

HSTCMP 205A/JSIS 205: Introduction to Filipino Histories

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Can you locate the Philippines?



Hint:
On the edges of
Asia and the
Pacific Ocean



Introduction

Locating the
Philippines:
On the edges of
Asia and the
Pacific Ocean



Geographically

The “Philippines” at
the edges of Asia
and spread of
“Great Traditions”

At the far edges of
the Pacific, the
Americas and
Europe



The Philippines in the World



Historically

By late 16th: “Philippines” located at nexus of
new world trade.

As a colony of Spain:

- served as trans-shipment point in emerging global trade
- linked Asia to Americas and Europe



Galleon Trade Routes



The Philippines as key trans-shipment point in Galleon Trade, late 16th-early 19th c.



The Philippines:
an archipelago
made up of more
than 7,000 Islands



Map by Pedro Murillo de Velarde, SJ,
drawn by Nicolas Cruz Bagay, mid-18th c.



Navigating the Islands

prior to the 16th c, native peoples had extensive knowledge of navigational techniques

- already had extensive and on-going contacts with outside regions via trade

at same time, archipelagic nature of the "Philippines": kept islands' people apart and autonomous



The name of the Philippines

Prior to colonization, "Philippines" and "Filipinos" did not exist

1521: eastern parts of archipelago called "*Islas del poniente*" (islands of the West) by **Ferdinand Magellan**

in **1542:** called "*las islas Filipinas*" (islands of King Philip II) by **Ruy Lopez de Villalobos**



Rey Felipe II
(King Philip II of Spain)



2 Questions:

What and who inhabited the "Philippines" before there was a Philippines?

What sort of societies existed prior to (and beyond) the arrival of the Spaniards?



PRE-COLONIAL SOCIETIES



Determining Pre-Colonial Societies
The problem of sources: no indigenous chronicles, no monument complexes.

- archeological finds
- 12th-16thc. Chinese references
- early Spanish accounts (16th c.)
- ethnographic studies of non-Christianized, indigenous populations

Hence, highly mediated knowledge of pre-colonial societies.



The Boxer Codex



- 16th century Manuscript from Spanish colonial Governor
 - Illustrations of ethnic groups in the Philippines
- Now owned by the Lily Library in Indiana.



Determining Pre-Colonial Society



- **Settlement Patterns**
 - Upland, Lowland
- **Social Relations**
 - Power and Hierarchy
 - Slavery
- **Economical and Cultural Practices**

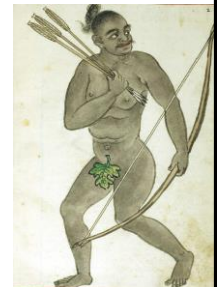


SETTLEMENT PATTERNS



Upland

- **mountainous terrain**
- hunters-gatherers
- Swidden (shifting) agriculture,
- In Cordilleras: rice terraces by 12thc.
- Harder to access, thus remained largely outside of colonial rule till 20thc.



Batad Rice Terraces in Banaue



Nagacadan Rice Terraces in Kiangan



Upland Populations

Smaller, more dispersed populations

Diverse social structures.



Upland Populations

A) some groups: egalitarian relations

- stress on **sharing of resources**
- companionship over kinship ties
- Rejected hierarchy, violence and slavery

Upland Populations

B) other groups: hierarchical, **competitive**, stress on raiding and trading

- Ruled by chiefs
- Much more similar to lowland coastal societies

Lowland

- interior & coastal
 - oriented towards trade, wet rice agriculture
- historically, lowland coastal more densely populated, **more resources**
- but also first to be colonized
 - oriented towards coast with access to **forests** and the **seas**

Palawan Island



Water, coast, forested interior



Lowland areas

Forests

- sources of food,
- trade items,
- building materials,
- abode of powerful spirits

