

An Ethnography of Ibanag Warfare and Weaponry Based on Spanish Colonial Records

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ABSTRACT

The Ibanag of Cagayan Valley in Luzon are among the many lowland-dwelling ethnic groups in the Philippines who were heavily acculturated during the Spanish period, adopting foreign customs, religion, and material culture. As such, many native Ibanag practices and technology went extinct and became forgotten in the modern era such as weaving, goldworking, headhunting, and the forging of weaponry. However, through the pioneering effort of historian William H. Scott, as seen in his work, *Barangay*, a general glimpse of Ibanag pre-colonial culture and society is now accessible. However, this ethnography on the Ibanag is largely expandable, serving as a foundation for the continued reintroduction and visualization of specific aspects of lost Ibanag culture, such as the conduct of warfare.


It is then the goal of this paper to broaden what Scott had depicted, particularly about Ibanag warfare and weaponry in a separate ethnography, to provide an extensive portrayal of related native practices, concepts, materials, and worldviews inherent among the Ibanag that became obsolete due to adoption of Western culture and religion.

The study involved perusing references used by Scott such as Jose Bugarin's *Diccionario Ybanag-Español*, Diego Aduarte's *Historia de la Provincia del Sancto Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores*, and the *Boxer Codex*. Information from these primary sources were melded and triangulated with various supplemental texts, along with comparisons to similar documented customs, extant material culture, and terminologies present in proximate ethno-linguistic groups. This, along with analyses and proposals on martial concepts were necessary in the composition of the ethnographic narrative.

The paper was limited to employing key references that are only available to the researchers, all of which are Spanish colonial period texts. As such, the study itself, like Scott's ethnography on the pre-colonial Ibanag, is expandable until other potentially significant sources can be accessed.

Keywords: *Ibanag, warfare, weaponry, pre-colonial, culture*

Introduction

f all the periods in the Philippines' history as a nation, one of the so-called eras that usually breeds much fascination, is ironically, the period where the concept of nationhood is non-existent. The cultural landscape of the Philippine archipelago during the pre-colonial era tends to appear vague and shrouded in mystery in comparison to the succeeding colonial eras. This confound especially applies in the study of history that focuses on the many ethnic groups of the lowlands who were conquered and acculturated in the early decades of the Spanish Period. The Ibanag people of Cagayan Valley in Luzon are one such people -- many of their native customs, intangible and material culture were lost. These include clothing, textiles, jewelry, tools, original dances, and chants, all of which were largely replaced or heavily influenced by Spanish culture and Christianity over the course of centuries. Nevertheless, pieces of information on pre-colonial Ibanag culture do survive in a handful of documents, putting researchers eager to learn about their uncolonized past on a rigid path, but still fortunately providing a solid starting point and foundation.

Whether or not the absence of widespread local documentation prior to the arrival of the Spaniards was solely due to oral tradition being the primary mode of "record keeping", or native records were destroyed by the invaders as some propose, the fact is that there are currently very few materials that serve as primary sources for pre-colonial Philippine culture in general. Moreover, most of these narratives were produced by foreigners, mainly the Spaniards themselves and the Chinese, and require careful interpretation, analysis, and triangulation or cross-checking with other materials. Some of these include documents that historian William H. Scott had relied on, in writing his pioneering compilation of the 16th Century Philippine culture, from south to north, in one historical ethnography, which includes the Ibanag people. In his

work, Barangay¹, one may notice the detailed descriptions that reflect a similar style observable in studies made by world-renowned anthropologists such as Franz Boas. This ethnographic approach entailed funneling in as many aspects of a people's way of life, from physical appearance and material culture to intangible customs, worldviews, and geography in one narrative, as observable in Scott's chapter on the Bisaya people². In comparison, one will also notice that the chapters on the peoples of Luzon and Mindanao were written with less detail, except perhaps the section on the Tagalog people³. As regards northern Luzon, the section on the Ibanag is also not as detailed⁴, while other ethnic groups were not included, such as the Iloko and the Ivatan. Nevertheless, as regards the section on the Ibanag, the published pre-colonial ethnography on the said ethnic group is the first of its kind, and thus, a very significant foundation for similar but more wide-ranging research projects in the future.

This brief paper is therefore, one such attempt to "continue" where Scott left off, regarding the presentation of what ancient native Ibanag culture and society might have looked like. Nonetheless, the existing wealth of sources available to the historian did not actually mean reaching great depths in eliciting information from his pool of sources. His historical ethnography on the Ibanag people is one such example – what Scott included in Barangay seems to be just the tip of the iceberg. On the other hand, this paper presents a more detailed and expanded description on pre-colonial Ibanag culture that focuses on warfare and weaponry, while using the same primary sources employed by Scott, namely the *Diccionario Ybanag-Español* (Ibanag-Spanish Dictionary), authored by the Dominican missionary to Cagayan Valley Fr. Jose Bugarin sometime in the 1600s and published in 1854, and the *Historia de la Provincia del Sancto Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores* (History of the Province of the Holy Rosary of the Dominican Order) published by Fr. Diego Aduarte, another Dominican, in 1640. A third key source is the Boxer Codex, which was written earlier – approximately before the turn of the 17th Century or around twenty years after the arrival of the Spaniards in Cagayan during the early 1570s. Both Aduarte's relation and the Codex contain descriptive accounts on the early people of Cagayan. Aduarte, following the writing of the Codex, used the name Nueva Segovia in referring to the province that served as the setting of his narrative. This coincides with the development of the province's capital in present day Lallo, which is within original Ibanag territory in northern Cagayan. Specific

¹ Scott, William H. *Barangay: Sixteenth Century Philippine Culture and Society*. Quezon City (ADMU Press, 1994): 17–271.

² Scott, *Barangay*, 17–160.

³ Scott, *Barangay*, 161–242.

⁴ Scott, *Barangay*, 263–271.

old Ibanag settlements where some of Aduarte's documentation and narratives took place were the coastal settlements of Pata and Masi, which are now in modern day Claveria and Pamplona respectively, as well as Abulug and Camalaniugan.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this paper is to provide an ethnography on the Ibanag people, focusing on pre-colonial warfare and weaponry.

Specifically, the paper attempts to describe native practices, beliefs, worldviews, and technology related to the conduct of warfare, while also including what were already mentioned by Scott. It also presents how and why the Ibanag people conducted raids and identifies and describes the weapons and potential implements they used, in such practices.

At the same time, the paper aims to provide analyses and proposals, on how martial concepts would have been applied, and how such concepts were related with other aspects of culture and way of life.

Lastly, this article presents the connection between Ibanag material culture in the pre-colonial era, to that of the present period, in terms of surviving materials and linguistic terminology, for the purpose of portraying how such technologies evolved.

Significance of the Study

As was mentioned, the Ibanag, as a lowland people, were quickly acculturated through Spanish influence, largely resulting in the permanent loss of most pre-colonial customs and material culture. This contrasts with the neighboring highland ethnic groups who managed to keep most of their pre-colonial technology and culture well into the 20th Century. Bringing the Ibanag people's pre-colonial past to light can be a basis for future comparative research on the historical diffusion of native material and intangible culture, as well as language, in the Philippines and nearby regions, by looking into similarities between and among different culturally related ethnic groups, ultimately serving as a potential foundation for studies on the peopling of the islands.

More importantly, putting to the forefront the Ibanag people's largely unexplored pre-colonial culture, may contribute to the strengthening of the ethnic identity of the present generations, by publicizing and highlighting the uniqueness of their ancient customs and traditions. Warfare and weaponry are just one of many aspects of pre-colonial Ibanag culture; numerous other cultural facets await study and publication.

Theoretical Framework

This paper, with its largely descriptive narrative, stems from the concept of acculturation. Acculturation is usually defined as a process in which an individual or group adopts a new or foreign culture when prolonged contact between the former and another group is established. Several models and ideas have been proposed from numerous studies such as the identification of its varying levels or types. For example, Reynolds describes two types of acculturation namely, balanced and unbalanced, where on one hand, the former involves an equal exchange of cultures between different groups, while the latter on the other hand, involves only one group adopting the culture of another. An example of an unbalanced acculturation would be colonialism, such as the Ibanag experience under Spanish conquest. Another type of acculturation is assimilation, wherein a dominant culture absorbs and incorporates another culture, often to the point of the latter's extinction⁵. Winthrop explains that a dominant group between the interacting sides within the process of acculturation carries out the cultural change of a particular group⁶.

These definitions and descriptions of acculturation on the existence of dominant and subordinate cultures reflect the relationship between the colonized Ibanag people and the colonizing Spanish Empire, where the latter became the dominant culture. Ngo, in studying acculturation of immigrants in foreign societies, relates that the dominant culture makes use of allocative and authoritative resources, to exercise power over others, to systematically devalue attributions and contributions of those considered inferior⁷. In some instances, according to Bourhis, et al., this is achieved through the implementation of

⁵ Reynolds, Hubert. "Concepts of Acculturation," In *Acculturation in the Philippines: Essays on Changing Societies; a selection of papers presented at the Baguio Religious Acculturation conferences from 1958-1968*. (New Day Publishers, 1971).

⁶ Winthrop, Robert. *Dictionary of Concepts in Cultural Anthropology* (New York: Greenwood, 1991).

⁷ Ngo, Van Hieu. "A Critical Examination of Acculturation Theories," *ResearchGate* (2008): 1, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/258031607_A_Critical_Examination_of_Acculturation_Theories_httpwww1uwindsorcacriticalsocialworka-critical-examination-of-acculturation-theories/stats.

mandatory policies from governments that largely represent dominant cultures⁸. This characteristic of exercising dominance reflects how Western powers during the age of colonialism, subjugated the peoples within the territories they conquered, the latter of whom, are often considered less or uncivilized, thus, also justifies perspectives akin to the idea of the White Man's burden⁹. In addition, the status quo of the dominant culture within the process of acculturation, is maintained through instruments such as normalization of dominant values and preferences and stopping or lessening of activities of subordinate groups¹⁰. For the Spanish colonization of the Philippines, the missionary activities of the Roman Catholic priests and the subsequent religious conversion of the natives, seemed to have played a central role in the normalization of western customs and worldviews in Cagayan, as well as the rest of the Philippines. Spanish missionaries, like Aduarte himself, on their part, saw native Ibanag customs such as the conduct of warfare and reverence to the anitos, as works of the devil and thus, needed rectifying for the natives to attain salvation in the context of faith¹¹. The result is the obvious elimination of head hunting, sacrificing of slaves, and other Cagayan traditions for example that involved the killing of people -- practices that conflict with the teachings of Christianity. With the phasing out of Ibanag martial practices, other related customs that were derived from warfare, most probably also followed suit. Specifically, tattoos and social ranks or standing acquired from martial prowess have lost their meaning, and native weapons of war became obsolete. This is apart from the introduction of foreign technology, customs, and language in general, that also replaced or have become syncretized with native counterparts. Those that were replaced, which are now unknown by many today, are worthy of reintroduction, forming an aspect of historical writing, such as this article, as well as recognition and giving value to ethnic heritage.

⁸ Bourhis, Richard, et al. "Towards an interactive acculturation model: A social psychological approach," *International Journal of Psychology* 32 (1997): 369 -386, <https://doi.org/10.1080/002075997400629>.

⁹ Hitchens, Christopher. *Blood, Class, and Empire: The Enduring Anglo-American Relationship* (Atlantic Books, 2013) 63-64. PDF version.

¹⁰ Ngo, *Acculturation Theories*, 1.

¹¹ Aduarte, Diego de, "Historia de la Provincia del Sancto Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores," in *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898 Vol. XXX*, ed. Emma Blair and James Robertson (The Arthur H. Clark Company, Cleveland, Ohio, 1905), 286. HTML version. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/39054/39054-h/39054-h.htm>

Methodology

Ethnography is a central aspect of cultural anthropology, which is one of the four subfields of anthropology in general. Apart from anthropology, ethnography is also applied and utilized in overlapping and related social sciences such as linguistics, sociology, psychology, and historical studies, among others. Essentially, it is the documentation of the culture of a group of people according to either or both of the researcher and the subject people's perspective. As a form of inquiry, ethnography usually employs the data collection method or technique, particularly participant observation, or immersion with the subject group, for the researcher to understand the cultural phenomenon being exhibited within the former. However, for this study, which involves inquiry into historical customs and technology, the use of the said traditional ethnographic methods is non-applicable. Instead, data collection involved the conduct of informal interviews, with blade experts and informants from Cagayan and Isabela provinces and use of inherent ethnic knowledge as reference, but mainly perusal and analysis of texts that can be categorized into three types.

