

# SAMA'-BAJAU INFLUENCES IN MAKIANG MUSICAL CULTURE

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## Abstract

Situated along upper portions of the Kinabatangan River of eastern Sabah, from beyond Tongod upriver to below Kota Kinabatangan downstream, the Makiang speak a dialect of the Upper Kinabatangan language, one of five languages in Sabah's indigenous Paitanic Family of Languages. Known as the Milian in the Makiang dialect, the Kinabatangan is said to be Sabah's longest river. Over hundreds of years, it has provided a link between indigenous peoples in its upper reaches and east coast maritime peoples. The river has enabled trade between the many different interior communities with coastal peoples, leading to the diffusion of objects, ideas and practices. This paper discusses instruments and genres of Makiang group music that suggest evidence of diffusion from Sama'-Bajau and also Suluk musical practices, including the *morunsai* vocal dance genre as well as the performances of the ensembles *sampasang no gabang* and *sampasang no kulintangan*. It illustrates evidence for the processes of cultural convergences through which east coast Sama'-Bajau musical practices that have been absorbed into interior cultures and transformed over time.

*Keywords:* group music, *morunsai*, *sampasang no gabang*, *sampasang no kulintangan*, *Makiang*, *Paitanic language family*, *Sama'-Bajau*, *eastern Sabah*, *diffusion*, *cultural convergence*

## Introduction

Sabah's geography features major river systems that flow from the mountainous backbone of the interior and meander across extensive alluvial plains to the coast. Rivers across eastern Sabah include the Paitan, Labuk (Sugut), Kinabatangan, and the Segama. For thousands of years, these rivers have supported various indigenous cultures including Dusunic and Paitanic peoples, as well as speakers of Ida'an, Bega'ak and Subpan dialects of the Ida'an language, and some very remote inland Murutic villages.

The Kinabatangan River, called Milian in the Upper Kinabatangan language, is said to be Sabah's longest river (Vaz & Payne, 1997/1998, p. 5). Many diverse communities live along its multitude of tributaries. The Tangara Murut, who speak a dialect of Bookan Murut, reside in its remote upper reaches. Various Paitanic groups

including speakers of the Lobu (Lobuu) dialects Lobu and Rumanau, and dialects of the Upper Kinabatangan language such as Kalabuan (Kolobuan), Makiang, Sinabu', Sinarupa and Kuamut, are found in the upper Kinabatangan River area but downstream from the Tangara. Sukang and Mangkaak, subgroups of the Labuk-Kinabatangan Dusun, also live along parts of the Kinabatangan River, while some Ida'an villages are located further downstream around Bilit and Sukau (King, 1984/1997, pp. 139-153; "Malaysia: Sabah", 2016). Outsiders often collectively label these diverse peoples *Orang Sungai* ("river people"), a gloss that ignores the cultural uniqueness of each group.

Like other eastern rivers, the Kinabatangan has served as a conduit linking upriver peoples with coastal and maritime communities such as the Sama'-Bajau and the Suluk (Taosug). In former times, brassware, gongs, ceramic jars and other objects were traded up the river in exchange for forest products and other resources from the interior. Cultural contacts due to trade also saw the diffusion of musical elements from coastal communities into interior societies in eastern Sabah.

Kartomi (1994/2008, pp. ix-x) uses the term 'cultural convergence,' which is a similar concept 'language convergence' (Pallesan, 1985), to describe processes that include both diffusion of minor traits and major creative transformations of styles, including principles of musical organisation, that have resulted from contacts between diverse cultures over a period of time. She describes 'cultural collision', on the other hand, as a clash between diverse cultures, whereby a dominant society may suppress the music-culture of a minority group or, conversely, a smaller group may reject the music of a larger one. Cultural collisions often result from war.

This paper will discuss the nature of cultural convergence, due to riverine trade from east coastal maritime communities such as the Sama'-Bajau and the Suluk, which has influenced the music-culture of the Makiang. In looking at frequently performed genres of Makiang vocal and instrumental music, it seeks to answer the following questions. How has cultural convergence affected Makiang musical culture? Has it resulted in small-scale diffusion of elements or major musical transformations?

