

The Site of the First Mass: Masao or Limasawa?



Presentors

Region XIII (Caraga)

Dinerman

Prof. R.

Region X (N. Mindanao)

Prof. M.



Prof. R. Baldado

Prof. P. Mendoza

Prof. S. Chan

Criteria for Adjudication

3 Ms

- **Manner**
- **Matter**
- **Method**

Debate or Discussion Flow

Arguments for Limasawa

Arguments for Masao

Merits of the Arguments

Relevance of the Topic

Account of the First Mass



*Antonio Pigafetta
(Lombardo)*

“... [From Humunu, we] took the course between west and southwest, and passed amidst four small islands, i.e., Cenalo, Pluinanghar, Ibusson, and Abarien.

“... [T]he 28th of March, having seen the night before fire upon an island, we ... anchor at this island ... **This island is in $9 \frac{2}{3}$ degrees north latitude....** It is 25 leagues distant from ... [Humunu and] is named Mazzava.”

Antonio Pigaffeta of Vicenza [Antonio Lombardo] in Henry Edward John Stanley (trans. and ed.). *The First Voyage Round the World by Magellan: Translated from accounts of Pigafetta and other contemporary writers.* London. Hakluyt Society, 1874: 80-83

Account of the First Mass



Fernão de Magalhães
Fernando de Magallanes
Ferdinand Magellan

“... On Sunday, the last day of March, and feast of Easter, the captain sent the chaplain ashore early to say mass ... When it was time for saying mass the captain went ashore with fifty men, ... dressed as well as each one was able to dress ... [W]hen the offertory of the mass came, the two kings went to kiss the cross like us....”

Antonio Pigaffeta of Vicenza [Antonio Lombardo]
in Henry Edward John Stanley (trans. and ed.). *The First Voyage Round the World by Magellan: Translated from accounts of Pigafetta and other contemporary writers.*
London. Hakluyt Society, 1874: 80

Current Map of the Area



Topography: Limasawa



Three islands (Camiguin, Bohol, and Lapinig) can be seen in the distant west and southwest.

Topography: Masao, Butuan



The seashore today in Masao and a replica of the balanghais.



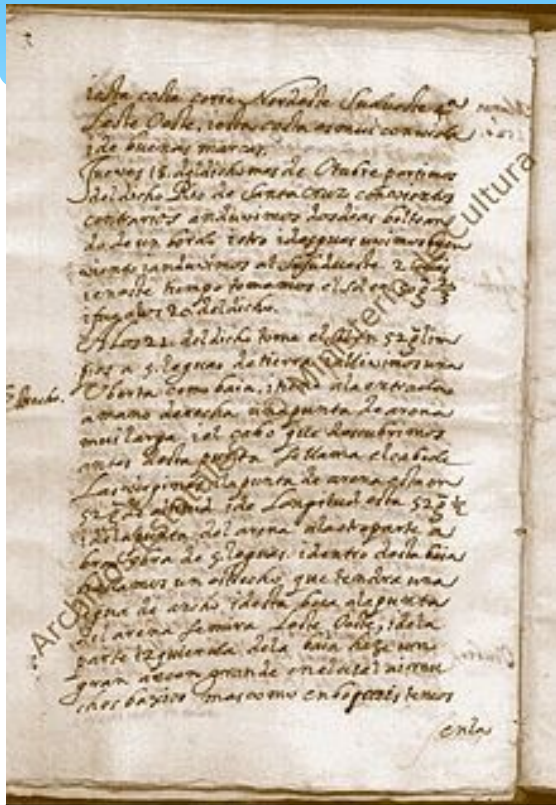
Limasawa as the Site

Limasawa as the Site

Arguments:

1. Evidence of Albo's log book
2. The evidence of Pigaffeta
3. Confirmatory evidence from the Legazpi tradition

Albo's account



a page of a manuscript version of Albo's logbook

“ From here we departed and sailed west, and fell in with a large island called Seilani, which is inhabited, and contains gold; we coasted it, and went to west-southwest, to a small inhabited island called Mazaba. The people are very good, and there we placed a cross upon a mountain from there were shown three islands to the west and southwest....”

