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DOCUMENTING PHILIPPINE PRE-HISPANIC SCRIPTS:
THE CASE OF THE KAPAMPANGAN BAYBAYIN

Joel Pabustan Mallari

Ancient Philippine Scripts and Alibata

Upon the arrival of the Spaniards in the Philippines, most of the people were already capable of reading and writing. Pedro Chirino (1604) notes in his Relación de las Islas Filipinas, "...there is scarcely anybody who cannot read and write in letters proper to the island of Manila." It can be presumed that their literacy is relatively based on the use of their own native scripts and language. The ancient "letters" or scripts were even mistakenly called for the longest time in history as "alibata" from an Arabic term /alef/, /ba/, and /ta/. It was during the time of Antonio de Morga (1904) that he thought these characters had great similarity with those of the Arabic alphabet. In the course of history the likes of Paul Verzosaa and Pardo de Tavera propagated this term without scrutinizing much of the contextual background of these old Philippine scripts (see more Morrow 2002; also refer to Appendix A). Thus the word "alibata" is not the right term for the ancient scripts. At present these almost fossilized scripts are now labeled as baybayin, bulitan, busung-kulit, panisulatmap etc. as suggested by recent research studies (see Pangilinan 2003, Hilario 1920) and the phonetical use of characters of these old scripts is similar to what is happening among the tribes of Mangyans in Mindoro (Morrow 2005; see also Conklin 1949).

Baybayin, Kulitan

The terms baybayin and baybayin actually refer to the ancient syllabary system of writing and spelling as Jose Villa Panganiban (1972) defined by his dictionary work. Early Spanish accounts usually called the baybayin "Tagalog letters" or "Tagalog writing" and the Visayans called it "Moro writing" because it was imported from Manila, which was one of the ports of the Philippine Islands where many products from Muslim traders entered." (Morrow 2002). The Bikolanos called the script basahan and the letters, ghibit while equally notable to mention is an old entry mentioned in Fray Diego Bergaño's (1860) dictionary listed as follows: "Culit, fine points in Pampango handwriting, Magculit, to learn reading its characters... Pagculitan, a little book of exercises in Pampango spelling". This was also confirmed
by Fr. Alvaro De Benavente (1699), saying that “the Kapampangan language uses the Malay characters which are common to all in this archipelago and which in Pampanga they refer to as *culit*...” These are most likely the base entries used by Michael Pangilinan and Edwin Camaya in naming and reconstructing the old Kapampangan script which they assigned as *kulitan* (or *baybayin*) (see Pangilinan 2002). Traditional Kapampangan use of the above mentioned entries generally bear the same meaning and also specifically refer to syllable and line (like geometrical or simple lines) respectively. *Gulis* is the equivalent of the Tagalog *gubit*, while *culit* is Bikolanos *gubit* as well. Kapampangan *kulit* (*culi*~), Bikolano’s *gubit* and the *baybay* equally represents the now known Philippine *titik*, the letter or character of the Roman alphabet or *abakada* (see Panganiban 1972). To date, the terms *baybayin* and *kulitan* are among the most commonly used terms by scholars of Philippine palaeography like that of the Kapampangan (Pangilinan 2002; Mallari 2006) and another is the assigned term *anas* (Hilario 1962).

As currently perceived, several of the writing systems of Southeast Asia descended from ancient scripts used in India over 2000 years ago while the shapes of the *baybayin* characters bear a slight resemblance to the ancient Kavi script of Java, Indonesia, which fell into disuse in the 1400s (Scott 1984; Morrow 2002). One good example is the 10th century Laguna Copperplate Inscription (LCI) artifact. This artifact, which is the oldest existing historical document, is said to be written in Kavi (see Postma 1992). Hector Santos (1996a) comments that “the text was in a language similar to four languages (Sanskrit, Old Tagalog, Old Javanese, and Old Malay) mixed together”, although the basis of which was not scientifically elaborated, like in referring to the so called Old Tagalog Comparatively speaking, this LCI text transcription has a lot of similarity to 16th century Kapampangan vocabularies (Coronel 1621, De Benavente 1699; Bergaño 1860, 1729) at least. However, as mentioned earlier among Spanish accounts, the advent of the *baybayin* in the Philippines was considered a fairly recent event in the 16th century and the Filipinos at that time believed that their *baybayin* came from Borneo (Morrow 2002), like the so called Malay origin of the Bisayan (Alcina 1962) and Kapampangan (see De Benavente 1699). Paul Morrow (2002) suggests that these scripts probably arrived in Luzon sometime around 13th or 14th century.

