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Who Are the Philippine Negritos? Evidence from Language

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Abstract

This article addresses the linguistic evidence from which details about Philippine "negritos" can be inferred. This evidence comes from the naming practices of both negrito and non-negrito peoples, from which it can be inferred that many negrito groups have maintained a unique identity distinct from other groups since the dispersal of Malayo-Polynesian languages. Other names, such as Dupaningan and Dumagat, reference locations, from which it is assumed the negritos left after contact with Malayo-Polynesian people. Evidence also comes from the relative positions of negrito groups vis-à-vis other groups within the subfamily with which their current language can be grouped. Many of these languages can be shown to be first order branches, suggesting early separation from the people whose languages they first acquired. The geospatial distribution of the northern languages of the Philippines closely matches the proposed dispersal routes of early Malayo-Polynesian peoples into the Cagayan River Valley and up the Chico and Magat tributaries from which negrito groups were displaced. One lexical item that is discussed is the word for the traditionally widespread practice of head-hunting, the term for which is reconstructible to Proto-Austronesian with reflexes throughout the Philippines and countries to the south. The practice was probably associated with agriculture and not only may have contributed to the early rapid spread south of Malayo-Polynesian languages through the Philippines and ultimately into the Pacific but also was later a major factor in the long periods of isolation of negrito peoples, during which the languages they had first acquired became very different from that of their former neighbors.

Keywords

Philippines, Negritos, AGTA, AYTA, ALTA, ARTA, ATTA, Dumagat, Malayo-Polynesian Dispersal, Head-Hunting, Demic Dispersal

Who Are the Philippine Negritos? Evidence from Language

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Abstract This article addresses the linguistic evidence from which details about Philippine “negritos” can be inferred. This evidence comes from the naming practices of both negrito and non-negrito peoples, from which it can be inferred that many negrito groups have maintained a unique identity distinct from other groups since the dispersal of Malayo-Polynesian languages. Other names, such as Dupanangan and Dumagat, reference locations, from which it is assumed the negritos left after contact with Malayo-Polynesian people. Evidence also comes from the relative positions of negrito groups vis-à-vis other groups within the subfamily with which their current language can be grouped. Many of these languages can be shown to be first order branches, suggesting early separation from the people whose languages they first acquired. The geospatial distribution of the northern languages of the Philippines closely matches the proposed dispersal routes of early Malayo-Polynesian peoples into the Cagayan River Valley and up the Chico and Magat tributaries from which negrito groups were displaced. One lexical item that is discussed is the word for the traditionally widespread practice of head-hunting, the term for which is reconstructible to Proto-Austronesian with reflexes throughout the Philippines and countries to the south. The practice was probably associated with agriculture and not only may have contributed to the early rapid spread south of Malayo-Polynesian languages through the Philippines and ultimately into the Pacific but also was later a major factor in the long periods of isolation of negrito peoples, during which the languages they had first acquired became very different from that of their former neighbors.

It is well known that all Philippine “negrito” groups speak languages that appear to be genetically related to the Austronesian languages spoken by non-negrito ethnolinguistic groups in the Philippines. Explanations for this have appeared in various publications. The consensus is that while negrito peoples (at least those that

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KEY WORDS: PHILIPPINES, NEGRITOS, AGTA, AYTA, ALTA, ARTA, ATTA, DUMAGAT, MALAYO-POLYNESIAN DISPERSAL, HEAD-HUNTING, DEMIC DISPERSAL.

Table 1. Austronesian Language Groups in the Geographical Philippines

1. Bashiic	6. Inati	11. Manobo
2. Northern Luzon	7. Central Philippine	12. Danao
3. Manide-Alabat	8. South Mangyan	13. Subanen
4. Central Luzon	9. Kalamianic	14. Bilic
5. North Mangyan	10. Palawanic	

have been said to carry Denisovan genes; Reich et al. 2011) must have been present in the Philippines for a vastly longer period than non-negritos, the languages they presently speak must have been acquired from incoming Neolithic migrants from Taiwan. This must have happened no longer than 4 kya (based on archaeological dates for the earliest Neolithic sites in the Batanes Islands and northern Luzon), when speakers of Pre-Malayo-Polynesian first reached the Batanes Islands.

In that there are no longer any Negrito groups in the Philippines that speak a non-Austronesian language, we are restricted to interpreting linguistic, archaeological, ethnographic, and genetic evidence to throw light on who the negritos are. Other articles in this special issue deal with the nonlinguistic evidence. The aim of this article is to review the available linguistic evidence that pertains to negritos. Among this evidence is the terminology that negritos call themselves and others that is emblematic of their claim to an identity distinct from non-negrito peoples; comparative linguistic evidence that enables us to identify the Malayo-Polynesian (MP) subgroup from which they first acquired their Austronesian language; and what this implies about their possible locations at the time of first contact with MP-speaking people and their subsequent movements. The article also discusses the lexical evidence for head-hunting that was probably one of the factors that not only motivated the rapid spread of MP peoples through the Philippines but also led to the extended periods of isolation that have characterized the negrito peoples and resulted in the extensive innovations that distinguish many of their languages from those of their former neighbors.

Today Proto-Malayo-Polynesian (PMP) has diversified into over a thousand separate ethnolinguistic groups, over 150 of which are spoken in the geographical Philippines (Lewis et al. 2013). These languages constitute around 14 fairly well-defined subgroups, listed in Table 1 in a generally north-to-south sequence.¹

Around 30 of the languages are spoken by negrito populations today. Many of these are severely endangered languages or have become extinct within recent historic times (Headland 2010). Table 2 lists the groups usually identified as negrito (see Figure 1 for approximate locations). Each location can represent a number of different sites where speakers of the same language are spread. Minter (2010: 46), for example, provides a map showing 82 GPS sites identified as Agta settlements in her census of Agta in the Northern Sierra Madre Natural Park, labeled 6 (Palanan Agta) on Figure 1.

The number and names of negrito groups vary from researcher to researcher, depending on, among other factors, whether the group identifies itself as distinct

Table 2. Negrito Languages Spoken in the Philippines

ETHNOLINGUISTIC GROUP ^a	LOCATION ^b
Batak (bya)	Palawan
Mamanwa (mmn)	Northeastern Mindanao
Inati (atk)	Panay
Inata (atm)	Negros
Pamplona Atta (att)	Western Cagayan Province, Luzon
Faire-Rizal Atta (azt)	Western Cagayan Province, Luzon
Pudtol Atta (atp)	Apayao Province, Luzon
Abenlen Ayta (abp)	Tarlac Province, Luzon
Mag-antsi Ayta (sgb)	Zambales, Tarlac, and Pampanga Provinces, Luzon
Mag-indi Ayta (blx)	Zambales and Pampanga Provinces, Luzon
Ambala Ayta (abc)	Zambales, Pampanga, and Bataan Provinces, Luzon
Magbeken Ayta (ayt)	Bataan Province, Luzon
Northern Alta (aqn)	Aurora Province, Luzon
Southern Alta (agy)	Nueva Ecija and Quezon Provinces, Luzon
Arta (atz)	Quirino Province, Luzon
Central Cagayan Agta (agt)	Cagayan Province, Luzon
Dupaningan Agta (duo)	Eastern Cagayan Province, Luzon
Palanan Agta (apf)	Isabela Province, Luzon
Disabungan Agta (apf?)	Isabela Province, Luzon
Casiguran Agta (dgc)	Aurora Province, Luzon
Maddela Agta (dgc?)	Quirino Province, Luzon
Umiray Dumaget (due)	Southern Aurora, northern Quezon Provinces, Luzon
Alabat Agta (dul)	Quezon Province, Luzon
Rinconada Agta (agz)	Camarines Sur Province, Luzon
Partido Agta (agk)	Camarines Sur Province, Luzon
Manide (abd)	Camarines Norte, western Camarines Sur Provinces
Remontado Dumágat/Sinauna Tagalog (agv)	General Nakar, Quezon Province/Tanay, Rizal Province

^aAll negrito languages in the Philippines are classified as ISO 639-3. The three-letter codes in parentheses are the *Ethnologue* unique three-letter abbreviations (Lewis et al. 2013).

^bThe locations given here are all approximate. Kurt Storck (personal communication) states: “The Mag-indi are located in the hills west of the municipalities of Porac in the northernmost area and Florida Blanca the southernmost area. Also, there are/were the villages of Maague-ague, Lumboy, and Labuan on the Zambales side (northwest of Aglao). Mag-anchi/antsi are in the hills west of Capas in the northernmost area to Porac in the southernmost. The Abenlen are in the hills west of Camiling in the northernmost area and San Jose in the southernmost. Ambala are in the hills east of San Marcelino in the northernmost area to the hills around and south of Olongapo all the way to Dinalupian, which is not on the maps. Magbeken are on the Western side of the Bataan Peninsula from Morong in the northernmost area to Mariveles in the southernmost.” More accurate locations can be found by referring to the *Ethnologue* map of northern Luzon (Lewis et al. 2013).

from non-negrito Filipinos, whether or not the language is still spoken, and the phenotypical features of its speakers. Iraya, spoken in northern Mindoro, just south of Luzon, is sometimes classified as a negrito language, but I do not include it here, primarily because the people do not self-identify as negrito, despite the fact that according to Tweddell (1958) a number of them carry phenotypical features reminiscent of negritos.²



Figure 1. Negrito languages and topographical features of the northern and central Philippines.

