PHILIPPINE INDIGENOUS WRITING SYSTEMS IN THE MODERN WORLD

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ABSTRACT

There is a current revitalization of the baybáyin script and related precolonial indigenous writing systems of the Philippine archipelago. This is due in part to modern communications technology; particularly the increased availability of personal computers and cheaper access to the Internet. When the Philippine masses discovered the few scholarly websites dedicated to baybáyin, enthusiasm spread out about their "newly found" heritage. However, even though the awareness of baybáyin script is currently on the rise, it remains vulnerable and in danger of misrepresentation and uncontrolled dissemination of faulty data. Those who recently learned about the script find it inadequate for the modern Filipino language and want to modify it to adapt to the myriad of modern lexicon and borrowed foreign words. Special interest and political groups with hidden agendas are proposing myopic bills into law that may aggrandize the Tagalog variant of baybáyin over other indigenous variants of the script, particularly the thriving script of the Mangyan. If it doesn’t get immediate support from officially recognized standardization, proper publication & documentation, practical everyday utility, and correct & responsible public exposure, the intrinsic character of this writing system may not survive the next generation. The future of Philippine abugida script is still in question. What has been done to preserve it, what is being done to revive it, can it adapt to modern Filipino languages, and how can technology & standardization help it sustain its character? The answers to these issues (and more) will determine the fate of baybáyin script.

* The first few Internet website entries that specifically focused on Philippine scripts appeared online between 1999 and the mid-2000s; from researchers such as Morrow, Santos, Quimson, Ganata, Cabuay, de los Santos, and Rubino.
INTRODUCTION

"Cuando los españoles llegaron al Archipiélago Filipino, encontraron que sus habitantes de raza malaya llamados Indios, tenían sus alfabetos y su manera de escribir propia." ~ de Tavera (1884)

"When the Spaniards arrived in the Philippine Archipelago, they found that its inhabitants of Malay race they named Indios, had their own alphabet and their own way of writing it." T. H. P. de Tavera recounts in his 1884 *report on contributions for the study of ancient Filipino alphabets, a precursor to the book on the study of ancient Filipino alphabets by Cipriano Marcilla y Martín. In his report, de Tavera laments about the lack of definitive studies about the native writing system of the Filipinos. He noted various lackadaisical record keeping about ethnography by the Spanish authors from the previous couple of centuries as to have merely glossed over linguistics; mentioning that the Germans and the Austrians having taken a better initiative on the subject than the Spaniards. From the few old manuscripts and vocabularios (wordbooks and dictionaries) published a couple of centuries prior, de Tavera pointed out the inconsistencies and contradictions of the various samples taken by authors whom de Tavera accused of being focused more on political and religious pandering than actual ethnographic and linguistic study. Nevertheless, from these old books and samples, de Tavera acknowledges the value of the collections. Wherein, given the lack of historical record and artifacts, these rare ledgers can be the keys to unlock the unwritten knowledge of the indigenous people of the Philippine Archipelago. In 1895, Marcilla published "Estudio de los Antiguos Alfabetos Filipinos" cataloging the various alphabet samples of which de Tavera mentioned in his report. Centuries later, the sets of characters and typefaces in Antiguos Alfabetos have been the source of many of today's digitized Baybayin charts that are circulating online and making its rounds in the Internet today. Oddly enough, these recent charts are presented sans actual background information (or the people interested with them has an aversion to reading provided details) that further inconsistencies, contradictions, confusion, and misinterpretations prevail. Poor de Tavera must be rolling in his grave.

* de Tavera, 1884 : Contribución para el estudio de los antiguos alfabetos filipinos.
Recent discoveries of artifacts dating back to as early as the 9th century and all the way to the Late Neolithic period indicates a rich and ever changing culture within the islands. These artifacts provided evidence that Chinese, Islamic, Hindu-Buddhist, Javanese, and other Austronesian settlement and civilizations influenced the cultural and linguistic development of the natives in the Philippines. And from a few of these artifacts, we now know and acknowledge that other writing systems existed in the precolonial Philippine Archipelago. However, a few of these extant writing systems are proprietary to their particular migrant cultural languages: Hanzi for Chinese, Arabic for Islam, Kawi for Javanese, Devanagari for Sanskrit, etc.; Baybáyin was the only one adapted for Philippine languages.

Adoption of the Roman/Latin Alphabet introduced by the Spaniards pushed the native scripts aside. Centuries later, a post-colonial writing system was created in the Philippines (circa mid-1900s). *The Eskayan script is used for the representation of a Visayan (Cebuano) language reproduction of a constructed Utopian language, also referred to as Eskayan. Eskayan makes use of an inherent vowel in a small set of consonant characters, a strategy reminiscent of baybáyin. However, unlike baybáyin script, Eskayan has an extended 1000 (approximate) set of syllabic characters representing consonantal codas.

Baybáyin scripts, an abugida (alpha-syllabary) derived from Indic scripts and influenced by Javanese scripts, as the only known "precolonial native writing system" to have been adapted to write indigenous Filipino languages, baybáyin script and its formally recognized & established variants (Palawan Scripts, Kulitan, Surat Mangyan Scripts, and Sulat Tagalog) are the focus of this report. Strategies for preservation, propagation, modernization, and standardization is the goal in which the future and stability of baybáyin scripts will depend on.

* Kelly, 2014 paper: A description of the Eskayan alphasyllabary of the Philippines: the form, function and origins of a postcolonial writing system.
HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Despite de Tavera's lamentation about the lack of detailed documentation back in 1884; today, there's ample data gathered and studies done in the past centuries to piece together a comprehensive understanding about baybáyín scripts. In the most recent decades, a number of books and articles about the subject of baybáyín script's history and origin theories have been written and published by research scholars like, Christopher Ray Miller, Jean-Paul Potet, Paul Morrow, Antoon Postma, Christian Cabuay, and others. Hence, this report does not dwell much about history and origin theories; rather, it focuses and deals with the immediate issues that affects the current status of the script. But, for the purpose of review, an abridged historical background is provided here:

Precolonial Literacy

Very little historic record or documentation exists about the inhabitants of archipelago, now known as the Philippines, prior to the arrival of the Spanish colonizers; save for brief mentions in Southeast Asian (SEA) and East Asian maritime trade records - excerpts mentioned by *William Henry Scott. However, in 1989, the discovery in Laguna of an artifact, a copperplate with inscriptions in old-Javanese with archaic Tagalog/Bisaya words and place-names, provided valuable clues regarding life in the old archipelago and the writing tradition of the time. **Dated around the 10th century and dubbed as the Laguna Copperplate Inscription (LCI), the text in it was written in Kavi/Kawi script which was later deciphered by Dutch anthropologist and linguist Antoon Postma with the help of Dr. Johann de Casparis, an expert in ancient Indonesian culture and history; revealing a document regarding a payment of debt. It contains evidence of cultural links between the precolonial Tagalog people and the various contemporary Asian civilizations, most notably the Javanese Medang Kingdom, the Srivijaya Empire, and the Middle kingdoms of India. The LCI provided one of the definitive links between baybáyín script, the Indic/Brahmic script family, and related SEA writing systems.

** Morrow: The Laguna Copperplate Inscription, Sarisari, etc.; Santos: Sulat sa Tanso, Bibingka.com.
The Laguna Copperplate Inscription, along with other recent archaeological finds in Butuan City, and the islands of Cebu, Mindoro, and Palawan are invaluable evidence that shed light on language, literacy, life and culture during the precolonial history of the ancient Philippine archipelago. The LCI is considered to be a national treasure. It is currently deposited at the National Museum of the Philippines in Manila (Fig. 1).

Fig. 1- the LCI dated 900 AD on display at the National Museum of the Philippines. Photo by Nordenx (2010)

Fig. 2- an illustration of the LCI by Nordenx (2009) based on the original rubbing copy by Postma (1991).
Orthographic and glyph-by-glyph comparative research (Fig. 3) suggests that Kavi script may have influenced the evolution of Baybáyin scripts and its sister scripts by the Bugis people of Sulawesi, Indonesia. It is also quite possible that proto-Baybáyin developed as a mixture of Kavi, Bugis, and Indic (Gujarati, Nagari) scripts.

**Observed Native Traditions**

Upon the arrival of the Spaniards and during the first century of their occupation, written accounts indicated that the majority of the natives in most parts of the archipelago were literate and proficient in reading & writing baybáyin script. **One of the earliest Spanish report about native literacy was written by navigator Miguel López de Legazpi, "They (the natives) have their letters and characters like those of the Malays, from whom they learned them."**

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* de Tavera, 1884; Scott, 1984; Wade, 1993; Miller, 2011;

In the early Western explorers' accounts, the chroniclers noted that the islanders wrote on natural materials; the most common was bamboo. The usual tools or writing implements were the points of daggers or sharpened iron styluses. In Charles R. Boxer's manuscript collection from the 1590, the *Boxer Codex*, there is an account describing this method of writing; how scribes cut the surface and bark of the bamboo to make letters. *A method which is still used today by the tribes of Mindoro and Palawan to write their own script* (Fig. 4).

![Fig. 4- Mangyan Hanunuo Script on live bamboo, Mindoro. Photograph by Nordenx (2013).](image)

**Surat Mangyan, having survived and used continuously, shows how other *Baybayin* characters' shapes & strokes could have evolved if its usage was not interrupted and was continually honed & adjusted.


