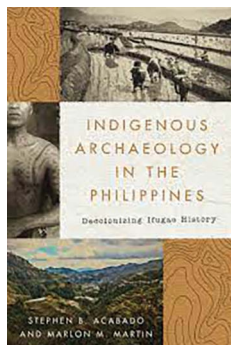


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STEPHEN B. ACABADO & MARLON M. MARTIN. 2022. *Indigenous archaeology in the Philippines: decolonizing Ifugao history*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press; 978-0-8165-4502-5 hardback \$60.



There are many publications on the overly studied Ifugao in northern Luzon, Philippines. These date from the 1900s, at the onset of the American colonial period, to the present day. The complex culture of the Ifugao people and their place in the world are topics of global interest. Studies often portray a single ethnography focused on specific communities, and these are published in academic journals and edited volumes with a specific regional focus. Stephen Acabado, a Filipino archaeologist, spearheads the *Ifugao Archaeological Project* (IAP) that, for almost a decade, has undertaken detailed and time-consuming work. The present volume is in collaboration with Marlon Martin, an Ifugao cultural bearer who leads the Save

the Ifugao Rice Terraces Movement (SITMO) in Kiangan, Ifugao. Both the IAP and SITMO have conducted archaeological research in the old Kiyangan village, which is believed to be the origin of the Ifugao people that is mentioned in their creation myths. The book demonstrates the impact of collaborative research and community archaeology on the Ifugao specifically, and on the Philippine nation-state in general.

As the authors claim, there is an expedient need to raise Indigenous voices above the dominant historical narratives that have marginalised and erased the Ifugao from colonial experiences. One of the major strengths of this book is the excellent combination of oral history supported by field research and empirical archaeological investigations. The key finding relates to the issue of the antiquity of the renowned rice terraces; these were thought to be at least 2000 years old, but chronometric dating reveals that they are much more recent, at around 200 years old. The archaeological analysis of the rice terrace system in Banaue, Ifugao, reveals that terrace building in the area dates to around AD 1585—the period of Spanish colonisation in the Philippines. Throughout the chapters, the authors assert that this indicates that earlier Ifugao generations used Indigenous rice terrace farming to resist Spanish colonisation, as this practice offered subsistence in the mountains when the Ifugao fled the Spanish invasion. Acabado claims that the rice terraces were a refuge for the Ifugao, and the ritual practices associated with wet-rice terrace farming promoted social cohesion and solidarity. Furthermore, Acabado suggests that taro production pre-dates rice farming, debunking the theory of the so-called isolation of the Ifugao Indigenous peoples when they fled to the mountains during the Spanish invasion. Instead, the terraced mountains (*payoh*) and centrality of rice (*tinawon*) in wet-rice production in Ifugao facilitated the development of further cultural elaboration. This then led to complex socio-economic and cultural practices, social hierarchy, ceramic trade, rituals, feasting, resource management and communal forest ownership distinct to the Ifugao *kadangyan* (affluent class) and the community.

The dating of the Ifugao rice terraces demystified the long-dogged myth concerning their antiquity. I recall that when the initial findings were revealed in Banaue, there was uproar from the communities. Many Ifugao depended on the rice terraces for their livelihoods and income. Clarifying the age of these terraces presented challenges to the everyday lives of the people, specifically regarding tourism-related activities: “can this new dating of the terraces put food on a family’s table?”, people asked. The careful presentation of the research in this volume, however, and more importantly, the focus on the cultural aspects and significance to the Ifugao, allows them to understand, to take pride and be empowered. As one member of the community accepted: “it is fine that the rice terraces are young”. Since then, the positive impact of the research has cascaded to the communities. This is clearly elucidated in the final chapter, which champions the rewriting of books, the inclusion of Indigenous knowledge systems in the education curricula, engagement of the communities, and the set-up of Indigenous learning centres and community museums, among other ongoing initiatives.