Rivers and seas

- opening to larger world of trade
- cultural influences



Fishing



Planting Rice in the Lowland/Costal areas



Cabangan, Zambales, Philippines

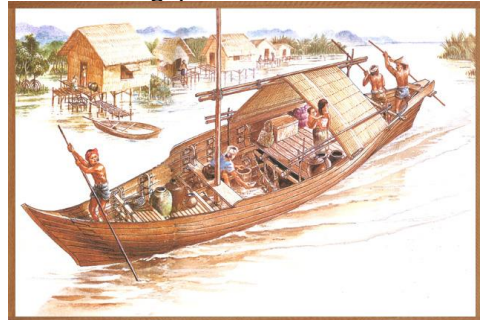


Social Relations of lowland societies

- Absence of large kingdoms
- No centralized states
- No monumental temple-rice irrigation complex
- Main settlements: autonomous villages called **"barangay"**
 - common name for both boat and society (but not fixed territory)



Balangay Boat from Butuan



Features of lowland societies

1. autonomous settlements (not centralized states)
 - o called "**barangay**" organized around chiefs (**datu**)
2. social relations organized around **kinship**
3. governed by notion of power based on **prestige** & the ability to attract a **following**
4. **wealth** based on *size of following and signs of "prestige"*, not possession of land
5. importance of **slaves**: supported datu and "freed persons"



Social Relations

- Both **hierarchical** and **fluid**
 - o Thus **unequal** but always **negotiable**

Reason: based on networks of **reciprocal indebtedness**:

- **everybody was indebted to somebody else**
- took place in the absence of code of laws and a strong State

What regulated relations of indebtedness?

- **The sanction of shame**
 - o Failure to live up to obligations=led to loss of status in the community and feelings of shame



Indebtedness is useful

in Tagalog: "**utang na loob**" (debt of inside) and "**hiya**" (shame)

- created ranked-based, status conscious society
- defined by ties of mutual obligations mediated by shame
 - o parent-children;
 - o chief-followers;
 - o masters-slaves



POWER AND HIERARCHY



Prestige = Power

Context: non-capitalist economy:

- power and hierarchy based not on private property
 - but on accumulation of prestige
- To have power=to have **prestige**
- And sign of prestige: having a **large following**
 - Followers seen not as citizens but as dependents, tied by relations of indebtedness
 - Prestige related to dynamics of dependency



The Datu



- Most powerful figure: chief or "**datu**," usually male
- Had accumulated the most prestige

Powerful datu=popular datu

- provided the means with which to sustain networks of reciprocal indebtedness



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From 16thc. "Boxer Codex"

The Datu

Datu's prestige a function of his "**charisma**"

- combination of physical strength, courage & generosity
- rhetorical prowess, ritual knowledge, and magical abilities

Effect: to place everyone else in his debt




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From 16thc. "Boxer Codex"

People Prestige

- Enabled datu to attract & mobilize **large following of people**
- People, not land basis of wealth
- People needed for the accumulation and distribution of resources



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From 16thc. "Boxer Codex"

Family

the family members of the datu: called **maginoo**

- from "ma" to have + "ginoo", noble



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BARANGAY CHIEFDOMS

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Not an Aristocracy

Datu's power based

- not on landholding
- nor sanctioned by a greater power outside of barangay
- No powerful gods, or emperors or kings to back up datu

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Rank of Datu

always dependent on **local recognition** of his ability to live up to *his* obligations

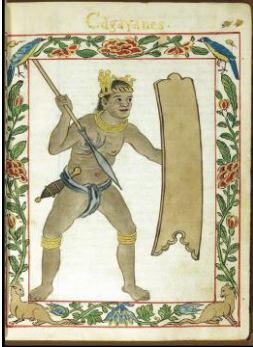
- failure to do so resulted in appearing shameful, therefore weak

Subjected datu to challenges by other datu from other barangays, or by those below him

- hence, the **precarious** nature of datu's position

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Social Structure



Underneath datu and maginoo:

1. freed men (**timaua**)
2. warriors (**maharlikas**)

followers of datu and beneficiaries of his power

Maharlika or warrior, 16thc., Boxer codex



The Warriors

But also chief challengers of datu

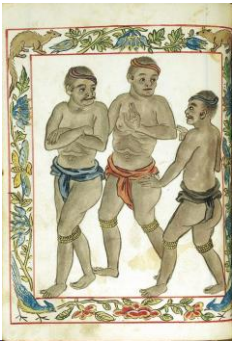
- once he is seen to lose his charisma &
- Failure to provide for barangay



Bontoc warrior, early 20thc.



