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Economic Developments in Antique Province: 1800–1850

Joselito N. Fornier



This is the first of two articles on economic developments in Antique during the nineteenth century. The two articles are aimed at contributing to the study of Philippine local and economic history. Nothing much has been written about the province of Antique because of its remote location. There was also an impression that very little occurred in the province in the nineteenth century. However, the source materials present a different picture. Despite its isolation, the province was able to develop economically through the efforts of the governors and inhabitants of the province.

Most of the available materials only provide a general picture of Antique's economic development in the first half of the nineteenth century. Thus, they do not allow comprehensive analysis of the variables which had an impact on the provincial economy. In spite of this drawback, the records have given a much more lucid and specific portrayal of Antique Province's colonial economy. Significantly, the information on Antique also suggests either an acceptable standstill or a developmental progression in the province, especially in agriculture. They seem to indicate that unless circumstances became adverse or consequential enough to cause profound transformations, reports would simply provide a general description of the province's produce. Lastly, provincial commerce was limited. *Palay*—the principal crop—was used to pay tribute and some amounts were sold in Iloilo. With the exception of the tributary crop payment, trade in palay and most other products was confined within Antique.

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The Province of Antique

The province of Antique is located in the western portion of Panay Island in the Visayan region of the Philippine archipelago. A triangular-shaped island in the extreme west of the Visayan island grouping, Panay—the sixth biggest island in the Philippines—has a total land area of 11,515 square kilometers (4,445 square miles). Panay is bounded by the following bodies of water: the Sibuyan Sea (north), the Cuyo East Pass (west), the Visayan Sea (east), and the Panay Gulf (south). The Iloilo Strait on the southern portion of Iloilo serves as the passageway between the province and the island of Guimaras. Panay's topography comprises three separate portions: western uplands, central lowlands, and eastern uplands. Currently, the island is divided into four provinces: Antique (west), Aklan (northwest), Capiz (northeast), and Iloilo (southeast). Capiz, Iloilo, and Antique became separate provinces during the Spanish period. (Before this division, Iloilo and Antique comprised one unit known as Oton while the area of Capiz was known as the province of Panay.) During the same period, a separate district called Concepción was briefly in existence on the extreme eastern portion of Panay. In 1956, the northwest portion of Capiz was reorganized as the province of Aklan (Algué 1900, map no. 20; *The Philippine Atlas* 1975, 17, 74–78; *Atlas of the Philippines* 1959, 153–60; 1992 *Philippine Yearbook* 1992, 36).

Antique is a seahorse-shaped province running almost entirely along the western coast of Panay Island. The province has a land area of 2,522 square kilometers (973 square miles). It is bounded on the north by Capiz, the Cuyo East Pass in the west, the Gulf of Panay in the south, and a mountain chain on the east which serves as the border between Iloilo and Aklan Provinces. The northwest tip of Antique is called Pucio Point (Punta Pucio) with Naco Point (Punta Naso) on its extreme southwest (*ibid.*).

The total hectareage of Antique during the nineteenth century was estimated at 379,317 (it is actually 267,927) broken down into the following four types: urban (536 hectares); rural, i.e., farmlands (30,704 hectares); uncultivated (61,672 hectares); and forest (286,405 hectares) (PNA 1872 "Superficie"; Cavada y Mendez de Vigo 1876, 87–88; Abella y Casiarego 1890, 8; Regalado 1977, 24). The mountain soils of Antique are mostly of indigenous origin. Shale and sandstone comprise the parent material of Antique's soils with shale responsible for the clayish texture of the ground. Shale and sandstone—aside from being acidic—are generally less fertile than limestone, less

permeable, and more susceptible to erosion. The clayish texture makes the soil difficult to turn when dry (Umaña and Arriola 1964, 4; PNA 1872, "Terreno"; Cavada 1876, 89; *Philippine Atlas* 1959, 17-19, Martinez de Zuñiga 1973, 459; Huke 1963, 55-58).

Antique is separated from the rest of Panay by a mountain chain (thirty-five mountains altogether) curving from northwest to southwest along the province's eastern half. These mountains comprise a considerable portion of the total land area of the province (about eighty percent) and have slope percentages ranging from eight percent to as much as sixty-five percent. The area of San Jose de Buenavista, the capital, has the most level slope in the province (three percent or less). Since a three percent slope is the maximum allowable incline for the most economical rice cropping, then the coastal or isolated pockets of flatter lands became the centers of population growth in Antique province. Moreover, the mountains, forests, and vegetation of Antique Province retain much heat and humidity. However, these elevated lands are also a source of protection and drought for the province during the Northeast Monsoon. Because of these mountains, Antique is cut off almost entirely from the other provinces of Panay. During the Spanish period, the road connections in Antique between the *pueblos* (municipalities) and the other provinces via the mountains were in poor condition, narrow, and only passable during the dry season. When the rains came, these roads gradually diminished in size and disappeared altogether in some places (*Philippine Atlas* 1959, 76; Abella 1890, 11-12; Mallat 1983, 197; PNA 1872 "Caminos" and "Montes"; Cavada 1876, 89-90; Umaña and Arriola 1964, 3-4; *El Archipelago Filipino* 1900, 1:54).