## **The Makiang**

The Makiang live along upper sections of the Kinabatangan River in the Tongod and Kinabatangan Districts, from beyond Tongod Town upriver to below the town of Kota Kinabatangan downstream. As mentioned above, they speak a dialect of the Upper Kinabatangan language, which is one of five languages in Sabah's indigenous Paitanic Family of Languages and one of two in the area of the Upper Kinabatangan River, the other being Lobu (Lyman, 1990/1991, p. 111). Each river tributary supports extended villages, that formerly consisted of series of longhouses (*waloy no bininatang*) along the riverbanks. A massive smallpox epidemic across northern Borneo from 1904 to 1905,

the Japanese occupation in World War II, and the coming of the British colonial administration after the War are each thought to have contributed to the decline of longhouses, and today villages are normally composed of single family dwellings.

Traditionally, the Makang socioeconomic system revolved around the cultivation of dry rice and riverine fishing, supplemented with hunted game from the forests. Cash cropping has developed more recently. The timber industry boom of the 1970s to 1980s depleted many forested areas, depriving people of closely available traditional sources of protein from hunted game. This has been followed in recent years by the planting of huge oil palm estates with the construction of oil mills that have polluted many of the river tributaries and consumed much of the land that was formerly forest. Today, many Makiang are engaged in farming and cash cropping or work on oil palm estates, while some serve in the business and professional sectors.

The Makiang are an acephalous society with bilateral kinship and gender balance. Marriage is exogamous as far as third cousins, and is initiated through a *muilug*, a long discussion between the parents and other kin of the potential partners, chaired by a go-between. The *muilug* is held to ensure that the future partners are not closely related and to determine the amount of *buru'* or bridewealth, usually gongs, large ceramic jars and jewellery, to be paid by the man's parents to the parents of his future wife. In this, the father of the bride-to-be has the final say. Once the date of the formal engagement (*mupogong*) is agreed upon, the young man must perform bride-service (*jandian*) and work for his future parents-in-law. Post-nuptial residence is normally uxorilocal (in the home of the bride) unless the parents of the husband have no daughters. In such a case, the married couple may periodically shift residence between their respective natal households. When the youngest daughter in a family marries, however, uxorilocal residence is a permanent arrangement and she and her husband inherit the house after the death of her parents (Lyman, 1990/1991, pp. 124-128).

The traditional Makiang belief system acknowledges the existence of God who has the title of *Minamaal* ("the Creator") and the Personal Name of Kinoringan ("God most high"). It also differentiates between *asundu'* or good celestial beings, and *manuli* or *mainat* that are evil spirits on the earth. Like other Paitanic peoples, most of Sabah's Dusunic and some Murutic societies, the Makiang believe that a human being has seven spirits. The Makiang refer to the large spirit of a human being that resides in the heart as the *hatod*, while *bosou* are the six smaller spirits in the joints. Upon death, the *hatod* goes to the afterworld or Nabal. The name Nabal is also used also among many Dusunic and some Murutic peoples for the afterworld. Among those Dusunic cultures, it is regarded as a spiritual counterpart to the physical Mt. Kinabalu. Nabal among the Makiang, however, is not associated with any topographical feature (Pugh-Kitingan, 2017c).

In former times, the traditional Makiang religion was headed by highly esteemed priestesses or *babalian*, who memorised and then recited the sacred *rinait*

(long ritual poetry) during complex ritual ceremonies, and sacrificed animals (usually pigs) as atonement (*sonsob*) for human wrongdoing. Each of these women was said to have a *mamiau* or familiar spirit. Apart from the priestesses, Makiang society also included ordinary spirit mediums and healers who themselves were called *mamiau*. They were also said to be seers. These could be women or men, but each had a *mamiau* or familiar spirit for healing. They did not, however, memorise and recite the *rinait* nor perform sacrifices and complex rituals like the *babalian* (Pugh-Kitingan, 2017c).

Today, most Makiang in the Upper Kinabatangan area are Christians of the Anglican Church. The percentage of Muslims in the population increases in villages downstream. There are roughly equal numbers of Christians and Muslims in Kg. Imbak, with more Muslims further downstream around the new township of Kota Kinabatangan and on to Bukit Garam. Other Christian denominations are also present further downstream.

### **Makiang Vocal Music and Sama'-Bajau Influences**

Apart from the ritual chanting of *rinait* by *babalian*, the Makiang performed many traditional genres of secular vocal music. Most of these have declined due to inroads made by new entertainment media. The *morunsai* circulating dance with its spontaneous call-and-response singing, however, is still extant and is an important feature of *mulug* discussions.

