

Philippine Style on Wood Screens: Early-Modern Altarpieces in Manila and the Archipelago

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Abstract: Early modern altarpieces constitute one of the most numerous collections of art in the Philippines and one of the most characteristic elements of religious heritage. Even so, art historians have paid little attention to their development and their chronology. This paper aims to provide a formal framework to date the archipelago's altarpieces from the sixteenth through the eighteenth century, highlighting both the European reference points and local artistic customs. After the fieldwork is described, a list of altarpieces located in various churches on the islands has been carried out, organising them both formally and chronologically. As a result, other pieces identified in the future would be easily dated following this pattern.

Keywords: altarpieces, religious heritage, woodcarving, Baroque, History of Art

Religious heritage has played a significant role in the image of the Philippines during the colonial period. Therefore, much work has been published in recent decades, mainly on religious architecture and, to a lesser extent, on artworks.¹ Despite these efforts, very little has been proffered about

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¹ René B. Javellana, *Wood & Stone for God's Greater Glory: Jesuit Art & Architecture in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991); Regalado Trota José, *Simbahan: Church art in colonial Philippines. 1565-1898* (Manila: Ayala Foundation, 1992); Nicanor G. Tiongson, et al., *Igkas Arte. The Philippine Arts during the Spanish Period* (Manila: CCP-AECI, 1998); Pedro G. Galende y Regalado Trota José, *San Agustín Art & History. 1571-2000* (Manila: San Agustín Museum, 2000); René B. Javellana, *La Casa de Dios. The Legacy of Filipino-Hispanic Churches in the Philippines* (Pasig: Ortigas Foundation, 2010).

the development of the altarpieces constructed during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries.² Altarpieces are numerous in the archipelago and due to their characteristics are a necessary starting point to examine the incorporation and reinterpretation of international ornamental fashions.³ Moreover, local woodcarving traditions, and to a lesser extent those in stonemasonry, allow us to connect regional trends with Spanish patterns.



Fig. 1. Pictorial altarpiece found in the cloister of the San Agustín Convent, Manila. Photo by the author.

² Lalaine Bangilan Liittle, *Retablo: Configuring Relationships, Spaces, and Activities in the Eighteenth century Spanish Philippines*, Doctoral Dissertation, (New York: SUNY, 2019; Ino Manalo, "Binangonan: A Retablo like No Other," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 43 (1/2), 2015: 140-197; More recently, see Roy John De Guzman and Juan Carlos G. Cham, "Letanía: Architectural Documentation of the Retablos of San Agustín Church in Manila," *Journal of Traditional Building, Architecture and Urbanism*, 1 (2020): 323-330; Raquel A. G. Reyes, "Paradise in Stone: Representations of New World Plants and Animals on Spanish Colonial Churches in the Philippines," in Raquel A. G. Reyes (ed.), *Art Trade, and Cultural Mediation in Asia, 1600-1950*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 43-74.

³ For the development of the altarpieces in Seville, as a case study of the larger Spanish evolution, see Fátima Halcón, Francisco Herrera, Álvaro Recio, *El retablo barroco sevillano* (Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla-Fundación El Monte, 2000); With a similar aim, but focusing on Mexican developments, see Armando Ruiz (ed.), *Los Retablos de la Ciudad de México. Siglos XVI al XX* (México: Asociación del Patrimonio artístico mexicano, A.C., 2005); or for Colombian examples, Adrián Contreras Guerrero, *Historia del retablo neogranadino (1550-1800)* (Córdoba: Editorial Universidad de Córdoba, 2020).

This paper aims to elucidate a chronological and stylistic development of the early-modern Philippine altarpieces, from the late sixteenth-century to the late eighteenth-century. To do so, a preliminary inventory of examples located throughout the archipelago has been created, numbering around one-hundred cases. This formal approach has important limitations to be considered. First, many have been drastically refurbished, affecting this study's formal considerations. Second, some may be contemporary reconstructions that include previous elements or even contemporary pieces in an older style, although many have been rejected from this study for these reasons. After this inventory, decorative elements have been compared, first with the few examples of projects designed for the Philippines, later cross-referenced with the altarpieces already dated by other studies, and finally connected with the chronological and stylistic development of the altarpieces in New Spain and Europe. As part of this process, those elements that are difficult to associate with any of these traditions have been compared with other Southeast Asian ornamental traditions, underlining the persistence of local artistic customs. To organise a large number of cases, a chronological categorisation is provided, although it is possible that future archival research might provide greater detail thereon.

The seventeenth century: Renaissance reinterpretations

After the arrival of the Spanish in 1565, the first altarpieces were painted on walls or produced in silk.⁴ Very few examples of this type have been preserved, one of them on the walls of the courtyard of San Agustín in Manila (Fig. 1). Although only half of the piece is still painted, some patterns can be identified. The altarpiece is articulated by pairs of Corinthian fluted columns or pillars. Between them are included geometric decorations in square, oval, or rhomboidal shapes. On the side of the altarpiece, a stylised volute with vegetal decoration and a garland hanging from the upper part is found. This description does not fit with the altarpieces articulated by banisters that can be found in Spain and Mexico starting in the second half of the sixteenth century. On the contrary, the use of a more limited classical vocabulary supports a later date for this altarpiece. This proposal must come from an Italian, or perhaps a German, treatises of the time, such as Serlio (1551) or Dietterlin (1593-1594). Very likely, other Spanish decorations included in publications such as the treatise of Lorenzo de San Nicolás (the second volume of 1667) reached the islands at this early date. For example, the form of the lateral volute might relate to other peninsular examples, and specifically with that of San Nicolás (1667: 186). All these forms were common in Christian altarpieces in Asia at the beginning of

⁴ Pedro Luengo, *The Convents of Manila. Globalized architecture during the Iberian Union* (Quezon City: Ateneo University Press, 2018).

the seventeenth century, as paintings found in the National Museum of Japan clearly show.⁵



Fig. 2. Altarpiece carved by Juan de los Santos in 1617 according to José and Galende. Photo by the author.

The first dated altarpiece of the islands is the one designed by Juan de los Santos in 1617 for the church of San Agustín in Manila (Fig. 2). It is now preserved in the museum of the convent and is organised by Corinthian fluted columns in four levels and seven lines for housing sculptures. The frieze is decorated with garlands, flowers, and geometric shapes at every level. Every niche is covered by a shell in a manner that can be connected with the more-developed altarpieces of Andrés de Ocampo (+1623) in Andalusia or the example of San Bernardino de Siena in Xochimilco (Mexico). The same museum preserves an altarpiece dedicated to Saint William the Hermit that follows a similar pattern (Fig. 3). Today, it is in the cloister, but it was originally built for the chapel of this devotion. It has a single register flanked by pairs of Corinthian columns with geometric shapes along with them. The attic follows a similar pattern when compared with the painted example at the same institution: lateral volutes with garlands and vegetal decoration. Interesting elements of this piece are the first level's broken pediment, the attic's scrolled pediment, and the pyramids. All these decorations are commonly found in Spanish designs of the period, although not in the Philippines, perhaps because of the lack of examples.

