

The Bajo

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DESCRIPTION

After becoming intrigued with the Bajo (Bajau) during an expedition to North Borneo in 1879, the author describes what he learned about these people during his travels through the Indonesian Archipelago over the subsequent two years. His paper is also partly review of the meager literature that existed on the Bajo up to that time.

SOURCE

Verschuer, F. H. van. 1883. De Badjo's. *Tijdschrift van het Aardrijkskundig Genootschap* 7:1-7. Original pagination is indicated by enclosing the page number in brackets, e.g. [p. 1].

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When in August 1879, as master of the steamship HMS Macasser, I was given the task of making a voyage to North Borneo and the Sulu Archipelago, I was ordered, among other things, to find out “whether the name *Bajo's Kobang*, which the pirates are often called, had some connection with the name of Kobang Island, so that this would not reflect favourably in relation to piracy, or was it, as was claimed, only a common name for the inhabitants of Tawi-Tawi island, not having anything to do with Kobang Island?”

For Kobang must be the island of Culi Babang, which is on the English admiralty map. Having arrived at the place, I found the English map of this part of east coast of Borneo so inaccurate that, with the sole exception of two small areas, Tanjong Unsang and Ligitan or Boom-Boom, recorded as early as 1845 by Capt. Belcher, it must have been composed from hearsay. With such a map, off an uninhabited coast, in a channel full of islands and reefs, to go and look for an island without having anyone who could tell me which of the at-least-apparently-uninhabited islands was Kobang, I considered to be an unprofitable mission, and so I came back to Batavia without being able to answer the question asked of me. Yet I think that according to the reports received I am able to establish that the name Kobang belongs to the part of the east coast of Borneo between Darvel Bay and St. Lucia Bay² and not to the Tawi-Tawi islands that lie opposite. However, whether Kobang denotes the whole region between the two bays, or a certain island or else a certain place, has remained unknown to me.³ The various reports about Kobang, to be found in E. de Waal, *Onze Indische Financien*, III, p. 208, give no certainty about it.

¹ [translator's note: I use the singular for names of peoples, thus 'thirty Bajo' not 'thirty Bajos.' Dutch spellings of place names and other names have been updated using the following replacements: oe → u, dj → j, tj → c and j (elsewhere) → y. I have replaced Van Verschuer's Bugies with 'Bugis,' and his Putieh with 'Putih.' Some inconsistent spellings found in the original (e.g. Macasser, Macassar, Makassar, Makassar) have been left intact.]

² [translator's note: For the region between Darvel Bay and St. Lucia (Sibuko) Bay as it was perhaps known to Van Verschuer, see the map in Warren (1971:11).]

³ [page 1, second column, footnote 1] I have recently received a copy of a map of this area made by Dalrymple and on it I found the name 'Kubang' approximately in the place where in 1875 the sloops of the Austrian corvette Archduke Friedrich were attacked. When I was at that place this event was unknown to me; I sent a sloop to the mouth of the river, wrongly held by Lehnert to be the Sibuko river, and it found no inhabitants.

Although my investigation was thus far unfruitful, through this mandate my attention became fixed on the Bajo themselves. Until now I had come to see them as a sort of fisher folk who often joined with the Sulu pirates in the Makassar Strait, but now I found out on this and my subsequent voyages that they were a widespread people who extended along the whole of the northern and eastern coast of Borneo, over the [p. 2] Sulu Archipelago, presumably over a part of the Philippines, and further over a great deal of our eastern Archipelago; that, everywhere practising the occupation of fishing, mostly only temporarily living ashore in extremely simple dwellings, always built over the water; a people that seemed to have their own language and, notwithstanding their great mobility and the very different races with whom they were associated, seemed to have retained their own character, and that in the end were not unfavourably judged by those with whom they came into contact.

Conditions of life aboard make it difficult to take many books with one, but on my return to the Netherlands I had expected to find extensive literature on the Bajo. In this I was disappointed. Certainly, they were mentioned in various works and travel accounts and they will presumably be in many others, both English and Spanish, which I cannot read, but after the first mention made of them by Padbrugge in the year 1675,⁴ I can find only one article in which they are treated of in detail and that is by Vosmaer from the year 1835.⁵ Only Padbrugge, governor of the Moluccas, describes the Bajo, who lived on the northern tip of Celebes, the present Minahassa. He calls them “in no way so savage or impetuous natured as Mr. Montanus says, but on the contrary humble, quiet, straightforward, trustworthy and not offending anyone, unless others first attack them, which does happen from some people off the coast of Celebes and for which public punishment is practised.” He believes that they originated in China or Japan.

