



## Some Notes About the Misericordia of Isla Hermosa

JOSÉ EUGENIO BORAO\*

The Misericordia of Isla Hermosa (Taiwan) can be compared neither with the institutions of the same name that existed all over the Portuguese colonial empire,<sup>1</sup> nor with the Misericordia of Manila that lasted for some centuries, providing care to widows, orphans and poor people. First of all, the Misericordia of Isla Hermosa lasted for a mere ten years (1632-1642), and it developed in the shadow of a *presidio*, in an embryonic city that never had a stable civilian population. Nevertheless, the name reveals its intention to become a charitable institution in the general pattern of the Portuguese *Misericórdias*. The main source of data about the Misericordia of Isla Hermosa is a single document, which, when complemented with a few secondary references, may help expand our understanding of the brief history of this institution.

Our Lady of Mercy, 17<sup>th</sup> c., oil on wood  
(Museum of S. Roque / Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa).

\* Professor at the National Taiwan University and a leading researcher on the early modern history of Taiwan.

*Professor na Universidade Nacional de Taiwan, investiga a fase inicial da História Moderna da ilha.*

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What we know about the Misericordia of Isla Hermosa is that it was established as the result of a local lay initiative, and that it was closely related to the Dominicans who also used it as a means of financing their apostolic endeavors. Given that the promoters of the Misericordia of Isla Hermosa were the Dominican Fr. Jacinto Esquivel and the Governor Juan de Alcarazo, let us start by introducing these two Basque countrymen, who both hailed from Vitoria, Spain.

### JACINTO ESQUIVEL AND THE MISERICORDIA (SPRING, 1632)

Jacinto Esquivel arrived at the Dominican mission in Manila with the purpose of going to Japan at a time when it was very dangerous to be a missionary in that kingdom. While in Manila, he studied Japanese and, in 1630, published a dictionary of the Japanese language based on the original Jesuit version published in Nagasaki in 1603.<sup>2</sup> Because the trip to Japan had become impossible, he moved to Isla Hermosa to wait for such an opportunity. He arrived in Quelang in the summer of 1631, at the age of 38. From there, he went to the nearby native town of Tapparri, where he remained until October of that year. Then he moved to Tamsui, where the Spaniards had a small fortress, and stayed there until February 1632. He had close dealings with the natives of the area, particularly those of Senar, whom he describes in great detail. At the end of that summer, he returned to Quelang, where he met Bishop Diego de Aduarte, who happened to be visiting the island, and talked to him about local missionary endeavors. We think that this was the moment at which the idea of establishing a Misericordia took shape. In fact, it must have been at the urging of Governor Alcarazo and Bishop Aduarte, respectively (both returned to Manila soon afterwards) that Esquivel wrote two reports, one on civil government and practical issues<sup>3</sup> and another on ecclesiastical matters.<sup>4</sup> Aduarte summarized these two reports in his *Memoria de las cosas de Isla Hermosa*, which he wrote in November 1632,<sup>5</sup> and in parts of his *Historia de la Provincia del Santo Rosario*,<sup>6</sup> published in 1640.

Esquivel was a prolific writer. After writing those reports, he also finished compiling three manuscripts: a grammar, a dictionary and a catechism, all of which dealt with the language of the natives of Tamchui. Esquivel was still in Taiwan in April 1633, when he

completed his plans for apostolic expansion by formally proposing to the *Santa Mesa* of the Misericordia the establishment, in Quelang, of a children's school to serve the neighbouring countries of Lequios, Korea, Japan and China—a proposal that the *Mesa* of the Misericordia fully supported.<sup>7</sup> Thanks to this proposal we know, firstly, that the *Santa Mesa* had only recently been established, at least formally. Secondly, we can discern indirectly some information about the contents of its statutes and the purpose for which it had been established. These ideas had been set out a year before in Esquivel's plan of action, and had been praised by Bishop Aduarte. Later on, probably in the spring of 1633, Esquivel finally made his long-awaited trip to Japan, either to stay there permanently, or to try to promote his "Quelang School" among the Japanese or the inhabitants of Lequios. But the trip proved to be a fateful one, for he was deceived and then assassinated. This short biography may demonstrate that Esquivel was a man with a global understanding of his mission, and knowledge of the means needed to accomplish it.

