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LAW AND RELIGION**

By Najeeb M. Saleeby

*and*

**THE ISLAND OF MINDANAO**

By Antonio Martel de Gayangos

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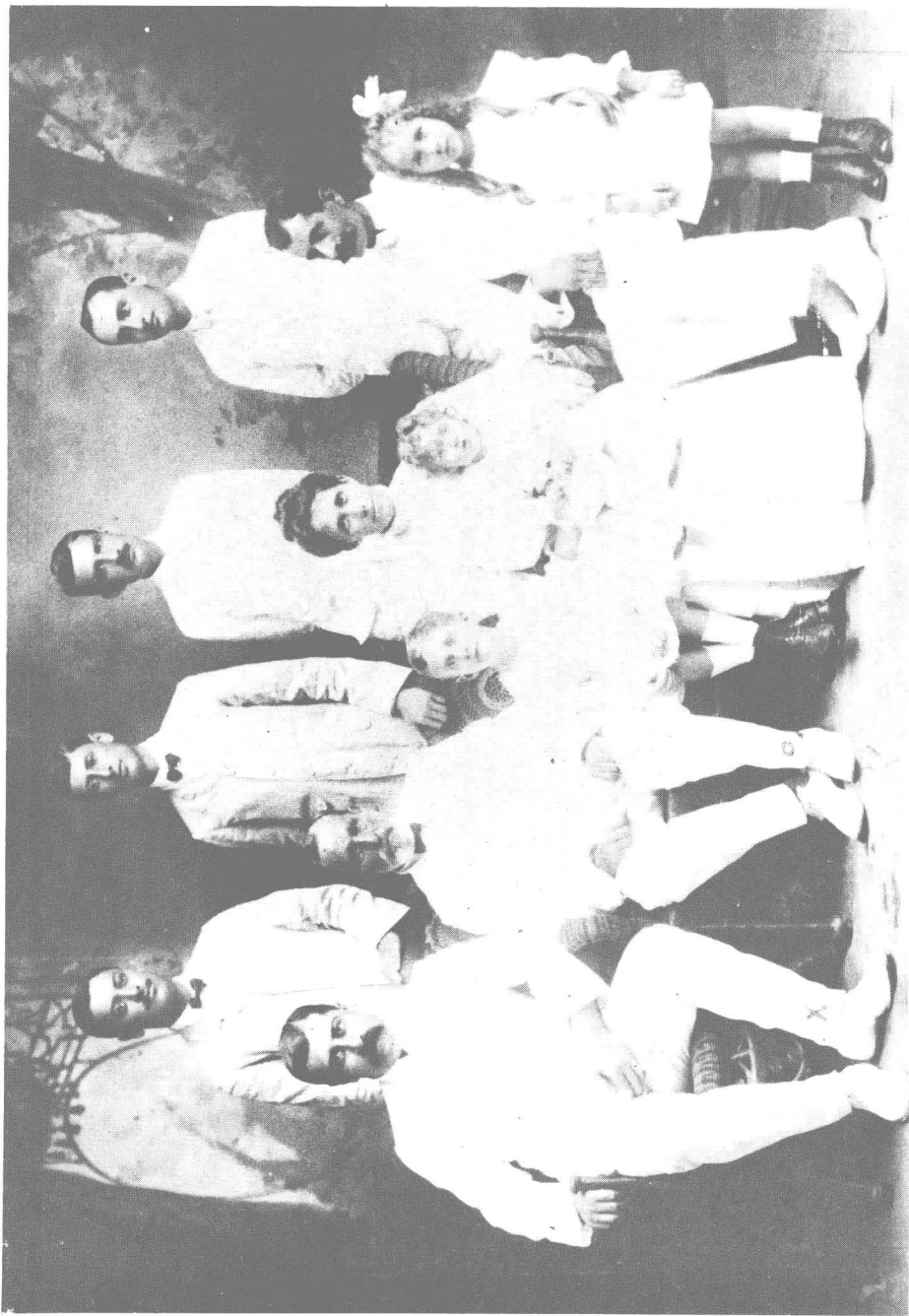
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THE SALEEBY FAMILY IN MANILA c. 1905

The author, Najeeb, is sitting at the left flanked by his father, sister-in-law, her children and older brother. At the rear are brothers and relatives. (Photo courtesy Mrs. Grace Saleeby Ashkar of Beirut, through F. Delor Angeles.)