Baybayin literature

The *baybayin* had already arrived in the Visayas by 1567 when Miguel López de Legazpi reported that, “They [the Visayans] have their letters and characters
the Kapampangan language uses in this archipelago and which in the most likely the base entries used naming and reconstructing the old /itan (or baybayin) (see Pangilinan 2002). We mentioned entries generally bear syllable and line (like geometrical ±ent of the Tagalog guhit, while culit culit, Bikolanos guhit and the baybay titik, the letter or character of the 1972). To date, the terms baybayin ed terms by scholars of Philippine (Pangilinan 2002; Mallari 2006) and 2).

writing systems of Southeast Asia over 2000 years ago while the shapes lance to the ancient Kavi script of 1400s (Scott 1984; Morrow 2002). Anon Copperplate Inscription (LCI) ancient historical document, is said to or Santos (1996a) comments that ages (Sanskrit, Old Tagalog, Old though the basis of which was not the so called Old Tagalog Compara a lot of similarity to 16th century De Benavente 1699; Bergaño 1860, mong Spanish accounts, the advent a fairly recent event in the 16th that their baybayin came from Bor origin of the Bisayan (Alcina 1962) Paul Morrow (2002) suggests that me around 13th or 14th century.

All early Spanish reports agreed that pre-Hispanic Filipino literature was mainly oral rather than written (Morrow 2002). Legazpi's account of 1567, went on to say:

“They have their letters and characters... but never is any ancient writing fond among them nor word of their origin and arrival in these islands; their customs and rites being preserved by traditions handed down from father to son without any other record” (San Agustin 1998b)

Among the manuscripts in Charles R. Boxer's collection, known as the Boxer Codex, (1590), reported that:

“They have neither books nor histories nor do they write anything of length but only letters and reminders to one another... [And lovers] carry written charms with them” (Quirino and Garcia 1958; Scott 1994)

To date, only the Tagbanua of Palawan and two tribes of Mangyans the Mangyan Bukid [Bu'id or Bud] and Latag [Hanunoo to Conklin 1949] (Francisco 1973) in Mindoro still write in their own native scripts except for some of the scholars of Philippine paleography. These tribes composed various forms of poetry using their own native scripts. In some cases, ancient Filipinos adorned the entrances of their homes with incantations written on bamboo so as to keep out evil spirits (Morrow 2002). In Minalin, Pampanga, an old wood from a demolished truss member of the centuries old Sta. Monica church was found to have such incision of baybayin (fig. 1.0).
Figure 1.0
Minalin Wood Inscription

This fragment is one of the few remnants left and is now kept inside the museum of the said church's convent. One of the surface ends of this wood contains a very brief incision of old scripts. The old scripts resemble much of the old Kapampangan and Sambal scripts recorded in the Estudio delos Antiguos Alfabetos Filipinos. The scripts may suggest a technical label of a carpenter's plan of construction, or it may have been a part of marking the type of timber being classified.

On the other hand, there are at least four widely recognized artifacts that are evidence of early "Filipino writing" - the silver paleograph and ivory seal found in Butuan, the earthenware pot from Calatagan, Batangas and the most significant of all, the LCI artifact from Laguna de Bay dated 900 A.D (Postma 1992; Santos 1996a; Francisco 1973). Although all of the above-mentioned artifacts having ancient evidence of Philippine pre-Hispanic writings, do not have secured archaeological context (Bautista 2007).

During the Spanish Period, Filipinos started to write on paper. They kept records of their property and their financial transactions, and Fr. Marcelo de Ribadeneira said in his 1601 Historia de las isles del archipélago Filipina... that the early Filipino Christians made little notebooks in which they wrote, "in their characters or letters" the lessons they were taught in church (Scott 1994). This is the same with what Fr. Diego Bergaño (1860) recorded as the pagculitan, "a little book of exercises in Pampango spelling..."

To take advantage of the native's literacy, religious authorities published several books containing baybayin text. The first of these was the Doctrina Christiana, en lengua española y tagala printed in 1593. The Tagalog text was based mainly on a manuscript written by Fr. Juan de Placencia (1903, 1975).
Baybayin styles and variations

In Pampanga, there are at least three sets of old Kapampangan scripts recorded during the Spanish colonial period. Copies of these can be found in the book of Cipriano Marcilla (1895), the Estudio delos Antiguos Alfabetos Filipinos, like the copies made by Fray Alvaro de Benavente (1699), Alfred March (1887) and Sinibaldo De Mas (1843 and 1863) (Table 1.0).

