

# Notes on the Cathedral Church of Our Lady of the Assumption, Maasin, Southern Leyte<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract:** This article proposes an early building history of the parish church (now cathedral) of Maasin, Southern Leyte, and its related structures. These are now found in various parts of the town, but within the bounds of two small rivers. The church is dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption, whose early image of wood is the subject of the second part of this work. The statue, with large sections of its original polychromy intact, is one of the better preserved images of its kind still in the possession of its original owner.

**Keywords:** Augustinians in Leyte, Jesuits in Leyte, Maasin, Our Lady of the Assumption, Southern Leyte, Toribio Padilla

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## Introduction

This work is divided into two parts. The first proposes an early building history of the church (now cathedral)<sup>2</sup> and its related structures. This is undertaken by reconstructing the history of the religious congregations that ministered to Maasin (Jesuits and Augustinians) up to the turnover to the Diocesan or Secular Clergy. The second is an art historical approach to the wooden image of Our Lady of the Assumption, venerated in the church of Maasin in a special chapel. Devotion to Our Lady of the Assumption here led to the church's elevation to National Shrine status, a decision made on the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines' 128<sup>th</sup> plenary assembly on July 6, 2024, in Cagayan de Oro City.<sup>3</sup>

## Construction of the church and related structures in their historic-religious contexts

### *Christian beginnings in Southern Leyte: the Jesuits (1616-1768)*

The territory covered by the present Diocese of Maasin is one of the earliest in the Philippines to enter the country's Christian historic record. The first recorded Easter Mass took place on Limasawa Island on March 31, 1521.<sup>4</sup> The island figured again in the narrative of the fourth Spanish expedition, when a ship of Ruy López de Villalobos rounded 'Macaoa' [Maçaoa] in 1543.<sup>5</sup>

After arriving off Samar from Acapulco, Mexico on February 13, 1565, the expedition of Miguel López de Legazpi could not find a welcoming community until they sailed further towards Cabalian (now San Juan, Southern Leyte). Though the Spaniards noticed the town with numerous rice paddies, infinite forests of palm trees and bananas, and numerous houses with chickens and swine, and another large town called Sogor further along the coast, the initial encounters between the two cultures were tense and hesitant. On March 5, the Augustinian fathers Andrés de Urdaneta and Martín de Rada and two other Spaniards came onshore to meet

<sup>2</sup> The parish church of Our Lady of the Assumption was made the cathedral of the Diocese of Maasin, when it was erected on August 14, 1968.

<sup>3</sup> <https://cbcpnews.net/cbcpnews/2-churches-elevated-to-natl-shrine-status/>, accessed July 20, 2024. The solemn declaration of the National Shrine of Our Lady of the Assumption will take place on August 14, 2024. <https://www.facebook.com/maasincathedral.shrine/>, accessed July 20, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Among the many learned works on the subject, we may just mention the work of the first bishop of Maasin: Vicente T. Ataviado, *The Mystery Isle. Which One is It?* (Maasin City: The Roman Catholic Diocese of Maasin, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> Gaspar de San Agustín, *Conquistas de las Islas Filipinas. Conquest of the Philippine Islands -1565-1615*, with an introduction by Pedro G. Galende, O.S.A. and translated by Luis Antonio Mañeru (Manila: San Agustín Museum, 1698/ 1998), pp. 162-163.

Camotuan or Camutuhan, son of Malitic, the aged chief. A blood compact was sealed between the young leader and the Spanish lieutenant general. On March 9, Camotuan and three companions joined Legazpi as they guided the ships towards Limasawa. (Unfortunately, they found Limasawa abandoned and continued instead to Camiguin.) Camotuan bade farewell to the foreigners raising his hand, with the fore and middle fingers crossed—indicating how close they were to be—and shouting “Castilla, Castilla, Cabalian, *amigos, amigos!*”<sup>6</sup>

Despite this rather auspicious beginning, evangelization in this part of Leyte was rather slow. In the northern part of Leyte, the Augustinians founded missions in Leyte, Barugo, and Carigara (1580) and Dulag (1582). These were turned over to the Jesuits in 1595. The priests of the Society continued by establishing themselves in Dagami and Ormoc (1595), Alang-alang and Palo (1596), and Tanauan (1610). Spreading the Word in what would be the Diocese of Maasin commenced with the return of the Christian presence in Cabalian and Sogod (1616), a full half century after Camotuan waved goodbye to Legazpi. Other missions followed: Baybay (1620), Maasin and Hilongos (1700).<sup>7</sup> The latter pueblo was made the Jesuit residence in 1710,<sup>8</sup> from which pairs of Jesuits would take turns evangelizing the surrounding country, essentially what is now the Diocese of Maasin.

The earliest-known mention of Maasin is as a *visita* of the residence of Hilongos in the Jesuit catalogue of 1700. The Jesuit assigned here was Father Pontius Picornell.<sup>9</sup> Maasin (or Maasim as it was sometimes written) eventually progressed to have its own minister, by at least 1737, if not 1755. Maasin is listed among the *curatos* (curacies, the equivalent then of parishes) of the Jesuits in Leyte, according to the Franciscan historian Juan Francisco de San Antonio whose work was published in 1738.<sup>10</sup> In the *Carta Hydrographica y Chorographica de las Yslas Filipinas* drawn by

<sup>6</sup> Peter Schreurs, “Castilla, Castilla, Cabalian, Amigos, Amigos!” *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society* 13:1 (1985 March), pp. 17-18. Gaspar de San Agustín, *Conquistas*, pp. 266-279.

<sup>7</sup> A National Historical Institute marker, dated 1994, places the establishment of the *visita* of Hilongos in 1603. The source for this datum is unknown.

<sup>8</sup> The years for the Augustinians and Jesuits are taken from René B. Javellana, S.J., *Wood & Stone for God's Greater Glory. Jesuit Art and Architecture in the Philippines* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1991), pp. 225-231. See also the references to the Jesuits in Leyte, in Horacio de la Costa, *The Jesuits in the Philippines 1581-1768* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1961), pp. 162, 184, and 290.

<sup>9</sup> Personal correspondence, Rolando Borrinaga, January 2024.

<sup>10</sup> The Jesuits had curacies in the island of Leyte in the pueblos of Leyte, Palompong, Ogmuc, Baybay, Hilongos, Maasim, Sogor, Cabalian, Liloan, Hinundayan, Abuyog, Dulac, Dagami, Burabuen, Palo, Tanauan, Haro, Alangalang, Carigara, and Barugo. Juan Francisco de San Antonio, O.F.M., *Chronicas de la Apostolica Provincia de S. Gregorio de Religiosos Descalzos de N.S.P. S. Francisco en las Islas Philipinas [...]* (Sampaloc: Imprenta del uso de la propia provincia, ... por Fr. Juan del Sotillo, 1738), Vol. 1, p. 215, no. 626. The list is published, in translation, in Pbro. D. Felipe Redondo y Sendino, *Breve Reseña de lo que fue y de lo que es la Diócesis de Cebú en las Islas Filipinas*. Translated by Azucena L. Pace (Cebu City: The University of San Carlos Press. 1886/ 2014), p. 108.

the Jesuit Father Pedro Murillo Velarde and published in 1734, Maasin is depicted together with Baybay, Hilongos, Sogor, Cavalian, Ginondayan, Limasawa, Panaon, and Liloan (see Fig. 1).



Fig. 1. Leyte Island, from the Murillo Velarde map of 1734.

