

Envisaging the Weight of His Legacy: Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río Lubián y Vieyra

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Abstract: This research is aimed at making up the career of one of the most relevant figures in the History of the Philippines during the eighteenth century, since he took over the Governorship and Archbishopric of Manila from 1759 to 1762, influencing his vital and professional path both in his mother country, Mexico, and his Asian projection. Although he will be remembered for his decision to capitulate in favour of Britain during the siege of the city of Manila, his broad humanist background, as a lover of arts and letters, left his imprint on the cultural heritage of that time.

Keywords: Philippines, Mexico, Governorship, Archbishopric, Legacy

The tenacious spirit of protection and sacrifice attributed to Manuel Antonio Rojo by his contemporaries together with his letters and other writings will help us understand his humanist character, as the lover of the arts and letters that he was. The Dr. and *Maestro* Cayetano Antonio de Torres, *Colegial Real* in the royal and oldest *Colegio de San Ildefonso* of Mexico City, who performed his funeral rites, highlighted the traits that honored this person “*la educación, la virtud, la sabiduría, la gracia y la naturaleza*”¹ (“the education, the

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¹ Andrés José Rojo y Calderón: *Memorias fúnebres o exequias del Ilustrísimo señor doctor don Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río y Vieyra*, (México: Imprenta del real y más antiguo colegio de San Ildefonso, 1765). I am grateful to Francisco Montes González for giving me access to this document.

virtue, the wisdom, the grace and the nature”). However, he reaffirmed that the last years of Rojo’s life were not easy, recalling them as the hardest period of his life.²

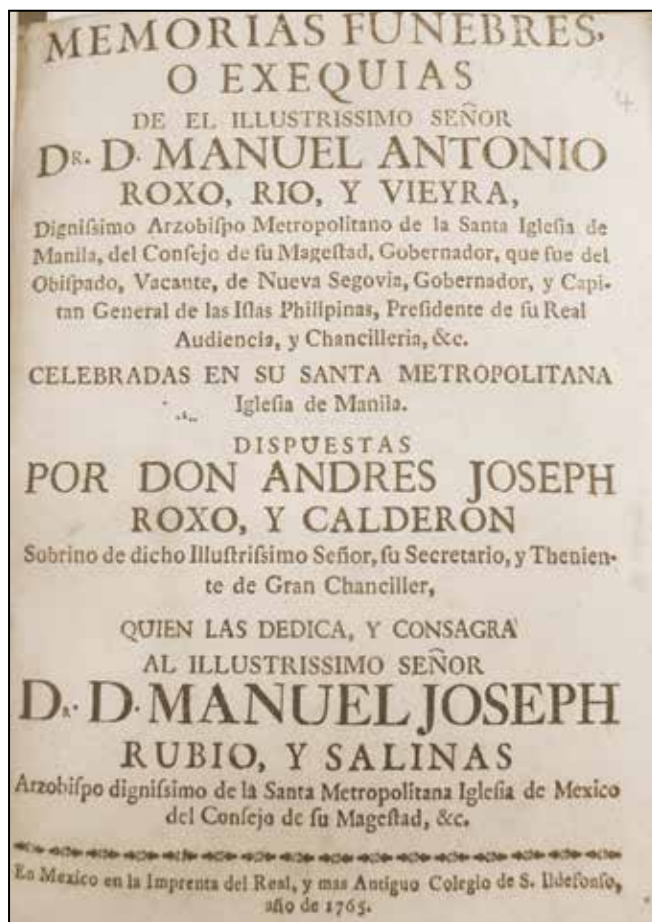


Fig. 1. Front cover of *Memorias fúnebres o exequias del Ilustrísimo señor doctor don Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río y Vieyra*, México: Imprenta del real y más antiguo colegio de San Ildefonso, 1765.

Every step in his path led him to an unexpected end after his long career in the ecclesiastical governorship of the Archbishopric in Mexico and Manila during the 18th century. What will be addressed in this article is the account of his acts and wishes until the end of his days, placing the emphasis on his role as an advocate and patron of arts in Mexico and the Philippines.

² “el trance más amargo, y doloroso para el Corazón de un Príncipe, a quien siempre animaba el pundonor, y que hacía tanto caudal de la honra de la Nación, y del amor, y fidelidad, que debía a nuestro Soberano.” Cfr. Rojo y Calderón, *Memorias*, 15-16.

“Debió Don Manuel Roxo al Mexicano
Fértil terreno su florida Cuna
Y a sus Ilustres Padres el ufano
Timbre de que se jacta la fortuna;
Pero uniendo lo Noble a lo Christiano
Supo a esfuerzos de unión tan oportuna
Dar con su gran virtud nueva excelencia
A su Patria, a su Cuna y su Ascendencia.”³

Vestiges of his teachings: Biographical sketch of Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río Lubián y Vieyra

Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río is a character unknown to many in spite of his relevance in the ecclesiastical and political hierarchy of the mid-18th century Viceroyalty of New Spain and the Philippine Archipelago, since, as shown later, he held various positions in these areas and promoted the progress of arts and letters. His influence survived especially in his mother country, Mexico.⁴

His father was Captain Manuel Rojo del Río y Lafuente, born in Tricio, La Rioja, appointed by order of King Charles II to various honorary positions in the royal service and his mother was Ignacia Lubián y Vieyra from Cádiz, daughter to a French father and a Portuguese mother.⁵ They had numerous offsprings: the eldest Manuel Antonio, José Alberto, Francisco Javier, Nicolás, Teresa Antonia, and María Antonia.⁶

Manuel Antonio Rojo always stood out for his erudition. When he was only 15 years old, he entered one of the most emblematic institutions in Mexico City, *Pontificia Universidad de San Ildefonso*, where he earned an academic degree in Philosophy, Canon Law, and Theology in 1724. His academic training continued in the Peninsula, at the *Universidad de Salamanca*, where he obtained a doctoral degree

³ Rojo y Calderón, *Memorias*, 11.

⁴ To complete the biography of this character, see the works of Joaquín Meade: *Semblanza del ilustrísimo señor doctor don Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río*. (México: Academia Mexicana de la Historia 1960); Mercedes Meade de Angulo: “Doctor Don Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río Lafuente y Vieyra. Arzobispo, Gobernador y Capitán General de Manila, protector de Don Juan López Portillo,” in María Cristina Barrón (ed.): *La presencia novohispana en el Pacífico Insular* (México: Universidad Iberoamericana, 1992), 157-162; Raquel Ofelia Barceló Quintal: “Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río Lubián y Vieyra: arzobispo y gobernador de Filipinas (1759-1764),” in Miguel Luque Talaván y Marta M^a Manchado López (eds.): *Un Océano de Intercambios: Hispanoasia (1521-1898) Homenaje al profesor Leoncio Cabrero Fernández*. Tomo I. (Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 2008), 161-177 y Pedro Luengo Gutiérrez: *Intramuros: Arquitectura en Manila, 1739-1762* (Madrid: Fundación Universitaria Española, 2012), 185-186.

