

The Marian Invocation of the Rosary in the Spanish Moluccas

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Abstract: This article provides an overview of the development of the Marian invocation of the Rosary in the southern periphery of the Philippines in the 17th century. In its various manifestations such as the foundation of brotherhoods, daily religiosity through quotidian prayer or protective dedication in hostile territories, the figure of the Virgin of the Rosary was of outstanding importance in the Moluccas Islands and in other regions of present-day Indonesia. During the Spanish sovereignty in these islands (1606-1663), in the Spanish capital of this territory, the city of Rosario, the prayer and worship of Our Lady of the Rosary was a key element to understand the religiosity developed in this territory.

Keywords: Brotherhood, Dominicans, Iloilo, Moluccas, Ternate, Rosario, Siau

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The origin of the dedication of the Rosary and its development in Europe in the 15th and 16th centuries

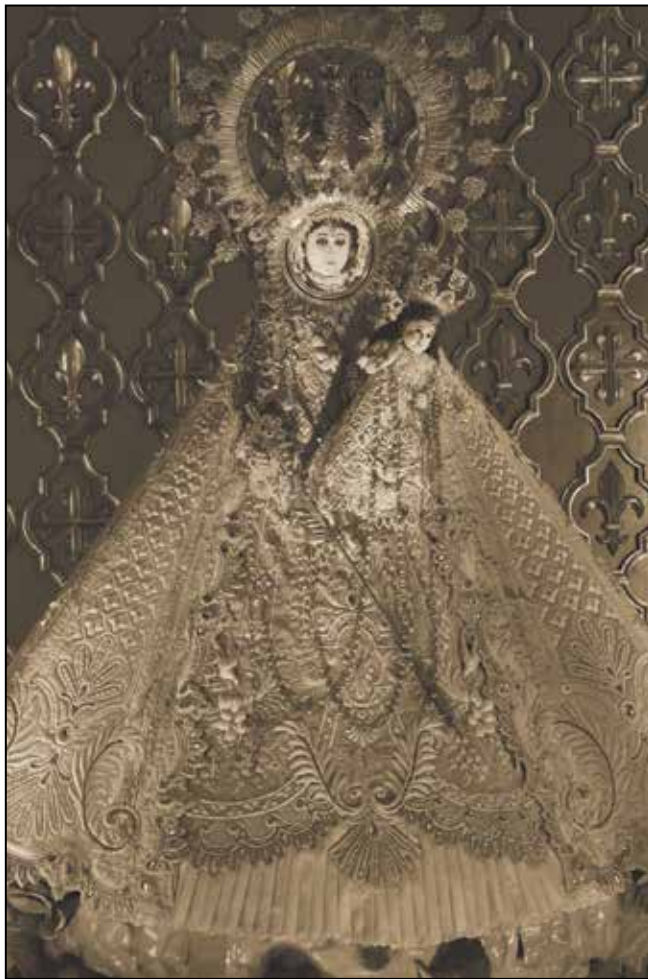
The appearance of the Virgin Mary, carrying a rosary in her hands, to Domingo de Guzmán in 1208 in the monastery of Prouille (Prouille, in the south of France), marked the beginning of an important Marian tradition. The invocation of Our Lady of the Rosary was widely spread and consolidated throughout Europe during the fifteenth century (due to the foundation of brotherhoods and the Rosary's prayer) thanks to the work of two Dominicans: Fray Jacob Sprenger (founder in 1475 of the first brotherhood of the Rosary in the city of Cologne with papal approval and support thanks to the license granted by Pope Sixtus VI) and Fray Alano de la Roca or Alano de Rupe (the great promoter of the prayer of the Rosary, *Psalterium Mariae Virginias*). Between the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century, under the influence of what was done in Cologne, the first brotherhoods dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary were also founded in Spain. The institution of the brotherhoods of Seville in 1480, Barcelona in 1488, Burgos in 1498, and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in 1530² are a good example of the wide diffusion of these institutions, as well as the recitation of the Rosary, since the end of the 15th century. Through the Dominicans, the brotherhoods soon arrived in America. Several of them were founded within the Dominican convents of the main American cities: in 1538 the first was founded in Mexico, which was succeeded by new brotherhoods in subsequent decades (Lima 1554, Bogota 1558, Guatemala 1559, Quito 1563, Santiago of Chile 1574 and Buenos Aires in 1586).³

During the second half of the 16th century, the victory of the *Holy League* against the Ottoman fleet in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571, when the Catholic fleet entrusted itself to the Virgin before the battle by praying the Rosary, gave this Marian dedication another big boost. The decision of Pope Pius V to give to the Virgin the title of "Help of Christians" or "Our Lady of Victory" and the subsequent decision of Pope Gregory XIII to grant her the definitive title of "Our Lady of the Rosary" meant that, since that moment, the practice of the Rosary become more popular and the dedication to the Rosary would also be extended as a patron saint to several military institutions and, in addition, it would enjoy great fervor in different Spanish territories, including those belonging to the distant Philippine Islands.

² Carlos José Romero Mensaque, "Los comienzos del fenómeno rosariano en la España moderna. La etapa fundacional, siglos XV Y XVI," *Hispania sacra*, 66/2 (2014): 259.

³ Fermín Labarga García, "Historia del culto y devoción en torno al Santo Rosario," *Scripta theologica: revista de la Facultad de Teología de la Universidad de Navarra*, 35/1 (2003): 161-166.

To the south of the Philippines were the Moluccas Islands, the famous land of the clove, a territory far from Manila which in the 17th century (from 1606 to 1663) constituted the southern border of the Spanish territories in Asia. The loss of sovereignty over these islands, after the dismantling of the forts and the return of the Spanish soldiers to Manila, was the beginning of an oblivion that persists today. However, the Spanish past in the Moluccas was an intense period lasting almost six decades that deserves to be recovered. The Spanish society of the Moluccas, as well as the situation of the Spanish soldiers, is hardly known. Within this daily life, religiosity played an important role and, more specifically, the devotion and worship of the Virgin of the Rosary constituted one of its fundamental pillars.



