

# **Extant Artifacts from the First One Hundred Fifty Years of the Dominicans in the Philippines (1587-1750)**

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**Abstract:** In commemorating anniversaries of institutions, it is always good to recognize the tangible aspects that were produced by these institutions. The objects or buildings award a certain rootedness of an institution in the place it has worked in. Thus, the present study was made in line with the 50th anniversary of the Dominican Province of the Philippines and the 500th anniversary of the coming of Christianity to the Philippines. The compiling of examples for this article was done chiefly by sifting through historic accounts, whether archival or published, and the correlation of the data with the succession of parish priests; with the appearance—and disappearance—of the mission from the Acts of the Dominican chapters; and with the extant artworks themselves or their context within edifices. In most cases, the times of manufacture can only be gauged in numbers of decades, being framed within the building of a church that could continue from one century to the next. Artifacts that are confidently dated, such as the the Binalatoca bell of Camalaniugan (1595), or the ivory pieces in Salamanca (1686), are valuable benchmarks.

**Keywords:** colonial church art, Dominicans, Bataan, Cagayan, Fuga, Manila, Pangasinan

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## Artifacts that root an institution to its milieu

Celebrating an anniversary of an institution is an excellent occasion to identify the tangible aspects that were connected to its history. By relics, objects, and buildings, an institution is rooted in the place it has worked in. The present survey hopes to provide the Dominicans, who established the Province of the Holy Rosary in the Philippines in 1587, a core of works crafted during their first 150 years.<sup>1</sup>

The assignment of dates to works of art in the Spanish colonial Philippines is notoriously difficult. There is a great lack of written sources, exacerbated by the loss of archives towards the end of the war in 1945. The data that can be sifted from the sources have to be correlated with existing evidence. Although it is acceptable to date a retablo a little after its church has been built, one must be prepared for exceptions or surprises.

In this context, Manalo (2015) proposed two scenarios: 1) the retablo mayor of Boljoon (Cebu) may have survived a fire that decimated its earlier church,<sup>2</sup> and 2) the side retablo of Binangonan (Rizal) may have come from an earlier church or its mother parish.<sup>3</sup> Related to the second example, José surmises that the retablo mayor of Cortés (Bohol) was a “hand-me-down” from its mother parish Maribojoc when the latter church was rebuilt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>4</sup> A retablo could be constructed utilizing columns from an earlier altarpiece, as in Manaoag. Three retablos were dismantled from the San Gabriel hospital church in Binondo; this was sent to Pilar (Bataan); columns from the same set seemed to have been rehabilitated as well in Hermosa, four towns away. In fact, seeing how long the columns lasted even after the original retablos were dismantled, encourages one to think that columns of earlier and contemporary styles were combined in rehabilitated or enlarged retablos: thereby adding one more challenge to the dating of such pieces. A wooden image could be covered with layers of paint, but its archaic features or proportions would betray its antiquity, such as the patronal image of San Bartolomé in San Manuel (Pangasinan).

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<sup>1</sup> Not included in the present study are archival and printed works, which deserve a separate project.

<sup>2</sup> See the detailed discourse in Ino Manalo, “Reading Boljoon, from records to retablos,” *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 44/1 and 2 (2016), 137-150.

<sup>3</sup> Ino Manalo, “Binangonan: a Retablo like no other,” *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 43/1 and 2 (2015), 141-142.

<sup>4</sup> Regalado Trota José, *Visita Iglesia Bohol* (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2001), 41.

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century church of Calape (Bohol) was selected to receive the 1600s bell of the Parian parish in Cebu, which was suppressed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The scope of the present survey has been extended up to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, recognizing that certain “over-staying” artistic elements could make pieces appear older than they really are. It seems likely that, as churches expanded or grew wealthier, their retablos and other pieces were rehabilitated or enlarged. It looks like several retablos incorporated elements from earlier constructions into renovated altarpieces. Hence a large retablo may have columns from the late 17<sup>th</sup> century partnered with columns or flanges in a mid-18<sup>th</sup> century ensemble. In South American contracts for retablos, it was the custom to stipulate that pieces from older ensembles be incorporated.<sup>5</sup>

The compiling of examples for this paper was done chiefly through the close reading of historic accounts, whether archival or published, and the correlation of the data with the succession of parish priests; with the appearance—and disappearance—of the mission from the Acts of the Dominican chapters; and with the extant artworks themselves.

Those artifacts that are confidently dated, such as the Binalatoca bell of Camalaniugan, or the ivory pieces in Salamanca, are valuable benchmarks. The silhouette of the Binalatoca bell, for instance, allows bells with similar outlines to be dated to the late 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> century. Nevertheless, laboratory analysis of materials and techniques is still needed to link objects from different sites. Columns and other components of retablos will have to be examined to see if their manufacture, joinery, or woodwork are contemporary to each other, or if they were combined from assemblages of different periods.<sup>6</sup>

This article is divided into the following sections: 1. Religious Statuary (1.a, Ivory images; 1.b, Wooden images and bas-reliefs); 2. Retablos; 3. Furniture; 4. Paintings; 5. Silverwork; 6. Bells; and 7. Baptismal fonts.

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<sup>5</sup> Damián Bayón and Murillo Marx, *Historia del Arte Colonial Sudamericano* (Barcelona: Ediciones Polígrafa, S.A., 1989), 78.

<sup>6</sup> See, for example how the retablo originally in the San Agustín chapel in the eponymous church (Manila) was altered when it was re-assembled in the *ante-coro* of the same church (Pedro G. Galende, O.S.A. and Regalado Trota José, *San Agustín Art & History 1571-2000* (Manila: San Agustín Museum, 2000), 29 and 134, respectively).

## 1. Religious Statuary

### 1.a. Ivory image

**Nuestra Señora del Rosario de La Naval**, Santo Domingo Church, Quezon City.  
(Fig. 1a.)



Fig. 1a.

Since this most famous image of Our Lady of the Rosario de La Naval has been extensively written about,<sup>7</sup> only a few salient points shall be presented here. According to the Dominican historian Aduarte (1962), the images of Our Lady and the Christ Child were commissioned by Luis Pérez Dasmariñas during his term as interim Governor-General (October 1593-July 1596). A pagan Chinese carved the statues under the direction of Hernando de los Ríos Coronel, a polymath, and Dasmariñas' trusted aide. Some time later, the Chinese came down from Ilocos (possibly from one his projects) and converted to Christianity in front of his Marian masterpiece.<sup>8</sup> Ríos Coronel was ordained a priest in Seville in 1610.<sup>9</sup>

Some of the raw ivory for the pieces may have come as royal gifts from Cambodia in 1594.<sup>10</sup> The head of Our Lady is composed of at least seven parts of ivory. Her exceptionally long ears are carved separately, and each is pierced with two holes (Figs. 1b and 1c); these confirm the early age of the carving. Her long, cylindrical fingers (Figs. 1d and 1e) are similar to those of Our Lady of Manaoag, perhaps a very early 18<sup>th</sup> century piece.

<sup>7</sup> See especially Regalado Trota Jose, "La veneranda imagen de Nuestra Señora del Rosario de La Naval: An Image Biography," in Lito B. Zulueta, ed., *The Saga of La Naval. Triumph of a People's Faith*, (Quezon City: The Dominican Province of the Philippines, 2018), 65-72.

<sup>8</sup> Diego de Aduarte, O.P., *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario de la Orden de Predicadores en Filipinas, Japón y China*, ed. by Fr. Manuel Ferrero, O.P. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas- Departamento de Misionología Española, 1962 [1640, Manila]), I, 71-72.

<sup>9</sup> John Newsome Crossley, *Hernando de los Ríos Coronel and the Spanish Philippines in the Golden Age* (Farnham, Surrey, England, and Burlington, Vermont, USA: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 91-92.

<sup>10</sup> Romeo B. Galang, Jr., *A Cultural History of Santo Domingo* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2013), 130. This is one of Galang's bases for narrowing the dating of the La Naval image to between 1593 and 1594.

The ensemble of Our Lady of La Naval was vandalized by British troops in 1763. A forensic investigation is necessary to identify what kind of damages were sustained. The Niño, surely, is an 18<sup>th</sup> century replacement of the original.<sup>11</sup> Despite the recent application of exaggerated eyelashes that tend to obfuscate the late 16<sup>th</sup> century visage of Our Lady, a peaceful, otherworldly mien still manages to reach out to all those who approach her and her Son.

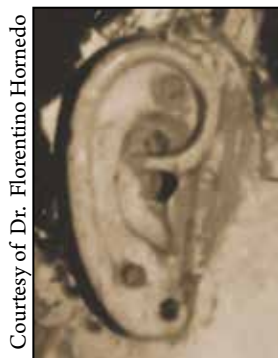


Fig. 1b.

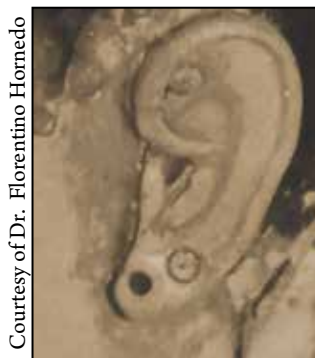


Fig. 1c.



Fig. 1d.

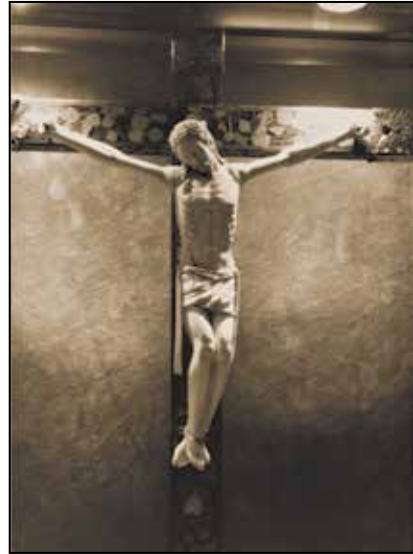


Fig. 1e.