Vosmaer, who spent several years under the Bajo on Kendari bay on the south-east corner of Celebes, gives a very full description of their way of life, as he saw it there, while he made detailed reports on their main occupation, the gathering of tripang and karet.⁶ He says of them: “In general they are industrious, open-hearted and honest people and they differ from those who rove about chiefly by their good nature, but also by their timidity.” Vosmaer divides the Bajo on the Kendari Bay into two groups: those living on the coast and those who rove about. Speaking in general about the Bajo, he says:

“Concerning their origin one must take refuge in guesses. They belong to the Malayan race, but whether at some earlier time the various tribes formed into an independent nation cannot easily be determined. A comparison of their languages would be able to throw much light on that. There is a great possibility that earlier

⁴ [page 2, first column, footnote 1] Valentijn, *Oud en Nieuw Oost-Indien*, I. p. 204–206. S. Keyzer publication.

⁵ [page 2, first column, footnote 2] *Verhandelingen van het Bataviaasch Genootschap*, XVII, 1839, p. 113.

⁶ [translator’s note: Tripang refers to sea cucumbers. Karet, shortening of Dutch *karetschildpad*, refers to sea turtles, or more specifically their carapaces as an item of trade.]

they must have lived for a long time in the Makassar empire. In this respect a certain backwater close to Goa called Tidung is said once to have served them as home, although no traces of it are to be found now. They themselves admit that their language is spoken nowhere on the shore, although it bears the marks of having belonged to a language that existed here earlier, perhaps spread over this archipelago, the now lost Polynesian.⁷ After the fall of the Makassar empire they became united in the Bonish, where they founded the community of Bajoa. They still regard themselves as the subjects of Boni and Goa.”

For the sake of completeness I will also comment here that H. von Dewall, speaking about the Bajo on the east coast of Borneo,⁸ ascribes their origin to the kingdom of Johore. Contrary to that, Van Spreeuwenberg says concerning the Bajo in Minahassa⁹ that they originate “from an island, now sunken, known on the sea charts under the name of *the Boot*.”¹⁰

A single, rather detailed informant on such a remarkable people in a period of two centuries is certainly not much. I should like to be the second, but am not in a position for that, as I came into contact with them too little and always for too short a time. It will seldom happen, however, that one person should in a relatively short period visit most of the region inhabited by the Bajo, as I had to do in the years 1879–1881, and I think that it can therefore be useful to pass on what I saw of them, even if only as a contribution to the knowledge of their spreading over the archipelago in those years.

Neither on Sarawak nor on Brunei did I hear the Bajo mentioned, except that I venture to say that on the whole they are not met with at all on this part of the northwest coast of Borneo. I first heard them mentioned [p. 3] during a visit on 27th September 1879 to the resident of the Overbeck-Dent Company stationed on the Pappar River, a Mr. Everett. He told me that the nearby kampong was inhabited by some ‘Orang Brunai’ (Malayans), apart from the Dusuns, as the original Dayak people are called, and also about forty Bajo. These last, however, belonged to Mengkabong, under the rule of Pangeran Roup.¹¹ The river Mengkabong runs about 6 miles to the north of the river Pappar; between the two

⁷ [page 2, second column, footnote 1] In A. R. Wallace’s work is appended a list of words of the Bajo language, which however is not included in Prof. P. J. Veth’s translation. See “Insulinde”, II, p. 528. It is not stated, however, among which Bajo Wallace collected his list.

⁸ [page 2, second column, footnote 2] *Tijdschrift voor Indische Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*, 1855, pp. 438–445. [translator’s note: Von Dewall’s hypothesis that the Bajau originate from Johore is actually stated on page 446.]

⁹ [page 2, second column, footnote 3] *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*, vol. 8, Batavia, 1846, Part 1, p. 35.

¹⁰ [translator’s note: Dutch *de Laars*.]