⁵ *Tabernacle of The Three Martyrs*. 1600s. National Museum, Tokyo.

This altarpiece should not be confused with another altarpiece commissioned by the homonym brotherhood of the convent in 1725, as José and Galende documented because the stylistic features are far removed from this period.

A slightly later contract to build an altarpiece for Lilio (Laguna) was published by Potet.⁶ In 1646, a team of three Chinese artists named Ti, Lawo, and Chaptico living in Siniloan was commissioned to finish the piece. It was organised by pairs of columns, carved panels, and a canopy. The description is very similar to the sort of pieces that have been included in this section. Other than the carving, the contract also includes the painting works, probably without gold, which is not mentioned in the contract.



Fig. 3. Altarpiece of Saint William the Hermit. Cloister of San Agustín Convent. Manila, Philippines. Photo by the author.

⁶ Jean-Paul F. Potet, *Seventeenth-Century Events at Liliw* (Raleigh: Lulu Press, 2013), 32-33, 78-81.

Not many Philippine altarpieces follow similar patterns. This is logical in the context of the history of missionary expansion in the archipelago. After the founding of Cebu (1565) and of Manila (1571), the first churches were built in these cities and their environs. Only from the second half of the seventeenth century onward, as a result of a more stable political and economic situation, did other neighbouring areas receive similar attention and funds from missionary orders to build elaborate altarpieces. However, an exception can be found, that of the lateral altarpieces of the Church of Our Lady of Candelaria, Silang, Cavite.⁷ The presence of missionaries in the village has been dated as far back as 1601, although it was not until 1639 that a stony church was finished there under Jesuit supervision.



Fig. 4. Altarpiece of the Virgin of Bethlehem, (ca. 1588). Anunciación Church, Seville (Spain). Photo by the author.

The altarpieces were built in wood and probably painted white in the eighteenth century to imitate stone. Only some red and green polychrome has been found for vegetal decoration. In general, the quality of the carving of these three pieces is better than those already mentioned. Like the aforementioned examples, it

⁷ Phillip Medina, *Angeli Dei. Angels of God in Silang's Retablos* ([Silang]: Museo de Silang, 2020), ebook.

shares the articulation, with pairs of columns or geometrical decorations. Important developments must be noted here: the general organisation in two levels with a single attic, using a very classical design for the pediment, the replacement of niches for sculptures with carved panels, and the adornment of angels with feather crowns. All these innovations can be found in other Jesuit buildings in the seventeenth-century Philippines, such as the Loboc (Bohol) Church's exterior decoration, but not in altarpieces. Even the façade of the Saint Paul Church in Macao, 1637-1640, shares many similarities. Very likely these two altarpieces can be considered the first local proposals in a large structure near the capital, something that is difficult to find in other territories under Spanish control at the time. Asian craftsmen interpreted the European models, emphasizing local taste in contrast to international trends, albeit in a very limited manner.

A few altarpieces should be included at the end of this epigraph because they share some features with the previously mentioned examples, but these also show some innovations that must be understood as later incorporations. The best example is the altarpiece of *San Juan de Sahagún*, today in the San Agustín Cloister, but probably originally placed in the church (Fig. 5). Compared with the one of Saint William, the pediments and pyramids remain while some important decorations have been included. Geometric shapes became garlands. Fluted columns have been embellished with hanging medallions and garlands as well as angels' heads in the lower third. An interesting aspect must be highlighted: the image of a saint in relief is located on a plinth, which is in accord with Spanish trends during the first half of the seventeenth century. This type of image is probable that reached the archipelago through devotional prints, appearing in these pieces during the second half of the century.

One of the few altarpieces that gained the attention of researchers is the oldest one preserved in Binangonan (Rizal), one of the villages alongside Laguna de Bay. It repeats the organisation of Corinthian columns in pairs with broken pediments at the top. Adornment of angels in the lowest third of the columns, small panels with quadrangular boxes, and upper vegetal decoration around oval registers, known as *targas*, is a clear development from the previous example and should be considered as a specimen from the second half of the seventeenth century. Only the unorthodox display of the pediment must be considered a local interpretation, as already noted by various scholars. As Manalo has pointed out, the lowest panels of the altarpiece, although not entirely preserved, are clear examples of a Chinese interpretation of sixteenth-century European engravings.

These same features can be found in an altarpiece preserved today in the San Agustín Museum collection (Fig. 7). With two levels of paired thin fluted columns,

it exhibits some novelties. The niches are designed to host a freestanding sculpture rather than merely carved panels. Plinths correspond with the typical seventeenth-century pattern in Spain. Columns are supported by pedestals, an option which is not rare in Europe, but is an exception in the archipelago. Finally, side flaps exemplify the carving trends of the mid-to-late seventeenth century in the Philippines, as has been noted for the Binangonan specimen.

While the Solomonic columns were incorporated first in Spain and later in Mexico, their impact in the Philippines has not been discovered in the second half of the seventeenth century. Something similar can be said about the decoration of the shafts of columns with flowers or geometric shapes. These elements will be found in the islands only in later examples.



Fig. 5. Altarpiece of Saint John of Sahagun. Cloister of San Agustín. Manila, Philippines; Altarpiece of Saint Thomas of Villanueva. Cloister of San Agustín. Manila, Philippines. Photos by the author.



Fig. 6. Altarpiece of Saint John the Baptist, by Juan Martínez Montañés (1610-1620). Anunciación Church, Seville (Spain). Photo by the author.

Fig. 7. Altarpiece. Today at San Agustín Museum, Manila. Photo by the author.



One final feature of these altarpieces should be underlined: their polychrome. All of them have received multiple restorations throughout their existence, likely being repainted during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Nevertheless, the painted one at the San Agustín Cloister and some others share the use of dark ochre. At the same time, both in Spain and America, altarpieces were covered mainly by gold, a technique and material probably difficult to obtain in the Philippines at this early period, and far the local. These altarpieces were likely painted in this colour to imitate the image of the Spanish works. Apart from this element, some of the preserved altarpieces also maintain their white ornamentation. This is an uncommon selection in Spanish territories, being described in the Philippines as a solution of the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth-century, precisely when the Royal Academy also imposed this same pattern in the metropolis. For this reason, it seems likely that these altarpieces were painted in accord with the new style at this time, although that is difficult to confirm with current information.



Fig. 8. Engraving of Nuestra Señora de Guía in its altarpiece. Manila, 1711.

The first half of the eighteenth century: The Solomonic altarpieces

The first instances of Solomonic altarpieces appear in the Philippines at the beginning of the eighteenth century. These altarpieces became part of artistic proposals in Spain between the second half of the seventeenth century and the 1720s.⁸ They had similar importance in Mexico, as Fernández has shown.⁹ Along with this new element, a different conception of the altarpiece appeared. While seventeenth-century artisans preferred carved polychromed panels, freestanding and golden sculptures predominated artistically during the eighteenth century.¹⁰ The first example that brings together both innovations is the engraving of the altarpiece of Nuestra Señora de Guía in Ermita (Manila), printed in 1711 (Fig. 8).¹¹ On one hand, the flanks still preserve the winding profile of the volute and the decoration of plump fruits. On the other hand, the Solomonic column is included. The pattern of decoration must be emphasized because it does not follow the traditional reference of Bernini's baldachin, but a more elaborate pattern that can be found previously on Mexican fronts, such as that of San Francisco in San Luis Potosí (1686). Further information about the consolidation of Solomonic columns in Manila can be obtained from the engravings of burial mounds (*túmulos funerarios*).¹² The examples of the ephemeral mounds of Pope Benedict XIII (1733), Governor Gaspar de la Torre (1745), and King Philip V (1748) all include Solomonic proposals and decorated volutes in the form of flaps.

