

Vigía: The Network of Lookout Points in Spanish Guam

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There are indications of the existence of a network of lookout points around Guam during the 18th and 19th centuries. This is suggested by passing references and few explicit allusions in Spanish colonial records such as early 19th Century military reports. In an attempt to identify the sites where those lookout points might have been located, this paper surveys some of those references and matches them with existing toponymy. It is hoped that the results will be of some help to archaeologists, historic preservation staff, or anyone interested in the history of Guam and Micronesia.

While the need of using historic records is instrumental for the abovementioned purposes of this paper, focus will be given to the Chamorro place name *Bijia*. Historical evolution of toponymy, an area of study in need of attention, offers clues about the use or significance that a given location had in the past. The word *Vigía* today means “sentinel” in Spanish - the person who is responsible for surveying an area and warn of possible dangers. But its first dictionary definition is still "high tower elevated on the horizon, to register and give notice of what is discovered". *Vigía* also means an "eminence or height from which a significant area of land or sea can be seen".¹

Holding on to the latter definition, it is noticeable that in the Hispanic world, in large coastal territories that were subjected to frequent attacks from the sea, the place name *Vigía* is relatively common. Throughout the former Spanish Americas, places like Chile, Venezuela, Panama, Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, etc., similarly to the Philippines, there are several places named *Vigía*. This is also apparent on the island of Guam, in Micronesia, which was part of the Spanish crown for over 300 years.

The origin of the toponymy *Vigía* is clear: those points served as lookout points sometime in the past. In Trinidad (Cuba), the *Loma Vigía* served as a surveillance point against pirate attacks.² In Puerto Rico, in the villages of Rincón, Camaceyeyes or Ponce, among others, exists *Cerro Vigía Vigía Hill*, etc. .. In Ponce, *Vigia Hill* is located 250 feet above the sea level, and recorded in use as a lookout point since at least 1801, where sentinels would scan the horizon looking for approaching vessels. Sentinels were required to identify the nationality of the vessel and notify it to the authorities by raising the appropriate flag.³

Interestingly, in many cases the *Vigías* are not the highest point in the area. In Trinidad, the highest is *Peak Potrerillo*. It also does not seem that the *Vigías* had a complex infrastructure. *Vigia Hill* in Ponce had just a wooden shed, the minimum necessary to shelter the watchman on duty, the service flags, and other equipment.

¹ Entries for *Vigía* and *Atalaya*. Diccionario de la Real Academia Española. Madrid. 2001. 22^a edición.

² Pelezuela, Jacobo de la (1871), “Crónica de las Antillas”. En Rubio, Grilo y Vitturi (eds.), *Crónica general de España: ó sea Historia ilustrada y descriptiva de sus provincias*. Volumen 12. Madrid. Imprenta de J.E. Morete. P. 185.

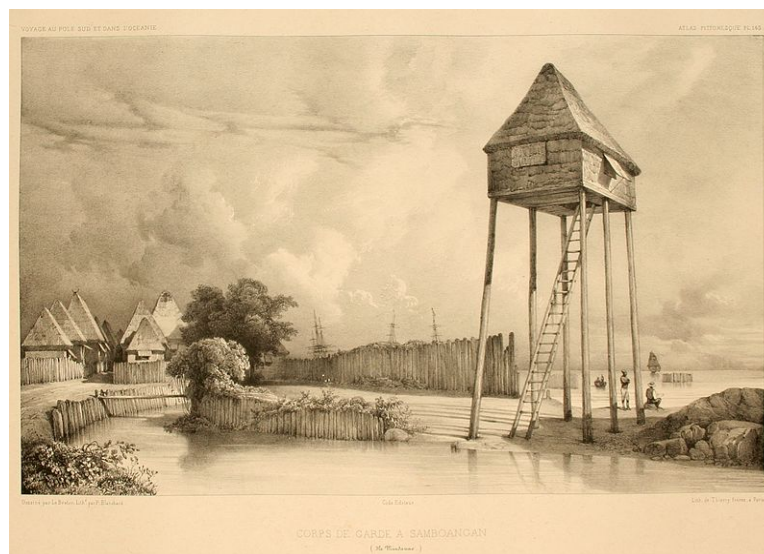
³ Rosario Natal, Carmelo (2003), *Ponce en su historia moderna: 1945-2002*. Secretaría de Cultura y Turismo del Municipio Autónomo de Ponce. Puerto Rico. P. 143.



Cerro Vigía in the town of Rincón, Puerto Rico, is not the highest peak in the area. Google Earth view.

The Vigías of the Philippines

Scholar Francis Warren referred to lookouts in the Philippines as small wooden or stone structures built with local labor and resources, and dating around the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He cited as an example the *Vigía* in Zamboanga, drawn in 1846 by members of the expedition of Dumont D'Urville.⁴ The morphology of these lookouts varied greatly according to needs and circumstances, but generally speaking they were required to be close to a town, and located on a natural or man-made elevation.



The very unique Vigía of Zamboanga, in 1846. Dumont D'Urville, 1846.

⁴ Warren, James Francis (2002), *Iranun and Balangingi: Globalization, Maritime Raiding and the Birth of Ethnicity*. Singapore University Press. P. 204, fig. 16; and P. 552. Reproduced from Dumont d'Urville, Jules (1846), *Voyage au Pôle Sud et dans l'Océanie sur les corvettes L'Astrolabe et La Zélée exécuté par ordre du Roi Pendant les Années 1837–1838–1839–1840 sous le commandement de M. Dumont-d'Urville*. Atlas pittoresque. Planche 143.

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In the early 19th century Manila, there were lookouts located in Intramuros, Cavite, Salinas, Calibuyo, and in the islands of Pulo-Caballo and Corregidor at the entrance of Manila Bay. Five men were assigned to each of them, six in the case of the *Vigía* of Corregidor.⁵ Manila was not unique. In fact several toponyms *Vigía* survive to this day in the Philippines. At the entrance of Manila Bay, in the Mariveles peninsula, there is *Vigía Point*. Further north, along the coast and the mouth of the river in the village of Malacapas (Pangasinan province), there is another *Vigía* place. And not far from the village of Cawayan (Masbate island), there is *Mount Vigía*.



Two of the vigias at the entrance of Manila Bay appear in the 1784-1790 map of Malo de Luque

⁵ Díaz Arenas, Rafael (1830), *Memorias históricas y estadísticas de Filipinas y particularmente de la grande de Luzón*. Impr. Diario de Manila. Segment of “Presupuestos” or budget. Unnumbered page.

In the case of the *Vigía de Nagparitan* (Burgos, Ilocos Norte), a colonial toponym overlaps with the indigenous name. *Nagpatiran* was the indigenous name of the mountain, and *Vigía* the purpose for which it was used. Over time, *Vigía de Nagpatiran* referred to the whole hill. Today there is a double overlapping, since on top of the *Vigía de Nagpatiran Hill* there is a modern lighthouse built at the end of the Spanish era, so the place is currently known as the *Cape Bojeador Lighthouse* in the *Vigía de Nagpatiran Hill*.

Generally speaking, these lookouts in the Spanish colonies largely differed in the infrastructures, depending on available resources and the strategic value or economic importance of the village. Most of the coastal towns of overall importance likely had a *Vigía* on a natural elevation of land, if any, or on a wooden or stone tower built for that purpose. In both cases, the purpose of these lookout points was common: to signal danger, news, or adverse weather.

The Island of Guam

Were *Vigías* ever established in the Mariana Islands? Adaptation to Chamorro of the word *Vigía* results in *Bijia*. It appears at least twice in the toponymy of Guam.⁶

1. *Bijia Peak*. Next to Mount Macajna in the district of Asan.

2. *Bijia Point*. The top of the cliff on the northern end of Gongna Beach, Dededo.