<sup>11</sup> José, "La veneranda imagen," 65-72.

**Santo Cristo.** Museo del Convento de San Esteban, Padres Dominicos, Salamanca, Spain. (Fig. 2.)

This image of the crucified Christ, dated stylistically to about 1600, is unusually mounted on a Japanese cross lacquered in the *maki-e* manner. Such crosses formed part of the body of *namban* artworks that Japanese Christians produced during the flourishing of Christianity in Japan from the second half of the 16<sup>th</sup> century to the first decades of the 17<sup>th</sup>.<sup>12</sup>



Regalado Trota José, 1992

Fig. 2.

**Pair of Images of the Mother and Child.** Museo del Convento de San Esteban, Padres Dominicos, Salamanca, Spain. (Figs. 3a, 3b, 4a, and 4b.)

These two statuettes are typical of the production of Marian ivories in the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The postures of both, with the hair falling in long, separate, and curled tresses, are clearly influenced by 17<sup>th</sup> century models from the Seville master sculptors such as Juan Martínez Montañés. Both backs are carved with the *suksok*, a tuck of the tunic into the belt so as not to drag on the floor: this is a feature found in many 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Philippine ivory images of the Virgin. In these two examples, however, the way the *suksok* is carved implies that even the mantle is tucked into the belt, which in reality would have been awkward. It has been hypothesized by José that the *suksok* was the local carver's private way of investing his statuette with nobility, as only women of high rank would be dressed in long gowns and capes.<sup>13</sup> The prototype for the image on the left served as the model for the present wooden body of Our Lady of Manaoag.

<sup>12</sup> Margarita Estella Marcos, "Crucificado," in *Filipinas Puerta de Oriente de Legazpi a Malaspina*, ed. by Alfredo J. Morales, (N.p.: SEACEX and Lunwerg Editores, 2003), 298-299.

<sup>13</sup> José first suggested the term *suksok* in 1990: Regalado Trota José and Ramon N. Villegas, *Power + Image + Faith. Philippine Art in Ivory from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Makati: Ayala Museum, 2004), 110.

Regalado Trota José, 1992



Fig. 3a.

Regalado Trota José, 1992



Fig. 3b.

Regalado Trota José, 1992



Fig. 4a.

Regalado Trota José, 1992



Fig. 4b.

### **Nuestra Señora del Rosario, Manaoag, Pangasinan. (Fig. 5a)**

The age of the image is not known, but the house of Nuestra Señora del Rosario in Manaoag was accepted by the Dominican chapter in 1610 (the previous church, administered by the Augustinians, was dedicated to Santa Mónica). Devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary quickly grew after the revival of a dead child at the feet of her image in 1627.<sup>14</sup> Seventy years later (1697), the image saved the church from a fire that was devouring the town.<sup>15</sup>

A wood block for printing images or *estampas* that were given to devotees is on exhibition at the UST Museum (Figs. 5b, 5c).<sup>16</sup> Stylistically, it could be dated to

<sup>14</sup> Mariano Rodríguez, O.P., *Historia de Ntra. Sra. del Rosario de Manaoag* (Manila: Tip. del Colegio de Sto. Tomás, 1913), 243-245.

<sup>15</sup> Mariano Rodríguez, O.P., *Historia de Ntra. Sra. del Rosario de Manaoag*, 236-237.

<sup>16</sup> Regalado Trota José, "A Visual Documentation on Fil-Hispanic Churches. Part 10. Parish Church and Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Rosary, Manaoag, Pangasinan," *Philippiniana Sacra* XLVIII:145 (September-December 2013).



the 17<sup>th</sup> (note especially the inscription at the bottom) or very early 18<sup>th</sup> century. A rosary frames the Mother and Child, with what seem to be shafts of light emanating from each bead. However, the image depicts Our Lady with her right arm extended outward, holding a rosary. This contrasts with the present statue in the sanctuary of Manaoag, where Our Lady's right hand supports the Holy Child, who is seated on her left hand. One possible hypothesis could be that the woodblock represents the engraver's *ideal* image of the figures, perhaps copied from a print (see a similar version in the *relieve* of Camalaniugan, below). "Open" statues with arms outstretched were quite uncommon for the 17<sup>th</sup> century (except for the Crucified Christ and the dramatic depictions of Saint Michael slaying the devil); "closed" statues were more the norm, with minimal hands or arms inserted onto the body. At some time, possibly in the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the present ivory faces and hands of the Mother and Child may have been carved for a mannequin such as that of the La Naval.<sup>17</sup> The donors who built the core of today's brick church, Capitán Gaspar de Gamboa and his wife Agata Yangta, may in turn have transferred the ivory parts to a larger, polychromed image, which is the one that stands today (the church was begun in 1701 and completed in 1722).

Nady Nacario, 2009



Fig. 5a.

. Nady Nacario, 2006



Fig. 5b.

Nady Nacario, 2006



Fig. 5c.

<sup>17</sup> Rodriguez, *Manaoag*, 85, 94.



The ivory head of Mary has ears that partly show through the wood, indicating that the head was initially carved to support a wig, and to be propped onto a mannequin such as that of Our Lady of La Naval (Fig. 5d). Characteristics that both heads of Mary and the Christ Child share with those of 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century Philippine ivory pieces are heavy-lidded eyes (again obscured by modern eyelashes), rounded nostrils, long ears, and a peaceful, other-worldly gaze. Mary has typical “rose-bud” lips and long stiff fingers (Fig. 5e), but atypically does not have the neck-folds that are reminiscent of Buddhist images. Significantly, her eyes are painted on, and have not been replaced by glass as has been the fate of the La Naval and many other devotional images. The Niño’s nose was broken off and has been repaired (Fig. 5f). His wavy hair is gilded, also in the 17<sup>th</sup>-early 18<sup>th</sup> century tradition (Fig. 5g); but his forelock was sliced off at some time to accommodate the inverted lunette that is peculiar to this Mother-and-Child ensemble in Manaoag.

Nady Nacario, 2009



Fig. 5d.

Aldrin Ong, 2005



Fig. 5e.

Nady Nacario, 2009



Fig. 5f.

Nady Nacario, 2009

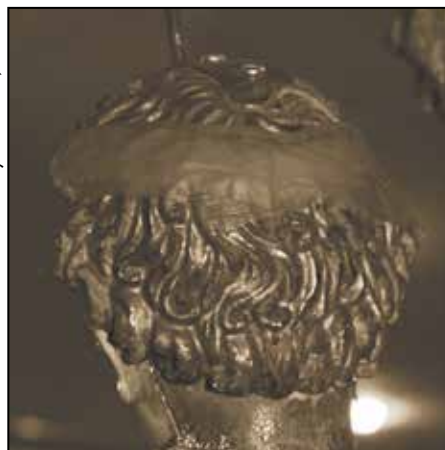


Fig. 5g.

The wooden body that incorporates the ivory pieces of Mary and the Niño may also be dated to the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Importantly, it retains its original vermillion<sup>18</sup> and gold coloring (Fig. 5h). Some gilded and elaborately chased metal pieces are fixed on the chests of both Mother and Child. Earlier pieces are kept in the nearby Museum; these still maintain their borders of granulated gold or gold-plated metal, a technique seen in pre-Hispanic gold jewelry.<sup>19</sup> (It is hoped that the rare qualities of the Manaoag images such as the original coloring on the body, the painted eyes of the Virgin, and the gilded hair of the Niño are respected by the caretakers at the Manaoag sanctuary.)



Fig. 5h.

<sup>18</sup> This vermillion appears to be of the type obtained from the mineral popularly known as cinnabar. Identified by Joselito H. Corpus, architectural conservator, pers. comm., 11 September 2021.

<sup>19</sup> Ramon Villegas, the late jeweller and art historian, personal communication, 2005.

**Santa Rosa de Lima.** Museo de la Catedral de Toledo, Spain. (Fig. 6.)

Regalado Trota José, 1992



Fig. 6.

This image of the popular Dominican saint was recorded in Toledo between 1684 and 1685,<sup>20</sup> a bequest from Bachiller Diego de Miranda y Palomeque, a cleric in Puebla de los Angeles, Mexico. The statuette arrived with other ivory images typical of those carved in the Philippines and brought to Mexico and Spain as gifts.<sup>21</sup> This Saint Rose is similar to another ivory image of the saint, documented to have been part of the collection of the famous Bishop of Puebla, Juan de Palafox y Mendoza; since he died in 1659, this image is even earlier and antedates Rose's beatification by nine years in 1668.<sup>22</sup>

**Santo Cristo.** Parish Church of Santa María Magdalena, Sevilla, Spain. (Fig. 7a.) and Sacristy, Parroquia de Santa Maria Magdalena, Sevilla Spain. (Fig. 7b.)

This superb image, documented to 1685,<sup>23</sup> watches over the sacristy of the church that belonged to the former Dominican convent of San Pablo. The church's first prelate was Pedro González (popularly known as San Pedro Telmo); and in this church in 1544 was consecrated the bishop of Chiapas, Fray Bartolomé de las Casas.

Regalado Trota José, 1992

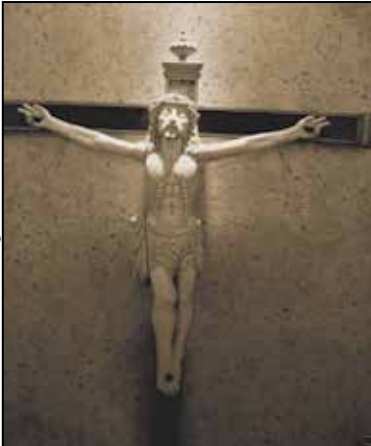


Fig. 7a.