### GOVERNOR ALCARAZO OF QUELANG AND THE FOUNDING OF THE MISERICORDIA (SUMMER 1632)

Juan de Alcarazo was one of the best generals in the Philippine colony; he was sent to Isla Hermosa as a substitute for Governor Antonio Carreño, a tough captain, who, after three years on the job, had created a certain degree of animosity towards himself among his men. Life on the island was not easy in those early years; many people died at the mercy of weather conditions, or because of a lack of access to clean water and basic sanitation. The need for a good hospital was obvious, although the garrison had always had access to basic medical treatment. In 1632, just weeks before Alcarazo's departure back to Manila, Bishop Aduarte wrote a report from which we can extrapolate that the existing medical facilities were barely sufficient to treat the soldiers. He mentions that a doctor had been present from the beginning of the conquest, but that he had just left the island, and his substitute, a Dominican friar, was about to leave. He also provided a survey of the items needed by the hospital at the time, since everything had to come from Manila. These were Aduarte's words:

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“There was one surgeon, but being a married man, and having stayed there for a long time, he left this year for Spain. He must be replaced soon because [the men] cannot manage in their positions without one. The only person there who is knowledgeable in this field is a friar who may be forced to come to Manila because he is suffering from poor health himself. His superior has already granted him permission for this. For want of volunteers, the Franciscans may be requested to send two brothers there, veterans of their infirmaries and who are experienced in curing [illnesses]. They may be assigned to man the hospitals there, rendering great service to God. Moreover, if the said order desires to send ministers to attend to the natives of that island, just like the Dominicans who are already working there, pray that they may do so. A doctor to prescribe and a pharmacist to dispense prescriptions are indispensable in any place where people live. It is useless to have one without the other. There is also a need for preserves and gifts for the sick, and more than just chicken with some income for their sustenance. Since there is no hospital there, up till now, everything has had to come from here, but in scarcer quantities than what is needed. Thus it is necessary to send them everything, in kind, or in the designated amount of money until God wills that the land yield [for their needs], since it is capable of doing so. The land clamors—without pretext—for ‘fracadas’ from Castile and woolen mattresses for the sick, as it can get very cold in winter.”<sup>8</sup>

Before leaving his post, Alcarazo thought about how to solve this problem, and discussed the idea with Esquivel; both agreed that a Misericordia should be founded, with the establishment of an attached hospital as its primary goal. At the same time, however, Esquivel had witnessed the beginnings of a *parian* in the embryonic Formosan city of San Salvador, and also a *pariancillo* in Tamsui. He observed and probably officiated over several marriages of soldiers with native women. He even proposed in his reports that some young ladies from Santa Potenciana College in Manila might be sent—with their dowries—to Isla Hermosa for prospective marriages. Because of his optimism and his understanding of the broader goals of the mission, Esquivel did not think only of a single hospital to serve

the incipient and unstable population of the island; he proposed four. In his reports, Esquivel detailed his rationale for establishing four separate hospitals:

- a) A hospital in Quelang for Spaniards and their wives, under the care of the crown and financed by trading on some products such as *bejuco*<sup>9</sup> o *corambre*.<sup>10</sup>
- b) A hospital in Quelang for servants and slaves, also under the care of the crown and financed by means of *estanco*.<sup>11</sup>
- c) A hospital in Quelang for Chinese, Japanese (if any), and natives, financed by the Misericordia of Isla Hermosa.<sup>12</sup>
- d) A hospital in Tamsui for Sangleys, Japanese and natives, financed by the sister hospital of the Dominicans in Manila.<sup>13</sup>

Esquivel also proposed that the school should be co-financed by the similar institution that the Dominicans had established in Manila and by the Misericordia of Isla Hermosa<sup>14</sup>, but that this should be done at a later stage, after the hospital was up and running. In other words, while Alcarazo was preoccupied with the condition of his soldiers and with his imminent departure, Esquivel was concerned about the stability of the missions.

