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Burial Goods in the Philippines: An Attempt to Quantify Prestige Values

Grace BARRETTO-TESORO*

Abstract

It has always been the practice to relate materials interred with the dead as markers of status. The value assigned to these burial goods are most of the time from the value system of the researcher. However, the value systems of past cultures were most likely different from that of the researcher. In this paper, I am proposing an independent system from ethnographic analogy by which burial goods can be evaluated from an archaeological perspective.

Keywords: burial goods, prestige goods, prestige value, status, Philippines

Burial Goods as Prestige Goods

Materials found with human skeletal remains are often referred to as burial goods. They are also called grave goods or grave furniture. It is a common practice to relate the burial goods to the status of the individual. However, it is appropriate to evaluate the nature of the burial goods prior to establishing the relationships between burial goods to the individual interred [Barretto 2002]. It is possible that the goods are not even related to the dead person but to those who buried the dead [*ibid.*; Pearson 1999].

Earle [1991] defined prestige goods as wealth objects. These generally symbolize power and markers of elite status. In the Philippine setting, the elements of status associated with the elites and nobility based on ethnohistory and ethnography were gold, silver, ivory, semi-precious stones, garments of imported Chinese silk or elaborately woven cotton, flower diadems, pegged teeth, beaded and gold ornaments, iron and bronze weaponry, brass and copper gongs and drums, metal sword with wooden scabbard, imported ceramics, and elaborate tattoos [Patanñe 1996; Junker 1999a]. It has been known that these items were prestigious because, primarily, the majority of these primitive valuables were made of non-local materials and/or unusual materials. Prestige goods possessed intrinsic characteristics which were evaluated and perceived by a particular society as admirable, desirable and worthy based on the cultural function and significance of the object in that society.

* Archaeological Studies Program, Palma Hall, University of the Philippines, Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines 1101, e-mail: batanes98@yahoo.com

Some scholars indirectly discussed the topic of prestige goods in their work which mainly focused on the socio-political developments in the Philippines from the tenth to sixteenth centuries. Nishimura [1992] looking at mid-fourteenth to mid-sixteenth century Cebu, concluded that only a select long-distance trade goods were related to socio-economic and socio-political differentiation in the area. Complexity was achieved as a result of inter-regional and inter-island trade which stemmed from the need to procure food for the center since its own resources can not support itself. The administrators were required to hold feasts to manipulate the people to work, to organize and mobilize a labor force for food production and procurement activities both on land and sea as well as the manufacture of craft products, and the redistribution of these items. In these feasts, certain items such as the use of glazed ceramics exhibit the socio-political authority of the administrators. The glazed tradeware ceramics, became markers of socio-political and socio-economic statuses. Bacus [1996; 1997], studying the fourteenth-seventeenth century Dumaguete-Bacong area, concluded that local decorated earthenwares, iron, and beads had limited distribution. On the other hand, glazed Asian tradeware had restricted distribution. In addition, she stated that the decorative styles on pottery may have had an iconographic role in symbolizing chiefly elite alliances. Settlement analyses in the Tanjay region demonstrate the slow growth and development of Tanjay as the center of political and economic importance [Junker 1993a]. Within this settlement, there is variation in density and compactness of cultural materials; architectural variation of residences; elite and non-elite habitation zones; manufacturing and production areas of local luxury goods; differential access to prestige goods found in habitation and burial sites; and difference in subsistence resources. As Tanjay was the regional political and economic center of the Bais Region, and resources were redistributed from this center, Junker suggested that the lowland coastal areas and upland interior areas were engaged in an internal trade network and a tribute system that Tanjay controlled.[1)] Ethnohistoric sources recorded that the pre-Spanish societies traded with the Chinese. They exchanged forest products and other raw materials for porcelain, silk, gold, jewelry [Junker *et al.* 1995]. Coastal lowland chiefs did not directly control nor have access over these products so an internal trade with upland tribal groups was necessary to gain access to these forest resources. These upland groups traded these raw materials for lowland luxury goods which include Chinese porcelain, metal jewelry, weaponry and locally made earthenware and subsistence products, textiles, iron tools, marine resources, and domesticated animals.[2)]

1）According to Bronson's [1977] proposed settlement model in coastal states in Southeast Asia, centers were organized along river mouths. This was one of the dendritic systems used by Junker to explain the spatial organization and exchange in Tanjay. Secondary and tertiary centers were located upstream at primary and secondary river junctions. Further upstream, relatively distant settlements are producers or procurers of products from more remote areas. All settlements are involved in trading with each other.

