. Deported from their once impregnable maritime stronghold after 1848 and cut off from the leadership of their chiefs and kinsmen, No-Jula's parents and family had to learn new ways of coping with their political, social and religious conditions in exile, in order to survive.

In the early 1970s, I first began to explore the history of the Balangingi Samal and the life and times of Panglima Julano Taupan, their remarkable war leader. My task was to investigate his experiences, personal life and character set against the background of the evolution of the Sulu Zone and a longstanding maritime conflict with Spain. But there were no elderly descendants of his raiding band still alive. Now, more than four decades after I began my study of the Balangingi Samal, I have returned to the subject of Panglima Taupan, his followers, friends and enemies, in an effort to reinforce earlier insights about the Balangingi Samal and their well-known chief, with some additional research.

When Cesar Majul wrote to me in the mid-1970s about the Balangingi exiles, he believed that ethnographic evidence would be uncovered to establish beyond reasonable doubt the fate of those Samal men, women and children deported to the Cagayan Valley between 1848 and 1858. It was left to Margarita Cojuangco, to

2. R.F. Wendover, "The Balangingi pirates," *Philippine Magazine* 38/8 (1941), 323–38, 337–38.

3. *Ibid.*, 338.

4. Cesar Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines: Past, Present and Future Prospects* (Manila: Convislam, 1971), 15.

publish their story of defeat, dispossession and deportation, in 1993 under the title, *Kris of Valor*. Margarita Cojuangco has sympathetically recounted the odyssey of Taupan's Balangingi followers who were resettled in the Cagayan Valley to work on the *tabacalera* plantations. She has reconstructed the history of the Samal Balangingi diaspora spanning four generations of exiles, offering new materials, insights and an ethnohistorical perspective based on several periods of fieldwork in Cagayan as well as in the Mindanao–Sulu regions.

SOURCES AND PERSPECTIVE

In the official records of the nineteenth-century Spanish Philippines, Julano Taupan and the period from the 1830s to the 1860s in the Sulu Zone, is marked by the emergence of the Balangingi Samal, terrifying widespread saltwater slave raids, and a narrative of escape, revenge, pursuit, surrender and betrayal. In this paper, I go in search of Julano Taupan, his family, and those who fought with him and lived after him in distant exile as a conquered people—a remarkable story of great loss and survival. In turn-of-the-century popular idiom Julano Taupan was stereotyped as the *moro* warrior—fierce, treacherous, master of the ambush, deceitful and bent on revenge. But, a century and half later, “Datu” Julano Taupan, once depicted as a brutal savage, is now commemorated as a Philippine national hero in a famous park in the centre of Manila.

Fig. 1

Datu Taupan (Balangingi, c. 1848), Rizal Park, Manila. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LM_DATU_TAUPAN.jpg



The rare glimpses we have of Taupan are revealing. In a singular captivity narrative written by a Spanish lieutenant colonel, several first-hand Filipino captive statements, and a few flag of truce conferences his deeds and words were recorded. Panglima Taupan, when finally trapped and seized under a flag of truce in 1858, was still a physically strong active man most likely in his mid-fifties. The Philippine farmers and fishers who feared him and the Spanish naval officers who hunted him for years and later wrote described him using adjectives such as “cunning,” “bold,” “cruel” and “talkative.” His intelligence, courage and gift for languages guaranteed his people’s survival through calamitous, albeit terrifyingly incoherent times. Though Panglima Julano Taupan’s deeds and words altered the course of Philippine and Southeast Asian population history, his own complex story of involvement in Balangingi’s rise, his masterminding of regional slave raids, and his defiant response to defeat and eventual surrender remain in part untold—yet its echoes continue to haunt the littoral societies and cultures of the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia to this day.

THE SPANISH SOURCES

The labels *moro* and Balangingi provided a major intellectual justification for Spanish, British and Dutch retaliation and incursion against the Sulu Sultanate in the nineteenth century.

The 1848 defeat of the Balangingi by Governor General Narciso Clavería and his large task force is one of the most important military feats in the nineteenth-century annals of colonialism in Southeast Asia. A decade after the event, Emilio Bernaldez, who served under Clavería as an army engineer, wrote a first-hand account of the expedition’s journey to the Sulu Archipelago and Balangingi. His book details the story of this slaving community’s sudden defeat in the face of modern warfare, set against the colonial backdrop of wider social and political transitions and transformations in the Philippines. He recounts the courageous defence and ultimate massacre of the Balangingi at the level of the individual response, the bloody battles and hand-to-hand combat, and the capture and total destruction of the various Samal forts. How realistic is *Resana Historica de la Guerra al Sur de Filipinas*? Only those individuals like Emilio Bernaldez and Julano Taupan who experienced the hell of this small war could truly know what happened. In the minds of hard-bitten maritime raiders among Taupan’s followers, in the campaign correspondence of Clavería and his officers, as well as in the oral traditions of the Balangingi, the heroic battles of extermination between the slave raiders and the combined forces of the Spanish, represented to both sides their own great epic—their crusade or their Masada—but this epic proved no more true (or false) than any other. In the end, the largest diaspora of Samal people in their time, effected through war, forced removal and relocation was accomplished.

After 1852, while the Balangingi were staring defeat in the face, Panglima

Taupan's defiant actions triggered a general sea war that lasted until 1858. For the entire period of this war, he led hundreds of Balangingi warriors on maritime raids from their hideouts among the vast reefs of the Tawi-Tawi Islands in the southern end of the Sulu Archipelago. The second Balangingi campaign dragged on for six years, costing the Spanish colonial government hundreds of thousands of dollars, and countless more Balangingi and Filipino lives.

Lieutenant Colonel Ibañez y Garcia's, *Mi Cautiverio: Carta que con motivo del que sufrio entre los piratas Joloanos y Samales en 1857*, appeared in print several years before his death. Nine years after the destruction of Taupan's stronghold at Balangingi, the captive Spanish Lieutenant Colonel offers a point blank view of how Taupan's remnant band of seafarers roamed the Visayan seas in search of slaves, plunder and revenge. Lt. Colonel Ibañez y Garcia wrote down the graphic memories of his terrifying ordeal as a captive of Panglima Taupan. Ibañez's 1857 story is a remarkable case of survival against all odds. While living as a captive, the Spanish officer came to know Taupan's driven personality and character, while this fierce, intractable sea warrior conducted a devastating campaign of revenge and raids against the Spanish. Ibañez's small book offers a spell-binding account of a closely knit desperate remnant, a once powerful sea people, and their relations to their leader, the explosive reaction to the tragedy they had recently experienced, and what it meant then to be a hunted Balangingi Samal rather than the once feared "fishers of men." The audacious *panglima* seized passenger and trading boats, put coconut and banana plantations to the torch and landed on the coast of Samar at Lauan to kill men, women and children, obviously haunted by the memory of the horror of the battle of Balangingi and the tragic circumstance of his imprisoned family. For Taupan, this sea war produced no winners.⁵

In 1857, Lieutenant Colonel Ibañez y Garcia was given the backbreaking task of cleaning the hulls of the Balangingi raiding boats and lashing them to the shore as a tempest brewed. His hands and feet were bruised and swollen. After the storm passed, he had to scour the coastline for a starchy, fibrous wild tuber (*palao radix*), which the captives were forced to eat. The taste, according to the Lieutenant's captivity narrative, was absolutely horrible. Everyone suffered from cramps and diarrhoea. Ibañez grew weak from dysentery and vomited blood.⁶ Captives were often ill fed at various stages of the journey to weaken their will to resist. They were given barely enough rice, sago and water to survive, and the Spaniard was constantly taunted:

To further my agony, often during meal times, Taynan, Panglima Taupan's woman, would snatch the rice and fish right from my hands giving it to her

5. Luis de Ibañez Garcia, *Mi Cautiverio Carta con motivo del que sufrio entre Los Moros Piratas Joloanos y Samales en 1857* (Madrid: Imprenta de Gabriel Alhombra, 1859), 12–18.

6. *Ibid.*, 14.

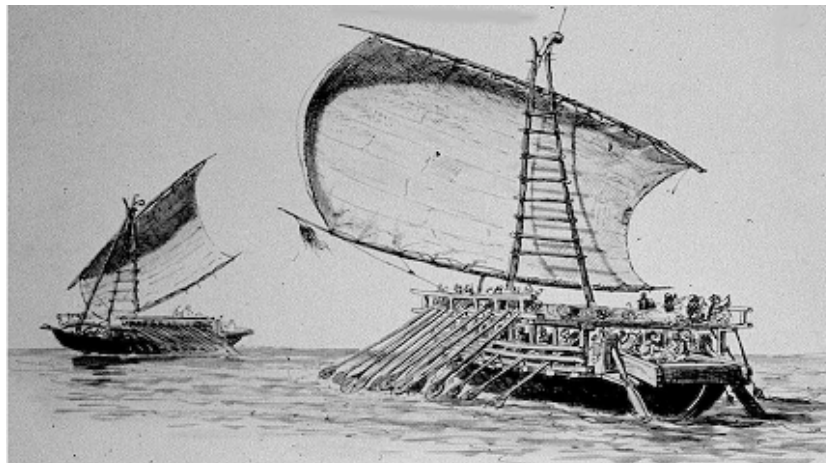
friends and leaving me nothing to eat. She would look wickedly at me, waiting for me to drop dead in hunger.⁷

To add further to the fear, an exhausted captive who collapsed on board a Balangingi *garay* (raiding vessel) ran the risk of being unceremoniously thrown overboard to drown. Ibañez, while naked and near delirious, had felt the rattan on his back several times, and noted the more extreme punishment meted out to captives:

I will never forget what I saw. Christian captives with rattan halters around their necks tied to the bench on which they sat. Their feet and wrists bound by ropes. They sat there in that position on the deck of the boat under the scorching heat of the sun, the rain, and in the wind's eye. Some simply collapsed over their oar, dying. Others were untied just on the verge of passing out, in order to regain consciousness, only to be tied up once again to the oar.⁸

Fig. 2.
Rafeal Monleon y Torres, Construcción
Navales: bajo un aspecto artístico por el
Restangador del Museo Naval, Catalogo
Descriptivo dos Tomos (Madrid: Museo
Naval, 1890).

