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Case report

Status differentiation, agricultural intensification, and pottery production in precapitalist Kiyangan, Ifugao, Philippines

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ABSTRACT

We explore the relationships among the development of status differentiation, the shift to wet-rice cultivation, and ceramic specialization in the Old Kiyangan Village (OKV), Ifugao between 900 CE and 1800 CE. Recent archaeological investigations at the OKV have established the intensification of status differentiation associated with the introduction of wet-rice cultivation in the region. Previous models suggest that wet-rice cultivation in the region was at least 2000 years old, but current research establishes that the shift to wet-rice farming occurred soon after the arrival of the Spanish colonizers at ca. 1650 CE in the northern Philippines. For elsewhere in the Philippines, Junker (1994, 1999) argued that the emergence of social differentiation in Tanjay, Negros, in the central Philippines coincided with increases in the pottery specialization, which also signified elite control of craft production and distribution. In addition, Stark (1995) viewed agricultural intensification as one of the conditions for the emergence of craft specialization in Dalupa, Kalinga. This paper explores the models proposed by Junker and Stark to investigate ceramic standardization, agricultural intensification, and status differentiation in the OKV. Our analyses of the dimensions of utilitarian earthenware ceramics from OKV suggest low degrees of specialization in pottery production, even when there were increases in social differentiation and agricultural intensification.

1. Introduction

Craft specialization was initially thought to be related to economic changes during which specialists emerged as a group who did not need to produce their own food but could focus on their craft (Arnold and Munns, 1994: 475; Evans, 1978: 115). As such, studies on specialized production became a central theme in archaeological investigations and have been defined in a variety of ways (i.e. Clark, 1995; Costin, 1991, 2001: 275–276; Cross, 1993; Rice, 1981). Rice (1991: 263) however, argued that the concept of specialization is better understood in terms of exchange systems, rather than substituting subsistence practices for specialized craft production. Similarly, Costin (1986: 328) uses an exchange model to explain specialization, but rejects definitions that link craft production with subsistence (Costin, 2001: 334). She defines specialization as part of a production system where “producers depend on extra-household exchange relationships at least in part for their livelihood, and consumers depend on them for acquisition of goods they do not produce themselves” (Costin, 1991:4).

Under these definitions, it is apparent that there is a direct link between craft specialization with changes in economic and political

systems. In many studies, ceramic production has been utilized as an indicator of the emergence of increasing cultural complexity (Brumfiel and Earle, 1987; Childe, 1936; Clark and Parry, 1990; Earle, 1981; Evans, 1978). Archaeologists have long argued that craft specialization is a feature of complex polities and craft specialization is commonly identified through statistical standardization of specific dimensions of a particular item – standardization as evidence of specialization. A regional example of the application of this concept is Junker's (1994, 1999) work in the central Philippines, where she used pottery standardization as a proxy for elite control of craft production and distribution. She argued that this control led to a hierarchical social structure in Tanjay, Negros (Junker, 1999; cf. Peterson, 2003).

Undeniably, increasing cultural complexity was one of the conditions by which craft specialization arose; however, it is not the only impetus for the emergence of specialists. Part-time specialization has been observed among nonstratified and small-scale societies in cases when economic intensification is documented (Stark, 1995). Stark's (1995:217) investigations in Dalupa, Kalinga, Philippines, illustrated a case where agricultural intensification (wet-rice) brought about ceramic specialization, since labor needs in the rice fields would have

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affected craft production.

This paper considers Stark's (1995) and Junker's (1994) propositions for the development of ceramic standardization and applies them to utilitarian earthenware ceramics from Ifugao, Philippines. The Ifugao are a highland group that is argued to have increased social differentiation as a response to Spanish colonialism (Acabado, 2017). Junker (1994, 1999) hypothesized that specialized ceramic production was a feature of hierarchical structure in the lowlands of Tanjay in the Philippines and that the increase in specialization can be identified by increases in the degree of dimensional standardization over time. Among the Ifugao, increasing social differentiation was accompanied by the shift to wet-rice cultivation at ca. 1650 CE, soon after the appearance of the Spanish in the northern Philippines.

We follow Rice's (1991) and Costin's (1991) approaches that argue for degrees of specialization based on the ratio of producers to consumers to explain the process of specialization that took place in the Old Kiyangan Village (OKV), Ifugao, Philippines. Our analyses of dimensional standardization suggest a low degree of specialization in pottery production at OKV. Among the Ifugao, simultaneous intensification of food production systems and the unambiguous emergence of elite households appear at the same time, about 1650 CE.

Our analysis starts with the initial occupation of the Old Kiyangan Village, which is placed at ca. 1000 CE, and ends when the village was abandoned in 1832 CE. Archaeological data recovered from the OKV include utilitarian earthenware ceramics; tradeware ceramics that are identified as Chinese (Song and Ming) and Vietnamese, which are regarded as heirloom ceramics and were used as rice wine fermentation vessels after 1650 CE; imported stone and glass beads; macro- and microbotanical remains; and human skeletal remains.

2. The Ifugao

Ifugao comprise one of the indigenous ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippine Cordilleras. It is also the name of the province that is home to different Ifugao ethno-linguistic groups spread through different political subdivisions (Fig. 1). The Ayangans, Tuwali, Yattuka, Kalanguya, and Keley-i are separated by social or political boundaries, each trying to be distinct from the other yet bound by a common identity, that of being Ifugao—people of *Pugaw* or the Earthworld. The Ifugao practice wet-rice cultivation, which by definition, is an intensified agricultural system. However, Ifugao wet-rice production is driven by cultural competition over prestige rather than subsistence needs (Acabado, 2015, 2017).

