
Document 1519C

Magellan's last will and testament of 1519

Sources: Original of Magellan's will¹, dated 24 August 1519, in AGI Seville. Summarized in Navarrete's Colección de los viages, iv, p. lxxxix. A full English translation is said to appear in Guillemard's The Life of Ferdinand Magellan (London, 1890), appendix ii, pp. 316-326.

Summary of the testament of Fernando de Magallanes, made at Seville on 24 August 1519

He requests that out of the fifth part that he has, by contract made with the emperor, from the profit of the expedition which was then being made ready for the Moluccas, one-tenth should be taken out and divided into three parts: one of which to be given to the Victoria Convent of the Minor Brothers at Triana², where they should bury him should he die in Seville, and the other two-thirds of the said tenth part to be divided equally between the monastery of Monserrate of Barcelona and the convents of San Francisco of Aranda del Duero and Santo Domingo de las Dueñas in Porto³. That out of the revenue goods that he has in the fleet, and out of the property he owns in Seville, one-fifth should be for the celebration of masses for his soul and for what would seem appropriate to his executors. That the Governorship and Lieutenantship that Their Highnesses have granted him by way of primogeniture of the lands to be discovered, be devolved after his days, by order of regular succession, upon males and females, as

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- 1 This, according to some, is Magellan's second will; however, his so-called first will of 17 December 1504 has been proven a false one, concocted after Magellan's death by people who claimed to be his legal heirs and successors. Indeed, both his wife and son died before even one of Magellan's ships had returned to Spain, and his father-in-law soon died also.
 - 2 Ed. note: A suburb of Seville; actually across the Guadalquivir from Seville, and where many of the preparations for the voyage took place.
 - 3 Ed. note: In Portugal, his normal place of residence.



Magellan's effigy and eulogy in Latin. (Drawn by Thomas Derrick, from "The Effigies Regum" of Crispin de Passe)

follows: 1° upon Rodrigo, his son by his wife Doña Beatriz de Barbosa, who was then 6 months old; 2° upon the child or children whom his wife was expecting; 3° should the above and his lineage fail¹, upon his brother Diego de Sosa, employed in the service of the King of Portugal; 4° upon his sister, Isabel de Magallanes; and passing the lineage horizontally, should his wife outlive him, the owner of the primogeniture is to assist the latter with the fourth part of everything, plus 200 ducats.

He imposes upon all the successors the indispensable condition to call themselves Magallanes, to use the coat of arms of the Magallanes, and to reside and marry in Spain. He also makes a provision so that the 50,000 maravedis of annuity [i.e. life-insured pension plan] on his life and that of his wife contracted for with the India House of Trade, the said wife is to assist his sister Isabel with 5,000 maravedis each year.

Of the rest of his freely-held property, he constitutes as heirs his children born and to be born, and he appoints his father-in-law, Commander Diego de Barbosa, as tutor to them until they reach 18 years of age, with the proviso that the fourth part of the income from the primogeniture be given to Doña Beatriz, another fourth being taken for himself, and with the remaining two to support the children and cover the charges of the governorship. He also appoints as executors the same father-in-law and Doctor Sancho de Matienzo, canon of Seville.

Magellan's coat-of-arms and specimen signature. *He had hoped to pass on his new titles to his son Rodrigo, but he died while still an infant. The motto "Ch[aridade] e fe" means "Charity and Faith".*



1 Ed. note: Something that really happened, because the said lady had a miscarriage and his first-born died in 1521.