** Nordenx, 2014.
Colonial Spanish Era and Classical Printing

Documentation of Native Philippine writing systems (Baybáyín scripts) started in the late 16th century by western linguistic scholars, historians, and anthropologists. Record of Baybáyín script was preserved in religious publications like the Doctrina Christiana, en lengua española y tagala (Fig. 5), printed in 1593, and various books such as dictionaries & thesaurus for several regional languages like the Vocabulario de la Lengua *Filipinas or Arte y Reglas de la Lengua *Filipinas that were printed & reprinted throughout the 17th to 18th century; many of which contains information about and specimen of Baybáyín handwriting and typefaces.

However, even though Baybáyín’s use was widespread throughout the Philippines in the 1500s, it began to decline in the 1600s despite academic documentation and the Spanish clergy's attempts to use it for evangelization, a gradual cultural & linguistic shift was steadily adapted by the native population of the colonized and Christianized centers of the islands. **Filipinos themselves abandoned their Baybáyín script in favor of the Latin Alphabet for a perceived social expediency. The population were convinced that learning the language and writing system of their colonizers would improve their social standing and get ahead in life under the Spanish reign. Typical of other colonized or conquered civilizations, they systematically bowed down to the economic, religious, cultural, and educational subjugation; by the 18th century, Baybáyín script already fell into disuse.

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* Tagala, Pampanga, Bicol, Bisaya, Ilocana, etc.
** de Leon, 1992; Morrow, 1999; Cabuay, 2009; Nordenx 2014.
During the three centuries of Spanish occupation, the archipelago opened up to curiosity & knowledge seekers from various western nations. The dictionaries, books, and manuscripts written & printed at the time would later became a valuable resource for those interested about Philippine history and also about Baybáyin in particular. Baybáyin typefaces (Fig. 6) and handwritten samples (Fig. 7) of the era provided the basis for the sets of classical letterforms and typeface styles.

Despite being well documented, during the later part of the Spanish regime, not only did Baybáyin usage declined, even the very basic awareness and knowledge about Baybáyin faded from the general population's collective memory. Higher quality academic books were mostly accessible to only the well-educated and rich upper-class Filipinos; even as the 19th century rolled in and came to a close.

**Modern Era and National Rediscovery**

When the Spanish lost control of the Philippines to the United States of America in the early 1900s and an insular then commonwealth government were established, it changed the
The cultural landscape of the islands once again. The English language was introduced as an officiating language. Later, the Surian ng Wikang Pambansa (National Language Institute) was established in 1936 and it selected Tagalog (due to its extensive literary tradition) as the basis for a "national language". A resurgence of nationalism at the time prompted renewed interests in Filipiniana among academics and many new books (in both English & Tagalog) about Philippine history & culture were written and published. And as Filipino scholars gained more access to international library collections, they rediscovered Baybáyin in the old books and archives.

Alibata (Fig. 7) was a misnomer that became the common name for Baybáyin, particularly the Tagalog version. Alibata is a word that was invented the 20th century by a member of the old National Language Institute, Paul Versoza. As he explained in Pangbansang Titik nang Pilipinas in 1939:

“In 1921 I returned from the United States to give public lectures on Tagalog philology, calligraphy, and linguistics. I introduced the word alibata, which found its way into news-prints and often mentioned by many authors in their writings. I coined this word in 1914 in the New York Public Library, Manuscript Research Division, basing it on the Maguindanao (Moro) arrangement of letters of the alphabet after the Arabic: alif, ba, ta (alibata), “F” having been eliminated for euphony’s sake.”

![Alibata](http://nov6666.blogspot.com/)

Fig. 7 - a page from Agh Aklat Ng Tagalog, Verzosa 1923
However, even though *Baybáyin* (under the new term Alibata) was being rediscovered by academics, the National Language Institute was more focused on pushing English & Tagalog into the educational curriculum. Only a few typefaces and some simplified handwriting styles showed up in this era, despite the great improvements on printing techniques. Then, any notion of re-introduction of *Baybáyin* script to the general public was interrupted as World War II (WWII) erupted. After the war, even with a full scale nation building was in progress, neither *Baybáyin* nor Alibata ever really became a priority. Once again, the old writing system was relegated down to a footnote in Philippine history.

Meanwhile, a small number of books on the use of *Baybáyin* scripts for specific regional or indigenous languages containing modernized or stylized typefaces were published at the later part of the 20th century.

**Pre-Internet *Baybáyin***

The last two decades of the 20th century saw a big leap in all manners of technology. Great advancements in computers, publishing, mass communications and even travel lead to an age of information explosion. Ideas are quickly accessible and passed around at a previously unimaginable rate. Before the Internet boom in the mid 1990's, a few *books introduced unofficial modified *Baybáyin* modernization. The authors, without as much as a single explanation or justification about every change and addition to the script, expected the public to just accept their new reconstructed script (conscript). Though well-meaning, these works lacked proper research & citations, and without consultation with the community it did not connect with traditionalists. Official recognition of these conscripts did not happen.

While Alibata, Rizaleo, and Bayani de Leon's versions & concepts (Fig. 8) didn't pan-out, a couple of other Baybayin variants were successfully kept alive by traditionalists and are pushing through with current efforts to keep it surviving in this modern world: these are Surat Mangyan, Kulitan, and other traditionalist & conservative reforms.

**Surat Mangyan**

The Mangyans of Southern Mindoro retained their indigenous way of writing Baybayin (Surat Mangyan) due to the relative isolation of their mountain homes and the delayed influx of non-Mangyan settlers/invaders. Spanish Friars began an expedition and native evangelization effort in 1572, only small pueblos existed until around 1679, and the Spanish authorities did not start the program to establish major settlements and populate Mindoro until 1801. It was after WWII, with the development of medicines that aided in the elimination of the threat of a virulent strain of malaria in Mindoro, that a massive wave of immigrants invaded the lowlands and pushed the Mangyan settlements further up the mountains. This drastic demographic change infringed and disrupted the Mangyan way of life and they struggle to hold fast to their culture. With their isolation dwindling and practice of their native crafts no longer tenable, Mangyan culture and Surat Mangyan has become endangered.
Older *Surat Mangyan* had rounded characters that closely resembles other old *Baybáin* Script samples (Fig. 9). Throughout their isolation, they evolved a more distinctly angular style that was easier to carve on the tough bamboo surface and developed a unique strict vowel marker placement and ligatures.

Work on modern *Surat Mangyan* standardization started in the 1960s when Antoon Postma began helping the *Hanunuo* Mangyan group of Southern Mindoro with his research, documentation, and preservation efforts of Mangyan culture. Postma published several books about the Mangyan (Fig. 10) and help establish organizations & foundations, build community centers, museums, schools, and libraries to help the Mangyan people. Working closely with the Mangyan and their elders, Postma helped develop a more uniform typeface and introduced the *pamudpod* (virama) to ensure that the script survive the demands of modern orthography and literacy.

*Fig. 9 -* Photo of a hundred or more year-old bamboo with Hanunuo Mangyan Script, via Paul Morrow (2012).

*Fig. 10 -* photos of a couple of Antoon Postma's books in my collection. Nordenx (2014)
Sulat Kapampangan (Kulitan script)

Throughout the history of Pampanga, many books were published about the Kapampangan language but only a few are written about its writing system (Kulitan, Pamagkulit). A hand-style typeface specimen is found in the Pampanga version of the Vocabulario authored by Alvaro de Benavente (1699) and reprinted several times, one particularly in Estudio de los Antiguos Alfabetos Filipinos by Cipriano Marcilla y Martín (1895) (Fig. 12). While Kapampangan orthography using the Latin Alphabet was revised a couple of times, Kulitan's orthography was not addressed until the 1960's by writer Zoilo Hilario from the Akademyang Kapampangan and historian Mariano A. Henson.

![Fig. 12 – Kapampangan script sample in Estudio de los Antiguos Alfabetos Filipinos. Benavente (1699), Marcilla (1895)](image)

A new generation of Kapampangan academics picked up on the works of Hilario and Henson and took it upon themselves to bring Kulitan up to date to the current Kapampangan orthography. In the mid-1990s, scholar Michael Pangilinan (as Siuálâ ding Meángübié) published primers and papers on Kulitan through the Akademyang Kapampangan and in 2012 he published the very first book solely devoted to the subject of Kulitan - “An introduction to Kulitan, the indigenous Kapampangan script.” His work has been the basis of my Kulitan typefaces & fonts. (Fig. 13)

![Fig. 13 – Historic typefaces digitized as Kulitan Fonts. Nordenx (2009)](image)
MODERN BAYBAYIN

With the overwhelming amount of technology and information readily available today, young people can't resist the allure of gadgets and the Internet. Unfortunately, this modern techno-culture carries with it a pervasive & dominant national and global culture. The embedded *Lingua Franca* of the Internet and mobile gadgetry are the major national & world languages; English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Japanese, Spanish, French, Russian, etc. and along with them their dominant writing systems. Combine this new technocracy with the current sociopolitical scene happening in the Philippines, or anywhere for that matter, how can indigenous cultures and native writing systems compete in the grand scheme of things? Modernization and official standardization holds the key and tools for indigenous cultures to remain competitive and survive. This is also where we look into traditionalists concerns to keep reforms conservative and true to their traditional, indigenous, native, and historic forms.