In this article I first discuss the significance of the names that some negrito people call themselves and how they refer to their non-negrito neighbors. I then shall outline the linguistic relationships that each group has with other MP groups, focusing on the fact that many of these groups maintain peripheral positions, either as isolates or as first-order groups within their subfamily. Typically, the languages can be shown to maintain features of PMP that are only sporadically found elsewhere or have been lost altogether. Next I discuss the patterns of relationship with their neighbors that these linguistic relationships imply, and then offer possible explanations for these patterns of relationship. This requires reiterating the linguistic evidence for patterns of dispersal of MP languages and a refutation of the claim that it is not possible to determine linguistically how the family spread south through the Philippines. Evidence is provided that, at least for the languages spoken in Luzon, geospatial distribution matches exactly the linguistic relationships established on the basis of the comparative-historical method. It also allows inferences to be drawn about precisely where negrito groups were when they first encountered the intruding Austronesians. Finally, I address the question of what factors brought about the isolation of many negrito groups, which may also have been a reason for the fairly rapid movement of early MP groups south to eventually reach western Oceania.

What's in a Name?

What Negritos Call Themselves. Most negrito groups in the Philippines that identify themselves as distinct from non-negrito groups retain a reflex of PMP *ʔa(R)ta as their term for “(negrito) person”³ and typically have a distinct term for non-negrito person (see “What Negritos Call Others,” below). The reflex of the medial consonant PMP *R is the main factor accounting for variation in the names of groups,⁴ such as Arta, Agta, Ayta, Alta, and Atta. It provides key evidence for the MP group with which the ancestors of today's negritos associated and whose language they adopted (for a discussion of the form and meaning of this reconstruction, see Reid 1987, 1994b, 2007b). While most languages in Luzon that have a reflex of *ʔa(R)ta maintain the medial *R, Sinauna Tagalog did not, showing *ʔata* “person” (Santos 1975: 16).⁵ The form is found without a reflex of the medial *R in the Ata languages of Negros, in Mindanao (“Ata Manobo”), and most if not all of the reflexes south of the Philippines (see Blust and Trussel 2010; Clark 2009: 76; François 2013: 53). The belief among some Filipinos that “Ita,” the name used by many Filipinos to refer to negrito groups, is derived from Malay *hitam* “black” (or its cognate in Tagalog, *itim*, or in Cebuano, *itom*) is mistaken. It is either a mispronunciation of the native term Ayta (sometimes written *Aeta*), as claimed by Padilla (2000: 53), or a tagalicization of Kapampangan *Eta*, which would be a possible Kapampangan reflex of PMP *ʔaRta.⁶ Garvan (1964), however, cites Kapampangan *Ayta*.

Blust reconstructs the term as PMP *qaRta (Blust and Trussel 2010–) with

an initial postvelar stop, for which I know of no evidence, and defines the term as “outsiders, alien people” (see Blust 1972). I reject the definition primarily on the basis of the fact that negrito groups in the Philippines, most of which use the term to uniquely identify themselves, have until fairly recent times fiercely retained their independence from MP groups and reject all negative names for themselves. Reflexes of *ʔa(R)ta “(negrito) person” primarily occur in the northern part of the Philippines where they first encountered in-migrating MP speakers. The meaning “slave, servant” occurs, but mostly in contiguous areas south of the Philippines in Sulawesi. I claim that this is an innovated meaning, being the result of social and cultural developments that occurred following the initial spread of PMP.

The evidence suggests that *ʔa(R)ta was a term used by negritos for “person” and was adopted into PMP with the meaning “dark-skinned person,” during the early stages of contact. Given the evidence from modern genetic studies that there has been considerable admixture of genes through intermarriage with non-negrito groups (Delfin et al. 2011), it would appear that the Western Malayo-Polynesian languages of the Sumatra-Barrier Islands, such as Nias and Simalur, and the Central Malayo-Polynesian languages of Nusa Tenggara, such as Rembong, Sika, and Lamaholot, all of which use *ata* with the definition “person,” were originally perceived as “dark skinned” by intermarrying lighter-skinned people and have maintained the old term for “dark-skinned person” as the general term for “person,” replacing the inherited PMP *táʔu (Blust’s *tau) “person, human being.” Oceanic languages also reflect the term with the definition “individual, person, human being” (Clark 2009: 76; François 2013).

Two other names for negrito groups in Luzon are *Dupaningan*, in northeastern Luzon, and farther south, *Dumaget*, both of which refer to locations. The name *Dupaningan* comes from the Dupanigan term *dupaneng* meaning “opposite side of the mountain, adjacent river valley.” It has the locative nominalizing suffix *-an*, so that Dupaningan (with a regular change of /e/ to /i/ when the syllable becomes open) means “place on the opposite side of the mountain; place in an adjacent river valley” (Robinson 2011). The initial *du-* sequence is a frozen, old locative specifier (explained below).

The name *Dumagat* is commonly used as an exonym for negrito groups, especially those who live in the coastal areas of eastern Luzon and surrounding areas.⁷ However, it is used as an endonym only by the negritos who live along the Umiray River and surrounding areas (Robinson 2011). They call themselves Dumaget (with stress on the final syllable), the final vowel change being the result of an areal feature of eastern Luzon negrito languages, referred to as low vowel fronting, by which a low vowel (PMP *a) was fronted and raised to either /e/ or /i/ following a voiced obstruent, in this case /g/. Since at least 1861 when the German zoologist Carl Semper published the results of his Philippine research trips, the term Dumagat has been understood on the basis of its apparent transparent cognacy with Tagalog *dágat* “sea, ocean, bay, lagoon,” into which the infix <um> has been inserted following the first consonant, assumedly deriving the meaning “people who came from the sea,” or “people who live along the coastline.”

Subsequent researchers have at times also used such definitions as the meaning of *dumagat*.⁸ Even some indigenous groups in Mindanao use the term with the meaning “Christians and settlers or those who came from the sea.”⁹ While this is currently the accepted meaning of the term, it is a Tagalog “folk etymology” that is widespread, and there are serious problems with it.¹⁰ The main problem is that nowhere else, either in Tagalog or in other Philippine languages, is the infix <um> used as an infix into a noun to derive the meaning “person from X.”

The true etymology of the form becomes apparent when we consider two factors. The first is that the name begins with the old locative specifier, *du (as occurs also in Dupaningan). The second is that one of the major sources of the Cagayan River that flows through the plain area between the Cordillera Central and the Sierra Madre is the Magat River. This is the largest tributary of the Cagayan River stretching for approximately 150 km from the province of Nueva Vizcaya down to its confluence with the Cagayan River about 55 km from the river mouth (see Figure 1 for the major topographical features of Luzon).

The form *du* is no longer a locative specifier in either Dupaningan or Umiray Dumaget but has been reconstructed to PMP (Reid 1978; Ross 2005a) and is maintained in Casiguran Agta as a specifier (“determiner”) before plural common nouns (including locations) that are “absent, out of sight” and similar meanings (Headland and Headland 1974). It also occurs in numerous other Philippine languages, from the Bashiic (Batanic) languages in the north to the Bilic group in the south, often with the meaning of “there (far)” (as also in the Tagalog distal demonstrative *doon* < Proto-Central-Philippines *duʔun). While in Dupaningan, reflexes of PMP locative markers (*du and *di) have been replaced, reflexes of *di (widespread on place names in negrito areas) remain frozen on a number of forms, for example, *dilod* “downstream” (< PMP *di lahud) and *didiya* “upstream” (< PMP *di daya). I assume, therefore, that Dupaningan *dupaneng* (as well as the name of the language group which is derived from it) retains a reflex of *du as a frozen locative marker. Tagalog *Dumagat* “sea people” then, is a mistaken parse of the negrito endonym that must have originally been, not *d<um>agat*, for the reasons cited above, but *du Magat* “the (distant) Magat River.”

One further piece of evidence for parsing “Dumagat” as “du Magat” comes from one of the names given to the Southern Alta negritos. According to missionary Wesley Petro (personal communication), they also call themselves *Edimala* (Reid 1991). This term clearly corresponds to *Dumagat*, in that the initial vowel *e-* is a reflex of the reconstructed PMP prefix *ʔi- “person from,” with widespread reflexes throughout the northern Philippines,¹¹ while *di-* is a frozen locative marker introducing the place name *Mala*, a cognate of *Maga(t)*, assuming that the name of the river was originally PMP *maRa(t).

I believe these names reflect old historical movements. They are the result of expanding Austronesian settlements in Cagayan Province (“the other side of the mountains”) by Austronesian settlers in the north, and by expanding Austronesian settlers along the fertile Magat River basin in the south (see “What Drove the Malayo-Polynesian Expansion?” below).