Foremost of the three categories of sources identified are the main historical references such as Bugarin's and Aduarte's works and the Boxer Codex. The narratives and descriptions in the key sources were supported by supplemental data from secondary documents such as the Tesauro Hispano-Cagayan, chronicler Antonio de Morga's narratives, Anthropologist F. Landa Jocano's description of uncolonized ethnic communities, including Scott's papers on indigenous societies, among others. The third category of sources, which were equally supportive to the study, includes early 20th Century photographs and ethnographies of neighboring culturally similar ethnic groups, who were largely uncolonized or unacculturated during the Spanish Era, as well as sample extant technology and materials from these closely related groups. Some of the said photographs depicting such groups as the Kalinga, Isnag, Bontok, and Ifugao were taken by Dean C. Worcester during the early years of the American period¹². The writing of ethnographies, in its usual sense, is often holistic, usually encompassing many aspects of culture and often including descriptions of the study's setting in terms of geography, as well as a history of the subject people. However, for the purposes of this paper, as well as considering publication limitations, the writing of an ethnography was largely historical in approach and focused on a specific aspect of culture of the Ibanag people, and

¹² Worcester, Dean C. "*The Non-Christian Tribes Of Northern Luzon*," *The Philippine Journal Of Science*, Vol. 1, No. 8, (1906): 791–908.

that is martial practices and related material culture. Furthermore, since this study describes cultural phenomenon that existed only in the past, the resulting analysis and interpretation purely reflects the researchers' perspectives.

Meanwhile, the historical method involves the employment of techniques and procedures used by historians, in studying and writing history. Furthermore, Primary and secondary texts, along with artifacts may be synthesized after being properly identified and evaluated for a historian to write a competent historical narrative. Consequently, in the application of the historical method for this research, the melding of the said three different types of sources of information, formed a competent foundation for a mediating interpretation, analysis, and triangulation necessary for the composition of an extensive ethnographic description of pre-colonial Ibanag warfare and weaponry. Archaic Ibanag terminologies and accounts of practices related to warfare and weaponry, elicited through the perusal of the primary texts were found to conform to information from supporting sources. For example, considering migration models to the Philippines such as the Out-of-Taiwan Model of the origin of the Austronesian-speaking peoples, can establish that Ibanag culture and those of adjacent ethno-linguistic groups share a common origin¹³, thus, the coinciding analogous similarities between colonial textual description from the key texts and observable materials from the supporting sources.

Though actual sources dating to the pre-colonial period are lacking, Bugarin's dictionary, Aduarte's accounts, and the Boxer Codex are already significant references even though these were already written in the early decades of Spanish colonization in Cagayan. The fact that these texts are themselves ethnographic and stand as evidence of the first known foreigners eliciting and recording information specifically on the Ibanag from an etic perspective, this directly implies that the concepts documented such as martial practices and weaponry, are pre-colonial in origin. In addition, linguistic cognates, customs, and materials from adjacent ethnic groups that were able to resist acculturation during the colonial period, support this probability.

¹³ Peralta, Jesus T. "In Focus: The Austronesian Expansion- a Reaction to "Paths of Origin," *National Commission for Culture and the Arts* (2011): <https://ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/in-focus/the-austronesian-expansion-a-reaction-to-paths-of-origin/>

The Ibanag people

The Ibanag (literally, “people living along the river”) are an Austronesian ethno-linguistic group native to the Cagayan Valley in Northern Luzon. They number around 400,000 according to the latest census of the Philippine Statistics Authority involving ethnicity¹⁴. Their ethnogenesis seems to predate the colonial period as suggested by historical narratives. According to colonial texts, their original homeland prior and during the start of colonization was in northern Cagayan province and included riverside areas in the present towns of Lallo, Camalaniugan, and Aparri, with expanded coastal territories from Abulug to Pamplona and Claveria, as well as inland but still likely riverine settlements within Gattaran to Amulung¹⁵. The riverine setting of these settlements or *ili* in Ibanag, refer to their proximity to the Rio Grande de Cagayan, the main artery of the valley’s river system. When the Spaniards led by Juan de Salcedo landed in Cagayan via Ilocos during the 1570s, the Ibanag were the first to be encountered, and as such, the Ibanag language was chosen by the missionaries as their medium of evangelization for the entire valley’s numerous other native ethnic groups¹⁶.

After Salcedo’s arrival, the term “Cagayanes” was coined, referring to the inhabitants of Cagayan – the same name used in the Boxer Codex’s ethnographic narrative¹⁷. The term itself, upon initial inspection, seems to be a general label that might include other non-Negrito native groups such as the Itawit, Irraya, or Gaddang. Blumentritt, using Spanish texts, presented the term as both referring specifically to the Ibanag people, as well as to all ethnicities within the colonial province of Cagayan¹⁸. Still, regarding the exclusivity of the term to the Ibanag, it could also be a potential misunderstanding, resulting from the other Cagayan Valley groups being able to speak Ibanag fluently, after the language became the lingua franca. Nevertheless, there is merit in the potentiality that the Cagayanes initially included only the Ibanag, as the name Cagayan, which was given by the conquistadors, could have referred only at first to the Ibanag

¹⁴ National Statistics Office. *2010 Census of Population and Housing*. National Statistics Office: Manila, 2010), 99.

¹⁵ Keesing, Felix. M. *The Ethnohistory of Northern Luzon* (Stanford University Press, 1962), 182 – 238.

¹⁶ Salgado, Pedro. *Cagayan Valley and Eastern Cordillera 1581 – 1898. Vol. 1.* (Rex Publishing. Quezon City, 2002), 9.

¹⁷ Donoso, Isaac. et al. *Boxer Codex: A Modern Spanish Transcription and English Translation of 16th-Century Exploration Accounts of East and Southeast Asia and the Pacific* (Vibal Foundation, 2016), Word version, 6.

¹⁸ Blumentritt, F. and Mason, O. *List of the native tribes of the Philippines and of the languages spoken by them* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901) PDF version, 534.

homeland – the northernmost area of the valley first conquered by the Spaniards. This area includes in what is now the town of Buguey, an estuary, which according to Ibanag historian Vicente S. Nepomuceno's relation of Spanish friar Fr. Francisco Rojano's account, was called Cagayan and was possibly the etymological origin of the provincial namesake¹⁹. This northernmost area that includes the heart of the Ibanag country is usually unnamed in maps such as those produced by Keesing from historical texts when comparing it to the other large ancient divisions of the valley to its south such as greater "Malagueg", "La Yrraya", Paniki, and Tuy²⁰. Later, in place of the name Cagayanes, it is possible that the Spaniards came to adopt the specific names of the native ethnic groups – "Ybanaques", "Ytaves", "Yrrayas", "Gaddanes", etc. to distinguish them from each other, when more unique groups were encountered during the expansion of the borders of the colonial province inland.

Throughout the colonial period, the Ibanag have expanded outside northern Cagayan and are now also presently concentrated in Tuguegarao, Solana, and Peñablanca in southern Cagayan, as well as most of northern Isabela, which includes the municipalities of Santa Maria, San Pablo, Cabagan, Tumauni, Ilagan, and nearby towns.

The Ibanag language, according to linguistic classification, belongs to the North Luzon language branch, together with Iloko and the Cordillera languages like Ifugao, Bontok, and Kalinga (a dialect cluster), and falls under the larger Austronesian language family. However, Ibanag is grouped together with Itawit, Isnag, Gaddang, Ga'dang, Yogad, Atta, and Malaueg in their own sub-branch in North Luzon called the Cagayan Valley languages.²¹

¹⁹ Nepomuceno, *Historia*, 10.

²⁰ Keesing, *Ethno-history*, 184 – 268.

²¹ Robinson, Laura and Lobel, J. "The Northeastern Luzon Subgroup of Philippine Languages." *Oceanic Linguistics* 52.1 (2013): 125–168.

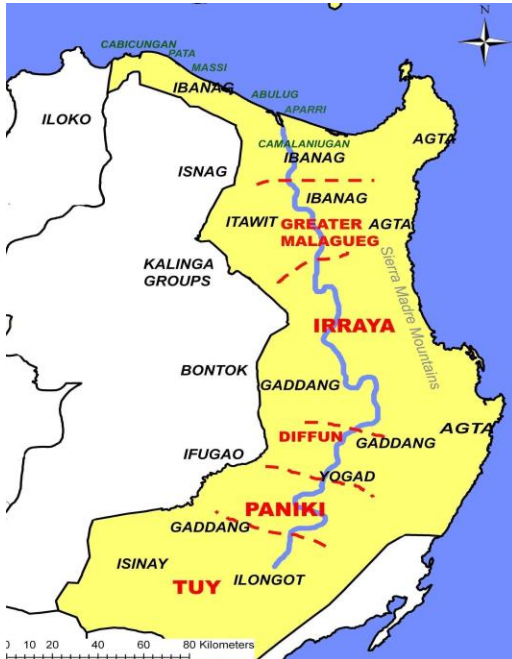


PHOTO 1:

The map shows the location of the Ibanag people at the advent of Spanish colonization. Also shown are the location of other ethnic groups (black). In red are the obsolete territories or divisions of the Cagayan Valley's lowlands. Core Ibanag territory is at the Cagayan River's mouth, which includes Camalaniugan and Aparri. According to Anthropologist Felix M. Keesing, extensions of the Ibanag territory are the northwestern coasts until the settlement of Cabicungan, as well as the greater Malagueg area. The yellow area corresponds to the modern administrative area of the Cagayan Valley Region, otherwise known as Region II.

Social classes: The Mengal

Before proceeding to the main topic, it is important to understand why the culture of warfare among the Ibanag people existed, and why it is intertwined with the nature of their social strata during the pre-colonial period – particularly the 16th Century when the Spaniards first encountered them. On one hand, Scott, in a separate work, categorized unhispanized Philippine society into four types, namely classless societies, warrior societies, petty plutocracies, and principalities²². On the other hand, Filipino anthropologist F. Landa Jocano identified five types of indigenous Philippine societies consisting of the pisan, puro, ili, magani, and banwa²³. The Ibanag people in the 1500s, though scattered in various settlements, lived in a warrior society, or what Jocano termed as a “magani type” community or “district”, much like adjacent ethnic groups like the Kalinga groups, Isneg, etc. This can be inferred from the existence of the *mengal* or a respected warrior class, which is the north Luzon equivalent of the Mindanao *bagani*. The Ibanag term *mengal* comes from the root word *ingal*, or bravery²⁴, one of the obvious default or core attributes of a warrior or soldier.

²² Scott, William H. “Class Structure in the Unhispanized Philippines”. *Philippine Studies*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (1979): 137–159.

²³ Jocano, F. Landa. *Filipino Indigenous Ethnic Communities: Patterns, Variations, and Typologies* (Punlad Research House, 1998), 129.

²⁴ Bugarin, Jose, Rodriguez, R. *Diccionario Ibanag-Espanol*. (Ympr. de los Amigos del Pais, 1854) PDF version, 130.

As such, the term *mengal* literally means “brave”. Linguistic cognates in neighboring and proximate Northern Luzon ethnic groups include *maingor* or *mingor*²⁵ among the Kalinga groups, and *maingel* among the Iloko. The term *mengal* itself is inherent among ethnic groups that are more linguistically related to the Ibanag like the Itawit, Gaddang, Yogad, and Isnag.

In Ibanag society, aside from the *mengal*, there are other social ranks or statuses. From historical texts, we can derive and propose five social classes in Ibanag society: the *kammaranan*, the *mengal*, the *kailian*, the *kobung* and *mangallu*, and the *aripan*.

The *kammaranan* seem to be a class or group of individuals, who may be equated to nobles or elders²⁶. It is ambiguous if a hierarchy exists between the *kammaranan* and the *mengal*, or if they were perceived and treated as co-equals, as prowess or bravery in battle were always the foremost factors in determining one’s standing in society. Specifically, as Aduarte described, those who have killed in times of war were highly honored and were given the privilege of using certain exclusive marks of honor in recognition of such accomplishments²⁷. It may be possible that the *kammaranan* were composed of retired warriors, hence, their esteem through their status as martial veterans or their accumulated wealth or war spoils, or through their role as counselors – the latter of which many Ibanag today usually associate the term *kammaranan* with. These descriptions coincide with that of Jocano regarding a *magani* type society, where the ruling warrior class is assisted by a council of elders²⁸, as well as the Boxer Codex’s narrative that Cagayan communities were ruled by respected leaders who were experienced warriors²⁹. It is also highly probable that from these two high social ranks, the settlement leaders or decision-makers called *urayan*³⁰ and other significant social roles such as being judges or *minammanunu*³¹, or emissaries or *kagun*³², were derived. In other words, leadership among the pre-

²⁵ Lawless, Robert. “Hunting and Fishing among the Southern Kalinga,” *Asian Studies* (1973): 90.

²⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 69.

²⁷ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 295.

²⁸ Jocano, *Ethnic Communities*, 129.

²⁹ Donoso, Boxer Codex, 7.

³⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 278.

³¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 194.

³² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 64.

colonial Ibanag was not determined by blood lineage, but still by prowess in warfare or *abbabaka*³³, and raids or *ngayaw*³⁴.

While the kammaranan were highly esteemed, it is apparent that the mengal never fell short with regard to being treated with respect. Warriors vied for this esteem through raids and counterattacks, and as Scott relayed, the mengal who was seen as the fiercest, strongest, and most valiant in battle, was branded and recognized as the *patul*³⁵. The term survives in the present Ibanag vocabulary and now refers to a “king” in the Western sense. Jocano mentioned that a distinguished warrior leader may extend his influence over other settlements, by requesting tribute in exchange for protection³⁶, coinciding with Spanish accounts of the Ibanag chieftain named Siriban in the 1590s who dominated numerous settlements³⁷.

As for the other social ranks or statuses, the kailian (from the root word, ili) were the regular citizens³⁸, who probably practiced different trades and livelihoods, who were property owners, and were self-sustaining. The kobung and mangallu may be treated as co-equals with regard to their social function, which was to provide service or labor for other people. The difference between the two is that the kobung were servants, either relatives or otherwise, who lived within the household they served³⁹, while the mangallu were those who worked for others in exchange for food⁴⁰. The details on the degree of material possessions or perception of esteem for these two labels or jobs are obscure. However, both were free people in contrast to the aripan. The aripan were literally slaves⁴¹, and were sometimes buried in funerals alongside the mengal whom they served⁴². Slaves were also traded off or bought and can be killed as a consolatory act when their owners were mourning a dead relative.⁴³

Whether these social classes, save for the nobility, are completely hereditary or otherwise, is unclear. Nonetheless, one was able to move up the ranks either

³³ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 2.

³⁴ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 179.

³⁵ Scott, *Barangay*, 268.

³⁶ Jocano, *Ethnic Communities*, 141.

³⁷ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 308.

³⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 126.

³⁹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 74.

⁴⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 20.

⁴¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 35.

⁴² Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 293.

⁴³ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 295.

through martial skill for males, or marriage for females⁴⁴ – what Jocano referred to as social mobility in magani societies⁴⁵. This implies that expeditions and defenses were participated not only by the mengal class, but commoners as well, even though the mengals led the attack. As for women, becoming a wife of a warrior also meant a rise in social status. Wives of kammaranan and mengal wore distinguishing garments such as the red *gaddun* overskirts that set them apart from other women⁴⁶. This was besides the main mark of status for both upper-class males and females – tattoos, which will be presented in the succeeding sections. Social mobility also applied to material wealth, particularly for the kobung or mangallu, as implied by the term *pangilabbu*⁴⁷ or helping one get out of poverty. As for the aripan, they only moved up the ladder once they were given their freedom, as in the term, *pakailian* or to consider a former slave a fellow member of the ili⁴⁸.

A Culture of Warfare

Various historical documents written by the Spaniards reflect the ferocity of the Ibanag mengal, from descriptions of material and intangible culture related to warfare, to the list of countless uprisings that made the people of Cagayan Valley, one of the most difficult among the Filipinos to fully conquer and pacify. Texts also mention that the warriors of Cagayan were considered as more, if not the most valiant and warlike of the conquered native peoples⁴⁹; Fr. Pedro Salgado quoted several colonial texts that relate the propensity of Cagayan peoples to wage war and kill, and that victims included many missionaries⁵⁰. Even Spanish soldiers were said to have not ventured out of their forts or pueblos without being armed and in numbers⁵¹. This ferocity that was evident in the pre-colonial Ibanag was inculcated into warrior's sons, by taking them to observe in and be familiarized with raids in other settlements. Boys as young as eight years old were said to have been groomed at such an early age by being given spears, shields, and bows and arrows to play with.⁵²

⁴⁴ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 297.

⁴⁵ Jocano, *Ethnic Communities*, 137.

⁴⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 110.

⁴⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 208.

⁴⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 126.

⁴⁹ Morga, Antonio de. "Report of Conditions in the Philippines". 1598. In *The Philippine Islands, 1493-1898, Vol. X*, eds. Emma Blair and James Robertson (Cleveland: A. H. Clark, 1903-07), 208. HTML version. <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/14266/14266-h/14266-h.htm>

⁵⁰ Salgado, *Cagayan Valley*, 27-28.

⁵¹ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 299.

⁵² Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 9.

Ngayaw, the Ibanag term for raiding, has linguistic cognates in neighboring ethnic groups and other Austronesian groups that have a culture of head taking and raiding – *kayaw* among the Kalinga groups⁵³, *mangayaw* among the Ifugao⁵⁴, *mangaw* among the Sambal⁵⁵, *ngayaw* among the Pangasinan⁵⁶, *mengayau* among the Mualang Dayak of Borneo⁵⁷, *mgaya* among the Truku⁵⁸, and *mgaga* among the Atayal of Taiwan⁵⁹. In contrast, *mangayaw* raids among the Bisaya did not necessarily involve the taking of heads and was done by sea⁶⁰ – an activity that seems to be absent in Ibanag culture, along with other forms of naval martial engagement, even though the Ibanag are also coastal boating people. Ngayaw raids and wars in general among the Ibanag, also resulted in head-taking as implied by the Boxer Codex⁶¹.

Bakal was the general term for conflict or fighting among the Ibanag and was also extended even to debates or arguments⁶². Warring seems to have been caused by several reasons, such as taking revenge for someone who was killed by another clan⁶³. It was said that during a raid, attacking Ibanag warriors did not discriminate between men, women, children, and old people^{64,65} – no victims were usually left alive, prompting Scott to conclude that slave trading was not a primary economic activity in the past⁶⁶. However, the presence of terminologies confirms the existence of slaves, as well as the act of trading slaves itself which is *mattaliw* (applied also to animals or livestock)⁶⁷.

⁵³ Krutak, Lars. "The Last Kalinga Tattoo Artist of the Philippines," *Lars Krutak: Tattoo Anthropologist* (2009): <https://www.larskrutak.com/the-last-kalinga-tattoo-artist-of-the-philippines/>

⁵⁴ Scott, *Barangay*, 262.

⁵⁵ Scott, *Barangay*, 251.

⁵⁶ Scott, *Barangay*, 249.

⁵⁷ Pangestu, Hesty & Kuswarsantyo. "Functions of Lang Nginang Ritual Dance in Mengayau Traditional Rite in Belitang," *ResearchGate* (2020): 10.2991/assehr.k.200703.011.

⁵⁸ Simon, Scott. "Politics and Headhunting among the Formosan Sejiq: Ethnohistorical Perspectives". *Oceania*. Vol. 82, No. 2 (2012): 168.

⁵⁹ Lancini Jen-hao Cheng. "Native Terminology and Classification of Taiwanese Musical Instruments", *Ensayos. Historia y teoría del arte*, Vol. 29, No. 28 (2015): 82.

⁶⁰ Scott, *Barangay*, 153.

⁶¹ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 7.

⁶² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 42.

⁶³ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 9.

⁶⁴ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 7.

⁶⁵ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 295.

⁶⁶ Scott, *Barangay*, 268.

⁶⁷ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 20.

Ibanag mengals were identified by the feathers of the *dulaw* or oriole (literally, “yellow”)⁶⁸ which they wore as head ornaments called *turunguya*⁶⁹. Scott misspelled the name of the bird as “*dalarw*” and mistook it for the golden oriole⁷⁰, which actually refers to several species that are not found in the Philippines⁷¹. Instead, oriole species with golden feathers endemic to Luzon are the black-naped oriole (*Oriolus chinensis*)⁷² and the Isabela oriole (*Oriolus isabellae*)⁷³. The Ibanag feather headdress approximates the ones worn by Cordilleran Kalinga groups, who call the same bird as *chalaw*. The Kalinga, however, usually add rooster down and tail feathers to their headdresses – a detail that was not confirmed by sources to have been done also by the Ibanag.

PHOTO 2:

The photo on the right shows samples of Itawit-made head ornaments called *arakarakkua*. The roots of the yellow feathers of the oriole are glued to the tips of jungle rooster red down feathers. The rooster feathers are then tied to wooden pegs that are tucked in a head cloth. The Boxer Codex also relates such ornaments worn by Cagayan chiefs but the pegs are made of gold. (SOURCE: Harold S. De la Cruz, 2021)



⁶⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 97.

⁶⁹ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 65.

⁷⁰ Scott, *Barangay*, 268.

⁷¹ “Eurasian Golden Oriole”, *Ebird*, <https://ebird.org/species/eugori2>

⁷² “Black-naped Oriole”, *Ebird*, <https://ebird.org/species/blnori1/>

⁷³ “Isabela Oriole”, *Ebird*, <https://ebird.org/species/isaori1/>

PHOTO 3:

The image shows a black-naped oriole in the Philippines. The bird is found in many parts of Southeast Asia as well. (SOURCE: Gwen Starrett, ebird.org, 2013)



Mengals of a settlement set out in parties when conducting raids or meeting attackers; *vuggayawan* or *pangan*⁷⁴ was the term for a troop or group of armed men. Texts suggest that *saffung*⁷⁵, which meant assembling a troop and calling them to war, was done through the sounding of drums or *gibbat*^{76,77}. As part of their battle preparations, it was suggested that the mengals wore only their g-strings or *bag*. The upper garments or *barawasi* and secondary bodily accessories would have been taken off, as the warriors oiled their bodies, so that they could have an advantage when the fight ended up in instances of clinching, grappling⁷⁸ or perhaps, ground fighting; the application of oils for such purposes was known as *damat*⁷⁹. Bugarin relayed several Ibanag terminologies for specific concepts related to fighting such as *kasi* or the act of tripping an opponent during a fight⁸⁰, and *dammag* or throwing an enemy to the ground⁸¹ – the latter may be a cognate of *dumog* or grappling or wrestling in Binisaya⁸², and *bultong* in Ifugao⁸³. The presence of these terms coinciding with the relation of the use of oils, implies the significance of unarmed combat. As to why, primary weapons could have possibly been exhausted or disarmed, prompting warriors to resort to wrestling. It is also apparent that driving an opponent to the ground was an

⁷⁴ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 12.

⁷⁵ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 215.

⁷⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 116.

⁷⁷ Payo, *Tesauro*, 84.

⁷⁸ Scott, *Barangay*, 268.

⁷⁹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 88.

⁸⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 72.

⁸¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 88.

⁸² “dumog”, *Binisaya*, <http://www.binisaya.com/cebuano/dumog>

⁸³ Atencio, Peter. “Get to know Ifugao’s traditional wrestling,” *Manila Standard Website* (2017): <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/241381>

important technique in battles, as this could be a potential prelude for gaining an advantage i.e., delivering a killing strike.

To face two or more opponents was *maggabbu*⁸⁴; *mattaddualan* was to fight multiple opponents successively⁸⁵. To fight with just one hand was *mangisarwig*⁸⁶; specifically, *maniriwanan* (from *ziwanan* or right) was to fight with only the right hand⁸⁷. The idea of fighting with just one arm may either mean that the Ibanag gave importance to non-retreating or yielding even if the other arm is incapacitated. It may also be that there were weapons that could be wielded two-handedly, as opposed to the primary weapon and shield tandem. Furthermore, one-handed fighting could also be an indication of hubris. Other concepts specifically related to unarmed fighting and weapons are detailed in the succeeding section.