#### ***Sama'-Bajau Influences in Upriver Circulating Dancing Call-and-Response Genres***

The terms *morunsai* or *barunsai* are used among many Paitanic peoples to refer to genres of movement by a line of men and women circulating in an anticlockwise circle, in which the dancers sing extemporaneous call-and-response phrases. Among the Tombonuo/Sungai of northeastern Sabah, the largest Paitanic ethnic group, these genres are said to be of Bajau or Suluk origin (Regis, Pugh-Kitingan, & John Baptist, 2003, p. 25).

Indeed, many Sama'-Bajau communities perform similarly named genres. The west coast Bajau of Kota Belud and Tuaran Districts perform *runsai* (often prefixed with the Malay *ber-* as *berunsai*; also spelled *runsai*) in which a line of men and a line of women, joined by a handheld cloth, circulate anticlockwise while calling out in extemporaneous alternating *pantun*-like verses called *kallang*. Headed by a senior matriarch, *runsai* is a form of indoors entertainment at social gatherings, especially wedding celebrations, that take place from midnight to morning inside the home or either the bride's family or that of the bridegroom. In Kota Belud and Tuaran, *runsai* is performed by middle-aged or elderly married people, using a poetic language that is said to be a mixture of West Coast Bajau and "Kagayan" or Mapun, a Sama' language from the Philippines. The *kallang* themes, determined by the matriarch, can impart a moral message, are often used for match-making or for courtship, sometimes jokingly

ridicule the opposite sex, and may express anger and insult in a neutral context. As the performers approach a conclusion to an issue discussed back and forth in the *kallang*, the men rhythmically stamp their feet on the floor, before the matriarch introduces a new topic for debate. This west coast Bajau *runsai* is entertaining, and its *kallang* verses are quite humorous. It serves an important social function in traditional Bajau village life, by providing a vehicle for discussing sensitive issues in a neutral and non-threatening context (Regis et al., 2003; Matusky & Pugh-Kitingan, 2004).

It appears that *runsai*-type genres were performed among most Sama' cultures, including those of Semporna on the east coast, but many are no longer extant. Recent "Kagayan" or Jama Mapun immigrants from Cagayan de Sulu Island in the southern Philippines, however, are often hired to perform their *lunsay* for entertainment during wedding celebrations among the Iranun community of Kota Belud District. This *lunsay* genre is headed by an elderly man and woman, but includes mostly younger unmarried people. Performed on wooden boards laid on the ground under a tent outside, it has a very rapid pace, and both men and women stamp their feet (Regis et al., 2003, pp. 32-33).

### *Morunsai*

The Makiang *morunsai* or *barunsai* may have developed through cultural diffusion from Sama'-Bajau communities on the east coast via the Ida'an, Bega'ak and Subpan, who are sub-groups of the ancient indigenous Ida'an language group which is distantly related to the Paitanic peoples. Its performance is very similar to the *rumunsai* of the Subpan of Kg. Sapugaya on the Segama River, Lahad Datu, who have also adopted some musical genres from the east coastal Bajau and Suluk. While the Makiang *morunsai* can be used for entertainment in some contexts, it is primarily the traditional vehicle for negotiation during *mulug* discussions prior to the *mupogong* or engagement ceremonies.

Those involved in the *morunsai* include the parents of the potential bride and groom, a go-between, and other close kin. Members are not divided by gender, unlike Sama'-Bajau *runsai*. They form a circle in which each person links their little fingers with those of the people on either side. Everyone faces into the circle. The pace is very slow. Each person steps slightly into the circle, then out, normally using a pattern of right foot—> left foot (in) slight pause together, left foot—>right foot (out), or for some individuals left foot—>right foot (in) slight pause together, right foot—left foot (out). This produces slight swaying motion as the circle moves anti-clockwise. The slow circular movement of dancers facing into the circle with little fingers linked and consequent swaying of the arms is very similar to the Subpan *rumunsai*.

Extemporaneous verses in the Makiang dialect, often described as *pantun*, are sung slowly and loudly without distinct rhythms and in a melismatic style. As noted previously, each individual tends to use their own pitch arrangement, regardless of the others in the group. This can create somewhat discordant layers of overlapping

sounds for the listener (Regis et al., 2003, p. 34). There may be long pauses punctuated by short comments and laughter. The *pantun* articulated during the *morunsai* thus constitutes a musical discussion in which individuals melodically expresses their opinions.