Our Lady of the Rosary of La Naval de Manila, Santo Domingo Church, Quezon City. Photo Fr. Lawrence Lew, O.P.

Its introduction and diffusion in the Philippines

The arrival of the Order of Preachers (also known as the Dominicans) in the Philippines, although it is true that it was a great boost for the dedication to the Virgin of the Rosary in the islands, did not mark the beginning of her cult in the islands. Prior to the arrival of the first Dominican delegation in 1587, there was an important precedent with the designation in 1579 of the Dominican Domingo de Salazar as bishop of Manila (a year earlier Pope Gregory XIII had created the diocese of Manila after separating it from that of Mexico). During his stay in Mexico, and before his arrival in the Philippines in September 1581, Domingo de Salazar commissioned his companion of the Order, Juan Crisóstomo, to travel to Spain and Italy (Rome) to organize what would be the first Dominican mission in the Philippines. Juan de Crisóstomo did so, and, years later, in 1586, the first mission left Cádiz to Manila with the aim of founding the Province of the Holy Rosary, the first and new province of the Order in the Philippines.

As expected, Bishop Salazar's reception of the Dominican mission was very positive. It didn't take long to find a location for them so they could locate their new headquarters. On August 16, 1587, Bishop Salazar founded, on the banks of the Pasig River, the church and convent of Santo Domingo under the invocation of Our Lady of the Rosary, whose name, as we have said, was used to designate the new Dominican province in this territory.

The Virgin of the Rosary of Manila

The Dominican church founded in Manila from the beginning also housed a carving of the Virgin of the Rosary made of wood that the Dominicans had brought from Mexico. When two years after its inauguration the precarious wooden structure of the church collapsed, the image of the Virgin suffered no damage. This fact, which was taken as exceptional, marked the beginning of a strong bond between the city and the Virgin that would never be abandoned.⁴

The Governor of the Philippines, Luis Pérez Dasmariñas (position held on an interim basis due to the death in 1593 of his father Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas, assassinated by Chinese oarsmen from his galley when he was on his way to the conquest of Ternate), gave a new image of the Virgin made in ivory by a Chinese

⁴ Juan Ferrando, *Hª de los PP Dominicos en las Islas Filipinas y en sus misiones del Japón, China, Tung-Kin y Formosa* (Madrid: Imprenta de M. Rivadeneyra, 1870), Tomo I, 240.

craftsman under the tutelage of Captain Hernando de los Ríos Coronel.⁵ This soldier (and future priest) was in charge of directing and guiding the Chinese craftsman in how the representation should be. Luis Pérez Dasmariñas, like his father, had a great connection and affinity with the Dominicans of Manila, especially with Fray Bernardo Navarro (or Santa Catalina). At the end of his interim government he resided until his death (in 1603 he was a victim of the rebellion of the city's Chinese community) in the house that the Dominicans had in Mindonog (present-day Binondo), on the outskirts of Manila.⁶

Governor Dasmariñas therefore commissioned a new image of the Virgen del Rosario that was preserved inside the new church made of stone on the same place where the first one was located. The great fire of 1603 that devastated a large part of Manila, including the Dominican church, spared the image of the Virgin.⁷ The carving, due to its beauty and uniqueness, became a benchmark in the Philippines and a symbol of the Catholic spirit and the resistance of the capital before the great problems that plagued Manila. The 1645 earthquake, which caused the destruction of the central vault of the church, did not affect the image of the Virgin either. A year later, recalling what happened in the previous century in Lepanto, the attacks of the Dutch fleets on Manila Bay could also be successfully defended. It was the origin of the famous "Naval de Manila," the solemn procession that the residents of Manila carry out every year to thank the Virgin for her protection during the attack of a large Dutch fleet on the Spanish capital of the Philippines.

During the 19th century, the great earthquake of 1863 that destroyed the entire church also made it possible to rescue and preserve the figure of the Virgin, although with great loss of some of its ornamental accessories.⁸ The events of the 20th century also caused various transfers of the image. In 1941, during World War II, it was moved from the Santo Domingo church to the Santo Tomás University to protect it from Japanese bombing. To this day, and since 1954, the image is kept in the church of the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary in Quezon City, from where the importance of Rosario's cult in the Philippines is safeguarded and highlighted.

⁵ Francisco Gainza, OP, *Milagros y Noven Santísima Virgen del Rosario* (Manila: Imprenta del Colegio de Sto. Tomás, 1885), Int. 9; Ferrando, *Hª de los PP Dominicos*, 244.

⁶ Francisco Colín, SJ, *Labor Evangélica, Ministerios Apostólicos de los Obreros de la Compañía de Jesús, Fundación y progreso de su provincia en las Islas Filipinas* (Madrid: Fernández de Buendía, 1663), Libro III. 529.

⁷ Diego Francisco Aduarte, OP, *Historia de la provincia del Sancto Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Philipinas, Iapon y China...*, (Zaragoza: Domingo Gascón, 1693), Libro I. 33.

⁸ Mariano Rodríguez, *Reseña histórica de la milagrosa imagen de la Virgen del Rosario que se venera en el templo de Santo Domingo de Manila* (Manila: Tipografía de Santo Tomás, 1907), 33-36.

The Brotherhood of the Rosary in Manila

As mentioned before, the importance of Our Lady of the Rosary in the Philippines dates back to the beginning of the Spanish presence in these islands and even before the arrival of the first Dominican mission to Asia and that was due to the establishment of a brotherhood dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary. The existence of a first brotherhood of the Rosary is already verified, through the wills of some prominent military men, before the Dominican arrival in 1587. The existence of a first Rosario institution is documented a decade earlier, in 1577, being its headquarters located in the San Pedro de Manila church.⁹ Even outside this brotherhood, in the daily life of the first Spanish citizens of Manila, the existence of various associations to the cult and the practice of praying the Rosary is recorded within the first Jesuit or Augustinian churches that were built in the Philippine capital.

