

**ERNESTO ROBLES, PETITIONER, VS. HON. DELFIN FL. BATACAN,
HON. CONRADO M. VASQUEZ, HON. JOSE B. JIMENEZ, ATANACIO
GERONIMO AND BENEDICTO GERONIMO, RESPONDENTS.**

G.R. No. L-46978. October 12, 1987

Ponente: CRUZ, J.

Read online (full-text search, related cases, audio case brief): <https://batas.org/library/34a47523db71/>

CRUZ, J.:

The central figure in this case is Severino Geronimo, who worked in the petitioner's land for twenty years until 1969 and died the following year at the age of 86. The central question in this case is the nature of the work he performed and the compensation he was supposed to receive.

After his death, an ejectment suit was filed against his two sons by the petitioner, who claimed they had no right to remain in his land.[1] Benedicto Geronimo did not choose to answer and so was declared in default.[2] The other defendant, Atanacio Geronimo, averred that he was entitled to succeed his father as the petitioner's agricultural tenant in accordance with R.A. No. 1199 and Section 9 of R.A. No. 3844.

The private respondent's position is that his father was an agricultural tenant of the petitioner during the twenty years the former worked in the latter's land. Hence, in accordance with the aforementioned laws, he could remain in the petitioner's land under the same terms and conditions of the original tenancy share arrangement entered into between his father and the petitioner. His share should also be P100.00 more or less per harvest every forty days during the time he continued discharging his father's work as his statutory successor.[3]

The petitioner, for his part, insists that Severino Geronimo was never an agricultural tenant of his but worked merely as a watcher in his land. He did receive the sum of P100.00 every harvest but not as his share therein for that amount was given to him as a reward for his past services. The only work he did was watch over the petitioner's land and make brooms out of the fallen coconut leaves he would gather. He sold these brooms and kept the proceeds for himself without sharing them with the petitioner.[4]

After trial, the Court of Agrarian Relations* rendered judgment recognizing the defendant as the agricultural tenant of the plaintiff and ordering the payment to him of the sum of P12,000.00 as his tenancy share.[5] Not satisfied, the petitioner went to the Court of Appeals,[*][*] which affirmed the challenged decision in toto.[6] The petitioner is now before us and faults the respondent court with grave abuse of discretion for upholding the trial court.

We do not agree that the respondent court erred. On the contrary, we find that its findings are supported by the evidence of record and in accord with the applicable law and doctrine.

Thus, on the nature of the work performed by Severino Geronimo, it quoted with approval the conclusion of the trial court that he "was the tenant on the subject parcel for quite a time and was recognized by Ernesto Robles as such," discharging such tasks as supervising the harvest, cutting down bushes, clearing the land, picking up the fallen nuts, and paying the laborers, like the coconut gatherers and huskers, from his 1/3 share.[7] This was based

on the declarations of several witnesses,[8] including the petitioner himself, and the several documents presented by Atanacio in which his father was described by the petitioner as his "kasama" to whom was being given his "bahagui" or share.[9]

As for the private respondent's right to succeed his father, the respondent court was correct in affirming the ruling of the trial court that, as the son of Severino Geronimo, Atanacio had the right to take over as agricultural tenant in the petitioner's land in accordance with R.A. No. 1199 and R.A. No. 3844.[10] Obviously, Atanacio was the only heir interested in succeeding his father as his brother, Benedicto, had not seen fit to claim his right and in fact defaulted in resisting the petitioner's claims in the ejectment suit. Significantly, when in his prayer the petitioner asks for authority to appoint the said Benedicto to succeed his father, it is presumably as his watcher only and not as agricultural tenant. The petitioner's consistent claim, it should be noted, is that Severino Geronimo was not his tenant but only his watcher.

The Court gave limited due course to this petition to enable the parties to argue on the amount of damages in view of the apparent lack of a credible basis therefor as observed by the trial court.[11] In his memorandum, the petitioner says the basis should be the weight of the coconut harvested and then, consistent with his main thesis, urges that no damages should be awarded at all.[12] The private respondent says that the basis should be the number of nuts harvested and then asks that the damages be doubled.[13] In his reply, realizing probably that the matter may have gotten out of hand, the petitioner now counters that the private respondent cannot claim an increase in the amount of damages because he has not, providentially, appealed the same.[14] This is correct and estops the private respondent.