As José and Galende has already published, two altarpieces were built for the San Agustín Church at the beginning of the century, both commissioned by colonial governors.¹³ The first was patronised by Fausto Cruzat in 1702 and dedicated to the homonym saint. The second was commissioned by Martín de Ursúa prior to 1715 for the Santo Cristo de Burgos (Fig. 9). Preserved altarpieces in the church must be dated later, while two cases today in other rooms might correspond to this date. The simplest is preserved next to the upper choir and includes two pairs of Solomonic columns, the decoration of which is divided into thirds. Flanking the structure, the

⁸ Fátima Halcón, "El retablo salomónico," in Fátima Halcón, Francisco Herrera, and Álvaro Recio, *El retablo*, 3.

⁹ Martha Fernández, *Cristóbal de Medina Vargas y la arquitectura salomónica en la Nueva España durante el siglo XVII* (Mexico: UNAM-IIE, 2002). See also Martha Fernández, "El salomónico en la catedral," in VV.AA., *La catedral de México* (Mexico: BBVA Bancomer, 2014), 151-184.

¹⁰ Pedro Luengo, "Notas sobre arquitectura y retablos en las iglesias de los arrabales de Manila en 1782," in Pedro San Ginés Aguilar (ed.), *Cruce de miradas, relaciones e intercambios* (Zaragoza: Universidad de Zaragoza, 2010), 265-278.

¹¹ Regalado Trota José, "A Celebration of God's Creatures as seen in historic Philippine church art," *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. LII, n° 157 (2017): 897-924.

¹² Pedro Luengo, "En nombre del rey. Exequias en Goa y Manila a mediados del siglo XVIII," *Potestas*, 5 (2012): 219-234.

¹³ Regalado Trota José and Pedro Galende, *San Agustín Art & History*.

profile of the volutes maintains sharp shapes, reducing the dimensions of the garlands. From this time forward, the lower part of the volute is decorated with leaves. A very similar line follows in the second altarpiece, today located at the sacristy. The most significant difference is in the attic, which includes a double-scrolled pediment. In contrast to all the aforementioned cases, its design is not the result of a classically divided pediment, but instead a local interpretation. While its decoration reflects the European tradition, the general shape of the element is more akin to Chinese roofs, and specifically the Chiwen 螭吻. At the centre of the structure, a carved panel is flanked by two pillars with geometric shapes and two volutes in a very dynamic form, crowned by a curved pediment. Like other cultural phenomena in the archipelago, the eighteenth century opened a new chapter wherein local influence is much more evident. While previous cases can be seen as reinterpretations of foreign models, at this time altarpieces had been integrated as local pieces by artisans.

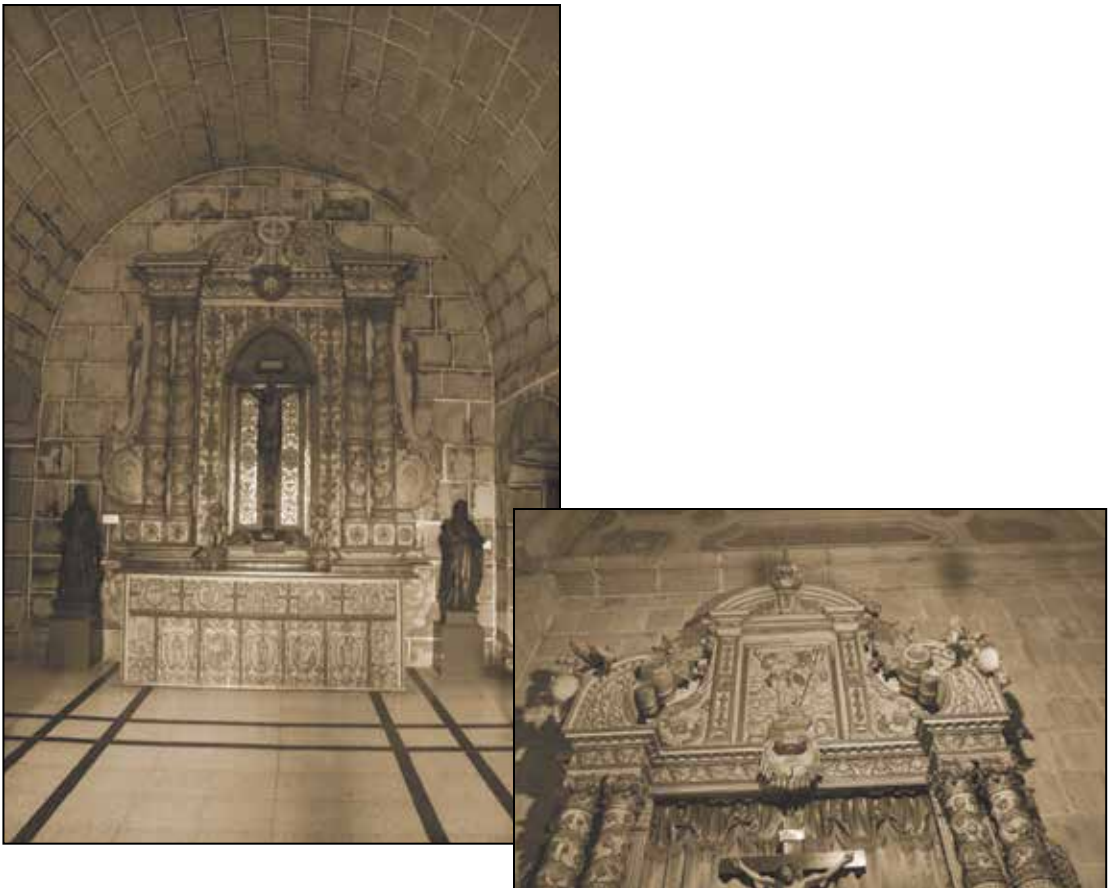


Fig. 9. Altarpieces of the San Agustín Convent, Manila, likely dating to 1702 and 1715. Photo by the author.

If the arrival of the Solomonian column to the Philippine altarpieces can be dated to the first years of the eighteenth century, this can be used to date the interesting example in Boljoon (Cebu).¹⁴ The structure is organised with groups of three thin-fluted columns without decoration. This would lead one to posit an earlier date, but some of these elements are Solomonian columns, which must be understood as a transition between both types of altarpieces. Dwelling on this proposal, the carved decoration is extended throughout the entire structure, in the dense forms explained above. Furthermore, the scrolled pediments have here clearly evolved in complex forms according to local tastes, which surely dates them to the first half of the eighteenth century.