Regalado Trota José, 2019



Fig. 7b.

<sup>20</sup> At this time, the saint had just been canonized (1671).

<sup>21</sup> Margarita Estella Marcos, *La Escultura Barroca de Marfil en España*, catalogue no. 664 (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1984). José and Villegas, *Power*, 114.

<sup>22</sup> Ricardo Fernández Gracia, "Santa Rosa de Lima," in Alfredo J. Morales, ed., *Filipinas Puerta de Oriente de Legazpi a Malaspina* (N.p.: SEACEX and Lunwerg Editores, 2003), 300-301.

<sup>23</sup> Estella, *La Escultura Barroca*, cat. 239. José and Villegas, *Power*, 115.

**Santo Domingo** (Figs. 8a, 8b), **San Francisco** (Figs. 9a, 9b), and **San Miguel Arcángel** (Figs. 10a, 10b). Museo del Convento de San Esteban, Padres Dominicos, Salamanca, Spain.

These three splendid pieces were inventoried in the convento's Book of Accounts in 1686. They were sent by the Dominican priest Francisco Antonio de Vargas (1656-1708), who professed here. He arrived in Manila in 1679 and taught Philosophy and Theology at the University of Santo Tomás until 1688.<sup>24</sup> The backs of St. Dominic and St. Francis are only summarily carved, implying that they were meant to be viewed from a retablo. In contrast, that of St. Michael is completely delineated, indicating it was mounted where it could have been seen from all directions, such as the landing of a stairway.



Regalado Trota José, 1992

Fig. 8a.



Regalado Trota José, 1992

Fig. 8b.



Regalado Trota José, 1992

Fig. 9a.



Regalado Trota José, 1992

Fig. 9b.

<sup>24</sup> Estella, *La Escultura Barroca*, cats. 631 and 632. José and Villegas, *Power*, 115.



Regalado Trota José, 1992

Fig. 10a.



Regalado Trota José, 1992

Fig. 10b.

### 1.b. Wooden images and bas-reliefs

**San Bartolomé.** Parish church of San Bartolome, San Manuel, Pangasinan. (Fig. 11.)

The mission of San Bartolomé de Agno was founded in 1687. Located east of Manaoag, it was meant to serve as a way station to Nueva Vizcaya. The church was burned by the nearby pagans in 1719, but the townspeople were able to save the image of their patron saint. They temporarily resettled in Maoacatoacat and then Pao and regrouped under San José de Maliongliong in 1739-1740. Finally, the scattered populace brought their patron saint's image to present-day San Manuel in 1881, which had been accepted as a house in 1878.<sup>25</sup> From these accounts, it appears that the original image is the one in the storeroom.<sup>26</sup> Forensic analysis of the wood and layers of paint could help to ascertain its age.



Sabino Mejia, 2011

Fig. 11.

<sup>25</sup> José Ma. González, O.P., *Labor Evangélica y Civilizadora de los Religiosos Dominicanos en Pangasinan (1587-1898)* (Manila: U.S.T. Press, 1946), 80, 102, 116-117.

<sup>26</sup> Regalado Trota José, "Santos, sacred vessels and church accessories," in Archbishop Socrates B. Villegas, D.D., ed., *Pananisla. Heritage and Legacy*, (N.p.: Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan, 2014), 125.



**Santo Domingo** (Figs. 12a, 12b) and bas-reliefs of **Pentecost** (Fig. 13) and the **Assumption** (Fig. 14). UST Museum.

According to classical sources in the UST Museum, the *Santo Domingo* is said to have come from Pozorrubio, Pangasinan. However, the archaic carving of the image does not jive with the founding of the parish in 1879; it is more likely to have been a “hand-me-down” from its mother parish, San Jacinto,<sup>27</sup> especially when the façade was cracked in the earthquake of 1848. An alternative source could be Manaoag, which is equidistant from San Jacinto and accessible like it through tributaries of the Angalacan River. This church also underwent repairs after the earthquakes of 1880 and 1892. Certain features of the *Santo Domingo* relate it with bas-reliefs of the *Pentecost* and the *Assumption* which are provenanced from Manaoag, also according to UST Museum sources. The striations of the saint’s beard and hair are similar to those of the apostles in the *Pentecost*, and the folds of the saint’s *capuche* (cowl) resemble those of the Virgin’s garments in both bas-reliefs.



Fig. 12a.



Fig. 12b.

<sup>27</sup> Regalado Trota José, “Images of Dominican Saints and Blessed in the Philippines,” *Philippiniana Sacra* LI:152 (January-April 2016), 210.

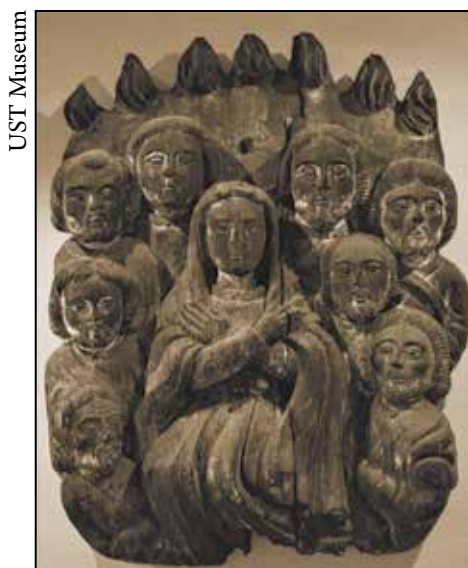


Fig. 13.

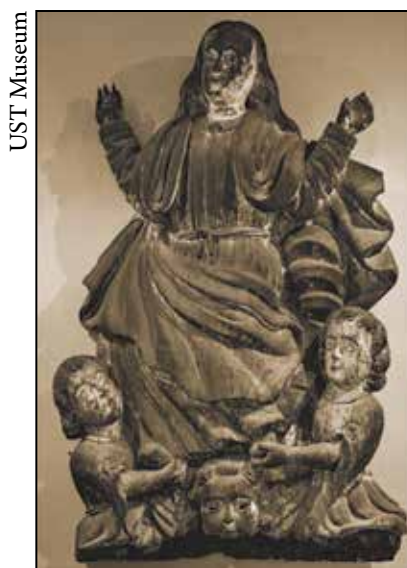


Fig. 14.

The bas-reliefs of Pentecost and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary stylistically may have belonged to a now vanished retablo in Manaoag that featured the mysteries of the rosary; this was retouched in 1739. As discussed below in the section on retablos, the bas-reliefs may have been replaced or merely retouched in 1777.

#### **Santo Tomás de Aquino.** UST Museum. (Fig. 15.)



Fig. 15.

This beguiling image used to be ensconced in one of the two niches flanking the main entrance to the old University of Santo Tomás building in Intramuros, according to sources in the UST Museum.<sup>28</sup> It could very well be, for it is only a few centimeters smaller than the niche in what is now known as the Arch of the Centuries in the UST campus in Sampaloc. Its carved features can be dated to the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century; the academic doctor's cap (*birette*) with its parallel fringes, however, seems to be a later addition.

<sup>28</sup> Angel A. Aparicio, O.P., ed., *Lumina Pandit. A Collection of Historical Treasures* (Manila: University of Santo Tomás Miguel de Benavides Library, 2010), 156-157.



**Nuestra Señora del Rosario.** Malaueg, Cagayan. (Figs. 16a, 16b.)

The first stone for the church Malaueg was laid on 21 November 1617, but an earthquake in 1618 cracked some of the walls. This building was ravaged by fire on 22 January 1641, but it was renovated and blessed on 12 March 1651;<sup>29</sup> this is the date that the late scholar Benito Legarda Jr. saw and wrote about.<sup>30</sup> In between 1641 and 1651, a new apse was built within the ruins of the earlier building: an indication that perhaps the population had decreased.<sup>31</sup> Thus, a great possibility that a number of pieces in the church dates from the 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century. (The central retablo, with its *estípites* (inverted triangular forms) and rococo elements, stylistically dates from the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century).

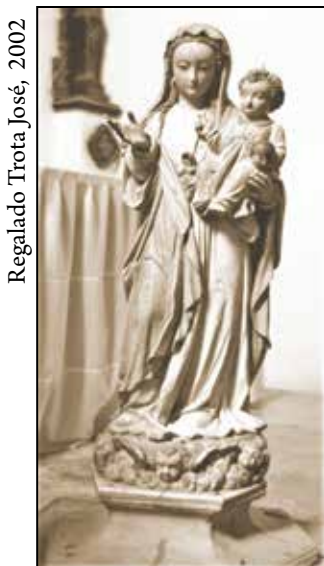


Fig. 16 a.



Fig. 16 b.

The Mother-and-Son ensemble featured here follows the popular prototype as that for Manaoag and Camalaniugan (now in the Archdiocesan Archives, Tuguegarao). Similar details include the cowl over Our Lady's head, from which strands of hair pulled back from the forehead peer out; and the rounded forms of Our Lady's shoes that show through the flattened folds of the tunic. The Niño, in fact, is almost an exact twin of his ivory counterpart in Manaoag. Note that the full range of curly locks on his head have been chipped off that in the Pangasinan image.

<sup>29</sup> Julian Malumbres, O.P., *Historiade Cagayan* (Manila: Tip. Linotype de Sto. Tomás, 1918), 386-387.

