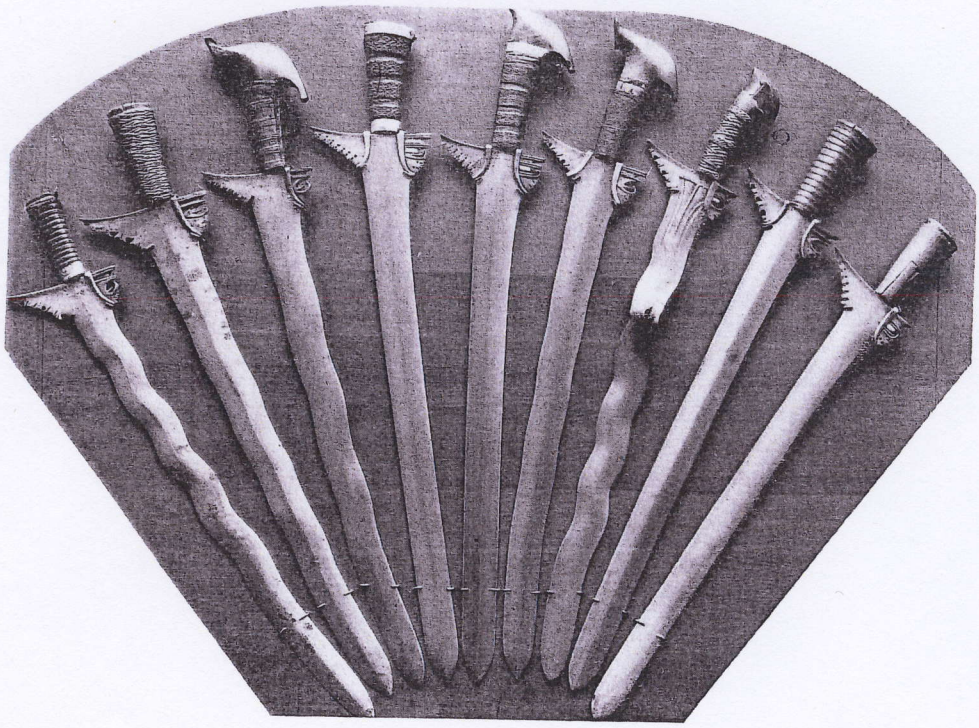
ANTIQUES

MARCH, 1926



A GROUP OF PHILIPPINE KRISES

Price, 50 Cents

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION *for* COLLECTORS & AMATEURS

VOLUME NINE

NUMBER THREE

The Weapons of the Philippine Islands, I.

By FREDERIC WADE HITCHINGS, M. D.*

Except as noted, illustrations are from the author's collection.

TO the lover of artistic things, as well as to the collector, the weapons of the peoples of the southern Pacific have long been peculiarly fascinating. In former times sea captains brought many of them back to this country, while, more recently, especially with increased facilities for travel and the coming of the Philippines into our possession, almost every army officer, enlisted man and tourist who has visited the Islands has returned with one or more specimens in his luggage. These weapons are represented in every museum in the country, the collections in the United States National Museum in Washington, the Field Museum in Chicago, and the Peabody Museum in Salem being among the most noteworthy.

When a standard dictionary, incidentally in very loose English defines a kris as a "dagger used by the Malays having a serpentine blade," and an encyclopedia is almost equally inaccurate, it becomes evident that more exact information should be available to those who may be interested. Unfortunately, exact information is difficult to obtain. The literature of the subject is scant, and frequently misleading. First-hand observations consist of many isolated facts which must be cautiously sifted before conclusions may be reached. Men who have spent years in the Islands have often neither seen nor heard of weapons that are undoubtedly Filipino.

