References


Incipient Islamic Publication in the Philippines:
Notes on the Early Printed Kitabs of Lanao from the 1930s to the 1950s

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1. Introduction

Over the past three decades, the number of madrasas (Islamic schools) and mosques in the Philippines has risen dramatically, along with the numbers of people who regularly attend Friday prayers at mosques. In addition, increasing number of Muslim women have begun to wear headscarves in Muslim-inhabited areas in the southern Philippines. These phenomena are known as “Islamic resurgence” and have been the subject of study in many works concerning Islam and Muslims in the Philippines.

It is commonly accepted in these works that this Islamic resurgence in the Philippines began in the 1950s, the period marked by the arrival of Indonesian and Middle Eastern Islamic missionaries and teachers, the return of Philippine Muslim students who had studied Islam in Mecca and Cairo, the revitalization of the Muslim Association of the Philippines, and the flourish of various Islamic organizations [Gowing 1964: 67-68][Majul 1985: 33-35]. Philippine Islamic intellectuals who had studied in Mecca and were responsible for these phenomena also describe this post-World War II period as the Golden Era of Islam in the Philippines [Bashir 1964][Badr al-Din 1958].

This seemingly “sudden” spurt of interest in Islam and increase in the contact with centers of Islamic learning in the world leaves one with the impression that the years preceding this florescence was a dark age for Islam in the Philippines, in which the Muslims and their religion were left in a vacuum without anything significant and dynamic happening to them.

In order to bring to light the actual conditions of Islamic intellectuals and Muslim movements in the Philippines during the period preceding the post-World War II Islamic resurgence, I have been conducting research on the activities of Islamic intellectuals in the first half to the middle of the 20th century, focusing on those in the Lanao area, located in the central part of Mindanao island.1 As part of this research, I have been surveying Islamic manuscripts and printed kitabs

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1 I use the term “Lanao area” to refer to the geographical area covered by the former province of Lanao or the present two provinces of Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte. For Islamization of Lanao, see [Majul 1973].
Islamic books) produced in the Philippines and those written or translated by Philippine Muslims. This paper presents the findings of this research and argues that an important change concerning the transmission and reorganization of Islamic knowledge was taking place as printed *kitabs* began to be produced by Islamic intellectuals of Lanao during the period from the 1930s to the mid-1950s. Contrary to the common view, the decades just prior to the 1950s were far from being static for Muslims in the Philippines; instead, a dynamic movement was underway.

I will first explain briefly the way Islamic knowledge was transmitted during the first half of the 20th century, following descriptions of nine printed *kitabs* of Lanao. I will then discuss the characteristics of these *kitabs*, with special reference to the author, the genre and its contents, the printing technology, and the institution involved in publication.

2. Background

The Muslim population in the Lanao area is predominantly composed of a people called the Maranao, whose native language has the same name. The Lanao area was governed by the traditional ruling system, consisting of four dynastic families (*pengampong*), each of which was divided into sub-units called *suk*, which were further divided into inged, which in turn consisted of *agama*, the smallest social unit. Each social unit, from *pengampong* down to *agama*, was ruled by a set of officials who had hereditary social titles, such as *sultan*, *dato* a *kabogan*, *radiamuda*.

Each social unit also contained religious officials, such as an *imam*, *kali*, *hatib*, and *bidal*. There were also titles such as *sharif* or *sarip*, which could be taken only by members of specific families who could trace their genealogies back to the Prophet Muhammad. On the other hand, those who could teach the recitation of the Qur’an and impart other Islamic knowledge were referred to as guro. Religious officials such as *imam* and *kali* could simultaneously be guro, but people of ordinary families could also become guro by excelling in Islamic studies. Aside from local guro, there were guro who came from foreign land, such as Hadramaut, Syria, and Borneo island. This class of Islamic intellectuals, who consisted of religious officials and teachers, will be referred to as *ulama* in this paper.

Some of these *ulama* had Islamic manuscripts, but these manuscripts were rarely shown to outsiders and were kept as precious family heirlooms within their households. In 1937 the first modern Islamic school (*madrasa*), namely Kamilul Islam Mahadul Ulum (hereafter, Kamilul Islam) was established in Dansalan, the capital of the Lanao province, by a reformist *ulama* and his associates [Kawashima 2009b]. Before its establishment, it was the common practice that Islamic knowledge was orally transmitted by a guro to his students at his home. These local gurus for the most part transmitted the knowledge gained from their own teachers or used the Malay language materials brought from neighboring regions in their study of the Qur’an and *hadith*.