Table 1.0

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<tr>
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All sets are composed of 14 characters (see also De Benavente 1699) which are variously classified by present palaeography scholars. Three of these characters are assigned as sinala, the vowel equivalents for /a/, /i/, and /u/ according to Pangilinan (2002), which Zoilo Hilario (1962) refers to as kakatni and the remaining forms as mikikutni (Hilario 1962). Fr. Alvaro De Benavente's (1699) Arte y Vocabulario De Lengua Pampanga made a notable comment about these ancient characters as follows,

"The Kapampangan language has fourteen characters and, although it is hard to read them, this must not be looked at as a defect, but rather as a creative contribution of the one who recorded them and explained them, because, without adding anything to them, one can write and read them perfectly well, as affirmed and rightly affirmed by Our Father Friar Alonso de Mentrida in his Visayan Grammar, where he attributes the recording, explaining and propagating of this native system of writing to Father Friar Francisco Lopez, author of the Ilocano Grammar..."
On the other hand, Paul Morrow (2005) made a good compilation and significant comments about these various baybayin of the Philippines. He presented a comparative chart summarizing some of the baybayin forms based from available sources (refer to Appendix B).

Paul Morrow (2005) cited the two sources for the Kapampangan samples. One from Bergaño’s 1732 edition of the *Bocabulario* printed in 1860. According to him (Morrow 2005) the first sample set is from the Angeles University Foundation papers on Kapampangan Linguistics. Although as to the present knowledge of the author no available chart or any documented data regarding this old character is found on the Bergaño (1860) document. The second set is from the reproduction of Sinibaldo de Mas’ chart in William Henry Scott’s 1994 *Barangay, Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society*. To date, a recently translated version of Fray Alvaro De Benavente’s (1699) *Arte Y Vocabulario De Lengua Pampanga*, provided good samples of Kapampangan old calligraphy of the (table 3.0).

Table 2.0  
The Kapampangan characters and their Romanized system equivalents  
(After De Benavente 1699)
MALLARI

DOCUMENTING PHILIPPINE PRE-HISPANIC SCRIPTS

**Methods, materials and technique of writing**

In China and Japan, calligraphy has for many centuries been a highly respected art form, and is considered at par with painting. That is, the same soft brush and ink, and the same light and swift technique that are used in Oriental painting are also used for calligraphy. A fine piece of calligraphy would be admired in the same way as a painting. This is not an alien art form to early Kapampangans, since they even knew a particular Chinese brush the *palis sangley*, which is clearly described as “a small pointed brush used in making little dots on a dish or platter…” as Bergaño (1860) noted. He adds that a “gulis,” is a “line, mark…to make strokes, like a painter, embroiderer, and writer…” It is in this fact that several archaeologically recovered Chinese ceramics in Pampanga bear examples of ancient calligraphy such as those found in Porac (see Beyer 1949; Fox 1960a and 1960b…) and Candaba (Mallari 2002) which probably represent identification information like dynasty or reign marks, and or kiln sites and might have influenced the manner and or style of writing of early Kapampangans.

William Marsden (1966) generally noted that the early people of Luzon “used to write from top to bottom, till the Spaniards changed it from left to right…” While Fray Diego Bergaño (1860) mentions several hints about this vertical writing direction of Kapampangan calligraphy from examples like “*Lalam, under, opposite of above… Y lalamo que yang susulat mo. Place it below what you are writing…”and; “*Tumbadic, to put something in reverse, that is, what usually is atop is placed below, like the penmanship going upwards…” Bergaño’s example suggest an opposite direction to what Marsden (1966) noted but agree to the vertical flow of writing. Discussion on whether the writing is vertical or horizontal, left to right or vice versa was also noted by Marcilla (1895). On the other hand, Paul Morrow (2005) significantly comments that

>“some observers were mistaken to believe that the *baybayin* should be read vertically from bottom to top in columns progressing from left to right because that was how the ancient Filipinos carved their letters into narrow bamboo strips. However, it was simply a matter of safety that when they used a sharp instrument to carve, they held the bamboo pointing outward and they carved away from their bodies, just as modern Mangyans do today. This gave the appearance that they were writing from the bottom upward. However, this did not necessarily mean that the text was supposed to be read that way too.”

