

# Ifugao Archaeology

## Collaborative and Indigenous Archaeology in the Northern Philippines

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The relationship between archaeologists and the communities that they work with has often been tenuous. Establishing a strong rapport with community members can be hampered by relatively short field time, limited interactions between the researchers and the community, and unequal power relations. The relationship further erodes when access and curation of artifacts are restricted,

particularly when it involves ancestral remains. The fragility of the relationship is particularly highlighted when archaeological findings question the accepted history and the basis of ethnic identity. This concern requires an approach that will mitigate the impacts of such research findings in the relationship between archaeologists and communities.

### ABSTRACT

Recent trends in the practice of archaeology have seen the emergence of the active involvement of stakeholders in the research process. This is an important development, given that the relationship between archaeologists and the communities that they work with has been tenuous, particularly when archaeological findings contest ethnic identities. As a case in point, the findings of the Ifugao Archaeological Project (Philippines) question the bases of Ifugao identity. Ifugao identity is centered on wet-rice production and resistance to colonialism. Previously, the dating of the inception of the Ifugao rice terraces was placed at 2,000 years ago. The findings of the Ifugao Archaeological Project (IAP), however, suggest that the construction of the terraces coincided with the arrival of the Spanish in the northern Philippines. Initially, this finding did not sit well with the larger Ifugao descendant communities, but, as our article narrates, the pursuit to actively involve stakeholders in the research process resolved this issue. Our experience in Ifugao has shown that the inclusion of the voices of stakeholders in the interpretation of the past is inadequate because it suggests that indigenous stakeholders are simply contributors to, and not co-investigators of, research projects. As our work in Ifugao demonstrates, primary stakeholders are now co-authored (exemplified by this coauthored article).

Una tendencia reciente en la práctica arqueológica es la participación activa de las comunidades de descendientes en el proceso de investigación. Esto representa un desarrollo importante, ya que la relación entre los arqueólogos y las comunidades con las que trabajan ha sido endeble, particularmente cuando los hallazgos arqueológicos tienen el potencial de poner en tela de juicio las identidades étnicas de estas mismas comunidades. Un ejemplo de ello son los descubrimientos del Proyecto Arqueológico Ifugao (IAP por sus siglas en inglés) los cuales nos obligan a repensar la historia y la manera en que los habitantes de Ifugao, Filipinas, se conciben en relación a la manera en que han sido presentados en la narrativa histórica filipina. La identidad de los habitantes de Ifugao está basada en la producción de arroz anegado y en la narrativa histórica que destaca el hecho de que los españoles nunca los colonizaron. Anteriormente se consideraba que las primeras terrazas de arroz fueron construidas hace 2,000 o 3,000 años. Sin embargo, los hallazgos del IAP sugieren que las terrazas se establecieron en una época más tardía que coincide con la llegada de los españoles al norte de Filipinas. Inicialmente, estos descubrimientos no fueron bien recibidos por la mayoría de las comunidades de descendientes de Ifugao. Sin embargo, como se verá en este artículo, el esfuerzo por involucrar activamente a las comunidades y partes interesadas en el proceso de investigación resolvió este problema. Argumentamos además que limitarse a incluir las voces de las diferentes partes interesadas en la interpretación del pasado resulta inadecuado, ya que denota que los indígenas son simples contribuyentes y no verdaderos co-desarrolladores o co-investigadores de los proyectos de investigación. Como lo demuestra nuestro trabajo en Ifugao, las principales partes interesadas son ahora también co-investigadores. Un ejemplo de ello es este artículo escrito en coautoría.

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Increasingly, in the last two decades, stakeholder engagement has been an objective of archaeological practice (Armstrong-Fumero and Gutierrez 2010; Atalay 2012:1; Lyons 2013). Community archaeology, as an inclusive approach, promises to bridge the discipline with community concerns. We consider archaeology at the intersection of archaeological ethics, practice, identity, and empowerment. As such, a number of archaeologists have called for the active inclusion of communities in archaeological practice (Atalay 2012; Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2008; Marshall 2002; Sabloff 2008). This results in a meaningful archaeology for both archaeologists and communities (e.g., Atalay 2010; Brady and Crouch 2010; Lyons 2013; Martin and Acabado 2015; Noble 2015).