⁵ I am thankful for these data to Dr. Javier Eusebio Sanchiz Ruiz, Senior Researcher at the Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM).

⁶ “Relación de méritos del doctor don Manuel Antonio Roxo. Fechado el 6 de mayo de 1746.” Archivo General de Indias [henceforth AGI], Indiferente 229. N.46. 506v-507r.

in Theology, a Bachelor of Laws degree, and a doctoral degree in Sacred Canon Law in 1736. After a brilliant academic career,⁷ once back in Mexico, he continued his judicial and ecclesiastical career by being part of the Metropolitan Church from 1738 to 1759, where he held office as vicar capitular, canon, provisor, Synodal Examiner and *visitador*.⁸ Moreover, he was the *consultor* of Manuel José Rubino y Salinas, Archbishop of Mexico.

As a jurist, he served in the Tribunal of the Holy Office of the Inquisition in New Spain since his appointment on 16th September, 1746. However, this was not his only experience in this context, as in that same year he was appointed ordinary inquisitor of the Diocese of León in Nicaragua as well as of the Dioceses of the Philippines and Yucatán. Nevertheless, in the judicial field, he will be remembered mainly for being one of the advocates of the *Real Colegio de Abogados* (Royal College of Attorneys) of New Spain and even leading the team of lawyers that drew up its statutes in 1758. This College was finally instituted in 1760 under the protection of Charles III and incorporated to that of Madrid with all its privileges in 1766.⁹

It is worth mentioning that for the admission, it was required that the members had purity of blood,¹⁰ and complied with its regulations based on a series of privileges, grants, and prerogatives summarized by Berní y Catalá. These criteria were paradoxical in view of the final events in the twilight of our main character's life, especially when he mentions "Que los abogados están exentos de ir a la guerra," ("That the lawyers are exempt to go to war").¹¹ Soon after the commencement of the constitution process of this Royal College, he set the course for the Bishopric of Manila, although he would not be the first Mexican person to hold that office. He

⁷ Described by his biographer as follows, "varón esclarecido por su ingenio y por su ciencia, debió sin duda distinguirse en aquellas aulas, cuando más tarde le vemos sustituir la cátedra de vísperas de leyes, obtener el honorífico puesto de rector de la misma Universidad, la más renombrada de España." Cfr. Francisco Sosa: *Biografías de Mexicanos Distinguidos* (México: Oficina Tipográfica de la Secretaría de Fomento, 1884), 915-916.

⁸ "Expediente de información y licencia de pasajero a Indias de Manuel Antonio Rojo, racionero de la catedral de México, con sus criados Francisco Antonio de la Puente, natural del Concejo de Sariego, hijo de Francisco Antonio de la Puente y de Teresa Vigil Bernardo, y Aniceto del Barrio, natural de Penilla de Trasmonte, hijo de Pedro del Barrio y de María Navedas, a Nueva España. Fechado el 9 de noviembre de 1737." AGI, Contratación, 5483, N.2, R.33.

⁹ Óscar Cruz Barney: "Discurso pronunciado en la cena de gala conmemorativa de los 250 años de fundación del Ilustre y Nacional colegio de Abogados de México y firma del convenio de hermanamiento con el Real e ilustre Colegio de Abogados de Zaragoza, el más antiguo de España," *Jurídica: anuario del Departamento de Derecho de la Universidad Iberoamericana*, N.º. 40, (2010), 301-304.

¹⁰ Well-known legal method of social exclusion of descendants of Jewish or Muslim in the Modern Age.

¹¹ Joseph Berní y Catalá, *Resumen de los privilegios, Gracias y Prerrogativas de los Abogados Españoles*. (Valencia: por Joseph Th. Lucas, Impresor del S. Oficio, 1764), 86-87.

was preceded by Miguel de Poblete,¹² Archbishop of Manila from 1649 to 1667, and Carlos Bermúdez de Castro, appointed Archbishop of Manila in 1724. Bermúdez de Castro arrived in the Philippines in 1728 and died the following year, hence he held the position shortly.



Fig. 2. Miguel Cabrera. Portrait of Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río Lubián y Vieyra. Andrés Siegel Collection. México. 18th century.

¹² Born in Mexico in 1604. He was Doctor in Canon Law at the *Real y Pontificia Universidad* after being ordained as a priest. He served as priest at the *Parroquia de San Fe*, canon at the Metropolitan Cathedral and general vicar of religious convents. He was appointed by Archbishop Palafox responsible for the Chair of Theology at the *Seminario de México*. In 1640 he resigned as Bishop of Nicaragua. In 1646 he became Archbishop of Manila, where he built the Cathedral, installed the choir and its canonical duties. He died with a reputation for sanctity on 8th December 1667. See Cayetano Sánchez Fuertes: "La biblioteca, pinacoteca y ajuar de Don Miguel de Poblete, arzobispo de Manila," *Archivo Agustiniiano*. Vol. 95, N^o 213, (2011), 399-444.

“Pero como no hay gran virtud sin un gran contraste, permitió Dios por sus altos juicios, que se levantase esta cruel tormenta, para que su virtud subiese, y sobresaliese más, mientras más se enfureciesen las salobre aguas de la tribulación: pudiéndose amomodar el hermoso epígrafe, Surgit, surgentibus undis.”¹³

At the helm not only of Ecclesiastical but also Political and Military Governorship

Archbishop of Manila

His extensive experience at the Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral soon earned him the merit of being appointed Archbishop of the Archdiocese of Manila¹⁴ in 1756 due to the death of his titular, Pedro de la Santísima Trinidad Martínez de Arizala. The Archbishop of Mexico at that time, Doctor Manuel Rubio y Salinas, was the one who ordained him on 24th August 1758 at the capital’s Metropolitan Cathedral before departing to his new destination.

It is a curious paradox that the new Archbishop arrived on the islands aboard the *Santísima Trinidad* galleon on 18th July 1759,¹⁵ the same vessel the British would capture later on thereby beginning the decline of his professional career.