¹¹ [translator’s note: Pangeran is a title, ‘prince,’ usually understood to be the brother or son of a reigning monarch.]

lies the wide Gaya Bay. At a few hours' rowing from the mouth it forms a sort of marsh or lake, on which the kampongs of the Bajo are situated. I heard, however, that this lake was easier to reach from Gaya Bay and therefore I came to anchor that same evening in the north of that bay before Gantisan. The officer who went ashore the next morning reached the lake after half an hour's walking and fortunately found a vessel there that took him to the house of the Pangeran in the Rambunei kampong, situated not far from the larger Mengkabong. He was very courteously received; the Pangeran apologised that his proas were not ready; otherwise he would have brought me down the river except for making a call, but he would go to Gantisan later – the journey was difficult for him – if I would have him brought back by my sloops. So on 29th September I received a visit from pangeran Roup with seven other pangerans, all members of a family, and about thirty Bajo as followers. I did not see anything very special about them; I noted down that they wore wide trousers and not short sarongs like the Malays and that they also had something Chinese in their faces. At that time I had not yet read that Padbrugge ascribed a Chinese origin to the Bajo, but I had read of Chinese immigrants in northern Borneo, who had now died out, and possibly this had stirred my imagination. However that may be, pangeran Roup could not tell me anything about the Bajo's origin. He himself belonged to the Brunei Sultan's family; his father, pangeran Madoud, had received this part of the coast from the Sultan in feud and he was thereby the recognised head of the Bajo on the northwest coast, while he had no authority at all over those on the northeast coast. His Bajo were Muslims and spoke their own language; they had for the most part said farewell to their roaming life and settled down in various kampongs on this coast that certainly must have played an important part at the time when piracy at Brunei and Tampasuk was flourishing. That they even then still made long journeys however was clear to me from the fact that one of the nephews of the pangeran, Ismail, a son of pangeran Badarudin and an Ilanon woman, was very familiar with Bulungan, where he had often stayed.

The same evening the Macasser anchored in the Bay of Ambong, where I found a Bajo kampong with two headmen (orang kaya), one of whom recognised the Sultan of Brunei while the other pangeran recognised Roup. Because of the bad weather I did not visit Tampasuk this time, but I went there on my next journey, on 11th June 1880. Neither on this occasion did I go up the River Tampasuk, the entry into which alone presents difficulties for a sloop, but I went on land from Abai to the English settlement on the river. Riding on buffaloes, we took two hours to reach it, but three times the buffaloes sank so deep in the mud that it was difficult to free them. I heard from the deputy resident that below the place of his establishment three kampongs were situated on the river: one of Ilanon people, one of Bajo and one of Dusun, who continually had disagreements and caused him more trouble than the whole population of the interior consisting of Dusun, whom he most firmly maintained to be of mixed Chinese and Dayak origin.

I now come to the northern part of the east coast of Borneo, viz. the part that does not belong to our district. Here the Bajo constitute the only population of the coast and nowhere have they kept their roaming character so much as here; in fact, only thereby have they been able to maintain themselves here. No building was possible on this coast or it soon fell prey to the pirates. The native (Bulu-dupi) population went back to the

interior and European influence took no interest in anything but occasional visits of individual traders to buy forest products. I went to Sandakan Bay twice, in Oct. '79 and July '80, and so I repeatedly had the opportunity of speaking with Mr. Pryer, the resident of the English Company, about the Bajo, in whom he had a special interest. As he had gathered round himself an inland population from the most varied nationalities, his judgement certainly had some value. He called them, among other things, exceptionally carefree and insouciant; they seldom remain more than a few days in the same place; whatever their labour produces they exchange for rice, but of it they take with them in their boats only enough for a few days and, when the provisions are used up, they live on roots that they find in the forest. [p. 4]