However, according to Agustín de la Cavada, whose work was published in 1877, Maasin was established as a *pueblo* (often commensurate with the founding of the parish) in 1755.<sup>11</sup> We only know the name of the last Jesuit of Maasin, Father Tomás Monton,<sup>12</sup> when he was made to leave his church and join the other Jesuits as they were rounded up before expulsion from the country in 1768. The towns left by the Jesuits that pertain to today's Diocese of Maasin were Hilongos, Maasin, Sogod (with its visitas Cabalian and Hinundayan) and Baybay (at that time a mission of Ormoc). (See *Table 1* for the last Jesuits in Leyte.)

<sup>11</sup> D. Agustín de la Cavada, Mendez de Vigo, *Historia geográfica, geológica, y estadística de Filipinas* (Manila: Imp. de Ramírez y Giraudier, 1877), Vol. 2, p. 262.

<sup>12</sup> José Ma. Clotet, S.J., *Noticias biográficas del R. P. Pedro Torra, S.J. (1845-1910)*, (Barcelona: Rafael Casulleras Librero-Editor, 1925).

**Table 1. Jesuits in the Residencia de Hilongos, 1768**

<b>Pueblos</b>	<b>Almas</b>	<b>Padres Misioneros</b>
Hilongos	4,200	P. Bernabé Limia, rector
Maasim	1,757	P. Tomás Monton
Sogod	1,003	P. Joaquín Romero
Hinundayan	562	Id.
Cabalian	722	Id.
Ormoc	2,399	P. Luis Sacanell
Bay bay	1,090	Id.
Palompon	1,246	P. Hilario Balza
Lalauiton	544	Visita

Source: Clotet, José Ma. 1925. *Noticias biográficas del R. P. Pedro Torra, S.J. (1845-1910)*. Barcelona: Rafael Casulleras Librero-Editor.

*Southern Leyte under the Augustinians (1768-1784)*

The Leyte churches vacated by their Jesuit pastors –along with those on southern Samar: Guiuan, Balangiga, and Basey—received replacements in the persons of the Augustinians, who came in a second wave almost two hundred years after they relinquished their missions to the Society. As with other religious orders enjoined to fill in the Jesuit vacancies, the Augustinians were hard-pressed to comply with the royal instructions. Some were pulled out from the missions in Panay, and one can only imagine the language challenges posed on either side of the communion rail. Ten out of the eighteen dispatched were in their twenties, the youngest aged 24. Some had barely spent a year in Manila upon arrival from Acapulco; three lost their mind “out of melancholy.” Some churches may have been vacant for a few weeks: Father Agustín Maria de Castro took a month on a sampan from Boljoon, Cebu to reach Jaro, Leyte.<sup>13</sup> (See *Table 2* for the second wave of Augustinians to Leyte, 1768.) The Augustinian Chapter of April 29, 1773, re-affirmed the sending of Augustinians to Leyte. Their ministries were in turn ceded to the Secular clergy in 1784 (most of

<sup>13</sup> Agustín Maria de Castro, O.S.A., “Relación de los pueblos de Leite recibidos de los Jesuitas, año de 1768,” in “Osario Venerable” published as *Misioneros Agustinos en el Extremo Oriente 1565-1780*, edited by Manuel Merino, O.S.A. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Santo Toribio de Mogrovejo, c.1780/ 1954), pp. 349-355. Father de Castro had been previously assigned in the missions in Panay before moving on to Cebu in 1768: Elviro Jorde Pérez, O.S.A., *Catálogo Bio-bibliográfico de los Religiosos Agustinos de la Provincia del Santísimo Nombre de Jesús de las Islas Filipinas desde su Fundación hasta nuestros días* (Manila: Establecimiento tipográfico del Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1901), p. 315.

these churches now pertain to the Diocese of Maasin),<sup>14</sup> except for Hinunangan and Hinundayan on the eastern coast and Guiuan, Balangiga, and Basey just across the San Bernardino Strait, which were turned over to the Franciscans in 1804.<sup>15</sup>

We owe Father Agustín Maria de Castro pocket descriptions of the Leyte towns and their churches as the Augustinians encountered them in 1768. (See *Table 2* for summaries of the descriptions.) The towns pertaining to today's Diocese of Maasin with Augustinians ministers were only Hilongos, Maasin, and Cabalian. Baybay was a station of Ogmuc [Ormoc], while Sogor was a station of Maasin. Only Hilongos had a church and convento of stone, well-furnished and well fortified. No church or convento is mentioned for Maasin, nor even for Sogor, or Cabalian, ironically among the first in the region to encounter Christianity. The only permanent structure in Maasin was a *baluarte* (watch tower) with 4 cannons of medium caliber; there was also a similar *baluarte* in Cabalian, defended by smaller falconets and *lantacas*. It is possible that the churches in these latter towns were built of wood or light materials. Or if they were of stone, they may have been razed by one or more of the numerous Moro raids so often reported in the religious chronicles. In 1752, such a raid is said to have reduced to ashes not only Maasin but Sogor, Cabalian, Hinundayan, and Liloan.<sup>16</sup> During Father de Castro's time in Leyte (1768 to about 1773, when he was assigned to Opon, Cebu), the towns of Sogor, Dagami and even his own Jaro and Alangalang were burned and totally destroyed. In one year, he counted 60 raids. "There is no town in Leyte which has not been taken or attacked," he wrote, "that's why many towns are depopulated."<sup>17</sup> Still earlier, Kudarat raided Ormoc, Baybay, Inopacan, Cabalian and Sogor in 1634.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Policarpo F. Hernández, O.S.A., "Augustinian Parish priests in the towns administered by them," Typescript, Archivo de la Provincia de los Agustinos Filipinos, Valladolid, no date, Vol. 3, pp. 70, 72.

<sup>15</sup> Hernández, "Augustinian Parish priests," Vol. 3, p. 68.

<sup>16</sup> José Montero y Vidal, *Historia de la piratería malayo mahometana en Mindanao, Joló y Borneo: comprende desde el descubrimiento de dichas islas hasta junio de 1888* (Madrid: Imp. y Fundación de Manuel Tello, 1888), Vol.1, p. 302. Other authors mention 1754; however, in the reference they cited (Montero y Vidal), the context year is 1752, and the next set of raids occurs in 1753: Leslie Anne L. Liwanag, Guinaldo C. Fernandez, Jr., and F.P.A. Demeterio III, "Critique on the 1983 historical marker installed by the National Historical Institute at the Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral, Maasin City, Southern Leyte, Philippines" *Social Science Diliman* 15:2 (July-December 2019), pp. 64, 66.

<sup>17</sup> Agustín Maria de Castro, O.S.A. "De otros trabaxos no menos gloriosos, que sobrevinieron a esta Provincia Agustiniiana, después de la Guerra, con ocasión de la nueva Misión de Leite," in "Páginas misioneras de antaño," ed. Manuel Merino, O.S.A. *Missionalia Hispánica* VIII, (c.1770/ 1951), pp. 130-131. See also de Castro, "Relación," pp. 349-355. Sections of de Castro's "De otros trabaxos" are translated in English and included in Manuel Artigas y Cuerva, *The Colonial Odyssey of Leyte (1521-1914)*, a translated and edited version of the first part of his *Reseña de la Provincia de Leyte* (Manila: Imp. 'Cultura Filipina') by Rolando O. Borrinaga and Cantius J. Kobak, O.F.M. Quezon City: New Day Publishers, pp. 71-73.

<sup>18</sup> Javellana, *Wood & Stone*, 229.