In this article, we present a case study in which the community archaeology approach facilitated the negotiation between the archaeologist and descendant communities. In addition, our case study supports the contention that community archaeology can be a decolonizing methodology. We provide a narrative of a successful case in which the community had a stake in the archaeological research. Their involvement enabled them to tell their story (e.g., Acabado and Martin 2015; Martin and Acabado 2015; this article). Our work among the Ifugao of the northern Philippine Cordillera (Figure 1) challenges the received wisdom of earlier archaeologists that their rice terraces (Figure 2) were as ancient as 2,000 years old. The descendant communities had passively accepted this colonial interpretation from the dominant archaeological discourse of the 1920s and 1930s, discourses that became the foundation of Ifugao identity.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL MODELS OF IFUGAO HISTORY

Anthropologists H. Otley Beyer (1955) and Roy Barton (1919) proposed the *long history* model for the inception of the Ifugao rice terraces (Acabado 2009:802). The long history model was based on Beyer's (1948) waves of migration proposition, which was the first model to explain the origins of peoples who settled the islands that now comprise the Philippines. The model claims that different groups of people, with different biological and cultural sophistication, arrived in succession. Underpinning the model was a very specific racial typology, with each new wave of people lighter in skin tone as the level of culture got higher. This model posits that the first to inhabit the islands were the dark-skinned pygmies that he classified as the Negritos. They currently inhabit interior mountain ranges across the Philippine archipelago because, as postulated by the model, of their inferior culture. They were pushed to the mountains when a second group arrived, identified by Beyer as the Indonesian A and B. The last group, the Malays, arrived in three succeeding waves, the last group appearing just before contact with Europeans. These waves eventually were Islamized and Christianized. They settled the lowlands, thereby pushing the Indonesians and the first two waves of Malays to the mountains. The first two waves of Malays were not converted to either Islam or Christianity.

The dating of the construction of the Cordillera terraces was based on this model. The Ifugao were considered the second wave of Malays, who were pushed up to the mountains when the

final third wave of Malays settled the lowlands. Some historians interpret this model as a colonial strategy to instill among Filipinos the subconscious need to avoid confrontation: that they just move away every time a new group of people arrives. Not only does this theory propagate the idea that precolonial inhabitants of the Philippines peacefully moved out of the way of newcomers, but it also posits that all development in the Philippines itself was due to external influence.