STUDIES IN MORO HISTORY,  
LAW AND RELIGION

*By*  
Najeeb M. Saleeby

*and*

THE ISLAND OF MINDANAO

*By*  
Antonio Martel de Gayangos

With an Introduction and Annotations  
*by Cesar Abdil Majul*




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## INTRODUCTION

 R. NAJEEB Mitry Saleeby's *Studies in Moro History, Law, and Religion* was first published in Manila in 1905. It presents a collection of some of the most authoritative *tarsilas* of the Magindanao, Bwayan, and Iranun royal houses. No accurate history of the Muslims in Mindanao can be written without recourse to them. Strictly speaking, *tarsilas* are documents *par excellence* needed to establish legitimacy to rule. On this score, they are mainly genealogical in character. However, they also serve as quasi-historical documents regarding the advent of Islam to the Philippines as well as a few important incidents in the lives of Muslim leaders. Noteworthy is the manner *tarsilas* try to demonstrate the descent of datus from an Arab ancestor who, in turn, is asserted to have descended from the Prophet Muhammad. The descent from a local princess is often emphasized. In general, it can be maintained that descent from the family of the Prophet served as a sanction to rule over other Muslims while descent from a local princess served as a basis for rights to the land. Supplementary to *tarsilas* are the *tartibs* which define relations between the members of society. Unfortunately, Dr. Saleeby did not include any of them in his work.

Saleeby's *Studies* is a sympathetic work mainly on the Muslims of Mindanao. In it he tried to demonstrate that the Muslims there were not savages but people organized into communities with a history which they cherished and still continue to cherish. His inclusion of the *Luwaran*, a code of laws which Muslim judges had used for more than two centuries with some sources based on the *Shari'ah* or Holy Law, dramatically shows the extent of Arab and Islamic cultural influences on peoples in the Philippines. The marginal notations on the *Luwaran* reveal the extent of adherence to the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence (*madhhab*), one of the four orthodox schools of Islamic Law. Clearly, the *Luwaran* represents an attempt to apply elements of the *Shari'ah* to local situations.

During the time Saleeby wrote, not much was known about the history of the Malacca sultanate. This limitation prevented him from presenting a more accurate periodization on the advent of Islam to Mindanao. Unfortunately, too, he depended to some extent on histo-

rical reports by Captain Thomas Forrest who was in Mindanao and Sulu during the second half of the eighteenth century. Forrest, or his informant, made a few errors regarding certain events in Magindanao and Sulu history. However, these do not belittle the value of Forrest's work.

Dr. Saleeby was a Christian Arab who was born in 1870 in Souk al-Gharb, a town very close to Beirut. He studied at the American University of Beirut and then went to the Bellevue Medical School in the United States. During the Spanish-American War, he served as a surgeon in the United States Army. During the Filipino-American War, he volunteered in the American expeditionary forces. He arrived in Manila in October 1900, on the famous transport "Thomas". Because of his knowledge of the Arabic language, he was sent to Mindanao. There he made many friends among the Muslims, principally among the sultans, datus, and learned men (*'ulama*). This was how he was able to secure copies of *tarsilas* and other historical materials. When he was assigned to return to the United States, he decided to remain in the Philippines which he said was the place he wanted to live. He was so sincere in this decision that he eventually brought his father and other members of his family from Lebanon to come and live with him in Manila.

In 1903, Dr. Saleeby worked in the ethnological survey of the Philippines. He then became the Superintendent of Schools of the Moro Province until 1906. He once served as medical director of St. Luke's Hospital. His last years were spent as a physician in Baguio where he died on December 18, 1935, of a cerebral hemorrhage.

It is interesting to note that Dr. Saleeby wanted the Muslims of the Philippines to keep and develop the Arabic script. It is well known that **even before the arrival of the Europeans in the Philippines**, the Muslims were already using the Arabic script. Although he was a Christian, Dr. Saleeby was very respectful and appreciative of the religion of Islam and the culture inspired by it which was really part of his heritage. The invariant respect and hospitality of the Muslims towards him **endeared them to him** and he often took their side in their conflicts with American authorities. American officials, in general, including General Leonard Wood, could not simply appreciate the stand of the good doctor. Some of them even came to distrust him. However, after a few years, General Wood came to appreciate his work. A principle of Dr. Saleeby was that the faith of the Muslims was to be left untouched since it was Islam that brought them the art of writing, law, and a richer culture. He realized that the Muslims

he met had a great deal of qualities that could easily be transformed into civic virtues. He knew too well that the Muslims in the Philippines considered, as they still do, that the coming of Islam to them was an instance of Allah's Mercy and Grace.