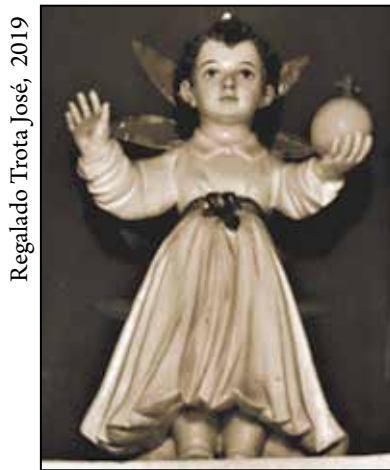
<sup>30</sup> Benito Legarda y Fernández, "Angels in clay: the typical Cagayan church style," *The Filipinas Journal of Science and Culture*, Volume 2, (Manila: Filipinas Foundation, Inc., 1981), 70.

<sup>31</sup> Regalado Trota Jose, "A Visual Documentation on Fil-Hispanic Churches. Part 4. Parish Church of San Raymundo de Peñafort, Rizal (formerly Malaueg), Cagayan," *Philippiniana Sacra* XLVI:138 (September-December 2011), 694.

Father Malumbres tells the story of the conversion of Bucayu, who descended from the mountains of Gumpat to Malaueg. Upon seeing an image of Our Lady in the church, he wept upon recognizing that this was the lady who had induced him to come down. He was baptized José Bucayu, and he and his clan were the only Itawes not to join the uprising in 1718. Would the image presently under discussion have been the same one that Bucayu saw?<sup>32</sup>

**Santo Niño.** Buguey, Cagayan. (Fig. 17.)

The church in Buguey, Cagayan may have been built soon after it was accepted as a house by the Dominican chapter of 1623. The Dominican priest Lorenzo Elduayen was assigned as *socio* to the first vicar for 17 years (1623-1640), the equivalent of nine terms;<sup>33</sup> in many instances in Dominican histories, such an extended assignment implied some sort of construction. The Santo Niño and the kimono-clad *portaciriales* presented below stylistically date from the first century of the church.



Regalado Trota José, 2019

Fig. 17.

The image of the Holy Child sports a bunched forelock and is dressed in a kimono, tightly tied at the waist with a cloth band whose two opposing ends meet in front. These characteristics are shared with many other images in the country, which may date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. What is unique to this image is its outstretched arms, quite unknown in representations of the Santo Niño in whatever century in the Philippines (one other rare example is the Santo Niño on the retablo mayor of Silang, Cavite).

<sup>32</sup> Julian Malumbres, *Historia de Ntra. Sra. de Piat*. (Manila: Tip. Linotype del Col. de Sto. Tomás, 1918), 63-64.

<sup>33</sup> Hilario Ocio, O.P., and Eladio Neira, O.P., *Misioneros Dominicanos en el Extremo Oriente 1587-1835* (Manila: [Provincia de Nuestra Señora del Rosario] 2000), 91. Regalado Trota Jose, "A Visual Documentation on Fil-Hispanic Churches. Part 24. The Church of Santa Ana, Buguey, Cagayan," *Philippiniana Sacra* LV:165 (May-August 2020).

**San José**, Buguey, Cagayan. (Fig. 18.)

In images of this type of St. Joseph, the right hand would normally be holding on to the Christ Child. The crossed cords on his chest are those of his hat, which corresponds to his depiction here as the Protector of the Holy Family as they traveled through Egypt.



Regalado Trota José, 2018

Fig. 18.

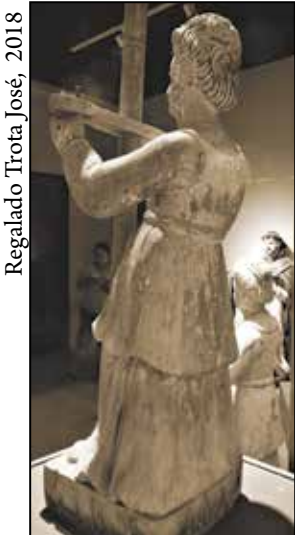
**Portaciriales** in Buguey (Figs. 19a, 19b, 20a, 20b, 21a, and 21b) and Tuao (Fig. 22), Cagayan.

The three *portaciriales* (pedestals for *ciriales*, processional cross, and candleholders) in Buguey are depicted as youths appearing just as the Santo Niño atop the main retablo, complete with bunched forelocks, kimonos, and a waist band with two opposing ends. The visages on these pedestals however are more ‘Oriental’ than the Holy Child.



Regalado Trota José, 2018

Fig. 19a.



Regalado Trota José, 2018

Fig. 19b.

Regalado Trota José, 2018



Fig. 20a.



Fig. 20b.

Regalado Trota José, 2018

Regalado Trota José, 2018



Fig. 21a.



Fig. 21b.

Regalado Trota José, 2018

The three *portaciriales* in Tuao are uniquely shaped as boy “caryatids” each holding up a horizontal bar.



Fig. 22.

**Bas-relief of Nuestra Señora del Rosario.** Camalaniugan, Cagayan. (Figs. 23a, 23b, 23c.)

The building history of the church in Camalaniugan is vague, since it went through many fires, earthquakes, and storms.<sup>34</sup> Though the oldest bell in the Philippines (dated 1595) hangs in its tower, it does not mean it was meant for this place (see the discussion below). However, a unique work of art that has withstood all the church’s vicissitudes is a *relieve* that by its archaic style could date from the 17th or early 18th century.<sup>35</sup> In this interesting piece, Our Lady and the Christ Child are joined by several angels holding out rosaries to the souls in purgatory. The joyous outstretched arms of the angels provide an interesting contrast with the anguished gesticulations of the suffering souls. The angular profiles and stiff body movements of all the figures are not typical of a *sangle* carver, and the *relieve* could have been done by a local artist. The extended right hand of Our Lady recalls the woodblock of Our Lady of Manaoag in the UST Museum.



Fig. 23a.

<sup>34</sup> Malumbres, *Historia de Cagayan*, 367. Regalado Trota José, “A Visual Documentation on Fil-Hispanic Churches. Part 21. The Church of San Jacinto de Polonia in Camalaniugan, Cagayan,” *Philippiniana Sacra* LIV:162 (May-August 2019).

<sup>35</sup> Composed of nine boards, it is also perhaps the largest wood bas-relief from the colonial period.



Regalado Trota José, 2002



Fig. 23b.

Regalado Trota José, 2002



Fig. 23c.

The images below, based on characteristics mentioned in the previous discussions, may also be dated to the 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Images of the **Santo Cristo** (Crucified Christ) in Lallo, Cagayan (Fig. 24) and Malaueg, Cagayan (Figs. 25a, 25b), and San Jacinto, Pangasinan (Figs. 26a, 26b); and the **Santo Entierro** (Christ lying in state) in Malaueg, Cagayan (Figs. 27a, 27b).

Regalado Trota José, 2018



Fig. 24.

Regalado Trota José, 2002



Fig. 25a.

Regalado Trota José, 2002

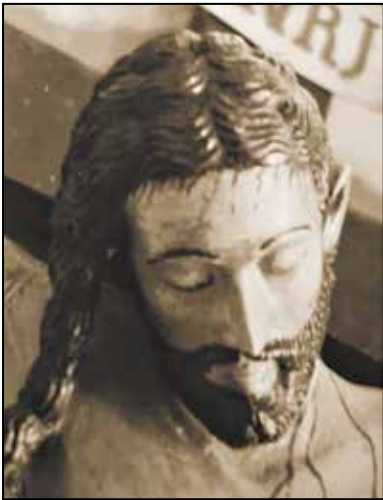


Fig. 25b.

Regalado Trota José, 2003



Fig. 26a.



Regalado Trota José, 2003

Fig. 26b.

Regalado Trota José, 2002



Fig. 27a.

Regalado Trota José, 2002



Fig. 27b.



Images of **Dominican Saints: Santo Domingo**, Lycem, Aparri, Cagayan (Fig. 28); **San Jacinto de Polonia**, Camalaniugan, Cagayan (Fig. 29); **Santo Domingo**, Dagupan, Pangasinan (Figs. 30a, 30b); and **Santo Tomás de Aquino** and **San Vicente Ferrer**, both by the same artist, Salasa, Pangasinan (Fig. 31a, 31b; and 32 respectively. )

Regalado Trota José, 2018



Fig. 28.

Regalado Trota José, 2002



Fig. 29.

Marc Henrich Go, 2011



Fig. 30a.

Marc Henrich Go, 2011



Fig. 30b.

Marc Henrich Go, 2011



Fig. 31a.

Marc Henrich Go, 2011



Fig. 31b.

Richard Alhborn, c. 1959



Fig. 32.

### 1.c. Images made of other materials

#### **Nuestra Señora de la Visitación.** Piat, Cagayan. (Figs. 33a, 33b)

According to the Dominican historian Aduarte, the image of Our Lady now venerated in Piat is said to have been brought from Macao to Cagayan in the last years of the 16th century or the first years of the 17th, most probably by Bishop Soria and the mission of 1604. It was first kept in the church in Lallo, then placed in the side altar dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary in Piat. It was then brought to Tuguegarao, and replaced by a copy with head and hands of ivory made in Manila. When the people of Piat protested, the original image was returned and enshrined in a chapel midway between Piat and Tuao; a copy of this image was painted on canvas and brought to Manila. The chapel was inaugurated on 26 December 1623; the next year the parched land was blessed with copious rains, which the people took to be a special blessing from Our Lady.<sup>36</sup>

Mostruario, 1906, AUST



Fig. 33a.



Fig. 33b.

Regalado Trota José, 2002

Curiously, the title “Our Lady of the Visitation” (Mary was heavy with child as she visited her cousin Elizabeth) does not quite match this image, where Mary carries the Child on one arm; her iconography corresponds to that of Our Lady of the Rosary. It cannot be ascertained if the present, almost life-sized image of papier-mâché (itself an unusual material for religious images, except if it came from Mexico) in the Piat Sanctuary is the same one that was first enshrined in Piat.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Malumbres, *Piat*, 11-17.