What Negritos Call Others. Most Philippine negrito languages also have a different term for non-negrito person (Reid 1994b). The Central Cagayan Agta refer to Ilocano people as *ugsin*. The Casiguran Agta call the non-negrito Kalinga near San Mariano, Isabela, *ugdin*.¹² The Dupanangan Agta call a non-Agta person, especially an Ilocano, *ogden* (Robinson 2011: 225), while the Alta refer to non-negritos as *uldin*. These terms appear to be reflexes of a form *ʔuRtin, which is also reflected in Atta *ujjĭn* “red,” giving an interesting insight into the possible reason for the name. The in-migrating Austronesians (from Taiwan) were apparently perceived as having red skins.¹³ This reconstruction, which in the past I have labeled PMP because of its apparent reflex in Ibanag *uzzin* “red,” I now consider to be an old negrito form that was borrowed into Ibanag. No other MP language has a reflex, and there are other terms reconstructed for “red” in PMP (see Blust and Trussel 2010–) that are completely dissimilar from *ʔuRtin.¹⁴

The Arta call a non-negrito person *agani*. This appears to be cognate with Ilokano *agáni* “to harvest rice; one who harvests rice,” lending credence to the idea that the non-negrito’s rice agriculture has long been the key factor motivating the negritos’ symbiotic relationships with their neighbors (Headland and Reid 1989, 1991). Others refer to non-negritos with the Central Philippine terms *putĭ* “white” [e.g., Casiguran Agta *pute* “term for any non-Negroid person” (Headland and Headland 1974: 126)] and *unat* “straight haired.”

Negrito Languages as Conservative Malayo-Polynesian Languages

The position of the languages spoken by negrito populations in relation to other Philippine languages is instructive of their probable history. Inati is the language of the Ati negritos spoken in the island of Panay (see Tables 1 and 2) and is an isolate among Philippine languages. It cannot be shown to be closely related to any other Philippine language, although, like all such languages, it has borrowed heavily from the languages that currently surround it (Pennoyer 1986–1987). Manide and its close sister language, Inagta (Alabat), in southern Luzon also form an isolate group of negrito languages, not closely related to any other Philippine language (Lobel 2010). Arta forms a first-order isolate in the Northern Luzon subgroup (Reid 1989). The two very distinct Northern and Southern Alta languages constitute at least one coordinate branch of the large Meso-Cordilleran group of Northern Luzon languages. Remontado Dumagat (also referred to as Sinauna Tagalog in the literature) and its related dialects constitute a distinct branch of the Central Luzon family, and Mamanwa retains a number of very conservative features of MP not shared by any other Central Philippine language (see below).

The only explanation for these facts has been discussed in several publications, including Reid (1987, 1994b, 2007b), and are reviewed in the sections to follow.

The Positions of Inati and Manide. As pointed out above, three Philippine languages cannot be subgrouped with any other Philippine language and must

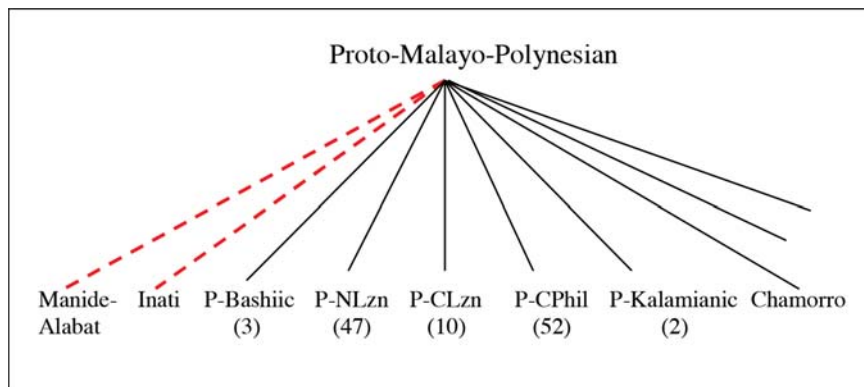


Figure 2. Some Malayo-Polynesian subgroups. Dashed lines are negrito languages. The number in parentheses under each proto-language in this figure and Figures 3–7 is the number of languages given for that proto-language in *Ethnologue* (Lewis et al. 2013).

therefore be considered to constitute (two) first-order subgroups of Malayo-Polynesian (see Figure 2): Manide (and its close relative Inagta of Alabat) and Inati, languages spoken by negrito populations.

Manide, a previously undescribed and rarely mentioned negrito language of southern Luzon (labeled 21 on Figure 1) has recently been examined by Lobel (2010). Although he shows that the language gives evidence of several periods of extended influence by Central Philippines languages, such as Tagalog, Bikol, and Bisayan languages, resulting in several layers of superstratal vocabulary, its “basic vocabulary is rife with forms that are either unique or have key phonological differences from cognates in other Philippine languages” (Lobel 2010: 494). It gives evidence of extended periods of unique development in having only 28% retention of Blust’s reconstructed list of 200 PMP words, the lowest (apart from Arta, another negrito language) of any Philippine language, and having a number of unique morphosyntactic developments. He states that Manide cannot be definitively subgrouped with any of the Central Philippine languages, with which it has apparently been in contact, nor can it be shown to subgroup with any language of Northern Luzon. Its closest relative is a geographically adjacent negrito language that Lobel refers to as Inagta Alabat, with which it uniquely shares a number of lexical, phonological and morphosyntactic features. He writes, “It is impossible at this point to definitively subgroup Manide with any Philippine language other than the closely related Inagta Alabat. . . . Manide [and] Alabat Agta, . . . must have acquired the earliest form of their present language from early Malayo-Polynesian groups that entered the Philippines from the north” (Lobel 2010: 502).

Inati (the language of the Ati) is spoken by negritos scattered throughout Panay (Pennoyer 1986–1987; labeled 24 on Figure 1). Although heavily influenced by the surrounding Bisayan languages with which it is in contact today, such as

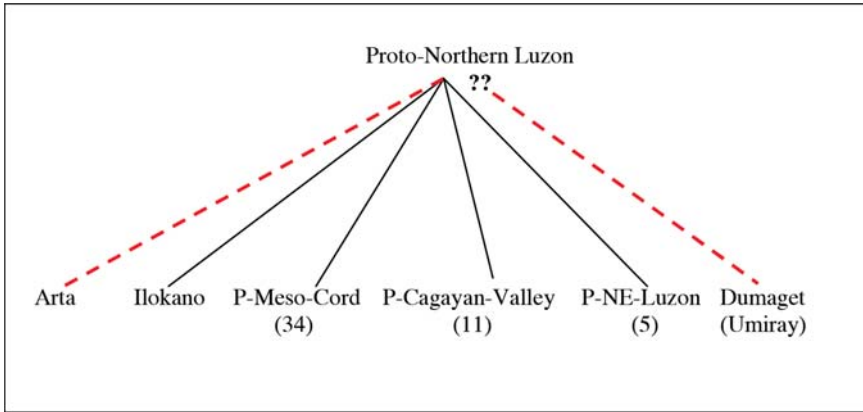


Figure 3. Some Northern Luzon subgroups.

the Manide-Alabat group, it cannot be easily subgrouped with them, or with any other Philippine language or subgroup. One of the distinctive characteristics of this language is its unique reflex of PMP *R. About a dozen forms show *R > /d/, for example, PMP *liʔəR > Inati /liʔad/ “neck” (the usual reflex in Bisayan languages is /g/). Similarly, the probable reflex of PMP *ə is /a/ (as in the Central Luzon languages), not /u/ or /ə/, as in the Bisayan languages. One must assume, therefore, that the Ati acquired their language from an early MP group but remained in relative isolation in the centuries during which the original MP inhabitants of Panay either moved away or were replaced by in-migrating people who spoke an early Western Bisayan language (see Reid 1987, 2007b).

The Position of Arta. The name of this nearly extinct group, spoken today by only a few mostly elderly negritos in Nagtipunan and Maddela, Quirino Province (labeled 9 on Figure 1), shows a reflex of PMP *R as /r/. This is one of the features that indicate its position as probably an isolated first-order subgroup of the Northern Luzon languages (see Figure 3). Only one other language in this group maintains this sound change: Ilokano. However, although Arta has borrowed heavily from Ilokano lexicon, being spoken in an area where Ilokano is one of the trade languages, Arta cannot be shown to share any of the morphosyntactic innovations that characterize Ilokano. The low percentage of PMP lexicon that Arta retains (only 28%, 8% lower than any other Philippine language apart from the recently described negrito language, Manide) likewise is indicative of a long period of independent development from other Philippine languages (for discussion, see Reid 1989, 2007b).

The Position of the Alta Languages. Two languages are spoken by negritos whose word for negrito person is *alta* (labeled 11 and 12 on Figure 1). Although today they occupy contiguous geographical areas, the languages are very different

from one another and are mutually unintelligible. They have clearly spent long periods isolated from one another. One group, Northern Alta, lives in the Sierra Madre along the river valleys that flow out to the Baler plain in Aurora Province. The range of the Northern Alta extends northward toward that of the speakers of Casiguran Agta, and perhaps as far as the headwaters of the Cagayan and Diduyon Rivers in Quirino province where a few families of Arta formerly lived.