Modern reform for most indigenous scripts needs to properly represent and stay true with linguistic rules & tradition. It needs to stay connected with its paleography, stay honest in its typography, stay current in its calligraphy, be validated by experts, and accepted by the community.

**Baybayin in the Age of the Internet**

While the pervasiveness of modern technology can bring the full force of culturally disruptive globalization further into remote indigenous outposts, there is still hope & time to intervene and turn these innovations into more beneficial tools. To use modern technology to promote awareness and push education can inject vitality into most endangered local traditions. Communities need to be more proactive and find ways to work with tech companies to localize communication devices, make fonts available for word processing, and make it accessible online. However, fonts first should be designed for practical use, it needs to comply with certain standards to be aesthetically and technologically viable.
But before we can discuss any application and tactics on how to help propagate save Baybáyín and other indigenous writing systems in the Philippines and even other SEA scripts, the writing system's orthography and typography must be completely ironed out and its standardization established. “Orthography” and “typography” being two separate issues.

Synchronizing with the modern spoken language and westernized orthography should actually be a secondary concern when trying to revive and preserve endangered indigenous scripts. The primary concern is keeping it honest, true, and connected with traditions that will preserve its culture and native tongue. While linguistic integrity may not be an everyday issue for many global or national languages, maintaining the original structure of an endangered minority language is important for its preservation. Adapting extremely radical changes in order for indigenous scripts to “catch-up” might actually be detrimental to the native culture and their traditional linguistic heritage.

Meanwhile, emulating and using tried & true typographic methodologies, whether the styles are uniquely native or expressively foreign, on the other hand is beneficial for the promotion of indigenous scripts. It revives interests and provides inspiration for new unique styles. Calligraphic and typographic art shows off the script's aesthetic potential. A cursory online image search about "baybáyín calligraphy" in the Internet today immediately returns numerous examples of amazing artwork by baybáyín practitioners & scribes. Having personally met a few of these artists and font developers, they told me that seeing modern styled baybáyín fonts online (by either Paul Morrow, or Nordenx, et al.) is one of the main influence and/or inspiration for them to develop their own calligraphic or typographic styles. However, there is a downside to this: without typographic standardization and with the basic letter shapes being muddled by the faulty charts and samples (the same ones that de Tavera lamented about), along with unofficial conscripts, this affected certain design & stylistic decisions by a few practitioners. This is why, before moving forward, it is important that we still look back and look around for lessons from both historic and related writing systems. Studies made by current scholars like Paul Morrow, Christopher Miller, Jean-Paul Potet, Mike Pangilinan, Antoon Postma, and many others are vital to the revival of Philippine and SEA scripts.
As the popularity of modern Baybáyin fonts and artwork grew, it exposed more artists to some of the unconventional styles and methods that are possible. But the popularity of Baybáyin (mentioned in publications) slowly climbed up (Fig. 14) starting in the 1990's, (based on data from Google's Ngram Viewer https://books.google.com/ngrams ) correlating to when Paul Morrow started his Baybáyin website that offered free historic typeface based Baybáyin fonts, there was very little Internet presence regarding Baybáyin prior to the early 2000's. Not until the spike of modern Baybáyin fonts, artwork images, and videos, availability and was easily searched online, was when informative Baybáyin websites started to show up and new books were published.

![Fig. 14 – Ngram for Baybáyin & Alibata, Google (2014)](image)

Visitor traffic (Fig. 15) to my blog/website (BaybayinFonts.com) and sites similar to it like Kristian Kabuay's (Baybayin.com) have slowly risen since 2006. This fact, and with more books being published on the subject, plus more news media coverage and even TV shows that mentioned Baybáyin were produced this last decade, attests to the revival of Philippine scripts.

![Fig. 15 – BaybayinFonts.com stats, Blogger (2014)](image)
Collectively, downloads of my modern Baybáyin fonts passed the 1 million count earlier in 2014. Views of my Baybáyin info blog (baybayinfonts.com) steadily increased as curiosity and popularity rose. A group gallery for Baybáyin enthusiasts in a popular art upload site (baybayin-enthusiasts.deviantart.com) also displays new artists supporting Philippine scripts in both traditional and unconventional forms (Fig. 16). Unhindered by strict traditional rules, Baybáyin has become more attractive to a new generation of practitioners.

Fig. 16 – unconventional Baybáyin (anthropomorphic, animorphic, zoomorphic, cursive, etc.) Calligraphy by Nordenx, DeviantArt (2014)

In the past years, baybáyin script practitioners & enthusiasts formed several online discussion groups, community forums, and social networking groups to talk about their "discoveries" (book research), what they learned, their preferences, shared ideas, and all sorts of input regarding Baybáyin scripts. *Places like the now defunct Yahoo! Groups and the current Facebook Groups have become central locations for baybáyin learning and exchange; a valuable resource & repository of online data about Philippine scripts.

* www.facebook.com ; www.yahoo.com
Typographic Standardization

Western alphabets have 3000 years of evolved letter design that was used to standardize its type in the last 500 years, but insular SEA scripts do not have that luxury or privilege. Luckily, most SEA scripts don't completely have to start from scratch. *Over the centuries, the western alphabet has been studied, measured, standardized, and its letter shapes broken down to its core components (Fig. 14). Modern print even analyzed every stroke and flourish and given them names and terminology as well as cataloged them by style, form, and function.

When it comes to typography, Baybáyín is still uncharted territory. Standardization is needed for modern Baybáyín. We need precise & careful comparative consideration to tangential scripts; (Indic) origin, (Bugis/Kavi) related, (Mangyan/Tagbanua) living, and (published) historic typefaces. I find that breaking down each Baybáyín character or glyph to its most basic strokes and forms helps in understanding these origins and relationships.

* Baines, 2002; Man, 2002; Craig, 2006; Diringer, 1948; de Jong, 2009.
Linguistic scholar Christopher Ray Miller is one of the leading experts in Philippine and Southeast Asian scripts. In one of Miller’s presentations (Fig. 15) from 2011, he showed how defining & identifying “graphomes” and figuring out the stereotypical structural elements which provide the defining features from each script to help simplify the task of learning the characters. Similarly, in an article I wrote in my Baybáyín Fonts site (www.baybayinfonts.com) earlier in 2010, I also began work on defining & identifying both unique & uniform graphomes and figuring out stereotypical elements and stroke styles. In the article, I bemoan how behind the pace Philippine scripts are when it comes to modern typography. Asian writing systems have also been thoroughly studied and general rules of typography established

![Elements of character structure](image)

*Fig. 15– Miller (2011)*

Asian writing systems have also been thoroughly studied and general rules of typography established. (Fig. 16) Though some Indian scripts and plenty of Southeast Asian script are still behind Chinese and Japanese standards, however, they are obviously a step ahead of baybáyín.

![Basic indication of alignments and shapes found in Tamil script](image)

*Fig. 16– Vargas (2007)*
Breaking it down and finding the elementary strokes

One of the steps I have taken is to break down character elements and divided/grouped them by their consistent forms of strokes. Since there are currently no official terminology specific for Baybáyín typography, I went ahead and labeled them using a naming convention that would be familiar to almost every Filipino. (Table 1) See table/graphic below:

### Table 1– Elements of Baybáyín, Nordenx (2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MAIN FORMS:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>agos / flow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ilog / river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ulap / cloud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>talon / falls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>alon / wave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### STRUCTURAL:
- tulay / bridge

### DECORATIVE:
- talsik / splash

Note: depending on the style the writer or artist chose, in certain characters, the stroke can be terminated with a decorative flourish or "splash" at the end of the stroke (see talsik below). Some characters can also use a different stroke "form" depending on style (blue strokes).

A flowing horizontal stroke similar to a ~ wave dash, the stroke starts from left to right and can end with a downward terminal or a splash.

Two curved vertical strokes similar to the number 3, the top stroke is the starting stroke (river entry) and the bottom (end falls) stroke can end with either an inward terminal or outward splash.

Two curved horizontal strokes similar to a ~ wavy dash, the stroke starts from left to right, rising then falling then rising and falling again. It usually ends with a downward terminal or splash.

An arc of stem or shoulder and sometimes a bowl (depending on style). Semi-curved flowing vertical strokes similar to a bracket ( ) or parentheses, it is usually a downward stroke that can be terminated with either an inward or outward splash, or it can link or to an upward "wave" stroke (see below).

A wavy angled rising stroke similar to a check mark V, the stroke starts from the mid-bottom left slightly dipping then rising to end usually with an outward splash. The "wa" character being the only exception, its wave ends in an inward terminal or splash.

A straight cross bar, stem, or arm which can be horizontal, vertical or at an angle. This is the support structure that connects or crosses other main strokes and the lines that the main forms follow. Depending on style, it could be slightly curved.

A flourish or serif. These are the decorative tail-like curved serifs or semi-structural details on the ends of most strokes. Styles can vary.
There are 5 main forms, each form is an individually stylized stroke or series of simple strokes. These forms are supported by one or two structural & decorative elements. The structural element determines the direction of the main form (horizontal, vertical, or angled).

