# IDENTIFYING SOME INTRUSIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIALS FOUND IN PHILIPPINE **PROTO-HISTORIC SITES\***

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Introduction .- The history of the Philippines prior to the advent of the Spanish colonizers in the 16th century is still imperfectly known. For one thing, detailed historical accounts about the country date only from Spanish contact (Fox 1959:3), and the first actual recorded mention of these islands in Chinese written history (as so far available) was the arrival of an Arab ship at Canton in 982 A.D. with a load of native goods from Ma-i, suggested by Beyer (1948: xii) as Mindoro Island in the central Philippines.

Secondly, the discipline of archaeology is relatively very young in the Philippines and until today it has attracted only a handful of workers, mostly foreign specialists. Beyer (1947:205-206) and Solheim (1952:62, 1953:154) list only two important archaeological investigations carried out before 1926, and these were in the nature of surveys. The first was undertaken by Alfred Marche, a Frenchman, in 1881 and the other by Dr. Carl Guthe, an American, between 1922-24. Extensive archaeological effort was initiated by Beyer in 1926, continuing this effort up to the outbreak of the Second World War. Senility precluded Beyer's plan for post-war field work, and others, like the writer, continued his At present, only three sets of Carbon-14 determinaactivities. tions have so far been obtained for Philippine archaeological sites and all were for the Late Neolithic.1

Thirdly, the culture history of the Filipinos is quite complex. Situated on the eastern periphery of one of the world's cradles of civilization, the Philippines has been the receiver, bearer and mediator of human movements and culture complexes which de-

<sup>\*</sup> This paper was originally presented to the International Conference on Asian Archaeology at New Delhi, India, December 14-21, 1962. The present form has been updated with the latest researches in Philippine Archaeology. <sup>1</sup>When the present paper was prepared for publication, a total of nine organic samples from the provinces of Sorsogon, Masbate, and Palawan had already been dated by means of the C-14 method.

veloped in the Asiatic mainland and the adjacent areas since Ice Age times. In bygone days it has been one of the cultural crossroads of the Pacific (Janse 1946).

The late phases of the Stone Age, in particular, are amply documented in sites all over the habitable areas of the Islands. The present paper, however, will concern itself only with a few classes of diagnostic artifacts encountered in sites within the period ranging from 100 A.D. and the eve of western contact (ca. 15 century), and the last 500 years of which is designated in the Philippines as the Proto-historic period.

Historical Background of the Philippine Proto-historic Period. Beyer and de Veyra (1947:2) has delineated the Philippine story into three broad periods, viz., (1) the Prehistoric (from the unrecorded beginnings to the beginnings of the Christian Era); (2) the Proto-historic and (3) the Historic (from 1521 to the present day). Roughly coterminus with the foregoing, the technological development of the Philippines may also be divided into three stages: the Stone, the Metal, and the Porcelain ages. Beyer (1936:42) classifies all archaeological sites which contain vitrified stoneware or porcelain under the heading "Porcelain Ages." The quantity of export ceramics found in Philippine sites within this period is truly fantastic, testifying to an extensive trade and a long period of almost continuous commercial relationship between this country and the mainland

Fragmentary written sources, augmented by archaeological and ethnological researches, point to Indian, Arab, Indo-Malayan, Indo-Chinese and Chinese influences upon the Philippines during the Proto-historic Period. At about the 1st century A.D. influences from Indonesia generally began to trickle into the Philippines, bringing the art of smelting and forging iron, as well as possibly glass-making, weaving, irrigated rice agriculture, new food plants, the water buffalo, the horse and so forth. Lowland wet-rice agriculture provided a larger food supply and stimulated village life, hence population markedly increased.

From the 7th to the 14th century two great Hinduized empires arose — Sri-Vijaya and then Majapahit — which included the Philippines within their cultural spheres of influences. Sri-Vijaya arose in Sumatra, expanding its influence as far as Formosa and the Malay Peninsula. It was destroyed and replaced by the Javanese Majapahit Empire in the 13th century. There is no historical evidence, however, that these two empires ever directly controlled

the Philippines politically, but their cultural influence, particularly in the realm of mythology language and religion, are evident even today among the Filipinos — lowlander or mountaineer.<sup>2</sup>

Quite active commercial voyages were carried on by Arab traders from about the middle of the 9th century A.D., when after having been forced to abandon their trading posts in South and Central China by a series of uprisings, they somehow continued to acquire Southeast Asian goods and took a new route northward from Malacca Strait via Borneo, the Philippines, and Formosa to southern Japan and Korea. On the return voyage, Chinese ceramics and other products were distributed. Beyer (1948:iv) says that after the middle of the 10th century the Arabs were readmitted in the Chinese ports of Chuan-Chow and Canton and many ships seem to have gone southward from Chuan-chow to the Philippines and Borneo through the Indo-China coast. This activity was carried on to the 12th century.