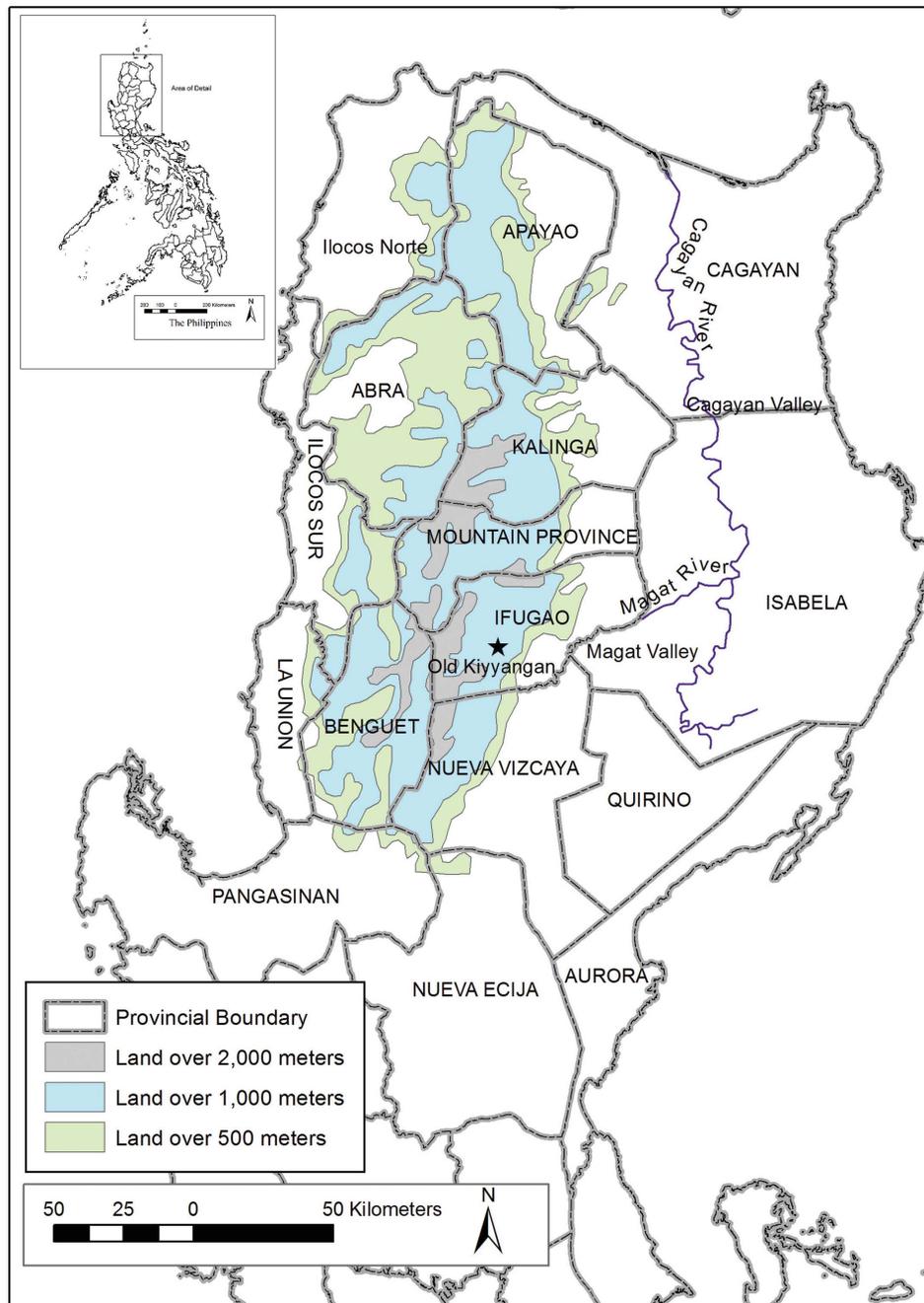
Recent ethnohistoric work and archaeological research show that the origins of the rice terraces were a response to Spanish colonial incursions after the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Acabado 2009, 2015). The Ifugao rice terraces were a pericolonial (Acabado 2016) phenomenon and became the fulcrum of an extremely resilient adaptation to Spanish colonization. Pericolonialism refers to groups who were not conquered by a foreign force, but show parallel culture change with groups who were directly colonized. Coming to this realization was a community process that engaged Ifugao villagers as players assessing the ethnohistoric literature and recent archaeological dating of the terraces.

## A CONTINUUM OF PRACTICE: FROM PARTICIPATORY ARCHAEOLOGY TO IFUGAO ARCHAEOLOGY

The processes in Ifugao mirror recent trends in the practice of archaeology that have stressed the role of archaeology in empowering marginalized populations (Atalay 2006, 2012; Colwell-Chanthaphonh et al. 2010; Little and Shackel 2007; McAnany and Rowe 2015; McGuire 2008; Marshall 2002). The involvement of descendant communities and other stakeholders in archaeological research is invaluable, especially in cases where research findings contest ethnic identities.

There is no agreed-upon definition of community archaeology, but Marshall (2002:212) characterized the approach as the participation and taking partial (or full) control of archaeological projects by community members. The approach empowers primary stakeholders to have a voice in the research project. Although archaeologists have brought the community to the forefront of the practice (for detailed discussion, see Pyburn 2011:37–38), there is a growing consensus that according some form of control to the community constitutes a meaningful community archaeology approach.

Participation of the community in archaeological projects should not be limited to consultations, given that positive impacts of archaeological research cannot be achieved without the contributions of community members (Moser et al. 2002:220–221). Effective and sustainable community archaeology actively engages local peoples in the investigation and interpretation of the past. This is achieved by continuous negotiations and forthright conversations between the archaeologists and stakeholders. The right to tell their story, either as writers of scholarly articles or as developers of heritage educational materials, constitutes the most important aspect of community archaeology. The involvement of the local people does not, however, imply that they are engaged in the excavation process itself.



**FIGURE 1.** Map of the northern Philippines with elevation information of the Cordillera provinces highlighted.

Obtaining the active involvement of the community entails collaboration. In our experience, indigenous archaeology in Ifugao emerged from this conception of community archaeology. In addition, what we have encountered in Ifugao fits into Colwell's (2016) continuum of practices (Table 1). The Ifugao Archaeological Project (IAP) started as mere participation that swiftly developed into collaboration. With the collaboration, the beginnings of an indigenous archaeology are observed in Ifugao (Nicholas 2008:1660) (Table 2).

