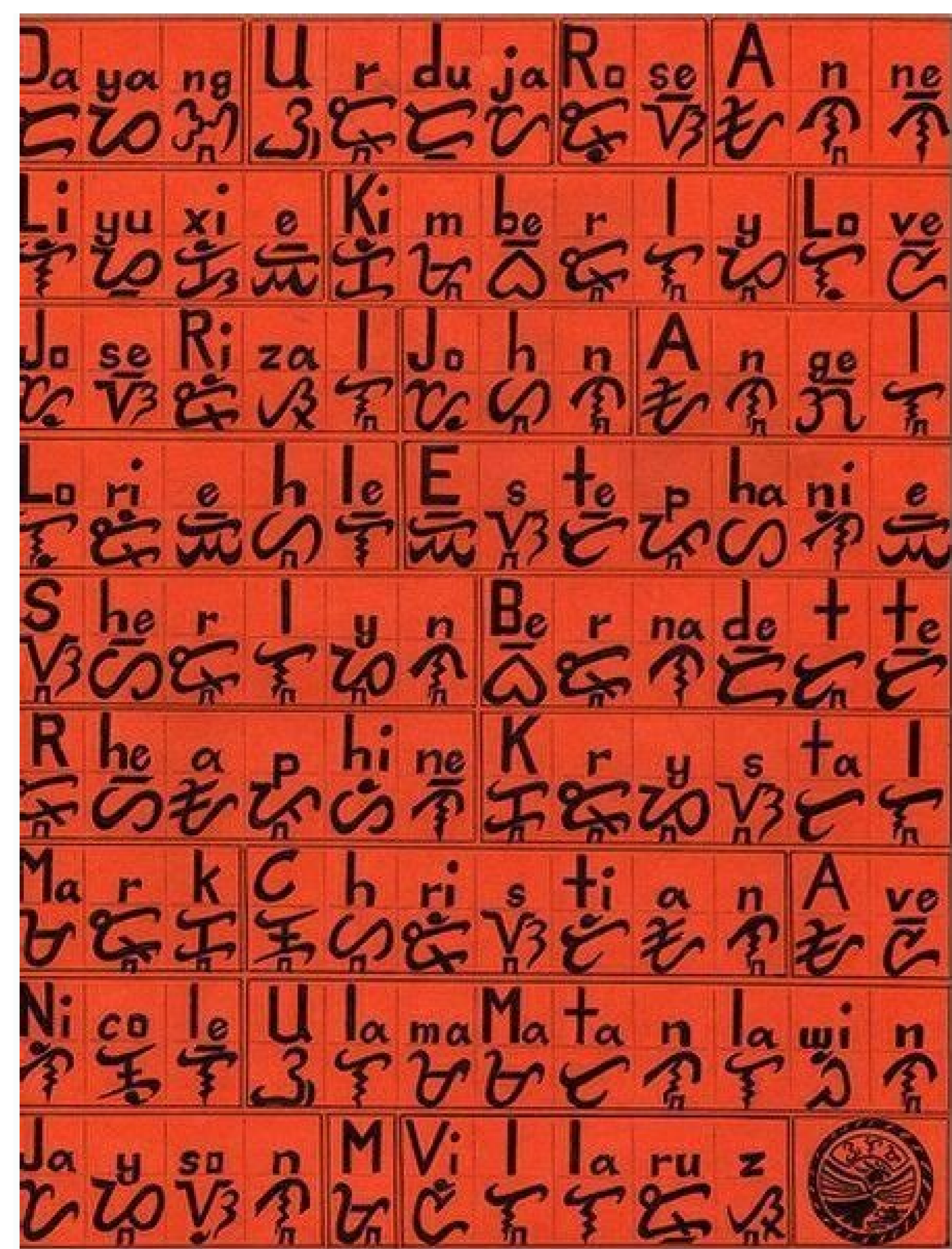


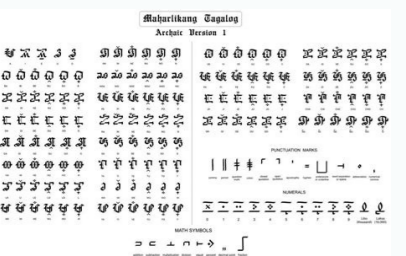
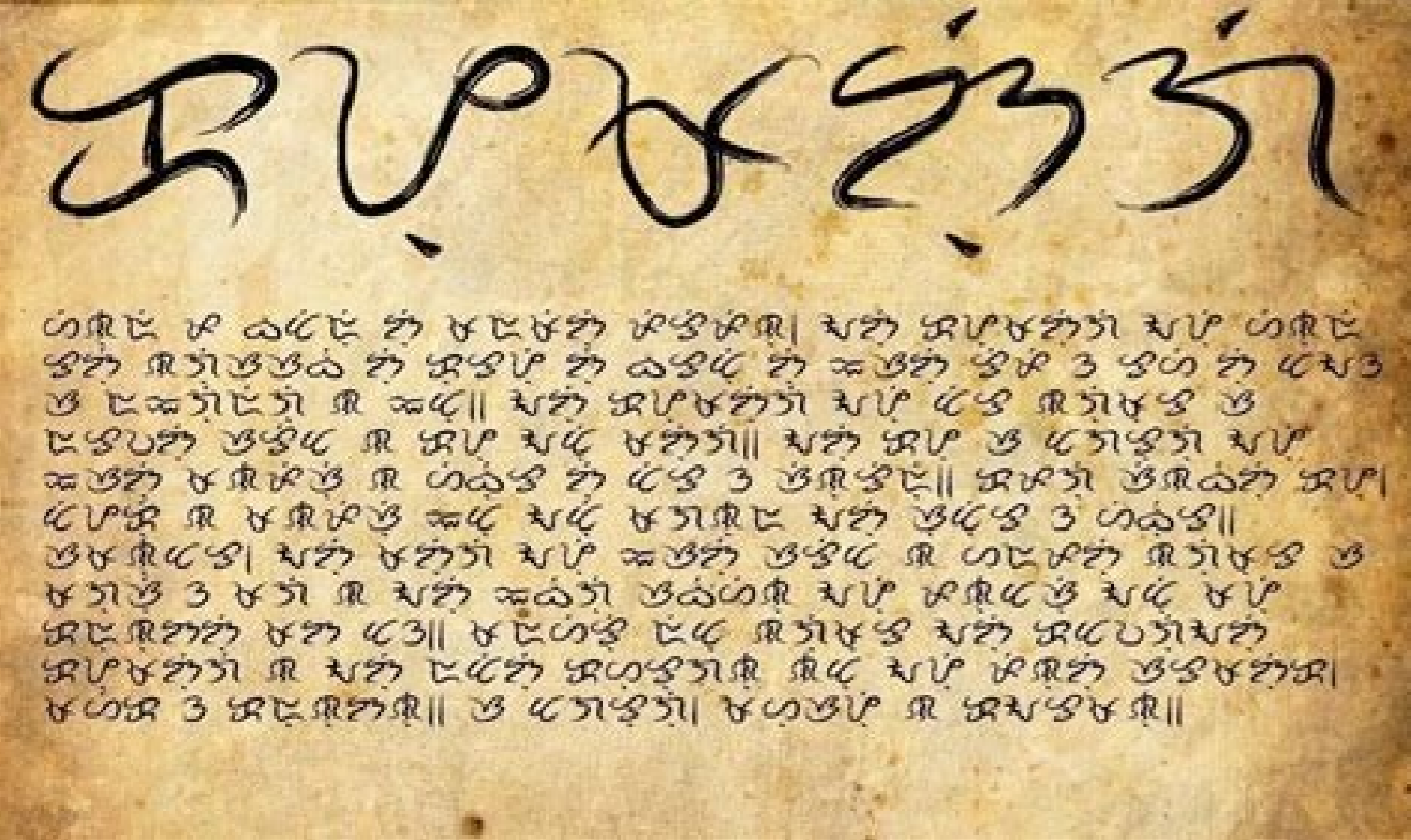
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School Teachers' Awareness and Acceptability of
Arabic as the National Writing System
of the Philippines.