Pre-colonial slavery



Slave called **alipin** in Tagalog,

- **oripun** in Visayan
- essential to the life of barangay

Had a dual role:

- furnished labor and
- signs of status and prestige to masters



Alipin

how did one become a slave?

- birth;
- indebtedness;
- capture in war



Slaves, or "alipin", 16thc., Boxer codex



Specific Features of Slavery:

1. *not based on race* (concept of race did not exist) but on birth, capture, indebtedness
2. *multiple gradations* of enslavement
 - ex.: **namamahay** (bondsman);
 - **sa gigilid** (house slave);
 - **alila** (dependent);
 - **bulisic** (slave of slave);
 - **bulislis** (slave of a slave of a slave)



3. Slavery *not* a permanent condition

- alterable via inter-marriage with freed people;
- purchase;
- acts of bravery

anyone could fall into or rise out of slavery, making for **social mobility**



TRADING-RAIDING-FEASTING COMPLEX



Economic practices

continuous & tightly knit with each other

Made up of three main activities:

1. Trading
2. Raiding
3. Feasting



1. Trading

Interior & overseas trade closely related, one enabling the other

- local goods, especially forest products, exchanged for foreign goods

Chinese porcelain most highly valued

- signified status & prestige especially after 10thc.



Recovered Chinese Porcelain in the Philippines



Chinese Porcelain valued as prestige



Trading supplemented by

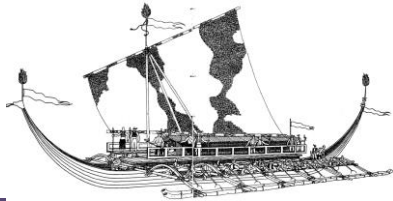
- subsistence agriculture;
- hunting and gathering;
- fishing;
- local craftwork such as pottery



2. Raiding

a kind of **violent commerce**

- took form of attacking other barangays for goods & people



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Main Reasons for Raiding:

- accumulation of surplus and slaves;
- enhancing prestige;
- revenge;
- rite of passage for boys into men
 - e.g., headhunting

Effects: **on-going conflicts** & shifting alliances

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Heads adorning Ifugao house, early 20th c



3. Ritual Feasting

Occurred at the beginning or conclusion of significant events

and as part of curing rites

- ex: births, deaths, marriages, expeditions, harvests, raids, etc.

Involved displaying wealth, dancing, singing, music

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Ritual feasting: Ifugao and Bagobo



Feasting in the Cordilleras



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Re-distributing meat, Cordillera, late 20thc



Feasting

- Sharing of food: took on a **material & symbolic** value
- feasting: redistribution of wealth
- display of social status (thus, highly competitive);
- consolidation of datu's prestige

Means for dealing with good and bad spirits

essential for sustaining web of indebtedness at the basis of social life

feasting intimately linked with trading and raiding



Cultural practices

Bodily Appearance

- Jewelry, Clothing
- Dentistry, Tattoos, Body Alterations

Language and Writing

- Written, Oral

Spirit Beliefs

- Animism, Islam



BODILY APPEARANCE



D) *Technologies of bodily appearance*

body: doubly significant

- material ground** for reproducing biological and social life
- a **malleable surface** for projecting and recognizing status, enhancing prestige for both men and women