In *La Mallorca v. Court of Appeals*,[15] the Court said:

"The increase of the award of damages from P3,000.00 to P6,000.00 by the Court of Appeals, however, cannot be sustained. Generally, the Appellate Court can only pass upon and consider questions or issues raised and argued in appellant's brief. Plaintiff did not appeal from that portion of judgment of the trial court awarding them damages. Neither does it appear that, as appellees to the Court of Appeals, plaintiffs have pointed out in their brief inadequacy of the award or that the inclusion of the figure P3,000.00 was merely a clerical error, in order that the matter may be treated as an exception to the general rule. Thus, the Court of Appeals committed error in raising the amount for damages."

In *Dy v. Kuizon*,[16] we declared:

"It is a well-settled rule in this jurisdiction that whenever an appeal is taken in a civil case, an appellee who has not himself appealed cannot obtain from the appellate court any affirmative relief other than the ones granted in the decision of the court below. An appellee who is not appellant may assign errors in his brief where his purpose is to maintain the judgment on other grounds, but he may not do so if his purpose is to have the judgment modified or reversed for, in such a case, he must appeal. Here, the respondent did not appeal and so it was error for the Court of Appeals to award him a relief not granted by the lower court."

In *Madrideo v. Hon. Court of Appeals*,[17] our ruling was:

"x x x whenever an appeal is taken in a civil case, an appellee who has not appealed cannot obtain from the appellate court any affirmative relief other than the ones granted in the decision of the court below."

The latest decision on this matter is *Aguilar v. Chan*,[18] where the Court noted that although the actual damages suffered by the plaintiff-appellee exceeded the amount awarded to her by the lower court, this amount could not be increased because she had not appealed.

The trial court had the opportunity to assess the evidence first-hand and so was in the best position to determine the factual relationship between the parties as well as the share to which the private respondent was entitled. We

do not find that the respondent court committed grave abuse of discretion in affirming the decision of the court a quo and see no reason to reverse it. We too affirm.

WHEREFORE, the petition is DENIED, with costs against the petitioner. This decision is immediately executory.

SO ORDERED.

Teehankee, C.J., Narvasa, and Paras, JJ., concur.
Gancayco, J., on leave.

[1] Rollo, p. 28.

[2] Ibid., p. 29.

[3] Id., p. 58.

[4] Id., p. 8.

* Judge Antonio O. Yatco, Ninth Regional District, Branch I, Lucena City.

[5] Id., p. 109.

[6] Id., pp. 28-37.

[7] Id., pp. 101-103.

[8] Id.; Agapito Laylo, Benedicto Geronimo, and Atanacio Geronimo.

[9] Rollo, pp. 102-103; Exhs. "3" and "4".

** Justices Delfin Fl. Batacan, ponente, Conrado N. Vasquez, and Jose S. Jimenez.

[10] Ibid., pp. 33-35.

[11] Id., p. 60.

[12] Id., pp. 56-58.

[13] Id., pp. 70-75.

[14] Id., p. 58.

[15] 17 SCRA 739.

[16] 3 SCRA 617.

[17] 137 SCRA 617.

[18] 144 SCRA 673.

ABOUT BATAS.ORG

Study smarter at BATAS.org

The Philippine bar review and law-school companion built around how your brain actually remembers.

The complete Philippine law library - free for everyone.

More than 100,000 Supreme Court decisions, Republic Acts, and executive issuances - full-text searchable, browsable by category and year, and always free. No paywall, no login. This PDF came from it.

Audio case-brief lectures.

Any decision becomes a podcast-style lecture - facts, issues, ruling, and doctrine - with read-along highlighting and a hands-free presentation mode. Study while commuting, working out, or resting your eyes.

Bar review built on the science of memory.

Complete, sequenced courses for all eight bar subjects, narrated like podcasts and reinforced with retrieval practice and spaced review - the study techniques with the strongest evidence behind them.

The full law-school curriculum.

One subscription unlocks the entire J.D. curriculum - every subject, every lesson, with your progress tracked down to the paragraph so you can pick up exactly where you left off, on any device.

Mock exams that tell you where you stand.

Timed multiple-choice exams graded instantly, with per-subject score breakdowns and focus suggestions that point you at your weakest topics first.

A study planner that keeps you on pace.

Set your schedule and BATAS tells you every day whether you are on track for bar day - and exactly which lesson to take next.

Start free at <https://batas.org>

The law library is free forever - and your first lesson is one click away.

The text of this document is an official public record and remains in the public domain. Formatting, presentation, and compilation © 2026 batas.org.

Downloaded free from the batas.org Law Library. Share it freely - the library is free for every law student, bar reviewee, and practitioner.