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Baybayin alphabet history. Baybayin history tagalog. Baybayin script history. History ng baybayin. History of baybayin in the philippines. How was baybayin discovered. Facts about baybayin. Baybayin history pdf.

I begin by giving a short introduction to baybayin, followed by a brief history; both these sections mostly summarize previously published material. I then consider variation in baybayin before ending with contemporary concerns of identity and ideology, considering especially how baybayin is implicated in Filipino nationalism. Please feel free to browse to any of these sections — I hope my writing is useful to you! Overview A portion of the Tagalog catechism from the Doctrina Christiana. Source: Paul Morrow. Baybayin is a writing system native to the Philippines, attested from before Spanish colonization through to at least the eighteenth century. The word baybay means “to spell” in Tagalog, which was the language most frequently written with the baybayin script. Apart from Tagalog, baybayin (with some necessary changes) was used to write Ilocano (Iloko), Kapampangan, Pangasinan, Bisaya, and Bikol. The identification of baybayin with languages other than Tagalog is a contested subject, as I describe below. Our sources for this writing are mostly from the Archives of the University of Saint Thomas in Manila. The examples of baybayin are generally of two sorts. First, there is abundant documentation from the Spanish colonizers who arrived in the Philippines starting from Magellan’s arrival in 1521 (and especially after 1565, the first military expedition). Among these sources is the famous Doctrina Christiana, a 1593 codex written in Spanish and Tagalog, with the latter written in both Latin and baybayin scripts. As a bilingual, this document is our most valuable source for understanding baybayin. The second kind of sources we have are a limited number of handwritten documents by proficient users of baybayin. Most of these are fragmentary notes, signatures, and other short snippets. We have only two longer documents: deeds of sale from 1613 and 1635. All other sources for baybayin are modern and generally emulate these earlier examples. Baybayin is an abugida: that is, a writing system whose segments are based on symbols for consonants, with vowel notation a secondary part of the consonant-vowel unit. Baybayin thus resembles other Indic scripts such as Devanagari (used for Hindi), Tamil, and Javanese (all of which are derived from the Brahmi script of ancient India). The 14 consonant characters end in an “a” sound when unmarked. To indicate an “e” or “i” sound, a kudlit (dot) is placed above the letter, while for an “o” or “u” sound a kudlit is placed below. Baybayin is read from left to right, though some early examples may have used a top-to-bottom order. Today, the font used to write baybayin is based on the type used in the 1593 Doctrina Christiana. This differs from many of the handwritten samples, however. For example, the author of the codex introduced his own kudlit to suppress the inherent vowel of a consonant. This feature, modelled after the Brahmic virama, allows easy representation of final consonants that are not followed by a vowel. In general, it is challenging to reconstruct some featur. These are generally written on stone or similar hardy materials, with a particularly interesting example being the Butuan Ivory Seal from 1002. The most common material for writing, however, was bamboo. Some have argued that the materiality of bamboo inscriptions affected the evolution of letter forms, since incising straight lines would have torn the leaves. In an even more intriguing argument, Bonifacio Comandante claims that the development of baybayin was influenced by the use of giant clams. Regardless of these points, some general idea of baybayin’s development can be ascertained. The earliest document found in the Philippines is the Laguna Copperplate Inscription from 900, which was written in a version of the Javanese bawi script, also in the Brahmic family. Sometime between then and 1002, baybayin was developed in the Philippines from bawi or related Indic scripts, becoming more and more widely used through to the arrival of the Spanish in the 1500s. The end of baybayin is also challenging but rewarding to understand. By 1745, Sebastián Totanes wrote in his Arte de la lengua tagala that “it is rare for an Indian to know how to read [Tagalog characters], and rarer still to write them. In our Castilian letters they all know how to read and write.” As late as 1792, though, baybayin