2）According to Solheim (pers. comm. 2002), salt is one of the most important lowland products that uplanders take with them. However, this is difficult to substantiate archaeologically.

The above researches used statistical analysis and stylistic attributes to study and classify items as prestige goods. However, the prestige value of a specific object type was overlooked. To date, the initial attempt to evaluate the prestige value of grave goods in Philippine prehistoric burials was done by Barretto [2002]. This work resulted in establishing a standard by which to measure the prestige value of grave goods. Selecting parameters to evaluate grave objects, a numerical prestige value was assigned to each item. This system is an attempt to quantify prestige values of artifacts using a system independent from ethnographic analogy. For this article, I am modifying the parameters I earlier proposed.

Previous works outside the Philippines made similar attempts to evaluate status using burial goods. Alekshin [1983] compiled from previous works three methods for assessing the wealth of grave goods assemblages:

a. ↑ wealth ↑ number of objects found in graves
b. ↑ wealth ↑ number of types of artifacts
c. ↑ wealth ↓ frequency of objects in assemblage of grave goods

Burials with a high number of objects found in graves and diverse types of artifacts were considered wealthy. Burials containing rare materials, meaning these materials were seldom found in a particular site, were likewise considered wealthy. However, as Alekshin pointed out, this criteria did not consider the raw material from which the objects were made. The nature of the material will greatly affect the prestige value of the artifact. A singular object made of gold found in a burial may be more valuable than 10 porcelain objects.

Jørgensen [1988; 1992] created a formula that measures the grave value for each burial "in order to measure the relative wealth or ranks of the various graves in the cemetery" [Flad 2001: 28]. Therefore, a high grave value indicates a high degree of wealth/status. Falkenhausen [2001] has listed a range of material factors that could suggest social differentiation among the burials in Shangma, North China. These include size of tombs, tomb architecture, presence of coffins, tomb furnishings, funerary goods, and human and animal sacrifices among others.

Measuring Prestige Value

To measure the prestige value of a cultural object the following factors/criteria were selected: *raw material, source of material, and time and energy required to manufacture and acquire an object, and cultural meaning.* All of these factors are extraneous factors. The value ascribed depends on what a society perceives as worthy, desirable, and important. The production time and energy and cultural meaning are factors that are based on the technological and complexity levels, respectively, of the society.

In itself, a raw material may be deemed prestigious based on color, luster, texture, and

other physical properties that set it apart from others. The source of a material indicates the level of difficulty in obtaining it. The source could be far away and scarce; far but abundant; near but scarce; or near and abundant. It follows that if the raw material is uncommon, more energy is spent in searching for it or more energy is spent in acquiring it.

The factor of production time and energy is similar to Sue Shennan's [see Pearson 1999] analysis of grave goods of the Early Bronze Age cemetery at Branč in Slovakia. The more energy and time exhausted to acquire and manufacture an object would mean more time away from food-production activities. This means that a society enjoys enough food surplus to allow its members to procure and produce items not directly related to food production. Traded objects become more prestigious because of the more work and energy involved in acquiring them. For a society to engage in an exchange of goods, it has to produce its own goods that are equally valuable for bartering. In order to produce local goods for export, additional collecting trips for raw materials are required to manufacture the goods needed for trading. These goods are not just for the society's own use but for surplus as demanded by the trade partners. The transport and redistribution of goods and the actual trading add more value to the trade item to be obtained. Junker [1999a] mentions trading expeditions, wherein the uplanders trek considerable distances to the coastal ports or to lowland markets. Some trade objects need reworking which involves supplementary labor, thus, these objects become more prestigious. Furthermore, Junker mentions a complex intra- and inter-island trade pattern which strengthens the proposition that traded commodities demand more manpower to obtain them. Hence, trade materials become prestigious. Another trading scenario is the down-the-line exchange where exotic objects are imported over great distances passing through many buyers and sellers [Green in Kirch 1990]. Consequently, these objects become status symbols since only certain members of a society can have access to them.