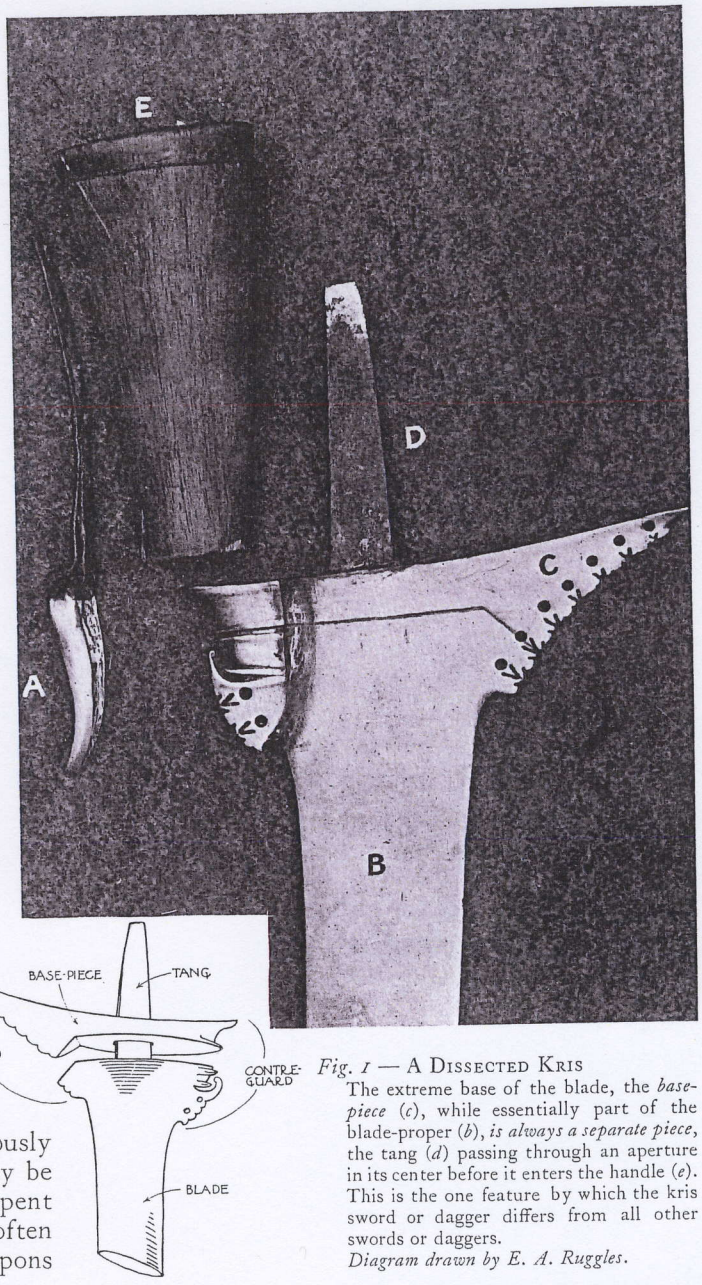


Fig. 1 — A DISSECTED KRIS
The extreme base of the blade, the *base-piece* (*c*), while essentially part of the blade-proper (*b*), *is always a separate piece*, the tang (*d*) passing through an aperture in its center before it enters the handle (*e*). This is the one feature by which the kris sword or dagger differs from all other swords or daggers.
Diagram drawn by E. A. Ruggles.

Human progress has always been marked by changes in customs as well as in material objects, such as habitations and dress. Along with other material objects, types of weapons have been developed which are characteristic of their makers, but, as men have sought new abodes, they have taken their weapons with them. As a result it is difficult to determine just where weapons which have come to be associated with different countries have originated. For example, what proved to be a Kabyle knife from northern Africa was given to the writer as being an unusual type of Filipino knife, since it had a history of being in the Islands for over one hundred years.

In the Philippines, the kris, the barong and the campilan were first imported in the course of Malay migrations, while more primitive, non-metallic weapons were truly Filipino. All the types to be described in this article may now, however, be considered as native to the Islands, if only from the fact that they have long been in use there. As regards the illustrations it may be said that all the specimens depicted are known to have come from the Philippines, and that, unless statements are made to the contrary, the originals are in the writer's collection.

It is generally agreed that the iron industry was not native to the Philippines. At first, manufactured articles were imported from other regions of Malaysia. Later, raw material and the various processes of working it were introduced, but mining and smelting were not understood. Even today foreign-made wagon springs are in considerable demand, since the shape of the leaves and the good quality of the steel adapt them to being wrought into swords and knives.

*Grateful acknowledgment is made as follows for permission to use certain specimens for purposes of illustration:
To The Cleveland Museum of Art for Figures 2b, 3c, 4, 7a, b, c and e, and others subsequently to be acknowledged.
To Theodore Hamilton for Figure 3d.
The photographs are the work of E. A. Ruggles, Cleveland Museum of Art Studio. — F. W. H.

Fig. 2 — The Three Types of Kris Blades
Straight edges (*a*); waved edges (*b*); partly straight and partly waved, *half-and-half* (*c*).

The Kris

Coming to the individual types of weapons, the first to be considered is the most characteristic of all Malaysian, and also all Filipino, weapons — the kris. *Kris*, itself, is a Malay word, and preferable to the Anglicized *creese*. It is much more than a "dagger having a serpentine blade," as will be shown. Statements made are based on the study of several hundred specimens. The best krises made in the Islands are the handiwork of the Moros of Mindanao.

Technical Description

The typical kris is a double-edged weapon of either sword or dagger length; in the swords the edges are essentially parallel (*Cover*). The blade is markedly widened on one side of the base by a part which projects at an angle of about seventy-two degrees from the blade proper to form a guard. The other side of the base is also widened, but to a much less degree, to form what has been called, for the sake of convenience, the *contre-guard*.

The extreme base of the blade, the *base-piece* (*Fig. 1 c*), while essentially part of the blade proper (see diagram, *Fig. 1*), *is always a separate piece*, the tang (*Fig. 1 d*) passing through an aperture in its center before it enters the handle (*Fig. 1 e*). This is the one feature by which the kris sword or dagger differs from all other swords and daggers. Often the base-piece is so accurately fitted to the blade proper that, without careful inspection, it is impossible to detect that it is not actually part of the latter.

The blade as a whole is held firmly attached to the handle by one or two metal, or part metal and part leather, *straps*, which pass around the guard or contre-guard, or both, and thence up under the winding of the handle (*Fig. 1 a*). Even if the tang were loose in the handle this ingenious arrangement would prevent the blade from slipping out.

The blade proper occurs in one of three types, viz., (1) with approximately straight edges; (2) with waved edges; (3) with partly straight and partly waved edges, *half-and-half* (*Fig. 2*). The waved blades show many variations of depth of wave, but one side always has one more wave than the other. In other words, the waves are never directly opposite each other; hence the so-called serpentine effect.