was still used to sign a pact on the island of Mindoro. In any case, by the twentieth century baybayin survived only in limited, isolated cases, as with the Hanunóo described by Harold Conklin in the 1940s and ‘50s (and shown in the video below). What were the reasons for the decline of baybayin? In answering this question, scholars are divided between the idea of conscious Spanish suppression on the one hand and a simple fading away due to the convenience of the Latin alphabet on the other. A key work cited in these debates is that of Otley Beyer, an American scholar of the Philippines. In 1921, he wrote that the fanatic zeal of the Spaniards for the Christian faith and corresponding hatred for all other forms of belief led them to regard the native writings and art as works of the Devil – to be destroyed wherever found. ... It cannot be said that such writings did not exist, since the early Filipinos were even more literate than the Mexicans; they used syllabaries of Indian origin. One Spanish priest in southern Luzon boasted of having destroyed more than three hundred scrolls written in the native character. It is important to place Beyer in the context of his time, a period of American imperialism in the Philippines. It is certainly possible that depictions of Spanish backwardness (quite literally book burning) were intended to portray American neocolonialism in a more favorable light. Furthermore, there is no direct documentary evidence of substantial destruction by Spanish missionaries. Modern scholars like Paul Morrow and Hector Santos accordingly reject Beyer’s suggestions, with Santos concluding that the inability of the ancient script to record the new sounds introduced by the Spaniards, the rapid acquisition of literacy in the Latin script with its concomitant social and material benefits, and the disruption of traditional family activities were the main culprits for the loss of the Tagalog script. Any burning of documents that may have transpired had very little to do with it. Variation in script and language Source: Paul Morrow. The question of variation in Baybayin is particularly compelling to investigate. As with any writing system, the forms of letters produced by different individuals are distinct. Some of these distinctions map onto wider regional variations, and particularly to differences in the languages the script is used to write (see the image above). On the one hand, I would argue that these variations do not constitute distinct writing systems. They are more like different versions of the Latin alphabet – e.g. French, Finnish, and Fula – than like the diversity of Brahmic scripts. On the other hand, I want to highlight that baybayin was never the exclusive possession of one language or one tribe. There are a number of reasons behind the assumption that baybayin as used only to write Tagalog. Firstly, Spanish missionaries generally dealt with Tagalog, as with the Doctrina Christiana; indeed, they often referred to baybayin as los caracteres tagalos, or “Tagalog characters.” Secondly, the number of non-Tagalog documents in baybayin is miniscule, just one part of the already small corpus of Tagalog writing. Nevertheless, other languages certainly were written in baybayin. As described above, the example of Hanunóo was evident through to the twentieth century. Adaptations were made to suit these other languages. For instance, /d/ and /r/ were allophones in Tagalog, so were represented by only one symbol in that version of baybayin. On the other hand, languages such as Ilocano differentiated these phonemes and hence had different symbols for them (compare the Mas 1843 and Doctrina 1593 columns in the table above). The Arte de la lengua yloca, with an example of baybayin in the lower part of the page. In particular, I think the example of the Arte de la lengua yloca demonstrates conclusively that languages other than Tagalog were written in baybayin. This codex was originally published in Manila in 1627 as a study of the Ilocano language by an Augustinian friar named Francisco López. The codex was re-edited in 1792, which is the version bought by Dr Nicolás León and donated to the John Carter Brown Library, where I accessed the work. Most recently, the document has been the subject of an article by Rebeca Fernández Rodríguez that highlights its position in the broader project of understanding and describing languages. Most of the codex is written in Spanish (in the Latin script), but there is an example of Baybayin used to write Ilocano on leaf 8 recto. This simple example serves as a reminder of the diversity in