These 5 forms and 2 support (structural & decorative) components are the most basic & consistent strokes of Baybáyn characters. These are based on all the samples (handwriting & print) found in books & manuscripts from 1600s up to the early 1900s and also compared with Brahmic/Indic, Malay, and our living scripts. I have been corresponding with Miller and studying each individual Baybáyn & related script's characters and found every shape & form correlations.

Each of the elements or stroke forms, from the Table 1 on the previous page, can be simplified further into their basic structural representations, or stylized further with various decorative flourish (serifs) already available to other typefaces; these forms can be seen from examples of signatures and handwriting styles in 17th century certificates and deeds that are archived in the University of Santo Tomas in the Philippines (Miller, 2011).

These elementary forms are not limited to Sulat Tagalog, they can be applied to typographic elements of Kapampangan Kulitan and Surat Mangyan typefaces/fonts too. It is quite possible to build a whole font set that contains all major variants of Baybáyn (Kulitan, Mangyan, Tagbanwa, Tagalog) using a singular typeface style. However, as font development is time consuming, I have only done separate fonts for each Baybáyn (Kulitan, Mangyan, Tagalog) at this juncture.

Besides establishing uniformity, these basic elementary strokes can also help identify particular graphomes that originate or were inspired from related SEA scripts. And it can point out the similarities or evolutionary changes of Surat Mangyan, Palawan script, and Kulitan from the theorized proto-Baybáyn mentioned by Miller in his papers.
Defining typographic elements and stroke uniformity will help future font/typeface designers streamline their productivity, leaving more room for stylistic visions. Guesswork is eliminated when the basic letterforms are ironed out; giving more focus on line weights, serifs/embellishments, and general artistry.

Standards for fonts, though more measured and precise, also applies to calligraphy even though the later tends to be more free and unbound from the technical limits & restrictions of fonts & typefaces. Calligraphers must adhere to established forms, just like the handwritten samples from old signatures that have been digitized as fonts by Morrow. I also have digitized a few historical typefaces and handwriting samples into fonts (Fig. 17). I found (like Miller, de Tavera, Morrow, and others did) that what many thought as "regional variations" are actually just stylistic choices; the basic elementary forms of each characters are still evident in every sample - there is an apparent standard.

Table 2 – A couple of tables from my Baybayin typographic study manuscript, Nordenx (2013)

Fig. 17 – Modern font based on Don Dionisio Kapolong’s signature and Christopher Miller’s studies of the letter shapes in Don D’s signatures, in the University of Santo Tomas archive, Nordenx (2013)
**Rules of Orthography**

After establishing proper typographic standards, it then becomes paramount that the rules of orthography be set (Fig. 18), fortunately the basic rules have already been covered by plenty of authors. These basic rules are what most baybáyin practitioners consider as "traditional" and is the preferred method of writing in artwork and poetry. However, lacking a way to write leading and trailing vowel-less consonants, this "traditional method" makes compositions difficult to read and leaves the reader guessing what the missing letters are and what the context of the message is.

### Traditional Baybayin Syllable Characters:

These consonant characters are treated as SYLLABLES; they each have a default /a/ vowel sound.

| BA | KA | DA | GA | HA | LA | MA | NA | NGA | PA | SA | TA | WA | YA |

These stand-alone vowel characters are also treated as SYLLABLES.

| A | E | I | O | U |

Add a kudlit mark on TOP of a consonant character to change the default /a/ into an /i/ or /e/ sound.

| BI | KI | DI | GI | HI | LI | MI | NI | NGI | PI | SI | TI | WI | YI |

Add a kudlit mark BELOW a consonant character to change the default /a/ into an /oi/ or /ou/ sound.

| BU | KU | DU | GU | HU | LU | MU | NU | NGU | PU | SU | TU | WU | YU |

Traditionally, the trailing, leading, dead, and/or stand-alone consonants are not written; making it hard to read certain words.

| KLIK | NANG | AT |

Traditionally, ‘DA’ or ‘LA’ was used in place of ‘RA’ depending on its location within a word or if it is a borrowed foreign word.

| DA | LA |

Traditionally, a "pause" mark '|' (tandang panigil) is used in place of a ',' (comma, kwit), and a "stop" mark '||' (tandang panapus) is used in place of a '.' (period, tuldok).

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* Postma, Antoon, 1989; Postma, Anya 2014;
Modern Phonemes

Instead of creating new letters or characters, reusing or reviving older letter styles seems to be a better solution that many in the community agree with. Minor stylistic differences can be used to differentiate letters from their homophonic equivalent (Fig. 19). Other logical changes are addressed by reintroducing minor glyphs or stroke styles from related scripts. Minimal changes and keeping true to traditional forms is what conservative reform aims to achieve.

```
Modern Reform
(As suggested by Baybayin Typeface & Font specialist Nordenx and included in his Fonts)

These are necessary reforms to bring the traditional script up to date with modern orthography.

Pamudpod & Virama (or Krus Kudlit) are used for canceling the initial /i/ vowel sound of a character.

ē The Krus Kudlit (Cross-shaped virama) was introduced by the Spanish and is used in the publication of the Doctrina Christiana. Modern uses X.

ē The Pamudpod (Crescent-shaped virama) was introduced by Antoon Postma and is adapted in Suri Mangyan and used in several publications.

The x-shaped virama is a stylistic choice by Nordenx, replacing the + shaped Spanish Krus Kudlit.

ē KLIK NANG NG ← The X-VIRAMA is used for leading or stand-alone consonants.
ē The PAMUDPOD is used for trailing consonants.

A modified 'DA' based on other Indic & SEA scripts and a Bicol sample is used for 'RA'.

ē DA LA RA ← A FLOURISHED 'DA' is created to represent 'RA'.
ē Traditionally, 'DA' or 'LA' was used in place of 'RA'.

Solid & Hollow (or Looped) Kudlit marks are introduced to differentiate the high & mid vowels.

ē RA RE RI RO RU ← a SOLID kudlit mark for high vowels /i/ and /u/
ē a HOLLOW kudlit mark RU for mid vowels /e/ and /o/

Simplified & Flourished vowel characters are suggested to differentiate the high & mid vowels.

ē E I A U O ← SIMPLIFIED characters for mid vowels /e/ and /o/
ē FLOURISHED characters for high vowels /i/ and /u/

Open & Closed (or Looped) end-strokes assignment to differentiate the 'FA', 'PA', and 'YA'.

ē FA PA YA ← The closed or looped 'PA' is from old handwriting samples, same as the open or loose ended 'YA'. Each form corresponds with their letter-shape counterpart.

Round & Bean (or upside-down Heart) shapes assigned to differentiate the 'BA' and 'YA'.

ē BA VA WA ← The Round 'BA' from old handwriting samples is assigned to 'VA' since other Indic and SEA scripts similarly use this form to represent a /bha/ sound.

Simplified & complex (flourished) strokes assigned to differentiate the 'SA' and 'ZA'.

ē SA ZA ← SIMPLIFIED character for 'SA'
ē FLOURISHED character for 'ZA'

The addition of the Sudden Stop & Inquisitive Stop marks fills the need for modern punctuation marks.

ē Sudden Stop mark (tandang panaman), a stop character ‘!‘ with an x-virama under it; use as an exclamation point ‘!‘.
ē Inquisitive Stop mark (tandang pananong), a stop character ‘?‘ with a small ‘BA’ under it; use as a question mark ‘?‘.

Fig. 19- A Conservative Modern Reform for Baybayin proposal, Nordenx (2012)
```
Over the years, I received numerous emails and private messages regarding my fonts and my efforts in standardizing the script for typography, uniformity of stokes, ease of legibility, ease of access, and synchronization with modern Filipino orthography. A lot of these correspondences are positive and very encouraging. However there a a few that are not. It seems that I have not made my intentions clear. People sometimes see the adjective "modern" in the name of my fonts and they immediately think "modified" which some view with the same disdain they feel when they think that something is a product of "colonial mentality".

Modern ≠ Modified: (Fig. 20) The only glyph I consider slightly "modified" in my fonts is my (fullscreen) Ra character. But even (fullscreen) Ra as an alternative character is basically still an embellished "traditional" (fullscreen) Ra. Maybe that's why folks accept it; I'm just pleasantly pleased that it has been well received by many and has become the de facto RA used by many netizens on the online Baybáyín community.

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* Nordenx, 2006
My other "alternative" characters are designed in the same fashion as my RA; an embellished (♀) Sa for Za, an embellished (⇝) I for E, and an embellished (♂) U for O.

My other characters are actually NOT embellished versions of the the character but are actually true but older representations of the same character; the round (O) Ba is the same but older (⊙) Ba. I assigned the round (O) Ba to the 'V' key because it more resembles the phoneme matching characters in related family of Indic & South East Asian scripts (Fig. 20).

The traditional F-shaped (♀) Pa is still the same as the old Kapampangan closed-loop P-shaped Pa so I assigned the F-shaped one to the 'F' key and the P-shaped one to the 'P' key [shape-wise it makes sense to me] - however, the old closed-loop Ya is very much similar to the old closed-loop Pa, so I chose to include & assign a current but still traditional loop-less (♂) Ya to the 'Y' key.