Antique's coastal areas present another barrier to communication and trade with the outside. Writers during the Spanish period commented on the lack of good anchoring coves or viable ports along the province's more or less regular coastline from the northwest to the southwest. San Jose de Buenavista was certainly not the only docking point for ships along Antique's coast. However, deposits from the ocean currents and the monsoons continuously change the configuration of the coastal areas, thereby making them shallow. Furthermore, swells batter the shores, especially during the monsoon. Since the coastal outline is also interrupted by stony and elevated platforms of land which slope down from the mountains, trading between ports and the inland areas of Antique presented difficulties then as they still do at present (PNA 1872, "Costas"; Cavada 1876, 91; Abella 1890, 78-87, *Philippine Atlas* 1959, 76; Fernandez 1877, 348-50).

The province of Antique has twenty-five rivers (all originating from the eastern mountains) and 279 tributaries. The major river of Antique Province is the Sibalom River which forms from the rainwaters deposited on the western slopes of Mount Ibayog. This body of water twists as it traverses down the mountains, passing in a half loop towards the municipalities of San Remigio, and Sibalom until it empties into the western coast off San Pedro. The combination of the river water and the level ground has turned the basin along the water route into the province's most fertile, productive, and developed area. As was often the case in Antique's history, the deluge from the rains would also cause many of the province's rivers to overflow and make them impossible to cross.

Economic Changes in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century

In the mid-1700s, a series of measures from the Bourbon monarchs of Spain led to the gradual economic transformation of the Philippines. Spanish mercantilists, influenced by the idea of the French Enlightenment, argued for policies that would increase the output of overseas colonies in order to benefit the mother country. The positive response from the crown led to the appointment of competent governors-general who experimented with various projects to stimulate the export potential of the islands (Cushner 1971, 186-88). Subsequently, as Spain lost its colonies in the New World, there was also a move to make the remaining overseas possessions pay for their administration and even send some money back to the Spanish metropole. In Antique Province, the work of at least a couple of governors reflects these changes.

By the late eighteenth century, the *reducción* (lit., "reduction") in Western Panay was already enjoying some measure of success. Enough people had been brought together into pueblos to justify the formation of the Antique political unit on a linguistic and physical basis (1796). The provincial tributary economy then partially integrated with a commercial economy. However, during the first half of the nineteenth century, productivity was generally focused inwards and geared towards the production of a steady supply of food. Despite the problems posed by pests, plagues, climate, topography, and unadaptable seeds, the provincial economy showed steady signs of harvest surpluses. However, the marketing system that eventually came into the province proved to be problematic when it came into contact with a centuries-old bartering system.

Agricultural Base

Little information is available on pre-nineteenth-century agriculture in Antique Province. However, the subsistence economy that characterized the early nineteenth century was most probably a product of pre-Spanish economic patterns coupled with an upland-lowland dichotomy. Accounts of the Visayan economy at the beginning of gradual Spanish hegemony suggest the existence of a symbiotic trade between upland and lowland peoples, especially in the Visayas. Products were exchanged across these two boundaries and this barter even took precedence over wars. *Palay* (*Oryza Sativa*)—the vernacular term for the rice plant and the unhusked rice grains—was found all over the Philippines. In the Visayas, it was cultivated on sloping terrain using swidden-type agriculture. These elevated areas served as runoffs for water, thereby eliminating the need for irrigated sites where palay could drown (see Scott 1982, 138–39).

A Spanish/Christian political unit intensified the upland-lowland contrast which was already in existence. Reorganizing the natives into settlements was necessary because of the Spanish view of civilization. Likewise, the scarcity of Spanish soldiers and missionaries also meant moving people into more easily accessible (and watchable) lowland areas. The negative Spanish image of the *monteses* (people who live in the mountains) thereby cut off the trade between the uplanders and lowlanders. Since the monteses were not Christians, they could not be allowed to mingle with the Christianized lowlanders. In the year 1841, Governor D. Manuel Yturriaga ordered monteses in Barrio Bancolub (pueblo of Sibalom) to convert to Christianity or leave the pueblo—despite the latter's allegiance to the *gobernadorcillo*, D. Rafael Baladjay.¹

The sometimes-forced relocation also resulted in a drastic shift in the provincial economy. The cultivation of palay—which was required as regular tribute by the Spaniards—was increased. Previously, the swidden-type agriculture produced some palay although it was not enough to last a whole year; Visayans also subsisted on various other crops and some wild game (Scott 1992, 138–39). The irrigated rice fields became necessary in order to increase palay harvests. The carabao (or water buffalo), a common but rarely-used animal in the Visayas, became the plow animal for the rice fields. The foundation of Antique's nineteenth-century economy—agriculture—was thereby intensified and diversified. Various cash crops were later added to food crops.