A similar case can be found in the Cathedral of Boac (Marinduque) and its three altarpieces located today at the same presbytery. Solomonian forms are here merely alluded to, the altarpiece preserving a canonical interpretation of scrolled pediments. Side flaps along with carved decorations are like those from the first half of the eighteenth century. The evolution of altarpieces in Marinduque, started in Boac, can be followed in the three examples from Santa Cruz de Napo. Solomonian columns are here clearly adopted, leaving the lowest third for complex decorations. Lateral flaps and the orthodox interpretation of pediments necessitate an early date in the eighteenth century, as do the use of cartouches, a seventeenth-century form in Europe later adapted in the Philippines. Despite this coherence, several elements might point to numerous reconstructions of the pieces. On one hand, most of the niches are prepared for still-preserved carved panels, which is common for previous examples. Along the same line, some panels with symbols, especially at the main altar, are likely to have been carved in the seventeenth century or are a relic. On the other hand, upper vessels, some carved panels, and the main altar's flaps, apart from generally white painting, appear to be an attempt to portray a more modern aspect of an older structure at the beginning of the nineteenth century. In sum, it can be understood that new decorative forms were arriving in Marinduque Island from the capital, although some artistic remnants remained. These same regional reinterpretations can be found in most of the examples included in this study, which might lead us to assume that altarpieces were not designed or made in the capital and later sent to the missions but instead were carved by local artisans trying to emulate the forms in vogue in Manila. Probably, for this reason, altarpieces might be considered examples of a pluralist heritage, representing the artistic production of different regions within the archipelago.

¹⁴ Ino Manalo, "Reading Boljoon from Records to *Retablos*," *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*, 44 (1/2), 2016: 92-182.



Fig. 10. The main altarpiece in Holy Cross Parish, Nabua (Camarines Sur). Photo by Joel Aldor.

While these cases show the importance of local reinterpretations of Western forms, other altarpieces preserved today far from the capital are noteworthy examples of accurate designs, e.g. the one at Nabua (Camarines Sur) (Fig. 10).¹⁵ The main altar used pairs of Solomonic columns with an orthodox interpretation of pediments, even on the scrolled ones. The wide incorporation of cartouches corresponds with other similar cases in the Philippines and should not affect dating it to the early eighteenth century. In contrast, all registers are designed as niches for freestanding sculptures, in the early-modern manner. Only the general density of decoration and the lateral flaps' profile led us to consider a slightly later date.

The aforementioned decorative elements are included in the only altarpiece which still preserves its date on it: the main altar of Saint Joseph Cathedral in Romblon (Fig. 11). Dated by José, and later by Manalo, to 1726 from the preserved inscription (MDCCXXVI),¹⁶ it emphasizes organisation through pairs of Solomonic columns, niches for freestanding sculptures, and the local interpretation of scrolled pediments. Side flaps maintain some angular forms, although round lines consolidate progressively. Noteworthy is the preservation of the lowest level, which is usually a different piece of furnishing in the Philippines. Here, medallions with different Augustinian symbols are included. Flanking them are reinterpretations of corbels with floral decoration. The altarpiece still preserves decorations of *cuir découpé* or

¹⁵ I want to thank Joel Aldor who generously pointed out these cases of Marinduque and Camarines Sur, among some others, to me.

¹⁶ Regalado Trota José, "A Visual Documentation of Fil-Hispanic Churches. Part VIII: Cathedral of St. Joseph, Romblon," *Philippiniana Sacra*, Vol. XLVIII, n° 143 (2013): 175-204; Ino Manalo, "Reading Boljoon from Records to *Retablos*."

strapwork, a common solution in Europe during the first half of the seventeenth century that continued in the Philippines up to this period. Similar features are seen in two lateral altarpieces in the same church, although in a more popular manner. Solomonic columns are replaced here by smooth shafts with helical decoration around them. Probably the most interesting element is leaving a panel empty between the niche and the columns for symbolic decoration. In one instance *Arma Christi* were incorporated, while lily jars were used in the other. As Jose has pointed out, this iconography connects it with the devotion at the main niche, which would not correspond with the current one.

From the first decades of the eighteenth century onward, the impact of local taste is more evident in altarpieces. This change might relate to some traditions still alive in the islands, such as the *Pahiyas* Festival, the ephemeral arches on the streets during the *Lamb of God procession* on Holy Thursday in Betis (Pampanga), and Morong (Rizal), although much more should be studied on this topic.



Fig. 11. The current main altar of Saint Joseph Cathedral, Romblon, dated to 1726. Photo by Joel Aldor.

A significant change in the development of altarpieces in the Philippines took place in the 1720s. At least three examples developed what Kubler called alcove-tower (*camarín-torre*):¹⁷ a structure at the rear of the wall of the presbytery placing the sacristy in the first level and a small oratory in the second, connecting the latter space

¹⁷ George Kubler, *Arquitectura de los siglos XVII y XVIII*, (Madrid, Plus Ultra, 1957); Id., "El camarín del Siglo de Oro," *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, 140-141 (1961): 239-245.

with the main niche of the altarpiece. Luengo identified it in Santa Ana church in Sapa (Manila), probably from ca. 1725, and the now-lost instance of Tondo, documented in 1727.¹⁸ A third case can also be found in the Caysasay church (Taal, Batangas), although the altarpiece is later. The church is usually dated to 1640, although this element might have been originally in the plans or, more likely, it was incorporated during the 1754 repair works. Finally, a fourth case might be found in San Juan Bautista de Bagumbayan. According to a 1737 publication, the image of Nuestra Señora de la Salud was in a Solomononic alcove, the decoration of which was similar



Fig. 12. Print of the Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados altarpiece in Manila.

to the elements proposed here.¹⁹

While this piece might be considered a liturgical and architectural change, it affected the evolution of altarpieces in the Philippines. Although these examples, following the alcove-tower model, had lateral access, it seems that they created interest among devotees, who wanted a closer relationship with the images. From this decade forward, it is more common to find altarpieces separated from the wall by building a staircase connecting it with the main niche. While this sort of access was included in previous Spanish cases with wooden close-fitting staircases for maintenance purposes, in the archipelago they were built in stone to provide comfortable access to the image. Even today, it is common to find devotees using

these elements for *pahalik*, the act of kissing the sculpture.

¹⁸ Pedro Luengo, "Noticias sobre obras en la iglesia de Tondo en el siglo XVIII." *Laboratorio de Arte*, 22 (2010): 217-233. About the *camarín* in Sapa see Pedro Luengo, "Iconografía musical en el camarín de Santa Ana de Sapa (Manila)." *Eikon/Imago*, Vol. 1, nº1 (2012): 119-130.

¹⁹ Benito de San Pablo, *La salud comunicada, por Maria Señora Nuestra: discurso panegyrico, que en la fiesta de dedicacion de la Iglesia de S. Juan Bautista de Bagongbayan, y Nuestra Señora de la Salud...*, (Sampaloc: Convento de Nuestra Señora de Loreto, 1737). Cfr. Miguel Ángel Castillo Oreja, and Luis Javier Gordo Peláez, "La salud comunicada por Maria Señora Nvestra," in Alfredo J. Morales (eds.), *Filipinas, puerta de Oriente* (San Sebastian-Manila: SEACEX-Lunwerk, 2003), 230.