<sup>37</sup> Regalado Trota Jose “Our Lady of Piat, Cagayan,” in Lito B. Zulueta (ed.), *The Saga of La Naval. Triumph of a People’s Faith* (Quezon City: the Dominican Province of the Philippines, 2007), 103.

## 2. Retablos

### **Retablos** in Fuga, Babuyan, Cagayan. (Figs. 34a, 34b, 34c, 34d, 34e.)

The first Dominican ministry in the islands north of Cagayan, known as the Babuyan, began in Fuga, in 1619. The sprawling church and convento of the mission, dedicated to St. Ursula and the 11,000 Virgins, must have been built during the years when the Dominican community consisted of four members: 1623-1638, and 1645-1647, at the earliest. A cell in the convento has been tentatively identified as the place where St. Francisco Fernández de Capillas, who ministered here from 1633-1635, would discipline himself. The mission was probably conceived as a stepping stone to Taiwan and China. The assignment of three lay-brothers in between the years 1623 and 1650 may indicate some special activity, such as construction. However, Taiwan fell to the Dutch in 1642; the mission seemed to have been temporarily transferred to nearby Camiguin in 1652, 1663, and 1665; and from the 1660s onwards the Dominicans began to resettle the islanders to Calayan or even the mainland. Church construction would not have been logical at this point, and therefore it is very plausible, that the church and convento were built in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>38</sup>

Two retablos face each other in the presbytery of the church nave (Figs. 34a, 34b, 34c), with the three points of the triangular pediment punctuated by three flaming hearts. A third retablo of similar style, stands atop the landing of the convento stairway (Fig. 34d); its niche may have held an image of Our Lady. There is an empty space where the retablo mayor would have been; holes in the wall imply that a wooden retablo was fixed to the wall (Fig. 34e). All three surviving retablos feature fluted pilasters and shell canopies elaborately worked in masonry, but there is no hint of the arrival of the Baroque. The shell canopies are unusual because the ribs are wider than the canals, rendering a “negative image.”

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<sup>38</sup> Regalado Trota José, “A Visual Documentation on Fil-Hispanic Churches. Part 17. The church of Saint Ursula and the Eleven Thousand Virgins in Fuga Island, Babuyan, Cagayan,” *Philippiniana Sacra* LIII:158 (January-April, 2018).



Fig. 34a.



Fig. 34b.



Fig. 34c.



Fig. 34d.



Fig. 34e.



**Drawing of a retablo in the old University of Santo Tomás in Intramuros, Manila.** Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomás (Fig. 35.)

The initial building for the colegio that was to be the University of Santo Tomás that opened in 1619 collapsed in the earthquake of 1645. It was gradually expanded as more land was acquired; with the last property donated in 1656, the block of the University just across the left side of the Dominican mother church in Intramuros was complete.<sup>39</sup> A plan delineating the parcels of land that constituted the block<sup>40</sup> was drawn by Fr. Juan Peguero, procurator general of the Order in 1675-1677 and 1682-1684.<sup>41</sup> Since the locations of the main entrance (today's Arch of the Centuries) and the chapel correspond to subsequent plans, it seems likely the university building was constructed by the 1670s or 1680s. The ensemble marked *altar de la capilla* consists of three levels. The ground level is the altar table, flanked by S-volutes topped by arrow-shaped finials. The second level is a smaller version of the table, similarly, flanked by S-volutes. The borders of these two levels are hatched, which may have been the artist's way of indicating carved ornamentation. The second level supports the third level which is the retablo proper: a single niche enshrining a cross. It is framed by an inner arch, broken into rectangular segments, and an outer arch which is broken at the top and bisected by pole which may have been the lower part of a crucifix. The retablo is flanked by looser versions of the S-volutes, themselves punctuated on either side by arrow-shaped finials resting on the volutes of the second level. This drawing of the UST retablo is our earliest indication of a Dominican altarpiece. It can see that the S-volutes which were to characterize much of the baroque retablos of the next century were already present here.



Fig. 35.

<sup>39</sup> Alberto Santamaria, O.P., 1927. "Los antiguos solares de Santo Tomás," in his *Estudios Históricos de la Universidad de Santo Tomás de Manila*, 211-227 (Manila: Tip. de la Univ. de Sto. Tomás, 1927). Fidel Villarroel, O.P., *A History of the University of Santo Tomás. Four Centuries of Higher Education in the Philippines (1611-2011)*, 2 vols. (Manila: University of Santo Tomás Publishing House, 2012), Vol. 1, 56-57.

<sup>40</sup> Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomás (AUST), originally in Libros 36.15, fol. 138; now in the Mapas y Planos section. Illustrated in Villarroel, *A History*, Vol. 1, 517.

<sup>41</sup> Ocio and Neira, *Misioneros*, 210.

**Columns from the retablos of the chapel of the Hospital de San Gabriel.**  
Hermosa and Pilar, Bataan. (Figs. 36a, 36b, 36c, and 37.)

Very soon after their arrival in 1587, the Dominicans began ministering among the Chinese in a house in Baybay (now San Nicolas, Binondo) and a hospital in San Gabriel, located first in the Parian outside the walls of Manila and then transferred to the other side of the river adjoining Binondo in 1598. The hospital compound, which included a chapel and living quarters for the Dominicans, went through several construction phases, especially after the earthquake of 1645. In 1728, the chapel and residence of the Dominicans—then in danger of collapse—underwent extensive renovations; these ended in May 1730 at the cost of 3,420 pesos.<sup>42</sup> It is quite likely that the retablos that were taken from the chapel in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as can be seen below, date from 1728-1730. The hospital was closed in 1774 and the chapel followed early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Finally, the buildings collapsed due to the earthquake of 1863.

Despite the disaster, Fr. Vicente Fernandez Trapiello was able to retrieve enough parts from three retablos<sup>43</sup> and re-assemble them in 1875 in the church of Llana Hermosa (now Hermosa, Bataan) where he was vicar from 1874 to 1878.<sup>44</sup> In the church today, several solomonic or twisted columns are distributed among the three altars, twenty alone on the central retablo (Figs. 34a, 34b, 34c). A detailed examination will determine if some of these are well-carved copies. These pieces then can be linked to the similarly carved solomonic columns which are found in the church of Pilar, Bataan (Fig. 35). Additionally, the central retablo here incorporates a bas-relief of Our Lady of the Rosary, two flanges with broken edges, and two finials that are linked stylistically to the Hermosa columns. The parish of Pilar was founded in 1801 and assigned to the diocesan clergy until it was ceded to the Dominicans in

<sup>42</sup> Pablo Fernandez, O.P., and José Arcilla, S.J., "The Hospital of San Gabriel of Manila," *Philippiniana Sacra* IX:27 (September-December 1974), 530-531.

<sup>43</sup> In a 1774 plan of San Gabriel, the three retablos could have been located in the central altar, the sacristy, and either the oratory of the sacristy or a lateral wall of the chapel. This could account for the "spill-over" of columns in Pilar. Archivo General de Indias: Plano del Hospital y Capilla de San Gabriel de Manila. 1774., ES.41091.AGI/27.11//MP-FILIPINAS,170QUATER; see Cheek S. Fadriquela, Ph.D., "Nuestra Señora del Pronto Socorro Conservation Management Plan," Ms., 2019.

<sup>44</sup> Trapiello was vicar of Llana-Hermosa from 1874 to 1878. Eladio Neira, O.P., Hilario Ocio, O.P., and Gregorio Arnáiz, O.P., *Misioneros Dominicos en el Extremo Oriente 1836-1940* (Manila: [Provincia de Nuestra Señora del Rosario] 2000), 157. The house of Llana-Hermosa was ministered to by the Dominicans from 1756 to 1768, when it was ceded to the diocesan clergy. Wilfredo C. Paguio, "A glimpse on the History of the Province of Bataan (1571-1900)," *Philippiniana Sacra* X:30 (September-December, 1975), 425, 427. The Dominicans returned in 1838. Ruperto Cruz Santos, D.D., "A Pilgrimage of Faith in Bataan (2): Hermosa," *Boletín Eclesiástico de Filipinas*, LXXXIX:899 (September-October 2013), 572-573.



1833.<sup>45</sup> A new church was commenced by Fr. Jesualdo Maria Miñano, O.P. in the latter year.<sup>46</sup> It is quite possible that one of Fr. Miñano's successors had access to the remnants of the retablos in San Gabriel and brought them to Pilar. (This opens the possibility that the columns could have come from other churches damaged by the earthquake, such as Binondo and even Santo Domingo in Intramuros, or demolished by the authorities, such as the Parian.)

Regalado Trota José, 2017



Fig. 36a.

Regalado Trota José, 2017



Fig. 36b.

Regalado Trota José, 2017



Fig. 36c.

Regalado Trota José, 1991



Fig. 37.

<sup>45</sup> Paguio, "A glimpse," 425, 428.

<sup>46</sup> Miñano stayed for only a year and a half in Pilar. Ocio and Neira, *Misioneros*, 460.