On my second stay however he had put several Bajo to work on his reclamations and he praised them as bigger, more muscular and harder-working than the rest of the population. I then also had the opportunity with Capt. H. O. Wichers and Mr. Pryer in the steamboat HMS Atjeh to see the inner part of Sandakan Bay. We visited the Bajo kampong Upak, which consisted of four fairly large houses, built on stilts in the water, in one of which we were very hospitably entertained. It was the home of Tuan Imum, the chief of the Bajo on the east coast, appointed by Sulu, but he was not at home and a woman neighbour, a Malay, did the honours. This Tuan Imum formerly resided in the more northerly Sugut, but, when he was driven from there by pirates, he found refuge in Sandakan Bay under Mr. Pryer's protection. On the way we also passed, nearer the islet of Ningkala, about twenty Bajo proas with their little nipa palm roofs lying in shelter under the trees; on them for the moment only women and children were to be seen. According to Mr. Pryer, the four houses of Upak were the only Bajo houses on the whole east coast; he was compiling a word-list of the Bajo language and intended to write about their origin in the kingdom of Johore.

After my second stay in Sandakan bay I was charged with reconnoitering the mouth of the Kina-batangan river and visiting the Silam kampong in Darvel Bay. Steaming into this magnificent bay, which, so far as I knew, had never yet been visited by a warship, I again found that the map did not correspond at all with reality. Thus I travelled, among other things, over the place where the great Pulo Gaya is shown on the map, without seeing anything of an island in the vicinity. I had already come to the deepest part of the bay and not a single trace had presented itself that could cause one to suspect the position of Silam, when under the dense green of the coast a few small Bajo proas were seen. Immediately course was set for them, but the ship touched ground. The flat-bottomed boat, the smallest vessel on board, then went to them with an officer and two Javanese, but they hurriedly retreated: only two men in a sampan were brave enough to stay there. These men showed us the direction in which Silam lay, but could not be persuaded to come aboard; soon they had all disappeared up one creek or another. Returning in the direction indicated, we saw, after a few islets, some houses; a sloop went there, but the kampong, consisting of about ten miserable huts, was deserted. The Bajo inhabitants had fled into the bush with the little that they possessed. Before the place lay a schooner under the English flag; the captain, an Arab, who bought up birds' nests, said that even on his arrival the population had fled. Leaving Darvel Bay, I left the mysterious Kobang with its

many islands and reefs on my right and, after passing through the Sibutu Passage, set course for Tontoli on Celebes; I come back to this trip below.

On my first journey I came from Sandakan Bay on 7th October 1879 to the island of Sulu, opposite the Spanish settlement of Jolo on the north coast, which was still on a war footing. I therefore on the whole did not come into contact with inland headmen and it was not possible for me to obtain any information about the population from the Spaniards, all officers, whom I met. None of them spoke any inland language and for them all the inland peoples, irrespective of whether they were Muslim or pagan, were ‘Morros,’ which name they still bandy about as freely as our travel writers in former ages did that of ‘Moors.’ Only the Christian Tagalog of Luzon, who constitute a great deal of the army and of the crew of the fleet, are called ‘Indios’ by them. From various reports, however, it seems to me that the Bajo extend over the whole Sulu archipelago and also over the Bisayas that belong to the Philippines. Gronovius, in his reports of 1848 about Sulu,¹² names the various islands where they dwell and says, among other things, that the chain of small islands to the southeast of the Tawi-Tawi islands are inhabited to a great part by Bajo. No sea offers them more favourable conditions than the Sulu Sea. Enclosed on all sides by islands, rich in pearl banks and all sea products, from the collecting of which the Bajo make their living, this sea is never visited by bad weather. The Sultan of Sulu maintains that the name of the island was originally Suwok ‘still water,’ which name was corrupted by the Brunei Malays into ‘Solok’ and by the English to Sulu.¹³ In that still water the Bajo with their small, hardly seaworthy vessels are in their element. What their relationship is with the [p. 5] Sulu Datus,¹⁴ however, and especially what their relationship was with the pirates—whether they went with them and so secured protection from them—that I never got to know.

The day after my arrival on Sulu, a native with a small outrigger proa came aboard the Macassar; he said he was called Mohammed, was from Pontianak and twelve years before had been robbed by pirates at Kotta-ringin. He had been a slave of a Bajo called Skatin all that time and was now invoking my protection. I had his statements checked as much as possible by my people whose homes were in Pontianak and obtained permission from the governor to take the man along with me without any objection. He was quickly at home on board and thus soon looked so much better that, although he did not complain about his master’s treatment, it was obvious that his diet had left much to be desired. He spoke the Bajo and Sulu languages and henceforth went with the sloops whenever contact with the natives could be expected, but this was not often the case. Having called at Zamboanga on Mindanao and taken on coal on Basilan, I steamed along the south side of

¹² [page 4, second column, footnote 1] *Tijdschrift van Nederlandsch Indië*, 1850, II, p. 65. Concerning the value to be attached to these reports, see E. de Waal, *Onze Indische Financien*, III, p. 162.