The arrival of Manuel Rojo in the Philippines was not easy due to the fact that Pedro Manuel de Arandía, who was the previous Governor-General, had just died. Thus, he was destined not only to carry out his duty as archbishop in Manila but also to take over the helm of the islands, not before settling the local conflicts with the substitute Governor-General Miguel Lino de Ezpeleta.¹⁶ On 6th July 1759, the new Archbishop of Manila, Manuel Antonio Rojo, arrived in the Philippines. His appointment and consecration was public knowledge on the islands since the previous year, he took up his position on 22nd July of the same year, immediately beginning the dispute with the *Audiencia* of Manila over the conflict of the interim governorship of the Philippines.

¹³ Rojo y Calderón, *Memorias fúnebres*, 16.

¹⁴ “Provisión de Manuel Antonio Rojo como arzobispo de Manila. Fechado entre 1755 – 1759.” AGI, Filipinas, 327, Exp. 6.

¹⁵ Manuel Merino Pérez: “El convento agustino de San Pablo en Manila.” *Missionalia Hispánica* VIII, (1951), p. 69; “Carta de Miguel de Ezpeleta sobre llegada de arzobispo de Manila. Fechada el 18 de julio de 1759.” AGI, Filipinas, 162. N.30.

¹⁶ The *Audiencia* of Manila had an established ad interim system in the Governorship while the new Governor-General arrived following this order: firstly, the Archbishop of Manila, but in this occasion he was on his way; secondly, the Bishop of *Nueva Segovia*, but this position had already been occupied some years before; thus the third option applied: the interim post was assigned to the Bishop of Cebú, Miguel Lino de Ezpeleta.

While the conflict between them continued, and the Archbishop was waiting for the King's resolution to whom he had appealed, in June 1760 the successor Governor-General, Juan Manuel de la Torre, who was on his way to the Philippines, died on his voyage to the islands.¹⁷ Finally, after the termination of appointment of Miguel Lino de Ezpeleta by a royal *cédula*, Manuel Antonio Rojo took office as Governor-General in 1761.

The control of the Philippine capital would soon vanish in the hands of a humanist like Rojo, who requested a substitute for the post from the very beginning, claiming that he had enough responsibility in the archbishopric and that somebody more qualified had to be appointed in order to govern the islands.¹⁸

Despite all these difficulties at the beginning of his mandate, since his arrival in Manila, he warned about the needs on the islands by mentioning the urgency in reactivating the trade of the Manila Galleon in the domestic sea routes in order to improve the economy and also to reduce the Muslim threat in the archipelago.¹⁹

For this reason, as Archbishop, he set off on a visit of his diocese in person, with his own wealth,²⁰ accompanied by priests who were well-versed in the vernacular languages spoken in the region. The Archbishop began his visit on 13th January 1760 at the Cathedral of Manila. From January to June he visited the parishes of the Archdiocese of Manila in order to acknowledge the situation of the faithful in the churches. He started by the church in the port of Cavite and then he continued on towards the sanctuary of *Nuestra Señora de la Soledad de Puerta Baga*. After this, he visited the churches of the villages of San Roque, Bacolor, Malabón, Balayan, San Juan Bautista de Calamba, Cabuyao, Biñán, Balibago, San Pedro Tunasan, Santiago, Quiapo, San Gabriel, Angono, and San Juan Buenavista.²¹

¹⁷ "Carta de la Audiencia de Manila sobre muerte del gobernador. Fechada el 13 de julio de 1761, Manila." AGI, Filipinas, 388, N. 36.

¹⁸ "Concluyó V.E. diciendo ingenuamente q[ue] habiendo en mi poco buque, y recargando el peso del Gov[ierno] al de la Mitra, es preciso, q[ue] se destine sujeto de iguales prendas, al q[ue] se desgració, para q[ue] con acierto maneje este empleo, en q[ue] yo tengo ning[un]a inteligencia ni versión, como diferente, y distante de la línea de letras, q[ue] he professado. Pero supl[ico] a V.E se me releve de la Resistencia [...]." Carta de Manuel Antonio Rojo sobre situación de Filipinas. Fechada en 21 de julio de 1761, Manila. AGI, Filipinas, 388. N.42. f. 2v.

¹⁹ "Urge la construcción de Barcos para el comercio de la Nueva Esp[aña] y de otras embarcaciones menores para la comunicación entre sí, y para ocurrir a las hostilidades de los moros, q[ue] cada día crece deplorables estragos." *Ibidem*. f. 1r.

²⁰ In New Spain he made a fortune thanked to the *haciendas* inherited from his father in the current states of San Luis Potosí, Tamaulipas and Veracruz.

²¹ Pilar Elordi Cortés: "Una visita pastoral del arzobispo Manuel Antonio Rojo a la diócesis de Manila (1760)," *Missionalia Hispánica*, XXXVIII, (1981), 321-390.

By analysing the original documents of the inventories that the Archbishop compiled in some of the churches from the Archdiocese of Manila, we know how he monitored the state of preservation of the churches as well as the lists of jewels, ornaments and pieces of furniture that were kept in each of them. In this respect, on 5th March 1660, during his visit to the church of *San Juan Bautista* in Calamba, Laguna, he mentioned several silver objects among the numerous goods. This gives an idea of the wealth that Philippine parishes had, prior to what was about to happen.²²

Upon these first visits, he became aware of the need to learn Tagalog, spread the word by means of pastoral letters,²³ prepare and edit catechisms destined to the evangelization of the local population, something that was being carried out since the beginning of the Spanish presence in the Philippines, with the Augustinians as pioneers in this evangelizing strategy, which had been adopted from their previous experience in America.

“Una salus victis, nullam sperare salutem”²⁴
Virgil (*Aenid*)

Governor-General of the Philippines (1760-1762)

Soon the good course of his Archbishopric would be truncated by the war declaration made by Great Britain to Spain in 1762, within the context of the Seven Years' War.²⁵ It was clear that the intention of the British was to weaken the Spanish power over sea trade so as to obtain economic benefit from these vessels. Even though the coveted and impregnable Manila Galleon was captured in few occasions, the British main object of desire was not only to get these goods but also the silver shipped from New Spain to China via Manila, which was the main reason for the British to settle on the Philippine archipelago, gateway to the Celestial Empire.