Aside from wearing very minimal clothing during battles, the documented hairstyle of the Ibanag men seems to coincide with combat efficiency, as well as general comfort or practicality. Men during the pre-colonial era wore their hair long, however, in a mullet – they trimmed the frontal half of their hair into bangs that end above their line of sight⁸⁸. This hairstyle for men was also common among the Kalinga and Bontok groups, as seen in American period photographs such as those by Worcester.⁸⁹

While travelling out on an expedition, the vuggayawan or troop was led by a vanguard or *baruang*⁹⁰, which might have been composed of mengals with the most experience. On their journey, the warriors listened to the sound of an obscure brown bird called the *bantay*⁹¹ or *battay*⁹², like what the Cordillera warriors do with the bird they call *idaw*⁹³. If they heard the battay sing on the left side of the path or waterway, the warriors returned home and discontinued their attack regardless of the distance they have travelled⁹⁴, fearing disaster if ever they proceeded. If the bird crossed their path from the right and then

⁸⁴ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 108.

⁸⁵ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 234.

⁸⁶ Payo, *Tesaurus*, 312.

⁸⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 136.

⁸⁸ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 7.

⁸⁹ Worcester, *The Non-Christian Tribes*, 866.

⁹⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 50.

⁹¹ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 7.

⁹² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 51.

⁹³ Lawless, Robert. "Hunting and Fishing", 86-90.

⁹⁴ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 288.

settled on the left side, they continued their attack, confident that they will be successful⁹⁵. The pre-colonial belief in omen birds was not limited to the northern Philippines as can be seen with the *tigmamanukin* of the Tagalog, the *sayasaya* of the Bikol people, and the *kaskas* of the Bisaya⁹⁶.

As regards the religious aspect of being a warrior, the *dularw*, also a bird of augury, was apparently significant for the mengals. This is because the bird was also a source of other omens, in which the mengals were believed to have had the exclusive power of interpretation.⁹⁷ Records are silent on any specific war deity, a religious facet of some warrior cultures practiced by other ethnic groups⁹⁸. Only the general term for spirits or *anitu* was documented^{99,100} and is still observable in surviving religious rituals today. Aside from looking out for omen birds, mengals also threw offerings of food in the water for the anitu if ever their journey required travelling by boat¹⁰¹. However, such offerings set adrift on the river in conjunction with prayers for good fortune are a core aspect of religious rituals in general. Although a specific deity or anitu connected to war is absent, the possible pre-colonial origin of the Biuag anni Malana epic, may suggest a potential deification of the warrior heroes or at least some sort of reverence, as can be observed today among the Ibanag of Cabagan, specifically regarding Biuag. There is also no textual evidence on invoking the unseen supernatural in inflicting harm, and its connection to waging war. However, the casting of curses or *gaged* in general was documented¹⁰² (now *gegek*, or swearing, in its modern form and meaning). The same can be observed for the use of protective talismans or spells.

A successful or victorious ngayaw or encounter would have resulted in days of feasting and drunken revelry, where the warriors as well as women, danced to the music of gongs, called *gassa*^{103,104}, around their golden spoils and their trophies of ascension in society – the heads of their defeated enemies or

⁹⁵ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 7.

⁹⁶ Clark, Jordan. "The Mysterious Cebuano Bird in Pigafetta's Account," *The Aswang Project* (2021): <https://www.aswangproject.com/mysterious-bird-pigafettas-account/>

⁹⁷ Scott, *Barangay*, 264.

⁹⁸ Blumentritt, Ferdinand. "Diccionario Mitologico de Filipinas," in *Archivo Del Bibliófilo Filipino*, Vol. 2 (Madrid: 1896), PDF version.

⁹⁹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 25.

¹⁰⁰ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 286.

¹⁰¹ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 288.

¹⁰² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 111.

¹⁰³ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 114.

¹⁰⁴ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 300.

victims.¹⁰⁵ *Pakkaw*¹⁰⁶ referred to recounting exploits and feats of bravery; *bannan*¹⁰⁷ was something similar but was done by relatives for the deceased.



PHOTO 4:

Bontok warriors prepare a feast after a successful headhunt in 1905. (SOURCE: L.H. Murphy, Charles Frank; colorized by Joseph Garcia, year unknown)



PHOTO 5:

An Ifugao man dances to gong music with a decapitated head in the middleground (SOURCE: Igorot... Mountain People on bramie.com, original author and year unknown)

The general and literal term for “enemy” in Ibanag was *kalinga*¹⁰⁸. The present Kalinga peoples of the Cordillera and San Mariano, Isabela were named after this ancient term, as it was used during the colonial period to refer to non-

¹⁰⁵ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 8.

¹⁰⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 185.

¹⁰⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 48.

¹⁰⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 66.

Christianized groups who live in remote mountainous areas, synonymous to the term *infieles*. The non-Christians were considered enemies by the Cagayan lowlanders as the former were heathens, retaining their raiding customs well into the colonial era that frequently set Christianized settlements as targets¹⁰⁹.

As much as conducting offensives, it is logical that the ancient Ibanag also defended their settlements from attacks or raids. The term *tubang* or resistance¹¹⁰ was used synonymously for *bakal* or fighting¹¹¹. The Ibanag made fortifications or *kuta*¹¹², watchtowers or *amata*¹¹³, and places of refuge when an attack was imminent called *gagakuan*¹¹⁴, which included forested areas as relayed by Scott. Moreover, they also employed barricades or *assil*¹¹⁵ and blocked trails and passes with stakes and ditches, while open spaces and waterfronts were planted with surrounding sharpened bamboo spikes or *palo*¹¹⁶. The presence of the *kagun* as an emissary of either war or peace¹¹⁷ and the term for ambushes or *tanab*¹¹⁸, denotes that declarations of open war could have been sent between settlements. Aduarte, on the other hand, stated that surprise attacks were generally employed¹¹⁹, suggesting that defensive structures would have been permanent if settlements always expected indiscriminate attacks.

Generally, to defend was referred to as *mangigu*¹²⁰ or *mamaliad*¹²¹; to guard something or a place was *magalluad*¹²². The term *alluad* meant guardian or sentry, which was also extended to the anitu, and later, Catholic images inside the home. The concept of defending the settlement from raiders meant that the conduct of headhunting raids was still a highly perilous, risky, and deadly endeavor, as the attackers themselves could be met head on, or ambushed by equally armed and skillful warriors. Death and dismemberment were possibilities, making the status of being a *mengal* worthy of the highest esteem and respect.

¹⁰⁹ Nepomuceno, *Historia*, 63.

¹¹⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 257.

¹¹¹ Payo, *Tesouro*, 312.

¹¹² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 81.

¹¹³ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 21.

¹¹⁴ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 109.

¹¹⁵ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 37.

¹¹⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 191.

¹¹⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 64.

¹¹⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 247.

¹¹⁹ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 295.

¹²⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 126.

¹²¹ Payo, *Tesouro*, 155.

¹²² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 20.



PHOTO 6:

Bontok warriors expecting an attack. (Source: Dean C. Worcester, The Philippines, Past and Present. 1914)



PHOTO 7:

The photo shows a close up of a decapitated Bontok man who was about to be buried. (SOURCE: Dean C. Worcester, 1906). The man's calf seems to have suffered a number of devastating wounds indicating that fighters possibly targeted the legs to quickly put their opponents to the ground before delivering a fatal blow – perhaps direct decapitation. It is said that the groove between the two bottom prongs of the shield locked a victim's neck in place for easier execution.

Because of this culture of warfare, feuds between settlements were prevalent. A *poyud*¹²³, a person sent to be sacrificed by dismemberment, was needed to achieve peace, and end the cycle of revenge. According to Aduarte, a poyud was required if two conflicting parties wished to settle their dispute without the shedding of blood. In this custom, the party that was considered in the wrong procured a slave who was sent to the aggrieved side, where the members of the latter participated in the killing and inflicting of wounds, even when the sacrificial person was already dead, as if they channeled their vengeance on the person instead¹²⁴. Possibly, the *poyud* was either an *aripan*, or *biyag* or captive from an uninvolved party.

In contrast to the resolution and prevention of feuds, outright initiation and declaration of conflict is a concept that was also documented. *Mappalamang* was a term that meant fighting in a duel¹²⁵, while *tagarug* meant challenging someone by coming to his house¹²⁶ – interestingly, both concepts can be seen in the epic of Biuag and Malana. It was not specified whether bouts were usually or inherently fatal, or if they were also intended to be non-deadly. Considering the latter, unarmed fighting could have been utilized, but as to how they ended currently remains as speculation. Physical confrontations that were not possibly intended to be fatal coincide with some terms. *Kaddug* or *kiddug* was a strike using a fist, targeting the chest especially¹²⁷, while *tukul* was the term if the target was the head¹²⁸. *Kuttad* was to kick¹²⁹, *lappag* was to slap the face¹³⁰, while *dakkul*¹³¹ was to deliver a head butt. In addition, *palu'* was to strike, using a blunt object, especially the head¹³², while *latto* was to use a pointed implement¹³³. *Tappel* meant hitting with the palm or flat of a blade¹³⁴. To parry or deflect a strike was referred to as *takkung*¹³⁵, and was applied also to armed combat. The term *palanid*¹³⁶ meant defending another by receiving a blow intended for that person. This specificity of terms regarding targets and modes of striking and

¹²³ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 208.

¹²⁴ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 295.

¹²⁵ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 169.

¹²⁶ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 58.

¹²⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 63.

¹²⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 259.

¹²⁹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 81.

¹³⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 148.

¹³¹ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 21.

¹³² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 191.

¹³³ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 37.

¹³⁴ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 62.

¹³⁵ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 57.

¹³⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 190.

defense probably are applications of martial methods, rather than being aspects or techniques of an actual fighting style or system.



PHOTO 8:

“This picture shows Lieutenant-Governor Walter F. Hale, of Kalinga, persuading Kalinga head men of Mangali and Lubao to settle amicably a head-hunting feud of long standing” (SOURCE: quoted from the original caption by Dean Worcester, in *The Philippines: Past and Present*, 1914)

As was mentioned, headhunting and warfare as customary practices among the Ibanag were eventually wiped out by the Spaniards during the colonial era, as these were in direct and total conflict with the tenets of the Christian religion and the Spanish Empire’s consolidation of power and authority over its colonies. Nevertheless, after their conversion to Christianity, the warlike character of the people of Cagayan was still utilized by the Spaniards in instances where they required native troops to bolster their forces during military expeditions – a detail commented by Dr. Jose P. Rizal in de Morga’s *Historia*¹³⁷. Moreover, abuses by the Spaniards during the colonial period resulted in many rebellions and uprisings, indicating that the people of Cagayan’s propensity to take up arms remained. In all actuality, the term *mengal* survives even in the present. However, instead of denoting bravery or courage, the term nowadays usually

¹³⁷ de Morga, *History*, Notes.

refers to someone who is domineering, or one who is quick to anger, hot-tempered, or prone to running amok.

Weaponry

Historical documents offer a glossary of weapons which were referred to as *ikkamman* or *illellam*¹³⁸. Some of the items listed below could have been used as or functioned more, as utility tools especially those that survive to this day. However, their capability to inflict fatal injury could have made them potential weapons in martial encounters, regardless of who the wielder was. Besides readily available wood, metal was a common raw material for making weapons, as it was used for blades and spearheads. Ibanag blacksmiths were known as *minammattal*¹³⁹ and forges, *ammattalan*¹⁴⁰. They possessed forging technology like the two-piston bellows or *lullû*¹⁴¹, anvils or *pannan*¹⁴² or *darattan*¹⁴³, and hammers or *buttû*¹⁴⁴. Others were blacksmith's tongs or *kaddû*^{145,146}, grinding stones or whetstones called *annetan*¹⁴⁷, as well as special storage containers or *kuripa*¹⁴⁸.

Non-precious types of metals used in smithing in general were iron or *balayang*, lead or *vuli*, and copper or *tubbaga*, although *tubbaga* also referred to alloys in general, like bronze or brass. Mixing different types of metals to produce such alloys was known as *tamul*¹⁴⁹. Blades were hammered from iron, but also from steel or *kaga*¹⁵⁰. To heat the iron, steel, or a combination of both was termed as *lullub*¹⁵¹, and generally, *tunaw*¹⁵² or *mamakalabaga*¹⁵³ (from the root word *baga* or embers). Tempering was *tabbu*¹⁵⁴. Over-hardening the metal was known as *lubay*, which also meant dulling a sharp edge through

¹³⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 124.

¹³⁹ Payo, *Tesauro*, 269.

¹⁴⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 52.

¹⁴¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 162.

¹⁴² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 194.

¹⁴³ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 92.

¹⁴⁴ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 61.

¹⁴⁵ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 15.

¹⁴⁶ Payo, *Tesauro*, 470.

¹⁴⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 26.