In 1957 another modern Islamic school, namely Madrasa Majlis Shura, was opened in Marawi City (the former Dansalan), and Islamic education along modern lines was further strengthened in the Lanao area. However, before Islamic schools became popular in the late 1950s, religious knowledge tended to be transmitted in a secret manner. It is said that a guro imparted his knowledge by whispering to a single student inside the mosquito net so that nobody else would see or hear what was said. Possession of a religious manuscript alone conferred social prestige to its owner, and great care was taken to ensure secrecy in transmitting religious knowledge.

Against this background, printing Islamic books and distributing them to the public meant a significant change in the view toward religious knowledge—that is, from something to be monopolized and jealously guarded by the family to what should be disseminated to the public and shared by them.

3. Description of Early Printed Kitabs

Although printed *kitabs* published outside the Philippines were brought to Lanao from time to time, it was in the 1930s that *ulama* of Lanao started producing printed *kitabs*. In this section I will describe nine printed *kitabs* published during the period from the 1930s to the mid-1950s, either in the Lanao area or by an Islamic intellectual of Lanao.

no. 1: *Nabi Nok gw sw kialapai ko donia*[^5]  
[Nabi Noh go so kialapai ko donia]  
The title means the Prophet Noah and the Flood of the world. The Prophet Nuh

[^2]: This term originated from the Arabic word *qadi*, which means judge.

[^3]: The Arabic name of this institution is *Mi'had al-ulum al-dini al-`arabi bi jam'iyin kamil al-Islam*. In the Philippines it is written as *Kamilul Islam Mahadul Ulum*.

[^4]: The present Jamiatu Muslim Mindanao.

[^5]: The original title is written following a system of transliteration adopted by Frank Laubach. The title in a bracket follows the Maranao spelling, which is common among contemporary Maranaos.
(Noah), who appears in the Old Testament, is regarded in Islam as one of the greatest prophets in human history and the first messenger of God. The Prophet Nuh and the Flood are also narrated in the Qur'an (23: 23-30; 71: 1-28). This booklet was written by Nuska Alim, an elderly Maranao ulama from the municipal district of Raimain, who was considered to be one of the most knowledgeable ulama in Lanao at the time. It is written in Maranao, using the Latin script, and was published by Lanao Press, which was run by an American Protestant missionary stationed at Dansalan, Frank Laubach. The text is incomplete and consists of six pages. The date of publication is not indicated but estimated to be in the 1930s since Lanao Press operated from 1931 to 1941. This booklet is part of the collection of the library of Gowing Memorial Research Center of Dansalan College at Marawi City.

no. 2: Kabarol akirat a tothol an ko maori a alongan
[Kabarol akirat a tothol an ko maori a alongan]
Kabarol Akirat means “News of the hereafter” (original Arabic phrase: khobar al-akhirat). Tothol an ko maori a alongan means “story of the Last Day” in the Maranao language. The text is written in Maranao using the Latin script. The author is Panggaga Mickey (Miki), a famous Maranao folksong singer of the 1930s. This booklet was also published by Lanao Press, and the estimated date of publication is sometime in the 1930s. It has 56 pages and is kept at the library of Gowing Memorial Research Center of Dansalan College, at Marawi City.

no. 3: Tafsir Juz' 'Amma bi lugha Lanao (Photo 1)
Tafsir Juz' 'Amma means the commentary of Juz' Amma, which is the last (30th) Juz' (part) of the Qur'an, starting from Sura 78 and ending at Sura 114. It is named after the first word of Sura 78, namely 'amma. bi Lugha Lanao is an Arabic phrase meaning “in the language of Lanao” or the Maranao language. It was common among Maranaos to start learning the recitation of the Qur'an with this last Juz'. Thus, Juz' 'Amma served as a primer for beginners. This printed kitab contains the verses of Juz' 'Amma in the original Arabic text, with their explanation in Maranao. The author is Abd al-Haqir Makalawan ibn Nuska Alim. He was a son of Nuska Alim, the author of Nabi Nok (no. 2), described above. It consists of 56 pages and was published in 1933 or 1934. It was lithographed at a print shop in Singapore, namely Matha' Hajji 'Abd al-Rahman. This book is part of the collection at the library of the late Alim Ulomuddin Said, at Marawi City.

no. 4: ljma' al-siraj al-Islami al-jami'a al-Islamiyya (Photo 2)
The title means “the Agreement of Siraj al-Islami” (“Light of Islam”), an Islamic organization. It is the bylaw of a local Islamic association, namely Siraj al-Islami, and written in the Maranao language using Arabic script. It describes the objectives, benefits, and obligations of its officers and members. The author is Makalinog Qadi sa Bayang, a local Islamic intellectual and the koli (judge) of his community. It was published in 1948 or 1949, and the place of publication is the municipality of Lumabatan of the Lanao del Sur province. It consists of 48 pages. The method of printing is mimeograph. This book is also preserved at the library of the late Alim Ulomuddin Said at Marawi City.