The musical patterns of a short excerpt from a *morunsai* performed at Kg. Imbak in Tongod District, are transcribed in Figure 1. Throughout the complete performance, much of the melodic material was pentatonic without semitones. Participants did not always adhere to the basic pitch arrangement, however, and some tended to sing flat in relation to others. This can be seen in the short transcription here, which starts with a line sung by one man. One woman then responds, overlapping with his line, but her pitches sound a semitone flat in relation to his (and also in relation to a previous lines that are not shown here). As she proceeds, other women join in and pitches are then raised around a semitone. The man resumes singing towards the end of the women's line.

Musical Patterns in *Morunsai* of the Makiang Community of Kg. Imbak, Tongod (PUG-KIT films 20170518/10)

$\text{♩} \approx 97 \text{ MM}$

Voices

Approximate foot rhythms

More women sing

(21 seconds)

Figure 1: A short excerpt of Makiang *morunsai* from Kg. Imbak, Tongod, in 2017 (Source: Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan)

The approximate rhythmic patterns produced by the dancers' foot movements are transcribed below their sung melodies. While upward stems indicate movements into the circle and downward stems show movements out; the actual footsteps are not transcribed. This transcription merely outlines their pace and general rhythm; the singing is not fixed to these basic foot rhythms.

There is no rhythmic foot stamping in the Makiang *morunsai*, unlike the Sama'-Bajau genres. The circle moves around slowly as the suitability of the potential match is discussed. If the father of the girl disagrees to the marriage, however, he will stamp

his foot once. Then, the whole *morunsai* and *muilug* ends. There is no further discussion, and the engagement and wedding will not proceed.

If, however, all issues concerning the marriage are discussed and resolved through the *pantun* and everyone participating in the *morunsai* agrees to the union, all the dancers will stamp their feet in unison. This concludes the *morunsai* and the engagement followed later by the wedding can proceed.

The *morunsai* thus serves an important function in the *muilug*. It provides a traditional performative process through which issues concerning the proposed marriage can be discussed and disagreements can be expressed without causing offence. If the father of the girl indicates his disapproval of the suitor or his family by stamping his foot, there is no argument. His wishes must be respected. If everyone agrees to the match, however, the terms of the engagement, bridewealth components, and dates for the lengthy wedding celebrations can be determined.

### **Makiang Instrumental Music and Sama'-Bajau Influences**

The Makiang formerly played several types of traditional solo secular instruments for entertainment, including a mouthorgan resembling the *sompoton* of the Kadazan Dusun of Tambunan District that was traded into the Tangara Murut community of the remote Upper Kinabatangan River and from there into Kalabuan, Makiang and other Paitanic communities in the area (Pugh-Kitingan, 2011). Like most Makiang secular vocal music, solo instrumental genres have declined in recent years with the advent of new entertainment media. The Makiang *gabang* xylophone, however, is still extant and is often played as a solo instrument.

For group instrumental music, the Makiang have two main ensembles: the *sampasang no kulintangan* that consists of a *kulintangan* (a set of small kettle gongs struck with pairs of beaters) and hanging gongs, and the *sampasang no gabang* that features a *gabang* and wooden slit gongs or *kantung*. Sometimes, these are mixed—the *gabang* might be played with hanging gongs instead of the *kulintangan*, or one or two slit gongs may be included in the *sampasang no kulintangan*. These ensembles show influence from east coastal gong ensembles.

### ***Influence of Sama'-Bajau Idiophones on Upriver Ensembles***

In Sabah, the *kulintangan* is not found in the large ensembles of hanging gongs played among Dusunic and Murutic peoples, unless the people have access to the coast. The Labuk-Kinabatangan Dusun, the Tidung, all Paitanic peoples, and the Ida'an/Bega'ak/Subpan of eastern Sabah, however, all have river access to the coast and hence, all have the *kulintangan* in their ensembles. Moreover, their gong ensembles are similar to the *tagunggu'* ensemble of the east coast Bajau (Pugh-Kitingan, 2019; Pugh-Kitingan & John Baptist, 2005).

This Sama'-Bajau *tagunggu'* consists of the *kulintangan*, two or three large hanging gongs called *agong* or *agung* (*tawag* types), and the brass-bodied *tambol* drum. Sometimes, a *babandil* or *bandil* (smaller *sanang*-type or large thin brass *tagung*-type) may also be included. A skilled virtuoso plays the *kulintangan*, usually accompanied by an assistant who strikes the highest-pitched kettle gong with a single beater. The *kulintangan* leads the ensemble, while the other instruments have supporting roles. Both men and women can play these instruments. The Sama'-Bajau *tagunggu'* repertoire consists of up to twelve or more pieces or *titik*, each identified by its rhythm and melodic outline played on the *kulintangan*.