The last factor, cultural meaning, is subjective. Different cultures, without doubt, endow different values to cultural materials. These values are dependent on what these materials symbolize in a given society. For this study's purpose, the objects were divided according to their utilitarian and non-utilitarian function. These functions were used because they were easily recognizable when inspecting the objects. Utilitarian objects are associated with food cultivation, procurement and storage. Non-utilitarian objects were mainly ornaments. In a society, non-utilitarian objects attain a higher prestige value because they were difficult to obtain. This is directly related to the third factor—time and energy needed to manufacture/acquire an object (see above). Luxury objects or non-utilitarian items, greatly contribute to the socio-political and cultural survival of a community. In the ethnohistoric context, these objects were assessed to be prestigious because of (a) their role in strengthening socio-political alliances in the form of gifts and tributes; (b) the belief that life continues after death in a different realm, and the objects served as gifts to the dead ancestors and gods for the dead to be accepted; and (c) the magico-religious roles of these materials in daily rituals. In specific socio-political-religious rites like forging political and trading

alliances; feastings; and sponsoring religious ceremonies, the tradition of receiving and giving tributes in the form of prestige goods demonstrates the high cultural value attached to these goods.

Based on the above, a simple table of values can be used to determine the prestige factor of a grave good. Each prestige factor is assigned values. To determine the prestige value of a grave good, all four prestige factors for a specific object must be evaluated. All four values are added, and the result will be the prestige value. The higher the numerical value, the higher the prestige value.

Application

To illustrate how the method works, grave goods from several Philippine burial sites were selected as case studies. The burial sites range from the Neolithic Period (5000–1000 B.C.) to the Protohistoric Periods (A.D. 1000–1521). Below are the descriptions of the sites and the materials recovered from these sites. Table 2 summarizes the burial sites chosen for this. It also includes the type of the burial found in the site and the time periods the sites belong to.

Table 1 Prestige Factors and Values

Prestige Factors	Criteria	Assigned Value
A. Source	Difficult to acquire	2
	Easy to acquire	1
B. Raw material	Scarce/rare	2
	Abundant/not rare	1
C. Time and energy needed to manufacture and acquire an object	Traded and reworked	3
	Traded	2
	Local	1
D. Cultural function	Non-utilitarian	2
	Utilitarian	1

Table 2 Burial Sites Included in This Study

Site	Period	Carbon-14 Dating	Type
1. Duyong Cave, Palawan	Early Neolithic Period	4630±250 B.P.	Open Pit
2. Manunggul Cave, Palawan	Late Neolithic Period	2660±80 B.P. 2840±80 B.P.	Jar Burial
3. Tigkiw na Saday, Sorsogon	Developed Metal Age	200 B.C.–A.D. 200*	Jar Burial
4. Maitum, South Cotabato	Developed Metal Age	1830±60 B.P. 1920±50 B.P.	Jar Burial
5. Panhutongan, Surigao del Norte	Developed Metal Age	A.D. 140±390	Dug-out Coffins
6. Balingasay, Bolinao	Protohistoric Period	14th–15th centuries*	Open Pit
7. Pulong Bakaw, Calatagan	Protohistoric Period	Late 14th–early to mid-15th centuries*	Open Pit

* Relative Dating

The Sites

1. *Duyong Cave, Palawan*

Dating to the Early Neolithic Period, Duyong Cave is located in the southwest coast of Palawan Island. Fox [1970: 60–64, Fig.18 and Pl.8] retrieved a skeleton in a flexed position. The skeleton was buried in an open pit which was dug in a rubble and a compact dark brown soil. The skeleton was facing down and both arms and legs were under the body. Further analysis of the skeleton revealed that it was a male adult about 20–30 years of age and 179 centimeters in height. The teeth were stained probably from betel[3)] chewing. The associated materials found with it were one polished stone adze and four *tridacna* shell adzes; shell lime containers and shell ornaments. The adzes were found along the sides of the body. Two shell disks with perforations in the center were found near the right ear. Another shell disk with perforation at the edge probably a pendant was found on the chest. It was made from the tops of *Conus litteratus.* Near the feet were six whole *arca* shells, one was filled with lime. The radiocarbon date of this site is 4630±250 B.P. The Duyong Cave artifacts belonging to the Early Neolithic Period were all made from local materials. The shell species used for implements and ornaments can be found in Central Philippines [Garcia *et al.* 1986].