thus keen attention paid to bodily **appearance**

bodily adornment important in the absence of temple building tradition

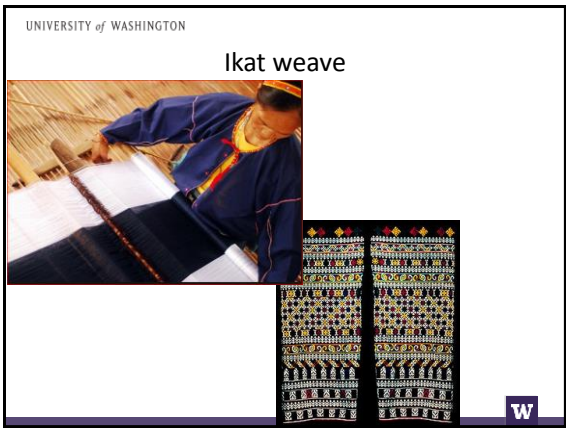
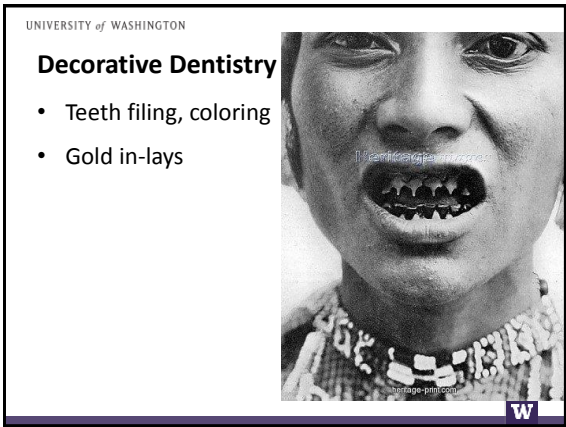
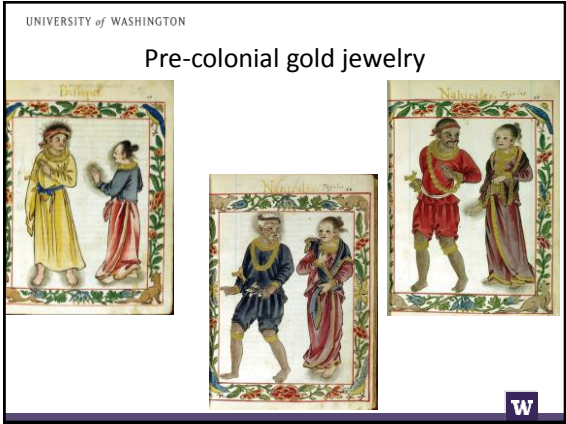


Ornamentation

Forms of caring for the body:

jewelry (gold, copper, brass)





Ikat weave



T'boli weavers and kids in longhouse, Lake Sebu, Cotabato



T'boli women; Ifugao man with putong (hat), 20thc.



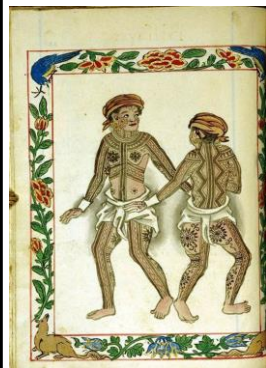
Tattoos

tattoos to signal status,

- for men (valor),
 - women (beauty),
- linked with rites of passage



Tattoos as body adornment, Visayas 16thc.



Tattoos, Cordillera, early 20th



Traditional tattooing practices, Cordilleras. Early 21st century



Betel Nut

widespread use for establishing social relations

- Served as a mild narcotic
- well-crafted containers to enhance status



brass betel nut box

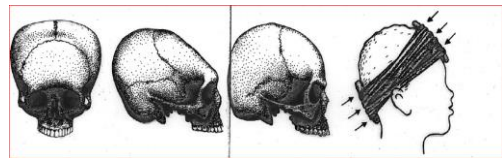


Left: Betel nut pouches Right: Betel nut ingredients



Body Alterations

skull molding (for children)



Circumcision for men

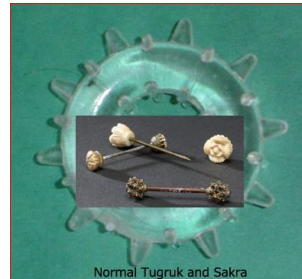
penis pins (*tukbuk*; *sakra*; *bulitis*)