Southern Alta speakers live primarily in the Sierra Madre of eastern Nueva Ecija and the adjacent coastal areas of Quezon Province. In addition to the usual more or less derogatory appellations given by non-negritos to negritos (such as Tagalog *balugà* “half-breed,” *pugot* “head-hunter, black person,” *Ita* “Ayta,” and so on; see Panganiban 1966; see also Minter 2010: 6), the Southern Alta are commonly referred to as *kabulowan*, which probably associates them with the little Bulu River, flowing west past Malibay in northern Bulacan Province, with headwaters in the area of Mt. Bisal on the boundary of Nueva Ecija and Bulacan. Whether Alta still live along this river is unclear.¹⁵ However, Southern Alta are reported to be living considerably farther south, near Norzagaray in Bulacan. There are also communities of Alta speaking what appears to be a phonologically more conservative dialect of Southern Alta at Dicapanikian and Dicapanisan, on the coast north of Dingalan. These Alta are also known as *Edimala*, a term whose etymology suggests an origin in or near the Magat River (see “What Negritos Call Themselves,” above).

Although the Alta communities live within the geographical areas also occupied or adjacent to various east-coast Luzon negrito languages, their languages are not closely related to them, but to those of the large Central and Southern Cordilleran families (see Figure 4). All of these languages can be shown to form a subgroup by one distinctive phonological innovation and one unique morphological change. The phonological change *R > /l/ (probably via an earlier *R > /r/ sound change, since *r and *l fell together in the Alta languages, as well as in the Central and Southern Cordilleran families) accounts not only for the language name, Alta, but also for a large number of other words that are reconstructed with *R

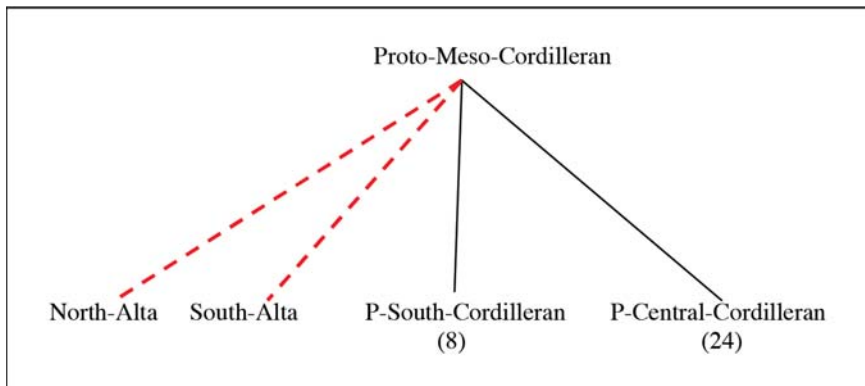


Figure 4. Some Meso-Cordilleran subgroups.

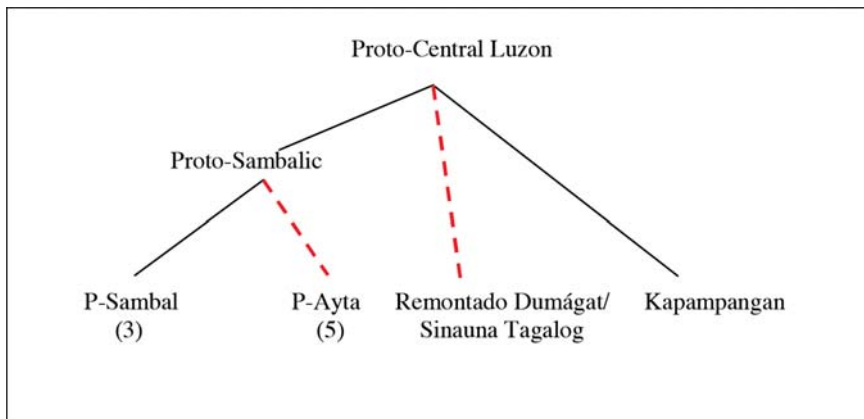


Figure 5. Some Central Luzon languages.

and have an /l/ reflex in the Alta languages. The morphological change that the Alta languages shares with the Central and Southern Cordilleran languages is the irregular reflex (*man-) of the ubiquitous intransitive verbal prefix, reconstructed as PMP *maR- with reflexes in Tagalog *mag*, Ilokano *ag-*, and so forth. In the Alta languages and all of their related South-Central Cordilleran languages, the prefix ends with /n/, not expected /l/. There are a number of lexical innovations that are shared by the Central and Southern Cordilleran languages but that are missing in both the Alta languages. These data suggest that the Alta languages constitute at least one coordinate branch with the South-Central Cordilleran languages in a group named Meso-Cordilleran (for details, see Reid 1991).

The Position of Remontado Dumágat/Sinauna Tagalog. Remontado Dumágat (and its related dialect Infanta Dumágat), one of the groups listed in Table 1, is still spoken (labeled 19 on Figure 1). A dialect of it (described by Santos 1975) was spoken by a few old people in the early 1970s in Tanay, Rizal. They referred to their language as Sinauna Tagalog or “Ancient Tagalog,” a misnomer by which the language is sometimes labeled in the literature. Younger people all spoke Tagalog, the language of most communities in Tanay, Rizal. The lexicon of the language was heavily larded with Tagalog words. However, a cursory glance at the language was sufficient to find that, unlike Tagalog, it belonged not with Central Philippine languages but with the Central Luzon languages, the most prominent member of which is Kapampangan. Comparative studies with dialects spoken by negritos in Infanta, Rizal (who are referred to as Dumágats) and with the so-called Remontado Dumágats of General Nakar, Quezon Province, show unambiguously that these are all closely related and also members of the Central Luzon family of languages (Santos 1975).

Evidence for the subgrouping relationship is both phonological (including the reflexes of PMP *R and *e) and morphological. The forms of verbal affixes

are very different between Tagalog (and other Central Philippine languages) and so-called Sinauna Tagalog and the Central Luzon languages. The actual position of this group of dialects vis-à-vis the other members of the family has recently been studied by Himes (2012). He concludes that “Sinauna” is best considered to be in a coordinate position with Kapampangan, on the one hand, and the Sambalic languages, on the other (see Figure 5). For a fuller account of the conservative position of Remontado Dumagat/Sinauna Tagalog in relation to the other Central Luzon languages, see Reid (2007b: 242–244).

The Position of Mamanwa. Mamanwa is the only group of negritos still maintaining a distinct language and culture in Mindanao (labeled 26 in Figure 1).¹⁶ They have been discussed in numerous academic studies, genetic (Delfin et al. 2011; Reich et al. 2011), anthropological (Maceda 1964), and linguistic (Miller and Miller 1976; Zorc 1977), among others. The language is generally classified as a Central Philippine language, but it is in many respects a very conservative language, not sharing in many of the innovations that characterize other Central Philippine languages. Zorc (1977) provides lexicostatistical and other evidence that suggests that Mamanwa does not directly subgroup with the Bisayan languages from which it has borrowed much of its lexicon but is a first-order branch of the Central Philippine languages (see Figure 6).

Mamanwa has been shown to maintain a PMP three-way contrast in its reflexes of case-marking specifiers that are distinguished by different vowels, specifically PMP *ni, *na, *nu, and PMP *di, *da, *du, the functions of which have been discussed in the literature (Blust 2005; Reid 2007a) but are irrelevant for this article. The PMP contrast is reconstructed by Ross (2005a) based on evidence from Formosan languages that show the three-way contrast and from Itbayat (the most northerly language of the Philippines), which is alone among non-negrito Philippine languages in retaining each of the three forms with separate vowels when they are prefixed to a demonstrative (“this,” “that”), as in Table 3.

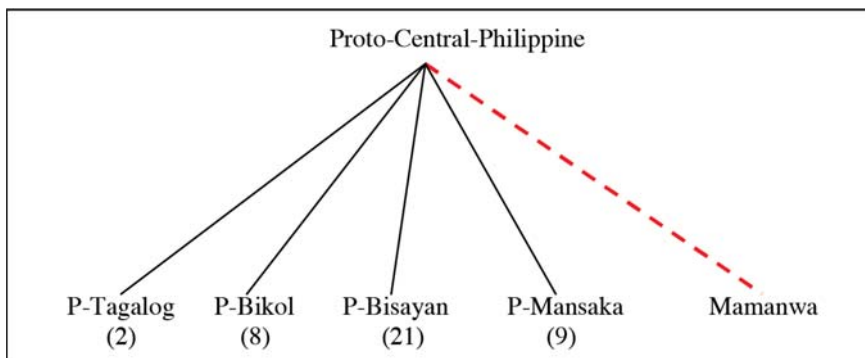


Figure 6. Some Central Philippine subgroups.