Fig. 13. The current main altarpiece of Santa Ana Church dedicated to Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados. Sapa, Manila. Photo by the author.

In addition to its architectural organisation, the altarpiece of Santa Ana de Sapa is a good example of how these pieces were evolving in the second quarter of the eighteenth century. A contemporary print includes the new sculpture of *Nuestra Señora de los Desamparados* at the new altarpiece (Fig. 12), not far from the current display (Fig. 13). The altarpiece mixes the Solomonic columns with a new type that appears at this time: fluted columns with garlands. Some traditional elements remain, such as the targas both at the top of the structure and at the lowest carvings or the side flaps with angels. However, more innovation is included, with several types of Solomonic columns, emphasizing the evolution from the century's initial decades.

The importance of the Solomonic decoration in Manila is underlined by some archival materials from the middle decades of the eighteenth century. The only projects for a *retablo* preserved in the Philippines is that of the sacristy, and one of the chapels, of the convent of San Francisco de las Lágrimas in Manila, which can be dated to the 1740s along with the church (Fig. 14 and 15).²⁰ One of them proposes groups of three Solomonic columns flanking the main niche. Side flaps present a more complex profile relying on sinuous lines. At the attic, pillars are replaced with atlases with long garlands hanging from their shoulders, a decoration which will be

²⁰ Project of altarpiece for the sacristy of the convent of San Francisco de las Lágrimas (Manila), Archivo Franciscano Ibero-Oriental (AFIO) 86/2. For further information, see Pedro Luengo, *Intramuros: Arquitectura en Manila, 1739-1762*. (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 2012), 308.



repeated in the following decades. Finally, the cresting replicates the rounded forms of the early eighteenth-century proposals found in the Spanish territories, being akin to the ones included in San Juan Bautista de Bagumbayan, mentioned above.

Fig. 14. Altarpiece dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. Project for the new convent of San Francisco, Manila, ca. the 1740s. AFIO 86/2.

new church was completed with other altarpieces, the plans for which have not been preserved. Only one drawing preserved at the Franciscan archive and photos of the main altarpiece of the church are an exception.²¹ The first example is a small altarpiece for the sacristy (Fig. 15). It mixes Solomonic and fluted columns with hanging garlands, and angels in the lowest third. Mixing decorated

The decoration of the

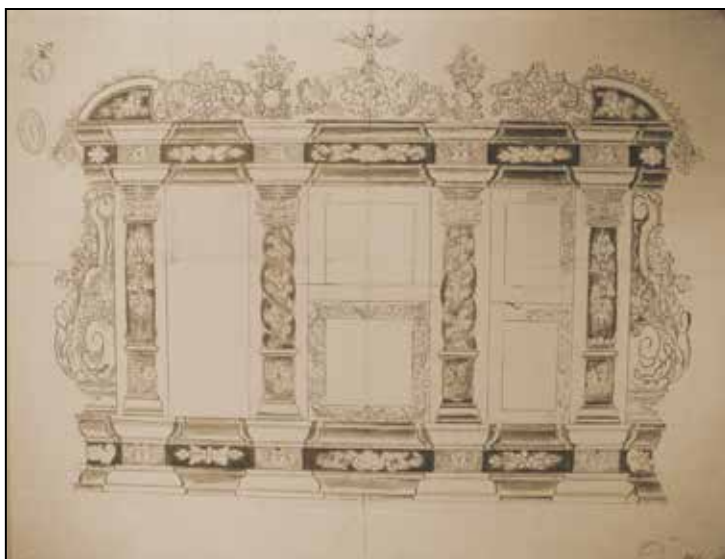


Fig. 15. A project for the altarpiece for the new Convent of San Francisco, Manila, ca. the 1740s. AFIO 86/2.

²¹ A tiny but complete image of the original altarpiece is included in Jose Femilou Gutay, "The Franciscans," René B. Javellana, (ed.), *La Casa de Dios*, 187.

columns and Solomonian columns was a tactic seen in Mexico in mid-seventeenth century examples, like the engravings of the King Altarpiece of the Puebla Cathedral of 1650 shows²² Several aspects led us to consider that their arrival in the islands was later. The flaps repeat the aforementioned forms, as does the cresting. Regarding the main altar, about which very little is known, it seems to have been a structure of three levels in a generally triangular shape.²³ It mixes Solomonian columns of different types, with atlases like the ones in the small altarpiece. Targes with carved panels of the life of Saint Francis and Saint Dominic were included. Although it is difficult to confirm, it seems that the central section was used for housing small overlapped alcoves, the one at the top being supported by *estípita*, an element rarely found in the Philippine context.

From these examples, we can see that one of the altarpieces preserved in the courtyard of San Agustín can be dated to this period. José and Galende found that the brotherhood of San Nicolás Tolentino housed in the San Agustín convent ordered a new altarpiece in 1740 (Fig. 16). The altarpiece is structured by pairs of Solomonian columns with decorations of angels in the lowest part on the first level, and a single angel on the second. The side flaps have almost completely lost their complex profile in favour of a more curved design. Probably the most interesting aspect of this piece is the polychrome, which might be mostly original. The substitution of gold with ochres, which here includes red colouring, has been already mentioned. This choice was common in eighteenth-century ornamentation in Spain



Fig. 16. Altarpiece of San Nicolás Tolentino, dated to 1740 by José and Galende. Photo by the author

²² Martha Fernández, *Cristóbal de Medina Vargas*, 107-108.

²³ Pedro Luengo, *The convents of Manila. Globalized architecture during the Iberian Union* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 2018), 108.

and can be found in other altarpieces in the Philippines from the middle decades of this century, although much more attention to this feature during future restorations would help us better understand the local reinterpretation of Spanish traditions.

The use of this type of Solomonian column, without any other types of pillars, is not as common in the archipelago, allowing us to date the pieces to the 1740s. One of these examples is that of the church at Guiuan in Eastern Samar. The three levels of the structure are organised with pairs of Solomonian columns decorated with flowers, in a very similar manner to the one at San Nicolas Tolentino. Even colours, mainly vermilion red, yellow ochre, and gold coincide in both cases with those found after the recent restoration of the piece at Guiuan.²⁴

Previous instances were dated from different historical sources, providing a clear context of the decorative pattern preferred in the Philippines during the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Thanks to this, it is possible to propose a date for other similar pieces preserved in the archipelago, albeit with far less historical information about their construction. For example, the main altarpiece of the aforementioned church of Silang (Cavite) is very similar to that of Santa Ana, while the one at Santa Monica in Minalin relies on the same pattern, merely with a wider diversity of Solomonian columns.

