

The Alubijid Spanish Kiln: The Archaeology, Colonial History, and Cultural Significance

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ABSTRACT

The kiln, a structure used to manufacture ceramic materials, is an integral part of the colonial history of Northern Mindanao, Philippines. In the past, clay bricks made using local kilns were the preferred building materials for Jesuit church structures in the Philippines. To create a more holistic understanding of the Northern Mindanao society in the Spanish era, this article investigates the last standing kiln

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in the municipality of Alubijid in the province of Misamis Oriental, Mindanao. The archaeological investigation reveals the original architectural structure of the kiln and the type of clay bricks produced. The history and the archaeology of the town of Alubijid are also investigated. The results not only provide information on the archaeology of the kiln and the history of Alubijid but also highlight the need for the local community to help conserve the archaeological site.

KEYWORDS

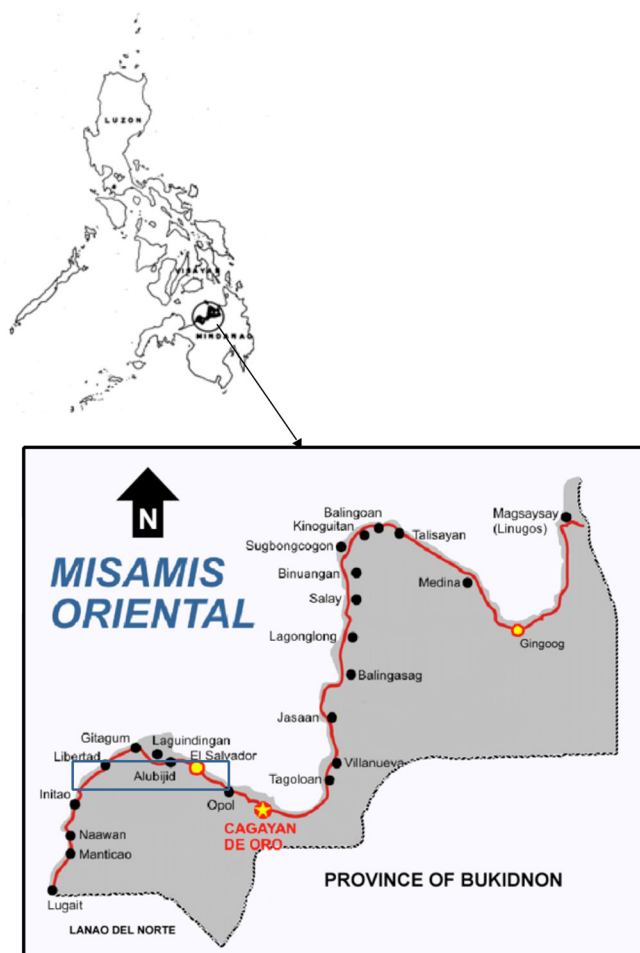
Spanish kiln, Alubijid, archaeology, Recollects, Jesuits, bricks, artifacts

INTRODUCTION

During the Spanish times, the kiln, locally known as *horno*, was where clay bricks were fired and hardened as construction material for houses, churches, bridges, and other engineering structures. Based on historical records, four Spanish kilns were constructed by Bro. Juan Costa of the Society of Jesus (commonly known as the Jesuits), specifically to supply bricks for colonial churches in northern Mindanao. These kilns were in the municipalities of Balingasag, Jasaan, Tagoloan, and Alubijid in the province of Misamis Oriental.¹

Unfortunately, the kilns in Balingasag, Tagoloan, and Jasaan were destroyed due to neglect during the

FIGURE 1. MAP OF THE PHILIPPINES SHOWING THE LOCATION OF THE MUNICIPALITY OF ALUBIJID, MISAMIS ORIENTAL



Source: <https://historyofarchitecture.weebly.com/misamis-oriental.html>

construction of the Cagayan–Gingoog National Highway in the 1970s. The only kiln left standing is in the town of Alubijid. In fact, it is the only surviving Spanish kiln in Misamis Oriental.²

The conservation of this remaining Spanish kiln is of paramount importance. Thus, in 2014, the University of the Philippines–Archaeological Studies Program (UP-ASP) and the local government of Alubijid initiated an archaeological investigation into this structure. The team aimed to understand the archaeology of the Spanish kiln and how this illuminates Filipinos’ understanding of the colonial history in Alubijid. The specific objectives were: (1) to conduct a thorough archaeological investigation and excavation of the Spanish kiln site; and (2) to establish the cultural chronology of Alubijid based on archaeology and historical documents.

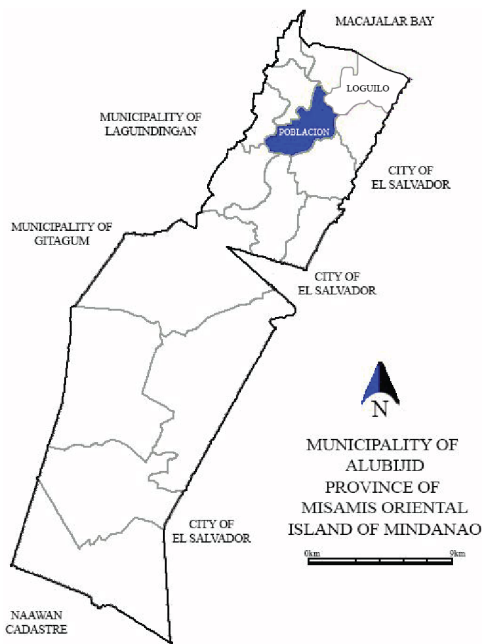
In the UP-ASP team’s investigation, the Spanish kiln in Alubijid was found to also have suffered from neglect. It was abandoned and heavily looted, and vegetation had covered its surrounding area. During the UP-ASP’s visit, the kiln was being used as a dumpsite by the community.