An Appendix has been added to the *Studies*. It is the *La Ysla de Mindanao: Su estado actual y las reformas que reclama* by Antonio Martel de Gayangos. The original manuscript contains 165 folios and 3 cloth maps and is part of the Ayer Collection (Document No. 305) found in the Newberry Library, Chicago, Illinois, United States. The manuscript is undated, but since it was written during the reign of the Magindanao Sultan Muhammad Jalal ud-Din Pablu, it must have been written between 1884 and 1888, possibly around 1885. The author was a Spanish government official in Mindanao for about 6 years. He carefully described the various Muslim settlements in Mindanao and mentioned their datus or chiefs. He recommended Christian immigration to Mindanao and that the Army there should consist of a majority of Spaniards. He also dealt with the missions, administration of justice, and military needs of Mindanao. Its economic statistics are valuable. There is also included the 1857 treaty between the Spaniards and Idris, the Sultan of Tumbao.

The footnotes in brackets [ ] are in the original edition of 1905, and are mostly by the editor of that edition. Other footnotes not enclosed in brackets are by the undersigned, prepared for the present edition.

CESAR ADIB MAJUL

قَيسَرُ اَدِيْبِ مَاجُل

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## CHAPTER I

# MAGINDANAO HISTORY AND GENEALOGIES

### INTRODUCTION

The history of Mindanao prior to the advent of Islam is traditional and mythological, and no effort has been made to put it on record. With Islam came knowledge, art, and civilization. A new system of government was instituted and its records were registered. *Tarsila*<sup>1</sup> were written and the noble lineage of the datus was carefully kept. Each sultanate or datuship kept a separate genealogy. These genealogies, called *tarsila* or *salsila*,<sup>1a</sup> were very limited in their scope and brief in their narration of events. They are our only source of written information on the early history of the Moros, and are valuable on that account. Previously the Moros withheld these *tarsila* and kept them away from all foreigners and non-Mohammedans; but their attitude has changed lately, and several different *salsila* were secured from the chief datus of the Rio Grande Valley.

The original manuscripts could not be brought, but exact and true copies of the same have been secured and translated and their translations are herein published for the first time.

### THE TRANSLITERATION

These *tarsila* are written in the Magindanao dialect with Arabic characters, and a great part of their text is Magindanao names which have never yet been expressed by means of Romanic characters. In translating these *tarsila* such a large number of words have to be transliterated that it is deemed necessary to adopt a system of transliteration which can be easily understood by every English reader and which is more adequate to express Magindanao sounds than either Spanish or English. Such a system is herein adopted and is briefly described as follows:

---

[<sup>1</sup>Throughout this paper foreign words which do not often appear in an English text are given the same form for both singular and plural.]

<sup>1a</sup>From the Arabic *silsilah* for chain or link.

With the exception of *ng* and *sh*, the characters used in this system are simple and represent simple sounds only. Every radical modification of a certain simple sound is regarded as a different simple sound and is represented by a separate and distinct character. Every compound sound is represented by those characters that express its simple constituent sounds. It is an unvarying rule in his system that every character represents an invariable sound and every sound has only one invariable character. The Magindanao dialect has only twenty-seven simple sounds and can be expressed by twenty-seven simple characters. These characters are the following:

*a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, b, d, g, ng, h, j, k*  
*l, m, n, ñ, p, q, r, sh, t, w, y, z*

The sounds which these characters represent conform very closely to the original Roman sounds of the letters.

- a* is the short sound of *ā*; it is pronounced midway between the *a* in *bad* and the *e* in *bed*
- ā* is pronounced as the *a* in *far, father*
- i* is pronounced as the *i* in *fin, ill*
- ī* is pronounced as the *i* in *machine, police*
- u* is pronounced as the *u* in *put, push*
- ū* is pronounced as the *u* in *rude, flute*
- ū* is a midvowel, pronounced with the tongue slightly moved from its normal position; it is intermediate between *u* and *e*, and is somewhat related to the *u* in *hurt*
- b, d, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t* are pronounced as in English
- g* is always hard, as the *g* in *gold, get*
- ng* has a guttural-nasal sound like the *ng* in *ring*
- h* has an aspirate sound and should be always pronounced like the *h* in *hill, behind*
- j* is rarely used; when used it is pronounced like the *s* in *adhesion, vision*
- ñ* has a distinct palato-nasal sound and is related to the Spanish *ñ* in *señor*; it is generally followed by *ya*
- q* is a clicking, guttural sound related to *k*
- sh* is equivalent to *sh* in *ship*
- w* is always consonantal and sounds like the *w* in *we, twin, water*
- y* is always consonantal and sounds like the *y* in *you, yes, beyond*
- z* is pronounced midway between *z* and *s*