**Table 2. Pueblos of the second wave of Augustinians in Leyte and Samar, 1768**

<b>Pueblo; No. of tributes</b>	<b>Description of church; Fortifications</b>	<b>Patron of church</b>	<b>Parish priest; age in 1768; remarks</b>
Ogmuc, with Baybay, no figures given	Church and convento of stone, just begun. Well defended port.	S. Pedro y S. Pablo	Jose Sopena, 34
Hilongos, 800	Large church and convento of stone, with precious ornaments. <i>Muralla y cañones.</i>	[Not named]	Jose Balis, 47; killed by the rebels of Hilongos, 1772
Maasin, 400; with Sogor, 300	No church or convento. <i>Baluarte</i> with 4 cannon of medium caliber.	[Not named]	Nicolás Jacquis (Yaquer in Jorde), 29; captured by the English in 1762 and returned via Macao
Cabalian, 400	<i>Baluarte</i> of stone with falconets and <i>lantacas</i> .	[Not named]	Andres Alvarez, 26; Escaped from the Moros but died without the last sacraments
Palompon, 500	Stone church; convento average. <i>Baluarte y artilleria.</i>	S. Francisco Javier	Francisco Martinez, 31
Dulac, 500; with Abuyog, 300	Church, convento of stone. <i>Muralla</i> of stone, well armed.	[Not named]	Jose Herrero, 26
Tanauan, 700	Church, convento of stone. <i>Baluartes</i> of stone, well armed.	[Not named]	Manuel Solores, 42; thrown from a cliff
Palo, 600	Beautiful church, well provided with silver and ornaments; good convento. <i>Muralla</i> of stone with good arms.	Transfiguración	Matías Rosel, 45
Dagami, 700	Church of stone, large, beautiful, and well decorated. <i>Baluarte</i> of stone with its arms.	S Jose	Jose Montenegro, 24

Burauen, 600	Decent church.	Concepción	Lorenzo de Molina, 26; 23- Jorde; lost his mind
Salog/ Jaro, 600	Decent church of wood.	S Mateo	Agustin Maria de Castro, 28
Alangalang, 500	Large church of wood. Strong convento serves as a <i>baluarte</i> .	Ssma. Trinidad	Bartolome Lalana, 30; turned mad with melancholy
Carigara, with Hileyte (destroyed by Moros), 900	Very large and beautiful church, with large molave pillars; well decorated with silver, with relics. Convento of stone, with its <i>baluartes</i> , and well armed.	Santa Cruz	Antonio Comas [Jorde- Juan Comas, c. 38] and Miguel Perpiñan, 31; Perpiñan died in the hands of Moro captors
Barugo, 400	Convento and <i>muralla</i> of stone.	[Not named]	Francisco Rodriguez, 26; lost his mind
Guivan, with Balanguigan, 1,100	Church and convento of stone. <i>Muralla</i> of stone, very strong.	[Not named]	Juan de Quiroga, 27, and Vicente Rodriguez, 26
Basey, 500	Town on a hill, well defended.	[Not named]	Ignacio Collazo, 25 [Jorde- Callazo]; built 2 baluartes along the San Bernardino strait; wrote a treatise on mathematics.

Source: Castro, Agustín Maria de, O.S.A. c.1780/ 1954. “Relación de los pueblos de Leite recibidos de los Jesuitas, año de 1768,” in “Osario Venerable” published as *Misioneros Agustinos en el Extremo Oriente 1565-1780*, edited by Manuel Merino, O.S.A. Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Instituto Santo Toribio de Mogrovejo, pp. 349-355. [images 399-405].

<https://ia802207.us.archive.org/29/items/misionerosagusti00cast/misionerosagusti00cast.pdf>

The first and only full-time Augustinian curate of Maasin was 29-year-old Father Nicolás Yaquer (according to the official Augustinian historians Elviro Jorde Pérez and Policarpo Hernández)<sup>19</sup> or Jacques (according to Agustín Maria de Castro,

<sup>19</sup> Pérez, *Catálogo*, p. 310. Hernández, “Augustinian priests,” Vol. 3, p. 72.



who probably knew him personally).<sup>20</sup> The difference in spelling may be due to the interpretation by the typesetter of the manuscripts written by Pérez and de Castro. Padre Nicolás, in Maasin from 1774 to 1785, was a survivor. While still a *corista* in Manila, he was captured by the British in the siege of that city in 1762, taken prisoner to India, and found his way back to Manila by way of Macao. In Maasin, he also undertook the spiritual needs of Sogod and Cabalian.<sup>21</sup> Artigas y Cuerva dates the construction of proper buildings for the church, cemetery, and schools from 1768 onwards, virtually attributing these constructions to the Augustinians though not mentioning them by name.<sup>22</sup>

As a sideline, some of the dates and names on the historical marker installed by the National Historical Institute in 1983 are not correct (Fig. 2). According to the marker, the church built of stone by Father Serapio Gonzalez was damaged then rebuilt in 1839 by Father Jose Paco. These names are mentioned in Raymundo C. Bañas' *Brief Historical Sketches of Philippine Catholic Churches* (1937), with the addition of Father Victoriano Garcia.<sup>23</sup> These three priests, although Augustinian, were assigned to Maasin, the town's namesake in *Iloilo*, and not *Leyte*, in the years 1867-1879, 1832-1864, and 1873-1879, respectively.<sup>24</sup>



Fig. 2. National Historical Institute marker, 1983.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2019

<sup>20</sup> de Castro, "Relación," p. 351. He is listed as Nicolás Jacques in the "Plan of Souls of the Diocese of Cebu for the year 1778" in Redondo/ Pace, *Breve Reseña*, p. 141.

<sup>21</sup> Pérez, *Catálogo*, p. 310. De Castro, "Relación," p. 351.

<sup>22</sup> Manuel Artigas y Cuerva, in "Maasin," from the second part of his *Reseña de la Provincia de Leyte* (Manila: Imp. 'Cultura Filipina,' 1914), said that Maasin was turned over by the Augustinians to the Franciscans in 1843, who remained here until the Revolution in 1896. My gratitude to Dr. Rolando O. Borrinaga for sharing me his transcription of this section, which is scheduled to be republished later this year. As stated by Augustinian historians, Maasin was turned over to the Seculars in 1784.

<sup>23</sup> Raymundo C. Bañas, *Brief Historical Sketches of Philippine Catholic Churches*, With a foreword by Henry C. Avery, S.J. (Manila: Commonwealth Press, Inc. 1937), pp. 88-89.

<sup>24</sup> Pérez, *Catálogo*, pp. 519, 430, and 528 respectively. See also Leslie Anne L. Liwanag, Guinaldo C. Fernandez, Jr., and F.P.A. Demeterio III, "Critique on the 1983 historical marker installed by the

### *Turnover of Maasin to the Secular Clergy (1784)*

Contrary to popular belief, Maasin did not experience Franciscan administration.<sup>25</sup> As stated above, Maasin along with several Leyte churches was turned over to the Secular Clergy as early as 1784. Unfortunately, no sources have been found for the names of those priests who ministered between 1784 and 1796. Perhaps, this was a long period of instability, served by interim priests. The oldest canonical book in Maasin, the *Libro de Entierros* which dates from January 28, 1796, is signed by Mariano Dorotheo: the first known Secular parish priest of Maasin (Fig. 3). (See *Table 3* for the list of parish priests of Maasin during the Spanish period.) Padre Mariano died on Oct. 12, 1825, and was buried in the church of Maasin. Based on his burial entry in the *Libro de Entierros*, he had served Maasin for at least 30 years, which ties in with the oldest entry in the canonical books as just mentioned. He seemed to be 65 years old, more or less, to Father Clemente de Espina, who gave him the last sacraments, and thus must have been born around 1765.