¹⁴⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 80.

¹⁴⁹ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 61.

¹⁵⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 64.

¹⁵¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 162.

¹⁵² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 264.

¹⁵³ Payo, *Tesauro*, 35.

¹⁵⁴ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 231.

overheating¹⁵⁵. Trimming down the edge or smoothening the flat of the blade was *paged*¹⁵⁶ or *delu*¹⁵⁷. A fine blade edge was known as *sira*¹⁵⁸; otherwise, it was referred to as *tullab* if it was thick¹⁵⁹.

Regarding raw materials sources for forging, terms existed for metal mining, which was *kurub*¹⁶⁰, as well as smelting or *dabba*¹⁶¹ or *sibug*¹⁶². Coal used for forging was specially sourced from obscure tree species called *uttu*¹⁶³ and *agu*¹⁶⁴. Nevertheless, there is no certainty that iron ore was particularly mined by the Ibanag. As such, iron as forging materials could have also been acquired from scrap and ultimately through trade. In other groups of the Philippines, iron ore mining and processing was documented as existing, although the knowledge on such industries was said to have been imported¹⁶⁵.

Traditional Ibanag bladesmithing nowadays is so rare if not totally extinct, as local blade manufacturing and commerce are now led mostly by the Ilokano who migrated to the Cagayan Valley from Ilocos starting sometime in the late 1800s¹⁶⁶. Nonetheless, inquiry on the survival of traditional Ibanag smithing knowledge and material culture is ongoing. Over the course of tracing, it was found out that the last Ibanag bladesmith in Pamplona, Cagayan has passed away with no heirs to the craft. The search for surviving native blacksmiths in other Ibanag areas has also proven to be difficult. In Tuguegarao, most, if not all local bladesmiths are of Iloko descent. Otherwise, they still trace their techniques from the said ethnic group.

1. *Dukkya*¹⁶⁷ – This was a blade like a large knife that was probably used too as a utility tool. The term survives in the present to refer to blades like the bolos. The original blade profile of the dukkya during the 16th Century and the visualization of how it could have developed or evolved in the succeeding

¹⁵⁵ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 160.

¹⁵⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 187.

¹⁵⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 94.

¹⁵⁸ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 54.

¹⁵⁹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 262.

¹⁶⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 80.

¹⁶¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 82.

¹⁶² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 216.

¹⁶³ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 280.

¹⁶⁴ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 8.

¹⁶⁵ Krieger, Herbert W. *The Collection Of Primitive Weapons And Armor Of The Philippine Islands In The United States National Museum*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926) PDF version, 134.

¹⁶⁶ Nepomuceno, *Historia*, 45–46.

¹⁶⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 99.

decades, are now most likely lost in history. However, the presence of a term for blade point or *utang*¹⁶⁸, can indicate that such a knife had a pointed tip. Other parts of the tool included the metal blade itself or *mayan*¹⁶⁹ (literally, content), the blade's edge or *ngarab*¹⁷⁰, the blade's tang or *pakaw*¹⁷¹, the hilt or *urungan*¹⁷², and the iron ferrule or *paraddal*¹⁷³. Blade handles were wrapped with rings or *allippo*¹⁷⁴, which were sourced from a species of vine called *tallippo*¹⁷⁵. Another hilt adornment style was the *binucayan*, in which shells of a species of mollusc called *bucaya* were used¹⁷⁶.

Old and worn-out blades that were only fit for weeding were called *dupal*¹⁷⁷. This implies that old blades were perhaps not usually repaired or restored, and that there might have been an abundance of raw materials or metal, used for forging new ones. Nevertheless, rust was still removed by using a grinding stone called *guggud*¹⁷⁸; *pakka'* meant cleaning rust with citrus juice mixed with water¹⁷⁹. Dented or chipped edges were called *ngira-ngirad*¹⁸⁰. Dullness of edges were *ngural*¹⁸¹ as opposed to *taram* or sharpness¹⁸². To dull the edge or points was *pappag*¹⁸³.

The name dukkyal has evolved to *dutchal* among Ibanag speakers outside the original Ibanag homeland of northern Cagayan – speakers of dialects in southern Cagayan and northern Isabela particularly. Nowadays, the term *dutchal* is extended to blades of outside origin, including those manufactured using Iloko techniques that found their way to Ibanag territories like Tuguegarao in southern Cagayan, where a blade smithing industry is thriving. Common extant blade types or profiles of Iloko craftsmanship that can be locally seen include the *guru*, *immuku*, *sinalong*, *immutingan*, and *baladaw*, among various others. Some like the *baladaw*, and *kampilan* have namesakes from other ethnic

¹⁶⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 279.

¹⁶⁹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 168.

¹⁷⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 181.

¹⁷¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 185.

¹⁷² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 279.

¹⁷³ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 197.

¹⁷⁴ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 3.

¹⁷⁵ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 61.

¹⁷⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 56.

¹⁷⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 98.

¹⁷⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 119.

¹⁷⁹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 195.

¹⁸⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 182.

¹⁸¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 183.

¹⁸² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 252.

¹⁸³ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 196.

groups, but they are entirely different blades – a probable case of linguistic cognation. Conversely, the sinalong, which stands out due to its “spear socket” hilt, seems to have a direct relation to the Kankana-ey counterpart¹⁸⁴ as does the type that some smiths refer to as guru with the *banao* blade from nearby Kalinga province. In addition, blacksmiths have also begun to copy known foreign blades, such as the Nepalese khukuri and Japanese santoku knives to expand their marketing catalogue.

Like those forged in the Ilokano homeland, Tuguegarao blades also commonly feature carabao horn hilts and leather sheaths. However, upon closer inspection of the *ulimarw* pommel – a pommel design that depicts a gaping animal or dragon’s mouth found in many lowland northern Luzon blades especially of the western coast, Tuguegarao pommels seem to be more alike with Pangasinan types rather than Iloko types, also suggesting a possible influence from the former. Today, in contrast to Ilocos and Pangasinan blades, many Tuguegarao blades are now usually unpolished after oil quenching and feature less intricate or plain pommels, with totally different names for blade profiles. One common diverging hilt design now lacks the ferrules, and feature rivets or *remaches* on full tangs instead. Furthermore, today, tire rubber is now a practical alternative for horn and wood as raw material for hilts, while plastic is now also a cheap and easy alternative for leather in making scabbards. Despite these modern developments in design, as well as forging technology, the main source of metal is still scrap materials, primarily steel leaf springs from automobiles. The divergence of blade smithing in Tuguegarao from that of Ilocos seems to be significantly due to acculturation. In addition, the former’s progression to practicality and utility is more evident as can be observed from the blade lengths, crafting materials, and methods used. Considering the occurrence of acculturation or blending of influences among Tuguegarao’s smiths, it is then possible to theorize that aspects from native Ibanag blade forging had also been adopted earlier before the latter’s apparent disappearance. Still, it is currently difficult to verify such proposals, as many among the present generation of Tuguegarao blade smiths, can no longer recall or identify foreign aspects to the traditional designs that they inherited from their elders.

Presently, the term dutchal is now used interchangeably by many Ibanag speakers with foreign terms such as *badang* (Iloko flat tipped blades) or *bolo*

¹⁸⁴ _____. "The Material Culture of Sagada," *Philippine Sociological Review* 22, No. 1/4 (1974): 41-49. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23892241>.

(American); *palataw* is also used but this seems to be a borrowing from Itawit or perhaps Tagalog. In Pamplona in northern Cagayan specifically, the term *dukyal* for some people came to refer to knives that were used as personal weapons, while the term *badang* came to refer to utility blades. On the other hand, in Isabela towns like Santa Maria and Ilagan, *palataw* is now also used to refer to larger working knives. The absence of these alternative terms for utilitarian blades in the old Ibanag dictionaries points to a case of lexical borrowing, from either population-dominant or neighboring languages. Regardless, the common denominator for all these adopted terms is that they are generic. Informal interviews revealed that there are no more known Ibanag terms for specific blade profiles or types. Although a few from old and dying generations may possibly remember terminologies related to blade types, continued searching and tracing respondents across towns and provinces, which are naturally time consuming will now prove to be more difficult and dangerous under the new normal in the region that resulted from the current pandemic. On the other hand, apart from blade shapes and types, an Ilocos Norte smith reportedly relates that Ibanag-crafted blades are remembered to be more elaborate, in terms of engraving or stamped signatures and scabbards.

Today, the *dutchal* is used for handicrafts, farm work and pruning, alongside actual utility blades such as sickles or *gattab*. Aside from farm-related use, the *dutchal* is also essential in butchery, and other commercial and domestic activities.

PHOTO 9:

The *tarad* is just one of many blade types forged in Tuguegarao. The hilts from these particular samples sport the old adornment style that uses vine wrappings as well as a *sinalong* style hilt. A practical purpose of wrapping the hilt is to increase grip. (SOURCE: Villa Pandayan Facebook page)





PHOTO 10:

The photo above shows a rusty late 1970's Tuguegarao blade with a shape that resembles a bulong unas (sugarcane leaf in Iloko) or yusoyos profile type from Ilocos Norte. The tang is a peened or hidden type and the hilt is made of carved wood featuring a discreet ulimaw pommel. This specimen also has an aluminum guard and an iron ferrule. (SOURCE: Jan Karl Coballes, 2021)

2. Ila'¹⁸⁵ – The term *ila* refers to a small knife. Nowadays, it is also commonly referred to as *kutchilyu* (from the Spanish *cuchillo*) and is smaller than the *dutchal*. Such a knife, apart from being a working implement, could have acted as a secondary highly portable, and even concealable weapon that can be used especially in instances, where fights ended in grappling or wrestling. Another term for a small knife was *kawi*, but this referred to a specific type used for paring; it also referred to a hook, or an arrow or spear barb¹⁸⁶. Another type used for cloth was called a *pabin*¹⁸⁷.

3. *Inalag*¹⁸⁸ – The *inalag* is the only bladed weapon that has a specifically documented blade profile, which was that of a leaf. Its name literally translates to “something that can be sheathed”, with the root word *alag* meaning a

¹⁸⁵ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 126.

¹⁸⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 74.

¹⁸⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 184.

¹⁸⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 12.

scabbard¹⁸⁹. Considering its shape, this blade is the same as the one described and portrayed by the Boxer Codex.



PHOTO 11:

The illustration of the Cagayanes in the Boxer Codex depicts the warrior as clad only in g-strings, while holding his primary weapon, a plain spear with adornments meant to be hair. He is also holding a large shield enough to cover his vital body parts. The spear and shield combination can be observed in many Cordilleran groups as the primary implements of war, with the ax being used only for decapitating fallen enemies.

According to the text, the inalag measured a span and a half in length, (20 to 30 centimeters according to Scott¹⁹⁰) and around eight finger widths at its broadest point. The hilt was said to have been made from ebony¹⁹¹, possibly mabolo or velvet apple, or carabao horn in actuality. The image in the Codex shows a sheathed blade tucked in the side of the warrior's g-string – to do so in such a manner was called *takil*¹⁹² (See Photo 11). These blades are nowhere to be seen today. Even the term alag has fallen into disuse. Instead, scabbards are commonly known today as *tuku'*, which comes from the same Ibanag word for a nook or small space, or figuratively as *balay*, which is the term for house. Besides this development, the Spanish translation, *vaina*, was also adopted.

As regards its blade shape, the inalag seems to be primarily a martial weapon as opposed to the dukkyl. Many leaf-shaped blades from other ethnic groups like the pre-colonial Bisaya *balaraw*¹⁹³, the extant Tausug *barung*, and possibly the Ifugao *hinalung*, were widely used as weapons. These blade profiles, some double edged, often ended in pointed tips, coinciding with the deadly method of thrusting, or stabbing as with a dagger. Moreover, by emulating the shape of a

¹⁸⁹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 12.

¹⁹⁰ Scott, *Barangay*, 268.

¹⁹¹ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 7.

¹⁹² Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 62.

¹⁹³ Scott, *Barangay*, 147.

leaf, significant blade width is added, which makes the blades effective cleavers. This cleaving capability conforms to the texts mentioning that the inalag was also used to behead slain enemies¹⁹⁴. Archaic terms for stabbing specifically with a spear or blade can be found in the Ibanag language; some of these words are already obsolete and are already unknown to many present-day Ibanag speakers. *Tanno* meant to stab or thrust in general¹⁹⁵, while *kattal* or *nannal*¹⁹⁶ meant to penetrate through a target, or to stab or pierce all the way through it until the hilt¹⁹⁷. The term *dudduk* originally referred to stabbing a pig or livestock's neck in the act of slaughtering¹⁹⁸, but came to refer nowadays to stabbing with a blade or pointed object in general. On the other hand, *kattab* generally was to slash with a blade¹⁹⁹, while *taffu* was a cleaving strike²⁰⁰. *Dattan* was to kill with a single hit²⁰¹.