The development of indigenous archaeology in Ifugao was surprisingly rapid. We credit this swift development to the recognition that communities are made up of individuals who have diverse interests and have differential power relationships within the community itself. Working with descendant communities means that consensus might not always be possible. The challenge is gaining the trust of as many community stakeholders as possible. In our case, we focused the initial collaboration with an established grassroots



**FIGURE 2.** One of the five terrace clusters from the Batad Rice Terraces in Banaue, Ifugao, included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. There are more than 50 terrace clusters in Ifugao.

**TABLE 1.** Five Historical Modes of Interaction with Tribes in the United States.

Colonial Control	Resistance	Participation	Collaboration	Indigenous Control
Goals set solely by archaeologist	Goals develop in opposition	Goals develop independently	Goals develop jointly	Goals are set by tribe
Information is extracted and removed from community	Information is secreted	Information is disclosed	Information flows freely	Information is proprietary and controlled by tribe
Descendants involved as laborers	No stakeholder involvement	Limited stakeholder involvement	Full stakeholder involvement	Archaeologists are employees or consultants of tribe
Little voice for descendants	No voice for descendants	Some voice for descendants	Full voice for descendants	Full voice of descendants is privileged
Acquiescence is enforced by state	No support is given/obtained	Support is solicited	Support is tacit	Support is authorized by tribe
Needs of science are optimized	Needs of others unconsidered	Needs of most parties are mostly met	Needs of all parties realized	Needs of tribe privileged



organization whose community network spans the whole province.

Establishing trust is very important in the practice of archaeology in Ifugao, since the discipline is considered a treasure-hunting endeavor by local peoples. It also does not help that the region

was the scene of the last stand of the Japanese during World War II, and so myths regarding Japanese loot abound. Every time non-natives excavate, the activity is almost always associated with treasure hunters. In addition, there is a long history of resistance and anti-lowland sentiment in the region that makes people wary of outsiders.

**TABLE 2.** Characteristics of Indigenous Archaeology.

(1)	the active participation or consultation of indigenous peoples in archaeology;
(2)	a political statement concerned with issues of aboriginal self-government, sovereignty, land rights, identity, and heritage;
(3)	a postcolonial enterprise designed to decolonize the discipline;
(4)	a manifestation of indigenous epistemologies;
(5)	the basis for alternative models of cultural heritage management or stewardship;
(6)	the product of choices and actions made by individual archaeologists;
(7)	a means of empowerment and cultural revitalization or political resistance; and
(8)	an extension, evaluation, critique, or application of current archaeological theory.

The designation of the Ifugao landscape as a living cultural landscape by UNESCO and a national cultural treasure by the Philippine national government increases the need for active community involvement. The economic and political transformations in the last 100 years have assimilated the Ifugao into the wider Philippine society. These transformations have drastically changed the way they live and how they think of themselves.

The Ifugao Archaeological Project (IAP) had its beginnings in 1997 as part of Acabado's doctoral research that focused on understanding the landscape of the Ifugao (2010). As an offshoot of this initial research, he developed a dating methodology that suggested that the Ifugao rice terraces were constructed much later than previously thought (Acabado 2009, 2010, 2015). In 2011, Acabado met with Marlon Martin, an Ifugao and the chief operating officer of the Save the Ifugao Terraces Movement (SITMo), to discuss collaborative research that eventually became the IAP. The project seemed a perfect fit since the SITMo is the leading grassroots nongovernmental organization in the region, and their mandate is to develop and implement heritage conservation programs for the then-UNESCO World Heritage Site in Danger. The IAP became a community-led project and the first of its kind in the Philippines. The development of the research project is a result of multiple meetings and discussions, as well as meetings-of-the-mind that emphasized that "it is no longer acceptable for archaeologists to reap the materials and intellectual benefits of another society's heritage without the society being able to benefit equally from the endeavor" (Moser et al. 2002:221). Although Acabado is Filipino, he is not an Ifugao.