The foundation of the Misericordia was the fruit of regular conversations between Alcarazo and Esquivel. Esquivel looked after the legal and financial side, while Alcarazo worked as a convener of possible members culled from among most representative officers. They agreed that the best formula for achieving both goals (hospital and school) would be to model this Misericordia along the lines of the one in Manila,<sup>15</sup> but adapted to local needs. The following steps would be necessary: (1) to determine the details of membership, location, and custody and handling of finances; (2) to establish and endow a hospital, which was the nerve-center of a typical Misericordia; and (3) to raise money. Aduarte summarized these three steps in the *History of the Dominicans*, saying that:

“They talked and decided that a Misericordia should be established on that same Island. To this, Don Juan later donated 4,000 pesos, and Fr. Jacinto, 2,000 pesos worth of alms that some people in Manila gave him to distribute among the pious works that were to be established in that new institution. The 6,000 pesos gave rise to the Misericordia.”<sup>16</sup>

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### APPROVAL OF THE STATUTES (AUTUMN 1632)

As we do not have the statutes, we can only attempt to glean from existing documents the contents of some of its chapters.<sup>17</sup> What follows is our provisional and limited interpretation, with some comments in the footnotes suggested by John Mezquida, which will help us understand the particulars of the case in Isla Hermosa:

#### CHAPTER 1

##### § 1. *General Commitments*

The members of the brotherhood are bound by “a grave and solemn oath of justice and charity;” and the “brotherhood’s primary goal” is to cooperate in “the responsibility of spreading the faith by providing these people [natives] ministers and the necessary means for the Lord and His holy Church to continually grow among them.”<sup>18</sup>

#### CHAPTER 2

##### § 1. *Membership of the Santa Mesa*

“Deputies should be appointed from among the more honorable men of the Island, and they have the authority to name their successors once their term of one year ends.” Nevertheless, the present Officer and Captain General, Juan de Alcarazo, was “appointed as perpetual Elder.”<sup>19</sup>

If we look at the composition of the *Santa Mesa* in April 1633—one year after its founding, when Alcarazo was already back in Manila—we see that the new Governor of Quelang was the new Elder. This is the complete list of *Mesa* members:

1. Bartolomé Díaz Barrera, elder brother and *proveedor* (i.e., president) of the *Santa Mesa* and the Brotherhood of Mercy of the city of San Salvador in Isla Hermosa. He was the “governor of the city and commander of the forces.”
2. Father *provisor* Francisco Bravo, Dominican; Superior and Vicar of the convent of Todos los Santos.
3. Captain and Sergeant Major Luis de Guzmán.
4. Captain Juan Baquedano.
5. Captain Matías de Olaso.
6. Captain Miguel Sáez de Alcaraz, officer of the regiment of Santo Domingo in Tamsui.

7. Second Lieutenant Francisco de Vivero, royal accountant and inspector.
8. Second Lieutenant Juan Pérez de Rueda, paymaster of the Royal Treasury.

#### CHAPTER 3

##### § 1. *Responsibilities of the deputies of the Santa Mesa, and its location*

It must have read something like this: The seat of the Brotherhood shall be at the convent of Todos los Santos, and whoever is the Prelate of the convent shall oversee everything. There, three keys shall be deposited in a box. One shall be given to the Officer and Elder, another to the Prelate of the convent, and the third to one of the deputies.<sup>20</sup>

We can see how this was observed in the case of the Vicar Francisco Bravo, whose title of *provisor* made him equal to the *proveedor*, Governor Díaz Barrera. However, we are not sure to what extent these positions were renewed every year, if only because of the scarcity of officers available to serve on the *Mesa*. In the case of Juan Pérez de Rueda, we know he was one of the three key-keepers in 1633 and also in 1642.

#### CHAPTER 4

##### §1. *Validity of the Statutes*

They had to be “sworn upon, and later they had to be sent for confirmation by the Archbishop of Manila because the spiritual jurisdiction of the Island falls under him. Once the confirmation was granted, the Brotherhood acquired a full and final status.” The same held true for every change made to the statutes.<sup>21</sup>

#### CHAPTER 7

##### § 1. *Increases in the Value of Estate Properties*

In the event that the Misericordia’s properties were to increase in value, “the money should be treated in the way the rest of the goods of the Foundation are treated,” that is, “it will be added to the capital and real estate properties of the *Santa Mesa*.” The consequences of this statement (probably not specified so clearly in this chapter) were that “even if the capital will be lost or exhausted with the passage

Banner of Estremoz Misericordia, 18<sup>th</sup> c., oil on wood. In Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, *V Centenario das Misericórdias Portuguesas*, Lisbon, Clube do Coleccionador dos Correios, 1998.