However, it is necessary to wait until August 22, 1594 for the official establishment of the brotherhood of the Rosary in Manila through the celebration of a council in which the official ordinances of the institution were established.¹⁰ The current image of the Virgin is also linked to this foundation, because this brotherhood decided that it should replace the previous one made of wood.¹¹ With the cult of the Rosary consolidated in Manila, the Spanish government of the Philippines wanted to incorporate new territories, and similar to what happened in Lepanto, that meant having to fight against armed muslim forces. To face them successfully, the Spanish soldiers did not hesitate to resort to the protection of Our Lady of the Rosary.

The importance of the Virgin of the Rosary in the Moluccas

The Moluccas, the famous Clove Islands, located in the south of the Philippines, were the scene of violent disputes between the Portuguese and Spanish for their control since the first decades of the 16th century. The Portuguese arrival from India in 1512 was responded to by the Spanish from the other side of the world,

⁹ Antonio García-Abásolo, "Cofradías y hospitales en Filipinas (siglos XVI-XVIII)," in *Devoción, paisaje e identidad, en las cofradías y congregaciones de naturales de España y América (siglos XVI-XVIII)*, edited by Óscar Álvarez Gila, Alberto Angulo Morales & Jon A. Ramos Martínez (Vitoria: Universidad del País Vasco, 2014), 62.

¹⁰ Carlos José Romero Mensaque, "Los comienzos de la Cofradía de Nuestra Señora del Rosario de Manila (1594-1650). Notas históricas de una institución colonial de la Orden de Predicadores," *Archivo Dominicano: Anuario*, 37, *Ejemplar dedicado a: VIIIº Centenario de la aprobación pontificia de la Orden (1216-2016)* (2016): 394-396.

¹¹ Regalado Trota José, "Imaging Our Lady in Sixteenth-century Manila: Nuestra Señora del Rosario de La Naval," *Diagonal: Journal of the Center for Iberian and Latin American Music* (2008): 2 (Proceedings of the Conference "Rediscovering a Hispanic Nation: The Fine and Performing Arts in the Philippine Islands before the Invasion of 1898," University of California, Riverside).

through the expeditionaries commanded by Juan Sebastián Elcano who, after making the first crossing of the Pacific, managed to reach the Spice Islands in 1521. The problems and disagreements that arose around the establishment of the antimeridian fixed in the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494 caused the Spanish and the Portuguese to fight in the Moluccas. Finally, the Clove Islands remained in the power of Portugal. The signing of the Treaty of Zaragoza in 1529 did Carlos I cede his rights in favor of his Portuguese counterpart and the islands remained under Portuguese sovereignty.

After the failure of their first experience in Asia, the Spanish had to place their Asian ambitions in another archipelago. A goal that they achieved decades later, in 1565, due to the López de Legazpi expedition to the present-day Philippines. While the Spanish were consolidating around Luzon, further south, the Portuguese had great difficulty in sustaining the push of the Moluccan sultanates. The military rebellion of the Ternate sultanate made that, after a long siege of five years, the Portuguese were expelled in 1575 from their island, the main island of the Moluccas, where the Portuguese had established their capital. From the Iberian Peninsula the events were closely followed. With Philip II (1580-1581) wearing the two crowns (Spanish and Portuguese) under his person, it was time to be able to recover the Clove Islands, although this time it would not be done from Goa or Malacca, the operation had to be done from the Philippines. It was not an easy goal: the distance from Manila and the strong local opposition caused up to five Spanish conquest expeditions to fail (Juan de Ronquillo in 1582, Pedro de Sarmiento in 1584, Juan de Morón in 1585, Gómez Pérez Dasmariñas in 1593, and Juan Juárez de Gallinato in 1603). To recover the Moluccas, it was necessary to launch one of the largest military expeditions in Asia. Also, to make the task difficult, a new threat appeared in this territory. At the beginning of the 17th century, for the first time, Dutch ships visited the islands. The risk that the European enemy seized them was very high. From Spain, Philip III decided that reinforcements should be sent from the Iberian Peninsula and from Mexico in order not to fail again.

The crucial stopover in Panay

From Spain, the news of the difficulties to prevail in the Moluccas was received with big concern, even more so when, as we have said, for the first time ships from various Dutch commercial companies began to visit the islands and managed to sign agreements with the Sultan of Ternate. The islands had the risk of falling into the hands of the European enemy if they did not act quickly. To achieve the objective, Pedro Bravo de Acuña, from Palencia, a person with great experience and military

worth, commander of the Order of San Juan and veteran of Lepanto, was appointed as governor of the Philippines. Before leaving for his destination, he was commissioned to solve the problem of spice trade control. After a few years in Manila, he managed to gather, with reinforcements from Spain and Mexico, the largest Spanish military expedition carried out to date in Asia. To guarantee the capture of Ternate, he did not hesitate to personally lead an expedition made up of more than 3,000 people (3,095 members, of whom 1,623 were Spanish, embarked on 36 ships)¹² which, as was done in Lepanto, was entrusted to Our Lady of the Rosary to achieve the goal.

The island of Panay, in the Central Visayas, halfway between Luzon and the Moluccas, was the meeting point of this large fleet. For several months, between the end of 1605 and the beginning of 1606, the neighboring towns of Otón and Iloilo saw the arrival of numerous ships that were to take part in the conquest of Ternate. In the preparations for the conquest, Our Lady of the Rosary played an important role. During the stay in Panay, while the regrouping of the entire fleet was taking place, the Brotherhood of the Rosary was founded. Gathered in the town of Otón, the governor Pedro Bravo de Acuña, the sergeant major Cristóbal de Azcueta, and the bishop of Cebu, Pedro de Agurto, decided to found this brotherhood. The main motivation for its foundation was to ask for protection and ensure the important military undertaking that they had to face in the coming weeks. The governor ordered the image of Our Lady of the Rosary to be embroidered on the royal banner and was included as its first member of the institution (Juan de Esquibel, *maestro de campo*, the highest military authority after the governor, was the second). In this way the brotherhood of the Rosary of the city of Iloilo was founded (near the town of Arevalo, one of the first Spanish settlements, together with Otón, founded on the island of Panay¹³). It was not the only link between Our Lady of the Rosary and Iloilo. A decade later, with the conquest of Ternate assured and the Spanish settled in the Moluccas, Iloilo became a strategic enclave for the maintenance of the southern islands. From this locality, all the Philippine supplies that had to be sent to the forts of the Moluccas were collected and centralized. The Dutch, aware of its strategic importance, did not take long to place this town among their objectives. On September 29, 1616, a Dutch fleet of 10 ships from the Moluccas attacked Iloilo. The attack was repelled due to the actions of Captain Diego de Quiñones, who, outnumbered (with just a garrison of 70 soldiers, was able to repel the landing of a force of 500 men) obtained one of the

¹² Archivo General de Indias (onwards AGI), PATRONATO, 47, R.3. Relación de buques, gentes, bastimentos, conquista Terrenate.