¹³ [page 4, second column, footnote 2] Following Dalrymple, the origin of Sulu should date to the coming of a Bajo from Johor. See *Het Grondgebied van Nederlandsch Oost-Indië* by J. E. de Sturler, 1881, p. 153.

¹⁴ [translator’s note: In Malay-speaking areas, Datu was a title given to certain significant rulers not belonging to the royal class.]

the Sulu and Tawi-Tawi islands again to the east coast of Borneo. While I was anchored on 21st October at Mabul Island, proas were seen in the direction of Boom-boom island, but on the approach of the sloop they speedily disappeared. On the island of Sipangon signs of habitation were found (bananas etc. grew there), but there were no houses except for a guardhouse on the reef between Boom-boom and Sipangon that could be reached only at high tide. It would be very desirable to investigate this region somewhat more thoroughly, although it lies outside our area, with an eye on the lively slave trade that is carried on by the Tawi-Tawi islands on Bulungan and Berou. The island of Dinawan, where, according to von Dewall, most of the Bajo lived in 1849, must have lain in this area, presumably the Danuang that was visited in 1863 by HM Ships Madura and Sindoro, but I learnt just as little about its position as that of Kobang.

Going further west along Batu Cinagal and in the whole of the vast St. Lucia Bay, I saw nothing of any inhabitants; I now went south, passed the islands of Derawan and Panjang that lie before the mouth of the Berou river and on 30th October I came to anchor before the kampong of Batu Putri, which is completely surrounded by coral reefs. It is these islands that are so much visited by the Bajo and where, so long as the Sultans of Berou and those of Bulungan were in a relationship with the Sulu pirates, they were so closely united with the latter that for the warships the words 'bajo' and 'bajak'¹⁵ come to mean the same. Since living, or even temporarily staying, on the islands surrounded by such dangerous reefs is forbidden by the civil administration, the situation has been considerably improved, to which naturally the change in Sulu has greatly contributed. Only on the island of Buja lying to the south, have Bajo received permission to settle; 100 souls live in about ten houses under their own 'penggawa.'¹⁶ They belong to the Maharaja Dandi, a son of the Sultan of Sambiliung, who lives higher up on the river Batuputih. Even before the ship was at anchor, the 'penggawa' came aboard from a small proa with a large Dutch flag and showed his appointment by the government. He was an elderly man with a sly face, but clearly not completely at ease aboard the warship; perhaps less pleasant memories were connected with it for him. I let him speak Bajorese with my slave in the presence of the interpreter, but he found it wiser to act as if he understood little of it. He was very pleased when he could leave again with some rice, a length of rope for a stone anchor, and a pot of paint for painting up the beacons, for which rich gifts he would send some fish, which were then brought by his son the following morning.

So far as I know, Bajo have also settled on land at the mouth of the River Kutei and there exists a Bajo kampong on the river Pasir. That, however, also in the Straits of Makassar the Bajo have a much better reputation than they enjoy with us may be shown by the following citations. In the "Directory for the Indian Archipelago" by A. G. Findlay, 1870, the English nautical description of our archipelago,¹⁷ it says on page 718: "The coast of Borneo northward of Pulo Laut is but little known, and has been very seldom visited by

¹⁵ [translator's note: Malay for 'pirate.']

¹⁶ [translator's note: Peggawa is a customary title given to leaders among the Bajo and Bugis.]

¹⁷ [page 5, second column, footnote 1] Will a Dutch nautical description of the archipelago ever see light?