The Ifugao are known throughout the Philippines and in the anthropological world for their extensive rice terraces. At the turn of the 20th century two prominent figures in Philippine anthropology began an intensive investigation of the Ifugao (Barton, 1919, 1922, 1978, 1938, 1955; Beyer, 1955). In 1924, Francis Lambrecht focused on documenting traditional Ifugao customs (1929, 1962, and 1967). In 1967 and 1980, Conklin produced the most important works on the Ifugao agricultural system and land use. Recent ethnographies of the Ifugao concern gender studies (McCay, 2003; Kwiatkowski, 1999), oral tradition (Stanyukovich, 2003), culture change (Sajor, 1999), and general ethnography (Medina, 2003).

3. Analysis of social differentiation in Ifugao

To understand the development and subsequent intensification of social differentiation in precolonial Ifugao, we assess the suitability of a political economy model that was applied in the central Philippines. This approach provides an explanatory tool to link economic processes (i.e., production, distribution/exchange, and consumption) and political organization. This perspective has been particularly useful to archaeologists looking at interaction networks of precapitalist societies (e.g. Cobb, 1993, 1996; Frank and Gills, 1993; Peregrine and Feinman, 1996). The archaeological record of precolonial Ifugao suggests that the

Ifugao were involved in an extensive interaction network, which could be one of the catalyst for the emergence of social differentiation in the region.

Examining the processes that led to OKV social ranking, we compare the political economy models proposed for the emergence of social differentiation and elite control in precapitalist lowland Philippines (i.e. Junker, 1994, 1999; Niziolek, 2011, 2013; Barretto-Tesoro, 2008b) with those observed in the northern highland Philippines (Acabado, 2017; Longacre et al., 1988; Longacre and Hermes, 2015), where heterarchic relationships (Crumley, 1995; White, 1995; Acabado, 2013, 2015) appear to have influenced agricultural intensification and craft production. Our investigation allows us to understand ceramic patterning that, in other studies, provided information regarding the relationship between elite control of production and the emergence of social differentiation. In our case, we hypothesize that intensified production of prestige goods did not result in high degrees of specialization. In addition, we argue that control of prestige resources, particularly the production and consumption of rice, was the basis for Ifugao social differentiation—not control of craft production itself.

Song Dynasty (960–1279 CE) stonewares and imported glass beads appear in OKV as early as the 12th to 13th century. The presence of these foreign goods increased after 1650 CE. Ming, Vietnamese, and Thai tradeware were also documented in the OKV in the later periods.

Imported glass beads with high lead content (a characteristic of glass beads produced in China starting in the early 6th Century CE [Fuxi, 2009: 8] until the Ming Dynasty [1368–1644 CE] [Brill et al., 1991]) appeared in the archaeological record of OKV as early as ca. 1400 CE. Carter et al. (2015) also documented similar glass beads in the Cardamom Mountains of Cambodia in the 15th century CE. In addition, the appearance of the Chinese glass beads was accompanied by stoneware ceramics (Acabado, 2017), suggesting an increase in the demand for imported goods.

The appearance of wet-rice soon after 1650 CE and an increase in imported items were accompanied by intensification of rituals and feasts, as supported by a surge in prestige and ritual fauna in the archaeological record (Lapeña and Acabado, 2017). Thus, status among the Ifugao during this period was tied to access to foreign goods and capability to control the production and distribution of wet-rice.

3.1. The indigenous concept of elite status

The concept of elite status in precapitalist lowland Philippines was based on potency or charisma (Bentley, 1986; Blanc-Szanton, 1990), which is archaeologically visible in high-status goods or prestige goods (Bacus, 1999; Barretto-Tesoro, 2008b; Junker, 1999). Prestige goods include foreign ceramics (Bacus, 1996, 1999, 2002; Junker, 1999), gold items (Barretto-Tesoro, 2013; Plasencia, 1589), and talismans. High status was also manifested in heavily tattooed male bodies related to headhunting and raiding activities (Scott, 1994). Tattooing among females was for beauty or to signify their high status. Junker (1999) identified Chinese ceramics to be commonly associated with elite zones in Tanjay. Barretto-Tesoro (2008b, 2009) and others (Reyes, 2010; Salazar, 2004; Scott, 1994) noted that symbols such as solar motifs, reptiles, and birds related to cosmology found on ceramics, textiles, coffins, ornaments, and body art also indicate high status. Junker's concept of elite status was tied to controlling the political economy while Barretto-Tesoro's elite category was connected to the socio-religious life of the community. Despite different approaches, both Junker and Barretto-Tesoro see evidence that elites restricted the circulation and possession of objects linked to a socio-political-economic ideology.

Among the ethnographic Ifugao three social statuses are recognized: the *kadangyan*, *natumok*, and *nawotwot*. These statuses are still recognized today even with the assimilation of the Ifugao into the market economy. The ranks were also mentioned in the Ifugao romantic tales, the *Hudhud*, which is assumed to be at least two centuries old (Lambrecht, 1967; Scott, 1994). The *Hudhud* refers to the wealthy

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