A Balangingi *garay* or *panko* with two banks of oars under full sail. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Brunei was within easy reach of the Balangingi Samal and a squadron of *garay* hovered about southern Palawan from the middle of March until the end of November to seize Brunei inhabitants and cut off trade to North-Borneo. The Balangingi were alleged to have a saying that, 'It is difficult to catch fish but easy to catch Borneans.'



Luis de Ibañez y Garcia's captivity narrative, while highlighting stereotypical images of the Balangingi and *moros* as treacherous, barbaric and uncivilised, also contains an important personal introduction to the traumatic transitional events surrounding Panglima Taupan and his times.

Ibañez was a complex man and a soldier and it is from his account that we learn about some of the horrific acts that the Balangingi performed to instil fear and terror—if only to weaken the captives' will to resist, once they had been taken on board. After nearly two months of harrowing captivity, witnessing Christian Filipinos repeatedly hunted down with long trident poles, Ibañez wrote:

7. Ibid., 24.

8. Ibid., 21.

I have seen a seriously injured father whose wife and children were captured, while the pirates laughed at the father. I have seen them beat the children while saying, “You must be happy,” they were told “because with us you do not have to pay taxes or perform personal services!” I have seen an emaciated woman, denied food for two days, while her baby cried because she had no milk to squeeze from her breasts. I have seen people eat filth and garbage, just as I have seen pirates kill men as though they were lambs because they enjoyed the sight of blood.⁹

The content of his captivity narrative dealt with the fundamental themes of death and suffering. He understood the basic reason behind the Balangingi Samal war leader’s vendetta in the aftermath of the destruction of Balangingi. For Taupan, it was not simply a matter of revenge, but rather the very survival of his people was at stake in a long-standing conflict of cultures at the back end of a bad war.

THE FISHERS OF MEN

Taupan grew up in a Balangingi community, but his origin and heritage were complex. He was born in the early 1800s most probably near Balangingi. His father must have been a Samal chieftain, given the rank title conferred upon his son. His mother, most likely a Balangingi Samal woman, possibly had been captured at a young age in the Visayas and enslaved by the Balangingi, as Taupan was given the Spanish-sounding name Julano.

As Sulu’s trade with China and the West expanded at the end of the eighteenth century, Taosug datus increasingly retained neighbouring groups of Samal seafarers as slave raiders. From Balangingi and related settlements on other islands, Samal speakers voyaged great distances; they swept the coasts from Luzon to Brunei and from Singapore to Menado, capturing slaves. The Balangingi Samal of Taupan’s youth lived, along with other Samal-speaking groups and the Iranun, in a dozen or more villages and fortified settlements scattered along the southern Mindanao coast, the southern shore of Basilan, and on the islands of the Samalese cluster of which Balangingi was the most important.

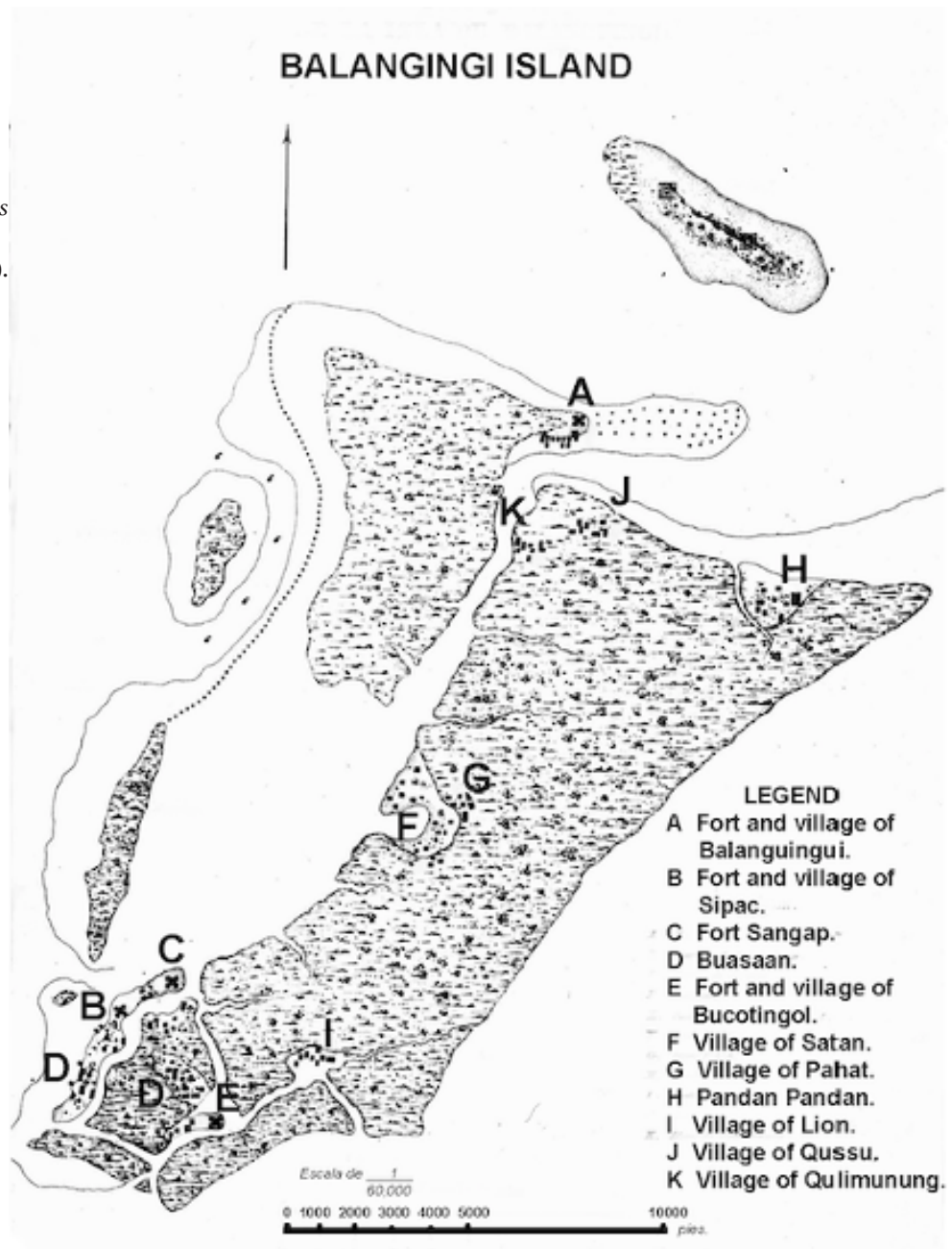
The Samalese group comprised Balangingi Island (6 square miles, 15.5 square kilometres) and Tunkil, a cluster of four islets (9.5 square miles, 24.6 square kilometres) situated in the centre of the Sulu Archipelago, midway between Borneo and Mindanao. Balangingi, together with the neighbouring islands of Tunkil, Simosa and Bangaloo, stretch in a seamless web across the passage between the Sulu and Celebes seas. The islets were subject to change in size and shape, due to tidal variations and shifts in

9. Ibid.

the wind and weather patterns, separating into small parcels of coral and rock when submerged at high tide. They were fringed with mangrove swamps, and separated from nearby islands by a series of connected reefs and winding channels through which swirled strong cross currents. But the rocky shoals, currents, wind and shallow waters were never considered a handicap for the Balangingi, who were superb mariners. As Sulu's slave-based commodity-driven economy rapidly developed, Balangingi's low-lying impenetrable seascape constituted a tremendous strategic ecological advantage for these emergent ethnically heterogeneous maritime raiders.

Fig. 3.
Emilio Bernaldez, *Resana Historico de la Guerra al Sur de Filipinas sostenida por las armas Espanoles contra los Piratas de aquel archipelago, desde la conquista hasta nuestros dias* (Madrid: Imprenta del Memorial de Ingenieros, 1857).

A mid-nineteenth-century Spanish map of Balangingi, home of the feared Samal slave raider. The islets in the Samales groups were fringed with mangrove swamps, awash at high tide but exposed at low tide. Bits of land became separated from one another as the sand barrier inside the encircling reefs changed shape and elevation. Channels into the lagoon opened and closed during the year with tidal movements and shifting currents.