In all three types of blade, if a straight line is drawn so as to conform to the median line of the handle and is then prolonged, it will be found to fall quite a distance outside of the median line of the blade. Therefore, even the *straight* krises are straight in *edge* rather than in *axis*, the axis being curved so as to conform nearly to an arc of a large circle. When the kris is held as it should be, with the guard up, the way in which this arrangement lends itself to striking a drawing blow can readily be understood.

The guard and contre-guard are characteristically pierced and notched. The notches in the guard might well serve to catch the edge of an adversary's blade and thus to

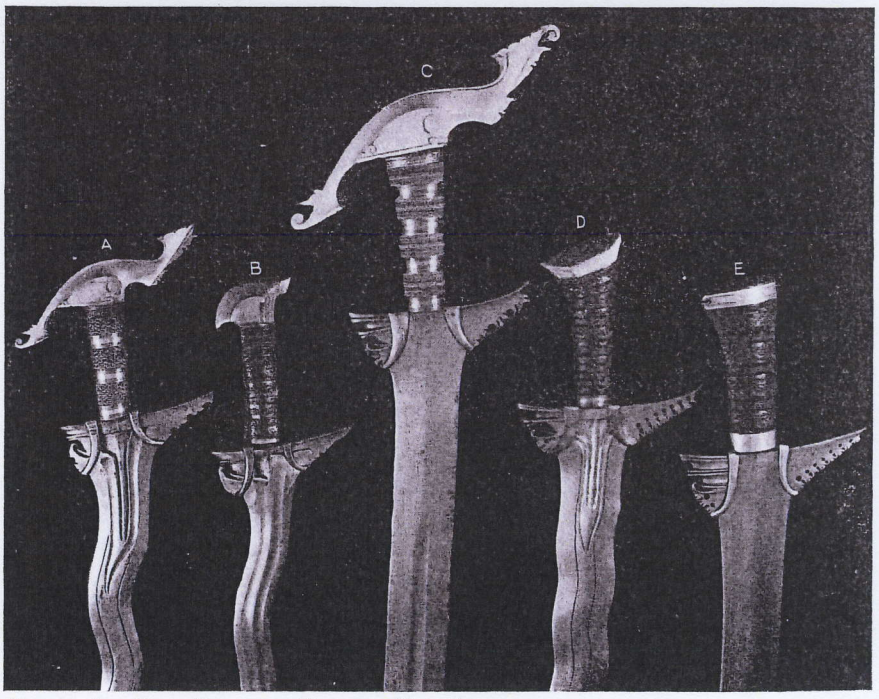


Fig. 3 — The Four Principal Types of Kris Pommels
Crutch-shaped (*a* and *c*); cockatoo (*b*); hexagonal (*d*); flat (*e*). Pommels a, b, c and d are made of ivory, while e is made of ebony with a silver ferrule around it.

Fig. 4 — A Group of Kris Scabbards
Kris scabbards, usually made of wood, are often ornamental in design.

disarm him. The contre-guard represents the highly conventionalized jaws and fangs of a serpent. In certain Javanese kris daggers, inlaid with gold, all the details of a serpent are shown, the body being formed by the sinuous blade.

Kris Pommels

Much artistic feeling is shown in the more elaborate kris pommels or knobs. The four common types of pommel found, the *crutch-shaped*, *cockatoo*, *hexagonal* and *flat*, are illustrated in Figure 3.

Quality of Steel and Effectiveness

The steel of which kris blades are made seems to be excellent. One blade, shown in the Cover illustration, was pierced by a bullet from a Krag rifle in the hands of one of our soldiers. The side of entrance was forced into a funnel-shaped depression of considerable width and depth; a hole somewhat larger than the bullet appears at the side of exit. At the level of the bullet's impact, the blade was originally bent at a right angle. Without doubt, an inferior quality of steel would have been shattered, but this blade indicated its temper when, in addition to having withstood the original injury, it was not broken when placed on the floor and stamped on in straightening.

There are numerous instances on record of the terrible wounds which kris swords are capable of inflicting; a drawing cut from the waved type being particularly efficient. Army officers have told me of seeing men who had been not merely decapitated, but had even had the head and one shoulder severed from the body by a single blow from a kris. Others have related instances in which the victim was split completely through from shoulder girdle to pelvis. Such uses of a sword almost equal the Japanese ideal of being able to cut a man in two so adroitly that the halves may take several steps before what has happened is realized!

Kris Daggers

The kris dagger differs from the kris sword mainly in being shorter, and in usually having no straps. There are many Filipino daggers (*Fig. 5*) with unwaved, waved and half-and-half blades, but they do not conform to the true kris inasmuch as they do not have the base-piece. In contradistinction to these, in the typical Javanese daggers, as well as in those from other parts of Malaysia, the base-piece is present, so that the latter should be regarded as being true krises (*Fig. 6*).

The Base-Piece Typical

It is again emphasized that, if judgment is to be based on actual facts, *the* peculiar feature of the kris is the *base-piece*. How or why this device originated I have been unable to learn. From the standpoint of manufacture, with primitive tools in the hands of the native armorer, there are arguments both for and against it.