In the case of Antique Province, however, both the dry and wet varieties of rice seem to have been cultivated. It would have been impractical, given the topography of the province, to avoid using the available terrain for palay cultivation. The *Gaceta de Manila* reports for Antique—when discussing agriculture—always mentioned *semilleros* (seedbeds) and the transplanting of germinated rice shoots to fields, thereby pointing to the existence of irrigated rice paddies. On the other hand, *protocolo* documents also refer to unirrigated lands known as *terreno seco*. In any case, both the dry and wet types of *palay* were being used throughout the Philippines in the nineteenth century (Javier de Morga y Jimenez 1883, 126). Twentieth-century Antique Province currently maximizes use of irrigated and unirrigated agriculture, especially for *palay* (*Binirayan* '82, 58).

Early nineteenth-century records on Antique reflect characteristics of a pre-Spanish economy. There was much emphasis on the increased productivity of agriculture and livestock. This preoccupation with numbers reflects the drive towards self-sufficiency and surplus production at the regional level. However, it also means (in accordance with statements made by provincial officials of the early nineteenth century) that Antique was not producing enough food crops to satisfy both the tribute obligations and nutritional needs of the inhabitants. The late organization of the smaller Antique Province (from Oton) also meant a delay in the formulation of economic plans for the area.

Provincial reports dated 1808 to 1811 provide a description of the region's agricultural condition in the early nineteenth century. These reports, inasmuch as they highlight the achievements of one Governor Angel Paredes, are quite detailed in their exposition of agricultural development in Antique Province. This series of documents (1808) from the *gobernadorcillos* portray a generally positive picture of the economy, contrasting the current situation with previous years of hunger and want, especially those from 1800 to 1805. Paredes' efforts apparently stimulated the development of the agricultural base of the province. In response to the governor's directives, most of the *pueblo* inhabitants planted new crops and increased cultivation of traditional crops, which included *palay*, *algodón* (cotton), *maiz* (corn), *cocos* (coconuts), *cacao* (cocoa), *buri* (palm) and *bonga* (areca palm). Cotton was used for textile products; coconuts provided oil, vinegar, and *tuba* (wine). Various portions of the *buri* produced molasses, flour, and building materials for sea vessels. *Bonga* was generally

utilized for its betel nut and its wood served as flooring for houses. Most of the items were generally set aside for local consumption. For the year 1808, approximately half of the palay harvests went to the payment of tribute. Table 1, incorporating statistics from the written reports of the governors and *gobernadorcillos* in the EPA, shows the palay harvest for 1808 in proportion to cultivated land (both expressed in *cavan* capacity).

Table 1. Palay Yields in Antique Province: 1808

Pueblo/Visita	Area of Land Planted (In Cavaness/Gantas)	Palay Harvested (In Cavaness)
San Jose	642.15	16,698
Bugason	480.1	8,350
Sibalom	1,199.9	29,975
Hamtic	486.8	7,290
Dao	579.9	9,580
Patnongon	1,069.13	15,975
Caritan	202.22	Lost from pests
San Pedro	395.14	9,375
Nalupa	315.23	7,900
Lauaan	182.21	3,740
Tibiao	230.4	Lost from storm
Culasi	303.16	Lost from storm
Pandan	135.8	Lost from storm and pests
Total	6,222.14	108,883

Source: PNA, EPA: 1802-1810, Tomo VIII, Exp. 16, fols. 141-185a, 1808.

Paredes' term also saw an increase in cultivated palay land in 1808, 1809, and 1810 as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Area of Cultivated Palay Land (In *Cavanes* and *Gantas*) in Antique Province: 1808, 1809, 1810

Pueblo/Visita	1808	1809	1810
San Jose	642.15	802	1,061.08
Hamtic	486.11	1,058	1,068
Dao	579.09	587.18	502.08
Sibalom	1,199.09	2,035	2,527
San Pedro	375.14	460	576.11
Patnongon	1,069.13	1,069	1,106
Caritan	202.22	206.11	?
Bugason	484.01	829	946
Lauaan	182.21	166	250
Nalupa	315.23	405	489
Tibiao	212.14	191	210
Culasi	303.16	280	416
Pandan	135.08	319	485
Total	6,184.76	8,407.29	9,636.27

Source: PNA, *EPA: 1802-1810*, Tomo VIII, Exp. 15, fols. 139-140, 1808; fol. 200, 1809; fols. 215-215b, 1811.