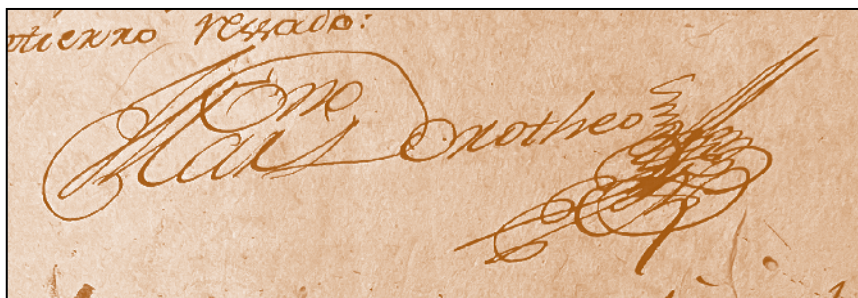


Fig. 3. Signature of Padre Mariano Dorotheo Singson on the first date of the first *Libro de Entierros* of Maasin, January 28, 1796.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2023

### *A reconstruction of early church building in Maasin, up to the 19<sup>th</sup> century*

Taking into account field observations, oral accounts, and the meagre historical resources available, a theory on the church buildings of Maasin may be proposed. An earlier site of Maasin may have been where the present late 19<sup>th</sup> century cemetery sits on the banks of the Kanturing River. This river is much wider and more navigable than the two *esteros* or streams that ‘embrace’ the present *población*. The site may have moved later due to a Moro raid, such as that in 1752, or natural calamity. Between the present church/ cathedral compound and the cemetery, are evidences of two early masonry structures.

National Historical Institute at the Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral, Maasin City, Southern Leyte, Philippines” *Social Science Diliman* 15:2 (July-December 2019), pp. 52-73.

<sup>25</sup> Artigas y Cuerva, “Maasin.”

1. The ruins of rubblework walls between the Mantahan and Abgao quarters of the city, across the Social Security System building on Ruperto K. Kangleon St., have been identified by the locals as the old cemetery gate, and by the city government as the old church (See Fig. 4).<sup>26</sup> The rough rubblework construction may indicate the very ancient status of the structure, as compared with the buildings in the church compound or the vanished *baluarte* described below.



Fig. 4. Ruins of a purported old cemetery or old church in the Agbao district.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2022

2. A *baluarte* or stone watch tower used to stand on the corner of Allen and Garces St., now the site of the Southern Leyte State University; it burned down in 1993 or 1994 and was demolished.<sup>27</sup> (See Figs. 5 and 6.) It was clad with regularly cut *sillar* (ashlar) slabs, like most of the structures in the church compound. It is just a block away from the eastern *estero*, and could have guarded the entrance to this waterway. (Could there have been another *baluarte* on the western *estero*?)

<sup>26</sup> Thanks to Jayson Resos for locating this for me; January 14, 2024.

<sup>27</sup> René B. Javellana, S.J., *Fortress of Empire. Spanish Colonial Fortifications of the Philippines 1565-1898* (Makati City: Bookmark, Inc. 1997), p. 81.

Figs. 5 and 6. *Baluarte* formerly in the commercial area, burned in 1993 or 1994.



Fig. 5. Photo: courtesy of Fr. Mark Vincent Salang.

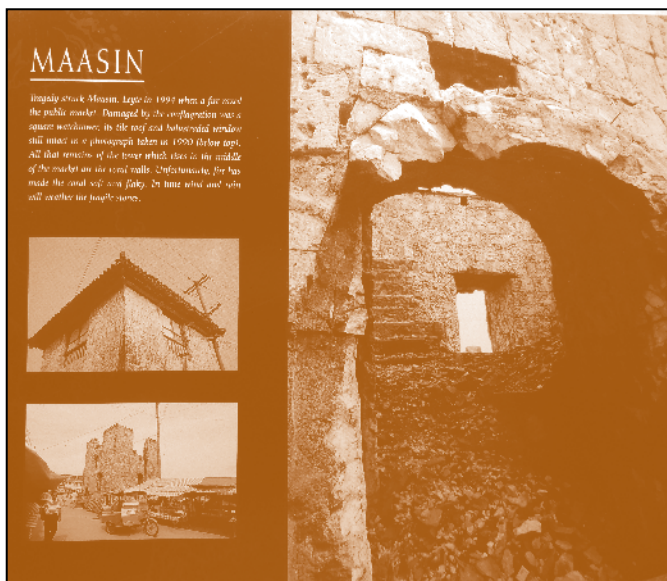
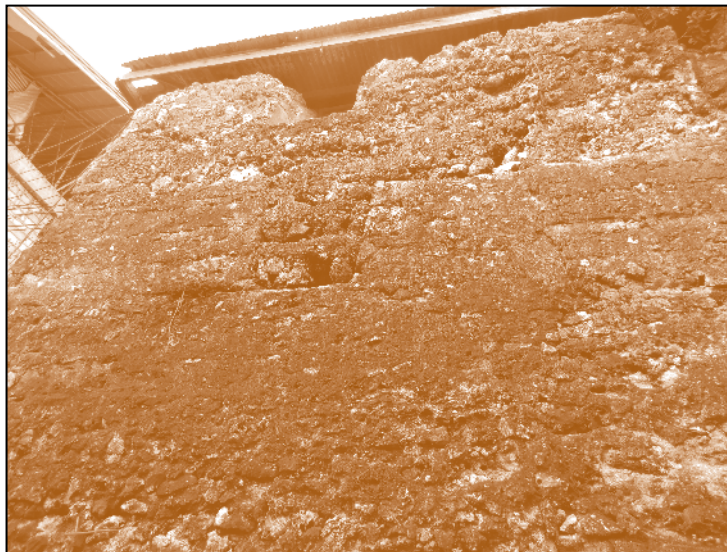


Fig. 6, from René B. Javellana, S.J., *Fortress of Empire. Spanish Colonial Fortifications of the Philippines 1565-1898* (Makati City: Bookmark, Inc. 1997), p. 81.

The cathedral compound, whose Spanish colonial components are the church proper, the bell tower, and remnants of a *baluarte* and the adjoining fortification walls, is located roughly in the center of the población ‘embraced’ by the two streams running north to south. All these mentioned structures are clad with regularly cut stone, just like the vanished *baluarte* described above. In contrast with these is a rubblework tower on the southwest corner of the compound (See Figs. 7

and 8). A stone slab carved with the inscription “*S. Carlos Año de 1771*” near its base places this *baluarte* within the Augustinian period of Maasin (See Fig. 9). In building technique, it resembles the ‘old cemetery gate,’ although the layering of the rough stones seems more orderly than that of the latter ruin. Further up the tower, a later set of crenellations was built over the older one. The base or core of this *baluarte* must have been that Father de Castro encountered in 1768; he added that it had four cannons of medium caliber.



Figs. 7 and 8. Baluarte at the southwestern corner of the cathedral compound.