The British expedition was planned by Colonel William Draper, who ordered Admiral Samuel Cornish to attack Manila with a troop formed by a large number

²² “Alajas de uso de esta Iglesia, Primeramente dos Caliz de plata con sus patenas, Itt. un Copon assi mismo de plata, Un incensario con su naveta y cuchara de plata, Un sol de plata mediano que sirve de ornato a la Virgen, Ytenn dos vinajeras con su plato de plata. Itt. Un baston con su estandarte y efigie de San Juan de plata. Itt. Assi mismo una diadema de plata y sirve al Sto. De plata.” Archives of the Archdiocese of Manila, Filipinas [henceforth AAM]. Box. 4.A.1. Santa visita de las Iglesias (1751-1835). Folder 2. Santiago, San Pedro, Calamba, Cabuyao, Guia (1760).

²³ *Carta Pastoral a los fieles de Manila*. Manila: (s.n). 1760; *Catecismo en lengua tagala*, Manila: (s.n), 1760; *Epistola pastoralis parochos et sacerdotes Archiepiscopatus Manilensis*. Manila (s. n), 1761. See José Mariano Beristain de Souza: *Biblioteca Hispano Americana Septentrional* (México: Oficina de D. Alejandro Valdés, 1821), vol. III, 61-62.

²⁴ The only salvation for the defeated is to hope for no salvation.

²⁵ Antonio Molina: *Historia de Filipinas* (Madrid: Ediciones Cultura Hispánica del Instituto de Cooperación Iberoamericana, 1984), Tomo I, 157-172.

of men, mostly British and indigenous people, which departed from Madras in the Indies arriving in September 1762 in Cavite, Manila. The Archbishop and Governor-General Rojo had already been warned about the arrival of the British squad by some friars from Castile and even the Indies, but he did not give it the importance that deserved.²⁶

The British arrived when the government of Manila was weak due to the vacant governorship following the death of Pedro Manuel de Arandía. After the landing, a sustained, intense attack started and lasted more than ten consecutive days until 5th October when Manuel Antonio Rojo, acting Governor-General of the Philippines and Archbishop of Manila, surrendered the city to the British troops.

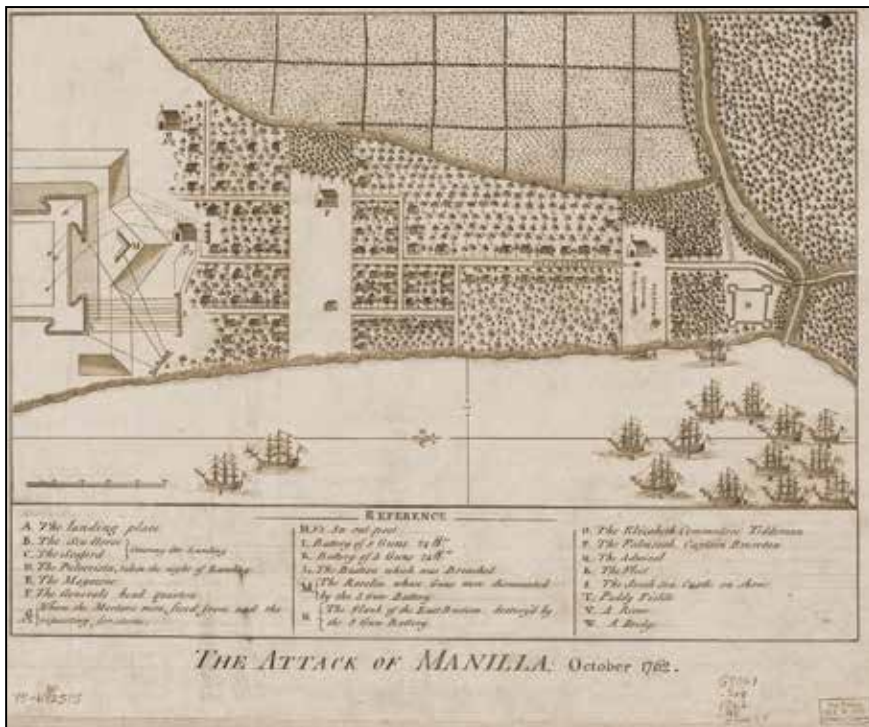


Fig. 3. The Attack of Manila, October. [1762] Map. Library of Congress, Geography and Map Division. Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <www.loc.gov/item/75692515/>.

Luckily, the presence of an *oidor* of the Audiencia, Simón de Anda y Salazar in Bacolor (Pampanga, Philippines) during his corresponding visit to the territory caused that, after self-proclaiming as Governor-General of the Islands and joining

²⁶ Eduardo Navarro, OSA: *Documentos indispensables para la verdadera Historia de Filipinas*, (Madrid: Imp. del Asilo de Huérfanos, 1908), Tomo I, 58.

forces with the local population, he managed to take control of the siege of Manila thus slowing down the advance of the invading troops. Unfortunately for our main character, this action implied a personal affront which discredited him even more, if possible, indirectly causing Simón de Anda y Salazar to immediately become Governor-General of Philippines, and later on, to be in power for a second term from 1770 to 1776. On 10th February 1763 the Peace Treaty of Paris was signed, but the news did not reach the islands until 3rd July 1763.

The negotiations of the Governor-General and Archbishop of Manila with the British troops directed the efforts to avoid the destruction of the city thus the capitulations of the capital of the Philippines were signed.²⁷ In these, the British demanded the arms, goods, ammunition, and supplies and a payment of four million pesos, two of them immediately. In return, they would respect the churches, convents, palaces, and other buildings, stopping the looting of previous days. Additionally they promised they would take no prisoners of war.

In view of these conditions, and not before both parts negotiating, the Spanish put forward a proposal, as they did not have much money, for the British to get part of the demanded payment by accepting silver and goods from *El Filipino* Galleon, anchored in Palapag Port, in exchange. Once the terms were accepted, Rojo signed the capitulations to put an end to the British attack not knowing that Governor-General Simón de Anda had made the vessel's captain unload the silver and precious objects, which would help him form the squad that would finally expel the British troops from Manila.²⁸

In a valuable document about the versions of both sides over what really happened, there is a cross-dialogue with the version of ones and the others. On the one hand the British mention that they regarded the Spanish as chicken because the latter thought they were going to be killed if they did not comply with the agreement. The British even dressed black people up as women to walk past them, insinuating they were cowards.²⁹ In response, the Spanish mention the severe threats received

²⁷ "Oficio del bailío fray Julián de Arriaga al marqués de Grimaldi. Fechado a 12 de diciembre de 1763, Buen Retiro, Manila, San Ildefonso." AGI, Estado 44, n°66.

²⁸ Carlos Vila Miranda: "Toma de Manila por los ingleses en 1762," *Anuario de Estudios Atlánticos*, Madrid-Las Palmas, núm. 53, (2007), pp. 167-220.