Research on Spanish colonial records has yielded the existence of at least half a dozen lookout locations. These were in Agaña (possibly outside of the Casamata, the site of which is the government house today, or most likely adjacent Fort Santa Agueda, in Apugan), Lada Fonte, Apoya, Ilichó, Jajayan Point, Ugam, Asiga, Pago, Santa Rosa, Tarrague, Ritidian, Fasonan and Dos Amantes.⁷

It is necessary to consider the historical context of the archipelago to attempt to date the use of these sites as *Vigías*, and to interpret their significance. Spanish colonizers concentrated their presence in Guam, the largest of the Mariana Islands. When the military conquest of the archipelago was completed around 1698, successive governors established government in the colonial capital of San Ignacio de Agaña. Following the Laws of Indies, villages were established in selected coastal locations, granted they had an anchoring place, easy access to fresh water, and enough fertile land to sustain a permanent population.

Both in Agaña, capital of the island, and Umatac, anchoring place of the galleons, a series of infrastructures such as bridges, wells, forts, government and store houses, were built to facilitate communication between the two towns and to supply the *Nao de Acapulco*, as the Manila galleons were known in its route from Acapulco to Manila.

The Manila Galleon was among the premier commercial ventures in the world. Its protection and supply was a state matter, so the governor of the Marianas had the mandate to supply them with fresh food and water. Concurrently, the colonial government itself depended on the arrival of the galleon: it carried the salaries and budgets, the official letters, private correspondence, the news from abroad, and most importantly the supply of basic goods for the colony such as garments, seeds, construction tools, farm implements, wine and wheat to perform mass, etc.

⁶ Topographic Map of Guam by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Year 2000.

⁷ Villalobos, Ramón María de, *Geographic, Military and Political Description of the Island of Guam*. Typescript and translation by Sister Felicia Plaza, MMB. RFT-MARC Working Papers n° 7 and 8. University of Guam, 1979. P. 12. *Jajayan*, one of the locations of the vigias, was misspelled as *Jafayan* in this publication. The original manuscript shows it was written correctly, *Jajayan*.

Vigía

Besides a small official vessel that linked Manila to Guam once or twice a year carrying the specific needs for the island, the main link of Spanish Guam with the outside world throughout the 18th century was the Manila galleon. Since it stopped at Guam for a few days, and it anchored far from the capital, it was imperative for the colonial government to spot the galleon as early as possible. To anticipate its arrival, a network of *Vigías* was established at strategic points along the coast. One of these lookout points was certainly in use by 1719, but the network must have been in place as early as the late seventeenth century. Some, if not all of them, were in sporadic use at least until the end of the galleon trade in 1815.

Indigenous men of military age, paid part of the tribute by taking shifts as sentinels, or as suppliers of the dry wood needed to signal with a fire that the galleon was on sight. In the first decades of the 18th century it passed by Guam usually between May 18th and June 20th, but the importance of this trade route was such that the governor and his officers moved to the town of Umatac in advance. This small village was raised to the rank of *Villa*, and permanent infrastructures such as a Casa Real, a school, a church and convent, bridges and culverts, were built. Over time, depending on the availability of human and material resources, up to four stone forts or batteries were built around the bay or in high points. Their whitewashed walls would also maximize at a minimum cost the dissuading visual effect of the batteries as seen from an enemy ship. The Villa of Umatac was in fact capital of the archipelago during that period, and its bay was to be the best and more often surveyed location of the entire Micronesia.

In the Western world, during the Ancien Régime, the lower social stratum related to the authority almost in terms of vassalage. The priorities of the crown were assumed to be the same as those of the entire population. Abuses committed against the common people in the exploitation of their labor undoubtedly marked the first seventy years of the eighteenth century in Guam. The requirements of the colonial government to be supplied with fresh farm products were clearly harmful for the Chamorros. The crown demanded tributes that could be redeemed in cash or in kind. In account of the dramatic depopulation that occurred during and after the *Reduccion*, Chamorros were exempted from the main tributes, but they were required by the colonial government to pay a tribute in kind, such as working in Royal farms once a week, or performing in public works or services when demanded.

Each year, in between mid May and late June, a dozen men from the village of Pago were required to take turns in the *Vigía* of the town to look for the upcoming galleon. At least until 1719, instead of the compensation the Laws of the Indies stipulated for the indigenous population, these sentinels received nothing for their work, other than a pair of trousers or shirt, and only as a prize for whoever spotted the galleon first.

From 1815 onwards, after the end of the galleon route, this network of lookout points had come somehow into disuse, perhaps with the exception of the lookout of Ilichó in Umatac, which was in regular use by 1819, and the lookout of Fort Santa Águeda in Agaña, which remained in use throughout the 19th century.



The *Vigías* of Governor Villalobos

Geopolitical changes in the second and third decades of the 19th century that resulted in the independence of the Spanish Americas forced the crown to prevent a foreign attack on the Philippines by, among other measures, strengthening the military presence of the island of Guam. Governor Ramón María de Villalobos was entrusted with the task of making a report on the defense capacity of the island for this purpose, which he conducted in 1832.

Villalobos argued in his report that effective protection of the coast of Guam would require such a large number of lookouts that it would be against the interests of the villages and against the interest of the Crown's own budget to build it. His reservations were logical: it would have been detrimental to the Chamorros, because a number of villagers would have to serve in these sentries. Besides, it would have been an expense to the budget of the crown since it would require a considerable outlay in wages and materials.

Villalobos maximized the few human resources available and minimized material costs by establishing the indispensable minimum network. In the report he wrote in 1833, he listed these lookouts as being located in *Ritidian*, *Tarrague*, *Santa Rosa*, *Fasonan*, *Dos Amantes*, *Lada Fonte*, *Apuya*, *Ilichó*, *Punta Jajayan*, *Asiga*, *Pago*, and *Almacén de Pólvora*. The sentinels posted

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in each of the Vigías were to communicate to the capital by lighting a bonfire, in case of the arrival of a foreign ship. In addition, Chamorro ranchers along the coast were instructed to give immediate notice to the nearest village in case of an invasion or attack.

By applying the pattern of construction of *Vigías* in other parts of the Hispanic world to Guam, with the help of local toponymy and existing historic records, we can have an educated guess on the location of these sites today.



Mount Apuya. Most probably location for both the Vigía and the mount itself, whose name has not been recorded since 1832. Status of the site unknown.

Punta Asiga

Villalobos' selection of Point Asiga for a lookout point, having a much higher mount in the vicinity such as Mount Quiroga, makes more sense than what it seems. As we have mentioned, the only consideration for choosing the right lookout point was not simply altitude. The highest point of a given area granted visibility. However, easy communication with the closest center of authority must have been another imperative. In that sense, Asiga point was more easily accessible from and to the two closest inhabited places: Inarajan village and Dandan, where the Royal farm of San José de Dandan was located and where the trail going from Inarajan to Agaña passed.

While the top of Mount Quiroga would have provided a greater visual span of the northern and southern sides of the west coast of Guam, the road in between the Alonso river and Ipan was nonexistent by 1832. And there was no bridge to cross the Talofofu river. It would have taken much longer for a sentinel trying to report a danger or news to go from Mount Quiroga to Pago, Inarajan or Agaña, than if he already was in the southern side of the Talofofu river. If Villalobos actually established a Vigía in Asiga point, it must have been located in the highest spot of the area, which is the 334 feet high elevation marked in the USGS map. This site remains unverified.