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of time, or if the portion that belongs to said college is reduced, the obligations assumed by the Pious Foundation will remain. On the other hand, the Dominican Order will not have the right to ask more than what has been agreed upon to fulfill its goals, regardless of the returns that could come from” the amount that had been requested by the *Santa Mesa*. “Our only obligation is to provide the usufruct” on the requested money “and, if these be diminished or used up, the usufruct of any other portion of the capital or the real estate [belonging to the Pious Foundation]. Everything will be done in the manner and amount indicated above and left to the prudence and good judgment of the fathers.”

### CHAPTER 8

#### § 1

“The *Santa Mesa* should not spend anything until the estate has been duly developed. And once the property has been acquired, a hospital, before anything else, must be established...” The implications of this statement for the establishment of a seminary for foreign children were that “we shall assume the task of construction and maintenance, by virtue of the special title or obligation we have to develop this property at its inception, and out of our special gratitude for this blessed order’s constant support of the conquest of this island from the very start. The granting of this school to the said Order does not mean that we are trying to take away or make them surrender their right to build more seminaries, schools or hospitals within and outside this island. Such projects shall always be given priority, as indicated in Chapter Eight of the code of the *Santa Mesa* and the brotherhood.”<sup>22</sup>

We have clues suggesting that one of the members of the *Mesa*, Captain Juan Baquedano, sent these statutes to Manila in the same *socorro* that brought back Aduarte and Alcarazo.<sup>23</sup> In that case, the statutes might have reached the bishop’s office before November 1632. We know this because when the *Mesa* gathered in April 1633 (Juan Baquedano was back on Isla Hermosa) the Archbishop included the new resolutions “in the first chapter of our ordinances after [that point], accepting an additional 2,000 pesos that Fr. Jacinto gave us to build the hospital.”

Regarding the goal of building a hospital, we can only say that a hospital was up and running before

the Dutch battle of 1642. For example, the official certificates of Simon de Toro, His Majesty’s fiscal officer, stated that every year from 1634 to 1642, a “box of medicine” came in every shipment of aid that reached Quelang. These certificates also provide us with additional information: for example, in March 1642, the vessel San Nicolás Tolentino brought Francisco Casta Vengala, surgeon and slave of His Majesty, who reported to Captain Andrés de Aguiar, caretaker of the Royal Hospital of the city of Manila. He brought surgical instruments including a pair of scissors, three razors and one lancet. We cannot be sure whether this hospital was the one the Misericordia had intended to build, or was just the continuation and development of the one that had already existed inside the fortress. In any case, once Baquedano, the man in charge of administrative procedures, received the Bishop’s approval of the statutes, he returned to the island with the *socorro* of the spring of 1633.<sup>24</sup> No wonder that upon his arrival, on April 10, 1633, the *Santa Mesa* of the Fraternity of Misericordia held an important meeting.

### THE SANTA MESA MEETS TO DISCUSS THE CREATION OF A SCHOOL (APRIL 10, 1633)

Up until now, the objective of the former governor Juan de Alcarazo had been to get a hospital built or well on its way to completion. Now was the moment for Esquivel to advance his project, a kind of school for Chinese and Japanese students, similar to the Jesuit school of São Paulo in Macao, or to that in Manila founded by Father Juan Fernández León in 1594 to attend to the needs of the orphans and the poor of the city, for whom he later tried to set up a seminary.<sup>25</sup>

The missionary point of view—as we have said before—was supported by the Bishop of Nueva Segovia, Diego de Aduarte, who in 1632 went to Isla Hermosa on a pastoral visit that lasted a few months, from the Spring *socorro* to the Autumn *socorro*. Once back in Manila, the bishop wrote a report on Isla Hermosa quoting the ideas of Esquivel. These are his words:

“Assuming that the conquest of Isla Hermosa is justified...this new conquest will yield a twofold benefit, the first and principal one of which is

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the preaching of the Gospel and the conversion of these barbarians....[but] this does not limit itself to the natives of this land but can extend to the great Kingdom of China, a neighbor so close that one can reach her shores in 24 hours by sea in fair weather... Besides, excellent contacts have already been established with the Chinese who visit the Isla Hermosa every day; some have already converted to Christianity, and so have the majority of those who die there—and they are not few. The Gospel ministers based in Isla Hermosa may not yet be in China, but they are at her gates. They are likewise close to the doors of Japan, which, even if it may be farther off, is easy to reach; and many Japanese travel along these routes. In this way, even if the voice of the Gospel may not yet reach China and Japan as quickly, the life and example of its ministers will surely make an impression on the souls of these infidels.”<sup>26</sup>