Illustration of penis ring from 16th c. Boxer Codex



Penis pins and ring from Borneo, but similar to those used in the Philippines



Normal Tugruk and Sakra



The precolonial Visayans had 30 words for penis ring: from the Boxer Codex:

“The men commonly place in their genital member and ordinarily carry in it a certain wheel or ring which they make of lead or brass and some of gold. They have holes in the round part of the wheel or ring, one in the upper and the other one in the lower part through which they put a small pin or nail of the same metal as the ring, and with which they pierce the lower part of the prepuce, and thus the wheel or ring is placed on the very genital in the same way that a ring is put on the finger. Thus they have access with the women, with whom they remain for a day or a night... after completing which they remain immensely satisfied, specially the women.



“Some wheels or rings are very large, there being more than 30 kinds, each with a different name, and in general a name sacred in their language. The Spaniards have had a special care after coming among these people to abolish this abominable and bestial custom among the natives, punishing with beating those who wear them, and spite of this they continue to wear and make them; and it is very common for them to carry the comb or nail which enters through the holes of wheel or ring, and placing [the nail] on the member of the man continuously therein, so that the hole may not close or in order not to be bothered with the time in putting the ring or wheel.”



LANGUAGE & WRITING



E) Language and writing

numerous local languages part of Austronesian family (over 100 languages)

- local script called “baybayin”



Alphabets used in the Philippines



Baybayin

derived from Sanskrit, by way of Sulawesi (Indonesia)

- 17 letters, 3 vowels, 14 consonants

written vertically or horizontally on perishable materials

relatively easy to learn, so was widespread till 16thc.



Contemporary use of babayin, written from top down, left to right



Use of Baybayin

after conquest, Spaniards replaced it with Latin letters

tended to be used for magical purposes (e.g., love letters) and very rarely for keeping records



Oral Literature

importance of **oral literature** e.g., songs, riddles, epics

- crucial in ritual feasts,
- while laboring (e.g., rowing, planting, hunting, raiding, etc.)



SPIRIT BELIEFS



F) Spirit Beliefs:

"Animism": widespread in pre-colonial societies
non-theistic belief in the presence of spirits in nature and ancestors

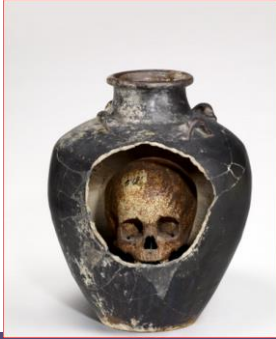
- Wide-spread practice of secondary burial in jars kept at home



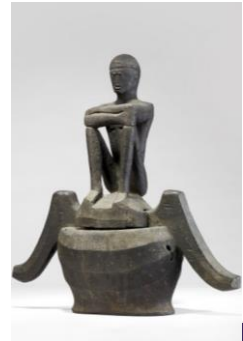
Burial jars: Manunggol and Sarangani, roughly 2nd c. BC



Burial jar for secondary burial of the dead



Rice gods, Cordilleras



2 kinds of spirits:

benevolent

- ancestors, spirit familiars

malevolent

- predatory spirits, creatures of lower mythology



Malevolent spirits: 'aswang' (viscera suckers)



Malevolent spirits: 'mananangal'



Left: Kapre



Right: Tikbalang



“Rocket Kapre”: aswang, tiyanak, duende, 21st c.



Rituals

Daily life consisted of constant negotiations with spirits via rituals

- **rituals** required to insure help of benevolent spirits to ward off acts of malevolent ones carried out by ritual specialists, or **shamans**
- called ***babaylan*** or ***catalonan*** -
- mostly female, or at times men dressed as women

Shamans (Babaylan) Performing curing rituals



Shamans

had themselves been possessed by spirits and subsequently became shamans

acted as mediums to call forth spirits in order to

- cure illnesses,
- cast out spells,
- mourn the dead,
- placate ghosts,
- protect against witches and other evil creatures,
- predict futures & provide guidance in raids, etc.