Photos: Regalado Trota José 2019



Fig. 9. Stone slab with the inscription, S.Carlos Año de 1771.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2019

A gabled entrance somewhere in the compound (but now demolished), similar in rough stonework to the 1771 *baluarte*, carried a royal seal and above it appears to be a heart, symbol of the Augustinians (see *Figs. 10 and 11*).<sup>28</sup> Could this be related to the three hearts at the very top of the pediment of the cathedral? The hilt of a dagger emerges from the leftmost heart, indicating that this refers to the Blessed Mother (*Figs. 12 and 13*); in which case the three hearts would symbolize the Holy Family, whose separate initials are featured over the façade windows and central niche.



Fig. 10. Gate, now demolished. Fig. 11. Detail of seal.  
Source: Javellana, *Of Wood & Stone*, fig. 119.

<sup>28</sup> Javellana, *Of Wood & Stone*, fig. 119.



Fig. 12. Three hearts on the Maasin cathedral façade.

Fig. 13. Detail.



Photo: Regalado Trota José 2019

What appears to be a heart transfixing by arrows (the symbol of the Augustinians), inserted into the monogram of Mary, figures in a carved slab over what used to be the main entrance of the church in Hilongos (*Fig. 14*). The lower section of this frontage, characterized by grouting between roughly quadrangular slabs, contrasts with the upper section, wherein the slabs are so tightly laid that no grouting can be seen. The stone technique of the lower section is also seen in the former rear of the church (now one of its transepts) and ruins of what must have been the convento adjoining the apse. It may be deduced that the walls with the visible grouting date from the Jesuit era. The upper sections with finer cut stone were constructed under the direction of the Augustinians and the Seculars who followed them (the tower was built by Father Leandro Cells Diaz, who also built Matalom church) (*Fig. 15*).



Fig. 14. Heart emblem on former façade of Hilongos church.

Photo:  
Regalado Trota  
José 2019



Fig. 15. Section of former façade of Hilongos church.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2019

It is possible that some construction assistance was shared by Father Ignacio Collazo, who is the only Augustinian assigned to Leyte-Samar during this period specifically credited with any building project.<sup>29</sup> He is said to have built two *baluartes* along the San Bernardino Strait (along the northern coast of Samar), and was recognized as a model defender of Samar and Leyte against the Moros. Additionally, he also wrote a treatise on mathematics. Father Collazo, although assigned as *párroco* of Palo in 1774 and of Basey in 1778 (where he died in 1797) may have been called upon to improve the fortifications in Hilongos and other places. In Maasin, he may have helped construct a wall from which the only remnant is a stone marker inscribed *P[uert]a de Tagnipa* (Tagnipa gate) and dated 1776 (Fig. 16).<sup>30</sup>



Fig. 16. Marker on 1776 Tagnipa gate.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2022

<sup>29</sup> Jorde Pérez, *Catálogo*, p. 332. De Castro, “De otros trabaxos,” p. 130.

<sup>30</sup> Javellana, *Of Wood & Stone*, p. 231, says Tagnipa was the old name of Maasin, though without a reference.



Thus, it can be proposed that the *baluarte* that Father de Castro described in 1768 was the work of the Jesuits, which was raised and improved by the Augustinians in 1771. The friars also erected a wall around the compound, including the section with the 1776 Tagnipa gate, and built (or improved) another *baluarte* by the eastern *estero*. At about this time, the Augustinians must also have begun the stone church that is today's cathedral. Like Hilongos again, the entrance to the church was incorporated into the fortification (Fig. 17). This arrangement, which allowed for so many theological implications, was also followed in the Augustinian towns of Capiz (now Roxas City; later demolished and rebuilt); in those of the Augustinian Recollects such as Cuyo (Palawan), and Calapan (Oriental Mindoro, now demolished); and those of the Jesuits especially Capul (Northern Samar) and Guiuan (Eastern Samar). Of these, only Hilongos, Capul, and Cuyo have maintained their surrounding walls fairly intact. Maasin follows Guiuan, on a smaller scale, with significant remnants of its church fortification. It is therefore one of the very few in the Philippines to have traces of this kind of architecture.



Fig. 17. General view of the church façade incorporated with the *baluarte* on its northern side, partially obscured by a Lourdes grotto and food stalls.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2023

As observed through the gradual spreading of angles of the pediment, Maasin church underwent periods of expansion, repair, and changes of roofing (Figs. 18 and 19).<sup>31</sup> One may suppose that significant improvements were undertaken by Father Toribio Padilla y López, parish priest from 1875 to 1883. A prolific writer,

<sup>31</sup> F.P.A. Demeterio III, Leslie Anne L. Liwanag, and Guiraldo C. Fernandez, Jr., *Cataloging and Baselineing the Filipino-Spanish Churches of the Diocese of Maasin on the Island of Leyte* (Davao City: Aletheia Printing and Publishing House 2020), pp. 31-32.

he authored a novena to the patroness, which was approved by Bishop Madridejos of Cebu in 1880.<sup>32</sup> He commissioned the 1882 bell dedicated to the patroness, *La Asunción de Nuestra Señora* (this is one of the rare bells with an image of the dedicatee) (Fig. 20). While in Maasin, Father Padilla also wrote a *septenario* in honor of the Holy Spirit, and translated a novena to Our Lady of Remedios into Sugbuanon (see a biographical note and list of his works at the end of *Table 1*). The new cemetery by the Kanturing River with the date of 1882 over its gate was begun, or inaugurated, during his term as well (it was continued by the next parish priest; on the base of one of the pillars can be read the year, 1885) (Figs. 21 and 22).



Fig. 18. Façade and tower.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2023



Fig. 19. Section of pediment showing different angles from the apex.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2023

<sup>32</sup> *Novena ni María Santisima sa iyang misterio sa pagpasacá cania nga mahimayaon sa langit patrona sa Maasin (Leyte)*. A second edition was printed in 1899 by the Seminario de San Carlos in Cebu City.

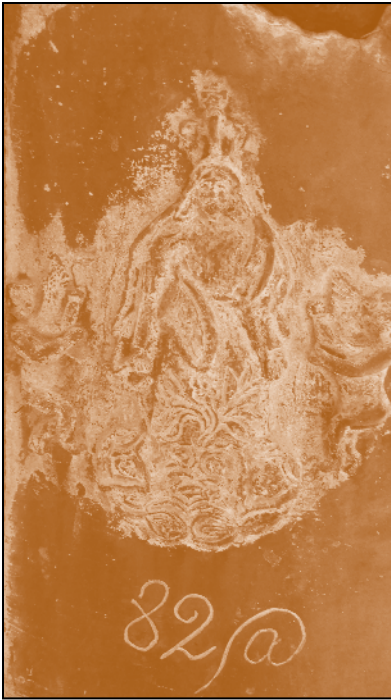


Fig. 20. Image of the patroness on the 1882 bell.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2019



Fig. 21. Cemetery facade, dated 1882.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2019



Fig. 22. Column with angel, dated 1885, in cemetery.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2019

The church and convento were destroyed by fire on November 10, 1884.<sup>33</sup> The repairs after this disaster very probably included the replacement of the roof tiles with sheets of galvanized iron, which allowed for a more gradual slope than that needed for the tiles.



Fig. 23. Interior, taken in 1962.

Photo: Courtesy of Fr. Mark Vincent Salang

Redondo refers to an old cemetery enclosed by loose stones, and to the new one under construction, being built of cut coral stone and lime mortar masonry.<sup>34</sup> Artigas y Cuerva also refers to the old cemetery as being replaced by the newer 1880s one.<sup>35</sup> Could we suppose that the older Maasin cemetery was indeed that whose ruins stand near Abgao? Nevertheless, it must be remembered that in the early centuries burial grounds were often located to one side or even in front of churches. Cemeteries began to be located a distance from the churches only in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Could we further suppose that the ruins are part of an earlier church, and that people remember that it once had a cemetery next to it?