At the meeting on April 10, 1633, Esquivel formally petitioned the Brotherhood of Misericordia, asking the brothers for a contribution towards the foundation of a school for natives. Following a formula similar to that of the hospital, Esquivel proposed that the Misericordia raise 2,000 pesos, which, combined with the assets and property of the

*Santa Mesa*, would cover the expenses of establishing and maintaining the school. We can abridge Esquivel's petition as follows:

“It will be to the greatest glory of the Lord ... that the Chinese and Japanese children, as well as the Koreans and those from the Islands of Lequios (as both islands form part of the said empires), have a school of their own to educate them in the holy way and to instruct them about the mysteries of our holy faith through reading, writing, singing, and the teaching of moral theology. In this way, the more gifted among them may be later ordained as priests and the less keen serve as catechists or preachers in their kingdoms, most specially in times of persecution, since they are able to hide and mingle with their own, which our priests cannot do.

Considering the benefits of starting this blessed task ... we see that the doors to conversion are almost open; the natives freely offer us their children, for the school will be so near their homes and it will be easy for their parents to visit them whenever they come to do business on this island. Moreover, the natives will sincerely seek out the ministers who live among them and those who will return in the future.

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Moreover, this project has many other advantages. The ministers from Europe can learn the language directly from the natives, making it easier for them to come and live in these lands. They will enjoy the favor of the parents and relatives of the students and thus open doors to the preaching of the Gospel. Likewise, they will partake of incomparable wealth, security, friendship, and trade with the two powerful kingdoms because their children are under our custody.

[I will] do whatever might be needed to find and collect 2,000 pesos that will be added to the capital and real estate properties of this Santa Mesa. The money should be treated in the way the rest of the goods of the Foundation are treated, observing what is indicated in Chapter 7 of our by-laws regarding the possible increase of capital. Even if the capital will be lost or exhausted with the passage of time, or if the portion that belongs to the said college is reduced, the obligations assumed by the Pious Foundation will remain. On the other hand, the Dominican Order will not have the right to ask more than what has been agreed upon to fulfill its goals, regardless of the returns that could come from that amount of 2,000 pesos in the long run. Our only obligation is to provide the usufruct on these 2,000 pesos, and, if these be diminished or used up, the usufruct on any other portion of the capital or the real estate [belonging to the Pious Foundation]. Everything will be done in the manner and amount indicated above and left to the prudence and good judgment of the fathers.”

In the end, the *Santa Mesa* of the Misericordia approved Esquivel's proposal, with some caveats. This was the conclusion of the members of the Santa Mesa:

“With this, we will render great service to God our Lord, to his Most Blessed Mother, our Lady of the Rosary, our patroness and advocate, and to his Royal Highness King Philip IV. We know that the purpose of maintaining these lands is none other than the disinterested dissemination of the faith, the greatest task that can ever be carried out in this world. Innumerable souls will be saved through this means because of the labor and loving vigilance of everyone involved in it. Above all, by a grave and solemn oath of justice

and charity, we have the responsibility of spreading the faith by providing these people ministers and the necessary means for the Lord and His holy Church to continually grow among them. This is the brotherhood's primary goal.

The Dominican fathers will take care of determining the school's location, name, patron saint, the building materials to be used, if it is to be made of stone or dines (*sic*), the capacity of the chapel and house, the chamber rooms and offices, the repairs, the necessary expansion and maintenance, as well as the uniforms, stipends, medical attention and supplies, number of admissions, and recruitment of religious men for the teaching staff. As for instructing the children in their own tongues, it is also up to them to decide on its aptness through time. Likewise, they shall determine the number of additional persons, servants or ministers, that the school can and will be able to accommodate as residents, who will assist in the growth and development of the school. To construct this building in a short time, the entire amount of 2,000 pesos, or its first installment, or even its second (whichever they prefer) must be granted soon. It shall be used in the manner indicated until it is spent, as they have wished it, on the said construction and, later, on its maintenance. As mentioned, the members of the said Order are not to be troubled or concerned or asked to give an accounting of what they have spent. They must not be deprived of whatever they say they need for this project, leaving all to their conscience and prudence, which ought to be completely trustworthy.