These alternatives, they are available to people if they wish to use them. My font can be used to write in the old traditional way as well as the modern way. *I included the hollow (○) kudlit mark for mid vowels e and o and the solid (•) kudlit mark which is assigned to represent the high vowels i and u.

---

* Nordenx, 2006
The x-virama or *krus-kudlit* and *pamudpod* vowel cancellation marks are both valid methods of vowel cancellation used by Philippine scripts. They are both borrowed from their parent Indic scripts and variations of the glyph (with similar inherent vowel-canceling function) are also used relative SEA scripts.

The *pamudpod* mark was introduced several decades ago by Antoon Postma and was adopted by the Mangyan and used for writing regular everyday communications and signage, but not on traditional Ambahan poetry and crafts.

The cross-shaped *krus-kudlit* was introduced by the Spanish in an attempt to “reform” the script in 1620. As Friar Francisco Lopez prepared to publish the Ilokano *Doctrina Christiana*, he introduced a new *kudlit* in the shape of a cross and initially used it for expressing final consonants. Later on it also helped solve the issues of leading consonants and consonant clusters that were common among many borrowed Spanish words. The x-virama replaced the *krus-kudlit* among many Baybáyín practitioners and artists for aesthetic reasons (technically still a cross, but on its side).

*Fig. 22- Function of baybayin viramas based on their descriptions, Nordenx (2014)*

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* Lopez, 1691; Scott, 1968.
Repeating Homophonic Syllables

Vowel sign doubling: Tagalog script historically shares with Buginese a spelling convention that can be called “vowel sign doubling”. This consists in marking a consonant letter with two vowel signs, either the same or two different ones, to represent two succeeding syllables beginning with the same consonant. ~ Miller (2011)

![Figure 23](image)

\[a \; pa \; katuu \; u \; || \; ni \; tu \; su \; la \; ku\]

\[
\text{at pagka[toto]} \circ \; \text{nitong sulat ko (…)}
\]

Fig. 23 - One sample of a couple of occurrences of vowel sign doubling in old Tagalog script.
(Excerpted from a 1635 land deed, University of Santo Tomas Archives, reproduced in Villamor 1922) ~ Miller (2011); Potet (2014)

Since /a/ is not marked but is supplied by default, I introduced the colon as a “padalaw-a” mark. It borrows the same concept and style/position as the Lontara/Bugis “pallawa” mark which is used to separate rhythmico-intonational groups and also used to denote the doubling of a word or its root. The padalaw-a mark also doubles the vowel characters in the same manner prescribed in *Ang Wika at ang Baybaying Tagalog* by Tolentino (1937) but it is on the right side instead of being on top or bottom of the (ᚢ) I and (ᚤ) U characters. Another extended possibility for this type of kudlit mark is what I call a “pahantig” mark which is a single solid (•) mark on the right side of the a consonantal syllable character which repeats the consonant sound.

We have to make sure that these forgotten traditions are documented and revived as well as corrected. For example: the double top-down kudlit is being mistakenly used as a vowel cancellation method; there is a precedent that this is used differently by our ancestors. Instead of a vowel-killer, the double top-down kudlit are actually bi-vowel consonantal syllable repeaters: ṋ = bubi ≠ "B".
Glyphs & Syllables

| Traditional: Double Kudlit Repeating Syllables - As seen in old published samples, placing two same kudlit marks side by side on a character creates a double same-vowel syllable. |
| Modern: Double Kudlit Repeating Syllables - Similar to the traditional Double Kudlit except that it doubles up the mid vowel (e or o) hollow kudlit marks. |
| Modern: Mixed High-Mid Vowel Syllables - By placing the kudlit combinations of i+e, e+i, o+u, or u+o on a character, it creates two same-consonant syllables with either mid & high or high & mid vowels. |
| Modern: Padalaw-a Mark – Repeats the default consonantal syllable. |
| Modern: Padalaw-a Mark – Repeats the default vowel syllable. |
| Modern: Pahantig Mark – Repeats the consonant after the syllable. |

Other orthographic rules still need a lot of work. Expressing root words and stresses need to be considered for Baybáyín. The subject of root words are beyond the scope of this paper but will be covered in my book. The subject of academic pronunciation guides for syllabic stress and diacritic marks have been tossed around in various Internet forums but no clear solution is in place. A couple of promising ideas are mentioned, the first are alternative kudlit markers on the left side of the character (Fig. 24). The other is explained in Table 4a and Table 4b in the following two pages (p.31 & p.32) respectively.

**Table. 3 – Repeaters, old & new. Nordenx (2012)**

**Fig. 24- Modifier Marker Positioning, Nordenx (2014)**
### Pahilis / (Acute)

Simply shows which syllable or syllables should be accented or stressed in a word. Many Filipino words are stressed on the second to last syllable that it is common to omit the *pahilis* mark when it falls in that position. This is should be reflected in baybayin as a normal syllable. However, if it is on the final syllable, the vowel character is "highlighted" and the trailing consonant is not joined to the syllable before it with a pamudpud, an x-kudlit is used instead to denote the accent on the vowel before it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>SYLLABIFICATION</th>
<th>BAYBAYIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>báon</td>
<td>supplies, allowance</td>
<td>BA • on</td>
<td>Oêmj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baón</td>
<td>bury</td>
<td>ba • On</td>
<td>Oêm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bútas</td>
<td>hole</td>
<td>BU • tas</td>
<td>Oêmj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>butás</td>
<td>punctured</td>
<td>but • As</td>
<td>Oêj</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Paiwà \ (Grave)

Found only at the ends of words. It does not mark a stress on that syllable. Instead, it signifies that the VOWEL sound should be clipped short in the throat. Baybayin should reflect this by highlighting the vowel character and the consonant is not joined to the final syllable or the one before it, therefore the x-kudlit is used to denote that it stands alone.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORD</th>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>SYLLABIFICATION</th>
<th>BAYBAYIN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bagà</td>
<td>lung</td>
<td>ba • gA</td>
<td>Oêj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>baga</td>
<td>ember</td>
<td>ba • ga</td>
<td>Oêj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bagá</td>
<td>interrogative</td>
<td>bag • A</td>
<td>Oêj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sukà</td>
<td>vinegar</td>
<td>su • kA</td>
<td>ũũj</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>suka</td>
<td>vomit</td>
<td>su • ka</td>
<td>ũũ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4a – Stress, Nordenx (2014)*
A combination of the *pahilís* and the *paiwà* marks. It signifies a stress on the marked syllable and a glottal stop on the vowel. It is also found only on the final syllable of a word. Baybayin could mark this with a visarga \( \text{H} \) (voiceless stop or silent \( [h] \) mark) adopted from the LCI, Kawi, and Burmese scripts (among other Indic scripts).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basâ</th>
<th>Wet</th>
<th>Basâ • sa[H]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basa</td>
<td>Read</td>
<td>Basa • sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>No, not</td>
<td>Hind • di[H]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindi Indian language</td>
<td>Hind • di</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Filipino grammarians classify words according to how they are pronounced. These terms are not crucial for a student to learn Filipino pronunciation but they are useful and important when you study the mechanics of Filipino grammar. However, the old terminologies coined by linguists during the Spanish colonial times need to be revisited as some of them are archaic and have different meanings in every-day modern spoken Filipino.

For example: the *Malaw-aw*: a very rare type of pronunciation that was more common in the days before the Spanish language influenced Filipino speech. It is marked with a hyphen or *gitling* instead of a *tuldik*. The *gitling* represents a glottal stop before the vowel of the final syllable.

Orthographic irregularities also needs to be clarified. Diphthong and monophthong like /o/ spelled as "au" or /aw/ spelled as "ao", etc. can be approximated in simpler & more precise ways in baybayin.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baybàyin</th>
<th>Tagalog script</th>
<th>Bay • BA • yin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baybayin</td>
<td>Spelling</td>
<td>Bay • bay • yin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baybāyin</td>
<td>Shore</td>
<td>Bay • bay • in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baybayín</td>
<td>Enumerate, line up (command)</td>
<td>Bay • bay • In</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4b – Stress, Nordenx (2014)*
**Other Rules, Names, Acronyms & Initialism**

A Common Mistake is not translating to a Filipino language or forcing foreign pronunciation & spelling. Ideally, Baybáyín should be used primarily for Philippine languages. However, Baybáyín has been known to be used by natives to write some Spanish and English (in "Pilipinized" spelling) words.

**General Rules of thumb for Baybáyín:**

Use borrowed words sparingly and only if there are no available equivalent words for them in any Philippine language or even Spanish. If you have to use the word as it is, you should follow the official rules on how to Pilipinize the spelling & pronunciation of foreign or borrowed words and how to break-it-down into syllables as laid out by the Philippine National Language Commission in the Balarila (Rules of Orthography).

If the word is an important scientific or technical term and you do not have a direct and official translation to any Philippine language or Spanish - don't Pilipinize the spelling and don't write it in Baybáyín Script, use the Latin Alphabet instead.

Other people's names: If the word is a name of person (or organization) - don't Pilipinize the spelling and don't write it in Baybáyín Script, use the Latin Alphabet instead - unless that person (or group) made known to you or the public how they write his/her name in Baybáyín (or they personally requested you to do so); how one prefers their name spelled & pronounced is a personal issue.