It is worth mentioning here that the area between Mount Patsud and Jalahai Point was completely unknown to cartographers, based on the maps of Guam made in between 1675 and 1913. The 1819 map of Guam prepared by French explorer Louis de Freycinet, the most accurate representation of Guam for almost a century, committed a huge miscalculation in this area as a result of which the map reduced the distance in between the bays of Inarakan and Talofofu. This

inaccuracy was incorporated by almost every subsequent cartographer until 1913. The only exception was the 1832 map of Governor Villalobos. This survey was conducted from land and he managed to obtain a more accurate representation of the actual distance in between the two bays. Still, he or his team probably visited only Nomna beach and no other segment of that coast until Asiga Point. Hence their mistaken assumption that the coast in between Asiga Point and Ulomnia Beach was all a single beach, when in fact it is mainly a rocky coastline with only occasional stripes of sand.



Approximate location of the Vigía de Asiga. Status unconfirmed.

Punta Ajayan

The small bay currently known as *Ajayan* was most likely pronounced *Hajayan* in old Chamorro, since Spanish cartographers recorded it as *Jajayan*. Located on the southeastern tip of the island, just over two and a half miles south of the village of Inarajan, *Ajayan* had some strategic importance in the 18th and 19th centuries, given the fact that it is possible to anchor in it. In 1819, Governor Medinilla had an officer (probably Chamorro or mestizo) posted in *Ajayan*, "to reconnaissance ships coming from the Kingdom of New Spain".⁸ The wording of the above mentioned letter by Governor Medinilla indicates that these lookouts were being managed by two men in duty: "...one of the two lookouts posted on top of Ilichu Hill reported to me that he had seen a three-masted ship..."⁹

Another officer was assigned for the same purpose at Cocos Island, a location that does not seem to have been continued over time. For its potential as a port, *Ajayan* bay was also a subject of interest to the French explorer Freycinet who ordered a nautical chart of the bay.

Even after the end of the Manila Galleon trade, the military value of the small *Ajayan* bay still relied on the fact that it was an anchoring place: it was possible to surreptitiously land troops

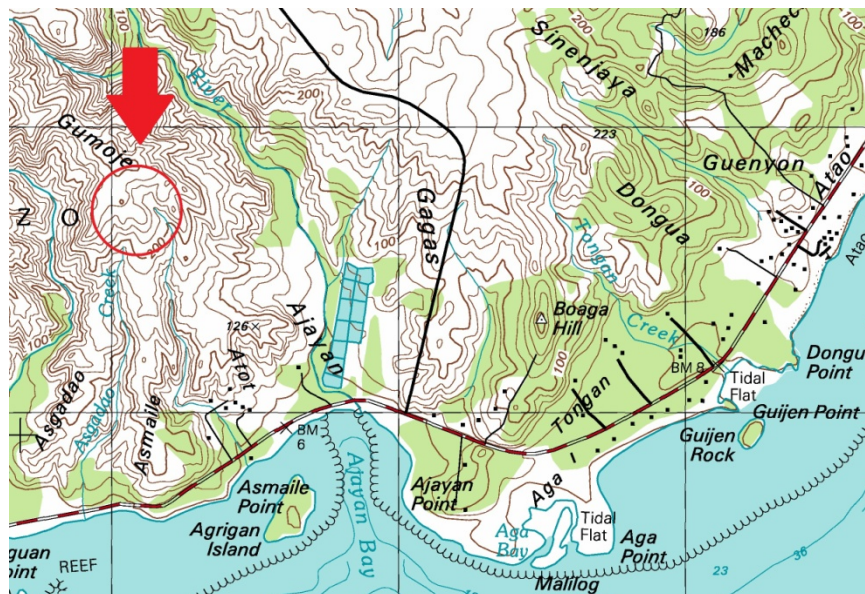
⁸ Lévesque, Rodrigue (comp.), *History of Micronesia. Vol. 19. The Freycinet Expedition*. 2002. P. 60 for the original Spanish. English version at P. 69.

⁹ Id. English version at P. 69.

there. It was probably for that reason that Governor Villalobos included Ajayan in his 1832 network of Vigías. But where was it?

The Vigía appears to have been in use in 1819, during Medinilla's term, and for an undetermined number of years after 1832. The map of Villalobos shows a wooden building in the right bank of the Ajayan river, perhaps just a farm or a sentry. Since the lookouts had a signaling function, the Vigía of Ajayan must have been in an elevated location somewhere near the bay.

To spot the exact location, we have to rely on the wording of the report by Villalobos: *Punta Jajayan*. In his map, Punta Jajayan is the coastal point of what in the USGS Map of Guam is called *Asmale Point*. The tip itself is not particularly large, but the hill immediately behind, appearing under the name *Gumoje* in the USGS map, is over 200 feet high. The best place to scan the horizon must have been its highest point. An alternate possibility to emplace a lookout is a nearby hill on the opposite side of the Ajayan river. *Boaga Hill*, toponym with Spanish resonances, is not very high but it would have provided a wider view of the east coast of the island. Both possibilities remain unverified in the field.



USGS view of Ajayan Bay. The coastal area directly below the red circle is the location of what in 1832 was understood to be Punta Jajayan. The red circle with an arrow marks a possible location of the Vigía, based only on the elevation of the terrain. Status unconfirmed.

Vigía de Ilichó

Mount Ilichó, just over a mile east of Umatac, is 1217 feet height, thus an ideal location for monitoring the whole south of the island and its surrounding waters. Since the galleons anchored right outside of Umatac Bay, the summit of Mount Ilichó may have served as a lookout as early as the late seventeenth century. In 1709, the English privateer Woodes Rogers passed by Umatac. The travel book written by one of its officers, Edward Cooke, includes a drawing of the southern west coast of Guam and a note pointing to one of the mountains behind Umatac. That

location likely corresponds with the lookout point. The note reads "*in this stump they hoist a flag when a Spanish ship comes in*".¹⁰ The point marked in the sketch does not seem to correspond to Iicho, but with a place further north. However, it is risky to make an estimation based on the profile of the island, a very sketchy one. The drawing has no apparent cartographic details other than three depths, the shapes of the islets of Cocos and Facpi, or the rocks at Fouha Bay and Santo Ángel in Umatac. Given the simplicity of the drawing, it might simply be interpreted as indicating that the Spaniards hoisted a flag on the Mountain located immediately west of Umatac Bay. That mountain is Iicho.

A further, more specific reference dates from 1792, during the visit of Spanish scientific expedition of Alejandro Malaspina. While in Guam, botanist Luis Née went to "*the mountains of the Vigía, not far from the village*".¹¹ One of the cartographic documents of this expedition is an outline of the bays of Umatac and Fouha. Although lacking details, it does include Facpi islet to the north, and Cocos Island to the south. Once compared to contemporary maps, the said sketch is accurate enough for us to attempt locating the few locations named in the sketch.¹² It mentions two peaks east of Umatac, probably because they were used as points of reference by the cartographer. The southernmost point is named Pico Iicho and the other, further north, is simply named Vigía.

These differentiated names indicate that the summit of Iicho and the peak known as Vigía were two different places. Both must have been quite close to each other, considering that the other documentary references refer to Vigía by using the generic name of Iicho. In 1819 there were two sentinels in charge of this lookout, as cited in the above mentioned communication from Governor Medinilla to the superior government in Manila, on occasion of the arrival of French explorer Louis de Freycinet:

As I was in the Town of Umatac for the purpose of looking after the needs of the frigate Paz for her quick departure at 11 a.m. of the 16th of March last, one of the two lookouts posted on top of Ilichu Hill reported to me that he had seen a three-masted ship...¹³

The two peaks, Iicho and Bolaños, are separated by just a few hundred meters. The Vigía was most likely somewhere in the area generically referred to as Mount Iicho by Medinilla.