Grave goods in this neolithic burial site include a shell adze made from the hinges of the giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*), and a stone adze of andesite. The shell and stone adzes would take more energy to acquire and manufacture. Since *tridacna gigas* are deep-sea species, it means that people have to dive for these. To date, only a couple of sites in the Philippines have shell adzes [Spoehr 1973; Ronquillo *et al.* 1992]. As for the andesite adze, andesite is very common in the Philippines for the whole archipelago is of volcanic origin. Furthermore, the adze's function of cutting down trees, clearing forest areas, making dug-out canoes reflect the important role of this implement in early neolithic societies in the Philippines. Shell containers are part of the areca nut-chewing paraphernalia. They are significant, perhaps more important than ornaments, because of their social role in forging and maintaining alliances and relationships in all levels of daily life.

2. *Manunggul Cave, Palawan*

The Manunggul Cave is likewise situated in the southwestern coast of Palawan Island. It is composed of four chambers and has three entrances. Only two chambers were utilized for burials. Chamber A is a jar burial site belonging to the Late Neolithic Period [Fox 1970]. This was radiocarbon dated to 2660±80 B.P. and 2840±80 B.P. The finds included 83 jade beads, 4 jade bracelets, 48 stone beads, 3 agate bracelets, 2 shell bracelets, and 17 shell beads.[4)] Shell beads were of two types: thin and flat. Black and white banded onyx beads were barrel-shaped. Some of the jade beads were polyhedral in cross-section, some were

3）The betel is a leaf chewed with the nut of the areca palm (*Areca catechu*) in combination with slaked lime and tobacco leaves.

4）Exact quantity is not known for it was accidentally mixed with those found in Chamber B [Fox 1970: 111].

rectangular while others were disk-shaped with round edges. Ear pendants of jasper and chalcedony were also recovered.

Highly decorated pottery finds include 78 jars, jar covers and earthenware vessels both found on surface and underground. A pottery coffin measuring 73 centimeters in length and 34 centimeters in width was believed to be a secondary burial. Wooden skull boxes were likewise recovered. Unfortunately, the grave goods in this site were recovered during the screening. Therefore, a grave good-to-burial correspondence can not be evaluated.

Towards the end of the neolithic phase, ornaments of foreign origin started to appear in large numbers in Philippine sites. In Manunggul Cave, Chamber A, the most prominent were objects made of jade. Other precious stones likewise found in the grave site were agate, jasper, and chalcedony. According to the *Distribution Map of Gemstone and Decorative Materials Found in the Philippines* published by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, these three gems are found in the Philippines. Jasper is a very common stone that is widely distributed all over the islands. However, all three are found outside the Palawan mainland. This confirms that all gemstones, including jade, found in Palawan were brought in. These trade items were more prestigious than the local ornaments because of their rarity, difficulty of acquisition and the additional energy needed to obtain them.

3. *Tigkiw na Saday, Sorsogon*

This primary jar burial inland site is located in the province of Sorsogon. A total of eight burial jars were recovered. Two jars had impressed designs on the bodies and its covers were made of earthenware. The rest of the jars had undecorated ovaloid-shaped bodies made of earthenware. Their covers were unlike the first two, for it was made of volcanic tuff. The stone covers weigh approximately 50–60 kilograms each. The site was dated to the Developed Metal Age (200 B.C.–A.D. 200) on the "basis of the finely chiseled groove or canal found in the stone jar covers" [Dizon 1979: 41]. Dizon believes that metal implements were utilized to fashion the grooves in the covers.

Associated materials include alkali glass beads. Dizon [*ibid.*] further hypothesized that the beads were interred with the females and the metal implements with the males. However, this cannot be cross-checked because there were no skeletal remains recovered. This is perhaps because of the acidity of the soil matrix. One clear distinction though is that beads and iron objects were not interred together. This could strengthen the claim for gender markers. Perhaps these artifacts were included in the graves with sex as a basis. This is a sexist and traditionalist view but it is the most probable reason. Sex differentiation in labor and roles is one of the basic determinants of social stratification.

4. *Maitum Jar Burials, South Cotabato*

Anthropomorphic pottery was found in Ayub Cave in the coastal area of Pinol, Maitum, South Cotabato [Dizon 1993; Dizon and Santiago 1996]. The low-fired secondary and/or multiple burial jars were made of earthenware, and designed and manufactured to look like

humans. Twenty-five pieces of restorable pottery with paddle impressed designs, cord-marked impressions, geometric and angular incised designs, or black and red paintings of scroll-S motif were recovered. Foot rims had cut-out designs. Fragments of clay shoulders, arms, and breast parts were found scattered on the cave floor.