¹³ Henry F. Funtecha, "The making of a 'Queen City': the case of Iloilo 1890s-1930s," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 20. 2/3 (1992): 110. After being destroyed in 1614 by a Dutch attack, Arevalo was not rebuilt and Iloilo assumed its role.

most meritorious victories in Spanish history in Asia.¹⁴ Our Lady of the Rosary did not remain out of this event. The fortress founded as a result of the Dutch attacks also received the name of *N^a S^a del Rosario* (current fort of San Pedro de Iloilo), it also had a church inside.¹⁵ This fort also had a close relationship with the Rosario brotherhood founded in 1606, since all the soldiers who served in the fort were part of it and were concerned with its maintenance. A part was deducted from their salaries in order to be able to collect the 200 pesos per year that constituted their annual budget (among these contributions were also included those of the Pampango soldiers of the fort¹⁶). From that moment a link began between Our Lady of the Rosary and the city that continues to the present. Iloilo currently houses another important image of Our Lady of the Rosary. Its origin goes back, according to tradition, to the Dutch attack of 1616 when Captain Diego de Quíñones discovered it while he was preparing the defense against the attack.¹⁷ The image is kept in the church of San Jose Parish Placer Iloilo City, halfway between Ternate and Manila. The invocation of the Rosary as protector of the island of Panay against enemy attacks therefore also had an important devotion.

The City of the Rosary, capital of the Moluccas

During the meeting held in February 1606 in Panay that gave rise to the brotherhood of the Rosary, it was also decided that the first position won in the Moluccas would bear the name of the Virgin and it would found a new brotherhood in it too.¹⁸ Those were complicated times, let us remember that the conquest of the Moluccas was a great challenge to face. It was not an easy undertaking since, as we said before, they had failed in up to five previous expeditions. In the last of them, in 1603, despite having Portuguese help sent from India, the siege had to be lifted due to the local defensive solidity. The enemies were not easy to defeat. The Sultan of Ternate would have obtained support from other Asian kingdoms (Mindanao and Java) besides the collaboration of the first Dutch ships that visited the island. The spirit of Lepanto, that is, the protection of the Virgen del Rosario became essential for the

¹⁴ Fernando Blumentritt, *Filipinas. Ataques de los holandeses en los siglos XVI, XVII y XVIII. Bosquejo histórico* (Madrid: Imprenta de Fontanet, 1882), 30-31.

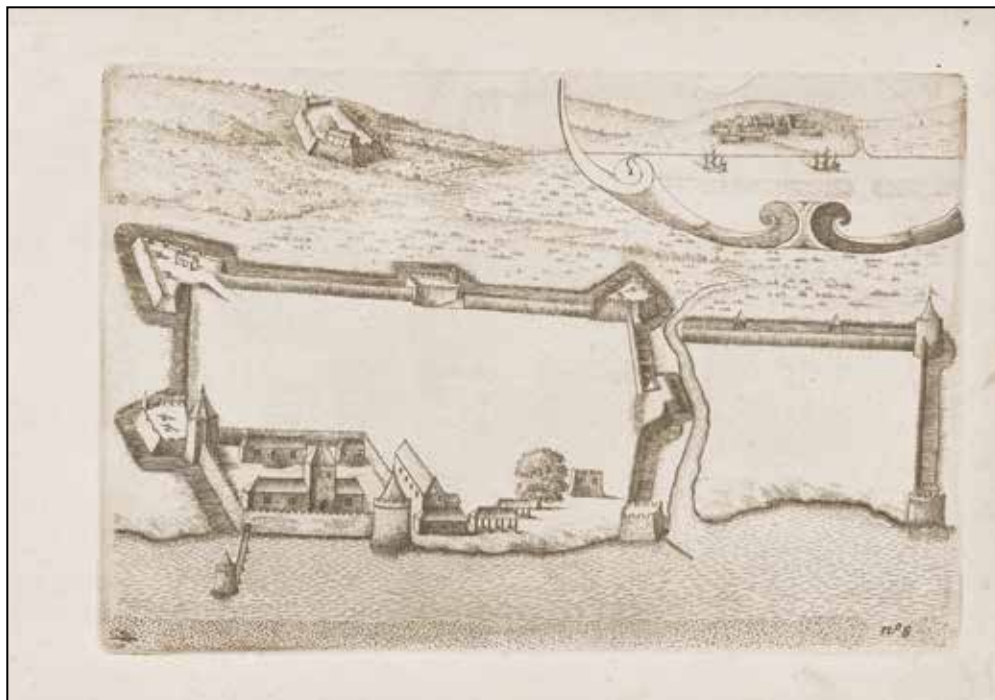
¹⁵ Juan Francisco de San Antonio, OFM, *Chronicas de la apostolica provincia de San Gregorio de Religiosos Descalzos de NSPS Francisco en las Islas Filipinas, China, Japón...*, (Sampaloc: Juan Sotillo, 1738), Parte I, Libro I, 119.

¹⁶ Juan José Delgado, SJ, *H^a general sacroprofana política y religiosa de las islas del Poniente llamadas Filipinas* (Manila: Juan Atayde, 1892), 235-246.