Your own name: Again, "How one prefers their name spelled & pronounced is a personal issue." No person (or translator tool) should dictate to you how you want to spell & pronounce your name. People can suggest alternative spellings, in the end it's up to you to figure out how the rules of orthography (spelling) fits how you want others to read or pronounce your name as.
Place names with no commonly known official direct translation to Filipino should not be
translated to Filipino, it should be written the way it is known internationally in the Latin Alphabet. If you should insist on transcribing it in Baybáyín, even if there is a Filipino translation for certain words in the name - don't translate it - just Pilipinize the pronunciation before transliterating it to the script.

Baybáyín Acronyms & Initials:

An "Acronym" is the term widely used to describe any abbreviation formed from initial letters and in some cases initial syllables. Most dictionaries define acronym to mean "a word" in its original sense, while other dictionaries attributes other senses that make an acronym to have the same meaning as that of initialism.

Initialisms are pronounced letter by letter using the alphabet character's names. Acronyms are read and treated as words.

Since Baybáyín is an Abugida and each of its characters are phonetic syllables, Filipino acronyms and initialisms should be written in Baybáyín script as they are pronounced in Filipino.

Since "acronyms are read and treated as words" and a lot of acronyms are "names" of organizations and technical terminology, we then go back to the "rules of thumb" which are:

If the word is an important scientific or technical term and you do not have a direct and official translation to any Philippine language or Spanish - don't Pilipinize the spelling and don't write it in Baybáyín Script, use the Latin Alphabet instead.

If the word is a name of person (or organization) - don't Pilipinize the spelling and don't write it in Baybáyín Script, use the Latin Alphabet instead - unless if that person (or group) made known to you or the public how they write his/her name in Baybáyín (or they personally requested you to do so); how one prefers their name spelled & pronounced is a personal issue.
Kulitan & Surat Mangyan Standardizations

_Sulat Tagalog Baybáyín,_ unlike Kapampangan _Kulitan_ and _Surat Mangyan,_ has no defined authority. _Kulitan_ has the Kapampangan Academy and Center for Kapampangan Studies and the Ágúman Súlat Kapampángan group. _Surat Mangyan_ has the Mangyan Heritage Center, Mangyan Mission, and the Mangyan elders & leaders looking after their cultural heritage. I do not presume to impose any change or idea without asking these organizations and their community first. Any fonts I create have to receive their stamp of approval when I disseminate them.

Both _Kulitan_ and _Surat Mangyan_ have their own set of technical dilemmas when it comes to font development and modernization. For one, both have strict rules and traditions. Kulitan having adopted a vertical writing direction and character stacking/ligature method that is proving difficult to develop for in a horizontally biased computer display setup. _Surat Mangyan_ has strict _kudlit_ marker positioning that has not been provided space for in the Unicode range, preventing it to be used in current popular online communications.

Modern Mangyan

My work with _Surat Mangyan_ is limited to designing & digitizing Mangyan typefaces and creating computer fonts for _Surat Mangyan_ (Fig. 25). I do this in the spirit of extending Postma's goodwill; so that the Mangyan script would be consigned to posterity.

_Fig. 25 - Surat Mangyan computer fonts available on the Internet. Nordenx (2010)._
Any and all decisions regarding changes and updates to Surat Mangyan rules are handled by the Mangyan elders & leaders. I follow and reflect these changes in my work. The only freedom I have with the script is technical and stylistic design. When the MHC published a new primer last year (2014), they reintroduced the older RA character, replacing Postma's Buhid RA. I immediately updated my Surat Mangyan fonts to match the change (Fig. 26).

One of the most beneficial use of indigenous fonts is for publication of educational materials (Fig. 27) and promotional tools. I volunteer my font and graphic design work to the MHC, from time to time, and hep raise awareness about the Mangyan's plight (Fig. 28, page 37).

STANDARDIZED FORMS & BASIC STROKES

Strokes common in Mangyan handwriting:

**Surat Mangyan "MA"**

![Typical typeface](image)

**Surat Mangyan "NA"**

![Typical typeface](image)

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36
Fig. 28- Promotional & fund raising apparel, graphic design, coloring book & educational materials by Nordenx (2015).
Creating for Kulitan

My research on bayáyin lead me to Súlat Kapampángan (a.k.a. pámagkulit or kulitan) and Mike Pangilinan's work. I find the challenges posed by the unique aspects of Kulitan script to be intriguing. Kulitan differs slightly from Baybayin as it has been adapted solely for Kapampangan orthography. A different method of writing garlit (kudlit) diacritic marks and character ligatures & stacking were developed. Much of the character shapes originally were the same as Baybayin but through limited but continued use, Kulitan handwriting evolved to match a vertical direction of writing preferred & popularized by Kapampangan practitioners, scholars, artists, and academics. Kulitan has been kept alive within the Kapampangan Academia for several decades and has been considered as sacred by the elite few thus they shielded it away from the public. This gave Kulitan an even more mysterious air that drew me into trying to learn more about it.

Table 5 – Kulitan Fonts, Nordenx (2015)

I have been following up and observing how the new generation of Kulitan students & practitioners write their Kulitan characters. Many of their calligraphic art has become available online in various Kapampangan websites. I compiled the different handwriting styles to watch for uniformity and emerging standards in strokes. This study ultimately affected the development of new styles, character spacing, coupling & grouping of new Kulitan fonts (Table 5).
APPLICATIONS AND PROMULGATION

The answer to how to promulgate Baybáyin and indigenous Philippine scripts in this modern day is to look at what piques the curiosity of today’s youth. Culture and language is fast changing, how can we show the next generation to honor and value native traditions?

Arts & Crafts

There has been a reemergence of a tattoo culture among young Filipinos world-wide. What was once a taboo that held a negative image for the mostly Catholic nation, tattooing has gained social acceptance over the last decade. Incorporating Baybáyin and Kulitan into modern or tribal tattoos has become a new phenomenon popular with the Filipino diaspora who were looking to get in touch with their cultures (Fig. 29). Several local & international Filipino celebrities and athletes have been seen sporting Baybáyin tattoos.

![Fig. 29 – My Baybayin Kufic Font inked, Catfish (2014)](image)

Traditional arts & crafts and modern art has a mixed-bag of patronage, often a niche market (Fig. 30). However interests and demand for arts & crafts does span a wide range of age & demographics. From paintings and murals, traditional calligraphy and digital graphics design, to jewelry and street art... If anything else, they are very good conversation starters to open up a dialogue about Baybáyin.

![Fig. 30 – Malaya Designs custom Baybáyin pyrography pendants. Haguisan (2012)](image)
New Literary and Artistic Traditions

Modern Bayáyn pioneers have ventured into uncharted territories. Breaching the cultural gap and catching up to Eastern & Western calligraphic & literary traditions is a big undertaking, given the centuries of interrupted development. Artists and writers have become innovators. Proliferation of new calligraphic styles and mediums new to bayáyn script have been popping up and shared on the Internet.

Baliktárin Palindrome and Baligtádin Ambigram are a couple of recent wordplay experiments I started. An excercise in new traditions, they have challenged the online Bayáyn Enthusiast community to be more adventuresome with their approach with bayáyn creativity.

Baligtádin (uitenyánti; lit. reversible) is a Bayáyn equivalent of an ambigram. Basically, an ambigram is a typographic, calligraphic, or symbolic art form representation of a word or phrase, whose elements retain meaning when viewed or interpreted from a different direction, perspective, or orientation. The meaning of the ambigram may either change, or remain the same, when viewed or interpreted from different perspectives.

“Kapogi ka.”
(You are a fellow handsome fellow.)

"Fig. 31– Baybayin ambigram. Nordenx (2014)
Baliktárin (lit. returnable back and forth) is a Baybáyin equivalent of a palindrome, or in other words: a palindromic Tagalog sentence written in Baybayin Script; it reads the same from the beginning to the end or from the end to the beginning.

The unit of Baliktárin is mora (per syllable measure) since the Baybayin Script is an Abugida (alphasyllabary or phonetic-syllabary). This syllabic constrained writing differs from a Palindromya (Tagalog Palindrome), which is written using the Latin Alphabet and uses phoneme (per letter measure) as unit.

Baliktárin is very much like the Kaibun (回文; lit. circle sentence), the Japanese equivalent of palindromes which uses their syllabaries, Hiragana and Katakana.

Preferably, traditional Baybayin orthography is used in Baliktárin; where a virama (vowel cancellation mark) is not advised and trailing/leading vowel-less consonants are not written.
“Baliktárin”

Baliktárin is an ambigram. It is returnable back and forth, is a Tagalog (Latin–Hiligaynon writing system) equivalent of a palindrome, or in other words a palindromic Tagalog sentence written in Baybayin script. It is read the same from the beginning to the end or from the end to the beginning. The unit of Baliktárin is more (per syllable) since the Baybayin script is an angular, alphasyllabary or phoneme-syllabary.

Baliktárin is very much like the Kilusan (pron. map). It is a palindrome or the Japanese equivalent of palindromes which uses their syllables; Hangul and Kilusan.

Preferably, traditional Baybayin orthography is used in Baliktárin, where a vowel (vowel cancellation mark) is not shielded and trailing/leading vowel less conditions are not written.