Francisco Albo (or Alvaro), “ Logbook of the voyage of Fernando de Magallanes”

in Henry Edward John Stanley (trans. and ed.), *The First Voyage Round the World by Magellan: Translated from accounts of Pigafetta and other contemporary writers*. London: Hakluyt Society, 1874

Pigaffeta's Account



*Antonio Pigafetta
(Lombardo)*

- * Pigafetta's testimony as regards the route taken by the expedition from the Pacific Ocean to Cebu
- * Presence of two native kings
- * The events of the seven days at the island of "Mazaua"
- * An argument from omission

Confirmation from Legazpi's Account



*Miguel
López de Legazpi*

- * Searched for Mazaua
- * Intended to go to Butuan but the winds brought them to Bohol
- * Legazpi expedition: Mazaua was an island near Leyte and Panaon



Masao as the Site

Arguments for Masao, Butuan

- **Name of the place**
 - in the accounts of *Pigafetta, Albo, the Genoese pilot, and Ginés de Mafra* the name of the island starts with letter M (Mazaua)
 - one must not accept B & R's translation uncritically; he even translates Pigafetta's "caza" into "hunt" when it should be "hut" (*Schreurs*); we should rely on the manuscript of Pigafetta

➤ Stanley (1874) merely asserts in a footnote, without any argument or proof: *“It is doubtless the Limasaua of the present day, off the south point of Samar.”*

➤ B & R (1903) merely declares: *“It is now called the island of Limasaua, and has an area of about ten and one-half square miles.”* Most succeeding Philippine historians then accepted this as fact.

- **The navigator's route from Homonhon**

- The travel from Homonhon to Mazaua took 3 days, yet Limasawa is so near Homonhon

- **The latitude**

- Actual latitude of Limasawa is 9 degrees 56 min; Masao's latitude is 8 degrees 57 min
- The latitudes given by Albo ($9 \frac{1}{3}$) and the Genoese pilot (9) point more to Masao

- **The route to Cebu**

- on its way to Cebu, the fleet sailed along “*Ceylon (Leyte), Bohol, and Baybay, Catighan, and Canighan*”
- Mazaua-Gatighan distance is 20 leguas (80 n. miles) (*Pigafetta*)
- actual Limasawa-Gatighan distance is only one legua (4 n.m.)

- **The geographical features of the place**

- **Artifacts**

- At the eastern edge of Pinamanculan, balanghai boats, burial grounds, ceramics, gold ornaments, and processing tools have been excavated—they suggest a thriving community and port centuries ago

- **Ecofacts**

- The Butuan River delta has evolved; a deltaic island existing in 1521 (geologists say it is the present Pinamanculan Hills in Butuan City) has fused with the mainland
- Another contemporary account of the voyage describes Mazaua as 3-4 leagues in circumference (Ginés de Mafra), which implies an area of 2,214 to 3,930 hectares; but Limasawa has only 698 hectares

Alternative Account: Ginés de Mafra



A drawing of Mazaua in a Pigafetta manuscript (**left**). An island with a circumference of 3-4 leagues has an area of 2,214 to 3,930 hectares. Limasawa has only 698 hectares (**right**).

- “... [Magellan] left this island [Homonhon], and sailing on his way arrived at another [island of] 3 or 4 leguas in circumference ... This island called Mazaua has a good harbor on its western side, and is inhabited.”

Ginés de Mafra
Descripción de los reinos, Libro que trata del descubrimiento y principio del estrecho que se llama de Magallanes

Masao as an island in 1521

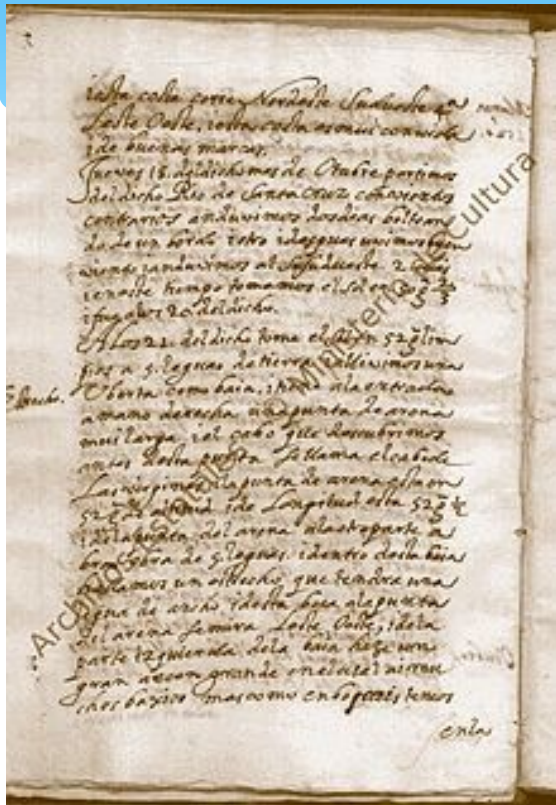


in Pinamanculan Hills, Butuan City

“The significance of Pinamanculan Hills cannot be taken for granted, especially now that it has been established that [the area] used to be an island.”