## THE IFUGAO

Ifugao Province is an indigenous peoples' enclave inhabited by different Ifugao ethnolinguistic groups spread through different political subdivisions. The Ayangan, Tawali, Yattuka, Kalanguya and Keley-i are separated by social or political boundaries, each distinct from the other, yet bound by a common identity, that of being Ifugao—people of Pugaw or the Earthworld, a realm in

their cosmos inhabited by mortal beings. These different Ifugao groups may have slight differences in language and practices, but such variations are more exceptions than the general rule.

As a group, the Ifugao are known throughout the Philippines (and the world) for their extensive rice terraces that dominate the Ifugao landscape. The rice terraces and the people who constructed them inspired pioneer anthropologists in the country to devote their careers to the region (Barton 1919, 1922, 1930, 1938; Beyer 1955; Beyer and Barton 1911). Francis Lambrecht began working in Ifugao in 1924, focusing on documenting traditional Ifugao customs (Lambrecht 1929, 1962, 1967). In the 1960s, Harold Conklin (1967, 1972; Conklin et al. 1980) started what would be the most important investigations on the Ifugao agricultural system and land use. Recent ethnographies of the Ifugao concern gender studies (Kwiatkowski 1999; McCay 2003), oral tradition (Stanyukovich 2003), culture change (Sajor 1999), and general ethnography (Medina 2003).

The Spanish encountered the Ifugao as early as the mid-1600s, but written description of the ethnolinguistic group did not appear until 1793, when the Spanish attempted to set up a permanent military presence in the region—where they were repulsed multiple times by Ifugao communities. Description of the rice terraces did not appear until 1801, when Fray Juan Molano wrote to his superior about the presence of stone-walled terraces (Scott 1974:199), prompting Keesing (1962) to argue that the Ifugao were once lowland dwellers who were pushed up to the interior of the Cordillera mountain range soon after culture contact.

Although the Spanish never maintained permanent presence in the region, it was a different story when the American colonial government took over the Philippines in 1898. Whereas the Spanish failed to subjugate highland communities, the Americans successfully placed the Ifugao and other highland groups under their control. This was followed by vigorous assimilationist programs of the Philippine central government that continued even after independence. Initially, the primary objective of these programs was to pacify an inveterate headhunting culture and to put an end to a defiance of civil government. These programs led to the slow and inevitable demise of customary Ifugao culture.

The establishment of the American colonial administration in the Cordilleras was followed by an influx of missionaries and the formation of a public school system, with standardized national history curricula. Thus, textbooks replaced orally transmitted culture; Christian hymns and verses took the place of epic chants and ancient rituals of the old religion, which were the oral repositories of Ifugao custom, law, and history.

Community memory of the past was lost as younger generations started to embrace the dominant culture of wider Philippine society, veering away from the ways of their forebears. Renato Constantino (1982:ii) aptly described Philippine colonial psychology as burdened by "the deadweight of colonial consciousness." Similarly, modern Ifugao also carry the deadweight of the adopted consciousness forced onto them by assimilationist policies.

An example of this colonial perspective is the long-held belief in the 2,000-year-old inception of the Ifugao rice terraces. This long

**TABLE 3.** Age Estimations for the Construction of the Ifugao Rice Terraces.

Proponents	Age Estimations	Basis
Barton (1919) and Beyer (1955)	2,000–3,000 years ago	Estimated how long it would have taken to construct the elaborate terrace systems that fill valley after valley of Ifugao country
Keesing (1962) and Dozier (1966)	< 300 years ago	Absence of descriptions of rice terraces in Spanish documents before 1801; movements to upper elevation of Cordillera peoples were associated with Spanish pressure
Lambrecht (1967)	< 300 years ago	Lexical and linguistic evidence from Ifugao romantic tales ( <i>hudhud</i> ) indicate postcontact origin (e.g., firebrand – rifle); observed short duration of terrace building and concluded a recent origin of the terraces
Maher (1973:52–55)	205 ± 100 B.P.	Radiocarbon dates from a pond field and midden
	735 ± 105 B.P.	Terrace-wall dating
Acabado (2009, 2012b)	< 500 years ago; A.D. 1600	Terrace dating; paleoethnobotanical evidence

history model does not have a scientific foundation, but it has nevertheless reached a myth-like status. This model assumes that the builders of the terraces—in this case, the Ifugao—were unchanging for 2,000 years. It is widely accepted by anthropologists that wet-rice cultivation is by definition a form of intensified agriculture associated with a complex sociopolitical organization (Greenland 1997). The long history model, however, exoticizes the Ifugao by arguing that the builders of the terraces were able to construct and maintain the terraces with the barest implements and a simple sociopolitical organization. Elsewhere in the world, once the presence of intensified agricultural system is documented, it is accompanied by sociopolitical changes.