Table 3. Itbayat Demonstratives (adapted from Ross 2005a: 9)

	FREE	NOMINATIVE	LOCATIVE
Near speaker	ni-ya	i-ya	di-ya
Near addressee	na-wi	uri	da-wi
Away from both	nu-urihay	u-urihay	du-urihay

Table 4. Mamanwa Demonstratives (adapted from Miller and Miller 1976: 36)

	LOCATIVE
There close by	di-ni
There distant	da-koza
There far distant	do-ro

Ross (2005a) notes that the fact that Itbayat retains the three-way contrast marks it as one of the most conservative of MP languages in the Philippines. (It is part of the evidence that he uses to suggest that the primary dispersal center of PMP could have been in the Batanic/Bashiic Islands.) He says, “I know of only one other language which maintains this same three-way contrast. This is Mamanwa, a language of East Mindanao in the southern Philippines. The most reasonable way of accounting for the Itbayat and Mamanwa sets is to infer that both are highly conservative and have retained a more complex Proto Malayo-Polynesian system that has been simplified in other languages” (Ross 2005a: 9; see Table 4).¹⁷

Patterns of Interaction with Austronesian Farming Groups

In several articles, beginning with Reid (1987), I have suggested that the patterns of linguistic relationship that negrito languages have with those of non-negritos are indicative of what must have been patterns of interaction with early MP-speaking groups. Some negrito groups, such as the different Atta groups of northern Cagayan Province, who speak languages that are in many respects dialects of Ibanag, reveal patterns of continuous close interaction with their neighboring language (Ibanag). This I have labeled the “relatively-remote-with-continual-contact hypothesis” (Reid 1987: 44, 2007b: 240). On the other hand, a few languages, such as Manide, though clearly reflecting early forms of the MP language with which they must have first interacted, cannot be subgrouped with any other language in the Philippines. Although they reveal a pattern of borrowings from both other negrito and non-negrito languages, the fact that they cannot be subgrouped with any of them suggests extensive periods of isolation, away from other groups, during which they developed the multiple innovations that distinguish them. This I have labeled “the relatively-remote-with-little-subsequent-intimate-contact hypothesis” (Reid 1987: 53, 2007b: 247).

The degree of shared features that negrito languages have with their neighboring non-negrito languages also suggests patterns of cyclic interaction whereby

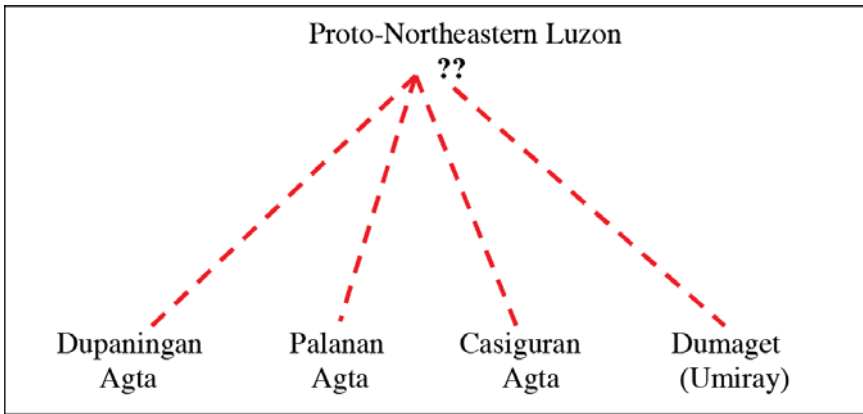


Figure 7. Some Northeastern Luzon languages.

negritos interacted closely in a symbiotic relationship with their neighbors, followed by one or more periods of isolation from them, a pattern that characterizes the Northeastern Luzon languages (see Figure 7). This is the “relatively-remote-with-cyclic-contact-with-the-same-language hypothesis” (Reid 1987: 45, 2007b: 240). In the case of the Alta languages and Remontado Dumágat (or Sinauna Tagalog) that are characterized by cyclic interaction with a language from a different subgroup than that with which they must have first interacted, it also conforms to the “relatively-remote-with-cyclic-contact-with-a-different-language hypothesis” (Reid 1987: 47, 2007b: 242).

While these hypotheses cover a number of cases, details of the contact relationships with each negrito group are clearly different from one another. Today, all maintain contact and have borrowed heavily from their neighboring language. What is abundantly clear, however, is that each of these languages shows stratal patterns both in lexicon and in certain other areas of the grammar that reveal patterns of cyclic interaction with non-negrito groups. These stratal patterns, moreover, can typically be determined, both by their phonology and by their semantics (as well described for Manide in Lobel 2010).

The question that arises is what does the cyclic interaction tell us about the social and other relationships that the negritos have had with their neighbors?

Possible Explanations

Initial Contact. Is it possible to determine what the linguistic situation was in the Philippines prior to 4,000 BP, the approximate date usually cited for the initial in-migration of people speaking an Austronesian language based on archaeological evidence (Mijares 2006)? Given the great time depth that negritos had probably been occupying the archipelago,¹⁸ I claim that the situation could very

well have been similar to that in New Guinea, an island occupied by humans for more than 40,000 years before Europeans first arrived. New Guineans combined hunting and gathering with horticulture (domestication of taro, and subsequently bananas and yams) as a way of life for around the last 10,000 years (Denham 2005; Haberle et al. 2011). The different geographical landscapes in which they lived, combined with the huge variety of cultural differences that developed, resulted in a linguistic diversity that was unparalleled elsewhere in the world. Over a thousand languages belonging to between 20 and 30 apparently completely unrelated phyla were being spoken (Ross 2005b), many by small, isolated groups in high mountain valleys, and others by neighbors living almost adjacent to one another on coastal shores and along river valleys.

Although there is archaeological evidence for possible human occupation of the Philippines from 67,000 BP, on the basis of a single metatarsal bone discovered in Callao caves, and a human skull cap discovered in the Tabon Caves of southern Palawan Island dated to 47,000 BP (Mijares et al. 2010), there is no archaeological or linguistic evidence that horticulture had developed in the Philippines prior to the arrival of Austronesians. However, the relatively rich resources along the narrow coastal plains and along the broad intramontane alluvial plain of the great Cagayan River and its tributaries in Luzon were well suited to the lifestyle of hunter-gatherers. Witness to this are the massive shell middens stretching for a distance of 40 km, some up to 500 m long, 100 m wide, and over 2 m deep, dating from around a thousand years prior to the appearance of pottery (Ronquillo 2000).¹⁹

Even without the influence of external languages, languages change over time from internal mechanisms, and one would assume, therefore, that prior to the arrival of the Austronesians there might well have been hundreds of negrito languages, spread across the archipelago. Neighboring languages would have probably been related, but across geographical barriers, and given the great time depth, many different language phyla may well have developed (Reid 2009a).

An attempt at discerning possible relationships among neighboring groups was made in Reid (1994a: 471). I claimed then that “Negrito and non-Negrito must have lived together in their villages, worked together and played together. The children of the community would have grown up speaking the same language, regardless of what their parents spoke at home, and after a couple of generations, it was the Austronesian language that prevailed.” Robinson (2011: 13–14) has challenged this claim. She notes that examples of such groups living and working together in a single village are rare and that negrito and Austronesian physical types suggest that the groups have maintained their separateness for thousands of years. Following Thomason and Kaufman (1988), she proposes a model of gradual language shift of three periods of ever-increasing contact. First there is only the borrowing of vocabulary. This is supplemented later by some structural borrowing. Finally, there is long-term cultural pressure of the dominant group resulting in massive grammatical replacement, a scenario not unlike the claim made in the above quote (Reid 1994a: 471). At this point in time, we cannot know the details of language replacement, details that probably would have differed from place to

place. However, at some point, whether after a few generations or after a longer period, it is clear that each negrito group was speaking the language of its neighbors, and probably intermarrying with them, given the recent genetic evidence of the affinities of negrito and non-negrito groups (Delfin et al. 2011).

Robinson argues that shared lexical items found only in negrito languages and not in non-negrito languages could not be evidence of a possible pre-Austronesian substratum. Such forms, she says, imply a “Proto-Luzon negrito,” which she rejects, since the possible substratal cognate forms come from eight different negrito languages that today appear to belong to four different Austronesian groups. However, her claim is misguided. It would be unlikely for groups of negritos that lived within a similar geographical range to not have shared a common linguistic ancestry, whether it covered all groups in Luzon or only those in a more limited range, and whether or not they ended up associating with different Austronesian groups. Given the cyclic nature of their contact with non-negritos, it is unlikely that they did not maintain some of their earlier language, both as emblematic symbols, and as common cultural lexicon even when most other lexicon in the language was being replaced.

There is no assurance, however, that the unique negrito lexical items shared among different negrito languages is in fact a negrito substratum, and not forms that have been lost in non-negrito languages or have not been recorded in them.²⁰ One thing is perfectly clear, however. Despite claims that there were other non-negrito populations in the Philippines prior to the arrival of the Austronesians, there is literally no evidence of substratal influence on lexicon (or syntax) from any other Southeast Asian language or language family, such as Austroasiatic.