Prior to the 2014 excavation/study, no thorough archaeological investigation had been done on the kiln or on the municipality of Alubijid. This paper thus looks at cultural materials through archaeology and historical archival research. It reviews how the 2014 archaeological study brought to light the historical significance of the Spanish kiln and its location’s potential as a tourist destination, which can provide a source of livelihood to the people in the area. This paper further discusses how this archaeological find contributes to the regional identity and cultural heritage of the people in Mindanao.

ABOUT THE SITE

The municipality of Alubijid is 25 kilometers west of the city of Cagayan de Oro and 67 kilometers east of Iligan City (Figure 1). It is geographically located between $8^{\circ}24'30''$ to $8^{\circ}35'36''$ north latitude and $124^{\circ}21'31''$ to $124^{\circ}30'30''$ east longitude. Alubijid is bounded to the north by Macajalar Bay, to the east by the city of El Salvador, to the south by the municipality of Naawan, and to the west by the municipalities of Laguindingan and Guitagum (Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. MAP OF BARANGAY POBLACION IN ALUBIJID SHOWING THE SPANISH KILN SITE



(Courtesy of Emil Charles Robles)

According to oral history, the word Alubijid comes from the alubijid or alubihod tree (*Spondia spinnata*, family *Anacardiaceae*). The alubihod tree was believed to be found along coastal areas—specifically, in present-day Barangay Baybay. Oral tradition has it that alubihod trees were used by traders as their landing site markers whenever they came to the area to engage in business or trade.

The original settlement of the people of Alubijid was first identified in Ilihan (natural defense fortress), also called Calumat.³ The word *calumat* is a password that stands for “Cauban, Agpas, Lukso, Ugma, Mamatay, Anak Tana” (Companion, Faster, Jump, Tomorrow, Die, Children Let’s Go). The password was used by the inhabitants to distinguish themselves from marauders.

Calumat was also used as a commercial trading center between the early inhabitants of Alubijid and foreign traders.⁴ According to local folklore, the site was often visited by Sultan Kudarat (1581–1671), the Maguindanao leader who fought and stopped colonizers from spreading the Christian faith in the island of Mindanao. Kudarat was believed to have recruited military forces for his crusade against the Spaniards. Through time, some of his military men chose to stay in Calumat and intermarried with the locals. Because of the rapid increase in the community’s population, the inhabitants likely geographically dispersed and resettled in its nearby hills. Thus, Barangays Talaba and Sampatulog were used as extensions of the original settlement.⁵

ARCHAEOLOGY OF ALUBIJID

The municipality of Alubijid is one of the twenty-two municipalities in the province of Misamis Oriental situated in the coastal area of Northern Mindanao. Alubijid—also spelled as Alubigid, Alubuhid, Alubijig, and Alubid—played a significant role in the archaeology of the province.

In 1991, an Archaeological Impact Assessment was conducted by the National Museum of the Philippines as part of the plan to develop a water system in Misamis Oriental.⁶ No cultural materials were reported from the survey. The archaeological studies conducted by the researchers were rudimentary, with no in-depth analysis on Alubijid generated.

In 2007 and 2008,⁷ conducted an archaeological survey in the coastal area of Northern Mindanao. Forty-one archaeological sites were identified in Misamis Oriental, including the Spanish kiln found in Barangay Poblacion, near the Holy Cross Parish Church, in the municipality of Alubijid. Bricks produced from this kiln were those used on the Holy Cross Parish Church in Alubijid and the Nuestra Senora de las Nieves in the city of El Salvador.

In 2019, the UP-ASP investigated the Calumat Open Site as part of their annual field school (UP-ASP Field School 2019) program. Archaeological findings substantiate the local belief that Calumat was a habitation site prior to the Spanish occupation in the area. The team was able to recover prehistoric materials such as obsidians and cherts, which are commonly associated with the Neolithic Period (3000–2000 BC).

Aside from lithic artifacts, a spoon-like shell artifact from the Calumat Open Site resembled the Neolithic shell rice scrapers from Palawan. Majority of the artifacts found were decorated earthenware sherds with Sa Huynh-Kalanay motifs. The Sa Huynh-Kalanay pottery tradition was the most prominent in Southeast Asia from the Neolithic to the Metal Age.

Further excavation of the site revealed human remains with gold-plated teeth and grave goods ca. AD 1000 based on radiocarbon dating. This would indicate that the site may have been occupied since 3000 BC until the coming of the Spaniards. Because the 2019 field school concentrated on establishing the chronology of Calumat, not much has been known about the structures and the Spanish occupation in Alubijid.

THE RECOLLECTS AND THE HISTORY OF ALUBIJID

In 1622, the Augustinian Recollects penetrated the northern coast of Mindanao. From Cagayan, they slowly Christianized the neighboring communities. The town of Alubijid was not exempted from these religious missions. After the expulsion of the Jesuits in 1768, the entire island of Mindanao was left under the sole control of the Recollects.⁸

In 1840–1864, Alubijid became part of the city of Yligan (currently spelled as Iligan). In November of 1865, pursuant to the Royal Decree issued on July 5, 1865 under the patronage of the Holy Cross, Alubijid was separated

from the mother city of Iligan.⁹ It was also in 1865 that the Augustinian Recollects founded Alubijid as another ecclesiastical mission.¹⁰ Thus, the town of Alubijid was established as an independent parish with two *visitas*: El Salvador and Molugan.¹¹ The first religious missionary assigned in Alubijid was Fray Candido Diez del Carmen, OAR (Table 1).