While *Indigenous archaeology in the Philippines* is a significant contribution to Philippine archaeology and Ifugao history, as well as an excellent example of how we can engage Indigenous peoples in long-term academic research, the authors somewhat indulged themselves with excessive correction of flawed constructions about the Ifugao to the point of redundancy in each chapter. Corrections of flawed constructs about the Ifugao by earlier scholars are found in every chapter, repeating those already elucidated in the initial chapters. A more useful consideration might have been to explore the context for these constructs. It is a given that the attempt to decolonise is inseparable from dominant colonialist paradigms, and more so that it is indeed incompatible with Indigenous paradigms. As the flow of discussions unfolds, it can be understood that Acabado and Martin’s approach is an example of a strategy in ‘decolonizing methodologies’ (Smith 2021) that can facilitate Indigenous self-determination. Chapters 1 and 2 lay out the foundation of the content of the book: the context, meaning, purpose and relevance of the findings. Core chapters, from Chapter 3 onwards, are the results of the archaeological investigations. All of this builds the connection to the content of Chapters 9 and 10 on the empowerment of the Indigenous Ifugao. The last two chapters are particularly illuminating and free of archaeological jargon, conveying a straightforward answer to the question of the present time. Decolonisation takes place in the process of ‘rewriting and re-righting’ (Kovach 2021) Ifugao history. While the decolonising process takes time, like the writing of an ethnography, both Acabado and Martin have already succeeded in empowering the Ifugao to decolonise themselves and to teach others to understand their own ways. The authors reiterate the concepts of ‘habitus’ and ‘agency’ that can restore the Ifugao in colonial history, and have opened the gates to resistance, recovery, re-education and regeneration not only of the Ifugao, but also of other Indigenous communities in the Philippines. The concluding chapter provides inspiration and encourages the young to appreciate their own culture more deeply.

The authors write in a readable manner, with effective use of anecdotes and narratives, accompanied by appropriate visual materials, including photographs, maps and illustrations, and historical documents to elucidate the points discussed in the text. Readers will also

benefit from an exhaustive list of relevant references on the Ifugao, and the inclusion of a genealogy of the literature on Ifugao and Philippine culture.

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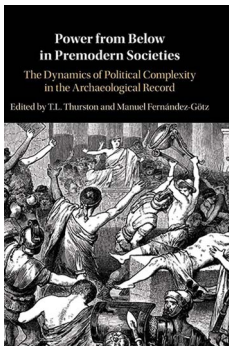
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T.L. THURSTON & MANUEL FERNÁNDEZ-GÖTZ (ed.). 2022. *Power from below in premodern societies: the dynamics of political complexity in the archaeological record*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 978-1-31651-539-6 hardback £75.00.



In 1979, Carole Crumley published a paper on settlement and land-use across three millennia in southern Burgundy, in which she made a clear, convincing and passionate argument that archaeological process can only be understood if archaeologists work from the premise of complexity, assume that societies will be dynamic, and take account of both time and space in interpreting how and why change occurs (Crumley 1979). She went on to explain the inadequacies of conventional models, in terms of hierarchy, for meeting those criteria and interpreting the evidence of that study. Hierarchy could not account for relationships that were never structured in terms of rank, in which ranking was mutable, and in which relationships between organisational elements were dynamic. Her new, alternative proposition of heterarchy—elements within an organisational structure that are unranked in relation to each other, or may be ranked dynamically, that is, in a number of ways “depending on systemic requirements”—has steadily grown in influence over the following 43 years (Crumley 1979: 144). T.L. Thurston and Manuel Fernández-Götz’s handsome edited volume on archaeologies of power may, as she suggests in her Preface, represent a substantive paradigm shift away from hierarchy towards heterarchy’s more inclusive conceptual approach.

The book itself is a pleasure to handle. It is beautifully presented in hardback, printed on high quality paper, with an attractive layout and clearly printed figures in black and white. Each chapter is well-argued, thoughtful and stimulating. Most authors discuss theoretical