²⁹ "Dicen que los obligamos a la entrega de las Islas, y de Cavite y a que firmasen la cantidad de quatro millones de pessos. Es cierto que se les penciono, o por mejor decir se les hecho una contribución para suplir los crecidos gastos de nuestra guerra: pero eso fue haciéndoles a ellos mismos que se tomasen la medida a proporción de sus caudales. Si estos no eran del fondo correspondiente, que pudiese suplir aquella contribución como firmaron esta. Porque los obligamos los Yngleses con la uniuqa amenaza de ser pasados a cuchillos. Y que lo creyeron. Pues en pena de su simpleza echanse asi mismo la culpa y no nos den el título de tiranos q[u]e se nos obedece dar por una amenaza que debio despreciarla o da buena presencia, Ignoran que los soldados hechan sus brabatas sin el ánimo de cumplirlas [...], q[u]e los Yngleses los violentamos por este camino y desde luego se acreditaran de

and reproached the British for the puerile attitude of those disguised men's actions, mocking them.³⁰

The money in Manila which amounted to two million pesos was not enough to satisfy the British monetary demands. And, although another two million pesos was to be paid in Royal Treasury Bonds, and even if the Governor General had recapitulated, there began the seizure and looting of ecclesiastical, governmental, and private assets and goods in Manila.

Pablo Domingo Ngien, Chinese Dominican Friar that was in Manila during the British siege, narrates its peculiarities and the assault the city was submitted to, describing in detail the number of precious objects the locals, as well as the convents and churches were deprived of. One curious detail is that they were given the opportunity to swap the liturgical objects, that is to say, the British told them that if they paid what the objects were worth, they could keep them, what he did with a chalice of *Santos Reyes* church outside the walls (*extramuros*) of Manila,³¹ taking it, it is believed, back to China. We could hold out hope that other religious men followed his example and, perhaps, more silver ornaments considered lost are preserved outside the city of Manila.³²

muy gallinas los españoles de Manila, si dicen p[or] causa de su vejación el miedo, q[ue] les infundió un ardid. A un presso n[uest]ro General p[ar]a darles a entender algo de esto guarnicio aquella tarde los muros con los negros vestidos de mujeres para q[ue] conociesen q[ue] habíamos fuicio de su singular cobardía y pobreza de corazón.” Justa satisfacción de los Jefes británicos (por la toma de Manila por estos piratas en 1762), con la Respuesta conveniente a tal satisfacción.” Archivo de la Universidad de Santo Tomás, [henceforth AUST] Beceros 44.3. fols. 37v- 38r.

³⁰ “También es menester decir q[ue] fue una gran puerilidad en los Ingleses y una fanfarronería el haber guarnecido los muros en la tarde del día del asalto con los negros venidos en viaje de mujeres para motejar a los Españoles, con esto q[ue] habían hecho juicio de una cobardía y pobreza de corazón.” *Ibidem*. f. 41r.

³¹ Pedro Luengo Gutiérrez, “Notas sobre arquitectura y retablos en las iglesias de los arrabales de Manila en 1782.” In *III Congreso Internacional de la FELAP*, (Zaragoza: Universidad de Granada, 2010), 265-278.

³² “A toda esta gente despojaron cruelmente quanto tenias de los precioso, infinitas cruces, hebillas, zarcillos, e anillos de Diamantes, Cadenas de Oro, Relicarios de Oro y plata, Manillas de Oro y de Tombaga, Rosarios de Oro y plata, Botones de oro y plata. Y duró este despojo todo el día, que tomaron la Ciudad de lo que sacaron los Ingleses un inmenso thesoro. Porque los bienes de Manila se reducían a Diamantes, perlas y oro [...] Se siguió después el saqueo de las casas de Manila y de diversos Conventos e Iglesias. Y este saqueo duró por espacio de quarenta horas. De suerte que los Ingleses así que tomaron la Ciudad, no pensaron en otra cosa, que en quitarnos quantos bienes teníamos y al tercer días de la perdida de la Ciudad, ya la tenían desnudada de sus bienes. Pero tuvieron respeto por los vasos sagrados, separandolos a parte y dando a nosotros la voluntad de redimirlos con dinero. Todos los Eclesiasticos sus vasos sagrados dando el dinero correspondiente y yo redimi un caliz perteneciente a la Iglesia de los SS. Reyes extramuros de Manila, por el precio de veinte y ocho pesos gordos, que así pesaba el dicho Cáliz.” Carta del conde de Fuentes, embajador de España en París, al marqués de Grimaldi, ministro de Estado, remitiéndole una de fray Pablo Ngien, religioso dominico chino que se halló en Manila durante el sitio de los ingleses, en la que relata particularidades del mismo y principalmente el saqueo a que sometieron la ciudad. Acompaña: Carta citada del religioso dominico. (París 14 diciembre de 1766). 4 hoj. Fol. AGI. Estado,44,N.6.

The indiscriminate forced seizure by the British affected all the spheres of society, as was the case of the pillage at Sergeant Andrés Blanco's and Marquis of Montecastro's houses together with the burning of numerous wooden houses, as well as the massive assault on churches, looting their goods and destroying their archives, as in the case of the Sanctuary of Guadalupe and *San Juan del Monte Church and Convent*. In spite of this devastating situation, some houses and churches could not be destroyed since they were made of limestone.³³

However, it is the literal testimony of Sergeant Andrés Blanco Bermúdez himself which gives a closer idea of the British troops' pillage of his house. Due to the fact that Francisco Bernabal was imprisoned there, he managed to avoid the first onslaughts of the confrontation but four months later it was looted. The British took all the belongings in it to *Casa de la Misericordia* (House of Mercy), to be sold or taken with them, and then burnt this residence and other *haciendas* in Camarines.³⁴