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<td>3</td>
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*Table 3.0: Romanized system equivalents (vente 1699)*
Even Dr. Luciano Santiago (Pangilinan 2002) also suggests the vertical arrangement of these ancient characters. Besides, Morrow (2005) further comments that “although the ancient people of the Philippines did not seem to mind which way they read their writing, the clue to the proper orientation of the text was the kudlit, or diacritical marks that alter the vowel sound of the letters”. Kudlit is the Kapampangan garlit (Panganiban 1972) which also refers to the tudlik (apostrophe mark) or tuldik (Bikolano, Kapampangan and Tagalog term for accent) (see more of Panganiban 1972). In syllabic scripts like Kavi, Bugis and others closely related to the baybayin, the text was read from left to right and the said diacritical marks were placed above and below the characters (i/e was above and u/o was below) (Morrow 2005). Moreover, while the ancient Filipinos carved the baybayin on the bamboo strips, they placed the diacritical marks to the left of the letter for the i/e vowel and to the right for the u/o vowels (Morrow 2005). Thus, when the finished inscription was turned clockwise to the horizontal position since the writing material is usually composed of a piece of bamboo or bark as in the case of the Mangyan writers, the text relatively runs from left to right and the marks would be their proper places, i/e above and u/o below as what Morrow (2005) noticed (see also Conklin 1949). The positioning of these marks is similar to what De Benavente (1699) documented as follows:

“In these and in similar ones, if there are more, the u only points out that the a does not form a diphthong with the last o, and our system of writing is the same as that of Pampanga in this regard, because in this dalao which is a diphthong is written this way ‘

Similarly, pulay, which is a diphthong, is written this way ‘

The method of adding dots as diacritics is the same with the research findings done recently by Michael Pangilinan (2002) (tables 4.1 and 4.2). The use of dots as diacritics also confirms the definitions recorded by Panganiban as kudlit, garlit, tudlik and tuldik. Personal exploration of these arguments also favors the vertical arrangement of writing these old scripts like the Kapampangan baybayin based from the following observations:
The use of diacritics in expressing various vowel base sounds according to De Benavente (1699) and Pangilinan (2002) documents, reading may somewhat become hard when the baybay or kulit characters are to be written in horizontal order. Although in the earlier, syllabic scripts like Kavi, Bugis and others closely related to the baybayin, the text was read from left to right and the said diacritical marks were also placed above and below the characters (see Morrow 2005; see also Pangilinan 2004 for the discussion of diacritics used to Romanized Kapampangan).

b. The consideration of dipthongs also complicates the syllabic character spelling. Like the diacritics, the addition of another singular baybay or kulit form to another, the horizontal arrangement may project “oneness” of syllabication per horizontal line written, thus making the whole horizontal line projected to be read as one syllabicated form. Although in De Benavente’s (1699) example, per word examples are written in one horizontal line.

Since the baybayin is a syllabic writing system, which means that each letter is represented by syllables instead of just a basic monosyllabic sound as in the modern alphabet (see De Benavente 1699; and Morrow 2005). Thus the writing of every syllabicated character is presumably represented not only by singular baybay or kulit character forms but also represented by various combinations of these character forms and diacritics which consequently require individual spaces just like what is being done among “grouping” of the Chinese, Korean and Japanese characters when written.

Thus it can be presumed that the general arrangement of writing is vertically rendered. This is common to most of the native Philippine scripts which is what is still practiced by the Tagbanuas and Mangyans (cf. fig 2.0). It is very similar to the present writing system of most oriental countries like China, Korea and Japan, and that of the Indian and other Islamic calligraphy of Asia in general.

Figure 2.0
10th century
Laguna
Copperplate
Inscription
Table 3.1
Reconstructed set of Kapampangan Baybayin after De Benavente (1699), Marcilla (1895) and Pangilinan (2002) rendered using C-speedball pen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Vowels</th>
<th>Consonants</th>
<th>Consonants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>bilabial</td>
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<td>dalan árung nga</td>
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Table 3.2
Reconstructed method on how to use the Kapampangan Baybayin after De Benavente (1699), Marcilla (1895) and Pangilinan (2002) with their respective syllabic sound equivalent rendered using chiseled graphite pencil