The covers were of four types: a) anthropomorphic motif/head; b) trunconical with simple applique design; c) simple ovaloid with four ear handles; and d) trunconical with adze-shaped and round spinning shaped motif [Dizon 1993]. Those resembling human heads were classified into three types: plain, with perforations, and with red hematite and black paint (probably manganese). Facial features like ears, mouth, and chin were either appliqued or molded with the head.

Earthenware vessels, glass beads, glass bracelets, shell scoops made of Melo sp. *Cassis cornuta Linnaeus*, shell spoon, shell bracelets and a conus shell pendant, metal implements such as a dagger and a bolo were associated with the anthropomorphic vessels. The materials were all found on the surface and/or in disturbed layers. The only *in situ* grave goods were two earthenware jarlets, each found in Jars 21 and 26. One was decorated with painted red scroll designs and the other one with scroll and impressed designs. Human teeth and phalanges were found inside the jarlets.

Soot samples from an earthenware jarlet found inside Jar 21 provided the radiocarbon dates of 1830±60 B.P. or A.D. 70–370 and 1920±50 B.P. or 5 B.C. to A.D. 225 [Dizon and Santiago 1996]. The Maitum potteries have some similarities with the Magsuhot terracota figures of a pregnant woman [Tenazas 1974], engraved human figures on coffins in Benguet and ritual containers in Ifugao, and stone covers from other southern Mindanao sites [Peralta 1973; Solheim *et al.* 1979].

It would be interesting to see the restored pieces since the designs of the anthropomorphic jars were most probably images of the persons interred. Details of the designs as well as the grave goods the jars contained may suggest the status of the person interred. Jar size could also be an indicator of status. It is also possible that the persons interred in these jars and placed in this cave belong to a distinguished social group within one cultural group.

5. *Panhutongan, Surigao del Norte*

Barangay Panhutongan is found in the municipality of Placer, Surigao del Norte. This burial site is a multi-component site utilized during the Metal Age until the Protohistoric Period [Dela Torre 1996]. I will focus on the finds belonging to the former.

Sixteen dug-out wooden coffins [Bautista *et al.* 1994] associated with human skeletal remains and metal implements were recovered at an average depth of 85 centimeters below present soil surface. Some coffins were rectangular and measured about 180–185 centimeters long and 35–38 centimeters wide; others tapered toward the feet with dimensions of 140–200 centimeters in length and 37–45 centimeters in width. The wood utilized as coffins were identified by the Forest Products Research and Development Institute of the Department of Science and Technology as *Lagerstroemia* sp.; *Litsea* sp.; *Vitex parviflora*

(molave); *Mangifera* sp. *(pahutan)*; *Pterocarpus indicus (narra)*; *Terminalia* sp., and *Shorea polysperma (tangile)*. Three individuals were placed on plank biers made of five long pieces of cut *Livistoria rotindifolia (bahi)* measuring 174 centimeters long by 4 centimeters wide.

Despite being disturbed by treasure hunters, surviving grave goods include different varieties of bolos, metal spearheads, and beads. The metal implements were found near arms, legs, and chest. This level probably belonged to the Early Iron Age A.D. 140±390. Among the 16 burials, more than half were interred with metal implements. This is very interesting because the presence of metal implements in these burials may indicate the significant and diverse roles of these tools in everyday life. These roles might have included, aside from utilitarian and defense functions, representation of leadership, bravery, and skills in hunting.

6. *Balingasay, Bolinao*

Balingasay in Bolinao is a fourteenth–fifteenth century contact period burial site situated in the province of Pangasinan [Legaspi 1974b]. Based on the grave stratigraphy, this site was utilized in one time period. A total of 51 adult burials, including an infant jar burial, were recovered. The infant was interred in a brown-glazed Ming jar that belonged to the late thirteenth to early fourteenth centuries. These burials were associated with local potteries and tradewares found at the same depth near the skeletons. It appears that the vessels were placed on top of the bodies. Some of the earthenwares were local copies of Chinese wares. The tradewares were of low quality, except for a green and yellow vase found in one grave. All skeletal materials were in supine position.