It should be underlined that Sergeant Blanco also demanded the money

³³ “[...] muchos dias después de la toma de esta plaza, saquearon la Cassa de Don Andrés Blanco, y se llevaron quanto había en ella..Asímismo quemaron la casa del Río de este Caballero y la de Nagtafan y la del Marqués de Monte Castro, cuya casa que esta dentro de esta Ciudad corrió la misma fortuna que la de Blanco. Saquearon las más de las Iglesias de a fuera llevándose los thesoros de las obras pias fundadas en ellas. Por muchísimos días consecutivos executaron lo mesmo en quantas casas pudieron violentar en los Arrabales de esta Ciudad. Quemaron mil y setecientas casa en el pueblo de Tondo mil, y quatro cientos en el de Binondo, muchas en el de Santa Cruz, que se se sabe quantas son, y todo entero el pueblo de Quiapo, se llevaron el Barco que un particular tenía en el Puerto cargado otro de varios individuos nombrado el Siam [...]. Destrozaron quadras enteras de edificios dentro de esta Plaza para hacer leña tomando para lo mismo y forma una contadura, una gran porción de madera destinada para la composición del Collegio de Santa Potenciana saquearon el santuario de Guadalupe, Incendiaron, y robaron la Iglesia y Convento de San Juan del Monte. Destrozaron todos los Archivos rompiendo y quemando quantos papeles pudieron haver a las manos. [...]. Menos daños se podía ocasionar a esta Plaza de las Casas quemadas en los Pueblos de Tondo, Binondo, Santa Cruz, y Quiapo porque se dicen que podían serles de padraсто en un caso de cito formal se responde de quemas bine serían las que corren desde la bajada del Puente grande por uno, y otro lado de, el orillando el Río, la Alcaicería de San Fernando las Iglesias de estos Pueblos y otras muchas que son todas de fábrica de cal, y canto, y de ellas más bien que de las casas de los infieles naturales que casi las más eran de nipa y caña se les podía ofender.” AAM. Box. 1. C.8. Libro de Gobierno Ecl. (1707-1752). Folder 2. British occupation. fols.14r-14v.

³⁴ “Itten, si saben que después de quatro meses de dicha Toma los oficiales ingleses saqueron dicha mi Casa llevando a sus Navios la Ropa de Mercadería, con Alajas de oro, plata labrada acuñada o menaje de Cassa con Forlones, Libreas, y todo quanto había en ella sin dejarme un catre en que dormir, ni una silla en que sentar de manera que haciendo una regulacion prudencial, y según los apuntes de compras para suu valor de doscientos y quarenta mil pessos, y asímismo la Casa con sus Camarines, el uno de maderas, y el otro de Champanas, con todo el avío de sillas, mesas, catres, Armarios, y Tambobos sacando el arroz que había en ellos que serían como quinientos cavanos, y que despues de este echo quemaron la dicha Cassa y Camarines, cuyo valor incluso lo en ella squeado importa mas de siete mil pessos.” Testimonio literal de la información dada por el sargento mayor Andrés Blanco Bermúdez, sobre el saqueo que hicieron los enemigos británicos en la casa de su morada y hacienda de Angono y Quingua como también de la Casa Huerta y Camarines. 31 hoj. Fol. AGI. Estado,44,N.84. f. 2v.

owed to him by some Sangleyes taken by the British, whom he would never see again, as well as the money invested on the Galleon.

In this sense, the locals of Manila not only lost their most precious belongings during the looting of their houses but they also ended up seeing how the resources invested on goods chartered on the Manila Galleon disappeared, as the British troops plundered the vessels that were on the port at that moment, the vessel *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* (alias that of Siam).³⁵ Moreover, the British allowed the Sangleyes to take galleys belonging to Spanish and local residents, which were in the river intended for the trade between provinces and the shipping and delivery of goods. Among them was a vessel which arrived two days after the British disembark announcing the imminent arrival of *El Filipino* Galleon. When the British got on board and found the official documents which *El Filipino* sent the Governor-General, they immediately set off to intercept it although Anda y Salazar had already warned the captain to disembark the silver.

Unfortunately, instead of intercepting *El Filipino* in *San Bernardino* Strait, they came across the *Santísima Trinidad* Galleon which was so badly damaged during the combat that it had to be towed to Cavite Port, and whose load was assessed and valued in three million pesos by Admiral Cornish.³⁶

One of the disputes in the peace negotiations was the capture of the Spanish vessel the *Santísima Trinidad* by the British and whether its load should be considered as part of the payment for the capitulation. Be that as it may, this Spanish vessel together with the rest of the British fleet, with their troops aboard, left Manila on 10th April 1764. The *Santísima Trinidad* was taken to the English port of Plymouth with precious objects which are held in custody nowadays in the British collections.³⁷

The capitulation of our character in favour of Britain caused his destitution and a sentence for treason. Finally, shouldering the burden of discredit at the end of his days, Manuel Rojo del Río Lubián y Vieyra died on 30th January 1764, after a long illness, mixed with the distress caused by the British occupation, as Esteban Roxas

³⁵ “Ytten, si saben que en el Navio la Santísima Trinidad (alias el Poderosos que asimismo saquearon dichos ingleses con todo la carga había yo embarcado en generos dado a correspondencia y prestado doscientos dose mil y mas pesos porque en el Navio Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe (alias el de Siam) que asimismo saquearon, tenia tres mil pesos para la quarta parte de su valor haberlo habilitado con cañones, Anclas, y demas aperos-Ytten si saben que los dichos Ingleses se llevaron consigo a los sangleyes Pedro Zacarias, que me decía mil quatro cientos pesos, Pablo Yangco tres mil y quatro cientos pesos, Francisco Gunco cinco mil trescientos quarenta y quatro pesos y tres reales. Juan Gamlo seis cientos sesenta y nueve pesos y seis reales cuias partidas compones la de dies mil ochocientos catorce pesos y un real constnates de sus obligaciones.” *Ibidem*. f. 2v.

³⁶ Carlos Vila Miranda: “Toma de Manila por los ingleses en 1762,” 176-180.

³⁷ “Embajador en Londres: inventario navío Santísima Trinidad. Fechado el 6 de julio de 1764, Londres, San Ildefonso.” AGL. Estado. 44, n°88.

y Melo mentions in a governmental report.³⁸ He never lost hope in his final effort to negotiate with the British, as it is clear in the memorable quotation of the poet Virgilio in the capitulations of Manila:³⁹ *Una salus victis, nullam sperare salutem.*⁴⁰