Overall, the pueblos of Antique increased cultivation of the other crops by planting the seeds distributed by the governor. Table 3 summarizes the number of plants and sown seeds in Antique per crop (except palay).

Paredes was apparently well-liked by the native officials of the province. Aside from his agricultural plans, Paredes used some of his money to secure smallpox vaccine and vaccinators for the province. Paredes was also effective in repelling the economically disruptive Moro raids. In 1811, the *gobernadorcillos* petitioned the governor-general to extend Paredes' term of office. Paredes—who became governor in 1805 or 1806—would stay on until the year 1815.²

Paredes' projects appear to have been followed up by D. Domingo Benito, Antique's governor in the 1830s. Unlike Paredes, Benito was more cynical of the natives, characterizing them as indolent and

Table 3. Number of Plants and Corresponding Seeds Planted in Antique Province: 1808, 1809, 1810

Type of Plant	1808		1809		1810	
	Number of Producing Plants	Number of Non-Bearing Plants/ Seeds Planted	Number of Producing Plants	Number of Non-Bearing Plants/ Seeds Planted	Number of Producing Plants	Number of Non-Bearing Plants/ Seeds Planted
Coconuts	34,195	131,084	71,309	140,562	65,040	149,362
Cocoa	42,186	143,100	33,990	68,909	33,678	113,615
Cotton*	14,401		21,547		978.18	
Buri	33,705	101,922	48,195	90,188		
Bonga	43,977	128,126	76,339	132,637	81,947	141,056
Corn*			452.20		763.23	
Other Plants					2,696	

*Given in terms of fields planted and measured in cavanese and gantas.

Source: PNA, *EPA: 1802-1810*, Tomo VIII, Exp. 15, fols. 139-140, 1808; fol. 200, 1809; fols. 215-215b, 1811.

uninclined to give their share of labor to the development of Antique. He contended in a report that such apathy was the cause of the province's retarded state. In the latter part of 1835—after a widespread provincial famine—Benito encouraged the planting of the seeds of *café* (coffee), cocoa, *sibucan* (sapan tree), and cotton. According to Benito, the response from the native and Spanish officials and Augustinian clerics was uneven. However, the results show that many people placed a lot of effort in the planting endeavor.³

A considerable number of cocoa and cotton plants and seeds were part of Paredes' economic development plan during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Either they failed to adapt to Antique's soil or else they died from the extensive drought that caused the 1835 famine. In any case, Benito also decided to revitalize and diversify the province's agricultural products probably as a way to minimize the repercussions caused by overdependence on one staple crop.

The subsequent events of 1836 demonstrate the failure of this enterprise in one pueblo. Patnongon, like the other pueblos of Antique, had complied with the directives of Benito to plant the seeds of various cash crops. The results were favorable for most of the pueblos as the inhabitants were able to harvest enough for daily needs (no figures were given in the documents) and pay the tribute obligation at the same time. Patnongon, however, experienced the opposite with crop failures and its residents were now unable to pay tribute for the current year. Benito then called for an investigation of the present and former *gobernadorcillos* of the pueblo, charging that these officials were remiss in complying with his orders. The sworn depositions of the officials reveal a variety of reasons for the failure of the crops in Patnongon. Generally, most argued that the seeds could not acclimatize to the soil and that the sun was too hot. However, the basic problem was simply one of priority. People simply delayed planting the cash crop seeds because they gave priority to the palay harvest. As a result, the seeds were planted just around the time the sun was getting too hot. It also appears that some portions of Patnongon were known to be unfavorable to crops and people avoided planting in these barren fields. In the end, the officials were exonerated from any wrongdoing. The most effective argument by the pueblo officials—and backed up by the parish priest—was a sickness that plagued the local population for eight months. Moreover, a good number of carabaos also died from some sort of disease, resulting in a loss of plowing time and capacity for Patnongon's farmers.⁴

Table 3 shows that massive efforts were needed to get any sort of yield from cash crops like cacao or cotton. The ratio of nonbearing plants or seeds was always higher in proportion to the plants that eventually became productive. From 1808 to 1810, there was also a gradual decline in the cash crops planted in the province of Antique. Overall the natives of the province seemed correct in their assessment that the crops being encouraged for cultivation would not take root in Antique's soil. The one exception was palay, which yielded bountiful harvests in Antique.