Uniform groups of these altarpieces can be found in churches of Laguna and Bohol. Most of them used Solomonian and fluted columns decorated very conservatively with garlands. The artist's freedom of design was still restrained by classical organisational principles: the use of broken pediments, targas, and corbels, among other decorations, remaining. Due to the use of these elements and the carved features, at least two stages are proposed. First are the three larger altarpieces of Paete, which can be dated to around the 1730s.²⁵ The model for Solomonian columns is the same found in that of Nuestra Señora de Guía from 1711. The incorporation of fluted columns with garlands has been identified around the capital a few decades later, probably because of some forms developed in southern Spain and later trickled into the Mexican *neóstilo*, based on a new conception of the Classical column.²⁶ At the transept, a fourth altarpiece is still preserved, but it depicts a completely different approach, one with fluted columns decorated with garlands, which must be dated to the 1750s (Fig. 17). A second stage can be identified in the altarpieces of Pakil,

²⁴ The church and the altarpiece were restored after the destruction of typhoon Yolanda or Haiyan in 2013. The *retablo* was restored by local sculptor Alfredo Menosa, Guy Custodio, and their collaborators. The works were completed in 2019.

²⁵ The church was begun in 1717, according to Huerta (1865: 139), so it seems possible that altarpieces were designed slightly later.

²⁶ Martha Fernández, "El neóstilo y las primeras manifestaciones de la Ilustración en Nueva España," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas*, 64 (1994): 31-45.

which might be dated to this same decade because of their similarities. First, the role of Solomonic columns has been replaced by fluted columns, pointing out a slightly later date. Second, the curved friezes on the lateral niches, which could only be found at the Franciscan church in Manila, are noteworthy.²⁷ Finally, the carvings depict a sharper profile, leaving behind the round forms of the previous decades. Despite this possible development, it is interesting to emphasize that seventeenth-century elements such as targas are maintained, although their shapes are progressively changed. After dating these two groups from Laguna, other similar examples can be included in the group, such as the main altarpieces in Lubao (Pampanga) and Baras (Rizal). The main altar of Nagcarlan church also repeats some of the above features, although profound later changes have been more recently introduced.

If the substitution of the Solomonic column by other solutions has been dated in Laguna starting in the 1750s, other nearby altarpieces could be dated similarly. A good example is a lateral altarpiece at the transept of the church of Paete (Laguna) (Fig. 17). Carved forms correspond with those proposed beginning in the first decades of the century, while garlands hanging from the shafts are like those previously pointed out. Contemporary engravings in Manila stress this decorative solution, as the front of a 1737 volume shows (fig. 17).



Fig. 17. Altarpiece of a chapel in the transept of the Church of Paete (Laguna). Photos by the author.

²⁷ The church burned in 1739 and the reconstruction did not finish until 1767. Thus, the altarpieces must be dated to the middle of the eighteenth century.

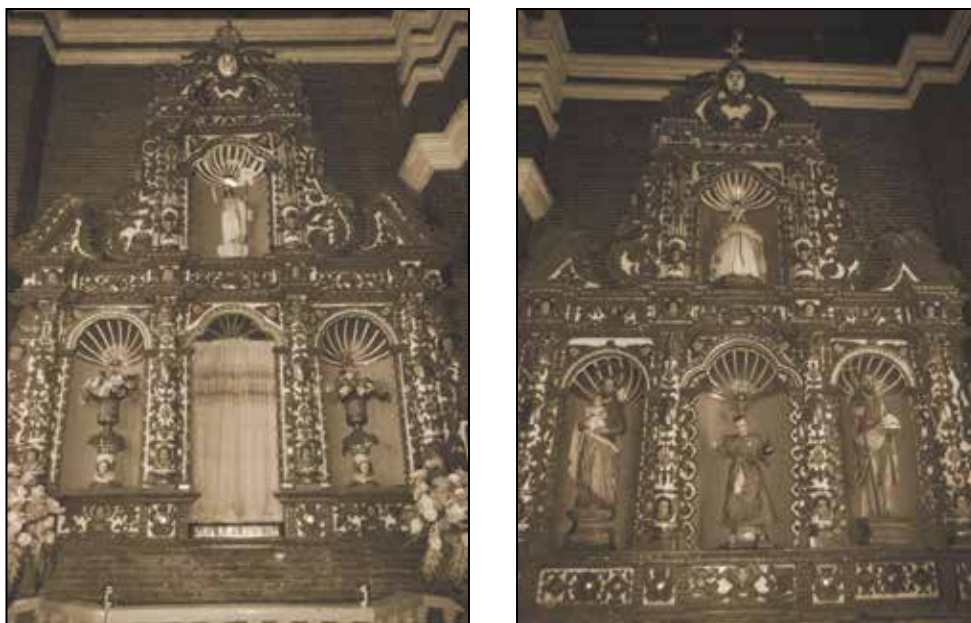


Fig. 18. Lateral altars of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Kawit (Cavite). Photos by Joel Aldor.



Fig. 19. The main altar of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Kawit (Cavite). Photo by Joel Aldor.

Along with this altarpiece of Paete, two groups of altarpieces were built for Saint Mary Magdalene in Kawit (Cavite) (Figs. 18 and 19) and the church of Maragondon (Figs. 20 and 21) should be considered. Both cases preserve three altarpieces from this period, with slight differences that allow us to understand

the changes from the Solomonian ornamentation of the early eighteenth century to the forms of the middle decades of that century. In Kawit, the most complex and interesting case is that of the main altar. Three types of columns are included, corresponding with each level. In the lowest, diamond and medallion shapes are covered with sinuous forms, recalling at some points the strapworks used in Spain in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and the earliest examples in the Philippines. Despite these elements, general ornamentation is clearly from the middle of the eighteenth century, so they must be understood as an archaic inclusion. The second level opted for simplified Solomonian columns with vegetal decoration. Here, seventeenth-century elements remain, integrated with a more Baroque proposal. At the top, pairs of columns, the shafts of which are fully decorated with vegetal shapes, are placed. From this description, it seems likely that this piece was designed in the 1730s, when the transition of the Solomonian altarpiece to the decorated column one takes place. At the transept of the same church, two twin altarpieces are preserved. These smaller structures are designed with similarly decorated columns at the first level. However, the second opt for hanging garlands, which have been dated at the end of the 1730s. It seems logical that the main altar was ordered before these altars and slightly later than the pieces for the transept if we agree with the stylistic development proposed here. Regarding their carved forms, they continue the evolution toward more complex and sharper profiles.



Fig. 20. Lateral altarpieces of the church of Maragondon. Photos by Roy John de Guzman.

The second group of altarpieces from this period can be found in Maragondon. Here, the chronological order of the three pieces is probably more complex. The oldest examples are found in one of the transept's altarpieces, at the Gospel side. It is organised with fluted columns, including a practically undecorated frieze, while the cresting corresponds with early-seventeenth-century patterns. Although all these elements would support an early date for the piece, most of the carved panels and the decoration of lower thirds of the lowest columns lead us to consider that it is an eighteenth-century design, albeit using older materials or ideas. Much closer to the period's style is the other lateral altarpiece, organised with Solomonic columns on the first level and fluted columns and garlands on the second. The profile of the lateral flaps and the broken pediment of the top, apart from the general design of the structure, stress some archaism from the artists involved in the entire Maragondon



Fig. 21. The main altar of Maragondon Church, Cavite. Photos by Roy John de Guzman.

project. Most of these features disappear in the final case, located in the presbytery, covered by a large structure of paired columns with fully decorated garlands hanging from the columns. Here, the decorative forms are more modern, due to their sharpness and the decorative design's general complexity. Emphasizing the possibility of a general refurbishment of the church at that time, the pulpit also follows this blending of decorated columns with old-fashioned strapworks. Returning to the previously proposed date for the other examples, this would represent a later specimen, one from the mid-eighteenth century, immediately before the Solomonic revival and the appearance of the *rocaille*. Finally, it seems probable that the modern polychrome does not concur with the original plan, although a general red and gold might correspond thereto.