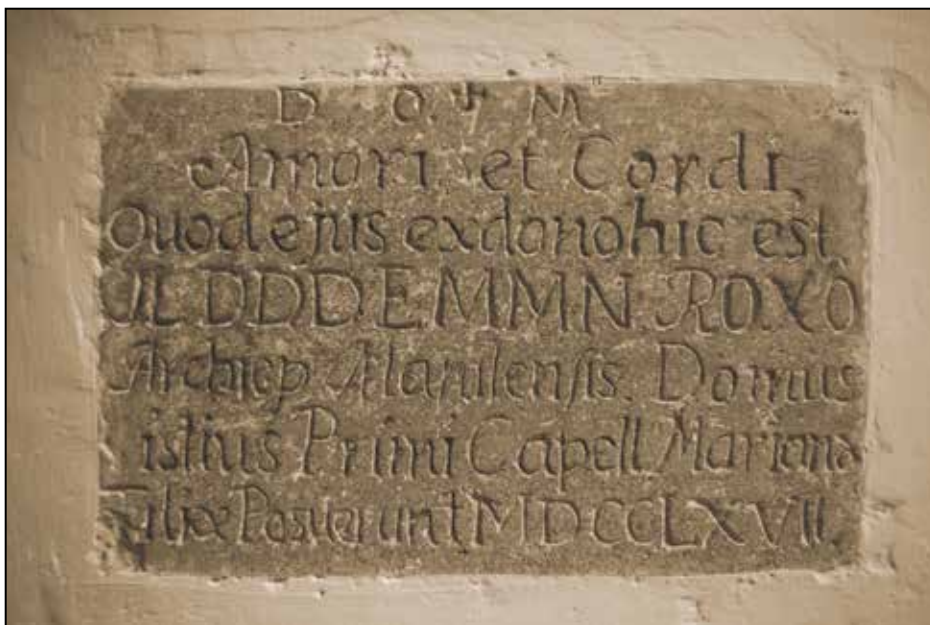


Fig. 4. Memorial plaque. Templo de la Enseñanza, Mexico. Photo by the author.

After his death, one of his last wishes was to be buried in the chapel of *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe* in Manila Cathedral, which was done with the solemnity his rank demanded,⁴¹ and that his heart was taken to Mexico and kept modestly in *Templo de la Enseñanza*⁴² in the city of Mexico, behind the inscription that reads:

D.O.M.
+
Amori et Cordi,
Quod ejus ex dono hic est
JL DDD EMMAN. ROXO

³⁸ "...con los sinsabores y cuidados, con que parece, que la Divina Providencia le quiso purificar con verse Prisionero de la nación Inglesa y ver con este acaso transtornadas todas las Islas, y su rebaño, quasi sin Pastor para consuelo, y alivio de tantas Ovejas, que andaban por los montes, selvas, y Pueblos buscando su subsistencia por verse libres de la opresión de unos enemigos tan sobervios, altivos y sin religión" AAM. Box 1. C.9 Libro de Gobierno Ecl. (1737-1892). Folder 7. Libro de Gobierno Ecl. (1760-1777). Consultas Arch. Rojo y Cabildo. Manila 15 julio 1764. f. 25r.

³⁹ AGI, Estado 44, nº66. Op., cit.

⁴⁰ The only salvation for the defeated is to hope for no salvation.

⁴¹ Rojo y Calderón, *Memorias fúnebres*, 18.

⁴² Consider the close bond he had with this temple, as he was its first priest. See Mariano Cuevas: *Historia de la Iglesia en México*. Tomo IV/V. (México: Editorial Porrúa, 2003), 196.

Archiep. Manilensis, Domus
Istius Primi Capell., Marianae
Filiae posuerunt. MDCCLXVII.⁴³

“Alentaba a la fábrica, y reparación de los Templos, proveyendo a las Iglesias pobres, de ornamentos, vasos sagrados, y de todo lo necesario para el culto, y Divinos Oficios.”⁴⁴

Artistic consciousness: legacy and erudition

Thanks to the description of his funeral rites at Manila Cathedral, we know how the final farewell to the deceased was, where all of the authorities of the city were present in order to pay him tribute: the royal Audiencia, members of all the sacred religions, military corps, colleges and the local community of Manila bade farewell to such an illustrious dignitary.

After the Archbishop's death there were still many issues to address, once the capitulations of the city of Manila had been put forward and handed over to the British. A Royal Order of 1766 sentenced the seizure of all his possessions upon the request of the Ecclesiastical *Cabildo* of Manila Cathedral that ordered to pay the costs of the silver that the British had confiscated some years earlier. In 1788 however, due to the slow resolution of the conflict, the *Cabildo* withdrew, apart from the fact that eventually the *Cédula Real*, declaring him traitor to the motherland, had not been implemented.⁴⁵

When he died, he left the Marquis of Villamediana as heir, but his inheritance took so long to be resolved that finally it was Felipe de Barragán who, in an auction, bought the possessions that had belonged to the Archbishop in New Spain.

Despite the fact that his last testamentary will would not be followed, in the course of his life the love for the arts was always present, which is something that he demonstrated during the few years he spent on the Philippine archipelago.

⁴³ I am grateful for this free translation to José Antonio Díaz.
Al más grande y mejor Dios.

+
He aquí el Amor y el Corazón,
Que son don mismo del que fue
Ilustrísimo Doctor en Teología Don Manuel Rojo,
Arzobispo de Manila, que fue el primero de esta Casa
en portar el Capelo, su hija Mariana
los depositó. 1767.

⁴⁴ Rojo y Calderón, *Memorias fúnebres*, 35.

⁴⁵ Meade, *Semblanza*, 164.

Once in Manila, apart from his governmental and ecclesiastical work, he carried out significant social welfare endeavour by rebuilding the Royal Hospital. He also supported the education sector by building the *Colegio de Santa Potenciana* and restoring the Royal *Seminario de San Felipe*. He also carried out various repairs in the ports of Cavite and *Real Fuerza de Santiago*. However, without a doubt, what he was more deeply involved with was in Manila Cathedral,⁴⁶ which recently renewed by the Italian architect Juan de Ugucioni and the master builder Esteban Roxas y Melo. He funded the costly composition and ornamentation of *San Cosme* and *San Damián* chapel, where he placed a silver lamp and enough oil and entrusted a caretaker with the task of always keeping it lit, he donated a valuable vestment for the funeral rites of royal people, a sumptuous set of six silver chalices, patens and cruets and he also provided the diamonds that the pyx lacked, thus helping to complete it. He also paid for the atrium, the composition of the great organ, the altar of *Santo Cristo* and the chapel of *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*, where his body rests, whose devotion the Archbishop supported until he solemnised her patronage on these Islands, among other acts.⁴⁷

Despite his decisive participation in the promotion of arts in the Philippines, he was defamed after his final decline. After the war with the British, Esteban Roxas y Melo felt sorry for everything that had disappeared, they did not even have silver to mortgage or sell in order to repay the loans obtained for building the Cathedral, which was damaged by the British attacks.⁴⁸

Without a doubt, it is in his home country where we can learn more about him as a person through his acts related to patronage, especially in the el Royal *Colegio de San Ildefonso*.