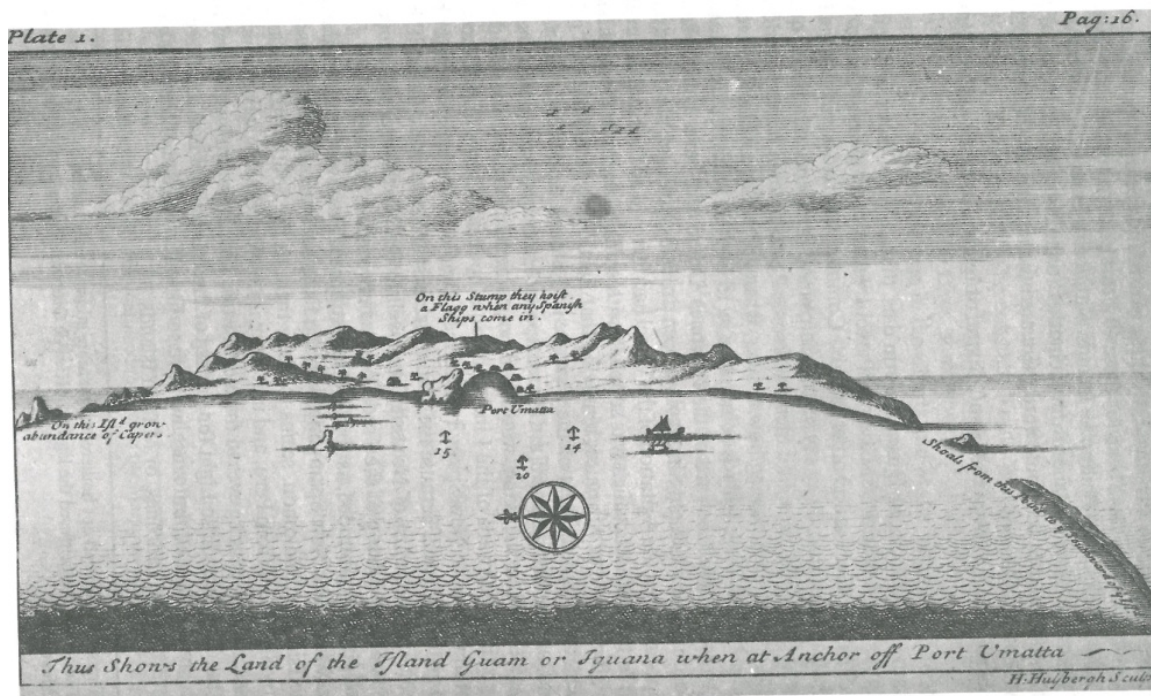
The overlaying of the above mentioned 1792 sketch with Google Earth reveals that the peak which the Malaspina cartographer thought to be Iicho actually corresponds to the top of a different mountain, Mount Schroeder. But the point named Vigía in the sketch also corresponds to a peak, now known as Bolaños. This is a very revealing fact since Bolaños, with its 1242 feet of high, is the highest point in the area and the most logical candidate to locate the flagstaff referred to in 1709 by Edward Cooke. But was Bolaños the best place to install a lookout?

¹⁰ Lévesque, *History of Micronesia, vol. 11. Frenc Ships in the Pacific*. P. 124. Source: *Captain Edward Cooke's A Voyage to the South Sea and Round the World*. London, 1712.

¹¹ David, Andrew (ed.), *The Malaspina expedition, 1789-1794: journal of the voyage by Alejandro Malaspina*. Vol. 2. Hakluyt Society, 2003. P. 260.

¹² A photocopy of this sketch was published in Pineda, Antonio (1990), *Guam Diary of Naturalist. 1792*. Driver, Marjorie (ed.). University of Guam. P. 78.

¹³ Lévesque, Rodrigue (1992), *History of Micronesia, vol. 19. The Freycinet Expedition*. Lévesque Publications. Quebec. Page 69. Original manuscript at LCW Mss. Div. Spanish Government Collection. Item 97.



Flagstaff point, somewhere east of Umatac Bay. Edward Cooke, 1709.

A visual survey of both sites, taken on March 23, 2014 with Ordot resident Aja Reyes,¹⁴ revealed that Iicho peak offers a much wider span of view of the Merizo bay area, notwithstanding the slightly higher altitude of Bolaños Peak. Hence it is still quite possible that the lookout station was located at Iicho Peak. In any case, the visual survey conducted that day revealed no existing surface remnants in none of the two sites. It is necessary and it is recommended to have an archaeological survey in both areas.

The unknown origin of the toponym Bolaños does not clarify much. Today it is mistakenly transcribed *Bolanos* due to the lack of familiarity the Anglo-Saxon alphabet has with letter ñ. However, the local pronunciation confirms the correct name, Bolaños. This word has no meaning in Chamorro. Scholar Paloma Albalá already noted its Spanish echo.¹⁵ In Spanish Bolaños happens to mean “stone cannonballs”, and it happens to be a place name in Jalisco, México. Both facts bear no relation with the Guam toponym.

¹⁴ The author express his gratitude to Ms. Reyes for participating in such extenuating hikes. Also to Mr. Adrian Cruz, and Mr. Joseph C. Santos for participating in an earlier attempt to reach Bolaños.

¹⁵ Albalá, Paloma (2000), *Americanismos en las Indias del Poniente. voces de origen indígena americano en las lenguas del Pacífico*. Ed. Vervuert. P. 40.



Bolaños and Ilichó in 1819. No visible structure or not drawn by Arago. NMI Museum of History and Culture.

Could it be that Bolaños and the old Vigía were one and the same? A plausible explanation for the origin of the name could date from the mid 19th century. Umatac had by then decayed in importance after the end of the galleon trade and with the habilitation of Apra as the main harbor of Guam. The function and name of the *Vigía* would have fallen into disuse. It falls within the logic of the time that one of the four governors of the Marianas between 1839 and 1852 (José Casillas Salazar, Gregorio Santa María, Félix Calvo, or Pablo Pérez) might have decided to honor their superior by renaming the old Vigía after him, even if such a superior was never in the Marianas. A certain Spanish Colonel Jose Luis Bolaños was assigned to the Philippines as *Teniente del Rey* in between those years. His was a high-ranking position in the colonial government whose mission was to replace the Captain General in the event of his death.¹⁶

Whatever the origin of the toponym Bolaños, the 1852 map of the Mariana Islands by Francisco Coello makes no reference to it. Spanish officer Sánchez y Zayas (1863) mentioned no Bolaños, although he referred the existence of the lookout point: “*Mount Ilichu overlooks Umata, and on it there is a station whence passing approaching vessels may be seen at considerable distance.*”¹⁷

When author Muñoz Barreda mentioned in his concise but not very exact book of 1894 the main mountains of Guam, he wrote: “*reference must be made of the Vigía of Umatac, near the village of the same name*”.¹⁸ This reference is hardly relevant; since the author was never in Guam and based his writings in previous bibliography alone. If the toponym Bolaños derives

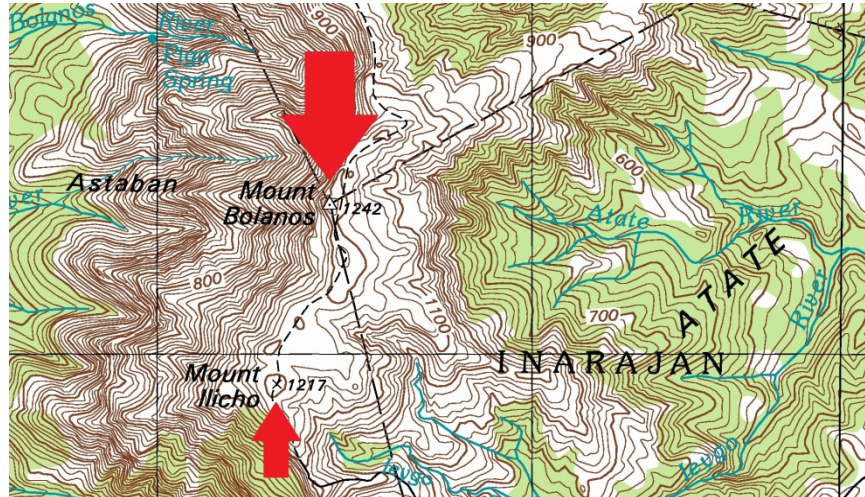
¹⁶ VV.AA. (1839), *Guía de forasteros en Madrid para el año de 1839*. Madrid, Imprenta Nacional. P. 127. VV.AA. (1852), *Calendario manual y guía de forasteros en Madrid para el año de 1852*. Madrid, Imprenta Real. P. 193.