The Barong

The barong is said to have originated with the Moros. It is a single-edged weapon with a leaf-shaped blade (*Fig. 7*).

Technical Description

The blade is considerably shorter than that of the kris, averaging from fourteen to sixteen inches in length as against the twenty to twenty-three inches of the latter, and it is much heavier and broader in proportion to its length than the kris blade. It is flat-ground from back to edge, neither side being beveled, except in rare instances.

The handle, which never has a guard, is formed by a bottom ferrule which is usually made of silver, and which extends half way to the top of the grip over wood, which, in turn, extends above the top of the ferrule to form the rest of the handle. The upper part of the handle

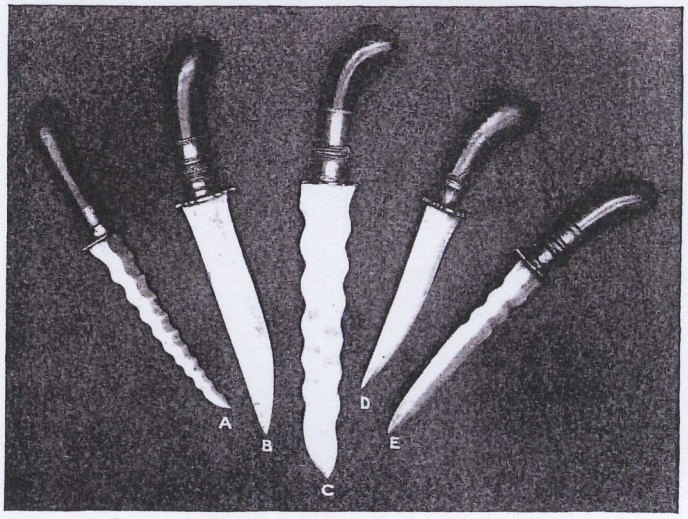


Fig. 5 — A Group of Filipino Daggers
There are many Filipino daggers with blades which are unwaved (*b*, *d*), waved (*a*, *c*), and half-and-half (*e*) as in the kris swords, but they do not conform to the true kris inasmuch as they do not have the base-piece. See Figure 6.

forms a pommel which is more or less like the crutch-shaped type of kris pommel.

In the illustration (*Fig.7*) the four unusually fine specimens from the collection of the Cleveland Museum of Art (a,b,c,e) express the highest development of the barong. The use of ebony with ivory inlays, and of ivory alone, as well as the treatment of the silver ferrules, is particularly effective artistically.

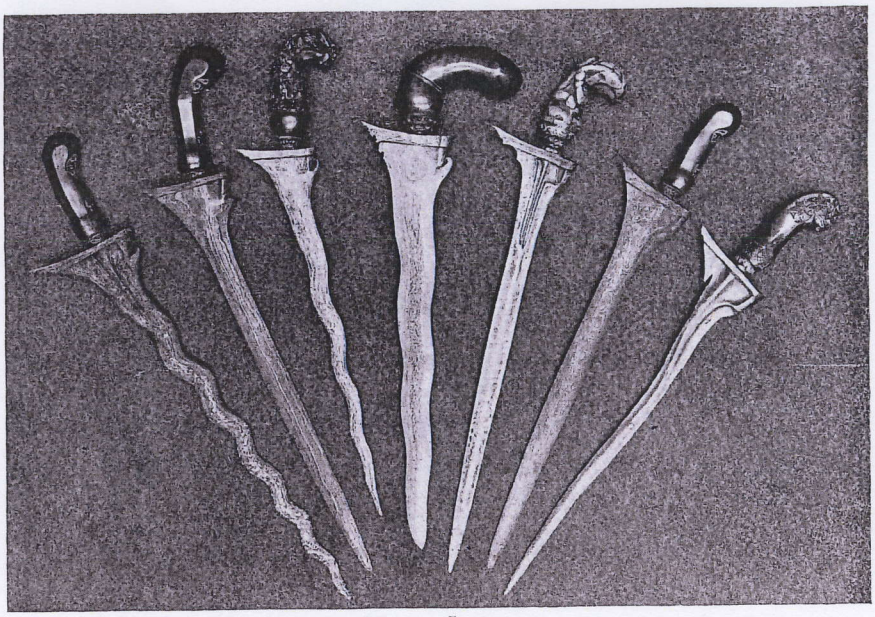


Fig. 6 — A Group of Kris Daggers, Mostly Javanese
In the typical Javanese daggers the base-piece is present, so that they should be classed as true krises. See Figure 5.

So much for the kris and the barong, single-handed weapons. In a subsequent article we shall discuss the campilan, the only two-handed sword used in the Islands; the bolo, which is a specific weapon, and not, as many suppose, any one of a dozen different forms of knife; and those gentle devices known as head-axes, which aid the ambitious warrior in gathering trophies to prove his prowess in conflict.