Unfortunately, disaster could hit the province's rice crops and cause misery to the inhabitants. In 1801, a storm caused the loss of 5,066 cavans of palay in six pueblos. Consequently, the tribute obligations of the province had to be reduced. During the term of Benito (1835), a widespread drought resulted in sickness and death as well as the disruption of peace and order in the province. People could not pay the tribute, possessions were sold, and a great number had to rely on vegetables and legumes to survive. Crime became a problem although the governor was able to use troops to bring down the "*facenorosos*" (villains).⁵ This drought possibly explains the huge drop in the population roll of the province between 1833 and 1837 (78,250 to 55,100 or 15,650 tributes to 11,020 tributes).⁶

These events, as well as statements coming from Benito regarding this crisis, demonstrate a growing dependence on products grown in the lowland region. Since people were falling back on alternative food supplies (vegetables and legumes), it meant that palay was already well-entrenched and produced in sufficient quantity to become part of the regular diet.

Livestock

Livestock, especially carabaos, were becoming increasingly important in Antique's agricultural economy. As draft animals, carabaos were attached to plows in the rice fields or used to pull carts. In recognition of their importance, carabaos were protected animals under the law. A Superior Decree of 30 May 1807 which was penned by D. Angel Paredes prohibited, among other things, the killing of carabaos. To disseminate the information, Paredes had the orders printed in Spanish and the local vernacular.⁷

The livestock count in Table 4 shows the importance of carabaos for the nineteenth-century agricultural economy. The increase in the

number of carabaos between 1808 and 1810 is reflective of either an improved breeding program or simply a better system of counting livestock heads in the province. The figures show that carabaos were now an essential part of palay farming in the province and demonstrate the growing utilization of irrigated rice fields.

Table 4. Number of Livestock in Antique Province: 1808, 1809, 1810

Type of Animal	1808		1809		1810	
	Adult	Young	Adult	Young	Adult	Young
Carabaos	5,992	1,018	7,931	2,247	7,773	2,174
Bovine Cattle	1,768	?	1,432	476	1,411	644
Horses	?	?	?	?	1,907	621

Source: PNA, EPA: 1810-1854, Tomo VIII, Exp. 16, table summary for the years 1808, 1809, 1810.

In 1836, the court of Antique Province jailed and investigated the gobernadorcillo (D. Agustín Mateo) of San Pedro for permitting the transfer of some cattle and carabaos to Iloilo. D. Domingo Benito had forbidden the export of cattle and especially carabaos from the province inasmuch as the animals were scarce and needed for daily work. The law had also forbidden the mortgaging or seizure of the animals (along with farm implements)—a tacit recognition by the Spaniards of the important place of agriculture in the provincial Philippines. From the available documents, it turns out that the secular parish priest of San Pedro, D. Domingo Franco, had taken the animals as payment for *derechos de entierros* (burial or internment rights). While the owners were reluctant to hand over the animals, they were forced to do so because they did not want the priest to view them as ungrateful. During the night, and unknown to the gobernadorcillo, Franco managed to sneak the animals out of the pueblo to his native Pototan, in Iloilo Province. Altogether, Franco had taken about nineteen carabaos and five cattle. The immediate effects of the transfer were not taken up by the surviving records. Presumably, since Franco had been reported to the archbishop of Cebu, the animals

were returned to their original owners. If the animals had remained with Franco, they would have been economically damaging to the agricultural livelihood of the aforementioned San Pedro farmers. Significantly, all of the officials' testimonies admitted to the scarcity and value of the cattle and carabaos, especially the latter, for the fields.⁸ Moreover, they pointed out that each individual in the *pueblo* only had one or two carabaos and that these were not enough to do the work in the fields.

According to Benito's report in 1837, the following animals (see Table 5) died due to a pestilence. Although the year was not given, the pestilence most probably occurred in 1835. Benito's report did not include the number of draft animals that remained in Antique Province after the onslaught of the epidemic. The drop must have been considerable for Benito to draft a decree outlawing the export of farm animals from the province. Benito recognized the potential damage to the agricultural economy (and tribute payments) of the province should an essential component of agriculture be lost.

Table 5. Animal Deaths in Antique Province: 1835

Pueblo	Carabaos	Cattle	Horses
San Jose	192	69	16
San Pedro	143	18	9
Sibalom	220	46	23
Hamtic	182	58	18
Dao	443	19	6
Cagayancillo and Anini-y	93	22	2
Patnongon	181	49	7
Carit-an	79	16	3
Bugason	357	132	21
Nalupa	172	81	14
Culasi	143	39	17
Pandan	119	27	11
Total	2,324	576	147

Source: PNA, EPA: 1810-1854, Tomo III, Exp. 15, fols. 217-218, 1837.