Regrouping what we have gathered so far, we can propose the following:

An early site of Maasin, perhaps the pueblo established by the Jesuits in about 1700, could have been on the site of the 1880s cemetery along the mouth of the Kanturing river, the widest of the waterways draining the town (Fig. 24 Map,

<sup>33</sup> Redondo, *Breve Reseña*, p. 173.

<sup>34</sup> Redondo, *Breve Reseña*, p. 173.

<sup>35</sup> Artigas y Cuerva, "Maasin."

1). At some point, perhaps due to a Moro attack, the town and its church may have transferred to the site now occupied by the ruins near Abgao (*Fig. 24 Map, 2*). A cemetery was also located alongside the church. At still another point in its history, perhaps in the mid 1700s, the town moved to its present location. The move may have been due to the Moro raid of 1752, if not some natural disaster or pestilence. The church may have been constructed of light materials, but a *baluarte* of roughly cut stone was erected as a means of defense. The Augustinians, after arriving in 1768 to replace the Jesuits, began to reinforce the defense. The Jesuit *baluarte* was improved in 1771 (*Fig. 24 Map, 3*); there are signs that it was raised at a later date. A stone church was built with its entrance the same as that leading to the fortification, which was also raised of stone around the church compound (*Fig. 24 Map, 4*). This compound was quadrangular, with the 1771 *baluarte* anchoring the southwestern corner (facing the sea).<sup>36</sup> Somewhere along the walls, perhaps on the western or northern side, was opened another entrance, the Puerta de Tagnipa, in 1776. Eventually, the church and most of the walls (excluding the 1771 *baluarte*) were clad in regularly cut coral stone. Another *baluarte* was built on the northern bank of the eastern stream that separates the *poblacion* from Abgao; this is the one that burned down in 1994 (*Fig. 24 Map, 5*). Its cut stonework resembles the later work on the church and walls of Maasin, as well as that on the church façade and upper fortification walls of Hilongos, which also date from Augustinian times. This *baluarte* guards the entrance to the said eastern creek which coincidentally leads to a passage up the hill. One could imagine that this passage served as an evacuation route to the *ilihan*, or upper portion of the hill, during a pirate attack. Interestingly, along this path is the modern-day Monte Cueva Shrine dedicated to Our Lady of the Assumption (*Fig. 24 Map, 6*).<sup>37</sup> Additional work and repair on the church and its properties continued as the Augustinians turned over Maasin to the Secular clergy in or around 1784. There was no Franciscan interlude.

When the pirate menace had subsided in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and following government regulations, a new cemetery was established some distance from the church compound. The cemetery, bearing 1882 and 1885 dates, was built along the Kanturing River, on land which after all may have been owned by the church since the pueblo's founding (*Fig. 24 Map, 1*).

<sup>36</sup> See the plan of the fortified compound, Demeterio, *Cataloging*, p. 36.

<sup>37</sup> The Monte Cueva Asuncion de la Virgen Shrine was donated to the Diocese by Atty. Joaquin Jr. and Florencia Chung. Its origin began with the landowner Atty. Joaquin Chung Jr.'s dream about the Lady of Assumption's request to build a shrine in that specific area. Since then, he built the shrine and passed the ownership and management to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Maasin. <https://maasincity.gov.ph/index.php/tourism/16-monte-cueva>, accessed January 2024.



Fig. 24. Map of Maasin City, showing cathedral compound and possible church cultural heritage sites.

1. Cemetery, 1882 and 1885, on the west bank of the Kanturing River.
2. Purported ruins of church or cemetery, on Abgao district.
3. 1771 baluarte in cathedral compound.
4. Maasin cathedral.
5. Site of former baluarte, burned in 1993 or 1994.
6. Monte Cueva shrine.

**Table 3. Parish priests of the parish of Our Lady of the Assumption, Maasin, Southern Leyte**

Legend for biographical citations and other annotations:

Name in <b>bold</b>	Minister or parish priest
Indented name	Assistant, <i>cura economo</i> , <i>cura interino</i> , or <i>socio</i>
cura int.	<i>cura interino</i> , interim parish priest
Ee	earliest entry
LdB	Libro de Bautismos
LdE	Libro de Entierros
Le	last entry
OSA	Augustinian
Sec	Secular
SJ	Jesuit

For full citations for bio-bibliographical sources, please see **References**.

Years	Name	Religious congregation	Lifespan	Bio-bibliographical source/ Remarks
By 1700	<b>Pontius Picornell</b> , assigned to Hilongos and Maasin. Perhaps the first mention of Maasin in the Jesuit <i>Catalogi</i> .	SJ	--	Borrinaga. Javellana mentions 1700 as SJ founding of Maasin; 231.
1768	<b>Tomás Monton</b> . Maasin was then part of the Residencia de Hilongos.	SJ	--	Clotet
1774-1785	<b>Nicolás Yaquer/ Jacques</b> . With <i>anejos</i> Sugod and Cabalian.	OSA	1739-1792	Pérez 310. Hernandez, III, 72, says until 1784. He was in Jaro, Leyte, 1786, including Carigara.
1784	Maasin placed under the diocesan clergy, 1784.			Hernández, III, 72.
1785-1796	No data available			
1795?; 1796 Jan. 28 (Ee)—1825 Oct. 12	<b>Mariano Dorotheo Singson</b> . Was cura for 30 years. In the authorization of LdB 7, 1823 Nov. 11, his name is given as Padre D. <b>Dorotheo Singson</b> . However, in his burial entry in the LdE, his name is given as D. Mariano Dorotheo Hinzon.	Sec.	c.1765-1825 Oct. 12; buried in the church.	LdE

1822 Sep 27- 1825 Oct 12	Clemente de Espina, <i>cura econo</i>	Sec.	--	LdE
1825 Oct 12- 1827 May 31	Clemente de Espina, <i>cura int.</i>	Sec.	--	LdE
1827 Jun 3- 1828 May 25	Juan Ximenes, <i>cura int.</i>	Sec.	--	LdE
1828 Jun 2- 1832 Oct. 14	Matheo Samson, <i>cura int.</i>	Sec.	--	LdE, LdB
1832 Oct. 20- 1833 Sep 10	<b>Juan Corvera</b>	Sec.	--	LdE
1833 Sep 28-1833 Dec 18	No signature			LdE
1834 Jan 8- 1834 Feb 20	Gregorio Jose	Sec.	--	LdE
1834 Feb 25- 1842 Jul 27?	<b>Manuel Salazar</b>	Sec.	--	LdE
1841 Feb 3	Julian Nepomuceno- signs due to indisposition of Manuel Salazar	Sec		LdE
1842 Aug 12- 1844 Dec 20	<b>Placido Ciriaco de San Raphael</b>	Sec.	--	LdE