Europeans (!). A peculiar race, a kind of sea-gypsies, lives about the mouths of the rivers. They are called by Mr. Earl the Orang Badju, dwelling in boats of eight or ten tons burden, each boat containing a family of about fifteen inhabitants, who employ themselves in catching and curing [p. 6] fish and tripang. They are very trustworthy and are very useful in carrying dispatches or any similar offices.” James Brooke, certainly no friend of pirates, says of them in 1830:¹⁸ “The Bajooos or sea-gypsies are another race on whom some dependence may be placed, particularly if they be freed from the trammels of debt, swindled upon them by the Malays. Mr. Earl, who had a personal acquaintance with this tribe and could speak their language, always expressed to me a degree of confidence in their good faith, which must have some grounds.”

I met no more Bajo and arrived at Makasser on 5th November 1879. Through the kindness of the Governor of Celebes the Bajo language of Mohammed was investigated by the administrative assistant Brugman, and that gentleman wrote to me:

“In compliance with your request I have heard through Mohammed, the slave freed by you, of the Bajorese living on Celebes. It was then evident to me that the two languages have much in common, though some words are different. In my opinion there is certainly a relationship between the Celebean and the Bornean Bajo and I also hold the opinion that the Bornean Bajo are of Buginese origin.”

In the judgement of my Malayan interpreter the language of the Bajo from the northwest coast of Borneo was much mixed with Malay, while that of those from the northeast coast was mixed with Suluese.

I now come back to my second journey, when I arrived on 23rd July 1880 at Tontoli on the northwest tip of Celebes. I heard there from the Buginese chief that there was a Bajo kampong on the coast just to the south of Tontoli, in which only Bajo were living and whose headman, the Bajo Rajah, was appointed by the Prince of Tontoli. The Buginese chief calls the Bajo a completely different race from the Buginese with their own distinct language; they always marry amongst themselves and also have different clothes: a jacket with short trousers.

At Menado I learnt from the Resident that there are still Bajo living in Bangka Strait, so the fear of the writer of *Een blik op de Minahassa*,¹⁹ “that this race will soon disappear,” has not yet been realised. At Gorontalo I took on board a controller of the inland administration and the chief of the Buginese (Kapitan Bugis), who were to accompany me on a voyage to the Gulf of Tomini. I made my first visit to the controller dwelling at Tilamuta; I heard from him that not far to the west of Tilamuta there was a settlement of Bajo and that the captain of the Buginese who was on board with me had not long before taken the daughter of the ‘Penggawa’ of that kampong as his second wife. Although the Bajo are mostly rovers, they always have such kampongs, built in the water, in order to

¹⁸ [page 6, first column, footnote 1] *The Raja of Sarawak* by Gertrude L. Jacob, I, p. 87.

¹⁹ [page 6, first column, footnote 2] *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*. vol. 8, Batavia 1846, part I, p. 35.

repair and renew their proas. All the Buginese and Bajo in the Gulf of Tomini pay taxes to the 'Rajah Bugis,' the monarch of Boni, who from time to time sends envoys to collect them.

As reports of piracy on the coast to the south of the Togean islands were multiplying in the meanwhile, I went no further into the Gulf of Tomini, but crossed over directly to the Togean islands. On this crossing I tried to get the Bugis captain to chat with me, but with little success; he was keeping Ramadan and was constantly occupied with his religious duties. Besides, I suspected that the separation from his young Bajorese wife was upsetting him. He told me that all the Bajo in the Gulf of Tomini were 'Buginese Bajo,' originating from Kendari Bay, and that they had no kinship with the other races that I had met, such as the 'Solok Bajo' and the 'Bisayan Bajo.' I do not agree with him in this; not long ago two Bajo were sent, for one reason or another, by the Resident of Menado to Makasser to the Governor of Celebes on the supposition that they belonged to that region, while on inquiry it was evident that they were from Batu Putih on the East Coast of Borneo; so in our Indies at least they maintain a connection with each other.