TABLE 1. LIST OF *CURA PARROCOS* IN ALUBIJID BASED ON FIDEL DE BLAS (1910), JOSE (2008), AND DEMETRIO (1995).

PUEBLO DE ALUBIJID			
YEAR	CURA PARROCOS/ MISIONEROS	RELIGIOUS ORDER	REMARKS
1865	P. Candido Diez del Carmen	OAR	Alubijid was founded by the OAR
1866	P. Julian Buju	OAR	
1871–1875	P. Jorge Carcavilla	OAR	
1877	P. Juan Pablo Ruiz	OAR	
1878			Alubijid was given to the Jesuits
1879	P. Jose Salvans	SJ	
1883	P. Domingo Viñals	SJ	
1889–1893	P. Ramon Pamies	SJ	

TABLE 1. LIST OF *CURA PARROCOS* IN ALUBIJID BASED ON FIDEL DE BLAS (1910), JOSE (2008), AND DEMETRIO (1995).

PUEBLO DE ALUBIJID			
YEAR	CURA PARROCOS/ MISIONEROS	RELIGIOUS ORDER	REMARKS
1896			Alubijid reverted back to the OAR
1897–1898	Fr. Julian Cisneros (Sisnero)	OAR	

1878 ONWARD: POLITICAL AND SPIRITUAL JURISDICTIONS

Almost ninety-one years after they were expelled from the Philippines, the Jesuits returned upon the invitation of King Ferdinand VII of Spain through his daughter Queen Isabel II (Jose 1992). In 1864, through another Royal Decree, the missionary works of the Recollects were surrendered to the Jesuit mission.¹² The Recollects obeyed the Spain queen’s decree despite their strong protests. Starting 1878, the newly returned Jesuits gradually took over the evangelical works of the Recollects¹³ including the role of sole spiritual administrator of the island of Mindanao.

During the Jesuit mission, the town of Alubijid was abundant with corn and rice crops. Its residents also produced tobacco and cocoa. More than three thousand coconut trees were recorded in the area.¹⁴ The town was surrounded by a virgin forest composed of molave, narra,

balayon, and to a lesser extent, ipil and camagon trees, and other precious wood. Alubijid was very rich in natural resources.

Fr. Jose Maria Clotet, SJ once wrote a letter to the rector of the Ateneo de Manila in April 1889:¹⁵

Very early on the 25th, I accompanied Fr. Pamies to visit the people in Alubijid. We rode on horses, following first the shore, then turning into the forest and soon saw the extensive rice plantations close to the village located on a small hill, its southwest slopes cut almost vertically although they are covered with greenery, and serve as the boundary of this attractive picture. At the bottom of the hill, a playful stream weaves like a serpent, beautifying those meadows and providing the people with good water. Through a narrow trail they themselves opened from the peak down, the people in the mountain descend for it. Observing it, I thought it was the trail to heaven, which is also narrow, has turns and more turns, if we thus describe life's vicissitudes—the road to heaven, which we Christ's missionaries have come to open for those people who had no road.

It appears that the original site of the town in Alubijid stood on top of a hill beside the stream. It was a beautiful place covered with greenery and vegetation. The location of the *casa parroquial* had a scenic, panoramic landscape. During the visit of Fr. Clotet, a new, bigger church was being constructed to accommodate the two thousand

residents in Alubijid.¹⁶ This may have been the site of the Holy Cross Parish Church in Barangay Poblacion.

In 1884, Barangay Pangayauan (spelled today as Pangayawan, in the municipality of Gitagum) was brought under the political jurisdiction of Alubijid.¹⁷ Barangays Pangayauan and Lourdes were two settlements under the Parish of Alubijid.

By the late 1800s, Pangayauan was the most inhabited and populated area in Alubijid. In 1896, a smallpox epidemic fell on Alubijid, and four hundred children died of the disease.¹⁸ It took a huge toll on the town's population.

During the American occupation, Alubijid, together with Opol, was annexed to Cagayan de Oro in 1918—through Executive Order No. 96.¹⁹ On April 15, 1940, through Executive Order No. 266 signed by President Manuel L. Quezon, Alubijid became an independent municipality. Provincial Governor Gregorio Pelaez inducted the newly created municipality while Hon. Timoteo Balacuit Sr. became its municipal mayor on July 1, 1940.

Alubijid was religiously governed by the Jesuits under the pioneering missionary priest Fray Jose Salvans, SJ.²⁰ Fray Domingo Viñals, SJ took over the role in 1883–1889 and was followed by Fray Ramon Pamies, SJ (also spelled as Piames) (Table 1).

Fray Pamies played a major role in the construction of churches in the towns of El Salvador and Alubijid. He was

considered the *cura misionero* who resided in El Salvador.²¹ In 1889, he supervised the construction of the Nuestra Senora de las Nieves (Our Lady of Snows) in El Salvador.²² The church was blessed in 1890.²³ However, because of its geographic location and proximity to the coast, the church was easily weathered and eventually fell into disrepair.²⁴ It was later relocated away from the coast.

The construction of the church by Fray Ramon Pamies, SJ would have been impossible without the assistance of the Jesuit brothers assigned in Mindanao. One of the important brothers working in northern Mindanao was Bro. Juan Costa, SJ.

BRO. JUAN COSTA

Bro. Juan Costa had significant contributions in the Jesuits' ecclesiastical missions in Mindanao. A genius brick maker, Bro. Costa was born on March 11, 1845 in Breba, Barcelona, Spain. He entered the order of the Society of Jesus as a coadjutor on October 29, 1867 and arrived in the Philippines on September 5, 1875.