1842 Oct 2- 1843 Mar 10	Juan Nepomuceno Tecson	Sec.	--	LdE
1843 Mar 11	Jose Gorriz	Sec.	--	LdE
1845 Jan 1- 1848 Dec 31	<b>Francisco Fernández</b> , <i>cura propietario</i>	Sec.	--	LdE
1849 Jan 3- 1850 Sep 12	Florentino Talio Antonio, <i>cura sustituto</i>	Sec.	--	LdE
1850 Sep 14- 1851 Jun 19	<b>Francisco Fernandez</b> , <i>cura propietario</i>	Sec.	--	LdE
1851 Aug 29- 1853 Jan 27	Florentino Talio Antonio, <i>cura int.</i>	Sec.	--	LdE
1853 Feb 8-1861	<b>Ygnacio Flordeliz Florentino</b> , <i>cura parroco</i>	Sec.	--	LdE
By 1860	Manuel Rivera, coadjutor, <i>con mi licencia</i>	Sec.	--	LdE
1861- 1862 May 16	<b>Nazario Villafaña</b> , <i>cura entonces de Maasin</i>	Sec.	d. suddenly, 1862 May 16	LdE
1862 May 17	Felix Villahermosa, int.	Sec.	--	LdE
1863- 1864	<b>Felix Villahermosa</b>	Sec.	--	Silver An. 1968-1993
1864- 1875	<b>Juan Loreto</b>	Sec.	--	Commissioned the 1867 bell. Silver An. 1968-1993

1875-1883	<b>Toribio Padilla y López</b>	Sec.	d. 1906	Commissioned the 1882 bell dedicated to the patroness. Silver An. 1968-1993
1883	Joaquin Buiser	Sec.	--	Silver An. 1968-1993
1883-1888	<b>Felix Magno</b>	Sec.	--	Silver An. 1968-1993
1888-1899	<b>Lucas Soto</b>	Sec.	--	Silver An. 1968-1993

Father **Toribio Padilla y López**, more known as Padre Bio, was ordained priest on September 22, 1855 by Bishop Romualdo Ximeno (Jimeno). He was parish priest of Maasin, Leyte, from 1875 to 1883, after which he became parish priest of Cebu City. His brother, Candido Padilla, was a revolutionary and President of the Cebu Chapter of Katipunan, and the priest became part of the uprising against Spain in the Battle of Tres de Abril (1898). During the turmoil only Father Padilla stayed in his convent by the side of the Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral, while the rest of the priests in the city sought refuge in Fort San Pedro. Suspected of being a sympathizer of the Katipuneros, he was disrobed and confined at Seminario Conciliar de San Carlos. When the Americans came, Father Toribio Padilla was reinstated as curate of his former church. He retained this post until 1904, two years before his death in 1906. Fr. Padilla was honored by the City of Cebu with a barangay and a street named after him.

Based on the website of the Biblioteca Nacional de España and the catalogue of the Augustinian Monastery in Valladolid, we find the following published works of Father Padilla:

*Novena sa mga calag sa purgatorio hinubad sa polong nga cebuano ni D. ... , ug cura parroco interino sa ciudad de Cebu. A expensas de Felipe Redondo, presbitero.* Manila: Imprenta del Colegio de Santo Tomás, 1893.

*Novena ni Santa Lucia, virgen ug martir. Guinbinisayá ni Don Toribio Padilla Presbitero, Catedratico del seminario de S. Carlos de Cebu.* 2d ed. Cebu: Imprenta del Seminario de San Carlos, 1899.

*Novena ni María Santisima sa iyang misterio sa pagpasacá cania nga mahimayaon sa langit patrona sa Maasin (Leyte).* 2nd ed. Cebú : Imp. del Seminario de San Carlos, 1899.

*Novena de S. Rafael Arcángel*. Cebú : Imp. del seminario de San Carlos, 1900.

*Novena de la Virgen de los Desamparados en visaya*. 2nd ed. Cebu: Imprenta de San Carlos, 1901. 8th edition, Cebu: Imprenta de San Carlos, 1908.

*Septenario nga igadayeg ug igasingba sa Espiritu Santo quitucod ni Don ... , ug cura párroco sa Maasin (Leyte)*. 3rd ed. Cebu: Imprenta de San Carlos, 1903. 5th edition, Cebu: Imprenta de San Jose, 1916.

*Novena sa mahal nga Virgen de los Remedios hinubad sa usa ca novena nga quinachila ni don Toribio Padilla y Lopez, cura Párroco sa Maasin (Leyte)*. Cebú : Imp. de S. José, 1915.

Website sources:

<https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/opinion/2019/11/06/1966432/parish-priests-diocese-cebu-1880s-part-6>

<https://mynameisval.blogspot.com/2010/08/brief-history-of-barangay-t-padilla.html>

<http://bdh.bne.es/bnearch/Inicio.do?languageView=en>

### **Notes on the wooden image of Our Lady of the Assumption in Maasin, Southern Leyte**

The wooden image of Our Lady of the Assumption presently venerated in a side chapel of the Maasin Cathedral (*Figs. 25 and 26*) has been described by some as ‘Mexican.’ Admittedly, colonial Philippine religious statues in a swirling Baroque style with billowing robes are rare, although a few important examples exist. A significant benchmark piece is the Assumption carved in ivory that occupies the topmost niche of the *facistol* or choir lectern in the Cathedral of Mexico City (*Figs. 27 and 28*). This piece, along with eight other ivory images of saints and the lectern itself, was a gift for the said cathedral commissioned by Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río, Archbishop of Manila from 1758 to 1764. (Due to the British Occupation 1762-1764, the extraordinary gift only reached Mexico in 1770.)<sup>38</sup> The Mexican art historian Manuel Toussaint remarked of these ivories that their carving was of an “extreme fineness which shows how such a precious material was worked in the

<sup>38</sup> Margarita M. Estella Marcos, *La Escultura Barroca de Marfil en España* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1984), Vol. 1, cat. 495, figs. 230 and 231.

Philippine Islands.”<sup>39</sup> The Asunción in Mexico (50 cm. high) is depicted sitting on a throne of coiled *ensaymada* clouds, with her right foot raised higher than the left. Her hands are outstretched in joy and wonder, and her cape billows behind her. The clouds and clothes are decorated with gold leaf in designs typical of the era. This seated posture seems to be the prototype for other Philippine images of the Virgin Mary such as those of Our Lady of the Rosary or of Consolation.



Fig. 26. Section of wooden image showing polychromy.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2023

Fig. 25. Wooden image of Our Lady of the Assumption in Maasin Cathedral.

Photo: Courtesy of Fr. Mark Vincent Salang



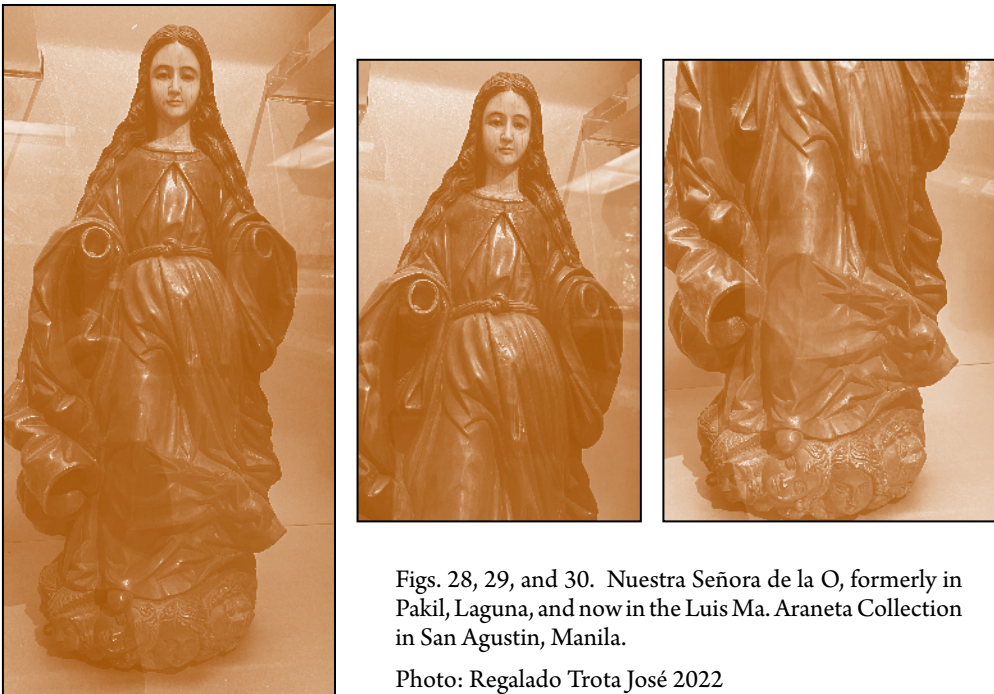
<sup>39</sup> Margarita M. Estella Marcos, “La escultura en marfil hispano-filipina.” In *Los Palacios de la Nueva España. Sus Tesoros Interiores*, coord. José Emilio Amores (Monterrey: Museo de Monterrey and Museo Franz Mayer, 1990), 89, 99.