Inland communities living up the eastern rivers, such as the Makiang, have developed their repertoires that tend to have less *titik* than those of coastal communities. The drum also occurs less in ensembles from further upstream and into the remote interior.

As shown previously, the Makiang *gabang* xylophone probably developed from the *gabbang* of east coast Sama'-Bajau and Suluk communities (Pugh-Kitingan, 2017d). Indeed, the Bajau *gabbang* itself is said to have originated from that of the Suluk (Tausug) of the southern Philippines. It consists of up to 17 keys of graduated lengths made from either *nibung* palm or bamboo, on an ornate steep-sided asymmetrical frame or *papagan gabbang*. The keys are struck with two carved beaters or *titik*. On this Bajau *gabbang*, the highest pitched key lies near the performer's left hand, and the lowest near the right hand (for a right-handed performer). *Gabbang* performance is a highly esteemed skill in Sama'-Bajau society. The instrument is played solo by both men and women in both important social and ritual contexts, and has its own repertoire of *titik* (Pugh-Kitingan, 2010).

### ***Gabang and Sampasang no Gabang***

The Makiang *gabang*, made from *tombirog* wood, is much heavier than the Bajau *gabbang*. It consists of nine or ten wooden keys, sitting on a low wooden frame or *papagan*. Its keys are struck with two carved beaters called *lilisag* or *tititik*. Unlike the Bajau *gabbang*, the highest pitched key of the *gabang* lies near the performer's right hand and the lowest pitched one is near the left hand (Pugh-Kitingan, 2017d).

The *sampasang no gabang* consists of a *gabang* and two or three wooden *kantung* slit gongs (Plate 1), but can also include hanging gongs (*agung*) and one or two small bamboo *tolutuk* slit gongs. The *kantung* are struck with *papankul* or beaters made from *tagas* wood. Their role in the music is essentially the same as that of two or three *agung* that are played in the Makiang *sampasang no kulintangan* and the *agong* in the Bajau *tagunggu'*. While the *kantung* appear to be a Makiang innovation, it appears that the *sampasang no gabang* may have developed earlier on among the Makiang upstream in imitation of brass ensembles further downstream that include the metal *kulintangan* and hanging gongs. Ian Baxter observed a metal-keyed *gabang* played with two *tolutuk* and *galu* rice pounders at Kg. Talibu (Baxter 2017, pp. 287-288, 342).



The *gabang* can play the *kulintangan* pieces together with the hanging gongs, especially if no *kulintangan* is available, but it also has its own repertoire. Table 1 shows the repertoire of the Makiang *sampasang no gabang* from Bukit Garam and Kota Kinabatangan Town, in Kinabatangan District, that is quite different from the *sampasang no kulintangan* repertoire from the same area (Table 4).



**Plate 1: Basic Makiang *sampasang no gabang* ensemble, from Bukit Garam and Kota Kinabatangan, Kinabatangan District**  
(Sources: Fieldwork 1989; Pugh-Kitingan [2017d, p. 94].)

**Table 1: Repertoire of *Titik* for the Makiang *sampasang no gabang*, Bukit Garam and Kota Kinabatangan**

	<i>Titik</i> Name	Purpose
1.	<i>Titikas</i>	To accompany <i>silat</i> martial arts and also <i>titikas</i> dance
2.	<i>Titik Lumambai</i>	To accompany <i>lumambai</i> dance
3.	<i>Titik Mangalai</i>	To accompany <i>mangalai</i> dance

Sources: Fieldwork, 1989, 1999; Pugh-Kitingan (2017d, p. 95).

Here, the repertoire of the *sampasang no gabang* contains three *titik*, each of which accompanies different genres of dancing. The *titik* called *Titikas* also accompanies traditional martial arts, generally known as *silat*.

### *Sampasang no Kulintangan*

Like the Bajau *tagunggu'*, the Makiang *sampasang no kulintangan* contains the *kulintangan* and two or three large hanging gongs. The Makiang set may also include other instruments such as a small hanging *sanang* type gong called *babandil* or *bandil*, a wooden slit gong or *kantung*, and the small bamboo slit gong *tolutuk*. In villages further upstream, gong sets tend to contain less instruments, often with just the *kulintangan* and gongs.