¹⁷ Gaspar de San Agustín, OSA, *Conquistas de las islas Philipinas: la temporal por las armas del señor don Phelipe Segundo el Prudente y la espiritual por los religiosos del Orden de San Agustín...*, Parte Primera (Madrid: Imprenta de Manuel Ruiz de Murga, 1698), 537.

¹⁸ Aduarte, *Historia*, I, 297.

success of the mission. Among the members of the fleet were several former Lepanto veterans. With the Governor Pedro de Acuña, we must highlight the Augustinian, and former soldier (with 20 years in Turkish prison behind him) Antonio Flores, one of the first assailants to overcome the walls and enter into the capital of Ternate.¹⁹



Dutch anonymous engraving of the city of Rosario, capital of the Spanish Moluccas in Isaac Commelin, *Begin ende voortganch, van de Vereenighde Nederlantsche Geoctroyeerde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, published by J. Janssonius, Amsterdam, 1646.

After landing on the nearby island of Tidore (whose sultan, unlike that of Ternate, had not rebelled against the Iberian presence and offered support to the Spanish), at dawn on April 1, 1606, the Spanish troops landed in the main port of Ternate, from where they managed to advance along the coast until they reached the outskirts of the capital to start the assault. A strong attack concentrated on one of the bastions of the wall managed to open a gap in the local defense and allow the troops to enter inside the walls. In just a few hours the capital of the Moluccas fell into Spanish hands. What was feared could be a long siege was reduced to a lightning operation with great military success. The news of the victory surprised Pedro de Acuña praying in the rear area before an image of the Virgin. In gratitude, the next

¹⁹ San Agustín, *Conquistas*, Parte Segunda, 510.

day, the governor erected an altar before which all the members of the expedition passed in procession.²⁰

Although the capital of Ternate was an ancient city with a long history, the Spanish, in fulfillment of the promise made in Panay, decided to rename it. In this way, the old local name of Gamalama or *Gamlama* (Great Town in the local language) or the previous Portuguese name of *Sao João Batista* (named in honor of the saint because the Portuguese fort was founded on June 24, 1522) gave way to the new denomination of the fort or city of the Rosary that, due to the promise made weeks before, was imposed on the festivity of the day of the conquest: Mary of Egypt (in compensation, one of the churches founded in Ternate, the one that corresponded to the Augustinians, was dedicated to Saint Mary of Egypt).²¹ Over time, the fort ended up becoming a great city, with an area of more than 10 hectares whose walls were visited by many inhabitants not only from the Moluccas, but from other more distant regions (including Chinese and Japanese).²² The *ciudad del Rosario* o *Rosario de Terrenate* (city of Rosary or Rosary of Terrenate, so named in Spanish sources) as the Spanish capital of the region became the center of power in the Spanish Moluccas. Several churches were installed within the walled enclosure of the city. The different religious orders present in the Philippines (Jesuits, Franciscans, Augustinians, and Dominicans) also settled in the Moluccas.²³ Each order founded its own church within the new city of Rosario. The Dominicans were represented by Andrés de Santo Domingo who, as a member of the 1606 conquest expedition, founded the Dominican church in the home of a wealthy local aristocrat.²⁴ However, the Dominican experience, unlike the other orders, was short-lived as it was the first order to leave the island. The lack of reinforcements from Manila, the difficulties of the region, and the greater strength of the Jesuits and Franciscans made the decision to return to Manila. It must be remembered that on a religious level, despite the Spanish conquest by the previous tradition, the islands depended on the bishopric of Malacca (and Kochi from 1641, after Malacca was conquered by the VOC). The link with the territories of Portuguese India continued to be in force, however the Portuguese Dominicans of Goa, unlike the Jesuits, barely reached the Moluccas. Their efforts were concentrated on the smaller Sunda islands (Ende and Flores-Larantuka) where they had arrived even before their Spanish companions in the Philippines. In

²⁰ Ferrando, *Hª de los PP Dominicos*, 532.

²¹ San Agustín, *Conquistas*, Parte Segunda, 236.

²² The remains of the city can be visited in the south of the island, in the present village of Kastela.

²³ The Augustinian Recollects arrived in the Philippines for the first time in May 1606, so they were unable to take part in the Ternate conquest expedition that left Manila several months earlier.

²⁴ Bartolomé Leonardo de Argensola, *Conquista de las Islas Malucas al rey Felipe III* (Madrid: Miraguano- Polifemo, 2009), 380.

these islands of southern Indonesia, they founded churches and accompanied the Portuguese soldiers established there in 1562.

The Brotherhood of the Rosary of Ternate

One of the members of the force that assaulted the capital and residence of the Sultan of Ternate, the Sergeant major and future Governor of the Moluccas, Cristóbal de Azcueta Menchaca, confirms that the first mass held in Ternate after the conquest was in honor of Our Lady of the Rosary. On an altar located in the old Ternate mosque, a painting of the Virgin brought from Manila was placed there, where the new main church of the Spanish Moluccas and headquarters of the new brotherhood of the Rosario de las Moluccas was founded.²⁵

This brotherhood founded in Ternate was one of the most important institutions in the Spanish Moluccas. The hostility of the territory, in continuous war with the Ternate rebels and the Dutch soldiers (since 1607, established a few kilometers away²⁶), the scarcity of resources (due to the distance from Manila), and the Spanish numerical inferiority (compared to the local, mostly Muslim) made the brotherhood have an important function of cohesion between the Spanish garrisons of the Moluccas. Its maintenance was possible thanks to the donations of the Spanish soldiers who served in the forts. Every year the administrators of the islands deducted from their salaries (in silver pesos, the famous reals of eight that arrived every year from Manila, and ultimately from Mexico) the corresponding part destined to cover maintenance expenses, such as the purchase of jewelry or ornaments of the Virgin.

The instructions that the Governor of the Philippines, Sebastián Hurtado de Corcuera, gave to the Governor of the Moluccas, Pedro de Mendiola, in Manila on January 8, 1636 before embarking to take office, include guidelines for the regulation of the brotherhood of the Rosary of Ternate.²⁷

²⁵ Rodríguez, *Reseña histórica*, 164.