Within their congregation, Jesuit brothers' role is to protect and accompany the Jesuit priests in their religious and military missions.²⁵ While the priests administer the holy sacrament, religious brothers are responsible for serving the daily needs of the community. In Bro. Costa's period, brothers usually received 400 pesos as annual stipend, as compared to the Jesuit priests, who received an annual government subsidy of 800 pesos.²⁶ The brothers

were considered the “silent” workers in the construction projects in the Mindanao mission.

From 1886 to 1892, Bro. Costa was assigned to the town of Balingasag. He was responsible for constructing the town’s water system, where he installed the first public faucets made of clay and bricks in the island of Mindanao.²⁷ Because of his expertise, he assisted several Jesuit priests in the construction of churches in Misamis Oriental such as the Sta. Rita Church in the Municipality of Balingasag, Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception in the Municipality of Jasaan, Nuestra Señora Maria de la Candelaria in the Municipality of Tagoloan, Nuestra Señora de las Nieves in the City of El Salvador, and the Holy Cross Parish Church in the Municipality of Alubijid.

He also trained the local people on how to make bricks and set up kilns in Jasaan, Alubijid, and Tagoloan.²⁸ The kiln in Alubijid was intended for the construction of the Nuestra Señora de las Nieves in El Salvador and the Holy Cross Parish Church in Alubijid.²⁹

Fr. Jose Vilaclara, SJ wrote about the ongoing project in a letter to Fr. Jacinto Juanmarti, SJ on December 29, 1892.³⁰

The church in Tagoloan is a bit more delayed, but work continues. With constancy, the same things as in Balingasag will be finished. Furthermore, they are working to build the church in Jasaan and the one in Alubijid. The one in El Salvador is almost finished. Everywhere, one sees the work of Bro. Costa who

has now set up ovens in all these places and trained brick makers who in his absence do the work very well.

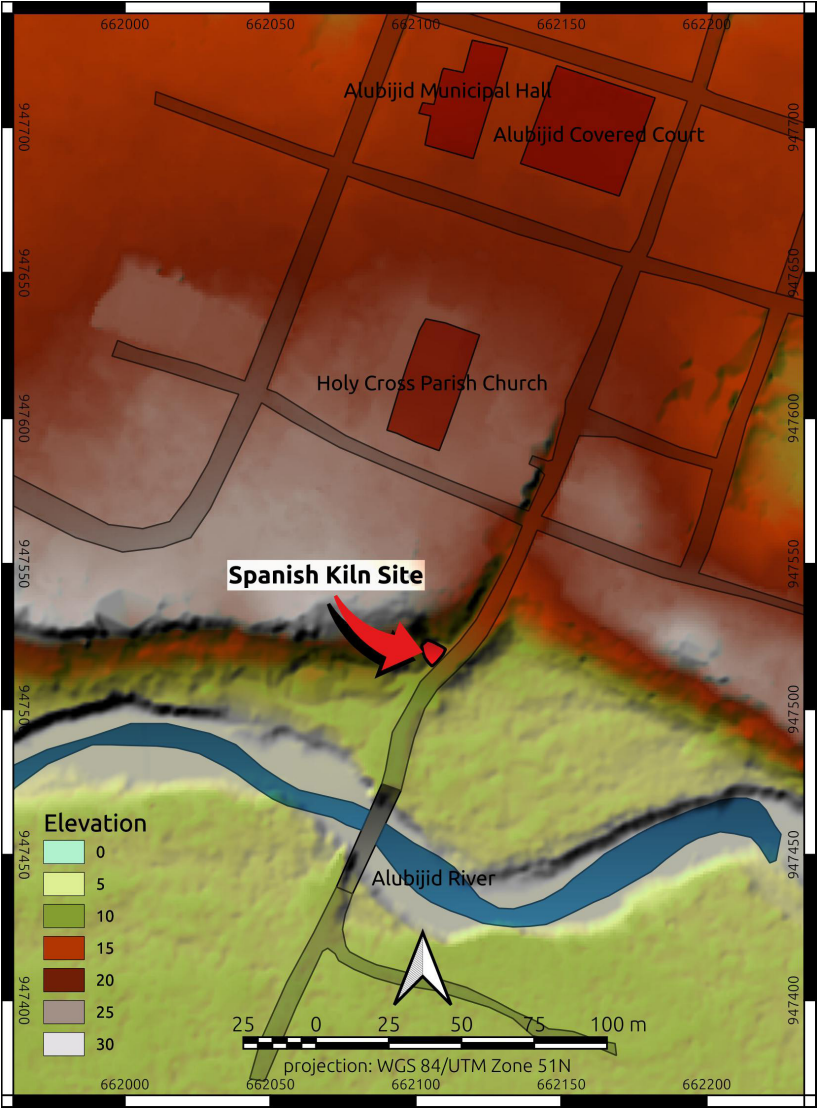
Bro. Juan Costa also used bricks for public fountains and churches. After his missionary works in Northern Mindanao, he was assigned to Dapitan in 1894, where he met Dr. Jose Rizal. He helped Rizal construct the water systems and may have contributed his expertise in the construction of the Dapitan Church.³¹ It was also in Dapitan where he spent his last days as a servant of God. Bro. Costa died on November 18, 1920 at the age of 75.