**18<sup>th</sup> century columns incorporated in the early 1900s retablos.** Manaoag, Pangasinan (Figs. 38a, 38b.)

Data on the old retablos in Manaoag are insufficient. The retablo that must have been installed in the church soon after its completion in 1722 was renovated (*trató ... de retocar*) in 1739 by three Chinese artists from Lingayen. The retablo was again retouched in 1777, after a *camarin* or chapel for devotees of the Virgin was constructed; it was made more artistic and elegant with columns and medallions representing the mysteries of the rosary (*retocó de nuevo en 1777, en forma más artística y elegante el altar mayor con columnas y medallones representando los misterios del Rosario*).<sup>47</sup> The bas-reliefs here illustrated are stylistically too archaic for 1777. Very possibly, they formed part of the ensemble in 1739, and were replaced in the later “retouching.” Another reading is that the altarpiece with its columns and medallions was *already* existing by 1777 and was retouched in a more artistic manner according to the tastes of the time. Like the bas-reliefs, the two pairs of twisted columns that adorn the side retablos in today’s Sanctuary in Manaoag stylistically were in vogue in the 1720s and 1730s; they must have survived the 1892 earthquake that severely damaged the church. The Tampinco atelier in Manila ingeniously incorporated the baroque columns in the neo-classical altarpieces a few years after 1909.<sup>48</sup>



Fig. 38a.



Fig. 38b.

<sup>47</sup> Rodríguez, *Historia de ... Manaoag*, 135-136.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 342-343.

### Columns from a Retablo. Piat, Cagayan. (Figs. 39a, 39b)

The house of Santo Domingo in Piat was accepted in 1610. The church and convento were built by Fr. Francisco Jiménez in 1740. The pair of columns now in the parish rectory may have been retrieved from this church when it collapsed some time ago. Though richly carved, the decorative elements seem more archaic than the solomonic columns of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, it must be remembered that the revered image of Our Lady of the Visitation was installed in the nearby chapel (now a Sanctuary) in 1623.<sup>49</sup> Therefore, the columns may either be traced to an earlier construction of Santo Domingo, or an early altarpiece from the chapel of Our Lady.



Fig. 39a.



Fig. 39b.

### Photographs of the old central retablo. Lallo, Cagayan. (Figs. 40a, 40b.)

No data are available for the construction of the church of Lallo, which was accepted as a house in 1596. However, there must have been building activity after damages caused by the earthquakes of 1619, 1688, and 1721. (The church was heavily damaged by Allied bombing on 6 January 1945.)<sup>50</sup> Two photographs of the old central retablo (now lost) of the Santo Domingo church in Lallo show tall baroque columns with vigorous vines and floral motifs carved over slightly delineated solomonic twists. Behind the festive arch that obstructs the central section appear smooth solomonic columns intertwined with leafy garlands, like those dated from the 1750s in San Agustin church in Manila. These latter columns may have been added to the older structure in a mid-18<sup>th</sup> century renovation.

<sup>49</sup> Malumbres, *Historia de Cagayan*, 389-390.

<sup>50</sup> Ed de Rivera Castillet, *Cagayan Province and Her People* (Manila: Community Publishers, Inc., 1960), 203.

Courtesy of Fr. Frank Manibog, Lallo



Fig. 40a.

Courtesy of Fr. Frank Manibog, Lallo



Fig. 40b.

**Retablo parts.** Tuao, Cagayan. (Fig. 41a and 41b.)

The monumental church and convento of Tuao, accepted as a house in 1612, are credited to Fr. Diego Piñero, who worked here for three terms (1700-1702, 1704-1706, and 1710-1712).<sup>51</sup> The buildings collapsed in the earthquake of 29 December 1949.<sup>52</sup> Parts of the baroque retablo, which stylistically can be traced back within the first decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, were retrieved from the ruins. Some were re-assembled in a museum. Others were imaginatively re-used as supports and ornaments for the present convent in the compound.

Regalado Trota José, 2008



Fig. 41a.

Regalado Trota José, 2003



Fig. 41b.

<sup>51</sup> Ocio and Neira, *Misioneros*, 245.

<sup>52</sup> Castillet, *Cagayan*, 309-310.



**Canopy from a dismembered retablo.** Salasa, Bugallon, Pangasinan. (Fig. 42.)

Salasa was separated from Lingayen as early as 1720, but it had to be re-established as a vicarage in 1733. According to an inscription that was observed in 1805, the church was built between 1747 and 1748, and was decorated in 1780.<sup>53</sup> The present side retablos (the central altarpiece was taken to Bugallon) with their rocalla features certainly date in style to the 1780s. However, there is an interesting hardwood piece that is unfortunately stuck into the back wall of the sacristy. The carvings on the piece—angel heads, ribbons, and rosary beads ornamenting a shell canopy—show this was a remnant of a retablo that stylistically may date before the 1740s. It may have been a “hand-me-down” piece from its mother parish, Lingayen. This latter church was described in 1691 as extraordinarily large and well-decorated, but due to its great age it was rebuilt in 1710.<sup>54</sup> It may have been around this time that the remnant was brought as a “starter piece” to Salasa.



Fig. 42.

### 3. Furniture

**Long tables and benches.** University of Santo Tomas Library and Museum. (Figs. 43a to 47; 50.)

Students matter-of-factly plop their bags on the heavy long tables in the main hall of the UST Miguel de Benavides Library (Figs. 43a, 44b, 44a, and 44b). Other similar tables go unnoticed in the UST Museum because they serve as supports for more eye-catching exhibits (Figs. 45a, 45b, 46a, 46b, and 47). The students are blissfully unaware that these ponderous furnishings are of great age and value. Some of them appear in early 1900s photographs of the library (Figs. 48, 49a, 49b); the long low benches now in the Museum (Fig. 50) can be made outlining the walls of the room. Though the scientific study of colonial furniture is still in its infancy, these tables by their style and construction can be attributed to the late 17<sup>th</sup> or early 18<sup>th</sup>

<sup>53</sup> González, *Labor evangélica*, 82.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

century of the University, when its student population as well as library was growing. Some of the table corners are elaborately carved with so-called dragon masks, with bulging eyes, growling stares and bared fangs. A table with similar features can be found in the old convento of Binmaley, Pangasinan; however, since it incorporates rococo elements it can be dated to the last third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The tables in UST and those selected in Dagupan below, are therefore datable to an earlier period.



Regalado Trota José, 2016

Fig. 43a.



Regalado Trota José, 2016

Fig. 43b.



Regalado Trota José, 2016

Fig. 44a.



Regalado Trota José, 2016

Fig. 44b.



Regalado Trota José, 2016

Fig. 45a.



Regalado Trota José, 2016

Fig. 45b.



Fig. 46a.



Fig. 46b.



Fig. 47.

G. Miller, *Interesting Manila*  
(Manila, 1912)

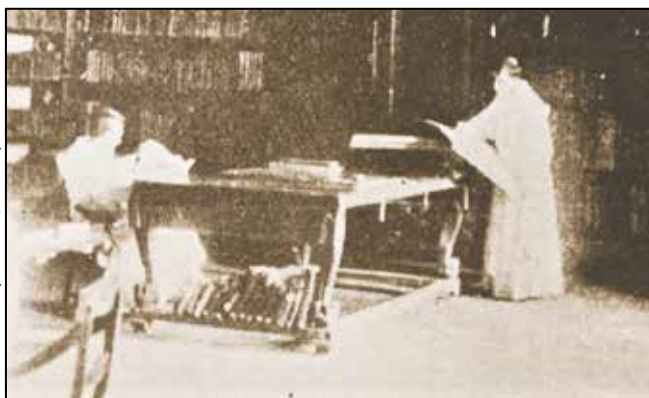


Fig. 48.



General Bulletin..., 1908-1909  
(Manila, 1908)

Fig. 49a.

General Bulletin..., 1908-1909  
(Manila, 1908)

Fig. 49b.

Regalado Trota José, 2016



Fig. 50.

**Furniture** in the old convento, now Archdiocesan Chancery, Dagupan, Pangasinan. (Figs. 51 to 55.)

The various pieces in the building were collected by the late Archbishop Oscar V. Cruz from various parishes in the Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan. Their provenances have still to be straightened out from collection records. Outstanding among them is a *cajonería* (Fig. 51a) literally a chest of drawers, but in the present context a chest of long drawers for keeping liturgical vestments. This one probably came from the sacristy of the old church in Dagupan. There are scant details on the building of the church. Its first Dominican vicar was assigned in 1643. The one described in 1804 was very old and had to be replaced by one built in 1814.<sup>55</sup> This *cajonería* by its features may date from the latter part of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Carved on the eight long drawers are short bands ending in scrolls reminiscent of 17<sup>th</sup> century strapwork. On either end of the cabinet are doors on which are carved three native warriors (Figs. 51b, 51c). On each door the dominant, central figure raises a scimitar-like weapon while holding on to a round shield; he is protected by a helmet and a (leather?) vest; his trousers are rolled up to the knee, and he wears what appear to be wooden shoes! The two smaller figures appear to be arms-bearers or assistants. Surprisingly for a militant scene, the characters are poised on floors of square tiles! Could these warriors have been carved as visual guardians of the precious vestments and sacred utensils stored in the chest?

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 69-70.

Marc Henrich Go, 2013 A



Fig. 51a.

Marc Henrich Go, 2013



Fig. 51b.

Marc Henrich Go, 2013



Fig. 51c.

Another unique piece is an **armchair** (Figs. 52a, 52b) with inscriptions in both Spanish and Ilocano. There were inscribed words at the backrest reminding one to think of only one God. On the edge of the seat and on the footrest are inscribed “This was finished on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March,” unfortunately without giving the year. The crest of the backrest features a circular frame in strapwork, flanked by two medieval-looking lions.

Sherwin Vardeleon, 2011



Fig. 52a.

Sherwin Vardeleon, 2011



Fig. 52b.

Elsewhere in the chancery are **long tables**, (Figs. 53a, 53b, 54a, 54b, 54c, and 55) some of them with the dragon masks that recall those in UST.

Sherwin Vardeleon, 2011



Fig. 53a.

Sherwin Vardeleon, 2011



Fig. 53b.