Several recent influential articles appeal to language contact with some Southeast Asian languages to account for the difference in word order (verb-subject to subject-verb) and other grammatical features in “southern” Austronesian languages (Donohue 2007; Donohue and Denham 2010). However, there is no evidence that similar changes in “northern” Austronesian languages (which include the languages of Taiwan, the Philippines, north Borneo, and north Sarawak) are the result of language contact. Documented grammaticalization changes resulted in variable order in many Philippine languages, and subsequent changes are the result of internal processes [Starosta et al. 2009 (1982); Kikusawa 2003; Aldridge 2010]. These processes are not unique to Austronesian languages but have been documented for other families as well.²¹

Furthermore, bold claims that “we confirm that Chamorro and Palauan, the Austronesian languages of the Marianas and Palau, show evidence of substratal influences that must have been acquired before their migration east from the Philippines area [Donohue 2007]” (Donohue and Denham 2010: 248) cannot be verified. A careful review of the paper cited in the reference (Donohue 2007) reveals that the two languages are not mentioned therein. I do not question the influence that the languages of New Guinea and Melanesia had on Austronesian speakers as they passed through this area, or the claims of language shift by some groups. However, no claim of the same type can be made for Philippine languages, or for

Chamorro, which appears to have originated from the Northern Philippines, soon after the arrival of Austronesians to the area (Reid 2002; Blust 2000). None of these languages can be shown to have substratal influence, a position that Donohue (2005: 530) formerly claimed.²²

Geospatial Contact. There is overwhelming linguistic evidence, recognized by all linguists who have studied it, including Donohue and Denham (2010: 225), that Proto-Austronesian had to have been spoken in what is now Taiwan.²³ Furthermore, mitochondrial DNA analysis is consistent with the linguistic claims (Tabbada et al. 2010).²⁴ There is good linguistic evidence that PMP probably developed in the Batanes Islands (Ross 2005a; Reid 2009b), in that all of the primary innovations that define this protolanguage are found in Ivatan, Itbayaten, and Yami, the main Bashiic languages, and that there are a number of Proto-Austronesian features that are retained in these languages but lost elsewhere.²⁵ That there was also a rapid movement south (over a period of probably well less than a thousand years) and into western Oceania is well attested archaeologically and is supported by the linguistic evidence. In this article, I am interested not in the patterns that developed south of the Philippines, or in the back-migrations that account for subsequent influence of Indonesian languages in the south of the Philippines or on Central Philippine languages by Malay-speaking traders and settlers (Wolff 1976). My primary concern is with the geographical trajectory that speakers of PMP dialects took as they first dispersed through Luzon, and into areas south. It was along this trajectory that negritos (e.g., the ancestors of the Arta) first contacted speakers of MP languages and switched to speaking them, retaining a number of PMP morphological features that can only be accounted for by a dispersal of MP languages from north to south.

The Cagayan River, with its wide alluvial mouth at the very north of Luzon (see Figure 1), was probably one of the first areas reached by speakers of MP languages on arrival in Luzon. It is also an area that, from the archaeological evidence, was probably occupied by a considerable number of negrito groups, who would have very quickly become aware of the “red-skinned” intruders from the north. Expansion south up the Cagayan River, converting available areas into arable, irrigated land would have resulted in the area being one of the first occupied by speakers of MP, and the area apparently became the homeland of the group whose linguistic innovations define the large subgroup now referred to as Northern Luzon (see Figure 3). The dispersal patterns of this group and the areas in which they now live match closely the subgrouping trees, established by application of the historical-comparative method.

Negritos who first contacted this group and who later moved away from them across the Sierra Madre were the ancestors of the Dupanangan negrito (people “from the other side”) and their related groups whose languages today constitute the Northeastern Luzon subfamily (see Figure 7). MP people moving farther south encountered the first major tributary of the Cagayan River, the Chico River, with its headwaters in the Cordillera Central (see Figure 1). Those

MP speakers who stayed in the northern reaches of the Cagayan underwent the innovations (e.g., *R > g) that characterize the languages now labeled as Cagayan Valley languages, and the negritos who continued to maintain contact with them, such as the Central Cagayan Agta and the Atta, shared those innovations. The MP speakers that moved south toward the confluence of the Chico and Cagayan Rivers underwent the innovations that define the Meso-Cordilleran group (such as *R > l). At this point, for reasons that we can never know, the group split. One group, the parent of the Central Cordilleran languages, entered the Chico River Valley, with populations settling along the northern sections of the river and associated tributaries and becoming eventually the dozen or so languages of the Kalinga-Itneg family. Others forged farther into the Cordillera Central, reaching the far southern reaches of the river and becoming the Nuclear Central Cordilleran languages. All of the languages can be shown to have settled along various tributaries of the Chico River, areas of opportunity for either irrigated taro or, probably subsequently, irrigated rice.

The other group of Meso-Cordilleran speakers moved south along the Cagayan, eventually reaching the confluence of the great Magat River. While some of this family (the ancestors of the Ilongot) continued farther south, eventually finding a home along the far southern reaches of the Cagayan River in the Caraballo Mountains (Rosaldo 1980), the others moved southwest into the Magat River Valley.²⁶ There they encountered negrito groups that picked up their language (the Dumaget and Alta languages—Edimala) and were eventually driven away from their homelands into the Sierra Madre and narrow coastal strips of eastern Luzon. It was via the Magat River and its tributaries that the ancestors of the Southern Cordilleran people, such as the Inibaloi and the Kallahan, ultimately reached their present locations, while one group, now speaking Pangasinan, crossed the divide and entered the fertile lowlands of the Agno and Bued Rivers flowing west into the Lingayen Gulf.

The other major language family of Northern Luzon is the Central Luzon family. It occupies the broad central plains south of the Lingayen Gulf and, in the remote past, probably most of the area now occupied by Tagalog speakers in southern Luzon (Zorc 1993), and even as far south as the island of Mindoro, just south of Luzon. But before the ancestors of this group made entry into the area via the Lingayen Gulf from Batanes (although it is possible that entry was made by moving south down the narrow western coast of Luzon),²⁷ the area must have been occupied by many negrito groups, such as the ancestors of the negritos who speak the different Ayta languages. The surviving Ayta-speaking peoples ended up in the remote Zambales mountainous areas between Bolinao and Mariveles on the west coast of Luzon. The central plain was probably also occupied by the ancestors of the negritos who speak the language now known as Remontado Dumágat (or Sinauna Tagalog) and its related dialects who were pushed into the Sierra Madre mountains of Rizal and Quezon provinces, east of Manila.

The question of why many of the negrito groups stayed isolated for long periods of time after initial contact, resulting in the wide range of innovative changes

that now characterize their languages (and the retention of many old features of PMP), is directly related to the question of what drove the MP expansion.

What Drove the Malayo-Polynesian Expansion?

Much has been written about the nature of the MP expansion. Some explanations have been characterized as demic diffusion by which a population diffused across an area not previously inhabited by them as a result of population growth resulting from agricultural or other technological development and ultimately mixing with other resident populations; others claim that it was not people at all who moved but language (see Gray 2012 for a critical examination of such claims). Both positions are extreme views, each only partially correct.²⁸ While agriculture may have been one of the factors that contributed to the dispersal southward, it surely could not have been the only one. Vast areas of land across the Philippines would have been available for conversion to agriculture, areas that even today, 4,000 years later, are still being developed. Certainly there were other factors that prompted people to move, factors that have been discussed by Bellwood [2006 (1995)] and Pawley (2010: 103–104).

Demic diffusion provides no ultimate explanation, either, for the patterns of negrito isolation, since one can assume that living in relatively close proximity to agricultural groups would have been advantageous to negritos. Even today they depend in many areas on the beneficence of farmers who provide rice and other such products in exchange for labor and forest products such as meat and honey.

Social and other cultural factors must have played a major role in MP dispersal, and this is the area that I want to focus on. One thing that is clear about speakers of PMP and their related languages in Taiwan is that these were a murderous bunch. It is no secret that head-hunting formed a major cultural activity not only of Austronesian tribal groups in Taiwan, such as Siraya (S. Adelaar, personal communication), but of the first Austronesian migrants out of Taiwan (Liao 2012). The term **ɲayaw* “head-hunting raid” is reconstructed to Proto-Austronesian (Blust and Trussel 2010–). It has reflexes in Puyuma and Amis in Taiwan, and also in MP languages throughout the Philippines, including Ilokano, Isneg (Cagayan Valley), Dupanangan, and Casiguran Agta (negrito languages of northeast Luzon); a number of the Meso-Cordilleran languages, including Kalinga, Bontok, and Ifugao (Central Cordilleran); Ilongot, Pangasinan, and Kalanguya (Southern Cordilleran); and Kapampangan and the Ayta negrito languages (Central Luzon). In areas farther south, including Tagalog, various Manobo languages (Greater Central Philippines), as well as both Tiruray and Tboli (Bilic languages of south Mindanao), show reflexes of the term (Liao 2012). Reflexes are also recorded in several languages in Sabah, Kalimantan, and Sulawesi.