On Togeana, at the entrance of the completely enclosed basin where the Buginese kampong is situated, I found a Bajo kampong consisting of a dozen houses. While the houses of the Buginese stood on land and were spacious and strongly built, those of the Bajo were no more than wretched huts built on stilts in the water. At Pagemana²⁰ it was the same story: the prosperous [p. 7] Buginese kampong was built on the rising sandy shore, but the Bajo kampong lay very shabbily in a marshy corner that was flooded at high tide. When I was with the Controller at the Buginese headman's, I also summoned the Bajo penggawa. He had only recently entered upon his duties, following the death of his predecessor; he was still very young, had a pleasant appearance and was very shy, but he had also brought three elders with him as advisers. After the conference of the controller with the headmen was over, I had some questions put to the Bajo chief through the captain of the Buginese. He had authority over all the Bajo in this locality and also over those of Togeana; after consultation with his advisers he declared himself ready to accompany me on the following day with his proas, in order to show me the way to the place where the pirates would be all together. Unfortunately it was reported to me, when I had gone back on board, that the bad Borneo coal that had had to be taken aboard at Gorontalo, as there was no other available, had had such a deleterious effect on the boiler that I had to decide to give up the pursuit. When on the following morning the

²⁰ [page 6, second column, footnote 1] The Pagemana I mean is the one indicated in red letters on van Musschenbroek's map (*Tijdschrift van het Aardrijkskundig Genootschap*). My sources said that the pirates lived at Patipati, but when I therefore wanted to enter the bay shown on the map, my pilots said that there was no Patipati on the bay. To the east of Pagemana was a Siuna kampong and in the corner of the bay a Poh kampong. Patipati is said to lie on the coast to the north of the Poh kampong. To the north of Cape Japara there is another fairly large island that does not appear on the map and was called Pulo Japara by the pilots.

‘penggawa’ came on board with some of his sopee²¹—that is the name of their neatly shaped vessels in this region—to ask for further orders, I could only thank him for his good intentions. As we steamed out, the ‘sopee’ went on to the corners of the reefs and lay like bouys to show the way.

In the Moluccas, at Ternate and Amboina, I did not hear of Bajo; that they were not absent, however, at that time even in those areas is related by Mr. Elout in his research on Bacan Island in 1880:²² “On the left the long island of Batang Loman, where the Bajo have built their kampong in the bay that lies opposite the island of Membaat ... The Bajo, who live in their lake-dwellings, built halfway into the sea, live by catching tripang and karet. Their number is about 160. The amount in piculs from the karet caught cannot be given even approximately. As seamen the Bajo have a good name; their intrepidity inspires the Alfur pirates with the requisite awe. They are also the only inhabitants of Bacan who dare to settle on Obi.” Departing from Ambon, I left the main home of the Bajo, Kendari Bay and the Gulf of Boni, on my right and came to Surabaya on 3rd October 1880.

I spent the first three months of 1881 in the Timor residency. There are no Bajo on the island of Timor or on Sumba. From Mr. Kleian, the administrator of Larantuka, I learnt that there were three settlements of Bajo in his area: two on the north coast of the island of Adonare, where they had extended their kampongs on the shore out into the sea, and one on the island of Great Basterd, opposite Geliting on the north coast of Flores. They fish throughout the whole year, except in the bad weather of the Western Monsoon, and they make unbelievably long voyages in their little sampans. He says they are helpful and completely trustworthy. They have their own language and marry among themselves, but they also have wives from the pagan mountain-dwellers; most of them have been born here and yet only a few of them are real Bajo. On my return journey, calling at Bima to load coal, I heard from the controller that the large kampong, situated on the opposite side of the bay opposite the Sultan’s kampong, where the controller also was living, was inhabited by Bajo and that they had settlements along the whole coast of Sumbawa. They have their own headmen, who come immediately under the Sultan. According to Vosmaer (in 1835), the Bajo, who are known by the name of ‘Sadulang’ in the Sumanap or Kangean islands and who live in the Straits of Makassar, recognise the Rajah of Goa as their patron. I cannot venture to decide whether the Orang Raja or Rajat and the Orang Sekat of Biliton²³ are connected with the Bajo.

Having come to the end of these notes, I refrain in general from drawing conclusions concerning the origin and connections of this race of people. If my reports can help to

²¹ [translator’s note: The usual spelling for this particular kind of small planked boat, common among the Bugis, is *soppe* or *sope*.]

²² [page 7, first column, footnote 1] *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsch Indië*, Sept. 1881, p. 202.

²³ [page 7, second column, footnote 1] De Hollander, *Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch Oost-Indië*, I, pp. 820, 837 and 848.

inspire someone more qualified than I am to investigate the Bajo in their dwelling places and to increase our imperfect knowledge about them, I shall be completely satisfied.

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[supplied by the translator]

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