Contemporary babaylan, early 21stc.



ebuano-Visayan Sinuog leader Tilang Diola.
Photos by Grace Nono



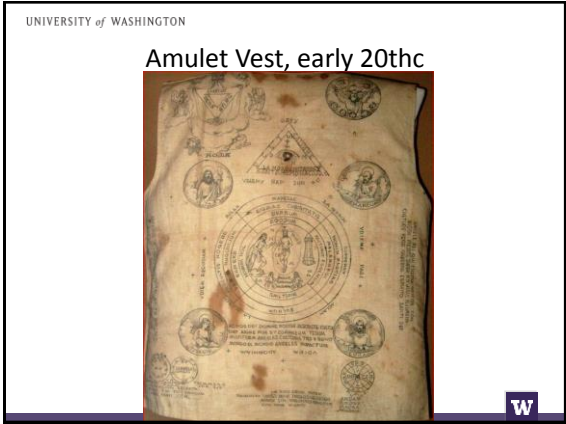
Shaman work

did not require temples, clerical offices, sacred texts

instead, shamans used ritual speech and gestures;

- sacrificial offerings;

Use of **amulets** to bring good fortune and ward off evil designs (“anting-anting”)



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ISLAM IN PRE-COLONIAL PHILIPPINES

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Spread of Islam
compared to rest of the world, Islam arrived late in the southern Philippines

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Spread of Islam

earliest evidence of Islamic conversions in 13thc., mostly in south (Sulu; Cotabato)

- brought by Arab traders, then later Malay missionaries

by 16th, Muslim influences spread to parts of Luzon (especially Manila)

- some datu began to refer to themselves as “sultans” and “rajahs”

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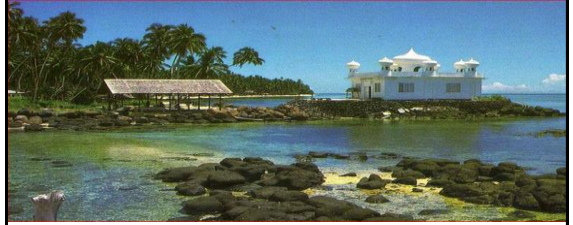
Islam in SE Asia

Significance of Islam:

- i. introduced a radically different way of life based on **monotheism**



Koran in Arabic script

**Temples for worship****Temples for worship**Laag Ta Bai
© www.Traveltabai.com**Changes Islam brought**

Islam introduced highly codified **laws** with divine sanction

orientation to sacred site outside of barangay (**Mecca**)

- importance of foreign language (**Arabic**);
- dietary laws

however, Islamic monotheism never wholly supplanted animistic beliefs

**Sultanates**

- ii. introduced new supra-local model of political organization beyond the barangay called **sultanates** consisting of several barangays under leadership of Sultan

**Sultans in Sulu, Magindanao**

Sulu Sultans, early 20thc



Effects of Islam

allowed for mobilization of larger numbers of people

- and for sustained resistance against Spanish conquest

Hence, Muslim areas never conquered by Spain

- but Spain limited advance of Islam beyond the South, pitting Christianized against Muslim peoples



SUMMARY



Summing up

Pre-colonial societies on the eve of Spanish conquest:

- relatively autonomous societies freed from centralized states and empires

For some upland societies:

- social equality based on sharing prevailed along with non-hierarchical relations



Social Relations

For majority, both upland and lowland: power based on prestige, wealth on number of following

- social relations based on inequality: reciprocal indebtedness and shame
 - Importance of slavery as debt bondage
- hence, social relations: hierarchical as well as fluid



Cultural Practices

Key activities: trading, raiding, feasting to social reproduction

animist beliefs, freed from centralized, monotheistic religions

emergence of Islam in the south by 12thc, but spread limited by Spanish invasion



All of these would radically alter with the imposition of Spanish rule.

How so?

- colonialism imposed a centralizing state structure
- *and* a centralizing religion by way of Catholicism

Effect: re-order social relations and ideas about power

- colonialism introduced a split between the majority who converted and submitted to Spanish rule versus the minority who refused and resisted



End of Lesson 1

Pre-colonial Philippine Society