The Chinese gradually joined the Arabs, increasing their competition until they finally eliminated the latter by about the 13th century. And after the Sung emperors moved south of the Yangtze to Hangchow in 1127 A.D. (the beginning of the period called Southern Sung) they pursued a more active participation in the trade with the southern islands and Southeast Asia. Philippine products bartered to the Chinese include raw cotton, abaca fiber, hardwood, gums, resins, edible nuts, shells, corals, pearls, sponges, rattan, beeswax, placer gold, edible bird's nest, and so forth. In exchange, the Filipinos received bar-iron, ceramics, silk, beads, gongs, bells, and so forth.

Ceramic products from Siam, Annam, and Tonkin began entering the Philippines in the 14th century and by the early 15th century, they comprise from 20 to 40% of the total trade with the Philippines, especially the southern regions. It slackened somewhat afterwards as Islam began penetrating the Islands, although goods continued flowing in small quantities from the mainland countries down to the arrival of the Spaniards.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Francisco (Sri Vijaya and the Philippines: A Review, *Philippine Social Sciences and Humanities Review*, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, pp. 101-102. On the possibility of the derivation of the Philippine visaya or bisaya from the Sanskrit visaya, "sphere, dominion, territory, country, kingdom," Francisco notes "the absence of the Philippines in the list of dependencies internal, Chinese, Sanskrit—of either Sri Vijaya or Majapahit over which they exercised power."

The spread of Islam also forced the Chinese merchants to look for a new route leading to the Pacific side of the Philippines. However, by the time the colonization of the Philippines began in the second half of the 16th century, trade with China continued throughout the western side of the Philippines, while both Chinese and Japanese ships traded largely along the northern and eastern coasts of Luzon. Later on, Spanish laws and regulations restricted these trading activities, thus encouraging "smuggling" in the southern islands where Spanish control was only nominal.

The Problem of Identifying Cultural Materials Introduced into the Philippines. — It is probably true universally that the farther we go back in time, the more difficult and cumbersome it becomes to reconstruct extinct cultures and pinpoint the racial and linguistic affinities of the carriers of these cultures. Nowhere is this more evident than in tropical areas such as the Philippines where preservation is generally poor. Writing, on the other hand, was not introduced till perhaps late proto-historic times, yet this hallmark of civilization is hardly of any major consequence to the present-day scholars, because the late Protohistoric Filipinos (like three groups still using it today) wrote on bamboo, a highly perishable material. Besides, they did not appear to have recorded historical events, trade activities, and so forth.

Many Philippine scholars tend to assume that nuclear areas such as India and China were the major progenitors of the major technological and cultural advances in Asia. This theory is supported by facts, but it is rendered questionable when one interpolates that other peoples in Asia necessarily lagged behind and became mere borrowers because they lacked the capacity to invent or develop anything independently.

We in the Philippines often find associated archaeological materials which do not appear to have been made locally. These are given tentative foreign attributions, pending future determination supported by additional date. For example, Late Neolithic stations have yielded nephrite or "chicken-bone jade" adzes. There is no known source of nephrite in the Islands, hence its probable source (at least the blanks) is traced to the mainland. Nevertheless, it is still valid to hope that somewhere, someday a local source may yet be found.

Some Philippine Finds Probably Originating from India or the Hinduized Regions. — Local proto-historic stations have brought to light green and blue glass bracelets with rounded or bevelled edges, and bead of composition, or of such precious stones as agate, carnelian, and occasionally amethyst, rock crystal, and sapphire (Beyer 1936:32). He believes that these are not Chinese but probably of Indian origin since similar finds were made here and such other places as eastern Java, northern Borneo and Malay Peninsula. There is no clear evidence of glass beads having been manufactured in the Philippines, but if this was possible for glass bracelets, then the probability is that only green and blue ones might have been manufactured locally, for these two colors predominate among those so far collected. Green is derived from iron, and blue from copper, both of which are available locally.