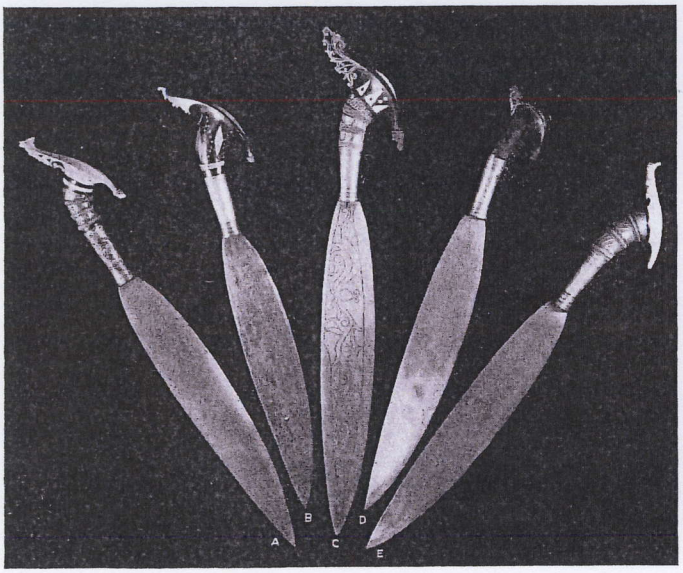


Fig. 7 — A Group of Moro Barongs
The barong is said to have originated with the Moros. It is a single-edged weapon with a leaf-shaped blade.

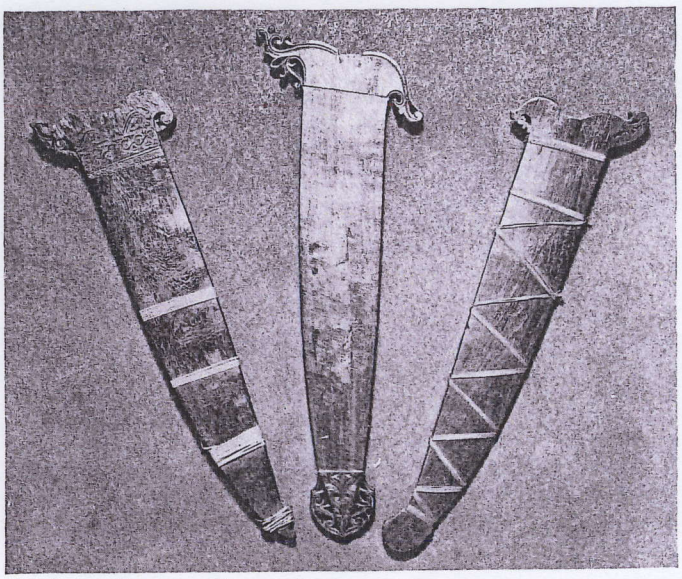


Fig. 8 — A Group of Barong Scabbards
The barong scabbards, like the kris scabbards, are made of wood, often quite beautifully carved.

(To be concluded in a subsequent issue)

Fig. 9 — TENAGRE HANDLES
The salient feature of these weapons is the horrible grotesqueness of their decerebrate, half-human, half-animal pommels. See Figure 13.

The Weapons of the Philippine Islands, II.

By FREDERIC WADE HITCHINGS, M. D.*

Except as noted, illustrations are from the author's collection.

(Continued from the March number of ANTIQUES)

THE CAMPILAN

ACCORDING to Walter Hough of the United States National Museum, the campilan is not essentially Filipino (Moro) but was introduced by way of Borneo. Doctor Hough states that this weapon is also found in the northern Celebes Islands. Army officers have informed me that the campilan is seldom seen north of Mindanao.

The campilan is a curious weapon (*Fig. 10*). Its length of blade — often twenty-eight inches from guard to point — its lightness in weight in proportion to its length, its clumsy wooden guard and handle, its pommel in the form of a conventionalized crocodile head with open jaws, all place it in a class by itself. It is the only two-handed sword used in the Islands.

The blade is single-edged — the back and edge both being straight — considerably narrower at the base than at the tip. Often it displays one or more prongs projecting from the blade at the back near the tip (*Fig. 10, b, c*). I have seen specimens showing from two to eight holes drilled through the blade near the tip and filled with silver or brass, each inlay being said to represent a victim killed with the weapon. The pieces of cloth attached to the three campilans shown in the illustration are fetishes made from bits of clothing taken from victims.

THE BOLO

According to the dictionary the bolo is a "cutlass-like" weapon or an agricultural implement, but anyone who has ever collected Filipino weapons has noticed the readiness with which the word is used to describe any kind of a cutting weapon, regardless of its size, shape, or origin. The word is also used as a verb — to *bolo* a man being to slash or stab him, regardless of any nicety of distinction as to the means employed. Nevertheless, discriminating residents of the Islands usually mean one particular kind of weapon when they refer to a bolo; and, if only for convenience in nomenclature, the word should be restricted to the type to be described.

Technical Description

The bolo has a heavy, single-edged blade which is much wider near the tip than at the base. The back of the blade is essentially straight, while the edge is convex, ending abruptly at the tip in a sweeping curve from the place of greatest width (*Fig. 12*). The cutting part of the blade begins at a distance of two or three inches from the handle.

*Grateful acknowledgment is made to The Cleveland Museum of Art for permission to use Figures 10b, 15b and 17d. — F. W. H.