Fig. 27. Our Lady of the Assumption (front and back). Ivory, in the *facistol* of the Cathedral of Mexico City, commissioned between 1758 and 1764.

Photo: Margarita M. Estella Marcos, *La Escultura Barroca de Marfil en España*, figs. 230 and 231



An image closely resembling the Maasin Asunción is the so-called ‘Virgen de la Misericordia or de la Merced’ formerly from Pakil, Laguna, and now in the Luis Ma. Araneta Gallery in San Agustin, Manila (Figs. 28, 29, and 30), even though this latter image is more professionally carved. The Pakil image, with its outstretched hands, could even very well be that of the Assumption; except that the slight bulge on her stomach links her to the devotion in Pakil to Nuestra Señora de la O.



Figs. 28, 29, and 30. Nuestra Señora de la O, formerly in Pakil, Laguna, and now in the Luis Ma. Araneta Collection in San Agustin, Manila.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2022

In terms of proportion and anatomical details, the Maasin Asunción is comparable to the image of San Juan Evangelista formerly in Boljoon, Cebu. The San Juan image used to form part of the Calvary scene in the left retablo of Boljoon, Cebu (Fig. 31). It was stolen, together with the image of the Dolorosa, several years ago, and their location is unknown. Remembering that Father Agustín Maria de Castro sailed from Boljoon for his new assignment in Jaro and Alangalang, Leyte, it is almost tempting to imagine that the Augustinian may have brought images of this kind from Boljoon (or nearby churches that had surplus images) to refurbish the new missions of his Order that were vacated by the Jesuits.



Fig. 31. Side retablo in Boljoon, Cebu.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 1986

The use of a vermillion background and patches of gold is similar to the technique used on the wooden body of Our Lady of Manaoag in Pangasinan (Fig. 32). The appearance is like *estofado*, but this is not quite the technique. In *estofado*, paint is applied over gold foil, and a sharp tool etches out the design from the paint,

exposing the gold. In Philippine examples, the gold foil, usually in the form of square patches, is applied over the paint.

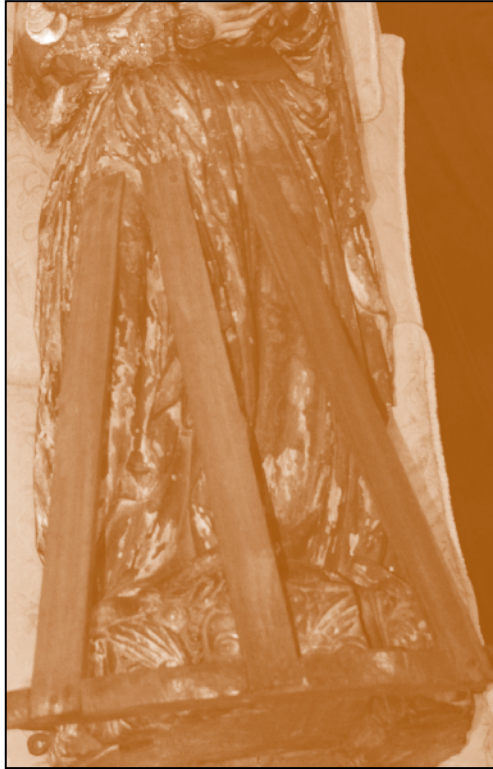


Fig. 32. Section of polychromy on wood statue for Our Lady of Manaog, Pangasinan.

Photo: Nady Nacario 2009

Very few images have retained their original colors due to the vagrancies of time or to over-restoration. The wooden image of the Assumption in Maasin is one of the rare examples that have preserved their authentic colors that are still with their original church owners.

The style of the wooden Maasin Asunción falls within the long 18<sup>th</sup> century, especially the first three quarters. There are very few examples of Jesuit stand-alone statues (*de bulto* or *de talla*, ‘carved in the round’) exhibiting strong Baroque influences. See for example the Asunción in Maragondon, Cavite (Figs. 33 and 34), which is earlier in style than the Maasin image, and has less Baroque ‘movement.’ As such it is more possible that the wooden Maasin Asunción—carved and decorated in the Philippines—was brought by the Augustinians to Maasin in 1768 or a few years after.



Figs. 33 and 34. Our Lady of the Assumption, Maragondon, Cavite (front and section of back).

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2023

### Additional photographs of Our Lady of the Assumption Cathedral, Maasin, Southern Leyte



Fig. 35. Anagram of Jesus, left section of the pediment.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2019



Fig. 36. Floral ornament over the image of Our Lady of the Assumption, central section of the pediment.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2023



Fig. 37. Anagram of St. Joseph, right section of the pediment.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2019





Fig. 38. Anagram of Mary, over the main portal.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2023



Fig. 39. Wooden image of Our Lady of the Assumption, over the main portal.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2019

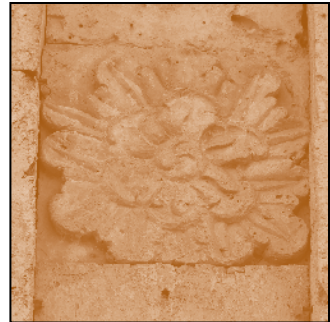


Fig. 40. Floral ornament in between pilasters, on the façade.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2019

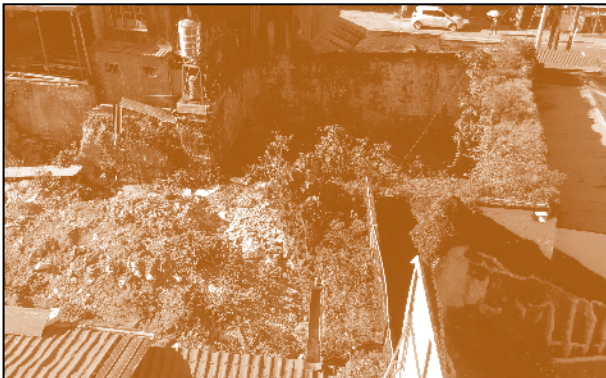


Fig. 41. View of the bastion right of the façade, from the belltower.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2019

Fig. 42. View of the right bastion from the inner courtyard, cleared of debris.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2021






Fig. 43. Remains of a possible bastion, adjoining the right side of the apse.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2023

Fig. 44. Rear of the apse, with the possible bastion to the left.

Photo: Regalado Trota José 2023 



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