4. *Bunang*²⁰² – This seems to be a halfmoon-shaped blade with a long point, (crescent-shaped, as interpreted by Scott²⁰³), that functioned only as a machete, i.e., a slashing or chopping tool, or an axe used for beheading fallen enemies. Moreover, it cannot be put in a scabbard due most likely to the shape of its blade. It can be inferred from the description that the bunang possibly resembled the *aliwa* of the Isnag, whose lands are adjacent to the Ibanag – an apparent case of divergent material culture. These are nowhere to be seen today; however, modern farm workers now use a similar tool, which is a long-handled sugarcane or brushwood cutter with a curved blade that lacks a pointed tip. This tool is referred to as *tabas* and is a likely case of adoption from outside material culture, like the cane machete or *palang*, coinciding with the spread of sugarcane farms in the region.

The term bunang is a cognate of the Iloko *buneng*, the latter of which is more synonymous to the dutchal as a general term for a large knife.

¹⁹⁴ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 7.

¹⁹⁵ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 248.

¹⁹⁶ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 43.

¹⁹⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 73.

¹⁹⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 95.

¹⁹⁹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 73.

²⁰⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 235.

²⁰¹ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 23.

²⁰² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 58.

²⁰³ Scott, *Barangay*, 268.



PHOTO 12:

Modern aliwas can be bought as souvenirs in Apayao province. (SOURCE: Isagaddan Crafts and Souvenirs, 2019)

5. *Duppil* / *suppil* – The duppil was a spear²⁰⁴. Also, nowhere to be seen today, it consisted of a metal spearhead and a pointed butt on the other end of the shaft, or *sussud*, which allowed the spear to be planted on the ground with the head up²⁰⁵ (See Photo 6). According to archaic lexicon, *yayyang* meant to brandish a spear or a blade²⁰⁶, a possible cognate of the Itawit term *panyang* or ritual healing dance that involved movements with the spear or blade (a similar ritual is practiced by the Iloko and Bolinao²⁰⁷). *Bungal* specifically meant the breaking of the spearhead from the shaft – this also applied to the blades and hilts of knives²⁰⁸. The *palla*²⁰⁹ or *sinubung*²¹⁰ was a type of spear that did not have a metal spearhead; this might have resembled defensive stakes. *Lukkab* was when a spear, or any other pointed weapon or tool, dulled its tip²¹¹.

In terms of usage, the spear could be used as a pike, as the term *tanno* or thrusting or stabbing was applied to the weapon²¹². At the same time, it also functioned as a javelin as can be seen in the terms *daya* or to aim²¹³, and *kanna*

²⁰⁴ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 99.

²⁰⁵ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 55.

²⁰⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 123.

²⁰⁷ Summer Institute of Linguistics. "Dictionary of Binubolinao". *SIL website*, 2014. <http://bolinao.webonary.org/>

²⁰⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 59.

²⁰⁹ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 46.

²¹⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 224.

²¹¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 160.

²¹² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 248.

²¹³ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 86.

or to hit with a missile²¹⁴. *Mallong*²¹⁵ or *lupparw*²¹⁶ was when a missile misses and passes by its target, and *ugo* meant missing in general²¹⁷. To dodge a missile was *mallia*²¹⁸. All these terms, according to the texts, applied to spears and arrows.

Like the custom of other warriors from other Philippine ethnic groups, the Ibanag mengals fastened the hair of their fallen enemies on their weapons, particularly their spears²¹⁹ – this coincides with the Cagayanes warrior depicted in the Codex (See Photo 11). This could have served as an additional visual fear factor intended for enemies during battles, especially if more enemies killed equated to more hair fitted on the weapon.

Though spears are now totally non-existent in the present, the Spanish term for a pike, *pica*, found its way into the Ibanag language and was also used to denote spears. The term survives to this day in the memory of some speakers.

6. *Saffuring*²²⁰ – Bugarin identified a type of spear, which had a head that split into two “halves” – pertaining to barbs. This kind of spear was considered as distinct from the duppil, which was considered plain or ordinary, and may have resembled those barbed types still possessed by the Kalinga and other Cordillera groups. As with the duppil, the saffuring is nowhere to be seen among the Ibanag today.

²¹⁴ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 69.

²¹⁵ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 159.

²¹⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 164.

²¹⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 272.

²¹⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 154.

²¹⁹ Scott, *Barangay*, 298.

²²⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 115.

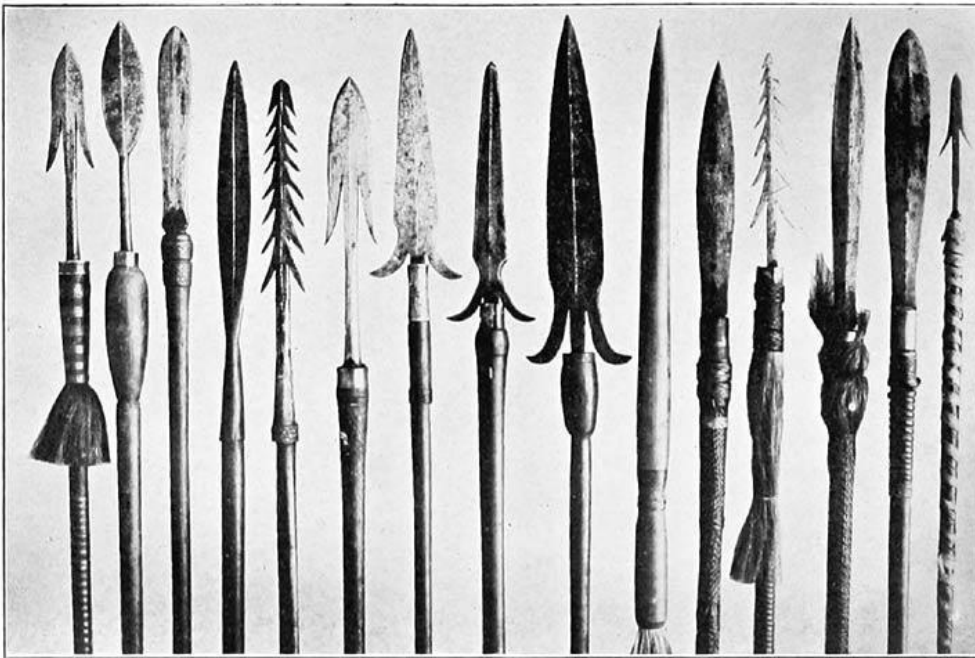


PHOTO 13:

The photo on the left shows various barbed and plain types of Cordillera spears, with some seemingly having hair tassels near the blade (SOURCE: Dean C. Worcester, 1906).

7. *Vutug*²²¹ *anna pana*²²² – This literally translates to bow and arrow. Arrows are also remembered nowadays as *pika*, peculiarly indigenized from the Spanish word for pike. Parts of the set were the bowstring or *dallo*²²³, a barbed iron arrowhead or *gila*²²⁴, an unbarbed arrowhead or *tubuyan*²²⁵, and the feather fletching on the arrow or *allad*²²⁶. *Luppi*’ was the term for a bamboo quiver²²⁷. Drawing the bow was referred to as *unga*²²⁸, while releasing the arrows was known as *fusso*²²⁹.

There is no documentation on what type of materials were used for the construction of bows and arrows, and texts suggest they were not widely used in comparison to the Negrito groups²³⁰. However, Rizal notes in de Morga’s relation that a Spanish expedition against Borneo in 1578, involved the recruitment of “bowmen” from Cagayan²³¹.

²²¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 60.

²²² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 193.

²²³ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 87.

²²⁴ Payo, *Tesaurus*, 270.

²²⁵ Payo, *Tesaurus*, 270.

²²⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 19.

²²⁷ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 164.

²²⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 277.

²²⁹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 106.

²³⁰ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 7.

²³¹ de Morga, *History*, Notes.

There was another traditional implement resembling the bow. The *bale* was a hunting trap that resembled a crossbow or ballista²³², and was possibly comparable with extant ones used by Central Luzon Aytas²³³. As to whether these were also used as defensive traps is speculation. Along with bows and arrows, the said hunting trap is nowhere to be seen among most of the Ibanag today.

Poisons meant for people as well as antidotes, were mentioned in the Codex²³⁴, but it is unknown if these were used in battles. If ever they were used, these may have been applied to weapons, such as arrows or even blade edges and tips.

8. *Watay*²³⁵ – The watay is an axe, synonymous to the *wasay* from other Philippine languages, such as Iloko and Bisaya. During the colonial and modern periods, it was and is also known as *katcha* (from the Spanish *hacha*). Bugarin also listed *futarw* as an obscure type of Chinese ax²³⁶, or an ax with a blade profile similar to a Chinese type, which is possibly related linguistically to the Tagalog *putharw*. The Chinese have been dealing with the Ibanag in trade posts such as Aparri even before the arrival of the Spaniards²³⁷, and the presence of such a tool is an obvious result. In turn, the presence of the term among the Gaddang²³⁸ further inland provides another evidence on the geographical extent of such foreign influence. Axes strictly serve as utility tools nowadays.

9. *Kalatag*²³⁹ – The Ibanag shield was the kalatag, which is cognates with the Tagalog *kalasag*. These extinct shields were said to be of body length; the Boxer Codex measured it as a fathom long, which is around five feet, and three quarters wide²⁴⁰. Such dimensions are indeed enough to cover the body like a pavise – the distinctive quality of Ifugao shields that is in contrast with those of the Kalinga, Bontok, Itneg, and other groups. Besides this description on size,

²³² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 45.

²³³ Primitivesurvival, "Making a Primitive Cross Bow JEST Camp - Subic Bay Philippines", *Youtube*, January 11, 2017, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQ90L43dOtc>

²³⁴ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 7.

²³⁵ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 270.

²³⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 106.

²³⁷ Ang See, Teresita. "The Chinese Presence in Northern Luzon: An Exploratory Study," *Philippine E-Journals, The Journal of History* (2018). <https://ejournals.ph/article.php?id=14564>

²³⁸ Delacueva-Basconcillo, Evaliza and Rojas, Nick. "Construal of Selected Gaddang Lexicon and their Cultural Implications," *Research and Reviews: Journal of Social Sciences*, (2017): <https://www.rroij.com/open-access/construal-of-selected-gaddang-lexicon-and-their-cultural-implications-.php?aid=85833&view=mobile>

²³⁹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 65.

²⁴⁰ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 7.

other details like shape, embellishments, and raw materials used are absent. Only the Boxer Codex image offers a visualization of what it potentially looked like (See Photo 11). Yet, the image of the shield in the manuscript does have a double prong at the bottom end, which is indeed a usual feature of extant specimens of Northern Luzon shields. *Mangalatag* meant to deflect a spear or arrow²⁴¹.

Bugarin also defined the kalatag as *coraza* or cuirass, which is body armor for the torso²⁴². Though pre-colonial carabao leather armor existed in the Cagayan valley, these were used in Gaddang territory further upstream²⁴³. Kalatag, therefore, was probably also used to refer to such armors.

Aside from hide cuirasses, the Codex also mentions *morrión*-like casques or helmets that were red in color²⁴⁴. While Bugarin listed “casco de cabeza” as *katul na ulu*²⁴⁵, this could have also referred figuratively to a person’s cranium; *katul* in Ibanag is the literal term for a coconut shell. Such strange helmets mentioned by the Codex could have been another case of importation.

10. Others

Ibanags once utilized blowguns called *palukki*²⁴⁶ (from *lukki* or to sprout or come out²⁴⁷), as well as slingshots or *alibattung*²⁴⁸. In the texts, there are no details regarding their dimensions and those of their missiles, as well as their construction materials, or if they were commonly used as weapons. These were most likely hunting tools.

Ibanags have a term for firearms, which is *palattug*²⁴⁹ (from *lattug* or burst, bang, gunshot²⁵⁰). A few gun parts were also listed in the dictionaries, such as the trigger or *tumukkaw*²⁵¹ (from *tukkaw* or bird’s beak), and a cannon’s ignition chamber or *talinga*²⁵² (literally, ear), adopted from the metaphor for a sewing needle’s eye. As to when these terms were added to the Ibanag vocabulary,

²⁴¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 65.