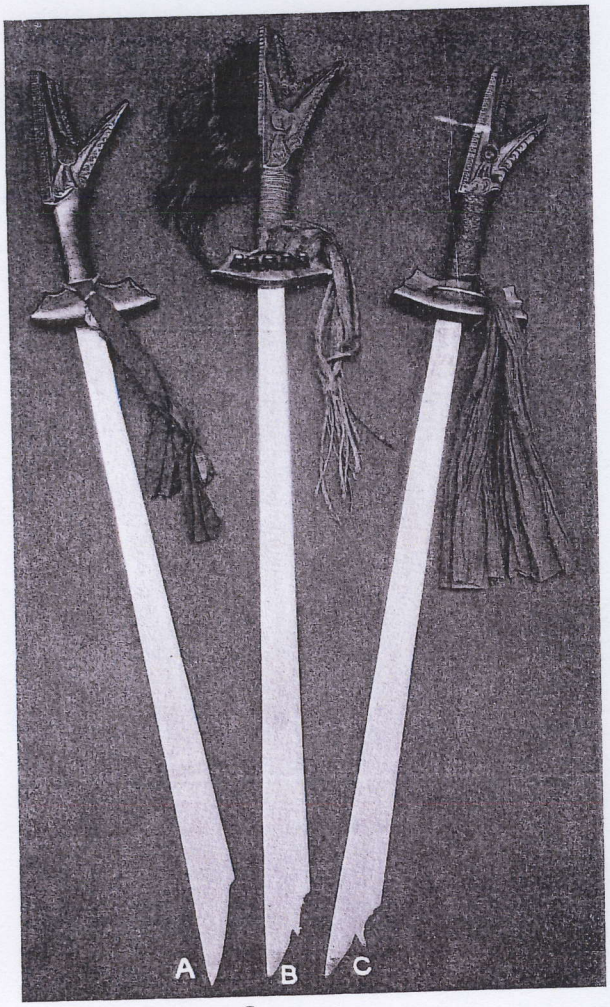


Fig. 10 — A Group of Campilans
The campilan is a curious affair. It is the only two-handed sword in use in the Islands. See Figure 11.

Since the greatest weight of the blade is near the tip, a blow struck with a bolo approximates a blow struck with an axe.

The ordinary bolo has no guard; and, while doubtless often used for fighting, it is primarily an implement of the field and jungle. The specimen shown in Figure 12 is a typical "work bolo." As may be seen, it is a crude affair: the handle rudely shaped, and the scabbard consisting of two pieces of wood lightly held together in three or four places by narrow strips of rattan. If the owner wishes to use the weapon in emergency, it is not necessary even to withdraw it from its scabbard. A blow will sever the rattan with ease — a fact which more than one American soldier learned to his cost.

The Tenagre Form

One form of bolo, however, shows a high degree of development in the weapon known as the *tenagre*. My authority for calling this form the tenagre is Lawrence W. Jenkins, Assistant Director of The Peabody Museum. In a letter he says: "This weapon is typical of the Island of Panay, Philippine Islands; this I have from United States army officers" (*Figs. 13 and 9*). The type, while rare, is clearly defined. Probably its ancestry can be traced back to the ordinary bolo, as has been previously stated. The most salient feature of the four specimens pictured is the horrible grotesqueness of the decerebrate, half-human, half-animal pommels. In the middle pair the teeth are made of bone or vegetable ivory pegs, while in the other two they are integral with the carving. The two longest weapons have blades twenty-eight inches from guard to tip, and they are so heavy that they may have been used as executioners' swords, being too clumsy for fighting except in the hands of a very strong man. The corresponding scabbards have the lower portions bound with wide bands of horn, curiously and ingeniously mortised together at the back.

The Head-Cleaver or Talibong

That the far from gentle art of head collecting has certain refinements is exemplified by the use of the head-cleaver or talibong, the character of which may be judged from the illustration (*Fig. 14*). Two distinct types occur, the one with the pointed tip being the rarer of the two. The curve of the blade facilitates chopping off a head while the victim lies on the ground.

Fig. 11 (above) — A Campilan Handle
The eyes of the crocodile may be represented by the carving or by discs of metal. The guard may have an accessory guard in the form of a broad metal staple, the bar of the staple being straight or bent into deep loops.

Fig. 12 (right) — A Bolo
The bolo has a heavy, single-edged blade which is much wider near the tip than at the base. A blow struck with a bolo approximates the blow of an axe.

The Head-Axe

Another curious weapon is the head-axe (*Fig. 15*). According to Dr. Hough this weapon reaches its highest development in the Philippines. It is found in the north in Luzon, and in the south in Mindanao. Its ancestry, also

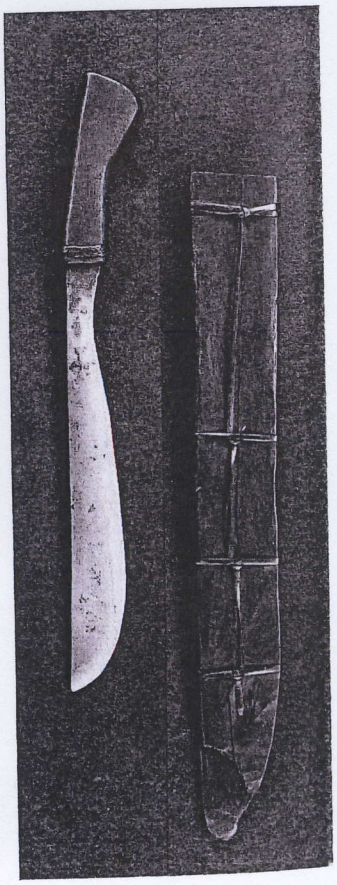


Fig. 13 (right) — A GROUP OF TENAGRES AND SCABBARDS
The longest two have blades twenty-eight inches from guard to tip, and are so heavy that they may have been used as executioners' swords. The corresponding scabbards have the lower part bound with wide bands of horn, ingeniously mortised at the back.

according to Dr. Hough, is "from the Dyak chopper through the talibong."