On these islands, the Balangingi Samal constructed wells and four forts (Balangingi, Sipac, Bucotingal, Sangap) to guard their villages and raiding *prahus*. The forts (*kota*), situated on raised ground and protected by coral reefs on three sides, were enormous stockades of two, three and four tiers of stout tree trunks, packed with rammed earth and coral to a height of more than twenty feet (6.1 metres) and defended with heavy cannon.¹⁰ Sali Werble of Isabel, Basilan, at the age of eighty-seven, recalled seeing the remains of the *kota*'s one-metre wide walls when he accompanied Dr. Najeeb Saleely, author of a celebrated history of Sulu, to Balangingi on an archaeological dig, in 1924. The fort's posts, according to Sali Werble, were still intact and made of hamuluan molave. This timber utilised as bulletproof shields on the Balangingi *prahus*, turned rock hard when sunk in a wet muddy place like the foreshore of Balangingi.¹¹

Remarkably, Hailan Kaligeran de Perez, aged ninety, still remembered childhood details of what her exiled father told her about his youth on Balangingi. The elderly woman recalled that the banished slave raider spent his life as a young boy, like Taupan, inside a large fort on a coral and mangrove-infested bank on Balangingi. Most importantly, he described to her a remarkable natural asset located at the tip of the island cluster—a hidden channel—that protected the forts and a collection of houses. Diego Kaligeran informed his young daughter one evening in the *sitio* of Tigbao, Zamboanga that the only way of entering the Balangingi *kota* was through this secret *butas*, or blind channel.¹² From a purely strategic and defensive standpoint, Balangingi was the best natural island fortification and large-scale maritime raiding base in the Malayo-Muslim world, during the age of sail.

But, Balangingi was not an ideal location in terms of daily living, particularly from a purely subsistence standpoint, for the slave raiders. The island had to import virtually all the food its inhabitants required, particularly rice and sago from Jolo and north Borneo. Nor was there an adequate supply of potable water. With no surface water, and little flora except the ubiquitous coconut palm, the Balangingi Samal could not adequately maintain the subsistence base required to support a large population.¹³ The islets upon which the Samal-speaking people of the Balangingi cluster lived placed them in an ecological bind that shaped their demographic origin and relationship to the Sulu Sultanate. The captive Francisco Thomas stated, "The inhabitants of these places [the Samalese cluster] live by piracy and ... they have no other means of existence, in fact piracy is the general vocation of the people."¹⁴ Balangingi's proximity

10. Emilio Bernaldez, *Resana historico de la guerra a sur Filipinas, sostenida por las armas Espanoles contra los piratas de aquel archipelago, desde la conquista hasta nuestros dias* (Madrid: Imprenta del Memorial de Ingenieros, 1857), 153.

11. Margarita de los Reyes-Cojuangco, "The Samal Balangingis: An experiment in colonial diaspora," MA thesis, University of Santo Tomas, 1986, 378.

12. *Ibid.*, 382.

13. James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone 1768–1898 The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1981), 183.

14. Bonham to Maitland, 28 June 1838, PRO, Admiralty 125/133 Sulu Piracy.

to Jolo as the major outlet for retailing captives; its ecological dependence on larger adjacent volcanic islands like Jolo and Basilan as a source of rice, fruit, vegetables and trade goods; and the natural barriers surrounding it, help to explain why Balangingi became the natural home of one of the most feared maritime raiding groups in island Southeast Asia.

SOCIAL ORGANISATION OF SLAVE RAIDING

In the earlier years of Taupan's youth, under the Sultanate's rule a Taosug *orang kaya*, who was appointed by the Sultan, controlled Balangingi. His moral and political authority was sanctioned by the Sulu State. But in the 1840s the balance of power began to shift away from the Sultan, and toward leading Balangingi *panglimas* and *prahu* commanders. When this marked political devolution reached the upper and middle strata of Samal society, seafarers like Panglima Taupan and Palawan Dando—as true warrior chiefs—began to organise a new social world for the vanquished Balangingi apart from the dictates of Taosug commerce and Spanish imperial authority.

There is no photograph or engraved portrait of Julano Taupan, war leader of the dispersed Balangingi of Tawi Tawi, who resisted the domination of both Jolo and Manila, and who became a renowned Samal hero. Taupan, as a *panglima*, did not rise from negligible social origins to become the principal chief of the Balangingi after 1848. Nobility was his birthright but his character and subsequent legend were already being shaped by his celebrated actions under Panglima Alip, his brother, from the mid-1830s, during his early slave raiding days. He was a warrior, he was a leader and he was prepared to sacrifice everything for his people. In the early 1840s, with the escalation of the sea war that pitted Spain against the Balangingi and Sulu, Taupan's fame spread. By 1845, the Sultan and Spanish authorities in Zamboanga recognised him as one of the most powerful headmen on Balangingi, alongside Panglimas Alip and Gaub.¹⁵ Nevertheless, Taupan increasingly wanted to make a go of life in the globalising situation of the mid-nineteenth century world unfolding around him, separated from the machinations of the Sulu Sultanate.

Accusations of cultural decadence and barbarism that were repeatedly directed against the Sulu Sultanate and the Balangingi by European participants in that trade are ironic. The Sulu Sultanate was able to channel its resources for statecraft and for social organisation in the direction of saltwater slave raiding when China trade suddenly made the collecting and processing of marine and jungle products from the zone profitable.

15. El Gobernador de Zamboanga a el Gobernador Capitan General, 26 February 1845, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu, 1836–1887.

THE PATTERN OF RAIDING

The sole orientation of the Balangingi Samal was, of necessity, towards the sea. From it, as specialists in maritime raiding, boat building, and marine procurement, they derived their strength, security, and—ultimately—wealth. In those areas that fell under direct Taosug dominion Taupan's followers were totally dependent on a marine-oriented economy; while in areas just beyond the direct pale of Taosug authority, including the islands of Cagayan de Sulu and Basilan, a mixed economy, based on fishing and agriculture was dominant. However, the Balangingi were an emergent strand-dwelling people compelled to establish their communities on the small coral and sand islands of northeastern Sulu, and along the eastern shores of Basilan.

The Balangingi visited the Philippines twice annually, once in March and again in October. It was the small settlements far from the *cabeceras* with little outside communication or defence, and those situated on offshore islands which could not be protected from the mainland, that were exposed to the greatest danger. The Balangingi often arrived along the Luzon coasts a month or two after the rice harvest ended and remained in neighbouring waters for up to six months. According to the detailed regional studies of Norman Owen, Luis Dery and Francisco Mallari the Balangingi Samal sunk or captured boats, raided coastal towns, pillaged the villages of Southern Luzon, and seized cattle and people unfortunate enough to still be there.¹⁶ But, in a cruel twist of fate, they would not harry to death the hapless survivors who fled to the hills, in order to encourage them to replant crops in time for the next annual raid.

16. Norman G. Owen, *The Bikol Blend* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1999); Luis Camara Dery, *From Ibalon to Sorsogon: A Historical Survey of Sorsogon Province to 1905* (Quezon City: Quezan City, 1991); Francisco Mallari S.J., *Vignettes of Bicol History* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1999).

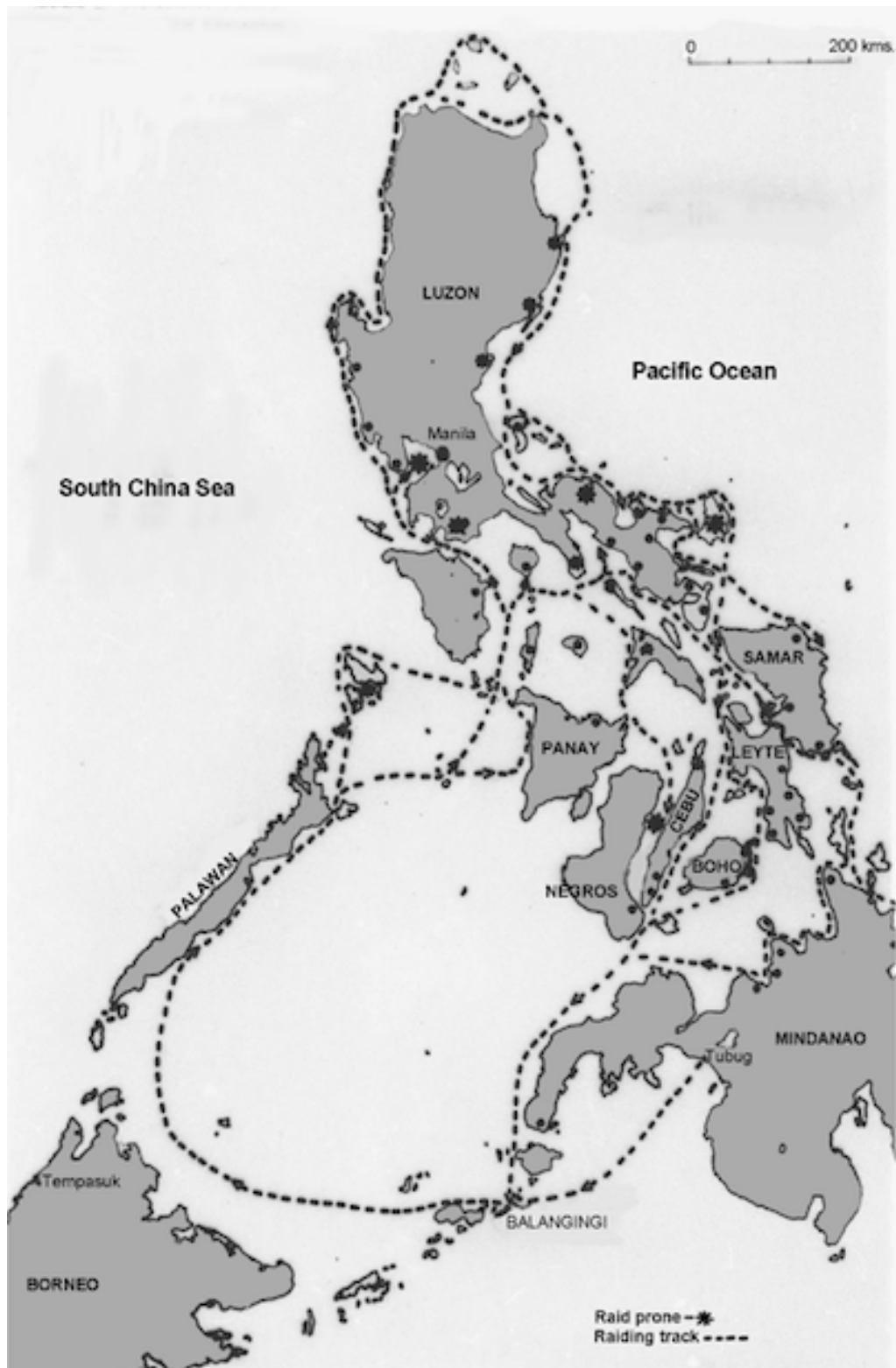


Fig. 4.