And since the above-mentioned Father Jacinto del Rosario, according to the rule and the Order to which he belongs, cannot go around seeking or giving that amount of 2,000 pesos, and neither does he have the power to accept the administration and management of that house on behalf of his order without the express permission of his superiors and prelates who shall not grant it until they receive a juridical testimony in the city of Manila that certifies our conditional acceptance,

Banner of Coimbra Misericordia, 18<sup>th</sup> c., oil on wood. In Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, *V Centenário das Misericórdias Portuguesas*, Lisbon, Clube do Coleccionador dos Correios, 1998.

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We conclude that for the above mentioned fathers [Dominicans] to study the matter themselves in order to see if they are able to carry out such an undertaking, we hereby give legal testimony certifying that we accept [the proposal] in the name of the above mentioned brotherhood and *Santa Mesa*.”

Nevertheless, the document continued, setting out the exact procedure that should be followed, which we can reconstruct briefly: firstly, the petition must be sent for review to the Prior of the Convent of Santo Domingo in Manila, Fray Domingo González; then it must go to the Archbishop of Manila to be sanctioned, thus becoming a formal statute; and, finally, it must be publicly notarized, so as to allow the Dominicans to begin their school project.

### THE APPROVAL OF THE SCHOOL PROJECT BY THE BISHOP OF MANILA (2 JUNE 1633)

The Misericordia proposal was promptly sent to Manila. There, the Bishop of Cebú, Pedro de Arce—at that time acting Bishop of Manila—approved it on 2 June 1633. For everything to be completed so quickly, communication must have been extraordinarily swift. The explanation for this may be found in the fact that a large contingent of Spanish merchants returned to Manila in April or May of that year, due to a lack of business. By June, the project was approved:

“I have studied the said proposal in consultation with a group of learned and serious scholars. The Lord Bishop Pedro de Arce, presently Governor of this Archdiocese, deems this school to be for the greater glory of God our Lord and the good of Christianity, as well as for the greater glory of our father St Dominic, a great beginning and a very effective means to conserve these nations. Thus he confirms the plan, in the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Manila, June 2nd 1633. Pedro de Arce, Bishop of the Most Holy Name of Jesus. In the presence of the scholar Raimundo de Quiñones, Chamber Secretary.”

Contrary to the speed with which the proposal found its way to Manila, the news that it had been approved arrived in Isla Hermosa quite late. It probably

left Manila aboard the *socorro* of August 1633 (which also brought the new governor, Alonso García), and it may well have arrived in April 1634, because that ship was diverted towards Macao and impounded for a few months. This implies that Esquivel made his trip to Japan, probably in the spring of 1633, without knowing that his proposal had been approved, although he may have assumed that it would be. But by the time official news of the approval reached Isla Hermosa, Esquivel, the main proponent of the school, had already been dead for a year. At this point, the Misericordia abandoned its plans for expansion and started focusing more on the management of its funds, becoming the financial arm of the more promising China mission project, and a lender of last resort to the governor of Quelang.

### THE MISERICORDIA AS FINANCIAL INTERMEDIARY FOR MISSIONARY ACTIVITY

Although it was a lay endeavor with pious ends, it is clear that much of the initiative for the Misericordia had always rested with the Dominicans. This much can be understood when we examine the changes in the position of the *proveedor*, who was the governor himself, and whose tenure usually lasted an average of two years. After such an examination, it seems safe to conclude that this Dominican-funded charitable institution became a genuine Dominican institution—a theory we can confirm based on clues provided by several later documents.

The first clue comes from a document dated February 17, 1637, when the soldier Duarte Rendon, acting as public notary, issued a copy of the original permission for the school, stating that “the original is kept in the house of the Misericordia.” This indicates that the institution was still operating, and still had an office, which was probably housed at the Convent of Todos los Santos, the only available building besides the fortress and the governor’s house.