The IAP (Acabado 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2013; Eusebio et al. 2015; Peterson and Acabado 2015) provides new information that has driven us to rethink the dominant historical narrative of the inception of the rice terraces because of the complete absence of archaeological data to support the long history model (Table 3). We argue that evidence supports a more recent history of Cordillera rice terracing traditions—a short history model grounded in ethnographic, ethnohistoric, archaeological, and paleoenvironmental data.

History textbooks also maintain that, because of the failure of the Spanish to conquer highland Cordillerans, the latter were isolated and unaffected by European and lowland cultures. This results in an assumption that no substantial culture change was happening in the highlands. Thus, according to dominant historical narratives in the Philippines, unconquered peoples become emblematic of stereotypes of “original Filipinos,” a label that is ethnocentric because it suggests unchanging culture through centuries of existence.

The IAP findings in the Old Kiyangan Village (Kiangan, Ifugao) repudiate these assumptions. Acabado (2016) argues that, living in a pericolonial region, the Ifugao consolidated their economic and political resources soon after contact with the Spanish. This allowed them to successfully resist multiple subjugation attempts by the Spanish. Archaeological data from the Old Kiyangan Village also indicate active and intense contacts with lowland

and other highland groups, particularly during the Spanish colonial period (Figure 3), and demonstrate that rapid social differentiation coincided with the arrival of the Spanish in northern Luzon.

## CONTESTING ETHNIC IDENTITY

Ifugao ethnic identity is largely based on the historical narrative that the Spanish did not conquer them and on the long history model (Acabado 2009). These narratives are also the bases for labeling the Ifugao as original Filipinos. However, the archaeological record does not support the contention that the Ifugao were isolated from the Philippine lowlands during the Spanish colonial period. Although the Spanish colonial government did not establish semipermanent missions in the present town of Kiangan until the late eighteenth century, the establishment of garrisons in adjacent lowland towns in the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Isabela influenced processes in the highlands.

The colonial period in the Philippines is still considered recent history by historians and archaeologists, but to the Ifugao (and most Filipinos), it seems like a distant, disconnected past. Archaeology reconnects the Ifugao to their ancestors and gives life to generational memory, especially practices that have been lost since conversion to Christianity. As we have written in another article, “stories fade into legends, and legends become myths, then faint memories . . . then archaeology” (Martin and Acabado 2015:43). For the Ifugao, who straddle both the old world and the new, there is hope for their heritage if such interest is rekindled by their participation in archaeology. To the Ifugao, relearning stories of their past is strange yet appropriate. Broken pots and weathered bones, artifacts from unrecalled times, are pieces in a jigsaw puzzle of a forgotten past. These things pique the interest of the modern Ifugao as scientific findings complement fragments of tales from the ancients.

During the initial years of the IAP, the project’s findings were questioned by Ifugao communities and stakeholders, particularly



**FIGURE 3.** Beads recovered from infant burials in the Old Kiyangan Village. The majority of these beads are imported from China, possibly obtained through interactions with lowland traders, refuting the idea of isolation.

the finding that their rice terraces were constructed after the arrival of the Spanish in the Philippines. Since Philippine history curricula include erroneous narratives of the past, it was hard to break the false notion of the long history of the rice terraces. This initial opposition was a result of Ifugao identity intimately tied to the centrality of rice in their culture. A recent inception of the terraces becomes controversial as it erodes their ideas about the past. Their active participation in the research process, however, has slowly changed their perception of history. As research partners, they now have an awareness that their identity has been based on a colonial romanticism that *older is better*.

Since the inception of the IAP, our goal has been to involve Ifugao communities in all aspects of the research project. What started out as a purely academic endeavor has been transformed by community engagement in the research program into one of the success stories in community archaeology—akin to what McAnany and Rowe (2015) consider a paradigmatic shift in the practice of archaeology today.