Examples:

• ᜃᜊᜓᜒ ᜎ ᜎ ᜃᜊ ᜎ ᜎ ᜃᜊᜓᜒ
  "A man I know."
  Kilala kong lalaki.

• ᜁ ᜊ ᜊ ᜋᜊ ᜊ ᜊ ᜁ
  "Put it down, woman."
  Ibaba mo, babae.

• ᜊ ᜅ ᜃᜊ ᜅ ᜊ
  "Is it really my jar?"
  Banga ko nga ba?

• ᜆ ᜋ ᜐ ᜋ ᜆ
  "Right in the eye."
  Tama sa mata.

• ᜁ ᜃᜊ ᜎᜊ ᜋᜊ ᜎᜊ �ᜊ ᜁ
  "Put him in jail. He's really crazy!"
  Ikulong mo. Loko e!

• ᜁ ᜎ ᜋ ᜎᜊᜓᜒ ᜊᜊᜓᜒ ᜎ ᜎ ᜊᜊᜓᜒ ᜎᜊᜓᜒ ᜋ ᜎ ᜁ
  "How many did we miscount? We only have fifteen!"
  Ilang maling bilang? Labinglima lang e!

NOTE: An easy way to remember the Tagalog terms and determine which is which (ambigram or palindrome):
• Baliktárin (baybayin palindrome) - key: “BALIK” meaning “RETURN”.
• Baligtádin (baybayin ambigram) - key: “BALIGTAD” meaning “REVERSED” and “UPSIDE DOWN”.

Fig. 33– Baybayin palindromes. Nordenx (2014)
Branding & Commercialization

Fashion apparels (Fig. 34) and brand name logos are eye catching and draws in the younger crowds. If and when Baybáyin and other Philippine scripts are incorporated into commercial products, it can capture the attention of the youth. If Baybáyin logos and designs are aesthetically done and marketed right, fads and followers can propagate more interest about the scripts.

International brand-name products have used other native scripts on their logos, but not Philippine scripts just yet. For these companies to acknowledge a writing system, it must be justifiably profitable to warrant redesign and retooling. If local scripts are heavily popularized in their respective ethnic regions, these big companies will notice. Why should we care? Because it is a big cultural morale boost, and as desperate it may sound, we need all the help we can get so that people will take notice and care about advocating for the preservation of our writing system. If global companies like Coca-cola or Pepsi (Fig. 35) includes a custom Baybáyin or Surat Mangyan or Kulitan label on their products, it can instill local pride; it is an officiating nod that the culture is alive.
Communication Technology

Thanks to ASCII & Unicode compliant fonts, we are now able to embed and use Baybáyín script for online communications. A lot of Filipinos in online forums and social media can now chat using Baybáyín fonts in our posts and instant messaging. And while it is still difficult to do the same in mobile tablet computers and cellphones due to technical limitations of the devices, Windows 8 powered tablets, laptops, and macbooks can now use Baybáyín fonts and custom Keyboard layouts (Fig. 36 and 37). It is possible that in the future, more software and app developers could incorporate all the Philippine scripts into more devices.

Cellphones, personal computers, and Internet connection are slowly working their way into remote tribal areas. Hopefully, when they arrive, that the writing systems of the indigenous people are already prepackaged into these technologies. Otherwise, they have to contend with the default global language of technology (in the Philippines it is English & Tagalog using the Latin Alphabet.

![Fig. 36 – Windows 8 on-screen keyboard showing a Baybáyín layout. Nordenx (2013)](image)

![Fig. 37 – Mac OSX custom keyboard layout. Nordenx (2012)](image)
Signage

The Mangyan Heritage Center (MHC) and the township of Mansalay have public signage erected in public buildings like hospitals & clinics, public markets, community centers, etc. (Fig. 38) and street signs (Fig. 40). Public visibility of the local writing system helps promote and inspire both locals and visiting tourists. I envision that modern lighted signs (Fig. 39) would liven up the local night life and invite more interest about the indigenous script.

Fig. 38 – Signages at the MHC. Nordenx (2011)

Fig. 39 – Lighted Mangyan “Welcome!” Sign. Nordenx (2014)

Fig. 40 – Bilingual Street Signs in Thailand. Google Image Search Result (2015)
Publication & Documentation

More books are needed; to be printed using the native writing systems. But not just boring academic textbooks; today's young readers are more interested in story books, graphic novels, comics & manga, magazines, and with modern gadgetry abound – ebooks (Fig. 41). I created the fonts and help established a publishing company to print & distribute those types of books. Hopefully, we would be able to do more in the future.

![Fig. 41– A collage of books, ebooks, graphic novels with native Philippine scripts. Nordenx (2013)](image)

A series of magazines back in the early 1900s used a typeface that emulated the style of baybáyín script (Fig. 42). This was the time when knowledge about the native writing system has practically faded and a shift in language, culture, and technology was in progress. Yet, some Filipinos in publishing back in those days have subconsciously wanted to reconnect with their roots. We now have since recovered a lot of that lost knowledge, we can now use the true form of our writing system in our publications.

![Fig. 42– Old magazines. Buhain (1998)](image)
Entertainment

Nothing is more attractive to the younger generations than video games or games in general. Competitive games, particularly multiplayer games or puzzles have been proven as effective learning tools for millennium. Incorporating native scripts or building an entire game around it is a very effective means to get your writing system noticed. However, development of such games are very time consuming and financially intensive.

My font work actually started out back in 2006 when I developed video games. I dream of creating games that use Philippine scripts.
Native scripts used in subtitles for movies and music videos have been popping up in the Internet. Most of them are created by *Baybáyin* enthusiasts and music video fans. Having modern fonts helped a lot in the creation of those videos. It is another fun way to teach and propagate native script literacy.

*Fig. 46– A Baybáyin subtitled music video, de Torres (2012)*
Education

Early 2013, I did some volunteer work to help the Mangyan Heritage Center (MHC) to document (Film & Photograph) Mangyan teachers & students utilizing the Mangyan Script & propagating the Mangyan culture (Fig. 47). The Mangyan teachers are a part of the cultural education & preservation project run by the MHC. I was amazed at how many and how well the Hanunuo students are faring well with learning their own writing systems. Education is key and the most important tool in this modern world for preserving an endangered culture. But it is quite difficult when we teachers have to compete with the onslaught of modernization and an influx of pervasive dominant culture. This is why we have to use these modernization and turn them around into beneficial tools instead of them disrupting our goal of educating our youths.

Whereas, in the United States where the disruptive influence of a dominant culture and modern distractions are much more prevalent, Filipino-American culture advocates and activist have taken on the challenge of cultivating and promoting their heritage and traditions themselves. Public events and festivals have been utilized by Kabuay, Bayani Art, Malaya Designs, and Nordenx (among others) as teaching opportunities (Fig. 48)
More Fonts, More Studies, More Charts, More Teaching Materials

Computer fonts makes it easier and faster to create more teaching materials and tools. It is essential in gadgets, apps, messaging apps, posting in social networks, creating more attractive posters, labels, logos, websites, promotional materials, apparel, flash cards, etc. etc. But in order to continue further with these materials and ventures, more financial support for professional developers & foundries is required. I subsidize my baybayin font & typeface development project by selling commercial font licensing and public donations. Creating fonts is a tedious, time-consuming, labor-intensive, and expensive prospect.

Table of currently available updated Nordenx Modern Baybayin Fonts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Font</th>
<th>Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mono</td>
<td>A I U b k d g h l m n n f s t w y p D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manhid</td>
<td>A I U b k d g h l m n n f s t w y p D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-named</td>
<td>A I U b k d g h l m n n f s t w y p D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generic</td>
<td>A I U b k d g h l m n n f s t w y p D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-named</td>
<td>A I U b k d g h l m n n f s t w y p D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Un-named</td>
<td>A I U b k d g h l m n n f s t w y p D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaya</td>
<td>A I U b k d g h l m n n f s t w y p D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital</td>
<td>A I U b k d g h l m n n f s t w y p D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ringo</td>
<td>A I U b k d g h l m n n f s t w y p D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinta</td>
<td>A I U b k d g h l m n n f s t w y p D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bern</td>
<td>A I U b k d g h l m n n f s t w y p D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6a – Fonts, Nordenx (2015)
Table of currently available Nordenx Modern Baybayin Fonts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Font</th>
<th>Characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alemania</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alpabeta</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brush</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Club</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Damo</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fuga</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gana</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jepoy</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kana</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kufic</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Script</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sulat</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanso</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tulso</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolats</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laso</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leets</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impen</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McKudlit</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varsiitita</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Varsiitto</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6b – Fonts, Nordenx (2015)*
**Table of currently available Nordenx Surat Mangyan Fonts:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Font</th>
<th>Hanubrush</th>
<th>Hanunuo</th>
<th>Postma</th>
<th>Un-named</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table. 6c – Fonts, Nordenx (2015)*

**Table of currently available Nordenx Old Sulat Kapampangan Fonts:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Font</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1699</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1887</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table. 6d – Fonts, Nordenx (2015)*

**Table of currently available Nordenx Modern Kulitan Fonts:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Font</th>
<th>Coolits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kulitulsok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schoolitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McKulit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pamagkulit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Angulo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Un-named</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table. 6e – Fonts, Nordenx (2015)*
For all of these tools to be effective, there is one more daunting task to finish so we can get full support and get everyone in the nation on board with a plan: to legislate a law to protect our indigenous cultures.
Putting it Into Law

Although well-meaning, the House Bill – National Script Act of 2011, also known as the “Baybayin Bill”, was considered by many Baybáyín practitioners, scholars, and enthusiasts as potentially detrimental instead of helpful to the Baybáyín revival and indigenous scripts advocacy. There was no provision in the bill for the actual indigenous living scripts. It does not provide the indigenous script and its native writers protection from exploitation. The bill in its current form was rough, open to interpretation, corruption, and biased; having focused heavily on the archaic Tagalog script. Neither the online community of Baybáyín enthusiasts & advocates nor other concerned international groups & scholars were consulted on the initial drafting of this bill. Concerns about the private group Baybayin Buhayin Inc. (Soul Venture Rizal Ministries) and the congressional representative sponsor, Leopoldo Bataoil, behind the proposed Bill was ripe among the Baybáyín enthusiast in online community forums, on whether or not they have hidden agendas.