\[
\begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\text{T} & \text{Hul} & \text{T} & \text{Hul} \\
\text{TV} & \text{Hul} (diphthong: Hul or Kayl) & \text{TV} & \text{Hul or Kayl} & \text{TVT} & \text{Hul} \\
\text{t} & \text{Hu} & \text{TT} & \text{Hu} \\
\text{TV} & \text{Hul} (diphthong: Hul or Kayl) & \text{TV} & \text{Hul or Kayl} & \text{TVT} & \text{Hul} \\
\text{t} & \text{Hu} & \text{TT} & \text{Hu} \\
\hline
\end{array}
\]
The pre-Hispanic people of this archipelago wrote on many different materials; leaves, palm fronds, tree bark and fruit rinds, but the most common material was bamboo (Morrow 2005; Conklin 1949). Points of daggers or small pieces of iron are the writing tools "panulat" (Bergaño 1860), the Tagalog "panulat" (Morrow 2005). Among the Boxer Codex manuscripts there is an anonymous report from 1590 that described their method of writing (Morrow 2005), which is still used today by the Tagbanua of Palawan and two tribes of Mangyans in Mindoro. They do not write with ink, but with some scribers with which they cut the surface and bark of the bamboo, and make the letters (Quirino and Garcia 1958). Once the letters are carved into the bamboo, it is wiped with ash to make the characters stand out. Sharpened splits of bamboo are used with colored plant saps to write on more delicate materials like leaves (Morrow 2005). When the Spaniards arrived, the Filipinos adopted the use of paper, pen and ink. The inked pen is called in Kapampangan as "quilce" [dipht: quilcy] and is "mapad susulat" (so inclined to write) according to Bergaño (1860). He even mentioned the uneasy use of the quilce by the Kapampangans. Apparently, these early quilce users are still acquainted with the supposed hard application of the old metal "panulat." In fact the arrangement of letters and the manner the diacritics are obviously rendered problematic in the printing of the first local paper book Doctrina Cristiana in 1593, since the supposed vertical arrangement of old Tagalog "baybayin" was written horizontally. Thus even the indigenization of new technology like printing which was introduced during the Spanish Period was unreadily and unconsciously absorbed through and through redefining even the local glossaries like "maglimbagan," which is “to write in blocks, like gothic letters/characters” (Bergaño 1860) used among the early Augustinian printing presses such as the one bought in Japan in 1614 (or earlier) (see Hernandez 1998, 2006).

Future research prospects and problems

To date, it is very apparent that there is a dearth of documents and study of Philippine palaeography. More research has to be done in order to understand better the present arguments based from these few available documents. In fact several artifacts that bear undeciphered ancient scripts found in the Philippines still complicate even the general understanding of "baybayin" scripts. Examples of these include the Calatagan Pot, LCI, and the Minalin wood inscription, to name a few. The case of the old scripts incised around the shoulder of the Calatagan Pot, said to exist between 14th to 15th (Fox 1959; Francisco 1973; Santos 1996b) bearing Bikolano, Ilokano, Kapampangan and Tagalog types during the period
when many of these languages have not yet been fully differentiated prove further insufficient studies. In fact, the Calatagan Pot was once again scientifically dated and produced an even much earlier date (see E. Dizon 2004) which means that the scripts are much older than what they were previously thought of. The 10th century LCI document, which was already deciphered was said to be written in Kavi. This was also said to be similar to the “mixture” of old South and Southeast Asian scripts at that time. The case of the undeciphered Minalin wood inscription also suggests another need to decipher the ancient scripts. The dawn of the baybayin in the Philippines was considered a fairly recent event in the 16th century and that these scripts probably arrived in Luzon sometime around 13th or 14th century as what Morrow (2005) suggests. Thus, a question of history and palaeographical evolution of these scripts remain a big problem to seek.

Moreover, the interchangeable use and representations of baybayin characters also complicate the history and context of study. Such notable examples is the preciseness of vowel sound equivalents that may define the exclusivity of the use of /i/ with /e/ for √ and /u/ with /o/ for 纛. It is in this concern where the proper use of each vowel sound can provide proper understanding of sentence construction like “lalaki” with “lalake” and “tabu” with “tabo”. The “lalaki” and “tabu” are usually vocally emphasized as regular or declarative types while “lalake” and “tabo” are usually identified either as interrogative or exclamatory forms. The dipthongization and pattern of evolution is another needed concern like /a+/i/ to /e/, and /a+/u/ to /o/. The relative absence of a singular baybayin character for dipthongized /e/ and /o/ suggests the aborted evolution of the Kapampangan baybayin characters probably due to its abandonment of use and adaptation of the Romanized system of writing and translation. In fact only the Kapampangan language has relatively developed dipthongs of /e/ and /o/ in the Philippines which is similar to most language groups of Indonesia (see Gamboa-Mendoza 1940). It is in this argument were the explanations of why the old Tagalog dictionaries compiled by De San Buenaventura (1613) and Noceda (1753) do not have entries beginning with the letter /e/ compared with the old Kapampangan dictionaries and grammar books (Bergano 1860, 1729; Coronel 1621; De Benavente 1699) that time.