¹⁷ Cited in Rosser, William Henry (1870), *North Pacific Pilot: the seaman’s guide to the islands of the North*. Ed. James Imray and son. Part 2. P. 81.

¹⁸ Muñoz Barreda, Vicente (1894), *La Micronesia española, o los archipiélagos de Marianas, Palaos y Carolinas*. Manila. Tip. Amigos del País. P. 84.

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indeed from the name of a Spanish officer, the renaming of Vigía to Bolaños must have occurred either unofficially, or after Sánchez y Zayas visited Guam in 1863. Bolaños did not appear in any known cartographic record of the island until the map of the U.S. Navy, 1913-1914.



Vigía de Iicho was most likely located at Bolaños Peak. Status unconfirmed.



Bolaños Peak as seen from Mount Iicho. March 23, 2014. Photo by Carlos Madrid.



View of Merizo from Mount Iicho. March 23, 2014. Photo by Carlos Madrid.

Vigía de Fonte

The report of Governor Villalobos mentions “Lada Fonte” as the location of one of the Vigías. That location must have been close to the Fonte river in Asan District. The USGS topographic maps include a Bijia Peak just west of Mount Macajna, directly above of the Fonte river. If there ever was any ruin there, it no longer exists. The site was completely flattened during the construction of the current infrastructure, ironically enough a radio communication station.

However, for the location of Bija Peak there are conflicting sources as well. In the 1914 U.S. Navy map of Guam, that name was assigned to a lower hill at the southeast side of Mount Macajna. That site, popularly known as Charlie Corn's Grave, is occupied by the 1973 ruins of the eclectic Mausoleum of the Chinese businessman of that name. A visual survey of the site was conducted on March 15, 2013 by the author along with Tano Lizama and Adrian Cruz, finding no remnants whatsoever.

Besides the two conflicting maps, there is an earlier reference that can simplify the question. The diary of James Lyle Young, resident of Guam in the 1880's, refers to a hunting excursion on January 22, 1881. He went from Agaña to Pigo, Asan, Libugon, then over the sabanas, then down to the Fonte, and back to Agaña, passing by Fort Santa Agueda. Along the route he passed by what he refers as "Flagstaff Peak":

January 22 Saturday. Left town at 6:30 a.m. with Henry, Jose Portusach, Gregorio Perez and 2 Chamorros and 4 dogs [...] returning to town at 5 p.m. having walked about 15 miles in the mountains in very hot sun and saw only 2 deer, one of which I fired at, at 600 yards without success. Had view from top of Flagstaff peak (0 - 2000 feet high) of the Ocean on both sides of the island. Saw Rota Island 50 miles away quite plainly.¹⁹

Regardless of the fact that Lyle exaggerated the height of the mountain, if any high peak of that vicinity was used as a flagstaff it must have been the highest. For the same reasoning, any lookout point and the flagstaff peak must have been one and the same. That can only be Mount Macajna, 709 feet high. Its location, directly above the Fonte River, still matches with the name given by Governor Villalobos: Lada Fonte. It is an area worthy of archaeological interest, but a visual survey conducted on March 15, 2013 showed no surface findings, other than a marker which formerly supported a USGS survey monument.

By the time the U.S. navy prepared the 1913-1914 map of Guam, the lookout point might have been in disuse for decades. The name Vigía was probably remembered by local informants but not its specific site. That could explain the disparity of locations given for this toponym in 20th century maps.



Mount Macajna, the most probably location for the Vigía de Fonte. No visible remnants found.

¹⁹ Young, James Lyle. *Private Journal, January 1, 1880 to July 9, 1881*. Canberra: Pacific Manuscripts Bureau, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University. Microfilm-roll. Courtesy of Prof. Lawrence Cunningham.

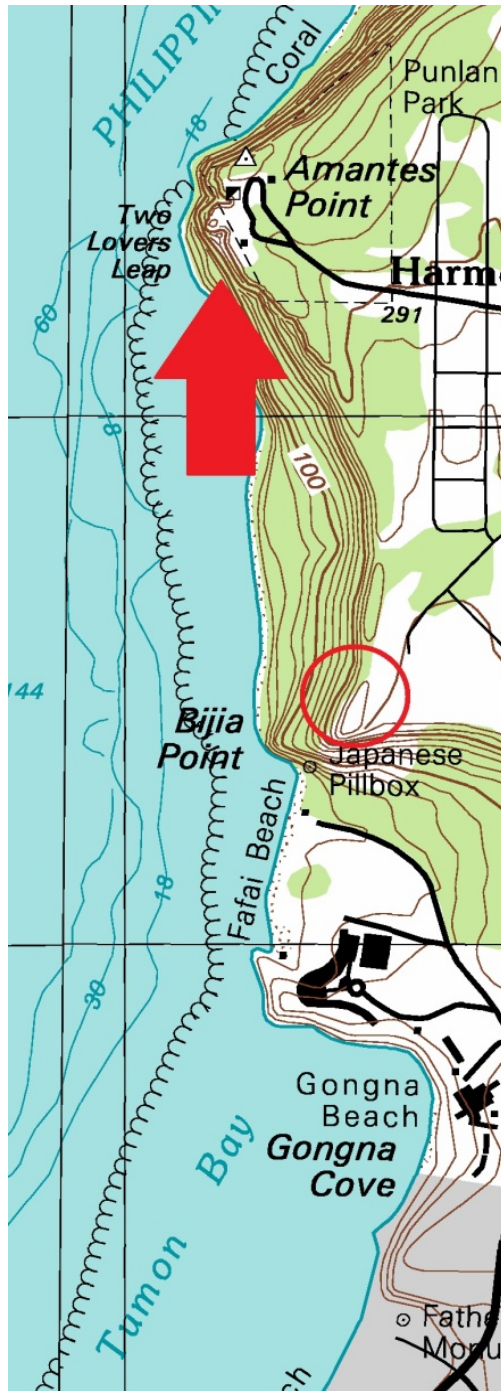


The marker on the summit of Mount Macajna formerly hosted a USGS Survey Monument.

Vigía de Dos Amantes

The toponym *Bijía* survives in the area of Puntan Dos Amantes, very specifically located: the top of the cliff directly above the Japanese cannon that names Gun Beach, in Gongna (Dededo District). A visual survey conducted by the author with the valuable help and support of Tano Lizama at that site on June 11, 2013, revealed no visible remnants. The U.S. Corps of Engineers installed a marker in 1949. Was *Bijia Point* used as a lookout? It is very possible, but somewhat unlikely. This cliff has lesser visibility and altitude than the nearby Dos Amantes. The report of Governor Villalobos specifies a *Vigía* in Dos Amantes.

Only speculation can be made about this somewhat strange location for the toponym. An old retention wall directly at the bottom of the cliff, made of non-carved stones, appears to be old enough to deserve closer attention, although there is no reason to believe it is related to the lookout. Perhaps that name carried on after the disuse of Dos Amantes as a lookout point. Perhaps current *Bijia Point* got its name because it was in the route up the cliff to go towards Dos Amantes, where the actual *Vigía* must have undoubtedly been located.