²⁶ Just one year after the Spanish conquest, a Dutch fleet under the command of Cornelius Matelieff managed to settle on the island and found the Malayo fort, one of its main settlements in Asia until the foundation of Batavia in 1619.

²⁷ AGI, FILIPINAS, 8, R.3, N.32.S. Carta de Corcuera sobre gobernador de Terrenate. Governor Hurtado de Corcuera gave the instructions a few months after arriving in Manila, therefore he was unaware that the brotherhood of the Rosary already existed in the Moluccas.

“the divine cult is administered and celebrated and the soldiers come to confess and take communion every month on their first Sunday to earn the graces and indulgences that the Supreme Pontiffs have granted to this brotherhood, ensuring that the soldiers give each month of each pay a real one more or less as you think and in case of the short salary that they are given as half pay they could not give it every month, you will agree with them what they want to give each year of what His Majesty still owes them, although it will be better that they give him the same half pay as is used in Flanders, and

«se administre y celebre el culto divino y acudan los soldados a confesar y comulgar todos los meses en el primer domingo de ellos por ganar las gracias e indulgencias que los Sumos Pontífices han concedido a esta cofradía procurando que los soldados den cada mes de cada paga una real más o menos como os pareciera y caso por el corto sueldo que se le da de media paga no lo pudieran dar cada mes, acordaréis con ellos lo que quieran dar cada año de lo que Su Majestad les queda debiendo si bien será mejor que le den de la misma media paga como se usa en Flandes, y se lo librareis al mayordomo que nombraréis de la dicha cofradía que ha de ser alferez reformado y uno de los capitanes presente y en esto y en lo que Nuestro Señor sea servido haber de poner mucho cuidado comprando de las dichas limosnas, ornamentos y lo demás necesario para el culto divino y si no lo hubiera lo necesario en dichas fuerzas lo enviaréis a comprar a esta ciudad [Manila] a lo que se juntaran las personas que pusieres... por cada fuerza mandando poner una cajita en los cuerpos de guardia donde se echen las limosnas y las dichas penas»

His testimony is a good evidence of the functioning of the brotherhood in the Moluccas that, despite the distance, maintains the principles of its homologous in Europe, such as the conditions that the brotherhoods had to fulfill so that they could win the indulgences that the Papacy had granted to the brotherhood. For Holy Week, the communion and confession certificates of each of its members had to be registered, so that they could later be sent to Manila. The brotherhood therefore had its own indulgences, thanks to the intercession of the Papacy. In addition, the economic problems of the Moluccas (on many occasions due to lack of currency) were not an obstacle to its maintenance, since it could be covered with part of the salaries that the soldiers received in the forts of the Moluccas.

Due to the fact that, as we have already said, the Dominicans were no longer present on the islands, it was some of the Jesuits residing in Ternate who assumed the management and were in charge of the treasury of the brotherhood. On January 14, 1637, the accountants of Manila recorded that of the 15,000 pesos shipped in the fleet destined to pay the salaries of the soldiers of the Moluccas, 500 pesos were destined to the Jesuit Ignacio de Mújica for the maintenance and purchase of ornaments for the brotherhood of the Rosary of Ternate.²⁸

you will release him to the mayordomo that you will appoint from the brotherhood, who must be a reformed lieutenant and one of the captains present and in this and in what Our Lord is served to have be very careful buying from the alms, ornaments and the rest necessary for divine worship and if there is not what is necessary in these forces you will send it to this city [Manila] to buy what other people put... for each division ordering to put a little box in the guardhouses where the alms and the said penalties are thrown.”

²⁸ AGI, Contaduría, 1218.866.

The expenses of the brotherhood were continuous and therefore depended on the arrival of the *Socorro del Maluco*, the periodic fleet that every year arrived in the Moluccas from Manila with reinforcements (soldiers, provisions, and money) to supply the forts of the islands. The absence of this fleet in some of the years (due to shipwrecks during the voyage or capture by the Dutch fleets upon arrival in Ternate) put the economic viability of the islands and therefore of the brotherhood at risk. In 1648, Father Manuel Carvallo, the vicar of the islands and rector of the school of the Society of Jesus in Ternate, was paid 268 pesos owed to him by the brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary, for having lacked the aid of the past years. and not having been able to take alms (that is, not being able to use the money that was deducted from the soldiers' salaries).²⁹



Current remains of the city of Rosario. Kastela, Ternate. Photo by Juan Carlos Rey.

Like the brotherhoods of Manila or Iloilo, the Ternate brotherhood also had its own image of the Virgin. Pedro de Heredia, the governor of the Moluccas between 1623 and 1637, was one of its great benefactors. During his lifetime, the governor donated a ring with a diamond valued at 1,200 pesos to the brotherhood for the finger

²⁹ AGI, Contaduría, 1227.344.

of the Virgin.³⁰ Even Pedro de Heredia (as a person of great fortune after a lifetime dedicated to high position in the Philippines) also made great contributions to Our Lady of the Rosary in Manila. At the end of his government, he donated 4,700 pesos worth of decorations to the image of the Virgin in Manila: two silver bows for 1,000 pesos each (with 12 candlesticks for 100 pesos each) plus a lamp for 1,500 pesos³¹ that were added to the 42 large silver candlesticks and 14 pre-existing silver lamps.³² His long government in the Moluccas made him accumulate a large capital. Not so much from his annual salary (of almost 3,000 pesos) but from his unofficial trade in spices. The remoteness of the islands constituted the southernmost territory of Spain in Asia and the access to precious spices (cloves from the Moluccas and mace and nutmeg from the Banda Islands) highly demanded by all merchants, both Asians and Europeans who approached the islands, caused an illegal trade that allowed some of the Spanish governors of the Moluccas to get rich.