The list of altarpieces following these patterns in the Philippines is longer still, with cases at the capital and around Manila in Malabon (General Trias), Orion (Bataan), and even further away in Panay (Capiz). Two are today preserved at the Intramuros Museum. One of them, now almost completely without colour, brings together an initial attempt to use Solomonic columns and flaps in a mid-eighteenth-

century manner. Something similar can be said about a more stylized piece, painted in white, probably at a later date. The increasingly sharper forms point to the early decades of the second half of the century. Outside of the capital today, the collection of four pieces preserved in the church of Saint Francis of Assisi in Malabon (General Trias) is similarly noteworthy. As with previous examples, both the main and the two lateral altars combine Solomonic columns with angels in the lowest third, along with fluted columns and hanging garlands. The fourth specimen, a small structure presently dedicated to Our Lady of Sorrows, is a clear example of how the proposed development of altarpieces came about in the Philippines. The second group, located in Orion church, might be dated to a later period. First, the three altarpieces are organized with fluted columns and garlands. The general carving style is pointier and sharper, creating fantastic hanging decorations at the flanks. This dramatic effect should lead us to consider a date in the 1760s, despite the reliance on old-fashioned *cartouches*. Finally, the church of Santa Monica in Panay preserves two eighteenth-century altarpieces, one at the presbytery and the other at the transept, both being structured by decorated fluted columns. This would lead us to date them to the century's middle decades, but the carved elements highlight sharp *rocaille* elements, thus it is more accurate to date it to the 1770s. Other examples of these altarpieces have been found in Libon (Albay). A smaller structure, closer in size to domestic altarpieces, proposes paired columns with fluted shafts and hanging garlands. The side flaps repeat the carving style of this period.

A similar phenomenon can be found on the island of Bohol where numerous pieces are still preserved. Despite the early missional presence on the island, churches of Loboc and Baclayon are a good starting point because they were completed in 1734 and 1737 respectively, while the Jesuits were expelled in 1768. Three altars are preserved at the church of Baclayon. Later examples include the pair of lateral altars of Loboc. During these three decades, a group of four altarpieces was made, most of which propose imaginative models of Solomonic paired columns. The fleshy carving of the initial decades of the eighteenth century is changed into sharper shapes. As happens in the capital, two types of cresting coexist during the 1740s: one being the broken pediment, usually scrolled and decorated in the local style, and the other being the more Baroque option of a vegetal decoration, as was typified in the Franciscan artistic proposal for Manila.

The 1750s. Toward a free design of the Solomonic column

If the 1740s were typified by the coexistence of Solomonic shapes and fluted columns with garlands, the 1750s introduced a freer approach to the helicoidal pillars, increasing the importance of the atlases. A fine example of this innovation

can be found in four altarpieces preserved in Manila's San Agustín church, two of which have been dated by José and Galende (Figs. 22, 23, and 24). First is the altar of Santa Monica, installed in 1754, and second is the altarpiece, commissioned by Doctor Negra in 1755. The Santa Monica altar proposed interesting single columns decorated with an enrolled garland of flowers and a ribbon. This is one of how the original Solomonic form developed into a more decoratively complex pattern. Other elements of the piece stress this development. For example, behind the columns is placed a pair of pillars, with decoration like the one with *estípites*. The rejection of the orthodox *estípites* was adapted here by a hybrid solution. As far as carved decoration is concerned, it is evident how rounded forms of the early eighteenth century are thinner and progressively more complex in this instance. If the identification of the altarpiece corresponds with the afore-mentioned date of 1754, other non-dated examples from the same church can be identified. For example, the altarpiece today at the chapel of Saint Joseph is almost identical, other than the attic, which is probably more modern; the more European scrolled pediment and differences in the ornamentation of some panels do not affect the chronological proposal. The same can be said about the altarpiece dedicated to the Immaculate Conception. Although some features could point to a slightly later chronology, similarities with the previous cases, located at



the same institution, would lead us to consider it as from the same workshop that was working for the friars during the middle decades of the eighteenth century. Small changes can be found between these altarpieces and Negra's of 1755, according to José and Galende. The new Solomonic model is repeated, as are new decorative patterns, which are here more elaborate. Apart from these similarities, two innovations must be underlined. The previous *estípites* were replaced by a large atlas as corbels, an option not widely followed outside Manila, with few exceptions. A good example is the main altar of the church of Magsingal (Ilocos Sur), where a reinterpretation of Solomonic columns can be found along with atlases and *estípites*.



Fig. 22. Altarpieces of the Immaculate Conception, Saint Claire of Montefalco and Saint Joseph in San Agustín Church, Manila. Photos by the author.

1750-1785. Between invisible *estípites* and early *rocailles*

Both in Spain and its colonial American possessions, the Solomonic prevalence was replaced in the second quarter of the eighteenth century by the *estípite*. The sculptor Jerónimo Balbás finished his Retablo de los Reyes for the Cathedral of Mexico in 1725, following previous works in Sevillian churches. This type of pillar was especially important in altarpieces but also in galleons, such as that of Santísima Trinidad, probably how they arrived in the Philippines. Their impact in the archipelago is very limited, and until recently, no cases have been found. From a chronological point of view, the first dated altarpieces using these solutions are found in the interior of San Juan de Dios church in Manila, an image of which was published in 1742. The engraving shows four altarpieces: one at the presbytery, one at the transept (dedicated to Saint Joseph), and two smaller ones at the nave (to Saint Anthony and Saint John the Baptist, respectively). The small ones are structured with paired columns, scrolled pediments, and dynamic volutes at the flanks. These two final elements can be found in the transept example but replacing smooth columns with Solomonic ones or *estípites*. Moreover, pyramids with balls at the top are included. All these elements are mixed again in the main altarpiece.

The *estípites* included in the representation of San Juan de Dios seem to be a local reinterpretation of the complex forms of the Spanish and Mexican pattern. Unfortunately, this may merely be considered a problem of the representation. From this only dated case, the recently identified cases, and the new ones proposed by this paper can be dated. Before doing so, another important decorative element must be considered: the *rocaille*. According to José, this decoration can be found in the Philippines beginning in the 1750s. His assertion is based on a meticulous study of the rich production of Philippine engravings from this period. From the early form, this new decoration was translated from engravings, probably based on German prints of them, to sculpture. Probably, the devotional prints of the Klauber Brothers (1700-1768 and 1712-1787) reached the Philippines at an early date. In these common engravings, the *rocaille* shapes and the sharp decorations are easy to discern. This phenomenon probably lasted from the 1760s to 1785, the date of completely developed *rocailles* on the altarpiece of Tanay (Rizal).