Vigía de Dos Amantes

Vigía



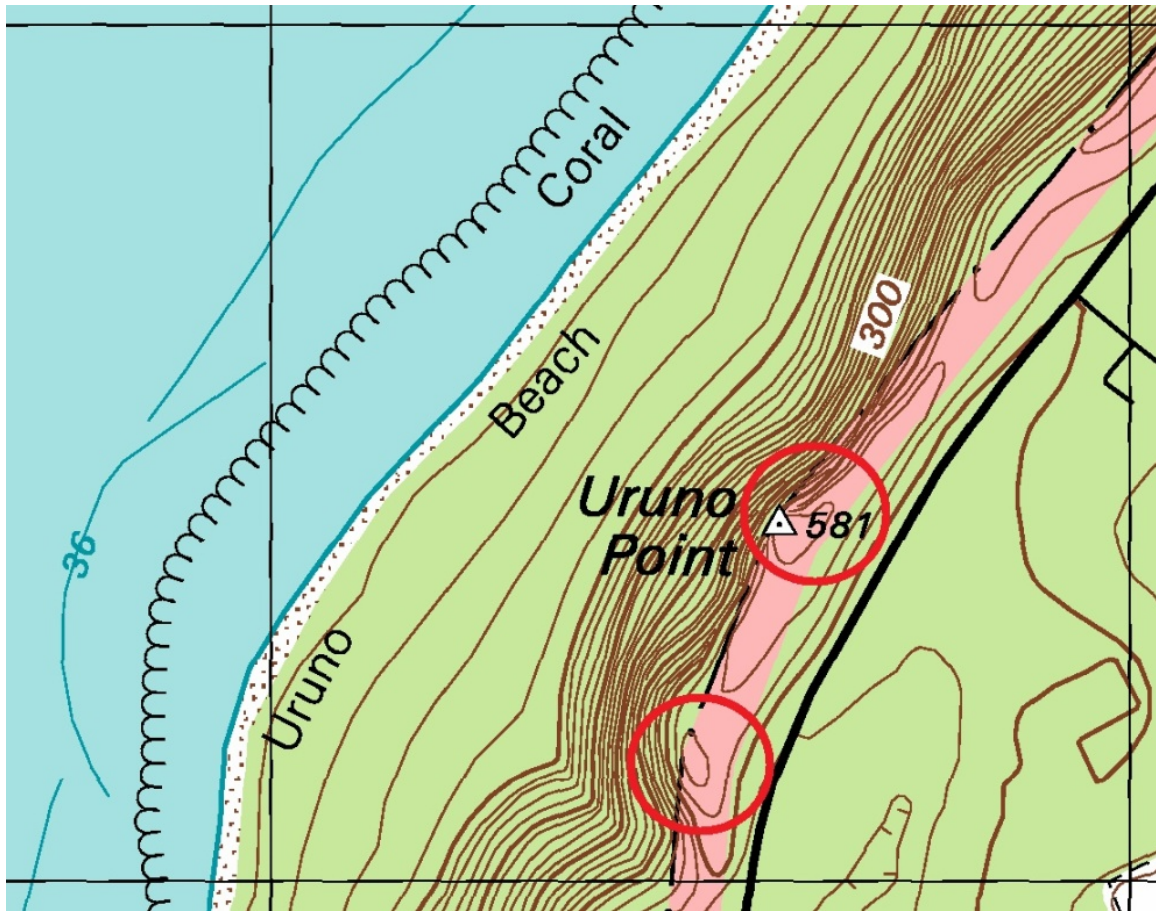
Stone Structure at Bijia Point. Ground Level. May 31, 2013.



U.S. Army Marker, 1949. Top of the cliff at Bijia Point.

Vigia de Fasonan

As in Ajayan bay, the possibility of anchoring in Fasonan/Falcona point represented both an advantage and a threat for the colonial government. It was the site of illegal migrations and daring escapes of political prisoners during the turbulent 1870's, and it should be remembered as the location of the historic capture by Chamorro soldiers of the Guam's colonial militia of blackbirder and pirate William "Bully" Hayes. The potential use of Falcona by enemy landing forces was a danger to be foreseen in 1832, hence the decision of Governor Villalobos to establish a lookout point there. A possible location of this Vigía is given in the accompanying map. Existence of any remnants remains unverified.



Vigia de Fasonan. Possible sites.

Vigía de Ritidian and Vigía de Tarrague

This area of Guam was somewhat relevant for the colonial government between 1668 and 1815.²⁰ The Vigía de Ritidian may have served as a lookout point and as a signaling station, much like the Vigía de Pago. It was mentioned as such by author Robert Rogers in his *Destiny's Landfall*, the best general history of Guam written to date. Rogers mentions a Royal Order from June 1668, regarding the lighting of an all-night fire in the highest point of Rota and in Mount Machanao.²¹ In the process of this research I have been unable to locate this Royal Order, which is not in the RFT-MARC collection of Spanish Documents, nor in the 20 volume compilation of documents about Micronesia by Rodrigue Lévesque. The most likely source for that statement is the 1959 book *The Manila Galleon*, by William Lytle Schurz, who refers to the exact same information but makes no reference whatsoever to Mount Machanao nor to any specific location.²² It is hard to believe that the original text of a 1668 Royal Order made reference to Mount Machanao, or to any other location for that regard, given the fact that by then the Spanish knew little to nothing about the territory. The actual Royal Order, likely signed years later, might have just mandated a fire to be lit in the highest and most visible locations of both islands. That is in fact how 18th century travelers would refer to it: "...there are orders given, that through all the month of June, fires shall be lighted every night on the highest part of Guam and Rota, and kept in till the morning".²³ Back then the highest point of Guam was believed to be Mount Santa Rosa. The Rotanese counterpart could have been at the top of Mount Taipingot, or in the area known as As Manila, which means "place of light" in Chamorro.²⁴

Nonetheless, if fires were lit somewhere in Ritidian after the times of the Galleon trade, it seems very plausible that they were lit in Mount Machanao, the highest point on top of the Ritidian cliff. As far as this research has determined, the first lookout point in Ritidian dates from 1832, when Governor Villalobos established it, and Mount Machanao is the most likely location. He advised about monitoring the trail descending to Ritidian in order to counterattack enemy troops, and taking into account that the old trail descending to the beach was very close to Mount Machanao, the Vigía of Ritidian must have been located there.

As for Tarrague, the same purpose of preventing a surprise attack on Guam by enemy forces was mentioned. Tarrague was among the most isolated places of Guam, with the closest seat of any authority being the farm of Santa Rosa, about 7.5 kilometers southeast. Monitoring Tarrague could have been done by granting land to farmers who would reside there on a permanent basis, and/or by placing a lookout point on top of the cliff, in the approximate area suggested in the image. The exact location of both Vigías, Ritidian and Tarrague, and the possible existence of surface remnants remains to be verified in the field.

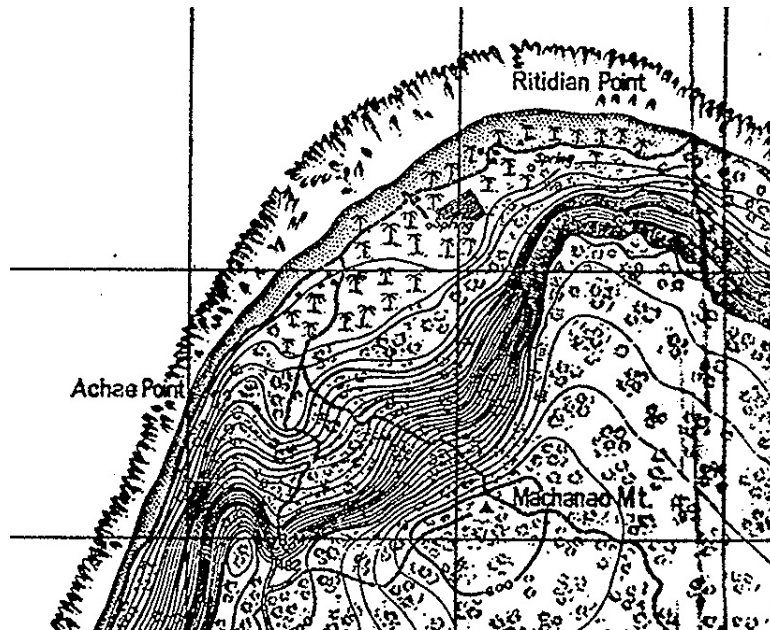
²⁰ For an overview on Ritidian during the Spanish times, see: Madrid, Carlos (2014), "Ritidian and Songsong Across de Rota Channel. Historic Significance and Culture of Historic Preservation". Mike Carson (coord.), *British Archaeological Reports, International Series*. Oxford Archaeopress. (in press).