no. 5: Kitab al-turuq al-hanna
This is the Maranao translation of a manuscript of Islamic mysticism, namely Abl al-Sunna wa l Jamaa, written mostly in Malay with some Arabic. The original manuscript was written by Sayyidna. According to the oral tradition, Sayyidna is said to have written it during his sojourn at Palengbang, probably around the beginning of the 19th century. It was translated by Sheikh Muhammad Said, a descendant of Sayyidna. It was printed by mimeograph in 1949 and consists of 142 pages. It is kept at the library of the late Ulomuddin Said.

no. 6: al-Hadith al-nabawiyya
This is a textbook published and used by Kamilol Islam. The title means “the narrative relating deeds and words of the Prophet Muhammad.” It was written in Arabic by Ilyas Ismail, a teacher of Kamilol Islam, who came from Aceh, Indonesia. It was also printed by mimeograph and has 33 pages. The date of publication is 1952. It is found among the Maisie Van Vactor Collection of Maranao Materials in the Arabic script at the Gowing Memorial Research Center of Dansalan College (hereafter, MVV Collection) at Marawi City.

no. 7: Tahdhib al-akhlaaq (Photo 3)
The title means “the instruction of morality.” This is another mimeographed textbook written in Arabic by Ilyas Ismail and published by Kamilol Islam. It is dated 1954 and has 40 pages. It is also part of the MVV Collection.

no. 8: Ta'ahib minipi
This is a book of prophecies, written in the Maranao language using the Arabic script. It is a collection of knowledge with regard to the interpretation of natural phenomena, such as earthquakes and solar eclipses, good and bad days for traveling, good colors for certain occasions, names of animals assigned to days of

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6 The Maranao has a rich tradition of oral literature and folksongs, such as darangen and boyo. Singers who specialize in such folksongs are called onors.
the week, names of each month in the traditional Maranao calendar, and names to be given to babies. The author is Ampatuya Mayasa Guro sa Kabasaran, a local ulama of the village of Kabasaran in the municipality of Pagayawan. It was published in 1953 or 1954 and has 47 pages. It is also printed by mimeograph. It also belongs to the MVV Collection.

no. 9: Juz’ al-’Amma Bagadidiya (Photo 4)
This is a mimeographed reproduction of the original Arabic text of Juz Amma. Bagadidiya is a name of a certain method of learning the recitation of the Qur’an and Arabic alphabets, which was popular in Southeast Asia. The title should read Juz’ Amma, without al. The name of the author is Ismail Guro Alim sa Bayang, a local ulama who taught at Kamilol Islam. It was published in 1955 and consists of 55 pages. It also is part of the MVV Collection.

4. Characteristics of the Early Printed Kitabs

The early printed kitabs discussed above are few in number, yet it is possible to point out several shared characteristics based on the available information.

(1) Author and Language

All the authors or translators of these printed kitabs are Islamic teachers, whether in the traditional educational system or in the modern one, exemplified by the system adopted by Kamilol Islam. With the sole exception of Ilyas, who is from Aceh, Indonesia, the rest are all Maranaos. This fact results in the predominance of the Maranao language in the printed kitabs they authored. Two kitabs, namely Tafsir Juz Amma (no. 3) and al-Turug al-kunna (no. 5), constitute the Maranao commentary on the Arabic text and the Maranao translation of the Malay text, respectively. Kabarol Akhirat (no. 2) may possibly be a Maranao version of the Malay manuscript of a similar title, namely Khabar akhirat dalam hal kiamat,7 written by Nur al-Din al-Rauiri, an ulama from Gujarat who stayed in Aceh in the mid-17th century and whose works have widely been read by Southeast Asian Muslims. The fact that such books were written in the Maranao language for publication suggests the existence of a body of Maranao readers who had looked forward to such materials at the time.

On the other hand, there are three books almost entirely written in Arabic.

These include two Islamic textbooks, which Ilyas wrote for classroom use at Kamilol Islam. They are Hadith (no. 6) and Akhlq (no. 7). Ilyas had studied at Ma’had Iskandar Muda and Normal Islamic School, both in Aceh, and also at the Islamic University in Jogjakarta.

Initially, he came to Manila in order to study secular subjects in English at a university in Manila. Soon after he arrived at Manila, however, the Indonesian currency was devaluated, and he became unable to withdraw his money from the bank. Ilyas consulted the Indonesian Embassy in Manila, whose staff member introduced him to an influential Maranao in Manila, namely Dianspun Sultan sa Masiru, who had come from the province of Lanao.