The original wordage to the bill is as follows:

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF BAYBAYIN, AND DECLARING BAYBAYIN AS THE NATIONAL SCRIPT OF THE PHILIPPINES

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the “National Script Act”.

SECTION 2. It is a declared policy of the state to inculcate, propagate and preserve our cultural heritage and treasures for the evolution and development of patriotism among our citizenry. The state shall give utmost priority to the conservation and promotion of arts, letters and culture of our nation as a tool for cultural and economic development.

SECTION 3. Baybayin also known as Alibata is hereby declared the national script of the Philippines. The official adoption of Baybayin as the national script shall be promulgated by inscribing Baybayin in all products locally produced or processed in the Philippines. Manufacturers of processed or food products shall include on the label a translation in Baybayin. The Department of Trade and Industries shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 4. Baybayin shall also include in the curriculum of the elementary and secondary schools. The Department of Education shall likewise promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 5. Any provision of law, decree, executive order, rule or regulation in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions and/or purposes of this Act is hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

SECTION 6. This Act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers of general circulation.
The “Baybayin Bill” has been presented every year since 2011 and has yet to pass into law (even as this paper is being written). At this same time, earlier in February 3, 2014, Baybayin Buhayin Inc.'s CEO Pastor Jay Enage, privately approached several Baybáyín scholars and artists (myself included) and invited them/us to share our input, opinions, and revisions (if any) for the Bill before they once again put it on the table for reconsideration. And after consulting with our colleagues and peers, this first draft of amendments and edits was quickly put into consideration:

AN ACT PROVIDING FOR THE PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION OF ALL INDIGENOUS PHILIPPINE WRITING SYSTEMS, AND DECLARING ALL NATIVE ABUGIDA SCRIPTS COLLECTIVELY AS THE NATIONAL SCRIPTS OF THE PHILIPPINES

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the "National Writing Systems Act of 2014".

SECTION 2. It is a declared policy of the state to inculcate, propagate and preserve our cultural heritage and treasures for the evolution and development of patriotism among our citizenry. The state shall give utmost priority to the conservation and promotion of calligraphic & typographic arts, orthography, and linguistic integrity so as to aid in cultural and economic enrichment & development.

SECTION 3. The (Non Latin Alphabet, Non Arabic Abjad) Abugida (alpha-syllabary) "Native Philippine Scripts" previously collectively categorized under the academic umbrella term "Baybáyín Scripts", which was also previously mislabeled as "Alibata", is hereby declared collectively as the "National Writing Systems of the Philippines" and henceforth categorized under the new umbrella term "National Scripts" (plural).

SECTION 4. Official adoption of ALL indigenous Philippine scripts and historic typefaces under the official status as National Writing Systems shall be promulgated by inscribing the appropriate local indigenous script in all products produced locally by the particular indigenous group. Manufacturers of processed or food products shall include a description or name of the product in both English using the Latin-Alphabet and the local language & indigenous script of the region or area where their manufacturing plant is operating. The Department of Trade and Industries shall promulgate the necessary rules, regulations, and incentives to carry out the provisions of this Act.

SECTION 5. Elementary and secondary schools shall include an all inclusive program about the National Writing Systems, with each region focusing on the appropriate script developed particularly for the local language/s of their region. The Department of Education shall likewise promulgate rules, regulations, and incentives to carry out the provisions of this Act. The Department of Education (DepEd) shall consult and work with the of the local indigenous peoples (IP) representatives: ethnic leaders, elders, scholars, and community organizations & foundations who are in charge of their cultural heritage regarding the promulgation of traditions & standards of their indigenous script.

Philippine Abugida or Native Alpha-syllabic scripts under the collective National Writing Systems include but not limited to the following scripts: 2 Surat Mangyan (Hanunuo, Buhid), 1 Sulat Kapampangan (Kulitan, Pamagkulit), 1 Sulat Katagalogan (Tagalog Baybáyín, Katitikan), 1 Surat Palawan (Inaborlan, Tagbanwa, Apurahuano), 1 Suwat Bisaya (Baybáyín Bisaya, Badlit), 1 Surat Ilocano (Kur-itan, Kurditan), 1 Surat Bicol (Guhit, Basahan), 1 Kesultanan Sulu (Luntarsug)

SECTION 6. Local government units (LGU) shall promulgate the inclusion of both Latin Alphabet and the appropriate local script into their signage for street names, public facilities, public buildings, and other necessary signage for other public service establishments such as hospitals, fire & police stations, community centers and government halls. All government departmental agencies shall assist the local governments in promulgating rules, regulations, and incentives to carry out the provisions of this Act.
Enage responds two days later acknowledging the revision I sent and sends their amended revisions. Their new wordage for the Bill is drafted, adding changes as follows:

SECTION 1. This Act shall be known as the "National Writing Systems Act of 2014".

SECTION 2. It is a declared policy of the state to inculcate, propagate and preserve our cultural heritage and treasures for the evolution and development of patriotism among our citizenry. The state shall give utmost priority to the conservation and promotion of arts, letters and culture of our nation as a tool for cultural and economic development. Furthermore, the State must give priority to education, science and technology, arts and culture, and sports to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress, and promote total human liberation and development. In recognition of the need to create among the people a consciousness, respect, and pride for the legacies of Filipino cultural history, heritage and our authentic identity.”

Section 3. Baybayin is hereby declared the indigenous national writing system of the Philippines. To generate greater awareness on its plight and foster wider appreciation of its importance and beauty. The emergence of a indigenous national writing system that could unite the whole country. The official adoption of Baybayin as the national writing script shall be promulgated by inscribing Baybayin in all products locally produced and processed in the Philippines. Manufacturers of processed or food products and shall include on the label a translation in Baybayin. The Tagalog-based national written script shall also use in mass media and in official communication. The national writing script of the Philippines will represent Philippine traditions and ideals and convey the principles of sovereignty and national identity. Local government units (LGU) shall promulgate the inclusion of both Latin alphabet and the appropriate local script into their signage for street names, public facilities, public buildings, and other necessary signage for other public service establishments such as hospitals, fire & police stations, community centers and government halls. The department of Trade and Industries shall promulgate the necessary rules and regulations to carry out the provisions of this act. All government departmental agencies shall assist the local governments in promulgating rules, regulations, and incentives to carry out the provisions of this Act.

Section 4. Baybayin as the indigenous national writing script which will be Tagalog-based national language on one of the existing native written languages. It is a recognition of our intangible national cultural heritage — our traditional writing systems and objects of national importance. Baybayin, which was also previously mislabeled as "Alibata", is hereby declared collectively as the "National Writing Systems of the Philippines". Of the more than a hundred languages being spoken and written by the different ethnolinguistic groups of dwellers in the more than seven thousand and one hundred islands comprising the Philippines, eight of them are considered major written languages. These major written languages are Sulat Katagalogan (Tagalog Baybáyín, Katitikan), Surat Mangyan (Hanunuo, Buhid), Surat Palawan (Inaborlan, Tagbanwa, Apurahuano) Surat Ilocano (Kur-itan, Kurditan), Suwat Bisaya (Baybáyín Bisaya, Badlit), Sulat Kapampangan (Kulitan, Pamagkult), Surat Bicol (Guhit, Basahan) and Kesultanan Sulu (Luntsug). As it evolves, it shall be further developed and enriched on the basis of existing Philippine and other written languages.

Section 5. Baybayin will give us a glimpse of the legacies of the past and how it remains to shape the present and the future. Baybayin shall also include in the curriculum in the teacher education courses and in the the elementary and secondary schools throughout the country. The Government shall take steps to initiate and sustain the use of Baybayin as a medium of official writing system and as written language in the educational system. The Department of Education, The Commission on Higher Education and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts shall likewise promulgate rules and regulations to carry out the provision of this act.

Section 6. Any provision of law, decree, executive order, rule and regulation in conflict or inconsistent with the provisions and/or purposes of this Act is hereby repealed, amended or modified accordingly.

Section 7. This act shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its complete publication in the Official Gazette or in at least two (2) newspapers in general circulation.

Approved.

As of 2015, even though the Bill has gained support of Senator Loren Legarda the year before, the Bill still has not been passed. Hopefully, improvements on wordage and provisions would help it in the future.
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