Map created by James Francis Warren. Slave Raiding in the Philippines, 1768-1868.

Coastal villages that lacked a Spanish friar and a *baluarte* ran a real risk of being attacked. It was in the interest of such vulnerable settlements that they be located near some type of natural refuge where villagers could flee to safety on first sight of the *moros*. Mountains or any high ground were an obvious choice, while villages in some cases were encircled with large groves of impenetrable bamboo or thickets of pandan, a plant with a spiny trunk and leaves.¹⁷ On Masbate, cave complexes were fortified and used as temporary dwellings by settlers too afraid to return to the coasts.

PART II. PANGLIMA TAUPAN AND THE BALANGINGI SAMAL DIASPORA

CLAVERIA'S EXPEDITIONS 1845–1848

Prior to 1848, Spanish colonial policy directed against the Balangingi Samal was based on principles of containment; periodic naval expeditions were sent south to destroy the shipping of the slave raiders and their Taosug patrons. However, by mid-nineteenth century, the Spanish authorities had decided to annex a number of the Muslim Sultanates in the south, including Sulu. This major shift in strategic thinking and foreign policy was meant to prevent the British and Dutch from expanding their colonial influence and territorial interest in the Philippine Archipelago and adjacent areas. The Spanish adopted an aggressive policy in the south. The new Governor of the Philippines, Narciso Clavería, understood the strategic importance of controlling Balangingi which became the focal point of the new Spanish plan and strategy.

A daring naval attack aimed at the throat of Sulu, namely Balangingi, was the key to cutting the Sultanate's trade in two and stopping slave raiding in the Philippines. To these aims, Governor Clavería, initially authorised a naval expedition against Balangingi in 1845, and established a small fort and naval base on Basilan in the heartland of the Balangingi.¹⁸ The expedition had been hastily prepared—lacking sufficient troops, artillery and scaling ladders—and consequently failed. But in the process the Spanish managed to properly reconnoitre the Samalese group, and they formed a detailed picture of the topography, defences and population of Balangingi.¹⁹

In 1847, two years after the unsuccessful attack, the Governor of Zamboanga

17. Historical Data on Numancia, Historical Data Papers (HDP), Suriagao; Historical Data on Libon, HDP, Albay; Historical Data on Bugao, Catanduanes; Historical Data on Mamperao (Camarines Sur), HDP, Zamboanga del Sur; Historical Data on Tarangoran, HDP, Samar, vol. 8, 10; Historical Data on Culasi, HDP, Antique; Historical Data on Bato, HDP, Catanduanes; Historical Data on Pandan, HDP, Catanduanes, all NLA.

18. Expediente 12, Jayme Simo, Subteniente de Marina Sutil a Gobernador Capitan General, 17 March 1845, PRO, FO, 72/684; Bernaldez, *Resana historico de la guerra a sur Filipinas, sostenida por las armas Espanoles contra los piratas de aquel archipelago, desde la conquista hasta nuestros dias*, 151–53; Expediente 7, Gobeirno Militar y Politico de Zamboanga a Gobernador Capitan General, 17 August 1846, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu, 1838–1885; J. Farren to Lord Palmerston, 27 December 1849, PRO, FO, 72/761.

19. Expediente 12, Sobre haber salido la expedicion contra Balangingi, 17 February 1845, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu, 1836–1897.

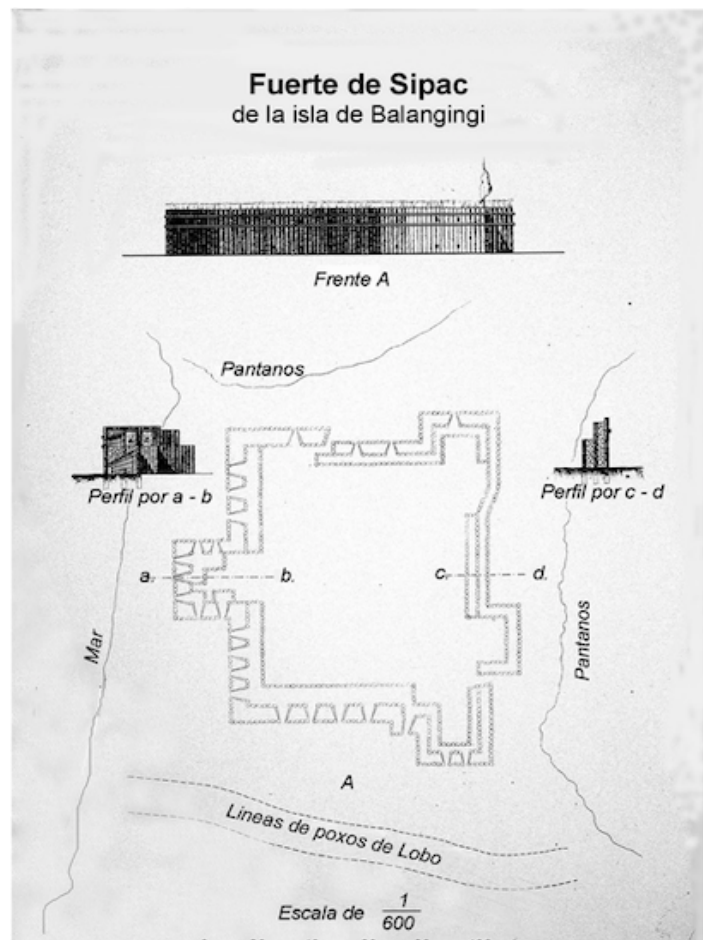
informed Manila that the Balangingi were busily fortifying their island. According to Spanish spies, hundreds of captives were employed gathering rocks and coral to reinforce the four forts that were constructed of stout palisades of varying heights. The walls of these forts, surrounded by mangroves and swamps, were over twenty feet (6.1 metres) high. The immediate environs of each fort were booby trapped with sharpened bamboo stakes and concealed pits were dug to trap and maim the vanguard of an assault force. The fort at Sipac, the largest of the four, was provided with redoubts and towers that Spanish army engineers acknowledged demonstrated exceptional skill in design and construction.

The beginning of the end for the Balangingi came in 1848, when a Spanish fleet, including three steam gunboats, bombarded Balangingi, forcing Taupan and the raiders to abandon their stronghold and disperse across the archipelago. In the folk memory of the Balangingi it was presumed that a traitor, a *renegado*, secretly led the forces of Clavería into this hidden channel—a channel through which certain boats could enter even when the tide was low.²⁰

Fig. 5.

Emilio Bernaldez, *Resana Historico de la Guerra al Sur de Filipinas sostenida por las armas Espanoles contra los Piratas de aquel archipelago, desde la conquista hasta nuestros dias* (Madrid: Imprenta del Memorial de Ingenieros, 1857).

Spanish plans of the heavily fortified Samal stronghold (kota) of Sipac. The kota was situated on raised ground, protected by reefs, rocks, mangroves, and a moat, and defended by heavy canon.



20. Santanina Rasul, "The Samal Bangingih," cited in Cojuangco, "The Samal Balangingis: An experiment in colonial diaspora," 410–11.

Because the Balangingi believed the reef-strewn seaward approach and palisades could not be breached by an invading force, hundreds of women and children were hidden by the Balangingi warriors inside the centre of the Sipac fortress in 1848. Consequently, these non-combatants suffered a brutal bombardment and crossfire by seaborne cannon and mortars. Once inside the inner stockade, the Spanish troops found the crazed Balangingi warriors, who killed their women and children in fear and desperation, and then impaled themselves on the phalanx of Spanish bayonets. Clavería's report noted that his troops:

Destroyed everything and I saw some of those "barbarians" killing their own women and children, so that we would not get them, and after that they threw themselves to their own death rather than surrender. It was terrible.²¹

In the immediate aftermath of the mass ritual slayings, more than two-thirds of the defenders were dead or dying. Sipac Fort was littered with piles of corpses and dismembered bodies dotted the beaches and floated aimlessly in mangrove channels. The battle-hardened Governor described the horrific backdrop of this hard-won victory as a "terrible sight." Other Samal, attempting to escape, leapt to their death or were picked off by well-positioned Spanish snipers. The killing stopped only after the Spanish commander promised clemency to the remaining warriors. The Samal men then submitted, put down their blood-soaked arms, and surrendered. They, along with Samal women and children who survived the carnage, were immediately marched out of the smouldering ruins as prisoners of war.