The function of head-hunting as a blood-letting ritual to increase the harvest of rice and to ensure fertility is well known. As Hoskins says, “A great number of accounts report that taking heads was associated with certain positive benefits that accrued to the whole group, in terms of either status improvement, better health, or

a release from mourning, individual participants could also cross the threshold to manhood, become eligible for marriage, or be released from debt” (Hoskins 1996: 13). Among the Kayan, Land Dayak, Kendayan/Salako of central Kalimantan, and the Tamanic peoples of west Kalimantan, head-hunting was endemic and was traditionally associated with the agricultural calendar (most head-hunting raids taking place after the harvest).²⁹

Feuding was a major aspect of Austronesian life, and although feuding can have other causes, the primary cause was associated with head-taking. Scott (1994: 9) says, “What the Spanish did report on their arrival was that armed conflict and raiding were commonplace, if not endemic in precolonial Philippine society.”³⁰ Rosaldo (1980: 24), referring to the Ilongot, one of the last head-hunting societies in the Philippines, states, “The feud embodies much of Ilongot historical consciousness and often motivates marriages and residential moves. In this sense the process of feuding is a central moving force for both the conduct and perception of history.”

I argue that such a cultural activity was not just a central moving force for the perception of history; we can also perceive it as a central moving force through prehistory. It provides a key factor, possibly in combination with early agricultural rites, which explains the rapid move south from northern Luzon to western Oceania. Furthermore, I believe it was ultimately the factor that forced negrito groups to abandon lands they had occupied for thousands of years. They fled for protection to more remote mountainous areas, where the languages they had acquired gradually differentiated from the languages of their former hosts, just as the Ilongots fled to the most remote mountainous areas they knew, in response to the incursion of Japanese soldiers during the last phases of World War II (Rosaldo 1980: 120–134).

But if it was the negritos who sought solace in remote mountainous areas, can we also claim that the same factors motivated the rapid move south of Austronesian farmers? In the early stages of the influx of Austronesians, we can be sure that their numbers were far inferior to the multiple bands of negritos who occupied the lands that the Austronesians would have wanted to convert to rice or millet agriculture. With the onset of feuding, it would have been the Austronesians who would have been forced to move away, in that they would not have had the same ties to the land and its resources that the negritos had. Only after the increase in numerical strength of the Austronesians would it have been the negritos who were forced to move.

Paz (2002) comes to the opposite conclusion from me with regard to the response of MP groups to such feuding activities. He considers that head-hunting would have hindered the spread of MP groups through the Philippines, citing it as a “friction zone.” He claims, “It is not difficult to imagine that during the initial dispersal of the Austronesians, their relations with the original inhabitants might have hindered rapid and easy dispersal” (Paz 2002: 280). An anonymous reviewer suggests that Paz’s conclusions may be correct for the buildup of substantial inland populations, but not for the rapid north-to-south spread of MP populations, which would have been accomplished by sailing along the coasts, a reasonable claim, but one for which there is no archaeological evidence.

Conclusion

This article has attempted to draw conclusions about who the negrito peoples of the Philippines are, based on linguistic data and inferences that can be drawn from them. This has meant discussing the various names that such people call themselves and their non-negrito neighbors. The well-known names, such as Agta, Ayta, Arta, Atta, and Alta, all of which mean “negrito person,” are reflexes of a term that contains a medial reconstructed PMP *R, and that help to identify the Philippine subgroup of non-negrito languages from which the negritos first acquired their present language. There are two other names for negrito groups that have been discussed in some detail: Dupanangan and Dumagat, both of which provide clues about the geographic origins of the negrito groups so labeled. Both terms carry an initial locative marker, reconstructed as PMP *du and identify the groups as coming in the first case from “the other side” (i.e., from the Cagayan River valley, which is the other side of the Sierra Madre mountain range from their present locations), and the other from the Magat River valley. The latter parse of Dumagat has not appeared in the literature before and is contrary to the commonly accepted meaning of the term as “person from the ocean.” The new analysis of Dumagat is based on three facts: (1) the parallelism between the two names with initial *du-*, (2) the unique association of the supposed infix <um> as a nominal derivation meaning “person from,” and (3) the cognate form *Edimala* (an alternate name for the Southern Alta), which likewise identifies their origin as the Magat River Valley.

The relative linguistic positions of the negrito groups vis-à-vis their non-negrito linguistic neighbors in a number of cases is significant, in that the negrito groups are either isolates or first-order groups within their subfamily. Their languages are distinguished by their relative conservatism, in that they maintain features of their ultimate parent language, Proto-Malayo-Polynesian, which have been lost in many other languages of their closest linguistic neighbors. They have also developed unique features that are not shared by their neighbors. The explanation of these facts requires an understanding of the nature of the linguistic dispersal of PMP. This is currently a controversial issue, but from the linguistic evidence it could only have been from Batanes (the most likely dispersal point of the family), south through northern and central Luzon and subsequently to the rest of the Philippines.

The spatial relationships of each of the subgroups of both Northern and Central Luzon languages mirror precisely the subgrouping claims that are based on the use of the historical-comparative method of linguistics. These allow us to make claims about the probable geographic locations of the negritos on first contact with their non-negrito neighbors. An explanation is required as to why negritos quite clearly must have separated themselves, in some cases probably for great lengths of time, allowing their languages to change radically from the one they first acquired from their new farming neighbors. One of the major factors discussed is the role of head-hunting in early Austronesian societies, revealed in the widespread reflexes of the Proto-Austronesian term *ɲayaw in Formosan languages and in all language

subgroups in the Philippines, and into Sabah, Kalimantan and Sulawesi. One may assume that especially in the early period of MP settlement, negritos would have been prime targets for head-hunting activity since fellow Austronesians would have had close if not kinship relationships, and the negritos themselves, at least from early Spanish reports, also had a reputation for conducting ferocious raids against their non-negrito neighbors. Such feuding would not only have fueled the retreat of negritos into more secure mountainous areas but would also have provided a strong incentive for the rapid move south of speakers of Malayo-Polynesian dialects into areas where at least for a time they would not be affected by retaliatory feuding.

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Notes

1. Six of these language groups (Central Philippines, South Mangyan, Palawanian, Manobo, Danao, Subanen) are claimed by Blust (1991) to be more closely related to one another in his Greater Central Philippine group than they are to other Philippine languages. Blust also includes the Sangiric and Minahasan languages of north Sulawesi among his “Philippine microgroups.” Yami, spoken on Orchid Island (also known as Lanyü or Botel Tobago) in Taiwan, is clearly a member of the Bashitic subgroup.
2. Beyer (1921) classified them as “Sakai,” his supposed second group of immigrants into the Philippines following “Java man” (Tweddell 1958: 2).
3. Thomas Headland (personal communication) notes that Casiguran Agta people refer to any dark-skinned, curly-haired person, regardless of size, such as themselves, as *Agta*. Their general term for person (rather than animal) is *tolay*.
4. *R represents what was probably a velar fricative /ɣ/ (or perhaps a uvular fricative /ʁ/) in the parent language, a sound that is reconstructed to Proto-Austronesian and Proto-Malayo-Polynesian; before the age of Unicode fonts it was commonly represented as an uppercase R.
5. Santos (1975) uses /q/ to represent the initial glottal stop.
6. I thank Jason Lobel for this suggestion.
7. Minter (2010: 234) cites the description of Dumagats from the 2008 website of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) as follows: “The term Dumagat may have been derived from the word *gubat* (forest) and *hubad* [not translated by the NCIP, but meaning ‘naked’]. The more logical origin of its name is *taga-dagat* which referred to ‘sea-gypsies.’ . . . They have beautifully proportioned bodies, arms, legs, and breasts especially among women. . . . They are peace-loving people.”
8. Maceda (1935: 239) writes,

The people now designated by the name Dumagat formerly dwelt along the shores of the Pacific Ocean, the chief source of their subsistence naturally being the sea. Hence they earned the name Dumagats, which translated into English, literally means “Sea People.” When interviewed, a number of them said “We call ourselves Dumagats, [in Tagalog] ‘mga taga tabing dagat’—the people living near the seashore.’ They came from across the sea and upon landing on the coast made their homes there.”

Vanoverbergh (1937: 909) states that “*dumágat* is derived from the Tagalog *dágat*, ‘sea’”; Reid (1994b) also defines *Dumagat* as a “seafaring person.” Padilla (2000: 53) says, “Lowland settlers on the other hand call them Dumagat (from the word ‘dagat’ for sea) because they often build their lean-to . . . on the riverbanks and seacoast during the summer months of March to May.”