Upon learning that Ilyas was highly educated in Islam, Dianspun brought him to Lanao to teach Arabic there. Ilyas became a teacher at Kamilol Islam, where he introduced a new method of Islamic teaching, following the one in use at Islamic schools of Muhammadiyah, an Islamic reformist organization in Indonesia.9 Prior to that time, teachers of Kamilol Islam were using both Malay and Arabic textbooks, explaining them in Maranao. Ilyas, however, chose to teach entirely in Arabic and produced Islamic textbooks in Arabic.

Another book predominantly written in Arabic is Juz al-Amma, Bagadidiya (no. 9). Its text is exactly the same as those found in other kitabs of the same title, which were published in various cities in Indonesia, such as Jakarta, Medan, and Surabaya.9 The emergence of these Islamic textbooks written entirely in Arabic is significant because the medium of Islamic teaching was to be later predominated by Arabic, replacing Malay and Maranao.

(2) Genre and Contents

Printing and publishing are associated with modernity, and one may think that printed kitabs served as the vehicle for disseminating novel ideas, newly brought from outside. The existing literature on the Islamic resurgence in the Philippines also emphasizes the role of Filipino Muslim students who studied in Azhar University in Cairo and Islamic missionaries and teachers who came from the Middle East in introducing Islamic reformist ideas and movements to the Philippines [Gowing 1964; Majul 1985].

However, the early printed kitabs in Lanao are not necessarily

7 The title means “the news of the hereafter on the [Judgment] day at the End [of the world]” in Malay.

8 The author’s interview with Ilyas Ismail on Sep. 23, 1987, at Makati, Metro-Manila.

9 The collection of Southeast Asian Kitabs of Sophia University has four kitabs of similar titles and containing the same text. These were published in different places in Indonesia (kitab no. 0074-0077 in [Kawashima et al. 2010: 49]).
reformist-oriented. On the contrary, most of them deal with subjects that had been popular in handwritten manuscripts or oral traditions. These include religious stories handed down from generation to generation (nos. 1 and 2) and knowledge on the prescription of herbal medicine and dream divination (no. 8). A manuscript on Islamic mysticism written in Malay with some Arabic, which had privately been kept, was also printed and distributed (no. 5).

An exception may be the agreement of a local Islamic organization, namely ‘Ifrīqiyah... (no. 9). The Maranao text of this booklet resembles the constitutions and bylaws of a formally organized institution in its form, but it may also be considered as the modified version of the traditional Maranao customary law, namely igna ago tarih, a compilation of agreements and arrangements that regulated the system of governance in Maranao society.

(3) Technology and Equipment of Printing

Another point worth mentioning concerns the technology and equipment of printing. Out of the three books published in the 1930s, the one written in Maranao using Arabic script, namely Tafsir ijtla' Amma (no. 3), was lithographed at a print shop of a certain Hajj 'Abd al-Rahman in Singapore. The remaining two books, written in Maranao using the Latin script, namely Nabi Nok (no. 1) and Kabarol Akirat (no. 2), were printed using movable types at a press run by a Protestant mission, which means none of them were printed at a print shop run by Philippine Muslims.

On the other hand, all six books published from the late 1940s to the mid-1950s are mimeographed in Lanao by Philippine Muslims themselves. Publication of mimeographed Islamic books would reach its zenith in the late 1960s to 1970s in Lanao. The mimeograph machine had been widely used all over the Philippines since the American colonial period, and Kamilol Islam also had one such machine. The mimeograph machine also became widespread in Lanao with the introduction and expansion of popular election in the province during the period from the mid-1930s to the 1950s, since it was an essential item in printing campaign materials such as flyers, letters, and sample ballots.

The relatively low cost for the purchase of a mimeograph machine enabled Maranao intellectual to obtain a small-scale print shop of their own, either as an individual, a family, or an organization. Another advantage of the mimeograph printing was that authors could print their writings in the Arabic script, simply by cutting stencil paper manually. This simple technology was crucial because of the absence of Arabic print shops, and Arabic typewriters were difficult to obtain in the Philippines. By utilizing mimeograph machines, Islamic intellectuals were able to equip themselves with their own media, which were controlled by nobody else besides themselves.