The horror of the attack at Sipac and the terror inspired by the steam warships, *Elcano*, *Magallenes*, and *Reina de Castilla*, was recorded in a remarkable *jawi* document found on one of the survivors. Amid the haunting nightmare of the warship's triangulated firepower that created a killing zone inside the fort, a little-known wounded Balangingi woman named Camarang addressed a letter to her lord, the Sultan of Sulu:

It is a vassal of thine who sends this letter along with Dayda, in the name of the six persons, men and women, who have here been taken captive by the Christians ...

The black ship fired its guns at us many times until noonday, and we could no longer bear it.

Then they stayed six days, until they had finished destroying our stronghold. We have great sorrow, even unto death.

21. El Goberndaor Capitan General a Senor Secretatario de Estados, 28 February 1848, PNA, Cartas 1847-1848.

Hear us, who are vassals of the Sultan, and doubt not that from the time of our forebears nothing so fateful ever befell.

The chief Olancaya therefore said: Let us all bear witness together by our deaths, for now is the appointed end of our faithful observance.

And Oto, his son, said: There is no help. O Imam Baidola, let us meet death together, you and I!

And Dina said: Be not afraid, my uncle; let us die bearing witness, and so depart from this world.

And Donoto made answer: By the life of our grandsires, we must hang back no longer.

And Bintu replied: My father, there is nothing to hold us back; let us die fighting, and not part company ever again.

To the Sultan of Sulu from the vassal Camarang.²²

The Balangingi who died in the battle totalled 450 and another 350 men, women and children were taken prisoner. The Spanish liberated nearly 300 captives from the Philippines and the islands of the Netherlands Indies.²³ In the five days following the assault on Sipac Fort, where the battle was so ferocious, the Spanish soldiers burned the decomposing bodies of 340 of their enemy in pits and trenches, razed four forts to the ground, destroyed seven villages, 150 vessels, and 7,000–8,000 coconut trees. Clavería's scorched-earth policy left Balangingi desolate and unfit for habitation.²⁴

The punitive expedition returned to a triumphant welcome in Zamboanga and Manila. There were parades and festivities held in honour of the stunning victory, news of which was officially announced across the provinces on broadsheets in a variety of dialects. A Te Deum was held in Manila's cathedral and Clavería was decorated and promoted to Viscount by the Spanish Queen, while many of the officers and men

22. Spanish copies of the letter are found in Jose Montero y Vidal, *Historia de Filipinas desde el descubrimiento de dichas Islas hasta nuestras días* (Madrid: 1894–1895), vol. 3, 128–30; Bernaldez, *Resana historico de la guerra a sur Filipinas, sostenida por las armas Espanoles contra los piratas de aquel archipelago, desde la conquista hasta nuestros días*, 238; the translation is from Horatio de la Costa, *Readings in Philippine History* (Manila: Bookmark, Inc., 1965), 208.

23. El Gobernador Capitan General a Senor Secretatario de Estados, 28 February 1848, PNA, Cartas 1847–1848; Bernaldez, *Resana historico de la guerra a sur Filipinas*, 163; Extract from *Straits Times*, 7 March 1848, in J. Plumridge to H. Ward, 24 March 1848, PRO, Admiralty 125/133.

24. El Gobernador Capitan General a Senor Secretatario de Estados, 28 February 1848, PNA, Cartas 1847–1848; Extract from *Straits Times*, 7 March 1848, in J. Plumridge to H. Ward, 24 March 1848, PRO, Admiralty 125/133.

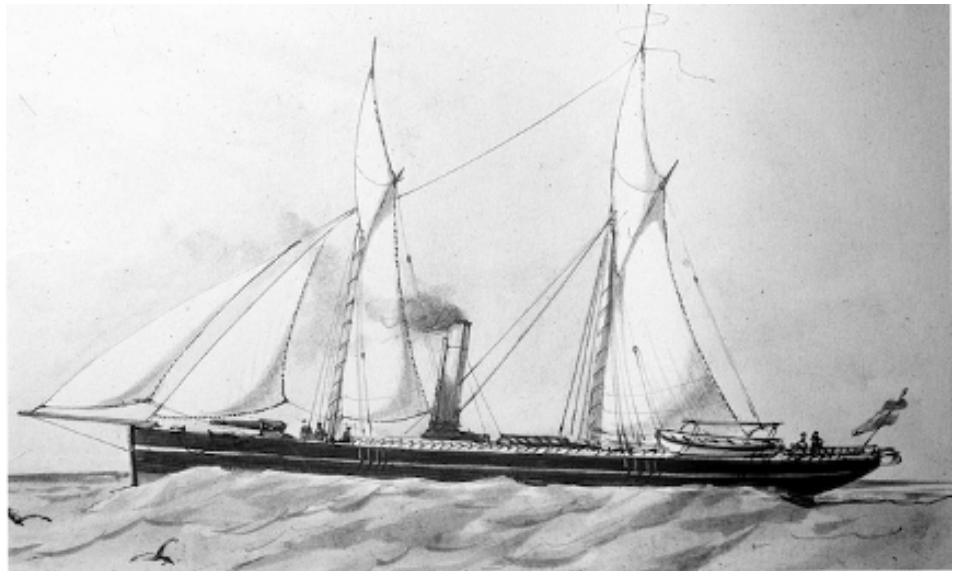
received citations for valour and were variously rewarded.²⁵

In 1848, when the Spanish, with the aid of steam gunboats, destroyed the fortified strongholds of the Balangingi cluster and deported hundreds of Samal people—men, women and children—to the distant mountain valleys of northern Luzon to become tobacco farmers, the Balangingi Samal and Panglima Taupan were dealt a major blow from which they would never fully recover.

Fig. 6.

Rafeal Monleon y Torres,
*Construccion Navales: Bajo
un aspecto artistico por el
Restangador del Museo Naval,
Catalogo Descriptivo dos Tomos*
(Madrid: Museo Naval, 1890).

The *canonero* was a prefabricated, flat-decked, shallow draught (2 metres) steamer that was rigged as a fore and aft schooner. First introduced in 1860, the *canonero* carried a smooth 24 lb bowgun with swivel guns mounted on the rails. It proved more than a match for Balangingi *garay* in coastal waters and signalled the end of Samal maritime raiding.



TAUPAN AND THE SULTAN

Nevertheless, the Spanish victory was not decisive. More than half the male population had been absent slave raiding or collecting provisions when the attack occurred. Hundreds of others managed to elude the Spanish and escape to Sulu.²⁶ In December 1848, the fugitive Samal attempted to reestablish themselves on Balangingi and Tunkil under Julano Taupan, who had been away when the Spanish attacked. When Panglima Taupan had returned to Balangingi in late February 1848, he found his fortified settlement deserted, and burned to the ground. Worst of all, his wives and children were all missing. He sought refuge on Sulu, but failed to convince the Sultan and the

25. El Gobernador Capitan General a Senor Secretatario de Estados, 28 February 1848, PNA, Cartas 1847–1848, folios 71–77, Doc.10; See also Margarita de los Cojuangco, *Kris of Valor: The Samal Balangingi's Defiance and Diaspora* (Manila: Manison, 1993), 81–96.

26. J. Farren to Viscount Palmerston, 29 February 1848, PRO, FO, 72/749 Spain; J. Farren to Viscount Palmerston, 28 February 1848, PRO, FO, 72/761; Diario de mi Comission a Jolo en el Vapor Magallenes, Jose Maria Penaranda, 19 March 1848, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu, uncatalogued bundle.

ruma bichara to assist him in freeing the Balangingi prisoners, especially the women and children held as hostages in Zamboanga.

The Sultan realised he could no longer oppose Spanish interests to the same degree that his predecessors had done—not if Taosug trade and regional relationships were to remain intact. Taupan, however, did not hold the Sultan's sentiments and he defied the Sultan and began to resettle his following on Balangingi and Tunkil. But they were quickly dispersed by a second Spanish expedition, which also destroyed Bual several months later.²⁷ In the years 1848 to 1851, there were few slave raids reported across the Philippine Archipelago.²⁸ Owing to the successive Spanish naval campaigns, the Samals were thrown back on their own economic, social and political resources. They still had a considerable number of raiding *prahus* in 1850, but the action of Spanish cruisers tended to scatter the Balangingi Samal throughout the Sulu Archipelago, and on the coasts of southern Palawan and north Borneo.²⁹

Clavería's letter of 19 February 1849, addressed to the Sultan of Sulu, reflected the extent of the political anarchy and intrigue that was commonplace after the fall of Balangingi. The Spanish Governor recognised that the Sultan, his "brother," no longer actually exercised control over the Balangingi who were still at large, and his response was therefore swift and decisive—a campaign of terror:

My dear brother: It has been drawn to my attention that Panglima Taupan with many followers, who had the opportunity to escape last year's attack on Balangingi, has returned to the island. I know that Taupan is one of the leading pirates who never respects the authority of the Sultan, as he has attacked several vessels of the Sultan's and used the flag of the Sultan for his own purposes. He cannot live except by piracy. He returned to Balangingi simply to renew his piratical life, a detestable practice. I have sent forces to destroy them as everyone knows I want to protect innocent people and at the same time persecute the pirates without let up. I also appreciate your offer to help me punish these pirates.³⁰

The Balangingi, who had come face-to-face with mass death inside the Sipac Fort and survived were unique, both psychologically and morally. It followed that a new social integration for these war-weary survivors was more difficult than anything that

27. El Gobernador Capitan General a Sultan Mohammad Pulalon, 19 February 1849, PNA Mindanao/Sulu, 1803–1890; Gobierno Militar y Politico de Zamboanga a Gobernador Capitan General, 21 November 1849, PNA, Piratas 3; J. Farren to Viscount Palmerston, 26 March 1849, PRO, FO, 72/761.

