EL SAGRARIO METROPOLITANO, WENDEL DIETTERLIN, AND THE ESTIPITE:

OBSERVATIONS ON MANNERISM AND NEO PLATERESQUE ARCHITECTURAL STYLE IN 18TH-CENTURY MEXICAN ECCLESIASTICAL FACADES*

por

JOHN F. MOFFITT

(Para el Prof. Dr. Erwin Walter Palm: Maestro preeminente de la arquitectura hispanoamericana.)

In a recent article, Robert Mullen has posed a fundamental question of perennial interest (and considerable ambiguity) to students of Hispanic art: «Can the art and architecture of Colonial Latin America be classified as Baroque?» [1] That «Baroque» should seem to many the logical stylistic term is the result of an inescapable temporal situation: the majority of the major Mexican Colonial cathedral facades, for it is this subject which will narrowly concern this discussion, fall within the framework of a specific time-period, namely the 18th-century. As a result, if one assumes that Spanish-American, specifically Mexican, architecture is a chronological reflection, although one evidently delayed in time, of preceeding European movements and models,

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1 R. MULEN, «Art Styles in Hispanic Latin America: An Identity Crisis», *Research Center for the Arts Review,* 1/4, 1978, 102. I cite this brief article merely as «a representative case», as Mullen is scarcely either the first nor the most searching investigator of the terminological and morphological problems associated with the study of Spanish Colonial art and architecture. For a later examination directed at just such problems of nomenclature —adding as well «barroco, salomónico-churrigueresco», «Barroco regional (o) rural», «barroco estípite», «barroco tritóstilo», and «barroco pasticcio» (among other terms)— see H. von Kügelgen Kropfinger, «El catálogo monumental del Estado de Tlaxcala. Consideraciones en torno al barroco a modo de prólogo», *Comunicaciones Proyecto Puebla-Tlaxcala,* XVI, 1979, 273-98 (with extensive bibliography). For their invaluable help in the presentation of this paper, I am nost grateful to the following scholars: Prof. Marcus B. Burke (Stephan F. Austin University), Prof. Dr., E. W. Palm (Emeritus, Kunsthistorisches Institut der Universität Heidelberg), Prof. Dr. Helga von Kügelgen Kropfinger (Mexico-Projekt der duetschen Forschungsgemeinschaft von Puebla-Tlaxcala), and Prof. Dr. Patrik Reuterswärd (Stockholms Universitet).

then logic apparently dictates that one must call such 18th-century Hispanic structures, characterized by curious historical anomalies and unique formal complexities, either «Baroque», or denying the existence of a significant time-lapse from European models to their American applications, «Rococo» [2]. On the other hand, Elizabeth W. Weismann feels that the search for, and subsequent application of such terminology is a futile exercise, observing that, «it may be that for the Americas 'styles' are unsuitable criteria, especially styles described in Europe [-an contexts]» [3]. Nevertheless, she continues, the problem may still be solvable if we carefully «scrutinize the artifacts [instead of working] from preconceptions». Another important factor, notes Weismann, is that many Mexican Colonial examples reveal what she calls «a mélange of Gothic, Mudéjar, Baroque and Plateresque traits». Obviously, in any case, there is no single or inevitable non-Hispanic, or «European», style-term which will adequately account for the immense variety of possibilities *in toto*. Professor Mullen, in an earlier study, has dealt with the problem from two restricted approaches: (1) he would trace individual *motifs* back to their Renaissance or Plateresque sources, or (2) he would morphologically classify buildings on the basis of their *plans,* whether single-nave, cruciform, cryto-lateral, and so forth [4]. Certainly this is a logically narrowed method of classification, almost along Aristotelian lines, which cannot be faulted because, as Aby Warburg put it, *«der liebe Gott stekt im Detail».*

Nevertheless, as Mullen had hypothesized, these were buildings which were, as he puts it, «[1] not greatly concerned with interiorized architecture,

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2 «Rococo», if this descriptive, morphological term must be applied to American buildings, is perhaps only generally applicable to certain Lusitanian-Brazilian 18th-century examples: e. g., Ouro Preto, Nossa Senhora do Rosario do Barro, and São Francisco de Assis da Penitencia: Recife, Santo Antonio; Salvador, O. Pilar: São Francisco São João d'El Rei: Mariano, São Francisco e Carmo, and so forth. See. P. Keleman *Baroque and Rococo in Latin America,* New York, 1967 (2 vols.), for illustrations and bibliography.

3 E. W. WEISMANN, «The History of Art in Latin America, 1500-1800: Some Trends and Challenges in the Last Decade», *Latin American Research Review,* X/1, 1975, 7-50 (quoted from 18-19). On the other hand, more recently Marcus Burke rightly challenges such an outright rejection of stylistic categorizations, stating that «one cannot second her skepticism concerning the applicaton of European stylstic categories to Latin American monuments. Eclectic architecture is not style-less architecture; the presence of so many European styles in one colonial building makes it all the more urgent to understand what those [individual component] styles are. The problem lies not with the historical method, but with the ways it has hitherto been applied. ...What was and is far more urgently needed is a rigorous and systematic investigation of all the sources of Mexican colonial art, with each period and each medium being scrutinized independently before sweeping conclusions are drawn». M. B. Burke, in his introductory essay —«Mexican Colonial Painting in Its European Context»— to the recent exhibition catalogue: *Spain and New Spain: Mexican Colonial Arts in Their European Context,* Corpus Christi, TX, 1979, 16-59. Burke's stylistic definitions of Mexican painting, as defined by and compared with their undeniable European counterparts and models, are extremely useful for their documentation and expository precision, and should contribute much to a positive re-definition of the true nature of the arts in the colonial period in Mexico.