On February 17, 1896—after 18 years under the jurisdiction of the Jesuits—the evangelical mission of Alubijid was returned to the Recollects.³² Fr. Julian Sisnero, OAR, took over as the *cura parroco* of Alubijid.³³ In 1905, due to their proximity to the city of Cagayan de Oro, the towns of Alubijid and El Salvador were placed under the ecclesiastical mission of Cagayan.³⁴

ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION

Today, the Spanish kiln site is beside the municipal road in Barangay Poblacion (Figure 3), at the side of the hill geographically located at 8°34'09" north latitude and 124°28'23" east longitude with an average elevation of 23 meters above sea level. The site has a vantage point of the Alubijid River, approximately 200 meters away toward the west. It was given the site name of Spanish kiln with an assigned National Museum Site code of X-2007-H4.

FIGURE 3. MAP OF BARANGAY POBLACION IN ALUBIJID SHOWING THE SPANISH KILN SITE



Courtesy of Emil Charles Robles and Engr. J. Vallente

Prior to the 2014 excavation, the surviving structures of the kiln were documented. Recordings through masonry profiling, measurements, and photography were done after the area was cleared of vegetation and garbage. Only one trench (called Trench 1) was opened due to topographic and physical constraints. This trench was positioned in the area that was likely to have been the interior part of the kiln. Datum Point (DP) was not established because the research team's method of excavation was based on the current surface of the area. The present ground was used as the team's reference in measuring (in centimeters) the vertical excavation.

TRENCH 1

Trench 1 has a measurement of 1.5 m x 2.0 m. It is located between the kiln's façade (exposed arch) and the oven's mouth. This trench was opened with the following objectives: (1) to expose the east and west walls from the arch leading to the mouth of the oven; (2) to expose the floor structure; and (3) to recover significant cultural materials.

Initially, the 10 cm spit method was used to excavate. However, it was found that the layers in Trench 1 were no longer *in situ*, as it was previously disturbed by treasure hunters. Excavation methods were adjusted to follow the natural sedimentary layers. Despite the disturbance on the layers, excavation of Trench 1 continued so as to investigate possible remaining destruction debris.

Spit 1 was a 10 cm spit, excavated using a trowel and shovel. From this spit, modern trash was recovered along with clay bricks and earthenware sherds. This spit was extended by another 10 cm, where a reddish stain was documented. This staining appeared to be remnants of powdered and decayed bricks that could have been part of a tunnel from the arch leading to the mouth of the oven. By this time, it was clear that the area had been highly disturbed.

However, Trench 1 was explored further in hopes of finding at least the evidences of a floor. Based on local accounts, a full-grown adult male could stand upright inside the kiln. It was hypothesized, then, that the floor would be deeper than what was already exposed.

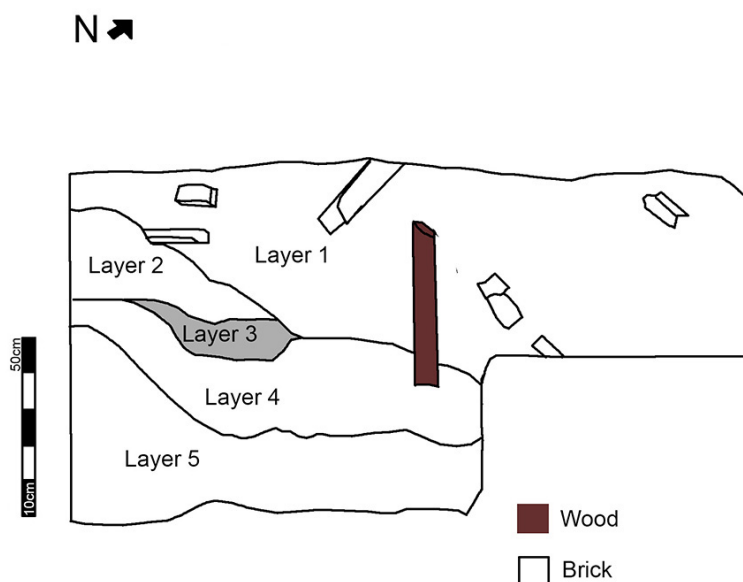
At Spit 2, the frequency of recovered whole and fragmented bricks intensified. However, modern trash continued to be recovered, some of which were found in between the bricks. It was established that the bricks found were results of a modern destruction phase. After Spit 2, it was decided that spits would be excavated at 20 cm intervals.

Spit 3 was excavated from a depth of 52.5 cm from the surface in the northwest section of the trench, directly in between the arch and the mouth of the oven. Within this spit was a very high concentration of modern trash in a matrix of very loose sediment. Aside from more bricks and present-day trash, no other artifacts were found.

Spit 4 was a distinct layer of thick and very compact reddish brown sediment, which appeared to be unmolded clay. At first it was thought to be a high concentration of bricks, but it was later established that, although it was angular, it was just one compact layer. It was hypothesized to possibly be the remnant of a floor. However, at a depth of 151 cm from the surface, modern trash of plastics were still found.

The excavation continued to Spit 5, still in hopes of finding the full extent of what is now a modern midden and the beginning of sediments that were *in situ*. At a depth of 171 cm below the surface, modern plastic bags were again uncovered. Excavation of the trench ended on this spit. A total of five stratigraphic layers were identified (Figure 4). The excavation ceased at 171 cm from the surface.

FIGURE 4. VERTICAL PROFILE OF THE NORTH-WEST WALL OF TRENCH 1



The floor of the kiln was difficult to identify because, according to the local people, the site was already destroyed and looted several times by different treasure hunters throughout the recent years. The poor conservation of the site may be due to the local community's lack of information on the importance of the Spanish kiln. After the treasure hunting activities, pits were left open and eventually filled in with garbage. The nature of the tunnel walls leading from the mouth of the kiln (i.e., the arch) to the mouth of the oven could no longer be established due to the extensive disturbance on the site.