²⁴² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 65.

²⁴³ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 7.

²⁴⁴ Donoso, *Boxer Codex*, 7.

²⁴⁵ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 73.

²⁴⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 191.

²⁴⁷ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 38.

²⁴⁸ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 14.

²⁴⁹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 190.

²⁵⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 152.

²⁵¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 259.

²⁵² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 243.

records lack clues and information – whether the guns referred to were from the Chinese, Japanese, or Spanish or any other foreign culture that have developed their own firearms. Nonetheless, guns were undoubtedly foreign materials. If ever the term *palattug* does precede Spanish arrival in Cagayan, the absence of native or non-European terms for bullets or gunpowder, suggests that guns were only observed from foreign peoples and were not adopted for actual use. Perhaps they were too valuable to be traded off.

Traditional Ibanag Tattoos

The Ibanag people, like many Austronesian ethnic groups, practiced tattooing. Tattoos were called *bato'* in Ibanag²⁵³. Its linguistic cognates in other neighboring ethnic groups are *whatok* (Ihuthut Kalinga), *batok* (Kalinga, Ifugao), *fatek* (Bontok), *batek* (Iloko, Kankana-ey, Ibaloi)²⁵⁴, and *batak* (Isnag, Itawit). For the Ibanag, these were applied with ink that was mixed with pigs' bile.

Like other ethnic groups such as the Kalinga, Bontok, and the pre-colonial Bisaya²⁵⁵, tattoos served as status symbols that made *mengals* distinguishable from the rest of Ibanag society. At the same time, tattoos could have also been earned as proof of the warrior's experience in battle. The privilege of receiving tattoos was extended to their wives, for it is believed that such women without tattoos cannot pass on to the afterlife²⁵⁶. For the Ibanag, it seems that the only documented tattoo design was the fern pattern or *appaku and* was applied only on the back of the hands resulting in a glove-like appearance²⁵⁷. Apparently, the Ibanags' designs were limited and less varied when compared to that of other ethnic groups; the Kalinga, Bontok, and Ifugao have diverse tattoo designs based on plants, animals, and natural phenomenon²⁵⁸. Though undocumented, it is possible that the Ibanag also possessed designs that were similar. What was only clearly documented though, was that the Ibanag possessed general crafting

²⁵³ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 51.

²⁵⁴ _____. "Tattoos in the Cordillera," *Inquirer.net* (2017): <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/941295/batok-tattooing-tattooing-mambabatok>

²⁵⁵ Scott, *Barangay*, 20.

²⁵⁶ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 292.

²⁵⁷ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 4.

²⁵⁸ Krutak, Lars. "Return of the Headhunters: The Philippine Tattoo Revival," *Lars Krutak: Tattoo Anthropologist* (2012): <https://www.larskrutak.com/return-of-the-headhunters-the-philippine-tattoo-revival/>

design patterns, such as lozenges or *nammata-mata*²⁵⁹, zigzags or *lassigassing*²⁶⁰, stripes or *buri-buri*²⁶¹, and human figures or *inattolayan*²⁶².

Historical Ibanag personalities

The historical narratives of Cagayan Valley, as written by the Spaniards, contain a long list of uprisings and rebellions within the Spanish Empire's three-century rule^{263,264}. Though many of these revolts were led and fought by actual mengals during the early years of Spanish conquest, other such incidents were instigated by non-warriors, particularly women, who nonetheless possessed the warrior trait of courage, in revolting against the foreigners who they considered as oppressors and enemies.

1. Guiab of Camalayuga – Guiab was a chief of pre-colonial Camalaniugan in northern Cagayan who was revered by his followers as a just leader and powerful mengal. Despite this, he had local rivals who discredited him to the recently arrived Spaniards. Despite Guiab's friendliness, he was captured and killed treacherously in 1581, in an attempt by the Spaniards to employ a divide-and-conquer strategy to subjugate the natives. However, the chief's death prompted his followers, and ironically, his rivals to attack the foreigners²⁶⁵. The Spaniards prevailed, and with Guiab out of the way, the path to the Valley's conquest was deemed clear.

2. Magalad of Lubutan – It was said that Magalad led one of the most powerful uprisings to ever challenge Spanish rule in Cagayan Valley. Hailing from Lubutan (probably in present day Gattaran), he and his brother were responsible for an earlier revolt against Spanish oppression in 1595 but were captured and imprisoned in Manila. When he was released upon the request of Dominican friars, which was intended as a sign of goodwill, Magalad started another rebellion the following year. Narratives relay that because the uprising was so strong, many settlements were considered impassable. Nonetheless, many rebel chiefs fell to the counterattacking Spanish forces. However, it was said that due to the difficulty in capturing the elusive Magalad, the Spaniards

²⁵⁹ Bugarin, *Suplemento*, 43.

²⁶⁰ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 150.

²⁶¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 59.

²⁶² Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 255.

²⁶³ Salgado, *Cagayan Valley*, 99-143.

²⁶⁴ Nepomuceno, *Historia*, 29-32.

²⁶⁵ Aduarte, *Historia in Philippine Islands Vol. 30*, 276.

had to bribe the chief's own men to take his life under his own roof²⁶⁶. The success of this treachery probably stemmed from the accounts saying that Magalad punished his fellow natives if they chose not to join his rebellion.

3. Caquenga of Nalfotan – The woman Caquenga was said to be a *minaggananitu* (priestess or shaman) who convinced the people of Nalfotan (possibly in present-day Amulung) to reject Christianity and return to their ancestral beliefs. A rebellion erupted in 1608 with chronicles saying that the rebelling natives desecrated the town's church by looting the vestments and throwing their spears at the images. The uprising ended after two years, and the rebels who were captured alive were said to have been eventually thrown and enslaved in the Spanish ships and were exiled²⁶⁷.

4. Carinugan of Cabicungan – Narratives relate a brief story of another woman who started a revolt against the Spaniards in Cabicungan (present-day Claveria, Cagayan) in support of an uprising that started in Pangasinan in 1661. Like her predecessor Caquenga's and many before it, Carinugan's revolt was eventually quelled. She was captured and executed by gunfire along with other conspirators²⁶⁸.

The Epic of Biuag and Malana

The legendary heroes of the Ibanag traditional epic, Biuag and Malana themselves, were presented in the story, as strong and courageous warrior men. The epic is actually a shared tradition among the ethnic groups of Cagayan like the Itawit, Malaueg, Gaddang; a few Itawit still practice the custom of recounting the story through a chant called a *dallogay*.

Depending on the version of the story, Biuag either wielded a *duppi*²⁶⁹ or a *watay*²⁷⁰, while Malana favored the *vutug* and *pana* – materials that could indicate that the oral tradition has a connection to, or even has its origin in the pre-colonial period.

²⁶⁶ de Morga, *Hlstory*, Chapter 6.

²⁶⁷ Aduarte, Diego de, "Historia de la Provincia del Sancto Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores," in *The Philippine Islands, 1493–1898 Vol. XXXI*, ed. Emma Blair and James Robertson (The Arthur H. Clark Company, Cleveland, Ohio, 1905), 276. HTML version. <https://gutenberg.org/files/42399/42399-h/42399-h.htm>

²⁶⁸ Nepomuceno, *Historia*, 30.

²⁶⁹ Coballes, Jan Karl C. "Biuag anna Malana. Summary and Translation in Ibanag". *Ibanag* (2021). <https://medium.com/ibanag/biwag-anni-malana-summary-in-ibanag-7326a4515811>.

²⁷⁰ Eugenio, D. *Philippine Folk Literature: An Anthology*, (University of the Philippines Press, 2007), 218.

The climax of the epic involved a famous duel between the two, over the love of a beautiful and mysterious maiden who was not named in the story. The match was interrupted by the maiden herself, who turned out to be a goddess with supernatural powers – a non-Christian element. The duel resulted in neither a victor nor a loser. However, most of the details of their intense fight contain largely fantastic elements, which are a common aspect of most, if not all native Philippine epics.

Archaic Ibanag Martial Arts?

To fight with a sword was listed as *kalî* by Bugarin²⁷¹. The 1867 Spanish-Ibanag dictionary or Tesauro-Hispano Cagayan listed sword fighting as *pakkalikali*, with its root word being *kalî* itself²⁷². Under the same text, a sword was translated as *kallî*²⁷³ which is an entry that is not found in Bugarin's work written around two centuries earlier, save for a homonym for drawing a straight line²⁷⁴. Interestingly, however, Bugarin used the Spanish term *espada* when translating several concepts related to blades but did not list and define an actual Ibanag equivalent to the said weapon. Some of these blade concepts were the aforementioned *kalî*, the act of unsheathing a sword which was *ubu*²⁷⁵ or *garu*²⁷⁶, as well as previously described terminologies for other related actions, such as *tanno*, *nannal*, and *yayyang*. It may be that dukkyals among the Ibanag were also forged to such lengths that the Spaniards also considered them as swords or *espada*, apart from using the term *cuchillo* to primarily describe the said blades. The inclusion of the term *kallî* as sword under the 1800s Tesauro was probably a case of adoption or indigenization of blades that were fundamentally longer than the average dukkyal, perhaps, Spanish swords. Besides defining a sword, the Tesauro also listed sword guards as *guarnicion* or *arandela*, which are technological aspects of a blade that seem to be non-native, hence, the actual Spanish words that have found their way in the Ibanag vocabulary of the 19th Century.

As regards the concept of sword fighting itself, whether this referred to an actual indigenous or acculturated system of martial concepts and fighting techniques that was taught, or otherwise, is also presently unclear. However, by considering the timeline between Juan de Salcedo's arrival in Cagayan, which

²⁷¹ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 66.

²⁷² Payo, *Tesauro*, 223.

²⁷³ Payo, *Tesauro*, 224.

²⁷⁴ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 67.

²⁷⁵ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 271.

²⁷⁶ Bugarin, *Diccionario*, 114.

was in the 1570s, and Bugarin's death, which was in 1676, a century of Spanish influence could have resulted in the introduction of *kalî* or *pakkali-kalî* from the *kalis* of the other Philippine ethnic groups. *Kalis*, or *karis*, as researched by Philippine weapons historian Lorenz Lasco using several early colonial period dictionaries that were mostly authored by Spanish authors, seems to be an indigenous term for either sword fighting, or a type of sword formerly used by the Tagalog, Kapampangan, Bikol, Iloko, Waray, Sugbuanon, Hilgaynon, and Kinaray-a²⁷⁷. It is important to note that these ethnic groups were encountered by the Spaniards before the latter's arrival in Cagayan. The proposition of the Ibanag *kali*'s outside origin is based on its apparent specificity on the use of swords. The presence of a native sword itself appears as an anomaly, when considering similar cultures proximate to the Ibanag, hence, the prevalent use of the spear and shield tandem. There is also no native Ibanag term analogous for the practice or use of spears or weapons in general. Moreover, the Spaniards' recruitment of troops among their native subjects may also support the theory that the foreigners stimulated the adoption of foreign martial arts or methods, as well as the sword in the purpose of improving the natives' fighting capabilities.

Kalis, as a type of sword, can still be seen until this day in the cultures of the Maranao, Maguindanaon, and the Tausug. The said blade has a clear connection to the *keris* of Malaysia and Indonesia, the latter of which is the etymological origin of the Westernized term *kris*. This connection is supported by economic and political ties between the Philippine archipelago and the islands of Malaysia and Indonesia that existed prior to the arrival of the Europeans²⁷⁸. Considering that the Ibanag also had access to direct coastal trading, this may support *kalî*'s potential pre-Hispanic origin. Considering these trade networks and spheres of influence, the geographic diffusion of *kalis* – the actual material and custom of sword fighting, or perhaps the term only, may have well reached Ibanag lands without Spanish involvement.

While more research is clearly needed in identifying whether the origins of *pakkali-kalî* are pre-colonial, the possibility of it being a mix of native and Spanish influences just like most of the various extant systems and styles of *arnis* or *eskrima* or *kali* could also be considered. It can be observed today that there is no publicly known *arnis* style or lineage, codified or otherwise, that is

²⁷⁷ Lasco, Lorenz, "Kalis - The Precolonial Fighting Art of the Philippines," *Dalumat eJournal*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (2011): https://www.academia.edu/7785019/Kali_The_Precolonial_Fighting_Art_of_the_Philippines

²⁷⁸ Scott, *Barangay*, 148.

native to the Ibanag territories, as far as ongoing inquiries have yielded. If indeed such a system exists, it is significantly unknown even in local communities.