²¹ Rogers, Robert (2011), *Destiny's Landfall. A Complete History of Guam*. University of Hawai'i Press. P. 47.

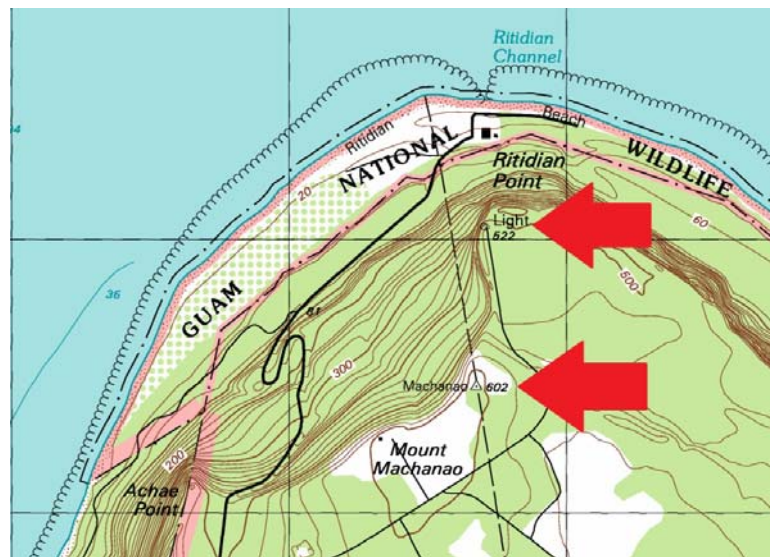
²² Schurz, William Lytle (1959), *The Manila Galleon*. E.P. Dutton & Co. New York. P. 248.

²³ VV.AA. (1759), *The Modern Part of an Universal History: From the Earliest Account of Time*. Vol IX. London. P. 479. The author cites Fernández de Navarrete and Gemelli Carreri as sources for this statement.

²⁴ The author expresses his gratitude to Mr. Victor Robert Hara Torres for this reference.



As this excerpt of the 1914 US Navy Map of Guam shows, the old trail descending to Ritidian was very close to Mount Machanao. A minor path passed by there.



Vigía de Ritidian. Possible sites.

Vigía



Vigía de Tarrague. Possible site.



As Manila, in Rota. The place of light. Photo courtesy of Rosanna Barcinas.

Santa Rosa or La Atalaya

Two Santa Rosa places appear in the 1852 map of Guam by Francisco Coello: a peak, and a mount. Why? Coello used the map of Freycinet of 1819 and the map of Villalobos in 1832 as his main sources. Freycinet committed an unfortunate miscalculation in placing Santa Rosa further north and west than where it actually is, whereas Villalobos placed it closer to its real location. Francisco Coello, working from his office in Madrid, unable to determine who was right and who was wrong, decided to keep both references. Interestingly enough, his map provides an alternative name for Santa Rosa: La Atalaya.

It has already been mentioned (footnote 1) how the words Vigía and Atalaya are synonyms, "eminence or height from which a significant area of land or sea can be seen." Given the height of Santa Rosa and its location, adjacent to the west coast of the island, a fire on its summit would have been very well seen by the crew of the Galleons which were coming from that direction. Santa Rosa was undoubtedly the most important of all the Vigías of Guam. The adjacent farm or Estancia de Santa Rosa, must have granted access to human resources as well as to the maintenance and care of the lookout point. Interestingly enough, a toponym related to that farm has survived to this day: Gayinero. It indicates the location of the extensive hen farm that was part of the Estancia de Santa Rosa. Access to the summit of Santa Rosa is currently restricted. The site was completely altered in the second half of the 20th century with the construction of a Communication Facility and it is highly unlikely any remnants were left.

Vigía



Possible location of the Atalaya of Santa Rosa.



La Atalaya, at Santa Rosa Peak. Detail of the 1852 Coello Map.

Vigía de Agaña. Almacén de Pólvora

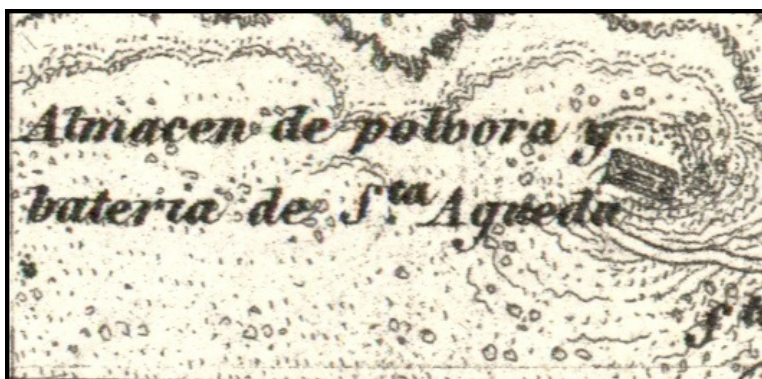
The Powder Magazine was located at Fort Santa Águeda, as can be seen in the image. This fort was in a relatively good state in the 1870's when Gustav Adolph Riemer took the first known photographs of Agaña.²⁵ Without any defensive purpose, Santa Águeda remained in full service as a lookout point until 1898. In the last decades of the 19th century the facilities in Agaña were much better than in previous eras. The city of Agaña had Chamorro and Spanish military battalions, whose soldiers, among other responsibilities, had to serve as sentinels monitoring the ocean, with a code of signals in place and a set of flags at their disposal. The sentinel was to raise the corresponding flag, indicating the nationality of the approaching vessel.

It was the sentinel stationed in Fort Santa Águeda who first informed the City of Agaña about the arrival of the *USS Charleston*, which can be read in the unpublished manuscript memories of the wife of a Spanish doctor in Guam:

One day, July 21st of 1898, at dawn, the signal of the sentinel whose stall was in a mount where a large portion of the ocean could be seen, showed the signal that a steam ship was in sight. The merchant sail ships that occasionally arrived there looking for copra (dry coconut for oil and few other uses) were indicated with a different signal.

It was an awakening in happiness, since we figured it was the anticipated Spanish mail ship, but when we rashly got up and looked out from the balcony, our disappointment was huge. The sentinel had raised the North-American flag, which indicated where was the ship from. (...) Because of the novelty, people of the town went up where the sentinel was, and they came back saying that they were four large steamships..."²⁶

Even though the author did not refer to Fort Santa Águeda by that name, the only location high enough to get a good sight of the ocean, but close enough to see its flag from a balcony in Agaña, and for the people to go up and return shortly after, is Fort Santa Águeda, in Apugan. The fort is the Vigía also referred to by Govenor Villalobos in 1832.



Detail of the Coello Map, 1852. Fort Santa Agueda and the Powder Magazine where one and the same.

²⁵ For some of those images, see Madrid, Carlos (2006), *Beyond Distances. Governance, Politics and Deportation in the Marianas. 1870-1877*. NMI Council for the Humanities. Northern Mariana Islands.

²⁶ Madrid, Carlos (2015), *The Memories of Maria Isabel Abarrategui*. Upcoming paper. Original in possession of the author.