This site is interesting because the burials contained rare artifacts that appear in only a few burials and always with other rare artifacts. A listing of the grave goods retrieved are as follows: bolo, dagger, spearhead, knife with impressions of wood; tradewares, bronze wires, bronze with bone ring, bronze rings, bronze earrings, bronze beads, bronze bracelet, carnelian beads, Chinese coins, glass beads, gold beads, gold earrings, gold comb, gold threadlike strips, gold pendant, stone implements, clay spindle whorls, tubular bone object, earthenware vessels, shell bracelets, shell perforated ring-like objects, shell rings, shell beads, bone bracelet, shells. Gold pegged teeth were also recovered from the site.

According to Barretto [2002], two types of elites were interred in this site. Type 1 are those burials with gold-pegged teeth. This type is further subdivided into two types, those interred with metal implements and those without metal implements. Gold dental ornamentation known as pegging was a status symbol and reflects aesthetic and social values [Junker 1999a]. Gold pegging was a practice reserved for members of more prestigious groups prior to death.

Hence, technically gold pegging is not a grave good. A skeleton with gold-pegging indicates its revered position in society. Only 8 out of 51 burials had gold-pegged teeth which suggest that the practice is not for everyone. Type 2 are those burials with metal implements but without gold pegging. Again this type is subdivided into 5 classes, depending on the

associated materials. Since data on age and sex were not available, the subdivisions in Type 2 may be related to these variables. In addition, the differences in artifacts associated with the metal implements may represent the different social groups within a bigger group.

7. *Pulong Bakaw, Calatagan*

The result of the Calatagan excavations was the best representation of the extensive trade with other Southeast Asian polities preceding the galleon trade of the Spanish Era. Among the numerous sites in Calatagan, the burials of Pulong Bakaw were chosen for study [Fox 1959]. In this site, a total of 207 graves were excavated, 95 of which were adults, 25 juveniles; 31 children; 4 infants; 2 infant jar burials; the rest have no skeletons or they were too badly disintegrated to be examined. The graves were dated late fourteenth and early to mid-fifteenth centuries. They contained Siamese, Sawankhalok and Annamese wares. Other artifacts included locally-manufactured earthenware vessels; beads; glass, gold, bronze, copper ornaments; iron tools; spindle whorls. Utilitarian vessels contained shells, fish, and animal bones. Species of cowries and shells, and sometimes deer and pig bones were found scattered around the remains. Spindle whorls were commonly observed interred with adults, juveniles, and children.

The form and quality of grave goods were indications of social ranking. Only 4 adult burials contained metal implements and only 6 adult burials had ornaments. Only 5 out of 25 juvenile burials had grave goods aside from pottery. Infants buried in jars had grave goods while those buried in open-pits had none.

There appears to be two types of prestige groups in this site. One group contained metal implements and the other group contained ornaments. No data was available on sex, it could be possible that the metal implements were interred with the high-status males and the ornaments with the high-status females. The only brass ornaments recovered from the site were found with a non-adult burial.

Non-prestigious graves contained local copies of tradewares. Chinese pottery forms influenced some local earthenware vessels. In lieu of porcelain that was considered prestigious, these local copies were often seen in burials perhaps because of difficult access to these tradewares. In some burials, a large quantity of poorly-potted low-quality porcelain was found, possibly to substitute for high quality porcelain.

The Spaniards were amazed to observe the extensive use of gold and other metals as ornaments and currency by the natives. All people, both men and women, wore gold ornaments—earrings, necklaces, anklets, bracelets. Pigafetta wrote that the natives of Butuan and Mindanao had their ears and penises pierced and filled with gold earrings and penis pins. According to Legaspi, a chief had only two pairs of earrings, two bracelets, and a chain, all of very fine gold; and “he will not trouble himself to look for anymore gold” [Legaspi 1974a]. Despite its universal appeal, gold ranked behind traded ornaments. This was perhaps because the locals regarded gold differently. “They would rather keep it below the ground than in cashboxes, because since they have wars, they can steal it in the house but

not in the ground," wrote Juan Martinez in 1567 [Scott 1994]. The Spaniards recorded the low-intensity mining operations in the Visayan Islands. This implies that gold was mined only when the need arose. According to Alcina, the introduction of the Mexican silver in the 1600s, led to a remarkable decline in gold usage [*ibid.*]. This clearly indicates a shift of preference from local items to foreign objects as symbols of status.