Textile Production

Textile weaving and the manufacture of various types of cloth were already in existence in the Philippines before the coming of the Spaniards. The industry was—like agriculture—geared only towards the use of an individual household. If we compare the nineteenth-century provincial population with the number of looms, it is obvious that many families in Antique lacked the necessary equipment for cloth production. Most probably, a household with enough clothing surplus used these items as a medium of exchange.

Governor Angel Paredes never complained about the inadequacy of the existing industry. Rather, he encouraged an increase in the

Table 6. Number of Looms in Antique Province: 1809 and 1811

Pueblo/Visita	1809	1811
Casa Real	7	?
San Jose	200	329
San Pedro	80	113
Sibalom	232	569
Patnongon	32	218
Bugason	130	209
Lauaan	15	173
Nalupa	100	368
Tibiao	55	56
Culasi	18	14
Pandan	51	173
Hamtic	386	411
Dao	169	203
Caritan	32	?
Total	1,507	2,836

Source: PNA, EPA: 1802-1810, Tomo VIII, Exp. 16, fols. 217-217b, 1811; and fol. 245, 1809.

number of looms and cloth manufacturing output for both household consumption and sale. (Undoubtedly, Paredes included cotton in his agricultural plan so that the product could supply raw material for the textile industry.) Between 1809 and 1811, there was a marked increase in the number of looms in the province, as summarized in Table 6. The *gobernadorcillos*, as usual, were acting under the orders of Paredes.

The *Casa Real* (government house) of San Jose utilized seven looms and employed fifty women. This project was undertaken to provide an example of the potential income that could be generated from cloth production. Paredes ran the operation with the salary for the women coming from him personally. Such a setup was beneficial for the women inasmuch as they were either widows or unmarried (and consequently without any income). As a result, these women were able to pay the tribute to their respective *cabezas* (*barangay* heads). Overall, the Casa Real's textile production was impressive, resulting in a turnout of cloths of silk, cotton, and *nipa* (a type of palm); silk and cotton cloths with patterns and colors; handkerchiefs; tablecloths; skirts; *sinamay* (embroidered cloths); pants and trousers; and blankets. (The cotton and silk materials were obviously imports.) The other pueblos also produced—in varying degrees—the same items for local use.⁹ Considering the striking increase of looms in the pueblos in just two years, it would seem that Paredes' textile production plan was successful. The elimination of the looms in the Casa Real in 1811 is indicative of the growing number of *telares* in the province, thereby allowing the government to shut down its operations and allow other people to take over.

Marketing and Exchange

Palay was exported out of the province in large quantities due to the tributary trade network. The governor, with an *indulto de comercio* (license to trade), procured rice for his own business dealings while the privilege lasted. Chinese *mestizos* also came in from Iloilo to buy palay. Overall, however, commerce in the first half of the nineteenth century was limited to internal trade. Minor agricultural products and textiles produced from the looms were intended primarily for local consumption although some could be sold to neighboring provinces. Despite the province's agricultural potential especially in palay, it was isolated by high mountains, and narrow and poorly maintained roads

leading north to Capiz and south to Iloilo. Muslim vessels engaging in the slave trade also posed some threats to trading ships. While the lack of good harbors certainly hindered regular attacks from Muslims, it also meant few places where ships could dock during trade and the very turbulent Southwest Monsoon. Generally, only maritime vessels came to Antique for fresh water and supplies (Martinez de Zuñiga 1973, 459–60; Mallat 1983, 196–98).

An unarticulated marketing system that was beginning to enter the provincial economy resulted in problems in the transactional and exchange network. Money in the conventional sense of the word, i.e., coinage, was in short supply for everyday transactions. Silver was available to supplement tribute payments as early as 1800. As a general rule, however, metal currency was not the usual form of exchange in the province. This situation—if nothing else—caused most transactions to escape formal measurement of everyday movement. Bartering was the regular form of exchange. Unfortunately, bartering coupled with profit-oriented exchanges produced some unsavory results especially because of the absence of a hard currency that could easily be broken down into units of lesser value.