The *sampasang no kulintangan* from Kg. Imbak is an example (Plate 2). It consists of the *kulintangan*, three large hanging gongs called *agung*, and the smaller *babandil*. Of the three large gongs, two are played together by one performer and hence are collectively called *uliyon agung* or *ulion agung*, while the third is played separately by a third performer and hence is named *agung tunggal*. The terms *babandil* and *agung* or *agong* are used for certain types of gongs by many maritime peoples, such as the Sama'-Bajau, as well as among the Ida'an, Bega'ak and Subpan further inland.



Plate 2: The Makiang *sampasang no kulintangan* of Kg. Imbak, Tongod District, with (from right to left) *kulintangan*, *babandil*, two *uliyon agung*, and *agung tunggal* (Source: Fieldwork 2017.)

Among the West Coast Bajau, for example, two *babandil* are played in the *kuri-kuriyan beritik* gong set from Kota Belud District, while those from of Putatan District include one *bandil* in their so-called *kulintangan* ensemble. These terms on the west coast are derived from the Iranun name *bebendir* for the same small gong, two of which are played in their *kulintang* ensemble (Pugh-Kitingan, 2004, pp. 154-161, 112-116, 118-119, 171-175; 2017a; 2017b). As mentioned above, the Bajau Kubang of Semporna use the term *babandil* or *bandil* for a large thin brass *tagung*-type gong that is sometimes included in their *tagunggu'*.

Makiang repertoires may vary in number and names of *titik* according to village location. The repertoire of the Makiang *sampasang no kulintangan* ensemble

from Kg. Talibu upstream in Tongod District, for example, contains three main *titik* (Table 2). A fourth *titik* called *Titipak* is played in Kg. Talibu with the *gabang* instead of the *kulintangan*, and other instruments in the *sampasang no gabang* together with two *galu* rice pounders that are struck against a length of bamboo. This piece is often performed when the married couple sit together on the bridal dias, but nowadays is used to accompany staged dancing by women at harvest festivals (Baxter, 2017, p. 293).

**Table 2: Repertoire for the Makiang *sampasang no kulintangan* ensemble from Kg. Talibu, Tongod**

Context	<i>Titik</i> Name	Details/Purpose
Wedding celebrations		
	1. <i>Manglisiu</i>	Played when the bridegroom arrives at the bride's house
	2. <i>Muinakot</i>	Played when the couple sit together on the bridal dais
Harvest celebrations		
	3. <i>Mangukai</i>	Played during village celebrations after the rice harvest

Source: Baxter (2017, p. 293).

By contrast, the repertoire of the Makiang *sampasang no kulintangan* in Kg. Imbak, Tongkod consists of five *titik* (Table 3). This village is located roughly half way between Kg. Talibu, Tongod upstream, and Bukit Garam, Kinabatangan downstream.

**Table 3: Repertoire of *Titik* for the Makiang *Sampasang no Kulintangan* from Kg. Imbak, Tongod**

Context	<i>Titik</i> Name	Details/Purpose
Wedding celebrations		
	1. <i>Manulou</i>	Introduction – played prior to the arrival of the bridegroom
	2. <i>Minakod</i>	Played when the bridegroom arrives and the bride's home
	3. <i>Momouabi</i>	Played when the couple sit together on the bridal dais
	4. <i>Mangalisiu</i>	Played as a send-off when the couple visit the groom's home
Other celebrations		

5.	<i>Titikas</i>	To accompany <i>silat</i> performances, and also the <i>titikas</i> dance
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Source: Fieldwork, 2017.

The first four *titik* in this repertoire are played during wedding celebrations, while *Titikas* accompanies a dance of the same name, as well as *silat* martial arts performances. Normally, final wedding preparations in Makiang villages begin at least a week before the actual ceremony in the bride's house. During this time, there will be nightly *kulintangan* performances, until the full *sampasang no kulintangan* will be played a day or so before the wedding day. These nightly performances serve to announce the forthcoming wedding while providing an opportunity for the performers to practice (personal communication with Stuart Lyman, February 1995, at SIL Malaysia office, Kota Kinabalu).