Summary Classification of Grave Goods According to Prestige Value

Tables 3–1 and 3–2 summarize the prestige values of the grave goods found in sites included in this research. It will be noticed that trade objects both utilitarian and non-utilitarian rank high in the prestige table. Utilitarian objects made from local items are next in the scale and are more prestigious than local organic ornaments. Local metal ornaments were higher in the scale than local utilitarian objects because the process of mining and smelting involved more work.

Generally, traded items were considered more valuable regardless of time periods than local items. Except during the Neolithic period, when it was the shell adze that dominated this time period, a time when man's activities and behavior were increasingly becoming dependent on simple but reliable stone and shell tools. These shells were the recipient of their handiwork and were transformed into exquisite accessories. Replacing the earlier adze, the iron implement—bolo, daggers, spearheads, knives—was the most valuable tool during the Metal and Protohistoric Periods. As shown above, iron was the most valuable artifact during the Metal Age. There are a number of iron deposits in the Philippine Islands [see Barretto 2002: Appendix D], but despite this, ethnohistoric sources indicate that the early inhabitants preferred bar iron, scraps, cauldrons from China over local iron [Jenks 1905; Christie 1909; Barton 1922; Cole 1922]. Smelting and casting by primitive methods proved to be difficult so they chose to use traded iron. Dizon's metallurgical research [1988] showed that iron used in making implements such as tools and weapons were, in fact, traded possibly from China as recorded. Furthermore, additional labor was expended since iron supplied from the outside was processed, forged, and reworked by local blacksmiths. The iron implements had taken over what the stone and shell adzes used to do. Small knives can be used for cutting and weaving; spears for hunting and/or self-defense; and bolos can be used to hunt animals, cut down trees [Legaspi 1974a], weed and slash plants; as a side arm and a carpentry tool. Due to its diversity as a tool, iron implements merit high prestige value compared to other utilitarian objects.

The next most valuable artifacts during the Protohistoric Period were the porcelain and stoneware. A number of local earthenware counterparts were fancy copies of Chinese pottery. It is possible that these local luxury items, were produced by the lowlanders to trade with upland and/or interior groups in exchange for forest products demanded by the foreign market [Junker 1999a]. Trade ornaments, specifically glass beads and glass bracelets were

more prestigious than local implements of shell and earthenware vessels. Shell ornaments as burial goods existed in the different time periods. Maybe the shell as a raw material endures because of its abundance in our island environment.

Table 3–1 Prestige Values Assigned to Artifacts from Selected Philippine Burial Sites

Artifact	Raw Material	A	B	C	D	E
Bolo	Iron	2	2	3	1	8
Spearhead	Iron	2	2	3	1	8
Knife	Iron	2	2	3	1	8
Dagger	Iron	2	2	3	1	8
Adze	*Tridacna giga*	2	2	1	1	6
	Andesite	1	1	1	1	4
Porcelain	Clay	2	2	2	1	7
Stoneware	Clay	2	2	2	1	7
Earthenware vessels	Clay	1	1	1	1	4
Scoop	Melo sp. *Cassis cornuta Linnaeus*	1	1	1	1	4
Spoon	Shell	1	1	1	1	4
Mortar	Stone	1	1	1	1	4
Spindle whorl	Clay	1	1	1	1	4
Handle	Bone	1	1	1	1	4
Anklet	Tin + Copper (bronze)	2	2	3	2	9
Bracelet	Tin + Copper (bronze)	2	2	3	2	9
	Jade	2	2	2	2	8
	Agate [a)]	2	2	2	2	8
	Glass	2	2	2	2	8
	Limpet shell	1	1	1	2	5
	Conus litteratus Linn.	1	1	1	2	5
	Clay	1	1	1	2	5
	Bone	1	1	1	2	5
Bead	Tin + Copper (bronze)	2	2	3	2	9
	Jade	2	2	2	2	8
	Glass	2	2	2	2	8
	Carnelian	2	2	2	2	8
	Shell	1	1	1	2	5
	Gold	2	2	1	2	7
Earring	Tin + Copper (bronze)	2	2	3	2	9
	Jasper [b)]	2	2	2	2	8
	Chalcedony [c)]	2	2	2	2	8
	Gold	2	2	1	2	7
	Cone shell	1	1	1	2	5
Ring	Tin + Copper (bronze)	2	2	3	2	9
	Copper	2	2	1	2	7
	Shell	1	1	1	2	5
	Alloy of gold- silver-copper	2	2	2	2	8
Pendant	Gold	2	2	1	2	7
	Conus litteratus	1	1	1	2	5
Comb	Gold	2	2	1	2	7
Pair of threadlike strips	Gold	2	2	1	2	7
Wire	Tin + Copper (bronze)	2	2	2	2	8
Strips	Copper	2	2	1	2	7

