
Makangit Pabintana, a site possibly occupied before the LGM in Northern Palawan, Philippines.

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Abstract

Palawan Island is one of the most likely routes that early modern humans followed to colonise the Philippine archipelago, coming from Sunda. The site of Tabon Cave attests to the fact that human groups were already present in the South of the island as early as 50,000 years ago. What is rather puzzling is that people seem to have been staying in this region for millennia before settling in the North of the Island. Indeed the earliest remains of human activities discovered in the North at the sites of Ille and Pasimbahan date of 16,000-14,000 B.P. . This could be due to the vegetation being sparser in the North during the Late Pleistocene than it was in the South (e.g. Bird et al. 2007). Here we would like to present a site that may challenge the view that humans only lived in the South of Palawan until 16,000 years ago: Makangit Pabintana. The archaeological material found on the surface and in two shallow test pits suggest that this site might have been occupied at an earlier period than Ille and Pasimbahan: stone tools, animal bones, including a possible felid fragment and deer antlers in great number. The antiquity of the site is also suggested by the fact that it does not contain materials from periods later than stone age, which could be explained by a rock fall blocking most of the great mouth.

Keywords: Palawan, early occupation, South vs North, environment, new site

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