In 1804, Governor Gerardo Ruiz requested the Manila government for the introduction of *vellon* (copper coin) currency into the province. In the letter, Ruiz rails against built-in “deceits” or “trickeries” prevalent in the transactional movements of the provincial economy. Ruiz points out that *jornaleros* (daily wage workers) do not get paid their daily wage (one-fourth of a *real*) so that their employers can force them to transact in kind for needed commodities. The problem, however, comes up when the goods exchanged are not of equal value. For example, it is impossible to exchange one whole pig (worth about 20 to 20.5 *reales*) for a chicken (valued at only four *reales*). The transaction, as a result, gets neutralized. Ruiz underscores the manipulative powers of the *principalía* in getting more than its fair share whenever such an exchange took place. The peasants, despite the unequal values, are forced to purchase what they need, going so far as to barter four pigs for one chicken. While the *principalía* may subsequently get full price for these items, the owners are paid nothing. Moreover, Ruiz highlights the control that the *principalía* exercises over the natives. Possibly because of their positions, the members of the *principalía* are able to force their farmers to sell to them the agricultural produce way below the accepted price range. In the end, the Manila government approved Ruiz’s request; still, because *vellon*

would also be introduced in Luzon and other provinces, the actual inauguration of the currency would not occur until 1872–1873.¹⁰

Documents from 1835 show the problems experienced by Antique as soon as marketing transactions clashed with the non-monetized and traditional barter economy. D. Domingo Benito, the governor, prevented the harvesting of any more palay until the natives settled their tribute obligations. This tactic was probably nothing more than a maneuver on the part of the governor to extract a promise from the provincial inhabitants to pay. Benito's correspondence with the Manila government explains the events that preceded the order. The governor traces the source of the tribute payment difficulty to the greed of the natives, *mestizo sangleyes* (half-Chinese) and provincial outsiders. The last two especially took advantage of the natives and bartered cheap items such as salty fish and merchandise for the palay harvest. Surprisingly enough, most of these items were readily available in the province. Whatever strategies the mestizos and outsiders used, they managed to persuade the natives to part with a significant portion of their crops in return for a trifling sum in kind. Subsequently, the results became evident when the tribute payments arrived late and people began or increased hunting to supplement the lost staple. Fray José Yzquierdo, the parish priest of San Pedro, earlier illustrated the problems faced by the pueblo with this marketing situation. Yzquierdo explains that it was customary in the past to exchange palay for some salt or coconuts. In trying to stop the practice, he tried to institute transactions in the public market with palay bought at the current monetary price. Benito responded likewise. While the monetary situation was the same as before, there was at least some assurance that palay could be bought in accordance with its value, whether the unit of exchange was in cash or in kind.¹¹

Regardless of the time period involved, palay was always the major crop of the province. According to Martínez de Zuñiga (1800), the glut of *palay* made the crop so cheap, it never rose above 1.5 *reales* per *cavan*. Mallat, around 1846, placed the price of *palay* at two *reales* per *cavan* or five *cavanes* for a *piastre* (eight *reales*). By the mid-nineteenth century, Antique had become one of the rice granaries of the Philippines. Palay was cheap because of a glut in the market, which occurred whenever harvests were plentiful. Mallat comments that palay in Antique is inexpensive because the crop has few markets (and consequently, less competition from retailers to increase the price) (Martínez de Zuñiga 1973, 460; Mallat 1983, 198; MacMicking

1967, 174). When palay was cheap, then a substantial portion of the harvest was also bought by retailers of the product. Nevertheless, as demonstrated by Ruiz and Benito, natives who oversold their stock could also starve.

The price of palay also reflected government control of the value of the crop. Since palay was used as tribute payment, it was to the government's advantage to fix the price of palay at two *reales* in order to assure itself of a cheap supply of food. As a result, the price control coupled with a glut in palay caused a drop in the value of the harvest. Time and again, however, people urged lifting the price restriction in order to allow palay's true value to be determined by the market. The gamble worked in the next half of the nineteenth century.

The Chinese in Antique Province

The Chinese and their mestizo offspring were not a significant factor in Antique's economy during the first half of the nineteenth century. In 1800, Joaquin Martinez de Zuñiga remarks that Antique Province is peculiar because no Chinese mestizos reside in the province. Martinez de Zuñiga is sure that mestizos could have kept the rice supply in the province inasmuch as they would have bought all the palay possible for subsequent resale to the natives at a higher price (Martinez de Zuñiga 1973, 460).

The absence of Chinese and mestizos in Antique is reflective of the government's earlier legislation against letting foreigners engage in commerce in the Philippines. In 1830, six of thirteen Chinese in Antique Province were found guilty of violating their residence permits. Apparently, they were allowed to engage only in farming but were instead found to be running stores. The governor, Antonio Martinez Cañas, was reprimanded by the Manila government for letting the Chinese engage in non-farming activity and instructed to comply with the law. In his response, Martinez Cañas shows the loophole that the Chinese used to engage in commerce. The aforementioned Chinese simply ran the stores for their native wives and sons. Martinez Cañas, as a result, could not force them into another line of occupation. Nevertheless, Martinez Cañas was ordered to comply with the provisions of the law and compel the Chinese to work in the fields.¹² While the restriction on Chinese participation in commerce would be lifted in 1839, it would take about two decades before the Chinese could reestablish a niche in the province.