Contacts between the Philippines and India (particularly South India) through the Malay Peninsula and perhaps Oc-eo in the delta of the Mekong River, Indo-China may be seen in the probable connection between the beads of Roman origin excavated in Arikamedu, two miles south of Pondicherry, in the Johore and Kuala Selinsing, Malaya, in Oc-eo, and in the Philippines (Francisco 1960:47). These have been identified in the Philippines as Graeco-Roman beads but Francisco suspects that these were directly brought from the Arikamedu sites, as bead factories were found showing the various stages of manufacture. Consequently, he suggested the term Indo-Roman beads.<sup>3</sup> The Arikamedu finds have been dated between the end of the 1st century B.C. and the 1st century A.D. Allowing for a hundred years for these to reach the Philippines via Malava, the Arikamedutype beads reached the Philippines at least as early as the first half of the 2nd century A.D. (Francisco 1960:401).

Although it is known that at least sixteen different Filipino cultural-linguistic groups were literate in a syllabic form of writing at Spanish contact, only one site has so far yielded the evidence that a system of writing traceable to India and identified to be a modified form of the Pallava Grantha script, had penetrated the Islands in pre-Spanish times. Between 1958 and 1961, archaeologists of the National Museum excavated at Calatagan, Batangas Province more than 1,000 graves accompanied

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Dr. Moreshwar G. Dikshit of the University of Nagpur, who was present when the paper was read at the conference, does not agree with Francisco. He thinks that the Philippine beads, pending personal examination, originally came from Venice.

by cultural materials. dating between the 14th and 15th centu-A significant find is an earthenware vessel (see Plate I) ries with svllabic writings incised around the shoulder, probably in the old Tagalog language.<sup>4</sup>

This system of writing is postulated to have been introduced through Java and other regions where South Indian scripts were The immediate source would probably be in Champa, in use. Borneo, and Java, and perhaps Malaya as well. It appears to have entered the Philippines not earlier than the 10th century A D I shall not here discuss the details involving the historical origins, development, and evolution of the Indian system of writing as it spread in Southeast Asia. Indonesia and the Philippines. For this, I refer you to the painstaking work of Prof. Juan R. Francisco (1960), submitted to the University of Madras (see Bibliography),<sup>5</sup>

Also from one of the 14th-15th century sites at Calatagan. Batangas was recovered a clay figure in bas relief (see Plate II). Francisco (1961:6) identified the object as "a Hari-Hara (Siva-Visnu, which is Hinduistic) figure of either Cambodian or Cham type. But it may turn out to be the Siamese Padmapani, which is Buddhistic, for there appears to be traces of the lotus (*padma*) held by the right hand (pani) with its stem projecting down to the foot of the image." Furthermore, the object appears to have been made in the Philippines.6

Francisco (1961:40) deplores that the meagerness of archaeological finds in relation to Indo-Philippine contacts does not show the real extent of the permeation of Philippine life by the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>Francisco is now preparing a monograph on Philippine Palaeography, which attempts to update the studies made on this field, utilizing the latest

which attempts to update the studies made on this field, utilizing the latest studies in epigraphy and palaeography in SEA. The Calatagan earthenware assumes a significant role in Francisco's studies for it is the 1st archaeolo-gical evidence of writing in the Philippines. <sup>5</sup> In a recent mimeographed paper ("On the Date of the Coming of In-dian influence in the Philippines") read in the International Conference on Asian History at the University of Hongkong, Francisco has set such "date" between 900 and 1100 A.D. on the basis of known early inscriptions in nearby Hinduized regions and between 12th and 14th centuries on the basis of archaeological evidence from Philippine sites. It appears from the fore-roing according to him that the language preceded the artifacts in their going, according to him, that the language preceded the artifacts in their arrival in these Islands and that this arrival coincided with the peak of In-dian culture in the intermediate regions and was on its way to decline in

the face of Islamic intrusions. <sup>6</sup>Francisco ("A Buddhist Image from Karitunan Site, Batangas Pro-vince") Asian Studies special issue I, p. 18, has set his definite identification of the image as "Mahayanistic Buddhist, the Boddhisattva Avalokitesvara in Padmapani form, with Buddha Amitabha represented in the oval nimbus of the image."