The prayer of the Rosary in the forts of the Moluccas

As expected, the Marian invocation of the Rosary was not limited to the brotherhood and the name of the city. The religiosity of the soldiers made the practice of the Rosary very important in the daily life of the islands, even more so when the Spaniards were in a situation of high hostility. Outside the brotherhood, the practice of the rosary also spread to the other forts on the islands. The Spanish deployed a dozen forts on the different islands of the archipelago. Although they all depended on the Rosario capital at Ternate, they founded and maintained forts on the nearby islands of Tidore, Halmahera, and Sulawesi.

The society of the Moluccas was a society dominated by a context of great intensity of warfare. When the Iberian and Dutch dominions in Asia collided in these islands, Moluccas became a continuous war front that determined that people lived in seclusion in the several forts of these islands. The threat of being attacked outside the forts, for fear of being attacked or ambushed, forced the Spanish to seclude themselves and live within their walled enclosures. From sunset to sunrise, the gates of the forts were closed. During this time all exits and entrances to the enclosure was prohibited. Among the daily routine of the garrisons was the recitation of the

³⁰ Archivo Franciscano-San Francisco el Grande, Crónica, segunda parte de la santa Provincia de San Gregorio de Filipinas que contiene cuatro estados: el primero de la Orden, el segundo seglar, el tercero de la Iglesia de Japón y el cuarto de las fuerzas de Terrenate en Maluco desde el año 1624, por Fray Antonio de la Llave, cronista de la misma Provincia (1624 -1644) 219. De la Llave will accuse Governor Hurtado de Corcuera of keeping it.

³¹ Aduarte, *Historia*, I, 34.

³² Rodríguez, *Reseña histórica*, 50.

rosary. In 1650, in the instructions that the governor of the Moluccas, Francisco de Esteybar, issued to regulate the daily life of the fort of San Francisco de Calamata de Ternate (located a few kilometers west of the Spanish capital), the daily recitation of the Holy Rosary was ordered after having closed the doors and having put the guard and surveillance, which had to be at 7 at night.³³

Our Lady of the Rosary in the fleet of the Moluccas

As important as the defense of the forts was the annual fleet that each year provided resources. The Spanish domain in the Moluccas was possible thanks to *Socorro del Maluco*, the fleet that transported the resources for the forts every year. In all the years that the Spanish presence in the islands lasted, there was no absence of this communication between the Moluccas and the Philippines. The navigation of this fleet was not easy, shipwrecks due to the frequency of reefs and coral barriers or attacks by enemy ships were frequent threats that they had to endure. The Virgin of the Rosary did not take long to position herself as the protector of the army. Just as it was established in the fleets of the *Carrera de Indias* (the fleets that connected Spain with America), where the one known as the *Galeona* (the image of Our Lady of the Rosary guarded in the Dominican convent of Cadiz) was established as the patron saint and protector of the fleets of galleons that all years united America with Spain, at the other end and final destination of the route, in the Philippines, thanks to Our Lady of the Rosary from Manila, also had its counterpart. In this way, all the transoceanic crossing that started from the south of Spain to continue through America through the ports of Veracruz and Acapulco and end on the other side of the Pacific in Manila, had one of its extensions, on the route of the Moluccas, with the protection of the Virgin.

During the journey between Manila and Ternate, which could last between three and six months, the daily recitation of the Rosary was normative.³⁴ In the instructions to be followed by the flagship of the fleet, San Salvador, given in the port of Zamboanga in Mindanao, on March 8, 1653, it is specified that every afternoon the Holy Rosary is prayed together:

«Y hará que todas las tardes recen en voz alta a coros el Santo Rosario de la Inmaculada madre de Dios».³⁵

³³ AGI, FILIPINAS, 52, N.7.109. Confirmación de encomienda de Laglag, etc.

³⁴ AGI, FILIPINAS, 54, N.4.73. Confirmación de encomienda de Caraga, etc.

³⁵ AGI, FILIPINAS, 52, N.13.57. Confirmación de encomienda de Viri, etc. "And it will make them pray aloud in choirs every afternoon at the Holy Rosary of the Immaculate Mother of God."

As protector of the fleet, protection also came in the form of miracles, some of which had great effects in Manila. In the aid of 1613 when the fleet composed of six ships was shipwrecked on the Mindoro's coast, it was attributed to her that there were hardly any deaths in the shipwreck. The intervention of the Virgin was thanks to Francisco López, a devout soldier, who despite being very wounded by the attacks from the oarsmen of the galleys, was able to endure a few days alive, until the arrival of Spanish aid that prevented him from dying without confession.³⁶ The cloak that the figure wore during these events became an object of great devotion among all the citizens of Manila as it was considered as a healer of major diseases by the residents of the city.

Beyond Moluccas: Siau and Macassar

Although it was the end of the Spanish experience in the islands, the Spanish departure from the forts of the Moluccas in 1663 did not mean the disappearance of Spanish influence in the region. North of Ternate, a few miles off the northern coast of Sulawesi, on the small island of Siau (Pulau Siau), the Spanish presence still continued. This small island had a strong historical link with the Iberians. In addition to the conversion to Catholicism of their monarchs during the second half of the 16th century (since 1563 due to the Portuguese Jesuits established in Ternate), their kings had a link or political alliance with Manila already prior to the Spanish conquest of the Moluccas in 1606. Because of this, by this long friendship, despite the abandonment of the Moluccas, the Philippines wanted to preserve ties with this island. Therefore, a small contingent of soldiers and Jesuits remained on the island to help their king, Catholic, Spanish ally and contrary to any pact with the Sultan of Ternate and the VOC (the Dutch East India Company, the political institution-Dutch trading company that since its arrival in 1607 controlled most of the clove of the islands).

In 1668, the Jesuit Francisco de Miedes, present on the island, reported that an old lamp that the governor of the Moluccas Pedro de Mendiola had donated to the brotherhood of Our Lady of the Rosary from Ternate, was found next to the image of the Virgin in Siau.³⁷ In 1676, a year before their expulsion from Siau, the Jesuits confirmed the practice of the Rosary every Saturday afternoon by the natives of the island.³⁸ This testimony informs us that after the Spanish abandoned Ternate in 1663,

³⁶ Rodríguez, *Reseña histórica*, 104-106.