Fig. 54a.



Fig. 54b.



Fig. 54c.



Fig. 55.

#### 4. Paintings

**Nuestra Señora del Pronto Socorro.** Binondo, Manila. (Fig. 56.)

The history of this manifestation of the Mother of God as Our Lady of Prompt Succor in the Philippines is shrouded in mystery. She is also known as Nuestra Señora de Biglang Aua, as inscribed on this painting as it appeared in 1904. The earliest reference to this Tagalog name is 1691, when Doña Juana Manahin of Bulacan, Bulacan made a bequest of four reales *a la yglesia de nuestra señora de Biglang Ava*. The location of this church is not mentioned though since in the 1694 execution of her will the parish priest of the Parian



Aldrin Ong, 2007

Fig. 56.

received this amount, it may be inferred that the image was then in the Parian.<sup>56</sup> This painting (spelled Biglanaua) was entered in a 1731 inventory of the Parian church.<sup>57</sup> A bell dedicated to Santa Maria de Biclanava was commissioned in 1749 by Juan de Arechederra, bishop of Nueva Segovia and interim governor general. This large bell may have been rung as part of the welcoming celebrations for the Sultan of Jolo, Azim ud-Din, who arrived in Manila in January 1749 and stayed as a guest of Arechederra in Binondo. The bishop was close to the Chinese community, having been assistant vicar (1716-1718) and vicar (1737-1743) of the Hospital de San Gabriel,<sup>58</sup> and he also may have donated this bell as a token of love for the patroness of the Parian.<sup>59</sup> Francisco Gainza, parish priest of the Parian mentioned the *sitio de Biglang aua* as one of the communities of the old Parian, which by the time he was writing in 1847, had already been dismantled (since 1791) and its cult transferred to the Hospital de San Gabriel across the Pasig River.<sup>60</sup> After the destruction of the Hospital in the earthquake of 1863, the painting was brought to its present sanctuary in Binondo; a novena in her honor was published here in 1865.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>56</sup> Archivo de la Provincia de los Agustinos Filipinos, Valladolid (APAF), "Testamento y Disposicion de Bienes de Doña Juana Manahin y Fundacion de Capellanía con Condiciones," Bulacan, July 1694, 2288, 370, N. 1-a.

<sup>57</sup> Archivo de la Provincia del Santísimo Rosario, Ávila (APSR), "Libro donde [...] las Joyas de Diamantes [...] 1731," Sección Erección de Provincia, Tomo 24, fol. 56.

<sup>58</sup> Ocio and Neira, *Misioneros*, 278.

<sup>59</sup> Regalado Trota Jose, *Bagting: The Valuation of Time and Memory in Spanish Colonial Philippines. Part II of Of War and Peace: Lantakas and Bells in Search for Foundries in the Philippines* (Manila: UST Publishing House, 2010), 175.

<sup>60</sup> AUST, "Memoria sobre el origen, progresos, variaciones y estado actual de la Yglesia de los Santos Reyes del Parian destinada para la administracion espiritual de los sangleyes cristianos por Fr. Francisco Gainza su actual parroco. 1847 Años," Folletos 115.22, fol. 92v.

<sup>61</sup> Fadriquela, "Nuestra Señora del Pronto Socorro," 17. This is a full report on the material properties of the painting, and a summary of all relevant data collected as of 2019.



According to the late art historian Santiago Albano Pilar, the *Biglang Aua* is one of the earliest paintings in the country.<sup>62</sup> Curiously, although it is of local origin, it is painted on a brass plate. Ornaments applied on the painting surface are of alloys of silver and copper; many of them are flattened versions of worked gold beads of 18<sup>th</sup> century style or earlier.

**Front page of a copy of Aristotle's theses, 1636.** Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomás: Libros 104. (Fig. 57)

A meticulously handwritten compilation of Aristotle's theses was used in the ritual assignation of topics that were to form the bases of examinations leading to the degree in philosophy. Its cover features the earliest University seal, a colored drawing dated 1636.<sup>63</sup> The central motif is the sun of Aquinas in the middle of the Dominican cross, encircled by 50 rosary beads set in a shield of strapwork, a style proper to the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. On the four corners of the page are lines drawn by a pointed instrument that indicate that these corners were intended to be decorated with leafy designs like those executed in silver on the front and back covers (see Figs. 60a and 60b below).

The model for the seal may have been the frontispieces of books such as Melchor de Manzano's *Relación verdadera* on the Dominican martyrs of Japan, printed in the Dominicans' Hospital de San Gabriel in Binondo in 1623. On Manzano's title page, the strapwork cartouche encloses a shield framed in a rosary of 50 beads and 4 Padres Nuestrros (Fig. 58).<sup>64</sup>



Fig. 57.

Retana, *Orígenes de Imprenta Filipina* (Madrid, 1911)



Fig. 58.

<sup>62</sup> Santiago Albano Pilar, as cited in Fadriquela, "Nuestra Señora," 8-9.

<sup>63</sup> The inscription on the title page reads: "De la Vniuersidad/ Año de 1636/ De Sancto Thomas." Villarreal, *A History*, Vol. 1, 68-70.

<sup>64</sup> Wenceslao Retana, *Orígenes de Imprenta Filipina* (Madrid, 1911), 25; title page in p. 155-LI.

### Ceiling paintings. Fotel (now Pudtol), Apayao. (Figs. 59a, 59b.)

Apart from the paintings on the ceilings of the refectory and sacristy, and on one wall of the monastery, in the church of San Agustín in Intramuros, Manila, the only other extant mural painting of the same period is in the ruined church of Fotel (also spelled Fottol; now Pudtol, in the province of Apayao). The church was built in stone by Father Pedro Ximénez in 1675-1676.<sup>65</sup> Even though the façade and most of the walls have disappeared, the solid masonry vault over the presbytery of the church is still standing. On its apex and whitewashed walls can still be discerned, if faintly, traces of vine-like designs: a reddish pigment was used for the heart-shaped leaves, while black was used to limn the branches and leaf veins.



Fig. 59a.



Fig. 59b.

## 5. Silverwork

**Silver covers of the “Libros de piques.”** Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomás: Libros 104 (Figs. 60a, 60b) and Libros 109. (Figs. 61a, 61b)

The covers of two books in the AUST are mounted with silver fittings that denote not only their high material value but their significance in the life of the fledgling university. The two codices were used in the ritual assignation of topics that were to form the bases of examinations leading to the degrees in philosophy and theology.<sup>66</sup> The examination book for philosophy, a handwritten compilation of Aristotle's theses (Figs. 60a, 60b) has been discussed earlier (see the front page, Fig. 57). The examination book for Theology (Figs. 61a, 61b) is a 1564 Madrid edition of Peter Lombard's *Four Books of Sentences*.<sup>67</sup> The book used to belong to the

<sup>65</sup> Julian Malumbres, O.P., *Historia de Nueva-Vizcaya y Provincia Montañosa* (Manila: Tip. Linotype del Col. de Sto. Tomás 1919), 370-371. Regalado Trota Jose, “A Visual Documentation on Fil-Hispanic Churches. Part 18. Churches in Fotel and Capinatan, Apayao,” *Philippiniana Sacra* LIII:159 (May-August 2018).

<sup>66</sup> Villaruel, *A History*, Vol. 1, 68-70.

<sup>67</sup> AUST, Libros 109. *Petri Lombardi Episcopi Parisiensis Sententiarum Libri IIII* (Paris: Apud Audoënum Pa[-]uum, sub insigni Divi Liliij, in via Iacobaea, 1564).

Augustinian friar Miguel Garcia Serrano, who was later consecrated archbishop of Manila in 1619. The *Sentences* must have reached UST after Archbishop Serrano died on 6 June 1629.

AUST



Fig. 60a.

AUST



Fig. 60b.

AUST



Fig. 61a.

AUST



Fig. 61b.

The front cover of the Aristotle replicates the Thomasian seal and strapwork frame on the 1636 page. On its back are the symbols of St. Catherine of Alexandria, secondary patron of the school.<sup>68</sup> In the Lombard, the order is reversed: St. Catherine's spiked wheel and sword are in front, while the Thomasian sun is at the back. Both motifs are encircled by beads, which could symbolize the rosary (the silver on the Aristotle has 52 beads in front and 51 in the back, compared to the correct 50 on the watercolor; the Lombard has 42 in front, and only 28 in the back).

The silverwork is undated, although it would not date much later than 1636 when the Aristotle was created. Each book carries a curious inscription on the lower edge of the title page. On the Aristotle: "Está el engaste de este libro con plata y echura en veinte y tres p.s. No es cobre" (The trimming of this book is of silver with workmanship worth 23 pesos. It is not copper). On the Lombard: "Está el engaste de este libro con plata, y echuras en diez y seis p." (The trimming of this book is of silver, costing 16 pesos). If we consider that a family's yearly tribute to the government, decreed in 1589, was 1 peso and 2 reales (one real equal to one eighth of a peso),<sup>69</sup> the Aristotle's silver would have been worth 16.4 years of tribute, that of the Lombard 11.4 years. Not cheap indeed!

The assessor's handwriting on the Aristotle differs from that of the Lombard, just as the execution and artistic style of the silverwork on either book are dissimilar, indicating different silversmiths. Basically, the Aristotle has more cutwork and features raised in relief, while the Lombard has more incised decorations on a flat sheet.