28. El Gobernador Capitan General a Senor Secretario de Estado, 24 June 1851, AHN, Ultramar 5162.

29. A.J.F. Jansen, "Aanteekeningen omtrent Sollok en de Solloksche Zeerovers," *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land en Volkenkunde, uitgegeven door het (Koninklijk) Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen* 7 (1858), 212–39, at p. 231.

30. El Gobernador Capitan General a Sultan Mohammad Pulalon, 19 February 1849, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu, 1803–1890.

they had experienced before. And this was especially so for their leaders particularly Panglima Taupan, Palawan Dando and Tumugsuc who had been absent during the bloody onslaught. But they proved to be capable of integrating into their personality and character as a remnant ethnic group, one of the most traumatic experiences to which a nineteenth-century Southeast Asian person could be subjected—namely the terrors of confronting a common cast of colonial mind and set of attitudes and policies—a genocidal mentality, and a dazzling array of modern weapons of mass destruction.

Though the Spanish held many Balangingi women and children prisoners, Taupan refused to accept a truce and the Balangingi soon managed to return to their maritime raiding activities. Establishing a base on Tawi-Tawi and flying the flags of various rival “nations” of Spain, Taupan’s followers preyed upon Spanish commerce in the Philippines. Taupan, accompanied by his brother Panglima Alip, established a base on the small island of Boan in Tawi-Tawi. The island was described by the Governor of Zamboanga as:

Another strategic point for Samal pirates because this place is very shallow and big ships cannot get close to the island. Only small vintas can gain entry to the island. Similarly, the Samals of Simasa joined by the Samals of Dong-Dong have again returned to piracy and have joined Taupapn’s group at the island Boan, Tawy Tawy.³¹

Panglima Taupan and Palawan Dando—true warrior chiefs—began to organise a new social world for the vanquished Balangingi, distant from the dictates of Taosug commerce and Spanish imperial authority. The new strategically organised society was mobilised to attack the Sultanate’s shipping and property. In response, the Taosug aristocracy who controlled the flow of the Sultanate’s global trade resorted to extreme violence. They called upon the assistance of the Spanish navy to eradicate the Balangingi. Taupan’s ascendancy, leadership and raiding campaigns came to signify the process by which the Balangingi Samal took over total control of saltwater slaving, in the aftermath of their defeat in 1848. Their hard-won separation was in many ways a defiant response to the Sultanate’s campaign of collaboration with Spain.

In the immediate aftermath of the destruction of Balangingi, the Spanish used the captive Samal women and children as hostages, hoping to persuade their husbands and kindred to surrender and make peace. But the political ploy did not work. Consequently, the Spanish assembled their war steamers and began to constantly cruise the Visayan and Sulu seas. Repeated search-and-destroy expeditions ended

31. Sultan Mohammad Pulalon a El Gobernador de Zamboanga, 16 June 1857, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu, uncatalogued bundle.

with a series of sea battles off the coasts of Samar and Mindanao and attacks against Taupan's bases in Tawi Tawi. Following 1852, Taupan had waged a hit-and-run style war in the Visayan Islands, with an inferior force and little popular support. In addition, he faced a technologically superior enemy. His raiding exploits became the subject of much conversation, consternation and controversy from the drawing rooms of Manila to the *conventos* of every province in the Visayas.

As there was no indication that the Spanish, or the world at large, were deeply concerned about the fate of the Balangingi prisoners held hostage in the *presidio* at Zamboanga (especially members of his family), Taupan's ability to give positive meaning to his sea war eventually began to crumble. The courageous Panglima had provided the necessary leadership and "life drive" for his remnant people caught in a bitter colonial conflict. Everybody and everything in the fragmented world of the dispersed Balangingi, of necessity, depended on his great courage and inner strength and security. But, by 1858, when the circumstances of his life were extremely harrowing and destructive, in the face of overwhelming odds and constant desolation and violence, the battle-weary Taupan was ready to strike a truce. The previous year, the Spanish assault fleet based at Basilan had launched a surprise attack on Simisa, a major Balangingi settlement, where they rescued seventy-six captives, and took 116 prisoners, including many members of the families of the Balangingi war leaders. After the removal of the Balangingi prisoners from Simisa up until the moment of their incarceration in the *presidio* (garrison) at Zamboanga, Taupan was extremely convincing as a man torn apart by his devotion for his wives and children held captive in Zamboanga. He now constantly lived with a parallel fear that they would leave him, deported on a moment's notice by the Spanish authorities, to a more distant destination, possibly Manila or, perhaps even the Marianas Islands. Therefore, on 7 July 1858, Panglima Taupan, Palawan Dando and Tumugsuc, against whom the lightning-like assault at Simisa had been specifically targeted, voluntarily presented themselves to the Governor of Zamboanga, under a flag of truce, to seek peace and to exchange Samal prisoners—especially women and children—for sixty Christian captives, one priest and one European woman.³² However, these Samal warriors were betrayed by the Spaniards. Their families were not returned to them and the celebrated Balangingi leaders were immediately seized as prisoners of war. The Governor General described why the Spanish broke the truce at Zamboanga, imprisoning Taupan and his followers:

These three moros being the leaders because of their audacity and energy enjoy universal notoriety among the moros. They have been the perennial scourge of our towns. Victims of their perfidious and covert acts, have related bitter

32. Report of Julio de Tolosa, Secretary of State, 10 July 1858, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu, uncatalogued bundle; See also Cojuangco, *Kris of Valour the Samal Balangingi's Defiance and Diaspora*, 124–27.

accounts of the pirates' ferocity for many years. The names of Panglima Taupan, Palawan Dando and Commander Tumugsuc are all well known for the crimes they have left in their wake. They cannot inspire trust so despite their protests they remain in prison. These are precisely the pirates whom Your Excellency perceived with foresight whose presence aboard the ship destined to transport them would have been dangerous.³³

He then continued his justification to the Crown for their imprisonment under a flag of truce, stating that:

The Samal pirates live free recognising no authority but force. They are men who have no law nor faith, not genuinely accepting the fact that they have surrendered their slaves, arms and vessels under a solemn pact. Since, at any moment without hesitation, they would violate the terms of the pact with complete disregard simply to satisfy their vengeance.³⁴

The Balangingi men deported to Cagayan petitioned for their families, deliberately held back in Manila and Zamboanga, to be relocated with them in the mountains of Isabella, so that they could live there together, permanently. These hostage Samal women and children were eventually placed in the *corrigimiento* (prison) of Tondo while the transfer to Isabella was arranged.³⁵ It took some time due to lack of proper transports. However, on 19 March 1860 the vanquished Samal women and children began the final leg of their long bewildering journey northward—a journey that was directed towards getting rid of them as an autonomous seafaring people and dispossessing them of their island homelands.³⁶ The general displacement and relocation of the Balangingi from the Mindanao–Sulu region under the terms of Taupan's surrender, was without a doubt the most consequential event in recent Samal history. That afternoon in March the deportees boarded a small sailing ship called

33. Report of Julio de Tolosa, Secretary of State, 1859, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu 1859, uncatalogued bundle.

34. Ibid.

35. Report of Julio de Tolosa, 25 August 1859, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu, uncatalogued bundle; for a wider discussion on exile, forced migration and forced labour as instruments of empire in the Indo-Pacific world see Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Eva Maria Mehl, *Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World: From Mexico to the Philippines, 1765-1811* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); see also the major collaborative research initiatives of Clare Anderson on the history of forced labour and penal settlements in Indian Ocean contexts.

36. Report of Julio de Tolosa, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu 1860, uncatalogued bundle; for a wider discussion on exile, forced migration and forced labour as instruments of empire in the Indo-Pacific world see Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Eva Maria Mehl, *Forced Migration in the Spanish Pacific World: From Mexico to the Philippines, 1765-1811* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); see also the major collaborative research initiatives of Clare Anderson on the history of forced labour and penal settlements in Indian Ocean contexts.

the *Josefita*, bound for the Spanish-owned tobacco plantations in the Cagayan Valley. There were forty women on board whose husbands, as prisoners of war, had been sent there ahead of them. These Balangingi women on the *Josefita* were sailing for the town of Camarag and other nearby towns in the province. Three months later, on 25 June 1860, Tumugsuc and Abubacal, the son of Palawan Dando, and their families were sent to Cagayan aboard the boat *Bella Carmen*.³⁷ Tumugsuc was deported to Nueva Viscaya and Abubacal to the inland town of Lepanto. The Spanish decided to separate the respective leaders and their families to prevent the possibility of a coordinated Samal outbreak in the small towns of the Cagayan Valley.³⁸ The Spanish authorities on the spot made it clear to the Balangingi that any effort to escape was futile. Flight would only end with some deportees dead, and the others soon rounded up by tribal peoples inhabiting the mountains surrounding the Cagayan Valley. The relocation marked a powerful imposition of will and the ultimate punishment, the violent displacement and dispossession of the Balangingi Samal. Once the most formidable and feared maritime raiders in the Sulu zone, they were now compelled to till the soil as novice tobacco farmers in the Cagayan valley in the far north, in order to survive as a remnant people.