As the findings of the IAP had the potential to contest Ifugao identity, the IAP and its community partners actively sought out various stakeholders in the region. SITMo took the lead in a series of consultations with civic and governmental organizations, soliciting various levels of collaborations. However, the more important aspect of stakeholder engagement during the early years of the IAP was the dialogue with elders from descendant communities who provided affirmative nods for the project, initially with about 20 community elders and leaders. SITMo then expanded the consultation to their community network. The community dialogues were a significant step in the development of community archaeology in Ifugao, as the conversations elicited interest about their past. The community consent, however, would have been ineffective without the assent of the private owners of the site. Unlike other indigenous groups in the Philippines, the Ifugao have private ownership.

Under Ifugao customary law, an owner has absolute right in her/his property; s/he can do anything with her/his land, as long as activities do not alter or destroy adjoining properties. Customary ownership in Ifugao gives primacy to private rights rather than communal rights. However, provisions in indigenous laws in the Philippines frequently ignore this fact, presuming that land ownership in indigenous domains leans toward the communal.

The initial stakeholder engagement in Ifugao resulted in the increased participation of the community in the IAP. The project also adhered to local customs, such as the invocation to ancestors and deities in the launching of the IAP in 2012 (Figure 4). More importantly, community involvement facilitated the potentially controversial archaeological findings; our community partners took responsibility for the dissemination of information and for explaining that the findings do not diminish the value of the Ifugao rice terraces. This collaboration has also stimulated interest among younger Ifugao about their history and the disciplines of anthropology and archaeology. Community archaeology in Ifugao is an ongoing process that involves proactive negotiation between stakeholders.

### Heritage Conservation through Community Archaeology

Five agricultural clusters in Ifugao are included in UNESCO's World Heritage List. Thus, conservation programs and development initiatives focus on the infrastructure of the rice terraces. However, most government agencies tasked to develop and implement heritage conservation programs in the region rarely involve the communities that are directly impacted by such programs, especially in the planning stages. By overlooking the local realities and the context of the heritage being safeguarded,



**FIGURE 4.** A *mumbaki* (Ifugao religious specialist) leads the *baki* (ritual) before the start of the 2012 field season of the Ifugao Archaeological Project.

government-mandated conservation programs effectively place heritage in danger by distorting concepts.

As an example, the *hudhud*, a UNESCO-declared Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity, has been incorporated into the curricula of local public elementary schools to facilitate the continuity of the oral tradition. However, students are taught to memorize snippets of the epic chants not for their sociocultural significance, but rather for inter-municipality competitions. These local schools also teach *culture* as synonymous to lessons on indigenous dances and ethnic ensemble, a mix of customary musical implements accompanied by songs and dances.

The UNESCO approach to the conservation of the rice terraces is similar. The importance of indigenous knowledge in the con-

struction and maintenance of the terraces is disregarded as long as stone walls appear intact and rice grows in the flooded fields. These conservation initiatives are fueled by tourism and the income generated by the influx of tourists. As such, these programs typically ignore cultural integrity, and communities that are directly involved in the maintenance of the terraces do not benefit from either the tourism traffic or the conservation programs.

The long-term conservation of this World Heritage Site requires a more nuanced understanding of the wider ecological setting, where the terraces are part of a system that involves sociocultural and environmental components. The participation of local communities in the conservation programs is also part of the bigger issue in the business of heritage conservation in the region, which is in line with the IAP's goals.

As an outcome of Ifugao community's participation in the IAP, and as the interest about learning about their past grows, a number of community stakeholders have requested that the IAP sponsor community ethnography workshops. This enables them to take hold of studies about their culture and their heritage, in collaboration with anthropologists and archaeologists. In 2015, community ethnography workshops were conducted for various stakeholders in the region. This was a major development, as mere involvement turned into major collaboration.

## SUMMARY: COMMUNITY, ARCHAEOLOGY, AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

The historically fragile relationship between the archaeologist and the communities that they work with assumes that there is a divide between the two entities. Community archaeology addresses this division and provides an avenue for collaboration. The inclusion of the voices of different stakeholders in the interpretation of the past (Bender 1998; Hodder 1999, 2000) also provides empowerment to local communities, but it can be inadequate when indigenous stakeholders are simply contributors to, and not co-developers or co-investigators of, research projects. Indigenous interpretations tell us what things mean to the people who experience them; when we treat them as mere contributors, there is a chance that the different interpretations will be polemical. When we accept them as co-investigators, then it does not become a matter of one side is wrong and the other side is right (Oona Paredes, personal communication 2016). Instead, we integrate the scientific findings with indigenous interpretations to achieve a nuanced understanding of the past.