As a former student, he had always had a strong bond with the institution that had trained him not only academically but also as a person. In gratitude for his training and education in this institution, he established an annuity to the chapel of *Colegio de San Ildefonso* for the feast day of San Luis Gonzaga, the Patron Saint of the College and University whom he was devoted to and of whom he had a beautiful

⁴⁶ Pedro Luengo Gutiérrez: *Manila, plaza fuerte (1762-1788): ingenieros militares entre Asia, América y Europa* (Madrid: CSIC, 2013), 109-119.

⁴⁷ Rojo y Calderón, *Memorias fúnebres*, 25.

⁴⁸ "...nos ha faltado aliento por la suma escasez en que nos vemos a remediar el perjuicio, que recibió la fábrica en el asedio de la pasada guerra, el cimborrio, o media naranja, que es de madera, recibió algunos balazos de los Naos, que batían la plaza, como también los tejados de las Naves con quiebra de algunos maderos, y así tenemos el dolor de ver, que a medianos aguaceros, (que aquí son la mayor parte del año) ser todo goteras la Iglesia, en especial el Presbitero, que se haya bajo el cimborrio, y de no poder, en ocasiones semejantes, celebrar en el Altar principal destinado a ello." AAM. Box 1. C.9 Libro de Gobierno Ecl. (1737-1892). Folder 7. Libro de Gobierno Ecl. (1760-1777). Consultas Arch. Rojo y Cabildo. Manila 15 julio 1764. f. 101r.

sculpture created, which was dressed up in wealthy clothing, and also a silver bier made to be carried during the religious parades. Moreover, he paid for the niche of the Calvary and built a golden altar in this former royal College. He also decorated the chapel in the church dedicated to the martyr saints Cosme and Damian, where he ordered to place a silver lamp. Furthermore, he promoted a grant for students to honour his memory for good.⁴⁹

We must not overlook the fact that he donated his extensive book collection to the *Colegio de San Ildefonso* before leaving for Manila. Without a doubt, this collection was one of his most valuable possessions but unfortunately, it was dispersed.⁵⁰ However, an inventory of the books that made up that vast library has been preserved. At this point we should recall his great work in the last days of his life as a creator, leaving priceless works for spreading the catholic faith through pastoral letters, catechisms, etc., some of which were written in Tagalog; other works had a legal character, since he was a lawyer.⁵¹

Among his last wills, he had a magnificent choir lectern made in the Philippines in order to be shipped to Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral. There it is still preserved today, in the same place to which it had been sent.⁵²

It departed in 1762 from Manila to Acapulco, even though it went through a hazardous experience on the voyage since it had to be sent three times via the Manila Galleon. The first time was aboard the *Santa Rosa* galleon, which was captured by pirates. The second time was that same year aboard the *San Carlos* galleon, which had to return to Cavite due to bad weather. And finally, four years later, it got to its final destination, this way complying with the Archbishop's last will.⁵³

⁴⁹ Félix Osores: "Noticia de algunos alumnos o colegiales del seminario más antiguo de México de San Pedro, San Pablo y San Ildefonso. Insignes por su piedad, literatura y empleos," 1ª parte, in Genaro García: *Documentos inéditos o muy raros para la Historia de México* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1975), 855-857; José Rojas Garcidueñas: *El antiguo Colegio de San Ildefonso*. (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1985), 60; Juan de Viera: *Breve y compendiosa narración de la ciudad de México*. (México, Instituto Mora, 1992), 68-78.

⁵⁰ I am grateful for this datum to Dr. Mónica Hidalgo Pego, Senior Researcher at the Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Sociedad y la Educación, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM).

⁵¹ Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río: *Imago sacris coloribus alumbrata animosi Philippi V. Hispa. Et Indiar. Regis Catholici* (Edita Salmantice, apud Antonium Villagordo, 1748); *Orationes gratulatorie in adventu Illmi. Archiepiscopi Mexicani in Mexicanam Academiam et in Reg. S. Ildephonsi Collegium* (Salmantice, 1750); *Academia legalis Deffensio pro jure ad catedram in Academia Mexicana obtinendam Regie Mexicane Chancellarie oblata*. Kal. Octob. 1739; *La mejor devoción del buen cristiano*, Mexico. See Beristain de Souza, *Biblioteca*, 61-62.

⁵² Juan de Viera: *Breve y compendiosa narración de la ciudad de México*, 21.

⁵³ For further information about this donation, see Ana Ruiz Gutiérrez: "Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río Lafuente y Vieyra, su labor de mecenas en Filipinas y Nueva España durante el siglo XVIII," in C. López Calderón, M. A. Fernández Valle, I. Rodríguez Moya (coords.): *Barroco Iberoamericano: identidades culturales de un imperio*. Vol.1 (Santiago de Compostela: Andavira Editora. 2013), 335-344.



Fig. 5. Choir lectern. Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral. Philippines. 18th century. Photo by the author.

The choir lectern was made of ebony and tindalo, it has three parts: the base, the choir lectern itself and the top. It was decorated with ten ivory figurines, the ones in the low part are the four Doctors of the Church and the ones that are above represent the Evangelists. In the centre of the dome that makes up the third part, the image of the Assumption can be seen, and finishing the piece there is a crucifix with an exquisite ebony and mother-of-pearl cross. Together with the choir lectern there arrived a drawing of it and it is signed as follows: “Josephus Núñez Delineavit. — Anno de 1766,” and instructions with letters to be able to assemble it.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Manuel Toussaint: *La catedral de México* (México: Editorial Porrúa, 1992), 106.

Unfortunately, the choir of Mexico City Metropolitan Cathedral was damaged by a disastrous fire in 1967, due to which some of the ivory figurines were lost, the crucifix was altered and some of the parts lost their attributes. The image of the Assumption was also severely damaged. Fortunately, the choir lectern remained intact, thus, the similarities that it has with the one that is preserved in San Agustin Church in Intramuros, Manila, can be appreciated. This lectern has little ornamentation, only an ivory Virgin that is exhibited today at the museum; however, originally it was the central part of the composition.

This choir lectern symbolises the greatness of Manuel Antonio Rojo del Río Lubián y Vieyra, of whose legacy very little or nothing remains with the passing of time, therefore it is relevant to make his story visible, highlighting the importance he had in the viceroyalty of New Spain and the Philippines. Sadly, he will always be remembered as the man who capitulated and left Manila in the hands of the British, a fortuitous fact in his life, since he was not even supposed to be the Governor-General of the islands. Be it one way or the other, this is the story of an illustrious Mexican, whose generosity and commitment had always been present in his life, be it in the ecclesiastical, social, or artistic roles. Without a doubt his heart will continue to beat in Mexico through his legacy.^{PS}

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