DISCUSSION

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE SPANISH KILN

Majority of the churches in the northern part of Mindanao were made of bricks. This construction material can also be seen today in the Immaculate Conception Church in the Municipality of Jasaan, the Sta. Rita Church in the Municipality of Balingasag, and the Nuestra Señora Maria De la Candelaria in the Municipality of Tagoloan. Many towns built their own kilns for the construction of their municipal churches.³⁵

The kiln in Alubijid is made of bricks (Plate 1) placed on top of each other in an alternating manner and plastered by sand mixed with lime. It is composed of a mouth, tunnel, and oven. The front of the kiln is 360 cm wide and 120 cm high (Figures 5 and 6).

PLATE 1. THE SPANISH KILN MADE OF BRICKS



FIGURES 5. FRONT VIEW OF THE MOUTH OF THE KILN

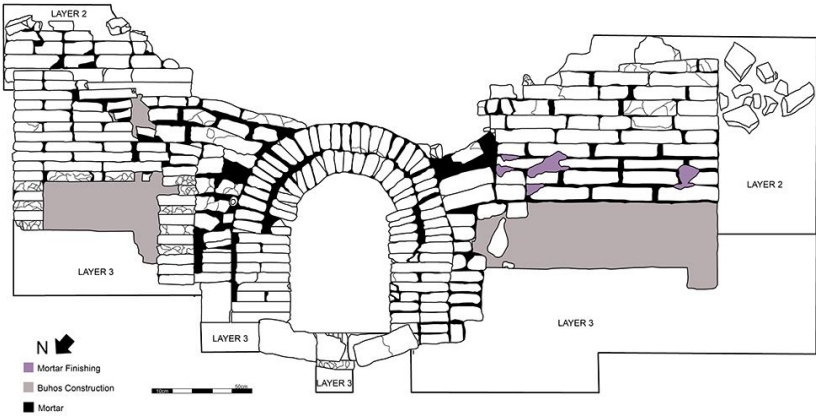
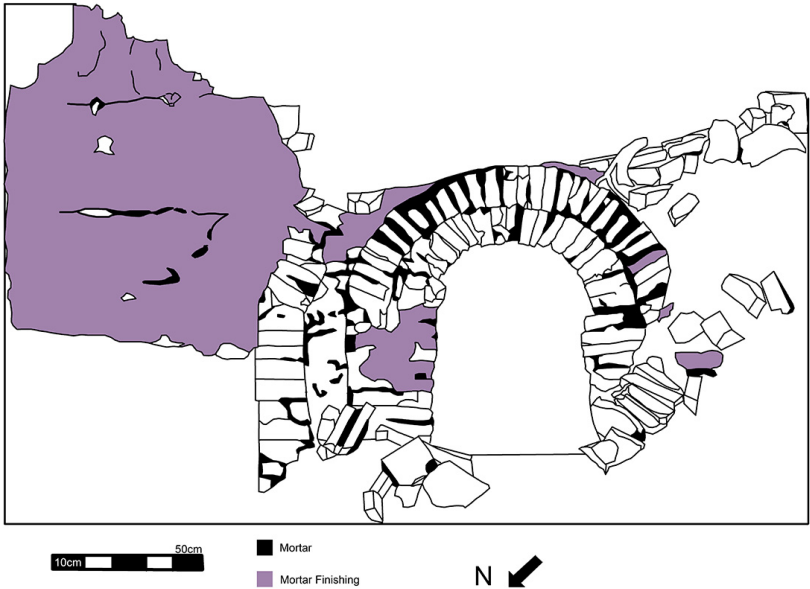


FIGURE 6. BACK VIEW OF THE KILN'S MOUTH

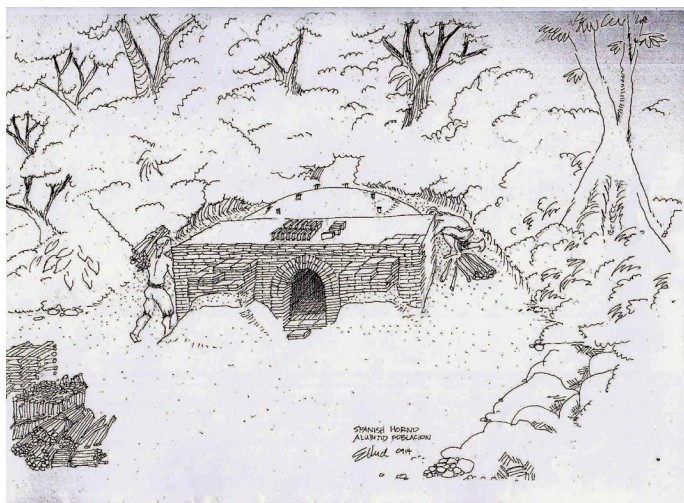


(courtesy of Ena Luga and Len Wright)

The mouth of the kiln is from 100 to 110 cm high, faces southwest and has an aesthetic double-arch formation made of piled bricks. It is flanked by protective walls to prevent erosion of the hillside behind the kiln. Each wall is supported by two buttresses. The buttress to the left of the mouth is still intact, while the buttress to the right had been destroyed during the construction of the 1997 municipal road. The tunnel is the connection between the mouth and the oven of the kiln and measures 200 cm long. Unfortunately, the remains of the tunnel were destroyed by massive treasure-hunting activities.