Scattered accidental finds before World War II sup-Indian port this statement. A small bronze image more than 3 inches tall and identified as that of Siva was found in 1843 on an island in central Philippines. From a photograph, Francisco (1960:40) found it difficult to describe and identify the characteristic mudras (hand gestures) of the deity because its two arms were badly damaged. The upper right hand is raised holding what seems to be a small *chattra* (umbrella) but which is actually the *nad*ma (lotus). while the lower right is thrust forward. The face is hardly distinguishable: and so is the head which is topped by a headgear, but it is the typical Siva knot gathered and tied in a chignon.<sup>7</sup>

Another image, supposed to be that of Ganesa was found in the same site but this copper object was subsequently lost in a fire which gutted a local museum where it was exhibited. Beyer (1947:28) identifies it from a similar image excavated in Java as Ganesa who was "the patron saint of Gadia Mada, the great prime minister who extended the power of Madiapahit over all Malavsia."<sup>8</sup>

Still another figurine, this time of twenty-one carat gold, came from a river bank in northeastern Mindanao. It appears to be an image of a female deity sitting cross-legged (see Plate III). The Chicago Natural History Museum, which owns it today, labels it as gold image of Bodhisattva of Javanese workmanship and made in the 15th or 16th century. Bever (1947a:301) echoed a Dutch scholar who said that it is a Philippine copy of a Ngandjuk image of the Madiapahit period. Francisco is currently writing a paper on this particular image. He is convinced that it belongs to the Buddhist pantheon.9

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup>Francisco ("On the Date of the Coming of Indian Influence in the Phil-ippines"), p. 7 has some doubts about the image being Sivaite, but rather Buddhist in association. It is a Boddhisattva—a Lokesvara of the Siamese type.

ese type. <sup>8</sup> In 1921, Beyer ("The Philippines Before Magellan", ASIA, XXI, October 1921, p. 864) published a photograph of "a crude Ganesha" which comes from Cebu. In another publication (Beyer-de Veyra, 1947), he included a photograph of the Ganesha Image (Plate 77) from Singhasari, Java, which he identified to be the model of a Ganesha image found in Cebu. It will be noted that these two photographs do not show any similarity or resem-blance as Beyer claims if what he refers to are the same artifacts. [Ed.] <sup>9</sup> The paper referred to finally appeared in *Philippine Studies*, Vol. XI, No. 3 (1963), pp. 390-400. As a Buddhist image, according to the author, it belongs to the Mahayana group and related to the concept of a female Boddhisattva, and at the same time the counterpart of the Hindu goddess (Sakti), as a Tara (or wife of a Buddhist god), which is a peculiar develop-ment of Buddhism in Southeast Asia.

ment of Buddhism in Southeast Asia.

# INTRUSIVE ARCHAEOLOGICAL MATERIALS

Some Philippine Finds of Chinese Origin.—Identifying stonewares, porcelain and associated objects which were traded into the Philippines from the 12th century onward become less difficult. Published works by foreign scholars, many of which have been the products of life-long labor, have been furnishing valuable aid. In a way, however, the benefits are mutually shared, for Philippine studies have been also contributing basic knowledge and corroborating data on Chinese and Southeast Asian export ceramics, particularly as regards finds from stratified sites. Undisturbed burial and habitation sites reveal unmistakably the sequential and orderly influx of these wares.

The traditional method of relating Chinese potteries to specific dynasties, and in some cases to a specific emperor, has simplified identification. Thus, in the Philippines, ceramic pieces and sherds attributable to Chinese kilns are generally recognizable at casual examination and begin from the Late Tang and Northern Sung (about the 10th century through Southern Sung (1127-1279), Yuan (1280-1348), Ming (1368-1644) and Ching dynasties (1644-1912). Proliferation of finds begins with the Southern Sung and this ties up with stepped-up trading activities by the Chinese after 1127 A.D. The trade potteries of each dynasty, except the Yuan which appears to be transitional, have certain characteristics which identify them as Sung, Ming, and so forth. There are pieces, called by Beyer as "Intermediate Wares" which cannot be assigned to any particular dynasty.

Potteries painted with cobalt blue under the glaze did not appear at least in significant amount until the Yuan period, and later became characteristic of many Ming wares. Blue-and-whites may belong to the early or later group by the type of footrim, manner in which the base is finished, glaze, the style of the underglaze painting, and the cobalt blue employed. Except for a few examples, the early Ming potters seem to make little attempt to finish the base. The glaze drips unevenly over the footrim, sand and other particles adhere to the foot rim, and the base is often unevenly colored by iron in the body which burns red in the unglazed potions. Moreover,footrims of early Ming wares are sharp, undercut and the outer edge is bevelled (see Plate IV).