(4) Institutionalization of Islamic Knowledge

The most important element related to the incipient publication of Islamic books in Lanao may have been the institutionalization of the system of transmitting Islamic knowledge. It is exemplified by the establishment of Kamilol Islam Society and its madrasa, namely Kamilol Islam Mahadul Ulom. Out of the eight authors of printed kitabs discussed above, four were affiliated with Kamilol Islam in one way or another. Iyass and Ismael Guro Alim were teachers, and Makalinog Qadi sa Bayan studied there. Mohamad Said sent his son to the madrasa. Islamic intellectuals and Muslim youths came to the madrasa from all parts of Lanao and formed a body of potential readers of Islamic publications. The communication network created among them must have facilitated the publicity and distribution of printed kitabs. Authors, producers, readers, and distributors converged on Kamilol Islam.

As discussed above, the incipient publication of Islamic books in Lanao did not necessarily introduce new ideas that were foreign to the Maranao populace. Rather, they reproduced ideas and stories that were already familiar with them. In their attempts to address these publications to a wider audience, however, standardization and reinterpretation of the texts were inevitable. Therefore, the publication of Islamic books in the 1930s to the 1950s can be considered the forerunner of the reorganization of Islamic knowledge in Lanao.

References


Kawahima Midori. 2009a. “Jawi” (Batak Arab) Publication in Lanao,
Table: Authors of the early printed kitabas of Lanao

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>place of origin</th>
<th>native language</th>
<th>language of Islamic education*</th>
<th>position in community</th>
<th>Kamiliol Islam**</th>
<th>kitab they authored; [language***]</th>
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<tr>
<td>a) Noski Alim</td>
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<td>Maranao</td>
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<td>Islamic teacher</td>
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<td>n.d.</td>
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<td>(2) Khabarul Akrat</td>
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<td>Malay and Arabic</td>
<td>Islamic teacher</td>
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<td>d) Makalinik Qadi sa Bayang</td>
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<td>Maranao</td>
<td>Malay and Arabic</td>
<td>student</td>
<td>(4) 'Imam al-Shaf'</td>
<td>[Mr]</td>
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<td>e) Sheikh Mohamad Said</td>
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<td>Maranao</td>
<td>Malay, some Arabic</td>
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<td>(5) al-Tauq al-Khumma</td>
<td>[Mr]</td>
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<tr>
<td>f) Ilyas Ismail</td>
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<td>Acehnese &amp; Indonesian</td>
<td>Arabic</td>
<td>madrasah teacher</td>
<td>(6) Hadiyyah [Ar];</td>
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Notes: *: The major language utilized when they studied Islam; **: Affiliation with Kamiliol Islam Maluddol Ulim; ***: The predominant language in the kitab they authored; [Mr] Maranao; [Ar] Arabic
Some early Islamic posters from the Netherlands East Indies

Nico J.G. Kaptein

1. Introduction

Recently, important progress has been made in the documenting of *kitab kuning* in Southeast Asia with the publication of the catalogue of the Sophia University collection (Kawashima 2010). Based on solid fieldwork, this catalogue gives an overview of which *kitab kuning* are still in circulation in this part of the world and it enables us to compare this with the earlier overviews made by Van den Berg (1886), van Bruinissen (no date; 1990) and Matheson and Hooker (1988) which provide insight into the distribution of these works and the fluctuations therein. An additional and unique feature of this catalogue is that it also includes works from the southern Philippines, which are not included in the other works mentioned.

The concept of *kitab kuning* is used in various ways, but here I will use it in its widest sense, that is to denote printed works on traditional Islamic learning in Arabic or a language in use in Southeast Asia, which are or have been in circulation among the various Muslim communities in Southeast Asia. The size and shape of the *kitab kuning* might differ, even the colour of the paper might be other than yellow. However, in my view, one characteristic must be present in order to correctly identify a *kitab kuning* and this is the use of the script of the Islamic language par excellence, Arabic. Of course, this description is of a prototypical nature and exceptions can be found. For instance, a recent development seems to be that some publishers of the traditional *kitab kuning* also include the modern Indonesian translation in a separate column, alongside the original Arabic text. As an example, I mention here a book from 2006, written by the well-known 19th century author Nawawi al-Bantani, entitled *Al-fuadhat al-nadaniyya fi al-sha'b al-imaniyya*. It is likely that, in this case, the Indonesian translation has been added because the knowledge of Arabic in Indonesia is, on the whole, declining. Another explanation might be that the publisher wants the book to reach a wider audience, beyond the circles of the *pesantren* where knowledge of Arabic remains common.

From my studies, I have distinguished three types of *kitab kuning*. The

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1 The illustrations accompanying this article have been published here with kind permission of Leiden University Library (UBL), and the Royal Netherlands Institute for Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (= Kitlv), both located in Leiden, the Netherlands.

2 The use of Arabic script emphasizes that the content of the book is Islamic.