Mary Jane Louise Bolunia. 2001.
Pinamanculan Hills: Its archeological
importance. Butuan City: 3

Alternative Account: Albo



a page of a
manuscript version
of Albo's logbook

“... [W]e coasted it [Seilani], and went to west-southwest, to a small inhabited island called Mazaba. The people are very good, and there we placed a cross upon a mountain ... and this island is in **9 1/3 degrees** north latitude.”

Francisco Albo (or Alvaro), “Logbook of the voyage of Fernando de Magallanes,”

in Henry Edward John Stanley (trans. and ed.), *The First Voyage Round the World by Magellan: Translated from accounts of Pigafetta and other contemporary writers.* London: Hakluyt Society, 1874

Alternative Account: Genoese



a Spanish caravel

“... [They] came to anchor at another island, which is named Macangor, **which is in 9 degrees**; and in this island they were very well received, and they placed a cross in it.”

a Genoese pilot in Magellan's fleet [probably
Juan Bautista]

in Henry Edward John Stanley (trans. and ed.), *The First Voyage Round the World by Magellan: Translated from accounts of Pigafetta and other contemporary writers*. London: Hakluyt Society, 1874



Merits of the Arguments

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Limasawa:

- Evidence of Albo's logbook
- The evidence of Pigaffeta
- Confirmatory evidence from the Legazpi tradition

Masao:

- The name of the place
- Navigator's route from Homonhon
- The latitude
- The route to Cebu
- The geographical features of the place



Relevance

Verified Distance



REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES

NATIONAL HISTORICAL COMMISSION OF THE PHILIPPINES

T.M. KALAW STREET, ERMITA, MANILA

“Earlier Pigafetta wrote that ‘24 leagues is equal to 100 miles or 160.9 kms’, so one league is equal to 6.7 kms ... From an accurate map, the sea distance **from the eastern side of Homonhon** going west southwest to ... **Limasawa** is 167 kms; divided by 6.7 kms. It is **24.9 leagues** and checks well with the **Homonhon-Mazaua distance of 25 leagues.**”

Engr. Jose G. Caburian

Testimony during the hearing of the National Historical Institute
on the controversy over the site of the first Mass

Deceitful Accounts

... [T]he various contemporary accounts of Magellan's voyage . . . [showed] a purpose to deceive ... [in order] to claim possession of the Spice Islands ... If the log of Magellan's voyage were to admit that the Spice Islands fell within the Portuguese sphere, the rights of Magellan in the Spice Islands would have been nonexistent and the expenditures of Magellan and his friends would have been in vain, according to the grant of the emperor Charles V ... [O]ne of the Spanish followers of Magellan, Bustamante, on his deathbed ... testified that certain alleged facts concerning Magellan's voyage were contrary to the truth."

George E. Nunn. October 1934. Magellan's Route in the Pacific.
Geographical Review, 24 (4): 631

Unintentionally Wrong Coordinates

Pigafetta's Journal			Present			Differences	
Name	Latitude	Longitude from the Demarcation Line	Name	Latitude	Longitude from Greenwich	Latitude	Longitude
		Longitude from Greenwich					
Massana	9° 40' N	162° E	Limasawa	9° 56' N	125° 04' E	0° 16'	-25° 19'
		150° 23' E					

“...[S]ignificant differences were determined for Pigafetta's recorded longitudes.... These erroneous values were mainly due to the determination methods used in those times. Therefore, **the coordinates found in Pigafetta's journal could not be used to accurately identify** the same locations on current maps. The only solution, therefore, remains the correct identification of the island names.”

Doina Vasilca. 2016. The First Voyage around the World—An old story using a new

Limasawa or Masao?

“One thing is clear: whoever started the tradition that the first Mass was celebrated at Butuan, it was certainly neither Pigafetta nor Albo nor Maximilian of Transylvania ...
... [And] to reject the Butuan claim is in no way to downgrade the cultural or historical importance of Butuan.”

Rev. Fr. Miguel Bernad, S.J. 1981. Butuan or Limasawa? The site of the first Mass in the Philippines: a reexamination. *Kinaadman: A Journal of Southern Philippines*, Vol. 3: 35. *Op. cit.* Budhi 3 (2001):164-5.

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