The *sampasang no kulintangan* repertoire of the Makiang from Bukit Garam near Kota Kinabatangan, in Kinabatangan District (formerly part of Tongod District), contains more *titik* than those upstream (Table 4). Some of the titles clearly show Sama'-Bajau and Suluk origins, while others are also found among the Ida'an/Bega'ak/Subpan group who also have strong historical trade contacts with the Suluk and also Bajau peoples. This Makiang repertoire is played during wedding celebrations. Variations in similar sounding names of *titik* and meanings among the three villages may be due to differences in sub-dialect and personal pronunciation of individual musicians.

**Table 4: Repertoire of *Titik* for the Makiang *Sampasang no Kulintangan*, Bukit Garam, Kinabatangan**

Context	<i>Titik</i> Name	Details/Purpose
Weddings and other events		
1.	<i>Tungkil</i>	Opening piece on celebratory occasions such as weddings.
2.	<i>Lubak-Lubak</i>	Medley of five pieces played to welcome guests. The name is the same as that of a <i>titik</i> of Suluk origin in the east coast Sama'-Bajau repertoire. It is also used for some pieces in the Ida'an/Bega'ak repertoire
3.	<i>Manuk-Manuk</i>	Formerly played by the riverside where a spear was placed in the river as a welcome home for warriors from battle. A <i>titik</i> of the same name is played by the Ida'an and Subpan.
4.	<i>Apu' Kalumbang</i>	Memories of the old folks ( <i>apu'</i> = grandparent)

5.	<i>Sago Tarupuk</i>	<i>Tarupuk</i> = a type of bird
6.	<i>Linggam Pulutan</i>	
7.	<i>Mius Minsarap</i>	
8.	<i>Monogou Pogong</i>	This name is also used for a <i>titik</i> in the repertoires of the Ida'an, Bega'ak and Subpan.
9.	<i>Mababa'</i>	
10.	<i>Minakod</i>	<i>Titik</i> for welcoming the bridegroom ( <i>minakod</i> = bridegroom)
11.	<i>Kagayan</i>	This name refers to Jama Mapun people, a Sama' group from Kagayan do Sulu Island, and may indicate its origin.  A piece of the same name also occurs in the repertoire of the Abai Sungai, a Paitanic group situated not far from the mouth of the Kinabatangan in Sandakan District (see Baxter [2017, pp. 144, 185-199]).

Source: Fieldwork, 1999.

The basic structure of Makiang *sampasang no kulintangan* music is somewhat similar to Bajau *tagunggu'* performance and the music of other similar ensembles, in that the *kulintangan* melody is of primary importance and is supported by the other instruments, but without the rapid beating of the *tambol* drum of the Sama'-Bajau ensemble. As among the Bajau and most other *kulintangan*-using groups, the Makiang *kulintangan* player is a virtuoso who knows all the pieces in the repertoire. She or he, however, is not usually accompanied by an assistant on the instrument.

An example of Makiang gong ensemble music is the piece *Titikas* from Kg. Imbak, Tongod (Figure 2). This is the same *titik* as that played by the *sampasang no gabang* of Bukit Garam and Kg. Muhibah, Kota Kinabatangan that was discussed previously (Pugh-Kitingan, 2017d, pp. 94-95). Although the tunings of the *kulintangan* and hanging gongs (Figure 3) differ from those of the wooden Kg. Muhibah idiophones, the distinctive rhythmic patterns of the *titik* in each measure, with the rising semiquaver-like motif followed by the high falling figure of a quaver and two semiquavers, are essentially the same. Throughout the piece, the melody moves motif by motif down the *kulintangan* then slowly rises back up to the higher-pitched kettles.

"Titikas" by *Sampasang no Kulintangan* ensemble of the Makiang Community of Kg. Imbak, Tongod (PUG-KIT films 20170518/6)

$\text{♩} = 200 \text{ MM}$  (*kulintangan* sounds a semitone lower than transcribed)

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system includes staves for *kulintangan*, *babandil*, *ulion agung (1)*, and *agung tunggal*. The *kulintangan* part is a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes. The other three instruments play rhythmic patterns using 'y' for notes and 'x' for rests. The second system continues these patterns. A '(11 sec.)' label is at the bottom right.

Figure 2: Excerpt of from the start of *Titik Titikas* from Kg. Imbak, Tongod (Source: Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan.)

Tuning of instruments in *Sampasang no Kulintangan* from Kg. Imbak, Tongod

The tuning diagrams show the pitch relationships for each instrument. *kulintangan* is shown with a sequence of notes labeled 'ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba'. *babandil*, *ulion agung*, and *agung tunggal* are shown with single notes on a staff, indicating their relative pitches.