The insertion of the handle at the back edge of the blade results in poor balance. But this position of the handle may be explained by the fact that it facilitates removal of a head more than would a median position.

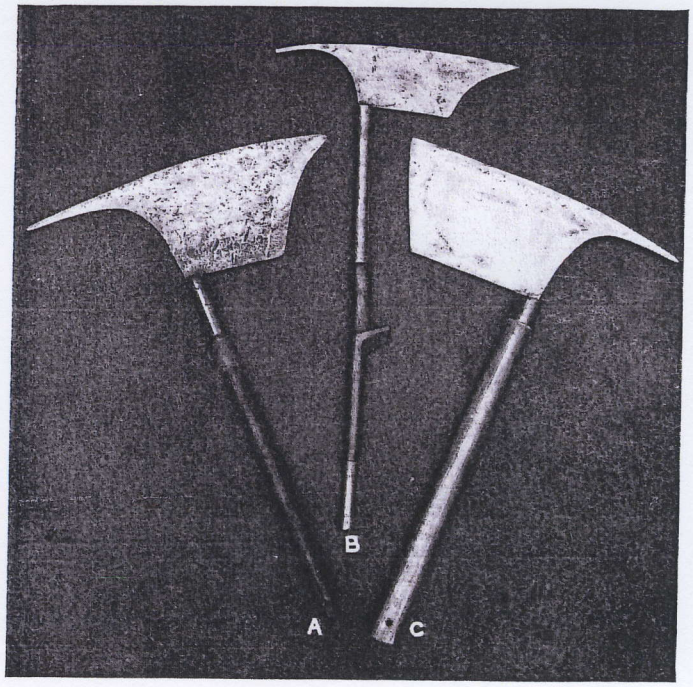
BOWS AND ARROWS

Bows and arrows are less characteristic of the Philippine Islands than are the other weapons. Yet bows and arrows occur in many types — some of the arrows being pointed with iron or steel with elaborate and cruel barbs, and others being simple in outline and free from barbs. Points of hard wood are often used, as shown in Figure 16 b. These particular specimens have shafts made of pieces of reed, and are surprisingly light in weight.

The shafts are neither notched nor feathered. The quiver (*Fig. 16d*) is made from a large piece of bamboo, cut out at the lower end so as to form a spike to be thrust into the ground when the quiver is in use. The two bows are long and flexible, one being made from bamboo. The bowstring is flat, and is made from a single piece of fibre wound with a narrow strip of rattan.

Fig. 14 (left) — A GROUP OF HEAD-CLEAVERS OR TALIBONGS
That the by no means gentle art of head collecting has certain refinements is exemplified by the use of the head-cleaver or talibong.

Fig. 15 (right) — A GROUP OF HEAD-AXES



SPEARS

The spears show as many variations of point as the arrows. Some examples of Moro work are beautifully watered, and are fine examples of skilful forging. Others exhibit the same interesting liking for unwaved, waved and half-and-half blades that is displayed in the kris swords and daggers. The short throwing spears or javelins depicted have palm wood shafts and brass mountings, the blades being ornamented with tooled designs.

SHIELDS

There are several types of shields. A Bagobo shield is shown in Figure 16. The Kalinga and Igorot shields have prongs.

DECADENT WEAPONS

There are many Filipino weapons which are with

difficulty classified, except in a general way, as decadent — at least from the artistic standpoint. They have certain characteristics in common which permit their being recognized at a glance. Spanish, Japanese and Chinese influences are shown in many of them. Both handles and blades show little artistic sense, or at best a sense which is expressed in bizarre forms and crude ornamentation. Compared with the older and finer types, such as the kris and barong, they are the mongrels of the Filipino world of weapons. The group shown in Figure 17 was selected rather at random for the sake of comparison.