baybayin. Nationalism Recent Filipino passports include Baybayin. Source: Proverbs 14:34 in Tagalog/Baybayin, as transcribed from the image above. The third reason why baybayin is so strongly associated with Tagalog is because of the modern discourse of Tagalog regionalism and Filipino nationalism. There is a great deal of interest today in the revitalization of Baybayin, including many online resources. Indeed, in some ways Baybayin has been reclaimed as a symbol of Filipino national identity. Passports issued by the government include Proverbs 14:34 in Tagalog, in both Latin (“ang katuwiran ay nagpapadakila sa isang bansa”) and Baybayin (see images above). The new series of banknotes includes the word “Pilipino” in bottom right in Baybayin (see image below). Furthermore, several bills have been filed in Congress to mandate the teaching of Baybayin and promote the script’s use in other ways; there has been significant pushback, though, with some calling out the bills as promoting a nationalist agenda. A 2017 PhD dissertation by Christopher Potter was devoted to precisely the links between “Language, Tagalog Regionalism, and Filipino Nationalism.” The recent series of banknotes includes the word “Pilipino” in Baybayin (bottom-right). Why are people interested in baybayin revitalization? A fascinating example is the website of Christian Cabuay, baybayin.com. Cabuay was born in the Philippines, where he lived for ten years before moving to the United States. He describes himself as an artist whose work since around 2005 has been inspired by baybayin. Cabuay has developed an app, filmed a documentary, published a book, and created a line of merchandise about baybayin. His work is motivated by a desire to “reclaim a part of [his] lost culture”; he says that “this ancient script is being resurrected thanks to young soul searching Filipinos.” In particular, there is a strong emphasis on anticolonialism: one of the shirts he sells consists of the slogan “decolonize indigence”. One of the shirts designed and sold by Christian Cabuay. It is interesting to contrast Cabuay’s work with that of Hector Santos (who I referenced earlier). Santos, too, is originally Filipino but later moved to California, where he died in 2014. His work is primarily historical, as opposed to the artistic projects undertaken by Cabuay. Their motivations do overlap: Santos states that after learning more about baybayin, “you might just feel prouder that you are Filipino.” At the same time, Santos criticizes people like Cabuay, arguing that “the same people who call for the revival of the Tagalog script have not shown any interest in propagating and maintaining the living Philippine scripts used by our “second-class” citizens [such as the Hanunóo]. ... This is a sad but accurate commentary on the divisions within Philippine society today: lowlanders vs. highlanders, Christians vs. non-Christians, urban vs. taga-bundok, western vs. traditional, pants vs. bahags, blouses vs. bare breasts, and so on. The history of baybayin is, as Santos demonstrates, inextricable from the broader cultural politics of the Philippines. From its first emergence through Indian influence, to its disappearance after Spanish colonization, to its modern resurgence as part of Filipino nationalism, baybayin reflects how identity has been shaped and expressed in the Philippines. As Santos poignantly concludes: Are we now forever fragmented as a nation grasping for empty symbols when there are so many real things that we should be proud of? Concluding thoughts I began this project out of pure happenstance. I was browsing through the various writing systems of the world and came upon one I had never heard of before: baybayin. As I did some more research, I realized that there was relatively little written on this subject. Furthermore, I recognized that I had access to a number of resources that enabled me to write at length about baybayin: most importantly, an academic library, but also the manuscripts in the John Carter Brown library. As I progressed further, though, I also realized my limitations: I do not speak Spanish or Tagalog, and I have had a relatively short time to acquaint myself with unfamiliar historical, cultural, and linguistic milieux. I have therefore here done my best to present an accessible, succinct introduction to baybayin. The last section is the only one I consider original, since I touch on my broader concern with nationalism and attempt to link this theme with the particularly fascinating dynamics of baybayin and Filipino identity and politics.

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