Although the Tribunal had decided to deport all Balangingi leaders to particular destinations, the Government reserved final judgement on Panglima Taupan who remained confined in chains at Fort Santiago. He was placed under the legal jurisdiction of the Commander of the Navy and found guilty of piracy for the capture of the Spanish schooner *Soterana*. Taupan was not sent to Bontoc in the Cagayan Valley, instead he was transferred to the Cavite Arsenal where he died in a cholera epidemic that swept through the area in 1861.³⁹ Three years later, 39-year-old Maria Manobo, a Balangingi, still deeply disturbed by the circumstances of the *panglima's* death, testified in Zamboanga in October 1864, that while in Manila, she had heard that Panglima Julano Taupan had died as a prisoner of war, shackled and alone in the Cavite Arsenal. The Balangingi woman uttered words that she had undoubtedly used many times in the presence of other Samal who possessed no such memories. The Spanish authorities were extremely concerned. They realised that despite the war leader's timely death their policy of dispossession and relocation had failed to extinguish the memory of Panglima Taupan, as indelible impressions of his character and incidents in his life lingered for years in the memory of elderly displaced Balangingi.⁴⁰

37. Ibid.

38. Report of Julio de Tolosa, 30 August 1859, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu, uncatalogued bundle.

39. Report of Julio de Tolosa, 8 September 1859, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu 1859–1861, uncatalogued bundle.

40. Report of Julio de Tolosa, 8 September 1859, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu 1859–1861, uncatalogued bundle; testimony of Maria Manobo, PNA, Mindanao/Sulu 1863–1894, uncatalogued bundle.

THE RETURN: HADJI DATU NUNO AND TALUKSANGAY

Taluksangay is a small islet of eight hectares surrounded by mangroves located twenty kilometres (12.5 miles) from Zamboanga. Haji Datu Nuno, alias Antonio de la Cruz, the Jesuit-educated youngest son of Panglima Taupan, established the importance of the places in which they had lived, and how much they grieved when they lost them, following Panglima Taupan's death in solitary confinement. According to the oral traditions of the Nuno family, Noyla, his pregnant mother had been deported to Tumauni after the conquest of Balangingi. In Tumauni she gave birth to a son, Haji Datu Nuno, who was baptised Antonio de la Cruz. Throughout the mid-1850s, Panglima Taupan is alleged to have made six or seven excursions throughout the Visayas and as far north as Mindoro and Ilocos searching for his second wife and child, all in vain. In the family history carefully handed down across the generations, Julano Taupan is supposed to have eventually met his son, then a ten-year-old Christian orphan residing in Vigan. The oral account states he made his son promise to relocate the exiled Balangingi scattered throughout the north, as a group to their original homeland in the south. Panglima Taupan also stressed to the young man that his true identity was Balangingi Samal and his true faith was Islam.⁴¹ In fact, it is likely that Antonio de la Cruz was born in 1849, the year after the attack on Balangingi, to Noyla, Taupan's second wife. In 1858, several of the Panglima's wives were captured at Simisa, including Noyla, and her young boy. It is likely that this was Taupan's son by Noyla. In 1858 the boy was nine years old. In 1866, at the age of seventeen, he was deported to Isabella. In the intervening years, he was sent to Manila and given some formal instruction by the Spanish. He served as a sacristan to a friar who educated him in Spanish ways before he was transported to Isabella with a group of Samal *deportados*. He petitioned the Government to return to Basilan and Mindanao in 1881 and offered to utilise his services as a culture broker in a manner deemed most appropriate by the Zamboanga authorities. By then, he could speak and write Spanish fluently. The Governor, Severo Ventura y Nuno, employed him as an *escribiente* or secretary. In gratitude for the trust the Governor bestowed upon him, Antonio de la Cruz adopted the name of his patron, Nuno.

The local officials in Zamboanga sought his assistance to facilitate the settlement of Taluksangay which was being populated by Samals.⁴² Many Balangingi who had lost a place of profound importance, their island homeland, found it unforgettable. Feelings about lost or destroyed places, namely Balangingi and Simisa, roused their

41. Statement of Hadji Jainudden Nuno and his wife Bai Sheika, 26 May 1985, cited in Cojuangco, "The Samal Balangingis: An experiment in colonial diaspora," 369.

42. Report of Rafael M. Caracciola, el Gobernador de Isabela a el Gobernador Capitan General, 10 September 1880, PNA, Gobierno General de Filipinas, 22, Folio 986/5, no. 956.

deepest emotions. As Panglima Taupan tragically learned from the Spanish strategy of forced relocation and the meaning of lost places, losing a home or village and being forced to leave a homeland was also like losing a loved one. Panglima Taupan and his orphaned banished son, each in their own way, had to confront what it meant to lose a place or a loved one forever, and why some of the first and second generation exiles kept on returning in their minds to those places and individuals so large in their lives and memories. Both men—the father, a warrior and the son, a man of letters—must have considered the meaning of the many lost places—homes and villages—and their seafaring way of life. Hadji Datu Nuno's return to Basilan and Zamboanga in 1881 is a diasporic story about grieving and loss that is also inspiring. He was not simply returning to nothing in the south. Hadji Nuno perceptively saw the beginning and the end of things for the exiled Balangingi in the sea and in southern waters, as he desperately strove to discern in his life in the present moment, the signs of times past for his people. The most drastic demonstration of this profound realisation was provided when those Balangingi exiles who had lived in the Cagayan Valley for more than forty years, who had not changed their attitudes and beliefs so radically, chose to return to their “real life” in the south. For them their choice suggested a (re)viewing of Balangingi and what it meant to be Balangingi or a *moro* people from a faraway place (Cagayan), on the edge of remembering, forgetting and imagining. In the end, the forced removal and banishment of the Balangingi from their homeland did not lead to a condition of permanent exile for everybody. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Haji Datu Nuno, the son of one of the most revered and feared Balangingi chiefs, arranged with the American colonial authorities to repatriate some exiled Samal to Mindanao and Sulu.

Francisco Vogel, the Spanish tobacco planter in Isabella, agreed to send those settlers who wished to return, providing they turned their land and plough animals over to him. In 1905, a hundred Balangingi men, women and children returned to Zamboanga on the S.S. *Mauban*, and Haji Nuno settled them at Taluksangay, Tigboa, and Tupalic.⁴³ Among those Balangingi *deportados* banished to the Cagayan Valley and subsequently repatriated to Zamboanga were Hailan Kaligeran's father, Diego Kaligeran, and her mother. In the ensuing years, they would recount to their daughter, Hailan, born in Zamboanga shortly after their return from exile, eyewitness accounts of the ferocious defence of Sipac Fort, anecdotes about Panglima Taupan and stories about their forced removal from the sea and relocation to the north, constantly wondering back then what might take the place of their disappearing traditions, and their disappearing way of life.

43. Wendover, “The Balangingi Pirates,” 325, 337–38; Majul, *Muslims in the Philippines*, 15.

COLONIALISMS PIRATES, EMPIRE BUILDING AND THE “SAVAGE” MYTH

An ethnohistory of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which focuses on the Balangingi Samal as saltwater slavers and “Malay pirates,” does not readily fit into conventional categories of historical analysis in the study of Southeast Asia or the Philippines. The Balangingi presence in the, albeit critical, first half of the nineteenth century, was so bound up with world capitalist developments in Asia as to be almost inseparable, from the time of the establishment of an East India trading post at Canton to the destruction of Balangingi in 1848. The larger international rivalries of the colonial powers—especially the Spanish and British—culminated in a protracted struggle for commercial dominance in the eastern seas, including Philippine waters. In this context, international economic and political considerations played their part in aiding and abetting “Balangingi Piracy,” considerations which were often hidden from view within the larger confidential diplomatic manoeuvrings of the Spanish and English and their respective trading interests.

In the context of the world capitalist economy and the advent of the China trade, it should be understood that the slave raiding activities of the Balangingi, so readily condemned in blanket terms as “piracy” by European colonial powers and later historians, was a means of consolidating the economic base and political power of the Sultan of Sulu and Taosug coastal chiefs. Indeed, it functioned as an integral crucial part of the emerging statecraft and socio-political structures of the Sulu Sultanate. Thus, viewed from within the Sulu world of the nineteenth century, the term “piracy” is difficult to sustain. However, due to its practical devastating effects, particularly when laser-like Balangingi attacks were systematically directed against colonial coastal settlements and shipping, the Spanish, British and Dutch authorities could hardly be blamed for reacting against it in harsh terms, despite from the late eighteenth century onwards, the word piracy itself being bound up with larger colonial strategic policy implications and mythic resonances.

Spanish colonisation of Sulu and Mindanao began with the concerted naval campaigns against Panglima Taupan and the Balangingi after 1848 and culminated in the late 1880s with the occupation and conquest of the old ruling families that confronted the Spanish forward movement in mainland Mindanao. During that time, a period which witnessed the displacement of the Balangingi Samal and the eventual economic and political collapse of the Sulu trading sphere, both the Spanish and English systematically created, in official documents and pronouncements, novels, short stories and theatrical productions, a composite image of the Balangingi “character,” as an ideological prelude and intellectual justification for the mid- to late-nineteenth-century conquest and colonisation of the Muslim south.