The multiplicity of symbolic representation of some baybayin characters also requires an in depth research to explain like ☯ for /d/ and /r/ sound; and the use of aría as the same baybay character for the Kapampangan /s/ and Sambal /h/. This might explain the absence of the hard /h/ sound of the
been fully differentiated prove fur­
ther Pot was once again scientifically
(see E. Dizon 2004) which means
they were previously thought of. The
study deciphered was said to be writ­
to the “mixture” of old South and
of the undeciphered Minalin wood
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like unsubscribe for /d/ and /t/ sound;
acter for the Kapampangan /s/ and
ance of the hard /h/ sound of the

Kapampangan and their use of /s/ sound equivalent to Sambal /h/ in such a
way Sambal’s “Juan” and “puha” is the Kapampangan “Suan” and “pusa”. The
interchanging use of unsubscribe as either /t/ or /d/ with  unsubscribe for /l/ can also provide
excellent explanation of the various nuances in spelling and pronunciation of
the traditional contemporary Kapampangan language. The similarity of strokes
like the directional flow of curvilinear forms (table 5.0) can also give hints of its
palaeographic history and evolution.

Table 4.0
Chart of comparative stroke patterns of Kapampangan baybayin rendered using
chiseled graphite pencil with their corresponding Roman letter equivalent (script
samples after De Benavente 1699)

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The variation in style (calligraphic style and strokes) of each recorded
sets of old scripts found in the Philippines made no further scientific scrutiny by
ey early scholars. As in the case of the Kapampangan baybayin, various scholars like
De Mas (1843 and 1863), De Benavente (1699) and Marche (1887), their collection
of samples vary from each other with no available comments supplied. The
manual recopying and degree of literacy in writing these scripts is also another
consideration like in the case of De Benavente’s (1699) original specimens were
“deformed” on the copied version done manually sometime after 1729* (E. Santos
2007). The copied specimens appears cursive with less angular strokes (fig. 3.0),
thus making the second copy of specimens presumably erroneous.

This preliminary research compilation projects promising ground of
scholarship in the field of Philippine palaeography and historical linguistics. Thus,
the future prospects and problems presented in this paper aim to gather relevant
constructive criticisms and augmentations from other scholars and related disciplines like archaeology and the fine arts.

Figure 3.0
Copies of Kapampangan baybayin from the two versions of *Arte y Vocabulario De La Lengua Pampanga* by Fr. Alvaro De Benavente

(a) 1699 original specimen; and, (b) later copied version

Endnotes

i For Paul Morrow (2002), another common name for the baybayin is alibata, in which according to him, is a word that was invented just in the 20th century by a member of the old National Language Institute, Paul Rodrigues Versoza. As he explained in Pangbansang Titik nang Pilipinas (Philippine National Writing) published in Manila in 1939, quoting the following excerpts:

"In 1921 I returned from the United States to give public lectures on Tagalog philology, calligraphy and linguistics. I introduced the word alibata, which found its way into newsprints and often mentioned by many authors in their writings. I coined this word in 1914 in the New York Public Library Manuscript Research Division, basing it on the Maguindanao (Moro) arrangement of letters of the alphabet after the Arabic: alif, ba, ta (alibata), “f” having been eliminated for euphony’s sake.”
Morrow (2002) further comments that Versozas reasoning for creating this word was unfounded because no evidence of the baybayin was ever found in that part of the Philippines and it has absolutely no relationship to the Arabic language. Furthermore, no ancient script native to Southeast Asia followed the Arabic arrangement of letters, and regardless of Versozas connection to the word alibata, its absence from all historical records indicates that it is a totally modern creation (Morrow 2002).

ii Translated from the old Spanish text by Fr. Venancio Q. Samson as a commissioned project of the Center for Kapampangan Studies of Holy Angel University, Angeles City in cooperation with the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

iii Jose Villa Panganiban (1972) also recorded other definition equivalent of this term kulit. In Ilokano it refers to the orthographic period, in Sugbuhanon it is a carving and in Hiligaynon it refers on both definition cited.

iv Kavi, an extinct Javanese script universally used in Southeast Asia during 600-1500 A.D. Kavi is considered to be the progenitor of most Southeast Asian scripts including Lampang, Rejang, and Batak of Sumatra as well as Buginese and Macassarese of Sulawesi, one of which was probably the source of other ancient Philippine scripts. (Santos, H. 1996)

v Translated from the original old Spanish text manuscript by Fr. Edilberto Santos as a commissioned project of the Center for Kapampangan Center, Holy Angel University, Angeles City. The manuscript is a direct copy furnished provided by Fray Francis Musni from the original handwritten document personally done by Fr. Alvaro Benavente (which was put in the archives on 31 August 1782 as witnessed by Friar Pedro Bello, the Secretary).

vi Paul Morrow (2005) made a tabulated specimens of available various Baybayin found in the Philippines.

vii According to Paul Morrow (2005), this was uploaded to the Ancient Baybayin Scripts Network (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Alibata/files/kapam.jpg) by Jojo Malig and thus waiting for further confirmation.