We consider our approach to be part of a larger community archaeology that becomes influential in the interpretation of archaeological data and the application of these data to solving contemporary problems—particularly the conservation programs for Ifugao tangible and intangible heritage (Acabado et al. 2014). The negotiations inherent in community archaeology become a form of knowledge management (Byrne 2012:28), in which stakeholders discuss research questions, methods, and interpretations. In this sense, the partnership between academic entities and the Ifugao publics provides for a meaningful interpretation of the past and a decolonizing approach. More

importantly, this process applies archaeology to community needs; it is not just an academic tool.

The decision to excavate the mythical Old Kiyangan Village was a result of this negotiation. The site is now a rice field, with no signs of a prehispanic village. But because of the richness of Ifugao oral history, the IAP was able to document a premodern highland village, a first in the Philippines. Without the Ifugao community's prodding, the IAP would not have realized the importance of the site.

The IAP is only in its fourth year, but the contribution of community engagement is already manifested in the public's perception of archaeology; we now receive fewer questions about treasure, and we see an increasing interest in the science behind dating archaeological events. Various Ifugao communities are also inviting the IAP to conduct other phases of the investigations in their locales, with written petitions sent to the project directors. With all the positive impacts of the IAP's community engagement, we hope that our successes can be replicated in other areas of the world, particularly in indigenous areas.

The dynamic process that we have experienced in Ifugao is similar to the processes that have been documented among indigenous peoples in North America in the 1970s (Anyon et al. 2000; Rowley 2002) where descendant communities began carrying out scientific research on their own terms. In Ifugao, what started out as a community archaeology approach has developed into what we consider indigenous archaeology. Following Nicholas's (2008) definition of indigenous archaeology, the offshoot of the collaborative research is that Ifugao communities are taking the lead in research and investigations relating to their heritage. The involvement of the community in the practice of archaeology does not necessarily mean that community members participate in actual excavations or artifact laboratory processing and/or analysis. In the IAP, it was the intensive consultations that spurred the interest of descendant communities in their history and heritage.

The initial pushback on the revisionist short history of the Ifugao rice terraces (Acabado 2009) was resolved by focusing on explaining the pejorative assumptions of the long history model to a select group of community members. Great effort was focused on soliciting the comments and participation of these stakeholders, and, eventually, they agreed to be collaborators in the research program. Our experience in Ifugao also showed that acceptance of archaeological findings, especially if these findings are controversial, is better facilitated when community members are involved in the dissemination of the information.

The recurring question from the descendant communities is "what's in it for us?" Since they consider archaeology to be a distant academic endeavor, the community wants to see tangible contributions of the research to their heritage conservation programs. Ifugao communities have recognized the importance of archaeology in the interpretation and display of their cultural materials and ancestral remains. Understanding what is at stake results in a decolonizing practice of archaeology (Smith and Waterton 2009:81–87).

The involvement of descendant communities in the research is a continuous process. Although communities' voices are heard in

reports and exhibits, there is also recognition that the archaeologist's interpretive authority plays a stronger role in the interpretation of findings. In our case, we avoid conflict by maintaining consultations and conversations with communities. We also ask our community collaborators to help disseminate the controversial findings of the research project to the wider community.

The communities that the IAP has worked with now have a stake in the research program. In fact, the IAP has organized community ethnography workshops in Ifugao to provide Ifugao communities with training in ethnographic documentation. Community members requested these community ethnography workshops as a result of our active collaboration.

The engagement between archaeologists and descendant communities in Ifugao has contributed to a better relationship between the two groups. A meaningful community archaeology approach minimizes potential conflicts between heritage stakeholders, instead intensifying conversations between archaeologists and descendant communities. Most importantly, indigenous archaeology is borne out of the collaboration.

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## Data Availability Statement

All field notes and photographs taken by the Ifugao Archaeological Project are kept by Stephen Acabado and Save the Ifugao Terraces Movement. For access, contact the lead author at [acabado@anthro.ucla.edu](mailto:acabado@anthro.ucla.edu). In addition, these datasets will also be available through Box, UCLA's web-based cloud storage service for sharing and storing files and folders online.

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