

WARRIOR'S CHOICE

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Traditional Muslim
blades can sit well in any museum showcase

Among the peoples of the Philippines the Muslim produced the most varied and most beautifully ornamented metallic hand weapons. Although they had some weapons in common, different Muslim groups had a few peculiar to them. Unlike the other peoples in the Philippines who fell under Spanish domination and were discouraged from producing weapons of war, the Muslims were free to keep on producing them for their defense as well as for ceremonial purposes or as insignia of rank and wealth. Metal crafts have reached a high state of sophistication as the Muslims were exposed to Arab and Indian influences. A Spanish officer of the 19th century, who participated in various military expeditions against the Muslims of Sulu and who had developed a fierce hatred for them, grudgingly commented that some of the Sulu weapons he saw did "not in any manner compare unfavorably with the famed blades of Damascus";.