Table 3–1—Continued

Artifact	Raw Material	A	B	C	D	E
Lime container	Arca shell	1	1	1	1	4
Perforated ring-like shell objects	*Tridacna gigas*	1	1	1	2	5
Tubular bone objects	Bone	1	1	1	2	5
Chinese coin		2	2	1	2	7

Notes: A- Source; B- Raw material; C- Time and energy to manufacture and acquire and object;
D- Cultural function; E- Prestige value

[a)] The nearest source to Palawan in the Philippines is Bulacan.
[b)] The nearest source to Palawan in the Philippines is Cuyo Island.
[c)] The nearest sources to Palawan in the Philippines are Catanduanes and Tarlac.

Table 3-2 Summary of Prestige Values of Grave Goods in Each Prehistoric Period

Prestige Value	Neolithic Period	Metal Age	Protohistoric Period
9			Bronze ornaments
8	Traded stone beads Traded stone bracelets Traded stone earrings	Traded stone beads Iron implements Glass beads Glass bracelets	
7			Stoneware Porcelain Chinese coin Gold ornaments Copper ornaments
6	Shell adze		
5	Shell ornaments	Shell ornaments Clay ornaments	Bone ornaments
4	Andesite adze	Shell implements Earthenware vessels	Spindle whorl Earthenware vessels Stone implements

Implications and Propositions

The table of prestige values is applicable to grave goods belonging to the different cultural periods in the Philippines. However, interpretation to why prestige items were interred with the dead may differ. The table of prestige values should be refined further to include other burial features such as nature of the site, and their geographical location. I think it is very important to include a locational analysis because different sites and cultures may have different views on what is prestigious or not.

Why Study Prestige Goods?

The examination of objects considered as prestige goods may provide clearer comprehension of aspects of culture such as degree of complexity, social or group and individual identities, and concepts of wealth. The study of prestige goods can also be the first step to further investigate related topics.

1. Technology. The study of prestige goods allow us to learn the origin of the object. If the object was from an outside source, when and how was it acquired? If the material was locally produced, what level of skills are needed to manufacture the object?
2. Degree of complexity. This may give us an insight on the nature of the society under investigation. If they have the capability to produce high-quality objects, were there people specializing in the production of certain crafts? What is the degree of stratification? Were people specializing because they had the option not to be involved in food production and procurement?
3. Level of integration. The presence or absence of an object in a given site tells us of the nature of a society's interaction with other cultural groups. What cultural groups did they interact with? When and how were the types of interactions? Were the interactions peaceful (trading) or violent (raiding)?
4. Social/group identities. Did certain objects identify a group of people within a cultural group? Or how did people differentiate themselves from other groups?
5. Individual identities. Do certain objects specify social positions, statuses and roles of a person in a society?
6. Concepts of wealth and power
    a. Value given by the society to objects
    b. Presence and variation in different social, cultural, temporal and geographic spheres

    The prestige value endowed on objects always has a relative value. Since cultural groups in archaeology occupy different time depths and space, it is most likely that prestige values differ also. If this is the case in Southeast Asia, concepts of wealth and power in the region may not follow the classic concept of wealth and power in other parts of the world.

Conclusion

In this paper, I have modified a previous method of measuring prestige values of objects found in burial sites. Seemingly, a prestige value is unquantifiable. Yet this method involves the designation of numerical values to prestige values by taking into consideration several factors or criteria of measurement. These factors—source, raw material, method of acquisition/manufacture of an object, and cultural function—were chosen to be able to quantify the prestige value. This method is an independent system which can be used alongside other approaches to examining prestige goods and determining their values. My study is an ongoing process so as to include other factors such as geographical location, and types of burial among others. It is hoped that an improved and modified version of measuring prestige values will be attained in the future.

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