As José notes, the engraving of the Virgin of Rosary, popularly known as La Naval, the altarpiece of which was depicted in 1759, should also be included (Fig. 23). These *estípites* seem to be much closer to the European style, while the rest of the decorative elements stress the arrival of *rocaille* forms commonly found in Klauber prints.



Fig. 23. Print of Nuestra Señora del Rosario, today at the Dominican convent in Cádiz (Spain).

After these dated cases, some other examples can be included. For example, José considered that the altarpiece of Malaueg (Cagayan) should be dated to this period. The altarpiece is no longer preserved, but the *estípites* are still used as decoration in the church with a very unorthodox reinterpretation of their location. The pieces show, first, that the orthodox design of the *estípita* was not followed, it being likely a visual reinterpretation from an engraving. Belonging to the same carved piece, the volute follows late eighteenth-century forms, closer to the *rocaille*. Pointed vegetal forms, more dynamism, and complexity of the profiles point toward a later date.

Much clearer are the *estípites* of the central niche of the altar of the San Guillermo Church in Bacolor (Pampanga). These are probably the best-carved *estípites* in the Philippines. They are included in a small piece organised with fully decorated columns, the patterns of which are akin to those mentioned from the 1740s. Thus, a date from the first decade of the second half of the century is probable for this piece. In this same region is located the church of Betis, the main altarpiece of which is an outstanding example of Philippine sculpture of the period. It incorporates different pillars, a developed version of the Solomonic column on the first level, and fluted shafts with hanging garlands and helicoidal forms on the lower third and the second level, in addition to *estípites* flanking the niches. This variety points to a later chronological framework, underlined here by the broad incorporation of *rocaille* and complex geometries such as those used in the lateral flaps. Other stipes of lower quality can be found in the main altar of Namacpacan in Luna (La Union). Obviously, the lack of success of this element is probably due to its misunderstanding. In this case, the rest of the piece uses Solomonic columns in a very late style, in addition to pointed decorative elements that can be considered contemporary to *rocaille*.

The late eighteenth-century proposals and the arrival of Neoclassical forms

On November 25th, 1773, King Charles III issued a royal decree about the *way of building pieces for all churches and their altarpieces*. This document drastically changed both the materials and the decoration of churches in territories under Spanish rule, although its impact was not immediate. From this date forward, all works had to be accepted by the Royal Academy, which was promoting the orthodox interpretation of classical architecture in contrast to the more recent developments of the Baroque. Wood must be replaced with stone, an edict that was adopted in only a very limited number of cases, in addition to the transition from polychrome decoration to marble imitations. In this same line, gold almost entirely disappeared from these pieces, it is termed a *fruitless expense ... putting it at risk of blackening*. The interpretation of this regulation first in Spain and later in the Americas and

Southeast Asia from the last two decades of the century onward, and mainly at the beginning of the nineteenth century, coincided with the independence movement in the Americas. Complex decorative forms of the late Baroque usually coexisted with these new limitations in hybrid solutions characteristic of this specific time. In the Philippines, during the 1780s, some dated altarpieces still followed the development of late Baroque, ignoring the new regulations. As a royal order, it seems likely that it would be adopted in the archipelago shortly after being received. For this reason, the reception of the new artistic regulations must correspond to the final decade of the eighteenth century and be widely adopted during the nineteenth century. For this reason, all neoclassical forms, very common in the altarpieces of the Philippines, must be dated in this century. From this general context, some examples preserved in the Philippines can be analysed. An intermediate example, with full adoption of *rocaille*, is that of Cortes in Bohol. Using pairs of Solomonian columns on the first level, and a similar pattern with fluted shafts on the lower half in the second, the decorative shapes of the flaps suggest *rocaille* forms and complexity.

A similar line follows an interesting group of three altarpieces from this period preserved in Tanay. The first two levels are organised with niches flanked by pairs of columns, the lower half of which is Solomonian and the upper fluted. In between, *rocaille* cartouches emphasize the freedom of the entire design. The attic is flanked by thin *estípites* with sharp ornamentation coherent with the rest of the proposal. Something similar can be said about the side flaps, which repeat the common style of European *rocaille*. All these decorative innovations contrast with the general design of the piece, which underlines straight lines as the first analysed altarpiece from the seventeenth century did. Indicatively, the mirrors, which commonly were included in rococo altarpieces at this time, were not adopted in the archipelago. Probably the lack of this material, which can also be seen in the changes in windows incorporating *capiz*, is the rationale.

The final stages of the *rocaille*, incorporated into more academic solutions, can be dated in the altarpiece of the church of Dupax del Sur. The building is dated to 1786, so the group of three altarpieces might be built slightly later, at the end of the decade. Their shapes clearly show the persistence of late Baroque forms but are included in a smoother structure closer to the classical tradition. Progressively, the final stages of the *rocailles*, complex profiles, and sharp decorations coexist with the columns imitating marble, white painting, and more classical forms. This can be dated to the 1780s, like the altarpiece of San Miguel Arcangel, dated by José and Galende in 1783 or 1788. Other good examples to explain how the baroque forms of the eighteenth century are progressively replaced by more academic designs are

the altarpieces of Buguey (Cagayan), Badoc (Ilocos Norte), Sinait (Ilocos Sur), Labrador de Pangasinan (Pangasinan), Namacpacan (La Union), Samboan (Cebu), Banton (Romblon) and Jagna (Bohol).

Conclusion

The long and varied inventory of pieces presented here demonstrates how relevant the history of altarpieces is for Philippine heritage and the history of religion in the archipelago. First, it has been shown that their number and coherence allow us to provide an approximate date for most of them. During the seventeenth century, it is difficult to determine these dates with much precision, but during the eighteenth century, development can be defined almost decade by decade. Apart from the stylistic and chronological organization of pieces, it is noteworthy to show how a progressive expansion from Manila can be found. All this can help us better understand the development of decorative forms in other Philippine pieces, from church façades to the numerous small altarpieces.

Much more scholarly attention on how local artists, and perhaps patrons, chose from elements from the Spanish tradition and those elements closer to local styles is merited. In this line, the early reinterpretation of scrolled pediments, or the variety of flowers, and also the general rejection of the *estípite* underlines the principal role of native communities in the development of this art. Future studies can cross-examine these results with the design of churches' fronts. While wood carving was mainly under the direction of Philippine artisans, stonemasons were usually Chinese, and a stylistic difference could probably be found.

Finally, this heritage is still alive in the archipelago, giving continuity to their religious meaning begun by the first Catholic missionaries five centuries ago. Significant intangible practices, such as the *pahalik*, remain active, giving meaning to the structure. The connection between the image of the altarpiece and the memory of the community must be preserved, along with its historical features. In this sense, special care in polychrome interventions or freestanding sculpture organizations must be taken. Here, individual tastes of contemporary restorers or managers should be drastically limited, to maintain a collective heritage for future generations.**PS**

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