The painting is done with a free stroke, the point at which the stroke was begun having a thicker, thus darker blue. Spots of blue often protrude through the glaze and hence become discolored; in later periods, designs were outlined and wash-

ed as in Late Ming and Ching wares. In the earliest Ming wares, the blue tends to run and has a deep hue, purplish-blue in color. The glaze, on the other hand, is commonly full of minute bubbles which, in turn, gives a misty quality to the underglaze design that is quite unlike the cold, almost mechanical, drawings of the Late Ming and Ching periods. Plates, bowls, and jarlets predominate, and the center designs include mythical animals, rocks with peonies, leaves and flowers, and the Chinese lion, and so forth.

There is a class of ware found only in sites between 1350 and 1450 called "hole-bottom" as it lacks a footrim (see Plate V). These are predominantly blue-and-whites and one of the true export wares. This class has so far been found in the Philippines, Borneo, Celebes, Formosa, Okinawa. It is not known in Sumatra, Japan and only one sherd has been found in Malaya.

Single-color glazes or monochromes almost wholly comprise the Chinese cultural materials in Philippine 12th to 14th century sites. These are Sung and Yuan wares and belong to the following categories:

(1) Grey stoneware, usually green or brown glazed and include jars, plates, ewers, jarlets, and so forth;

(2) Fine-grained grey porcellanous ware, usually emitting a clear bell-like ring on percussion and glazed grey, green, greenish-brown, and include bowls, saucers, jars, and so forth with incised or impressed designs;

(3) White or cream-colored wares with impressed or incised designs;

(4) Thick-glazed celadon or olive green wares which include plates, jarlets, vases, incense burners, and so forth.

The monochromes, associated with 15th and 16th century blueand-white Ming wares, are more glassy and coarser, bubbled type of glaze in contrast with the softer and more opaque coverings of the Sung and Yuan wares. The 14th-15th century sites show that the blue-and-white outnumber the monochromes, showing the increasing replacement of the Sung and Yuan monochromes.

Concluding Statements.—Controversies have been raging in the Philippines the past forty years or so regarding the attribution of scattered archaeological finds and some surviving beliefs and practices in the Philippines which are diagnostically Indian.

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Did India influence the Philippines directly, indirectly, or both? If so, either way, how deep has been the permeation? Increasing number of students agree that Indo-Philippine pre-Spanish contacts have always been coursed through the intervening Hinduized regions, such as Southeast Asia and Indonesia, which are very close to the Philippines.

Of the ceramic wares identified to have come from Indo-China (Plate VI) and Siam (Plate VII) the writer will not discuss here, owing to lack of time and the many controversial points still to be ironed out. The so-called Sawankhalok wares from the old site of Sawankhalok, Siam, are, however, now well known on account of their characteristic forms and shapes, glaze, and the kind of clay used which is stoneware (see Plate VI). Since these wares were said to be manufactured between 1350 and 1464, their presence in an archaeological site provides a significant key in dating and identifying the associated materials.

An association such as this has helped ceramic scholars and fanciers enormously, particularly in regards to the early Ming trade wares. In England and continental Europe, for example, the early Ming porcelains (14th-15th centuries) have been the least known according to Robb (1930), because the Sung and Yuan custom of enclosing porcelian and stoneware in graves seems to have been discontinued in the early Ming dynasty; and also, because European traders did not become appreciably active until middle-Ming (1450-1556) and late-Ming (1567-1644) times. Therefore, the wares between these two historical events are scarce both in China and Europe but fortunately numerous in the Philippines and perhaps the neighboring areas, in habitation and burial sites. In fact, the custom of jar-burial, using both local and imported iars and other wares, continued well into the 20th century among a few Philippine indigenous groups.

And finally, the great variety of ceramics produced at Sawankhalok have hitherto been known chiefly from fragments and wasters found around the original kilns, together with certain undated specimens from Borneo and elsewhere. Philippine sites not only brought to light datable fragments from stratified sites but hundreds of perfect or near-perfect whole specimens.

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Plate I. Filipino earthenware vessel with incised inscriptions (14th-15th century). Talisay Site, Calatagan, Batangas.



Plate II. Padmapani.



Plate III. Agusan Image.



Plate IV. Base of an early Ming Blue-and-White plate. Note sand particles adhering to the footrim. Calatagan, Batangas.



Plate V. Base of an early Ming Blue-and-White hole-bottom saucer. Talisay Site, Calatagan, Batangas.



Plate VI. Annamese Blue-and-White Bowl (15th century). Calatagan, Batangas.



Plate VII. Sawankhalok Cover-Bowls (1350-1464). Calatagan, Batangas.