Conclusion

It can be said that the scarcity of primary resource materials resulted in the analysis of texts as being limited itself, despite cross-referencing them with supplemental and supporting sources and materials as well as surviving terms in the present Ibanag vocabulary. This led the course of the study to become open-ended and subject to additions, or perhaps rectifications until further references have been made available, as other potential sources can possibly be found in materials other than those of Spanish authorship. Nonetheless, until means to access Chinese, Japanese, or Malay archives and references become less rigid than it is considered at the present, existing and exhausted materials on hand can still undergo further analysis and study. Nevertheless, the breadth of less known information that is pre-colonial Ibanag warfare and weaponry, which was brought to public knowledge, can still be considered as a significant development. This is mainly due to the digitization and resulting ease of accessibility of actual colonial period resource materials, of which a number still await, as references and subjects of future studies. In terms of visualization of pre-colonial Ibanag materials and culture presented in this paper, one need not imagine out of nothingness but instead look to the neighboring highland ethno-linguistic groups. Comparison of material and intangible culture, as well as language has shown that similarities exist between the pre-colonial Ibanag and the nearby Cordillerans in terms of customs related to warfare.

Despite the limits of research on ancient Ibanag warfare, the Spanish texts as credible primary sources, nonetheless confirmed the idea that warfare was a central aspect of the pre-colonial Ibanag way of life. In addition, the culture associated with warfare, indeed underscores the perception that the era before the Spanish imposed their norms and the Christian faith was a very perilous time to live in. One can only imagine the situation or feeling when one is put to the brink of death by spear or decapitation – a feeling that can be experienced on a daily basis during those dangerous times. The Christianization and subjugation of the Ibanag by the Spaniards effectively wiped out the former's native martial practices and have led to the extinction of authentic tools that functioned primarily as weapons of war such as the inalag, duppil, kalatag, and even the vutug well in the colonial period. Indeed, these implements are no longer seen today even in local museums in contrast to surviving terminology

like dutchal, ila', and watay, which are all utilitarian and continue to be part of the Ibanag way of life up to the present.

Nevertheless, the attested valor and strength of the ancient Ibanag warrior could still serve as figurative inspiration for people today, especially in trying times. This is besides the fact that knowledge on the uniqueness of the Ibanag ethnic identity, through understanding the historical culture of past generations, can instill pride and confidence to the Ibanag people living in the modern world.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX A: PHOTOS

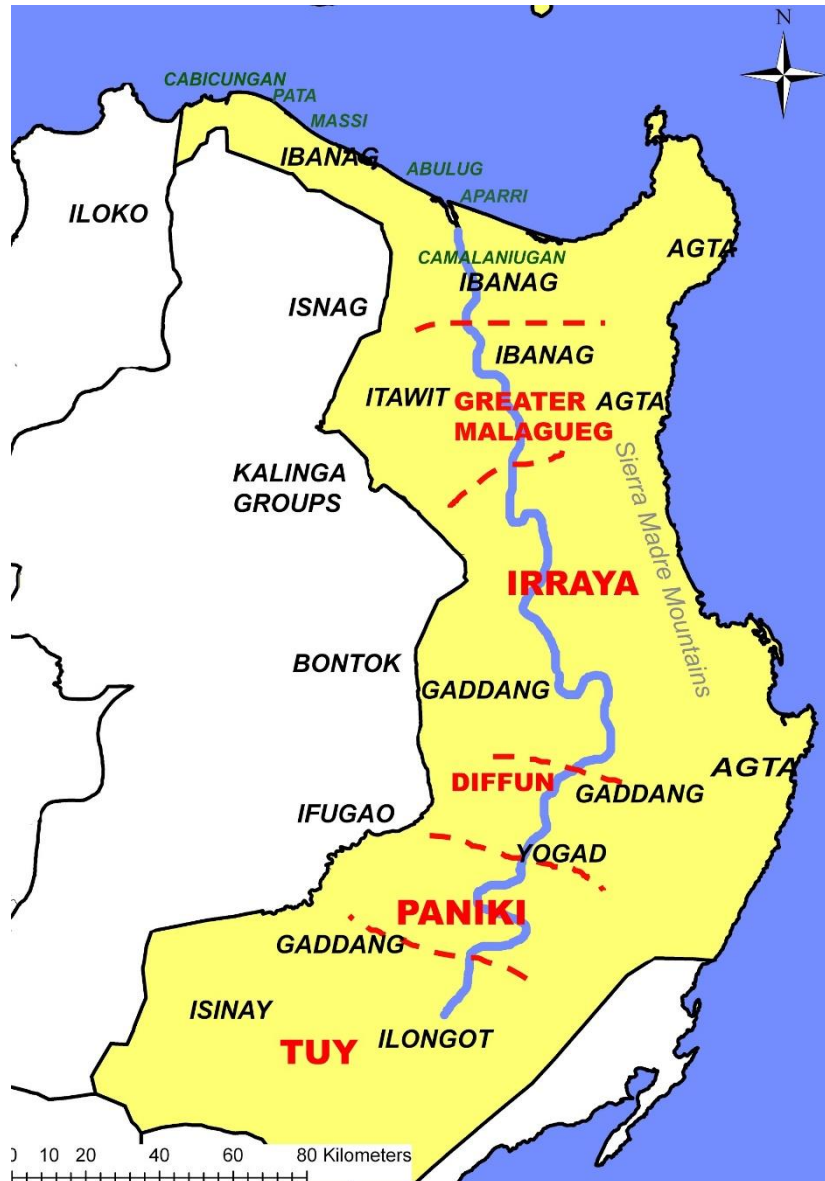


PHOTO 1:

The map shows the location of the Ibanag people at the advent of Spanish colonization. Also shown are the location of other ethnic groups (black). In red are the obsolete territories or divisions of the Cagayan Valley's lowlands. Core Ibanag territory is at the Cagayan River's mouth, which includes Camalaniugan and Aparri. According to Anthropologist Felix M. Keesing, extensions of the Ibanag territory are the northwestern coasts until the settlement of Cabicungan, as well as the greater Malagueg area. The yellow area corresponds to the modern administrative area of the Cagayan Valley Region, otherwise known as Region II.



PHOTO 2:

The photo on the right shows samples of Itawit-made head ornaments called arakarakkua. The roots of the yellow feathers of the oriole are glued to the tips of jungle rooster red down feathers. The rooster feathers are then tied to wooden pegs that are tucked in a head cloth. The Boxer Codex also relates such ornaments worn by Cagayanes chiefs but the pegs are made of gold. (SOURCE: Harold S. De la Cruz, 2021)



PHOTO 3:

The image shows a black-naped oriole in the Philippines. The bird is found in many parts of Southeast Asia as well. (SOURCE: Gwen Starrett, ebird.org, 2013)



PHOTO 4:

Bontok warriors prepare a feast after a successful headhunt in 1905. (SOURCE: L.H. Murphy, Charles Frank; colorized by Joseph Garcia, year unknown)



PHOTO 5:

An Ifugao man dances to gong music with a decapitated head in the middleground (SOURCE: Igorot... Mountain People on bramie.com, Original author and year unknown)



PHOTO 6:

Bontok warriors expecting an attack. (Source: Dean C. Worcester, *The Philippines, Past and Present*. 1914)



PHOTO 7:

The photo shows a close up of a decapitated Bontok man who was about to be buried. (SOURCE: Dean C. Worcester, 1906). The man's calf seems to have suffered a number of devastating wounds indicating that fighters possibly targeted the legs to quickly put their opponents to the ground before delivering a fatal blow – perhaps direct decapitation. It is said that the groove between the two bottom prongs of the shield locked a victim's neck in place for easier execution.



PHOTO 8:

“This picture shows Lieutenant-Governor Walter F. Hale, of Kalinga, persuading Kalinga head men of Mangali and Lubao to settle amicably a head-hunting feud of long standing” (SOURCE: quoted from the original caption by Dean Worcester, in *The Philippines: Past and Present*, 1914)



PHOTO 9:

The tarad is just one of many blade types forged in Tuguegarao. The hilts from these particular samples sport the old adornment style that uses vine wrappings as well as a sinalong style hilt. A practical purpose of wrapping the hilt is to increase grip. (SOURCE: Villa Pandayan Facebook page)



PHOTO 10:

The photo above shows a rusty late 1970's Tuguegarao blade with a shape that resembles a *bulong unas* (sugarcane leaf in Iloko) or *yusoyos* profile type from Ilocos Norte. The tang is a peened or hidden type and the hilt is made of carved wood featuring a discreet ulimaw pommel. This specimen also has an aluminum guard and an iron ferrule. (SOURCE: Jan Karl Coballes, 2021)



PHOTO 11:

The illustration of the Cagayanes in the Boxer Codex depicts the warrior as clad only in g-strings, while holding his primary weapon, a plain spear with adornments meant to be hair. He is also holding a large shield that is enough to cover his vital body parts. The spear and shield combination can be observed in many Cordilleran groups as the primary implements of war, with the ax being only for decapitating fallen enemies.



PHOTO 12:

Modern aliwas can be bought as souvenirs in Apayao province. (SOURCE: Isagaddan Crafts and Souvenirs, 2019)

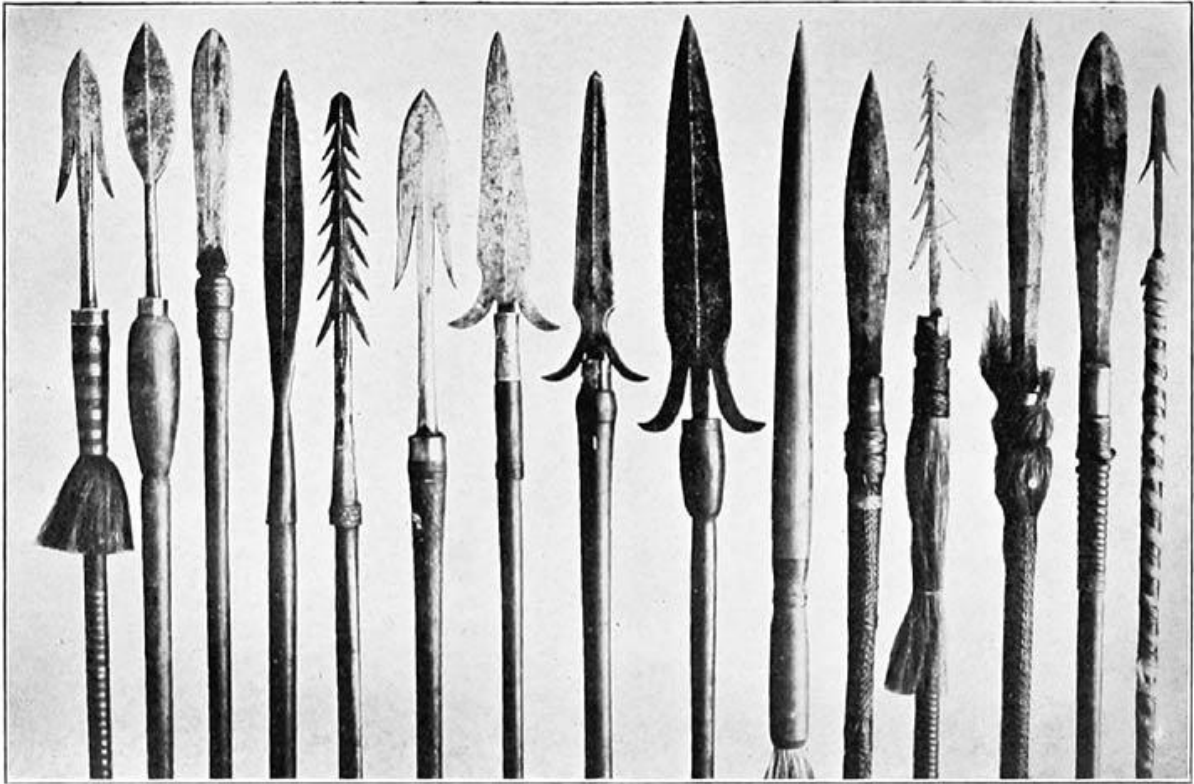


PHOTO 13:

The photo above shows various barbed and plain types of Cordillera spears, with some seemingly having hair tassels near the blade (SOURCE: Dean C. Worcester, 1906).