9. Sabino Padilla, personal communication, 18 June 2012.
10. Sander Adelaar (personal communication) comments, “This is reminiscent of the English term ‘Sea Dayak’ which is apparently an English folk etymology. The Iban called themselves ‘si Daya’ and only at some very recent point in history became seafarers.”
11. The common prefix attached to locative nouns in East Luzon languages to indicate a person’s origin is a borrowing of Tagalog (or Ilokano) *taga-*. However, Casiguran Agta retains a regular reflex of PMP *ʔi- as a frozen prefix *e-* in a few forms, the first of which has negative connotations, for example, *ebuked* “people who live way back in the Sierra Madre mountains; hick, hillbilly” and *edilod* “people who live downriver from Maddela area in the Aglipay area” (Thomas Headland personal communication, 19 July 2012). Headland further notes: “I don’t recall ever hearing this ‘*e-*’ prefix used with any other geographical name to refer to people in any certain area. And while my Casiguran Agta neighbors refer to Agta in the mountains as *ebuked*, they never say that term to their faces or if they are present, because it is insulting. Instead they will say in its place *tagabuked*, which is not an offensive term.”
12. Thomas Headland, e-mail communication to author, 9 April 2010.
13. Malcolm Ross (personal communication) notes that “‘redskin’ is also the word the decidedly black-skinned people of Bougainville use for other Papua New Guineans.”
14. Patricia Afable (personal communication) has drawn my attention to Ifugao and Kalanguya (Kallahan) *uldin* “government order,” which is a borrowing of Spanish *orden* via Tagalog “order, command, clerical office” (see Panganiban 1966: 202), but which, she says, can be used to refer to “Ilokanos and lowland people.” It also appears as a Spanish borrowing in Batad Ifugao *uldin* “a government decree or law” (Newell 1993: 521), and in Ibanag *orden* “order, command, religious order” (Ibarbia 1969: 102). This is clearly an interesting similarity, but I believe it is coincidental, since Spanish *orden* would not have developed with a velar stop for /r/ in Casiguran Agta, for example, nor would Central Cagayan Agta have changed /d/ to /t/ and then /s/ (before *i), and Ibanag also has an appropriate reflex of the reconstructed *ʔuRtin in *uzzin* “red.” Apart from the phonological problems, the semantics are quite distinct.
15. There is one other Dibuluan River in northern Luzon (literally, the place of *bulu* “a type of bamboo”) with headwaters in the southern Sierra Madre in Quirino Province flowing north-west to join the Cagayan River in Isabela Province. There is also a Dibuluan *barangay* of San Mariano municipality, Isabela Province, where, according to Minter (2010: 47), there are four sites where (Palanan) Agta live. Whether or not these might also be earlier locations of the Southern Alta “Kabulowan” people is unknown.
16. The Ata Manobo language (spoken in northwestern Davao del Norte Province, Mindanao) is sometimes included in the list of Philippine negrito languages. The name is possibly a reflex of PMP *ʔa(R)ta “negrito person,” and there are a number of phenotypically negrito individuals among the population, but the group identifies itself as Manobo, not as negrito (see discussion in Reid 2007b: 237). Other such groups in Mindanao include the Tigwa and Matigsalug Manobos.
17. In comments on this article sent to me by Jason Lobel, he draws attention to the following sets of data found in Southern Luzon negrito languages that strongly support the Ross hypothesis:

“In Inagta Rinconada and Inagta Partido, the ‘oblique case markers’ are *di* ‘generic/non-referential’, *dya* ‘referential and visible’, and *du* ‘referential and not visible, especially referring to something in the past.’” There are also corresponding “genitive” forms *ni*, *nan*, and *nu(n)*. In the demonstratives, the *i ~ a ~ u* contrast is also found, but not as transparent, for example, genitive *naʔi*, *naʔan*, *naʔon*, oblique *didi*, *diyan*, *doʔon*, nominative *yaʔi*, *yaʔan*, *yaʔon*, also nominative *ʔi*, *ʔan*, *ʔon*.

18. This is consistent with the genetic data cited by Jinam et al. (2012):

Our mtDNA data do not appear to show any similarities in the extant mtDNA lineages of the negrito groups (Andaman, West Malaysia, and the Philippines), Melanesians, and Australian Aboriginals. The mtDNA diversity in each of these Australoid groups is characterized by distinct markers. . . . We found that those mtDNA lineages have a time depth ranging from 30,000 to 50,000 YBP and is consistent with earlier reports. This suggests their long-term presence in the [*sic*] Southeast Asia, probably dating back to the original inhabitants of the region.

19. Thiel (1989) notes that the pottery in the Lal-lo site she excavated covers a period of 3,400 years.
20. I am grateful to Jason Lobel for pointing to a couple of such forms that are possible elicitation errors, or that do have possible cognates in one or more non-negrito languages. He notes that *kubung* “mosquito” in Inagta (Rinconada) actually means “mosquito net” in both Bikol and Inagta (Rinconada). Also *sugbung* “shoulder” is also found in Waray, a Central Philippine language.
21. Starosta et al. [2009 (1982: 466–472)] detail the changes brought about by “Aux-axing” which resulted in structures in verb-subject languages (including Ivatan, Chamorro, and Inibaloi) that developed a subject-verb order. Both Kikusawa (2003) and Aldridge (2010), while approaching the subject from completely different theoretical positions, claim that subject-verb ordering is the result of reanalysis of a fronted topic, an account that Donohue (2005: 531) accepts: “It is not implausible to suggest that the preverbal position became used more and more frequently with topical subjects to the point that the word order changed from verb-initial to subject-initial.”
22. “The Austronesian ancestors of the modern Austronesian population in Southeast Asia and Melanesia spoke verb-initial languages; this is still the dominant order in the more conservative languages to the north, in northern Borneo, the Philippines and Taiwan, and is also the word order found on the edges of the insular Southeast Asian languages, where, for instance, Nias, Enggano and Tukang Besi preserve a verb-initial order” (Donohue 2005: 530).
23. This despite the skepticism still expressed by some nonlinguists that the Proto-Austronesian homeland was located in Taiwan [e.g., Terrell’s comments in Donohue and Denham (2010: 246), with terminology such as “highfalutin subgroups” determined by a historical method with its “formulae and logic” that has “long outlived its usefulness,” comments designed to parody and denigrate the well-established scientific basis for the method, and one without which we couldn’t even be talking about an Austronesian language family.]
24. “This finding, together with the geographical distribution of ancestral and derived haplotypes of the B4a1a subclade including the Polynesian Motif, is consistent with southward dispersal of these lineages ‘Out of Taiwan’ via the Philippines to Near Oceania and Polynesia. In addition to the mtDNA components shared with Taiwanese aborigines, complete sequence analyses revealed a minority of lineages in the Philippines that share their origins—possibly dating back to the Paleolithic—with haplogroups from Indonesia and New Guinea” (Tabbada et al 2010: 21).
25. Donohue and Denham (2010: 227) claim that on purely linguistic grounds it is not possible to determine the direction of movement of MP languages but imply that it must have been from “southern Indonesia to the Batanes Islands in the north,” even while citing Ross (2005a). The

latter gives evidence that the Batanes Islands was the most likely area where the innovations that define PMP took place and from where dispersal to areas south probably began.

26. While the name of the Chico River is clearly a Spanish borrowing, the origin of the name of the Magat River is obscure. The fact that it has cognates in Dumaget (< *du-Magat) and Edimala (< *ʔi-di-Mala) suggests that the form is a reflex of a MP *maRa(t), itself probably morphologically complex with a *ma- stative prefix, and the first vowel being the result of the common reduction of a like-vowel sequence such as *maʔaRa(t). The meaning of this derivation is now lost, but it may be the source of the Ilokano prefix /ʔaga(t)-/ (with some forms showing a final /t/, and some forms without it) that derives a meaning “to smell like X,” for example, Ilokano *agat-báwang* “to smell like garlic” and *aga-sábong* “to smell like a flower.” There is also a cognate in Ibanag (*magaC-* “to smell like X”) that shows the same morphologically complex form as the name of the river, and with the vowel sequence also reduced (Rubino 2000: 12).
27. The possible connection between the Central Luzon languages and the Batanic group is a matter of some controversy (Zorc 1974, 1986; Ross 2005a; Himes 2012). While these languages (and the northern languages of Mindoro) share the sound change *R > y, there are few other shared features. However, Bolinao, Sambal, and Kapampangan speakers all refer to their origins as *ibatan* (Rubino 2012).
28. This does not question the unassailable fact that in-migrating Austronesians to the Philippines were agriculturalists. There are a considerable number of agricultural terms that have been reconstructed to Proto-Austronesian, such as *pajay “rice plant,” *beRaS “husked rice,” *Semay “cooked rice,” *lesung “mortar,” *qaSelu “pestle,” and *qeta “unhusked rice kernel,” that have widespread reflexes in western Austronesian languages; a number of such terms have phonologies that could not possibly be the result of an early northward movement of agriculture from areas to the south (Blust 1995; Pawley 2002: 264). Paz’s claim (2002: 281) with reference to Proto-Austronesian *Semay (his miscited *semay), and its reflex, PMP *hemay “cooked rice,” that only Subanon has “a close-sounding term (*gemai*)” shows a lack of understanding of the regular processes of sound change that produced forms such as Aklanon, Hiligaynon, *humáy*; Ata Manobo *homoy*; Ilianen Manobo *imiy*; Tigwa Manobo *himiy* “cooked rice,” or of the semantic changes that resulted in forms commonly found in several Cagayan Valley languages such as *ammay* “rice plant.” Much more can be said to explain the linguistic questions raised by Paz, but this is not the place for such discussion.
29. Robert Blust, and Sander Adelaar, personal communication.
30. For a detailed account of the early Spanish reports of head-hunting both by negritos and their neighbors, see Scott (1994: 252–256).

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