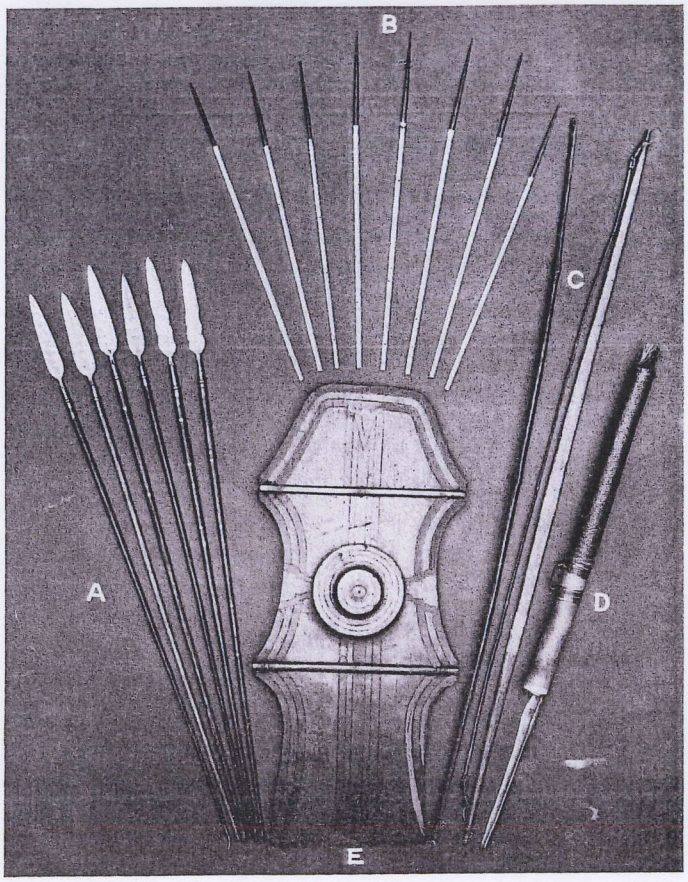
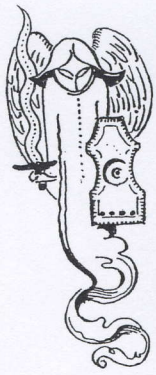


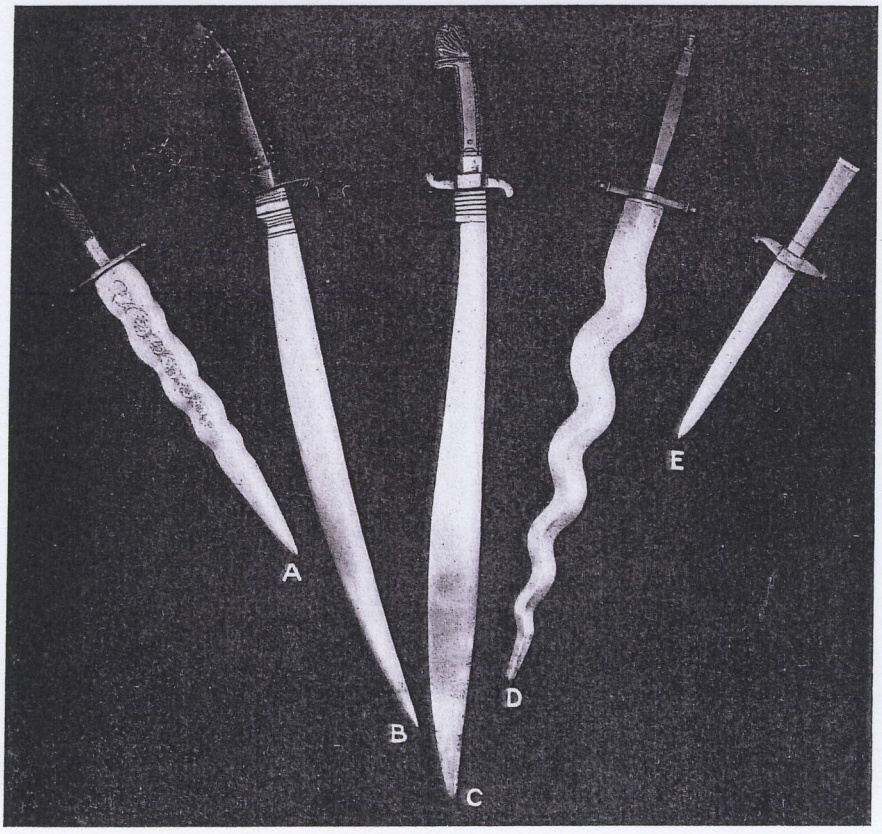
Fig. 16 (left) — BAGOBO SHIELD, JAVELINS, BOWS AND ARROWS AND QUIVER

Figure 17d has an interesting blade. While "flaming" enough to have been used in driving Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, its curves do not make it a kris, and it must be regarded as a freak.

The foregoing pages give at least a brief idea of the most typical of the Filipino weapons. That the weapons themselves show the development of human thought, ability to express thought in concrete form and, at the same time, appreciation of beauty of line and harmonious use of materials of various kinds is self-evident.

NOTE.— The come and go of military forces between the United States and the Philippine Islands, together with a steadily increasing volume of civilian travel, has brought to this country a great many souvenirs in the shape of savage weapons—a considerable number of which have inevitably found their way into local curio shops where their identification often constitutes a difficult problem to dealer and customer alike. ANTIQUES is not deeply concerned with savage accoutrement in general, but it has considered itself privileged to offer the preceding succinct, orderly and authoritative discussion of the weapons made and used by the far-eastern wards of America. — ED.





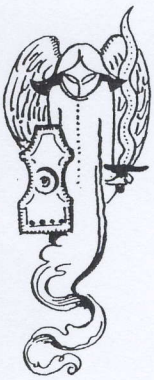


Fig. 17 (right)—A GROUP OF DECADENT WEAPONS There are many Filipino weapons which it is impossible to classify except in a general way as being decadent. Compared with the older and finer types, such as the kris and the barong, they are poor in design and clumsy in execution.