viii Around 1750 BC, during the Shang dynasty, Chinese calligraphy emerged as a writing system in which the characters, in the form of pictograms and ideograms, are executed within an imaginary square and read vertically from top to bottom. Examples of which include various Chinese high-fired ceramics (like blue and whites) that reached major Philippines shores like coastal Pampanga which bear calligraphic art designs.

ix Part of the translated work done by Fr. Edilberto Santos from the old Spanish text of De Benavente (1699) as a commissioned project of the Center for Kapampangan Center, Holy Angel University, Angeles City.

x Fray Diego Bergano (1860) gave an example of how Kapampangans usually writes, saying that terms “pilit, mamilit, memilit” as “like writing paper full of blots of ink, or full of sketches/rough draft, or filled with blemish, dirt...” and another example description of the paltac entry saying “to variegate, to embellish, to bespatter, or mix colors, ... or the table top, on which one writes, full of drops of ink...” (Translated from the old Spanish text by Fr. Venancio Q. Samson)

xi This is according to Fr. Edilberto Santos, in reference to the printing of the Arte de La Lengua of Fray Diego Bergano in 1729.
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122
Appendix A

BAYBAYIN STYLES & THEIR SOURCES*

By Paul Morrow

Although it is commonly believed that each province in the Philippines had its own ancient alphabet, Spanish writers of the 16th century reported that the practice of writing was found only in the Manila area at the time of first contact. Writing spread to the other islands later, in about the middle of the 1500s. For this reason, the Spaniards usually called the ancient Filipino script “Tagalog letters”, regardless of the language for which it was used.

The baybayin script, as it is known today, fell out of use in most areas by the end of the 1600s. In the 19th century, historians gathered old samples of baybayin writing from various sources and locations and assembled them in comparison charts, noting the source location or language of each specimen. Most of these same historians came to the conclusion that all the variations in the letter shapes were due to the tastes and writing styles of the individuals who wrote the original specimens and not due to regional differences. In other words, there was only one baybayin. But, in the 20th century many writers copied the comparison charts into their school textbooks with little or no explanation attached. Thus most readers were lead to believe that each sample of writing was a different alphabet according to its title in the chart.

There was actually much more variation in the handwriting of individuals of any given region than there is in this chart of supposedly distinct alphabets. Compare this chart to the examples of baybayin writing on the pages, The Baybayin as Written by Filipinos and Baybayin Handwriting of the 1600s.

This is a chart of some baybayin forms and the original source of each. They are sorted chronologically and grouped by their familiar region names but they are not distinct alphabets of the different regions or languages; they are only variations of typestyles and handwriting. There are details for each below.

Source Information

Doctrina 1593
From the Doctrina Christiana, en lengua española y tagala printed in 1593. The Tagalog text was based mainly on a manuscript written by Fr. Juan de Placencia. Friars Domingo de Nieva and Juan de San Pedro Martyr supervised the preparation and printing of the book, which was carried out by an unnamed Chinese artisan. This is the earliest example of the baybayin that exists today and it is the only example from the 1500s. The sample shown is my own font based on the facsimile, Doctrina Christiana, The First Book Printed in the Philippines, Manila, 1593. National Historical Institute, Manila, 1973. 2nd printing, 1991.

Chirino 1604
From Relación de las Islas Filipinas by Pedro Chirino, published in 1604. The sample shown is from Relación de las Islas Filipinas, The Philippines in 1600. Manila [Historical Conservation Society], 1969. The letter A may have been printed backward, so I have reversed it for this chart.
Lopez 1620
From Libro a naisuratan amin ti bagas ti Doctrina Cristiana... written by Francisco Lopez in 1620 but bearing the publishing date of 1621. This example was scanned from the chart in Dr. Ignacio Villamor’s La Antigua Escritura Filipina (1922) p. 103. See Baybayin Variants for more information about this typeface and Final Consonants for information about Lopez’s modification of the baybayin.

Mentrida 1637
From Alonso de Mentrida’s Arte de la lengua Bisaya-Hiligayna de la isla de Panay, 1637. Mentrida’s font has been listed in some charts as the Visayan alphabet. However, like other early Spanish writers, Mentrida considered all the variant letter shapes to be part of one Philippine script. He wrote the following about his typeface:
It is to be noted that our Bisayans have some letters with different shapes, which I place here; but even they themselves do not agree on the shapes of their letters; for this reason, and because of the limited types available, I have shown the characters according to the Tagalogs. (Blancas de San José, Francisco. Arte y reglas de la lengua tagala. Bataan 1610. Prologo. From Rafael, 1988, pp. 45, 221).
This sample was taken from the web site Promotora Española de Lingüística (PROEL, http://wwwproel.org/alfabetos/bisaya.htm, bisaya3.gif) It was probably based on a chart by Juan R. Francisco in his work “Philippine Palaeography” in the Philippine Journal of Linguistics, special monograph 3, 1973.