### **Table bell.** UST Museum. (Fig. 62.)

This artifact has been separated from the section on church bells primarily because of its different function and silver craftsmanship. On its hip can be unscrambled this inscription: "[Universidad de] Santo Tomás Año de 1684."<sup>70</sup> It carries the Dominican cross on its waist; the minuscule dashes framing the cross

<sup>68</sup> According to legend, St. Catherine was tortured on a spiked wheel and then beheaded after having converted fifty pagan philosophers through debates over Christianity, hence her patronage of philosophers and apologists of the faith; *Butler's Lives of Patron Saints*, edited and with additional material by Michael Walsh (Turnbridge Wells, Kent: Burns & Oates, 1987), 97. The UST Statutes of 1734 confirmed St. Catherine as secondary patron of the school: Villarroel, *A History*, Vol. 1, 193.

<sup>69</sup> Luis Alonso Álvarez, "Don Quijote in the Pacific: The Construction of the Spanish Project in Asia, 1591-1606," in Jorge Mojarro, ed., *More Hispanic Than We Admit 3* (Quezon City: Vibal Foundation, Inc. 2020), 355, 363, 367. In 1573, when the tribute was equivalent to 7.5 *reales* (with eight *reales* to a peso, this was 1/16<sup>th</sup> less of a peso), the *indios* could still pay in kind: a blanket measuring two by one *varas* (about 1.68 x 0.84 m.) plus two *fanegas* (about 111 liters) of rice. *Ibid.*, 354.

<sup>70</sup> Villarroel, *A History*, 1, 530.

number to about 48, the closest to a rosary the silversmith perhaps could achieve. Its place in the university life cannot be clearly ascertained; but it is displayed in the UST Museum along with other paraphernalia used for the graduation examinations.

UST Museum. Villaroel, *A History*, 1, 530



Fig. 62.

**Monstrance.** Paniqui, Tarlac. (Fig. 63.)

Paniqui was accepted as a house in 1686, and attached to Telbang (an adjunct of Bayambang) until 1718, when it was erected as a vicarage.<sup>71</sup> A monstrance kept in the church manifests elements of the 17<sup>th</sup> century: arched “ears” protruding from the nodes, and especially the alternating pointed and wavy rays surrounding the pyx.<sup>72</sup> It should be noted, however, that the use of “ears” which occur with 17<sup>th</sup> century strapwork survived in isolated pieces at least until way into the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Similar “ears” sprout from the silver candlestands and a mounted silver crucifix in the Archbishop’s Palace in Vigan, Ilocos Sur; they were sent there by Bishop Juan de la Fuente Yepes in 1755.



Sabino Mejia, 2013

Fig. 63.

<sup>71</sup> González, *Labor evangélica*, 121.

<sup>72</sup> Regalado Trota José, “Santos, sacred vessels and church accessories,” in Archbishop Socrates B. Villegas, D.D., ed., *Pananisia. Heritage and Legacy*, (N.p.: Archdiocese of Lingayen-Dagupan, 2014), 127.



## 6. Bells

**Sta. Maria de Binalatoca bell**, Camalaniugan, Cagayan. (Figs. 64a, 64b, 64c, 64d.)

The oldest bell in the country still hangs from the (modern) belfry in Camalaniugan, Cagayan. On its hip can be unscrambled this inscription: SANTA. MARIA. DE. BiNALATOCA. ORA PRO NOBIS. 1.5.9.5. Though the house of Camalaniugan was accepted in 1596, the name of the bell is most closely related to Binalatongan: this was the first mission of the Dominicans in Pangasinan, which was accepted formally in 1588. The town was the center of a rebellion when it broke out in 1763. When it was put down, the place was ordered to be burned by the king and relocated to what is present-day San Carlos City (for good measure, he gave it his name as well). The Binalatoca bell may have been “exiled” to far-away Cagayan. This gives rise to the prospect of the diaspora of objects due to political reasons.<sup>73</sup>



Fig. 64a.



Fig. 64b.



Fig. 64c.



Fig. 64d.

<sup>73</sup> At least one bell was left in the community. In the visitation report of San Carlos in 1804-1805, the Dominican provincial secretary Fr. Manuel Mora recorded a large bell consecrated by Bishop Ginés Barrientos in 1690. APSR, "2. Seccion de Ministerios Tomo 2. Estado de las casas de la Provincia en Filipinas, años 1804-1805," Reel 21.

### **Santo Domingo and another bell, Lallo, Cagayan. (Figs. 65a, 65b, 66.)**

The town just south of Camalaniugan is Lallo. One bell is inscribed on its lip: STO. DOMINGO DE LALLO AÑO DE 1694. The other bell, an *esquilon* (a bell that rotated on its axis), has no inscription or date, but its shape conforms to 17<sup>th</sup> century bells.<sup>74</sup>

Regalado Trota José, 2019

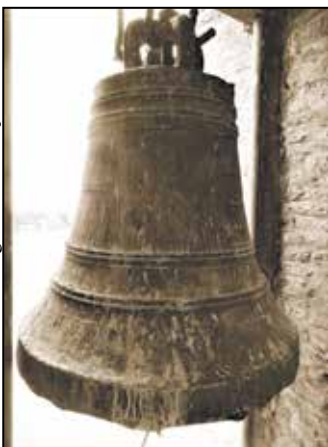


Fig. 65a.

Regalado Trota José, 2019



Fig. 65b.

Regalado Trota José, 2019



Fig. 66.

<sup>74</sup> Regalado Trota José, "A Visual Documentation on Fil-Hispanic Churches. Part 20. The Churches of Lallo and Tocolana in Cagayan," *Philippiniana Sacra* LIV:161 (January-April, 2019).

**San Miguel bell, Nassiping, Gattaran, Cagayan. (Fig. 67.)**

Further south of Lallo is Nassiping, an important town in the 17<sup>th</sup> century but now a district of Gattaran. A bell that used to hang in the tower (it was stolen in 2005) had this inscription on its hip: + S.TE MiCHAEL: ORA PRO NOBiSNASiPiNG: IVNIO .6. DE 1726.<sup>75</sup>

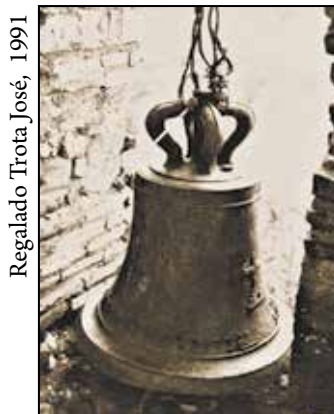


Fig. 67.

**Other bells in Cagayan**

The benchmark pieces described above provide at least two characteristics of bells from the 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century: elongated proportions and numerous moulding wires (raised horizontal bands involved in the casting of the bells).<sup>76</sup> We can thus consider two bells each in Tabang, now Faire (Figs. 68, 69) and Tuao (Figs. 70, 71), and one in the Archbishop's Residence in Tuguegarao (Fig. 72), dating to the period under discussion. The province of Cagayan can lay claim to the greatest number of early bells in the Philippines.



Fig. 68.

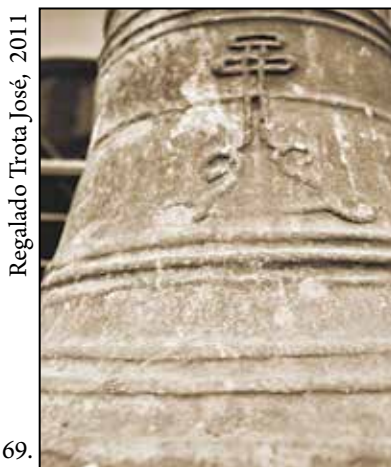


Fig. 69.

<sup>75</sup> Regalado Trota Jose, "A Visual Documentation on Fil-Hispanic Churches. Part 22. The Church of San Miguel Arcángel, Nassiping, Cagayan," *Philippiniana Sacra* LIV:163 (September-December, 2019), 567.

<sup>76</sup> José, *Bagting*, 19, 117.

Regalado Trota José, 2002



Fig. 70.

Regalado Trota José, 2002



Fig. 72.

Regalado Trota José, 2002



Fig. 71.

## 7. Baptismal fonts

Since baptism was an integral part of Christian life, it is very possible to assume that the baptismal fonts of stone that are still extant in Cagayan: Nassiping (Fig. 73), Tuguegarao (Fig. 74), and unprovenanced one in the Archdiocesan Museum in Aparri (Fig. 75) date from the early years of these churches.

Cagayan Provincial  
Calendar 1970s



Fig. 73.

Regalado Trota José, 2002



Fig. 74.

Regalado Trota José, 2002



Fig. 75.

## Conclusion

Despite the lack of data, it is possible to hypothesize some scenarios that can aid in identifying artifacts from the earliest years of Christianization. Putting together lists of parish priests, and combining these with historical accounts, yield approximate years for the existence or fashioning of objects. Dated artifacts provide us benchmarks for style, iconography, and technique. At the same time, such identified objects must also be juxtaposed with their image or artifactual “biographies” in order to discern the layers of interventions such objects underwent, such as repairs, paint overlays, dis-assemblies, re-compositions, relocations, and the like.



I have presented here a range of works of art that are anticipated to date from the late 16<sup>th</sup> to the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It is hoped that further testing or research can validate their dates, so that a more nuanced history of the development of art in colonial Philippines can be written. For the Dominicans, the province of Cagayan—with the island of Fuga—has yielded the greatest number of pertinent artifacts, in terms of sculpture, retablos, and bells. In contrast, furniture has better survived in Pangasinan and Manila (thanks to the University of Santo Tomás' escape from the destruction of World War II). Thanks to the survival of records, early ivories have been located in Spain. As more and more items are identified and dated, artistic styles can be defined, and artistic movements plotted. Such knowledge will be invaluable in assessing the significance of excellent, rare, and unique works, in the prioritization of conservation projects, and in the selection of appropriate motifs or icons for special occasions or institutions, among many other benefits. This is all tantalizing, but it will always have to be eked out from the slow and constant study of sources. **PS**

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