Vigía de Pago

Considering its recurrence in historic maps, the *Vigía de Pago* must have been a significant one: it appears in the 1832, 1852 and 1887 maps. In fact, a seemingly lookout point exists in that location to this day. In the course of this research, a flat platform made of piled stones without any visible masonry, was identified as such by the author of this paper with Mr. Adrian Cruz from Mangilao. It is located in Yoña, in the highest point of the hill overlooking Pago Bay on May 29, 2013. The platform is located a few meters north of the abandoned house known as the “Old Bordallo house”, a house that was originally built by the Eustaquio family, former owners of the land, years after World War II.

Documentary reference about this vigía has been found in Spanish records. In 1720, on behalf of the inhabitants of Pago, the Spanish Jesuit missionaries presented to the Crown an official complaint. Their complaint referred to 1709:

... every year there were twelve sentinels, to watch for the galleon that passes regularly in its return from Acapulco, from May 18th to June 20th, until they find it, which usually happens with little difference in mid-June, and when the said ship does not arrive, [they had to watch] until the end of the same month. And they have not been given neither foodstuff nor payment, but only some pants or shirts as reward to whoever was the first to detect the galleon. For this, it is ought five pesos at least to both of them, for foodstuff and payment each year, which multiplied by the eleven years that the said government lasted, sums 55 pesos.²⁷

Were these sentinels villagers from Pago conducting their service elsewhere? Or were the sentinels watching in the *Vigía de Pago*? While this last possibility seems more plausible, the definite answer to this question remains unclear.

This Vigía in Yoña is probably the only one that has survived to this day, besides Fort Santa Águeda near Hagatña. Proper archaeological testing of the soil in and around the stone structure could confirm if it was actually used to light a fire on top, thus indicating if one of the galleons was ever sighted from that position. Inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places is strongly recommended due to the overall significance of the Vigía as a tangible testimony of the galleon trade and its relevance for the history of Guam and the Mariana Islands. In fact, that particular hill is uniquely full of historic significance: the area combines tangible remnants of relevance besides its prehistoric use: early Spanish times (the Vigía), the Japanese invasion (ruins of a Japanese battery partly incorporated in the current Bordallo house) and of the late 20th Century Guam (the house itself, where Governor Bordallo spent some time).

²⁷ AGI, Filipinas. Leg. 528. A2. C.2. Manuscript page 123v. *Quejas y ruegos de los siete pueblos de Rota acerca de las vejaciones y trabajos no pagados en el gobierno del señor don Juan Antonio Pimentel, gobernador que fue de estas islas y sus oficiales y alcaldes*. Transcribed by Felicia Plaza. RFT-MARC signature: DU 500 Fil. Leg. 528 A1. c.2. P.191.



Vigía de Pago



This aerial photograph of Pago Bay, taken in 1929, shows a circular feature in the same location than the existing stone structure found in 2013.

Vigía



Vigía de Pago, Dr. Madrid. May 29, 2013



Vigía de Pago. Sides facing South-East

Vigía de Yugam

The only source for this Vigía is the map of Guam by Don Francisco Coello, in 1852. No other documentary reference has been found, nor a reason to install a lookout point in the approximate area where the map places it. It is unclear why Francisco Coello referred to it as

Vigía de Yugam, or what was his source for such name. The location he provides would have been useless for identifying any vessel approaching Guam. It was not listed in the report of Governor Villalobos either.

Something is clear: the name must refer to its proximity to the rivers Ugum and Atate, which were just known as Yugam by the Spanish. But such a location in the map, the middle of the southern part of the island, makes it an unlikely candidate for a lookout point.

It could be that the caption in the map was meant to be read “M. Iicho ó Vigía de Yugam” (Mount Iicho or Vigia of Yugam). If that was the case, then the name clearly referred to the Vigía of Mount Iicho, at Bolaños Peak. One of the springs of the Ugum-Atate rivers is relatively close to Bolaños Peak.

Possible as it may be, that hypothesis is problematic. In the map of Francisco Coello and in two separate lines near a black rectangle that Coello uses to symbolize a structure, the words *Vigía de Yugam* are somehow differentiated from “M. Iicho”. It seems both captions were meant to be read separately, *Vigía de Yugam* on one side, *M. Iicho ó Umata* on the other, and the word *Umata* written in a different line.

In his map, Villalobos drew a brown-colored rectangle in between the Inarajan and Atate-Ugum rivers, implying that there was a light structure made of wood or cane. Francisco Coello followed it closely; using Villalobos’ map as far as roads and trails are concerned. It appears that he interpreted the isolated structure drawn by Villalobos as a *Vigía* since his map includes a black rectangle and a single trail associated to it, close to the words *Vigía de Yugam*. These words do not appear in the maps of Freycinet or Villalobos.

So where did Coello get the name *Vigia de Yugam*? It remains to be studied. Freycinet’s map only includes the name Yugam (spelled *Iwgan*) next to a station point. Lacking further reference, there was still no reason for the colonial authorities to have had a lookout point in the area. It is not mentioned as such in any of the two maps nor in the report of Villalobos.²⁸

If *Vigia de Yugam* was indeed a lookout point, it must have been north of the Inarajan River, but south of the Atate river, somewhere in the vicinity of the area known as Sinagoso in the USEGS map of Guam. The matching of the Villalobos map with Google Earth and the USGS topographic map of Guam produces two most likely candidates for the dubious *Vigia de Yugam*:

1. The 442 feet hill, up north from the Inarajan Falls.
2. The 569 feet hill, north of the spring of the Fintasa river.

Both are located east of the swampy area known as Sinagoso in the USGS map of Guam, and southwest of Dandan. This is in accordance with the location of the wooden structure marked by Villalobos. The hill number 2 is higher than the previous one and closer to the river Ugum, where the Vigía seems to have gotten its name. But it is further away from Inarajan, the likely place of origin for the lookout point sentinels.

The existence of a network of lookout points around Guam during the 18th and 19th centuries is beyond doubt. These lookouts must have been part of the daily life of the Chamorros of the 18th century and up to the 1830’s, who were required to attend to their maintenance, take shifts in scanning the horizon, and gather the timber necessary to light a fire in case of need. Given the complaints made by many 19th century governors of the Marianas about the lack of compliance of the official orders, and the intermittence of their own efforts in implementing the laws, it is possible that most of the Vigías were functioning mainly during the term of Villalobos, until 1837. Most of the Spanish records pertaining to the local affairs of these years were

²⁸An adjacent red annotation that was erased in the Villalobos map read *Paparguan* and was written again elsewhere on the map, close to its actual location. It bears no relation with this puzzle.

Vigía

destroyed in World War II. However, the logbooks where each disposition was briefly summarized have survived and are now part of the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. The existing copies at the RFT-MARC collection of Spanish documents, Item 1 includes the expenses and dispositions taken by Governor Villalobos, but no reference is made to the construction of infrastructures for these Vigías. Either establishing the Vigías implied no significant expense or the expenses were absorbed as part of the Polo (communal work).

As the concern for a possible invasion faded away, and with the Spanish crown having less resources than ever, it is possible yet improbable that even the most industrious governors who followed had all those sentries in service.

To establish if all the *Vigías* were in use on a regular basis, or just intermittently, requires further research. It appears for now that at least the most important of the lookouts - the Vigias of Mount Macajna, and Fort Santa Águeda - remained in continuous use throughout the 19th century.

Other than the elusive *Vigía de Yugam*, the only one that appears in historic cartography is the *Vigía de Pago*, which in turn is the only one of which material remnants surviving to this day have been found. As for the other locations, further field research can confirm the exact site and the possible existence of tangible remnants.



Only reference to the Vigia de Yugam. Coello Map, 1852.



Vigía de Ugum. Approximate locations

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