Ezguerra 1663
From Domingo Ezguerra’s Arte de la lengua Bisaya en la provincia de Leyte, 1663. According to William H. Scott, the letters that Ezguerra recorded “contain what are probably engraver’s errors—for example, the use of a marginal check mark normal to Spanish usage of the time, to represent two different letters of the alphabet”. (Scott, 1994, p.95) These were probably the alternate forms of the A and the I/E and possibly the alternate form of the Da. There was no character for Ya. I have moved the alternate I/E into that position. The other alternate letters are not shown here. This sample was also taken from the web site Promotora Española de Lingüística (PROEL, http://wwwproel.org/alfabetos/bisaya.htm, bisaya3.gif) It was probably based on a chart by Juan R. Francisco in his work “Philippine Palaeography” in the Philippine Journal of Linguistics, special monograph 3, 1973.

San Agustin 1703
From Gaspar de San Agustín’s Compendio de la lengua Tagala written in 1703 and published in 1787. The sample shown was scanned from Pre-Spanish Manila, A reconstruction of the Pre-History of Manila, by Jesús T. Peralta & Lucila A. Salazar. National Historical Institute, Manila, 1974. 2nd printing, 1993. p. 78. Reproduced from Cipriano Marcilla y Martín’s Estudio de los antiguos alfabetos Filipinos, 1895.

Bergaño 1732
Possibly from Vocabulario de la lengua Pampanga en romance, 1732 by Diego Bergaño, printed in
1860. Awaiting confirmation. The sample shown here is from the Angeles University Foundation papers on Kapampangan Linguistics. It was uploaded to the Ancient Baybayin Scripts Network (http://groups.yahoo.com/group/Alibata/files/kapam.jpg) by Jojo Malig.

Hervós 1787
From Saggio pratico delle lingue con prolegomeni e una raccolta di Orazioni Domincale in più di trecento lingue e dialetti, 1787 (Practical examples of languages with prologues and a collection of the Lord's prayer in over 300 languages and dialects) by Lorenzo Hervós y Pandura. Because this book was not written specifically about the Philippines or Philippine languages, I believe that the type style is taken from an earlier source. It most closely resembles Ezguerra’s typeface of 1663. The sample shown here is my own font. It was based on two Austrian books that reproduced Cebuano text in this font, Illustrirte Geschichte der Schrift (The Illustrated History of Writing) by Karl Paulman, 1880 and Sprachenhalle (Hall of Languages) by Alois Auer, 1847. There was no letter for Wa; the U/O character was used instead in these documents. The R sound was represented by the letter Da in Bisayan words and the La character was used for Spanish words. The scans of these documents were provided by Mr. Wolfgang Kuhl.

Jacquet 1831
From Eugène Jacquet’s “Notice sur l’alphabet Yloc ou Ilog” in Considerations sur les alphabets des Philippines, 1831. The sample shown here is a reconstruction of two low resolution scans of a chart by Juan R. Francisco in his work “Philippine Palaeography” in the Philippine Journal of Linguistics, special monograph 3, 1973. His chart, in turn, was based on examples in a book by Pardo de Tavera, Contribución para el estudio de los antiguos alfabetos filipinos. The scans were downloaded from two web sites: Alibata at Pandesal by Terrio Echavez (http://alibataatpandesal.com/pilipina.html pilipinajpg) and Promotora Española de Lingüística (PROEL, http://www.proel.org/alfabetos/tagalo5.gif). Some examples from David Diringer’s The Alphabet, A Key to the History of Mankind (Third edition, 1968, p.298) were used to reconstruct the blurred images of the scans. Diringer’s source was Fletcher Gardner’s Philippine Indic Studies of 1943.

Enrile 1835
From Caracteres antiguos con los que escribían estos Naturales de la Tagalog y Camarines (Ancient characters with which these natives of the Tagalogs and Camarines used to write”), the Pascual Enrile collection 18 of the Biblioteca del Museo Naval in Madrid. (ms. 2287, doc. 32:214-214v) Photocopy provided by Dr. Malcolm Warren Mintz.

Mas 1843
From the chart by Sinibaldo de Mas y Sans in Informe sobre el estado de las Islas Filipinas en 1842 Vol. 1. Madrid, 1843. All of the examples by Mas were copied into Pedro Paterno’s chart Cuadro Paleográfico (1890). These examples are from the reproduction of Sinibaldo de Mas’ chart in William Henry Scott’s Barangay, Sixteenth-Century Philippine Culture and Society, 1994, p. 214.