Between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries, Spaniards and others viewed Sulu’s relations with Spain in terms of a pseudo-cultural historical cycle, the “*moro-*

wars” cycle, according to which “*moro* piracy” led to the repeated enslavement and humiliation of Christian Filipinos. In turn, this called for various forms of retaliation at once “punitive, imperial and morally imperative.”⁴⁴ The label *moro* by turning history into myth, in an epic struggle between civilisation and “savagism,” connoted Muslim peoples in the Sulu Archipelago and Mindanao, who were considered in the eyes of most Spaniards and Filipinos to be savages and demons and pirates and slavers.⁴⁵

Over the previous three centuries, most Spaniards and Filipinos cast all Muslims, especially the Balangingi, in stereotypical images that changed somewhat from time to time to suit new colonial needs and conditions, but which were invariably denigrating. By the 1850s, the Taupan-led Balangingi, infamously labelled as *moros*, were regarded simultaneously as depraved, uncivilised, subhuman savage warriors and shiftless, untrustworthy foreigners, who were unable to handle their own affairs and liable to annexation and conquest. Such preconceived ideas and notions about the stereotypical meaning of *moro* and a contested sense of space and place, had already been amplified in the metaphysics of Muslim-hating and empire building in the Philippines, when the initial tide of Balangingi maritime raiding and the heresy and menace of Islam swept over the archipelago in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

In nineteenth-century Spanish literature on the *guerras piraticas de Filipinas* and English accounts about the Balangingi and Malay piracy there is an association of the male Muslim physical and psychical self with the raw environment and nature which uses sea-littoral ethnoscapas as a setting against which *moro* and Balangingi identity and sense of place might be interrogated and problematised as a precursor to the cant of conquest. These images of *Los Duenos de los Mares* (the Lords of the Seas) that were carved out of language(s) systematically by the Spanish and British were also imposed on the seas and islands of the Balangingi, as a geographical sign of their dangerous, uncivilised, and contaminated character, and labelled as ominous “vile” sites—unclean places located beyond the pale. James Brooke, the White Rajah of Sarawak, called the Balangingi villages “nests of rats” in his influential reports and imperial writings on “Malay Piracy.”⁴⁶ While the network of atolls, rocks, shoals and submerged reefs were also described by the Spanish as natural “nests” and “webs,” implying a breeding ground

44. Lofti Ben Rejeb, “Barbary’s ‘character’ in European letters, 1514–1830: An ideological prelude to colonization,” *Dialectical Anthropology* 6/4 (1982): 345–55, at p. 346; for further reading on piracy and empire in global comparative and Indian Ocean world contexts see, John Kleinen and Manon Osswenweijer (eds.), *Pirates, Ports, and Coasts in Asia Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2010); Stefan Eklof Amirell and Leos Muller (eds.), *Persistent Piracy Maritime Violence and State-Formation in Global Historical Perspective* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014); Ota Atsushi (ed.), *In the Name of the Battle Against Piracy Ideas and Practices in State Monopoly of Maritime Violence in Europe and Asia in the Period of Transition* (Leiden: Brill, 2018); Stefan Eklof Amirell, *Pirates of Empire: Colonization and Maritime Violence in Southeast Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

45. James Francis Warren, “Moro,” in *Encyclopedia of Asian History*, vol. 3, ed. Ainslie T. Embree (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1988), 39.

46. Statement of James Brooke in Parliamentary Papers, House of Commons, 1851, Vol. LVI, Pt. I, “Operations against the Pirates on the Northwest Coast of Borneo,” p. 134.

for rats, other vermin and spiders—dangerous, dirty creatures in people’s minds that always caused fear and harm. To justify their violence, Claveriá’s expeditionary force portrayed the *moros* of Balangingi as being vile and savage, in order to vindicate the ferocity of the Spanish crackdown and the eventual fate of the Balangingi Samal.

Stemming from profound differences between the cultures of Spain and England and the culture of the Balangingi, these myopic imperial images and beliefs signified by the signs *moro* and Balangingi defamed and dehumanised the Muslim inhabitants of the Sulu Archipelago, reducing them in the European mind and imagination to something sinister and faceless, akin to the barbarians who resisted Roman rule and Christianity—barbarians who had to be cleared from the seas of Southeast Asia rather than the lands of Caesar’s empire. But the fundamental characteristic and central focus of the centuries-long conflict and uneasiness had always been the fact that almost everything that mattered to the Balangingi had come to be defined and measured by the sea—the seas, which in so many ways were invented, “discovered,” and eventually conquered by the Spanish and English. The central fact of domination and empire was the fundamental attitude and belief that the Balangingi possessed their seas only as a natural right, since that possession, in the minds of the Spanish and British, existed prior to, and outside of, a properly civilised state. What followed, then, was that the sea was technically *vacuum domicilium*. The Spanish and British, who would control the sea and make it safe and productive for Christianity and world commerce, who would give it order and regulate inter-regional and global trade, were obliged to take over and eradicate the *moros* and Balangingi of the eastern seas, in order that *laissez faire* trade and colonial Christian enterprise could be carried out successfully. It is clear that the central focus of these cultures in conflict had always been the sea—the seas which, in more ways than one, were “discovered” by Spain and Britain and functioned as a political instrument, a commodity, a national prerogative and aspiration. The Balangingi were defined by it, measured by their dominion and use of it and, ultimately, were to be dispossessed of it.

PANGLIMA TAUPAN AND THE PHILIPPINE NATIONAL IMAGINARY

Margarita Cojuangco has highlighted the persistence of a Muslim cultural identity in Yoggad society, which takes Balangingi ancestry, as the common basis for membership, and promotes a collective trans-local/trans-regional identity, in the Philippines.⁴⁷ The rise and fall of Panglima Julano Taupan and the Balangingi in the mid-nineteenth century demonstrates that there was no fixed “Balangingi Samal” identity prior to that century, but rather that it was constantly in flux. Conversely, as a consequence of the “emergence” of the Balangingi slavers as a distinct ethnic group, any sense of

47. See Cojuangco, *Kris of Valour the Samal Balangingi’s Defiance and Diaspora*, 27–38, 137–54.

“Filipino identity,” actual or imaginary, was also in flux and equally precarious. The case of Panglima Taupan and the Balangingi Samal, both before and after losing their homeland, illustrates that the process of maintaining and managing ethnic self-identification and the writing of its history in the Philippines, has always been a contested domain, and that cultural difference as signified and articulated by ethnicity is both problematic and fluid.

Some Filipino intellectuals and citizens, in an echo of nineteenth-century Spanish beliefs, prefer to believe that the origins of Panglima Julano Taupan and the Balangingi Samal are still shrouded in the distant past as *moros*, denying the fluid nature of ethnic identity and the ethnohistorical process for tracing ethnic self-identification.

Indigenous women of the Visayas and Luzon were targeted by the slave raiders. These women, predominately coastal dwellers, were often snatched from beaches in the grey light of dawn as they fossicked along the shoreline with their families. Their husbands were often killed on the spot and the bodies left where they lay as a grim warning to others. These now-widowed women (sometimes with their children) were transported as slaves to the Sulu Sultanate where they were compelled to work, either helping to procure trade commodities to be exchanged with the Chinese, Europeans and Americans, or to become the concubines and secretaries (if they could read or write Spanish, Chinese or English) of the rich and powerful. They often renounced their Christian backgrounds, assumed a Muslim identity, intermarried and became involved in a different sort of reproductive labour, namely the raising of a new generation of Balangingi raiders. The biological basis of social reproduction of this mingling of cultures because of slavery puts paid to any stereotypical idea of a “pure” cultural group of slavers inherently born to cruelty. Given that today’s Balangingi, Cebuano, Ilocano, Tagalog, Visayans and Yoggads share common ancestral roots, what does that signify for understanding what it means to be “Filipino” and for defining Islam in the Philippines nowadays, as well as reconciling political-cultural relations between Christians and Muslims in the Philippines? The questions posed by the life and times of Julano Taupan, especially concerning the accomplishment of ethnicity among the Balangingi Samal, for understanding the Philippine past since the nineteenth century, are far reaching.

Julano Taupan’s search for his captive family in the fog of war took him far from what was familiar and led him and his remnant people into danger and terrifying loneliness. Today, however, Taupan’s hit-and-run sea war against Spain in the Philippines is a treasured heroic memory. Some of the Balangingi leader’s values—a sense of duty, love of nationhood, courage, and self-sacrifice beyond the call of duty—have not been forgotten in the national imaginary and identity politics of the present day Philippine republic. Taupan, once stereotyped as an intractable savage, now is depicted in Philippine histories as a nineteenth-century anti-colonial warrior and patriot chief. Two long columns of large busts of Filipino heroes run the length of

Rizal Park, a tropical oasis, in the centre of downtown Manila. In an ironic twist of historical fate, among the busts on display is that of “Datu (chief) Taupan.” The large bronze plaque on the column below the imposing bust reads:

Also known as Panglima Taupan, he was the leader of the Sama Balanguigui of Zamboanga, Basilan, and Tonquil Islands. He fought for the independence of his people against Spanish incursions and launched raids against Spanish settlements. In 1848, Spanish forces using modern gunboats finally took Balanguigui islands after a fierce battle. Datu Taupan and his followers were captured and were relocated to Isabella Province in Northern Luzon.

Fig. 7.

Text of Plaque that accompanies the Bust of Datu Taupan, Rizal Park, Manila. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LM_DATU_TAUPAN_TITLE.jpg [accessed 18 April 2019]