Until the opening of the port of Iloilo, Antique was not attractive enough for more Chinese to participate in the economic life of the province. In 1839, forty Chinese mestizos but only one Chinese were found living in Antique. By 1850, the number of Chinese mestizos in the province had dropped to thirty-two along with one Chinese resident.¹³

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the hand-to-mouth existence that characterized the late eighteenth-century provincial economy gave way to the intensified cultivation of food and cash crops, livestock raising, and even an attempt to expand textile production beyond the domestic level. However, despite the efforts of provincial governors and the local inhabitants, cash crops found it difficult to adapt to the soil and weather of Antique Province—a defense made by people who were accused of sloth and carelessness. This shows that despite the profitability of cash crops in other areas, massive efforts were needed for its cultivation in Antique Province and compensation for the labor was never sufficient. Nevertheless, rice became a major food crop in the province and flourished in Antique's soil unlike the other cash crops. Thus, before the nineteenth century had reached its halfway point, Antique had become a major rice producer even though its trade was still geared inwards.

Like most other areas of the Philippines at this time, barter was still an accepted mode of exchange. However, as marketing forces began to enter the province, the exchange of products, alongside carelessness, ignorance of market prices, and profit-oriented haggling sometimes divested a peasant farmer of his entire harvest. In the absence of a hard currency that could be broken down into smaller units, the peasant farmer may have had no choice but to turn over his rice for some item that was immediately needed or looked enticing. On the other hand, the *principalía* and half-Chinese merchants—more aware of the prevailing market prices and the weakness of the barter system—exploited the situation.

Antique, however, was still tied to an internal provincial economy and its contact with the outside seemed limited. Nevertheless, the opening of the port of Iloilo would link the province closer to the world market through its produce and its *sacada* labor for the sugar plantations of Negros. Despite isolation, some noticeable changes would begin to occur in Antique's economy in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Abbreviations/Definition of Terms:

<i>Cavan</i>	a unit of dry measure for <i>palay</i> equivalent to 75 <i>litros</i> . a unit of measure for land. 1 <i>cavan</i> of palay seeds = 1 <i>hectarea</i> , 22 <i>areas</i> , and 90 <i>centiareas</i> .
D.	abbreviation for the honorific title <i>Don</i> .
EA	<i>Estadísticas (Statistics) - Antique</i>
EPA	<i>Erección de Pueblos (Foundation of Towns) - Antique</i>
Exp.	expediente, part
fol./s	folio/s, fold numbers
GM	<i>Gaceta de Manila</i>
<i>Gobernadorcillo</i>	head of a <i>pueblo</i> municipality.
MIP-A	Memoria de Isla de Panay (Report on the Island of Panay) - Antique
<i>Monteses</i>	people who live in the mountains.
PNA	Philippine National Archives
<i>Pueblo</i>	lit., town but more accurately defined as a municipality in the Philippine setting.
<i>real</i>	a currency unit equivalent to one-eighth of a <i>peso fuerte</i> .
Tomo	volume number

Notes

1. PNA, EPA: 1783-1897, Tomo II-A, Exp. 6, fols. 168-207b, 1841-1842
2. PNA, EPA: 1802-1810, Tomo VIII, Exp. 15, fols. 219-226b, 1811.
3. PNA, EPA: 1835-1842, Tomo VI, Exp. 3, fols. 8-11, 1836.
4. PNA, EPA: 1835-1842, Tomo VI, Exp. 11, fols. 180-196b, 1836.
5. PNA, EPA: 1810-1854, Tomo III, Exp. 10, fols. 199-200b; Exp. 11, fols. 201-203b, 1835.
6. See Joselito N. Fornier (1995), Table I: Population and Tribute Figures for Antique Province: 1792-1898. Most of the population figures were compiled from the government publication known as *Guía oficial de las islas filipinas*.
7. PNA, EPA: 1802-1810, Tomo VIII, Exp. 13, fols. 113-116, 1807.
8. PNA, EPA: 1835-1842, Tomo VI, Exp. 10, fols. 130-148b, 1836.
9. PNA, EPA: 1802-1810, Tomo VIII, Exp. 16, fols. 247-253, 1809.
10. PNA, EPA: 1802-1810, Tomo VIII, Exp. 8, fols. 73-80, 1804-1805.
11. PNA, EPA: 1835-1842, Tomo VI, Exp. 7, fols. 33-41.
12. PNA, EPA: 1828-1836, Tomo IV, Exp. 5, fols. 97-106b, 1830.
13. Arenas (1850), 5.o cuaderno, 8-9; Cuadro 17: "Reseña de Provincias," 5.

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