³⁷ Hubert Jacobs, SJ, *Documenta Malucensia*, vol. 3 (Roma: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu, 1984), 209.

³⁸ Jacobs, *Documenta*, 689.

the brotherhood and the image of the Virgin were installed in Siau, from where she continued to act as patron saint and protector of the small garrison of Spanish soldiers who defended the island from Santa Rosa fort (on the east coast, above the current town of Ulu). Therefore, the devotion to the Rosary, in its different dimensions (both the custody and devotion of the image and the practice of praying) got over the Spanish capital of the Moluccas and spread to the different territories occupied by the Spanish in the region. The departure of the last Spanish garrison from Siau in 1677, expelled by a military attack by the Sultan of Ternate backed by the VOC, put an end to the Spanish stage in this region in the south of the Philippines, which currently belongs to the north of present-day Indonesia.



Brotherhoods of the Rosary mentioned in the article.

Further south of Siau and Ternate, on the southwest coast of Sulawesi, was the sultanate of Macassar, the most important kingdom of Insulindia, which, due to its strong confrontation with the VOC, was always an ally of the Spanish in Asia. This

complicity of interests, derived from the existence of a common enemy, caused the Spaniards from Manila, but especially those from the Moluccas, to travel frequently and even settle in Macassar. Halfway between the Portuguese Goa and the Spanish Manila, Macassar received a lot of Iberian influence. In 1649 a Dominican mission headed by Fray Juan de Costa (João d' Acosta) who left Goa for Solor y Flores had an important stopover in Macassar. The Dominican took advantage of his stay in Macassar to build a church that he dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary and left in charge of Father António de Macedo.³⁹

From Manila, the Dominicans also came to Macassar to give continuity to what was started by their Portuguese companions of the order and the small Spanish community residing in Macassar also made possible the existence of a brotherhood of the Rosary in this great city in South Asia (*Ujang Padang* present-day). The new brotherhood was founded by a Spaniard Fray Teodoro «castelhano, da provincia de Manila»⁴⁰ who arrived in Macassar after residing for a decade on Isla Hermosa (Taiwan). His stay in southern China ended in 1642, when the Spanish defeat by the Dutch VOC deported the Dominican mission established in Taiwan to Batavia (present-day Jakarta), where he finally was able to leave to settle in Macassar.⁴¹ As a great devotee of the Rosary, he took advantage of his stay in South Sulawesi, before returning to Manila, to found the brotherhood in this sultanate in which, unlike other Insulindian kingdoms, its sovereigns, although Muslim, were always very interested in commercial development around their port. Due to this, they allowed and did not hinder the residence of Catholic communities in their city.

However, in 1659, due to the new policy of the sultan of Macassar against the religious orders established in his sultanate (partly motivated by pressure from the vicar of the city who did not want to share their alms with the religious orders), the brotherhood had to be moved to Larantuka where the Dominicans had established a mission several decades before. All the ornaments of the brotherhood of the Rosary

³⁹ Cornelius Wessels, SJ, "Wat staat geschiedkundig vast over de oude missie in Zuid-Selebes of het land van Makassar? 1525-1669," *Studiën*, 103 (1925): 433.

⁴⁰ Teodoro Quirós (de la Madre de Dios), (Vivero, 1599-Manila, 1662). He arrived in Manila in 1627, after he taught at the Colegio de Santo Tomás he settled in 1632 in Taiwan. Among his works, in addition to a Tagalog language dictionary, is a treatise on the devotion to the Holy Rosary.

Basilio Sebastián Castellanos de Lasada (dir.), *Biografía eclesiástica completa. Vidas de los personajes del antiguo y nuevo testamento; de todos los santos, papas y eclesiásticos célebres...en orden alfabético. Redactada por una reunion de eclesiásticos y literatos revisada por una comision nombrada por la autoridad superior eclesiástica, etc.*, tomo XIX (Madrid: Imprenta Alejandro Gómez Fuentebro, 1864), 1215.

⁴¹ Artur Basílio de Sá, *Documentação para a Historia das Missões do Padroado Portugues do Oriente, Insulindia*, vol. V (Lisboa: Agência Geral do Ultramar, 1958), 532.

of Macassar were transferred to this island.⁴² It was the end of the brotherhood of the Rosary of Macassar and its definitive transfer to the island of Flores, where, thanks to the support of Goa, it was able to begin an extensive stage that gave rise to one of the most important Rosario cults in present-day Indonesia.

Of all the Rosary brotherhoods founded in present-day Indonesia, the one in Macassar, like those in Ternate and Siau, were the work of Spanish Dominicans from Manila, unlike Larantuka, which was founded by Portuguese Dominicans from Goa.

Conclusion

The importance of the Rosario cult was not limited only to the Philippines but also developed in the peripheral territories located to the south of Mindanao. During the 17th century, from Manila this Marian invocation was able to expand, affecting the territories with Spanish presence. In this way, the Rosario cult enjoyed an importance in some territories of what is now Indonesia, especially in the Moluccas Islands. The complicated situation in this region (due to its distance from Manila, the scarcity of resources and the hostility against the VOC) helped the figure of the Rosary to form one of the pillars of the religiosity of the Spanish society of the Moluccan forts. The prayer of the Rosary was present in the daily life of the soldiers of these islands and the Brotherhood of the Virgin was one of the most important institutions in the so-called city of Rosario de Ternate, the Spanish capital of the region. The influence of Our Lady of the Rosary was not limited to these enclaves and even went beyond this framework and ended up reaching more distant islands and territories such as the island of Siau or the sultanate of Macassar. Although the dismantling of the Spanish positions in Indonesia carried out during the second half of the 17th century ended the cult of Rosario, throughout the time that this experience lasted (1606-1677) it enjoyed great popularity and constituted a reference in the society of that time.^{PS}



⁴² Maria Alice Marques Viola, “Presença histórica “portuguesa” em Larantuka (séculos XVI e XVII) e suas implicações na contemporaneidade” (Tese de Doutorado em Antropologia, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2013), 250.

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