Figure 3: Tunings instruments in the *Sampasang no Kulintangan* from Kg. Imbak, Tongod (Source: Jacqueline Pugh-Kitingan.)

In this piece, all the hanging gongs accompany the *kulintangan*, except for the deeper sounding *agung* in the *uliyon agung* pair. The higher-pitched *agung* and the *agung tunggal* are tuned a whole tone apart like the two wooden *kantung* slit gongs in the Kota Kinabatangan *sampasang no gabang*. Their synchronous rhythmic patterns, however, are simpler, due to the more cumbersome movements involved in beating a large gong with a heavy mallet compared to hitting a *kantung* with a smaller wooden beater.

## Conclusions

It is clear that cultural convergence due to riverine trade with east coastal communities, which has occurred among various peoples living along the Kinabatangan River, has also affected Makiang music. Elements of Sama'-Bajau and also Suluk music can be seen in the names and types of instruments, as well as some names of Makiang musical pieces. Sama'-Bajau influences can also be traced in the *morunsai* or *barunsai* circulating dancing verse debate.

The name *morunsai* recalls the Sama'-Bajau terms *runsai* (or *runsai*) and *lunsai*. Its movement is anti-clockwise, and it involves the loud singing of extemporaneous alternating *pantun*-like verses back and forth between men and women in the group.

But *morunsai* is also different from the Sama'-Bajau *runsai* and boisterous *lunsai* that are today practiced in Sabah. It is consistently very slow throughout a performance and does not involve foot stamping, except as a final conclusion. Men and women are not separated according to gender in *morunsai*. Musically, *morunsai* does not adhere to strict melodic and rhythmic formulae as in the Sama'-Bajau genres. The musical lines are sung back and forth in free rhythm, with melodic material determined by each individual performer. In this, the Makiang *morunsai* is very similar to the Supban (Ida'an) *rumunsai*. It appears very likely that these genres have developed over time from the diffusion and adaptation of Sama'-Bajau *runsai* types among the Subpan, as well as Makiang and other Paitanic music-cultures.

The Makiang xylophone or *gabang* is said to have originated from the Suluk and Sama'-Bajau *gabbang*. Over time, the *gabbang* has become diffused into music-cultures further upstream as the *gabang*. This has resulted in structural transformations in the instrument, due to changes in ecology and available natural materials from a coastal environment to the interior. The wooden *kantung* slit gongs, however, appear to be a local innovation. The *sampasang no gabang* ensemble of *gabang* and two or three *kantung* has its own repertoire, although it can be used to play pieces from the *sampasang no kulitangan* repertoire.

The *kulintangan* as well as larger hanging gongs, has also been traded upriver from the coast, and the *sampasang no kulintangan* is similar to the Sama'-Bajau *tagunggu'* but without the *tambol* drum. As shown previously, interior Murutic and Dusunic ensembles that do not have the *kulintangan* consist of many hanging gongs, and each instrument has an equal role with the others in producing the rich sound texture of the particular colotomic music. Where the *kulintangan* is played with hanging gongs in ensembles, however, it assumes a leading melodic role with the other instruments providing supporting parts. It is not known what kinds of ensembles were played by Upper Kinabatangan peoples in ancient times, but the introduction of the *kulintangan* would have resulted in major creative transformations, allowing for a diversity of musical pieces produced with ensembles of comparatively less instruments than other interior sets.

Musical pieces in a *kulintangan* repertoire are denoted by the term *titik* or “beat”, a word also used similarly among coastal and maritime communities. Among the Makiang, repertoires from downstream contain far greater numbers of *titik* than those upstream, and the titles of some indicate that they originate the Ida’an/Bega’ak/Subpan further downstream, as well as from Sama’-Bajau and Suluk music-cultures on the coast. This richness of downstream Makiang repertoire thus points to the origins of the *sampasang no kulintangan* and its music among coastal and maritime peoples.

Thus, cultural convergence due to trade connections with the Sama’-Bajau and other coastal communities has affected musical cultures further upstream, including that of the Makiang. This is seen not only in the diffusion of traits such as musical terms and single objects like the *gabang*, but in major genres such as *morunsai*, and the *sampasang no kulintangan* ensemble, its performance practice and music. Over time, these elements have been adapted to suit Makiang society and environment, resulting in the development of a distinctive musical culture.

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