The Misericordia also underwent some changes. On the one hand, the Dominicans had to fund their ever-greater number of trips to China. On the other, the governor was in increasing need of borrowing money, and the Misericordia—as was also the case in other places—was the only institution capable of

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lending it. Thus the figure of the governor as “elder brother,” or *proveedor*, was slowly blurred by the fact that the Misericordia was the one loaning money to him. The clearest reference to this situation dates from the arrival of last governor, Gonzalo Portillo. In his first report to Governor-General Sebastian Hurtado de Corcuera, Portillo writes that as soon as he arrived in Taiwan, “the priests of the order of St Dominic asked me to pay them the 2,000 pesos that Your Majesty owes the cash box of the *Santa Mesa*, since they have lent it.”<sup>27</sup> Likewise, he states in another report, “Of the 4,000 pesos that came, I paid 2,000 to the *Santa Mesa*. It will be necessary to ask again,

even though I know that I will have a big argument with the priests about it.”<sup>28</sup>

Thus the financial situation of the Misericordia before the Spaniards were defeated by the Dutch and left Taiwan seems to have been one of solvency. This is the case according to the testimony of the scribe and key-keeper in 1642, Juan Pérez de Rueda, who in 1644 declared that the Dutch seized all of the Misericordia’s assets, namely “8,000 pesos in reals, 10 plates of ordinary silver, two large plates and merchandise worth 1,000 pesos.”<sup>29</sup> Certainly this data is consistent with the inventory of the Spanish Fortress that the Dutch made after their conquest.<sup>30</sup> **RC**



## NOTES

- 1 For a general introduction to this topic see Ivo Carneiro de Sousa, “Da Fundação e da Originalidade das Misericórdias Portuguesas (1498-1500)”, *Oceanos* no. 35, 1998, pp. 24-39.
- 2 *Vocabulario de lapon, declarado primero en portuguez por los padres de la Compañía de Jesus...* Colegio de Santo Tomás de Manila, 1630. See W. E. Retana, *Orígenes de la Imprenta Filipina* (Madrid: Victoriano Suárez, 1910), pp. 114-115.
- 3 José Eugenio Borao Mateo, *Spaniards in Taiwan*, SMC, Taipei, 2001, pp. 162-178. From here on in, abbreviated as *SIT*.
- 4 *SIT*, pp. 179-189.
- 5 *SIT*, pp. 190-198.
- 6 *SIT*, pp. 204-210 & 219-226.
- 7 *SIT*, pp. 199-203.
- 8 *Ibid*.
- 9 Any climbing woody vine of the tropics with the habit of a liane; in the Philippines especially any of various species of *calamus*, the cane or rattan palm.
- 10 Hides. *SIT*, p. 175.
- 11 Trade.
- 12 *SIT*, p. 185.
- 13 *SIT*, p. 185.
- 14 *SIT*, pp. 185-186.
- 15 See J. O. Mesquida, “Origin of the Misericordia of Manila”, *Ad Veritatem*, March, 2003, pp. 423-462; Nicholas P. Cushner, *Spain in the Philippines*, Ateneo de Manila University, 1971, pp. 139-152.
- 16 *SIT*, p. 209.
- 17 We only have traced eight chapters, but we know that the statutes of the Misericordias of Lisbon, Goa and Manila each have 33 chapters.
- 18 This kind of missionary endeavor was not typical of most Misericordias.
- 19 This case, in which *Mesa* members appointed their own successors, is quite original, because most Misericordias would elect the *Mesa* in an indirect manner: the whole brotherhood would choose ten electors, and these electors would vote in the members of the *Mesa*. This three-key system follows the general practice of most Misericordias. The main difference is the importance given to the convent, which nonetheless makes sense given the embryonic status of the city.
- 11 This was the case for all confraternities and brotherhoods.
- 22 The extant documents emphasize the creation of the school, but we don’t have clear references as to the creation or management of a hospital, something expressly stipulated in one of the chapters of the statutes of the Misericordia of Manila, which was copied from the statutes of the *Misericórdia* of Lisbon.
- 23 *SIT*, p. 195.
- 24 *SIT*, p. 211.
- 25 Antonio M. Molina, *Historia de Filipinas*, vol. 1, Madrid, 1984, p. 93.
- 26 *SIT*, p. 192.
- 27 Letter of Portillo to Corcuera, AGI, *Filipinas, Escribanía de Cámara, 409-B* (*SIT*, p. 316).
- 28 AGI, *Filipinas, Indiferente General 1874* (*SIT*, p. 335).
- 29 AGI, *Filipinas, Escribanía de Cámara, 409-B* (*SIT*, p. 518).
- 30 VOC 1146, ff. 742-743 (*SIT*, 394-397).