The oven is the most important part of the Spanish kiln as this is where the bricks were placed and fired. Its

FIGURE 7. RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SPANISH KILN



(courtesy of R. Lluch)

dome (Plate 2) is approximately 300 cm wide and has enough space for hot air and gasses to circulate and pass through the bricks. It is composed of eight funnels where the fire was channeled and nine exhaust tubes where heat was released. Firing required a gradual process so as not to damage or make the bricks brittle.³⁶ The temperature of the kiln usually ranged from 1,500 to 1,800°F and took two to three days for the bricks to cool down.³⁷

PLATE 2. INSIDE THE OVEN OF THE KILN



Demand for bricks in the Philippines was high such that they even had to be imported from Mexico for the buildings and bridges in Manila.³⁸ It was not until the nineteenth century that the Philippines started making her own bricks and even exported to Guam.³⁹

In the Philippines, bricks were used in the absence of adobe and cut coral stones.⁴⁰ Sometimes, they were used for aesthetic/decorative accents such as those seen on the church in Boac, Marinduque.⁴¹

In Alubijid, a total of 776 pieces of earthenware bricks were inventoried at the Spanish kiln site, majority of which were found on the surface. Of these, only eleven complete bricks had been recovered. A complete rectangular brick measures an average of 30 cm long, 15 cm wide, and 5 cm thick (Plate 3).

PLATE 3. GENERAL LENGTH OF THE BRICK RECOVERED AT THE SPANISH KILN



The size of a brick may indicate its function and use. Those manufactured in Alubijid are classified as “common bricks.”⁴² Common bricks are used in both external and internal walls of a structure. These are “common” as they are mass produced for the general market. The Alubijid type of brick, according to historical evidences, was used in the construction of the parish churches in the Nuestra Señora de las Nieves in the city of El Salvador and the Holy Cross Parish Church in the municipality of Alubijid.

Based on the high standard deviation of their dimensions, the bricks found at the Alubijid site appear to have been manually produced. They were made of clay using the soft-mud manufacturing technique. A wooden brick mold was used to form the size of the bricks.

Machine-made bricks would have a more standardized dimension, which is not the case with those found in Alubijid. The presence of striations and sometimes handprints on the bricks may also be indicative that their makers used wooden molds.

The length and width of the bricks at the site are proportioned to be alternately placed on top of each other. Color indicates the temperature used in the kiln. Iron present in clay is responsible for giving the brick a red hue. The color or hue is also dependent on the firing intensity inside the kiln. The bricks in Alubijid are of a pale-red color, which indicates that the bricks were burned properly, although they might have been soft and fragile compared to modern bricks.

Bricks meant for the commercial market, like other industrial products, are often marked with the manufacturer's brand, usually in initial forms.⁴³ Unfortunately, no brand names were found on the Alubijid bricks. They are all plain except for traces of animal paw marks, human fingerprints, and footmarks. Some have inscribed numbers (Plate 4). The presence of these impressed marks on the wet clay may indicate that some events happened during the molding and handling process. Furthermore, the absence of a brand name in the Alubijid bricks indicates that they were not meant for the commercial market.

PLATE 4. INSCRIBED NUMBERS WRITTEN ON THE BRICK



THE COLONIAL HISTORY OF ALUBIJID

The Recollects, the first religious order to spread Christianity in Alubijid, founded Alubijid as a parish in 1865. The Jesuits took over the evangelical work in the parish in 1878. The town of Alubijid gradually transferred its central government to the present site located approximately 5–7 kilometers southwest from Ilihan. At the new location, the Jesuits built another church made of bricks to accommodate the increasing population in Alubijid.⁴⁴ This is the site where the Jesuits' first church construction in Alubijid—the Holy Cross Parish Church in Barangay Poblacion—now stands. The church might have been constructed in 1889–1893—around the same period when the kiln found in the said barangay was built.

Relocating old towns from one place to another is a common “practice” in northern Mindanao. The Recollects established a town or community and built a church as the center of the government and religious activities. After the turnover of the evangelical mission to the Jesuits, the latter gradually transferred the old town to areas where there were abundant water supply, fertile soil, and proximity to the coast, and for religious “legacy.” The relocation of *pueblos* may be manifested in the history of Balingasag,⁴⁵ Jasaan,⁴⁶ El Salvador,⁴⁷ and Tagoloan.⁴⁸

CONCLUSIONS

Bro. Juan Costa, SJ, built a total of four kilns in northern Mindanao but only the one in Alubijid remained to this day. It should be underscored that Bro. Juan

Costa, SJ must have trained the locals during that time on brick making in order to produce enough materials for construction. Thus, it can be said that the skills shared with the locals is one of the Spaniards' living legacies in Mindanao, and the kiln site a cultural heritage that should be protected.

One of the objectives of this archaeological research is to establish the general chronology of Alubijid. Unfortunately, the systematic and scientific excavation at the kiln's site failed to establish any timeline because the site's stratigraphic profile had been disturbed. The site fell prey to treasure hunters or looters. It was also turned into a dumpsite by the surrounding community.

Interestingly, after the release of the 2014 archaeological report, "Spanish Kiln in Alubijid" by the UP-ASP,⁴⁹ the local government unit (LGU) of Alubijid issued Municipal Resolution No. 40-2015, stating that the "Alubijid kiln site, the only surviving kiln in northern Mindanao used in the late 19th century by Spanish Jesuits to build churches in Misamis Oriental Province, is a significant and important archaeological and cultural site in the municipality of Alubijid, Misamis Oriental."

The LGU of Alubijid's initiative regarding the Spanish kiln is the right initial step in acknowledging their cultural heritage. After all, its cultural heritage helps define its past and differentiates its people from other local and international communities. It gives them their distinctive character. The municipal resolution acknowledges that Alubijid's historical kiln exhibits exceptional cultural,

artistic, and historical significance to the region (Mindanao) and to the Philippines.

The archaeological kiln site provides an opportunity for the local government of Alubijid to initiate a long-term municipal plan for local policies, economic development, and management programs that protect and preserve the archaeological site. Protection involves guarding and securing the place from looting and treasure-hunting activities as unsystematic excavation of the site can inadvertently destroy the fragile structures through local ordinances. It also provides an opportunity for the community to take their role to protect their cultural heritage for the future generations, and in the process, to improve its tourism industry.

This site also opens an opportunity for cultural education of the people to understand the importance of archaeological sites and its potential benefits to the municipality. The site is testament to the history of the town and the cultural identity of the people of Alubijid. Its presence can also bring socioeconomic growth to the municipality. This undertaking, however, needs the partnership of communities living in or near cultural areas to be involved and engaged in site protection initiatives.

The education aspect can be realized by starting cultural awareness in the elementary and secondary schools like an inclusion of local archaeology lessons in history subjects, and for teachers to include actual visits to the town's historical, cultural, and archaeological sites. This will be valued into their students' consciousness and ability to preserve their "own" tangible heritage.

NOTES

- 1 Jose S. Arcilla, *Jesuits Missionary Letters from Mindanao*, vol. 4 (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 2000), 516; G.F. Vega, *Historical Glimpses of Old Balingasag* (Quezon City: Rapid Lithographics & Publishing, 1999), 63; R.B. Javellana, *Wood and Stone* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991), 251.
- 2 L.M. Neri. "A Report on the Archaeological Survey along the Coastal Area of Misamis Oriental, Philippines." *Hukay*, 16 (2011). 7; L.M. Neri, "The Archaeology of Misamis Oriental" (Unpublished Report. Archaeological Studies Program Library. University of the Philippines. Diliman. Quezon City. 2008).
- 3 Municipality of Alubijid Comprehensive Land Use Plan (CLUP) 2000–2015.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 M. Cuevas and A. Bautista, "Misamis Oriental Archaeological Survey Project" Field Report. Manila: National Museum, 1991.
- 7 L.M. Neri, "A Report on the Archeological Survey," 1–27.
- 8 F. Demetrio, "The Village: Early Cagayan de Oro in Legend and History," in *The Local Historical Sources of Northern Mindanao*, ed. Francisco Demetrio, SJ (Cagayan de Oro City: Legacy Sales and Printing Press, Inc. 1995), 424; Regalado T. Jose, *Simbahan: Church Art in Colonial Philippines 1565–1898* (Manila: Tomato Graphics and Excel Printing Services, 1991), 21–22.
- 9 *Provincia de San Nicolas de Tolentino de Agustinos Descalzos dela Congregacion de España e Indias* (Manila: Imprenta del Colegio de Santo Tomas. 1879), 295, Archivo Recoleta de Filipinas, Quezon City.
- 10 Jose, *Curas de Almas*, 98; De la Asuncion, 19.

- 11 *Provincia de San Nicolas*, 1879, 295–296.
- 12 Blair and Robertson 1637–1638, Vol. 28, 343.
- 13 Demetrio, 434; Bernad, *The Great Island*, 2004, 147–149; Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 173.
- 14 *Provincia de San Nicolas*, 295.
- 15 Arcilla, 351.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 *Poblacion y Territorio. Provincia de Misamis. Estadística – Misamis*, SDS 13726.
- 18 Demetrio, 434; *Sinopsis Historica de la Provincia de S. Nicolas de Tolentino de las Islas Filipinas de la Order de Agustinos Recoletos por el Padre Ruiz de Sta. Eulalia Cronista Provincial*. Vol. 1. (Manila: Univ. de Sto. Tomas, 1925), Archivo Recoleta de Filipinas, Quezon City.
- 19 Municipality of Alubijid CLUP 2000–2015.
- 20 Jose, *Curas de Almas*, 98.
- 21 Jose, *Curas de Almas*, 98; Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 251.
- 22 Arcilla, 350; Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 251.
- 23 Arcilla, 424.
- 24 Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 251.
- 25 Ibid., 182.
- 26 Ibid., 175.
- 27 Vega, 63; Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 251.
- 28 Arcilla, 516; Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 251.
- 29 *Sinopsis Historica*, 285.

- 30 Arcilla, 516.
- 31 Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 248.
- 32 Demetrio, 434; M. Lao, "Cagayan de Oro, 1622–1901," in *The Local Historical Sources of Northern Mindanao* ed. Francisco Demetrio, SJ, Cagayan de Oro City: Legacy Sales and Printing Press, Inc., 1995., 321; *Sinopsis Historica*, 285.
- 33 Jose, *Curas de Almas*, 98.
- 34 Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 251.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Gurcke, 28.
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 53; Jose, *Simbahan*, 36.
- 39 Jose, *Simbahan*, 36.
- 40 Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 53.
- 41 Jose, *Simbahan*, 98.
- 42 Gurcke, 98.
- 43 Hittel, 528–529.
- 44 Arcilla, 351.
- 45 Vega, 26–27; Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 251.
- 46 Neri et al., "The Archeology of Karaang Jasaan," 31.
- 47 Neri et al., "The Archaeology of Karaang Lungsod," 244.
- 48 Neri et al., "The Archeology of Karaang Jasaan," 13; Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 251.
- 49 Neri et al., "The Last Kiln Standing: The Archaeology of Alubijid, Misamis Oriental" (Unpublished Report. Archaeological Studies

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