4 R. MULLEN. *Dominican Architecture in Sixteenth-Century Oaxaca,* Phoenix, 1975 (but see note 38 below for René Taylor's observations on penninsular groundplans).

[because (2)] ornamenting the walls was more important than defining space» [5]. Hence, granted the priorities cited by Mullen for the interests of the original designers themselves, it seems proper mainly to restrict, or «externalize», our arguments to the stylistic phenomena of certain characteristic facades. Having decided to deal only with the design characteristics of the typically Mexican sculpted portals, we may then ask ourselves two related questions: (1) To which historical style do these facades appear to adhere in their general principles? (2) If we are able then to suggest a general type, being one based demonstrably upon a recognizable group of European prototypes, are we then able to prove the validity of this general stylistic thesis by pointing to accessible, *specific models,* which are ones likely to be known to the New World designers, perhaps otherwise unfamiliar with actual European buildings? Certainly these putative models cannot be expected to be representative of the manner of the early 17th-century Roman School, particularly as Mullen has already demonstrated in a concise and convincing manner the inapplicability of what he calls Italianate «Baroque with a capital 'B'» to describe Latin American solutions for ecclesiastical facades, stating that a majority of these structures lack «multi-planar depth...and a totality of design [arranged in] whole space» [6]. Instead, a large majority of supposedly

[5] The observation made by Mullen in his 1978 article, which states that Mexican architects were largely uninterested in the definition of interior spaces, may be considered as a result of empirical observation. As far as I know, there is no architectural treatise (or any other sort of solid contemporary documentation) which can be considered to provide unequivocal proof for this observation. Nevertheless, en lieu of any contradictory primary documentation, Mullen's essentially empirical appraisal of the apparently «externalized» primary emphasis of the 18th-century Mexican architects should now be considered in the light of Chueca Goitia's analysis of the spatial disposition of the Sagrario Metropolitano, which closes this paper; see also M. González Galván, «El espacio en la arquitectura religiosa virreinal de México», *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas UNAM,* XXXV. 1966, 69-101.

[6] According to Anthony Blunt. «if we try to isolate the principle features of High Roman Baroque art, the following seems to stand out: a preference for a large scale, the use of irregular and complex forms, movement in line, mass and space, a fusion of the arts of painting and sculpture with architecture, the bold use of illusionism and directed light, dramatic action extended over architectural space, and richness of materials» (A. Blunt, *Some Uses and Misuses of the Terms Baroque and Rococo as Applied to Architecture,* Oxford University Press, 1973, 3ff.). Although by this definition the term seems largely inapplicable to New World architecture, nevertheless, there are a few 18th-century Mexican examples which I feel may tend toward a «true» Baroque expression. In these, the facades to a greater degree will appear to partake of the principles of multi-planar (even if illusionistic) depth, revealing a totality of design which is massively plastic, or «sculptural», rather than shallowly planar and monotonously fragmented into micro-units, and rigidly enframed to the degree the *portada* appears to be «applied», rather than to have grown from the wall in a way which seems to obey some sort of organic necessity. One also looks for a logically cumulative, rhyhmically developed focal-point, fixed upon the central portal(s), with the peripheries subordinated to, and diminishing regularly from, the emphatic center, and gradually referring back to the basic wall from which it grows. Nevertheless, in even these few examples, one can not expect to encounter instances of that innovative, total, organic and balanced relationship between exterior and interior which is still the *sine qua non* of true Boroque design, especially in the manner as this was championed by a Bernini or a Borromini. I would then call

«baroque» Mexican facades are characterized, as he puts it, by «the single plane [broken into] a multiplicity of units [arranged in] a cellular pattern... of juxtoposed boxes [in] staggered modules».

The stylistic principles just announced here by Mullen incidentally are also descriptive of the recognized tenets of Mannerist architectural design in general, especially as that architectural style had originally been outlined in its 16th-century European, specifically Italian, context in a pioneering study by Nikolaus Pevsner [7], and subsequently developed in later discussions by Wolfgang Lotz and Christian Norberg-Schulz, among others [8]. Mannerism has even been referred to upon occasion in a Latin American context, although as yet only sporatically [9]. As just one very typical example of a trend we might think to designate as a Mexican «Neo-Mannerist» design, recognizing of course that there are certainly other co-existing, contemporaneous or simultaneous stylistic possibilities, I would like to cite the facade of the *«Sagrario Metropolitano»,* attached to the Cathedral of Mexico City. This monument was the design of the architect Lorenzo Rodríguez, and it was built between 1749 and 1768 (figs. 1, 2).

We now may compare Nikolas Pevsner's observations dealing with the general principles of Mannerist architecture in order to see how well these statements might be profitably applied to the specific example chosen, focusing our attention especially upon its richly sculpted portal-facade, or *portada* [10].

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these few examples representatives 18th-century Mexican «Neo-Baroque» (this terminology deriving from the given conditions of: (a) time-lapse, and (b) lack of fundamental interior-exterior coordinations). These examples would include: Oaxaca, Cathedral; Guadalajara, Cathedral (in spite of its later, Wren-like «Neo-Gothic» steeples); México DF., Cathedral; Puebla, Cathedral; Morelia, Cathedral; Chiapas; Cathedral, and so forth. It will be noted that most of these «Neo-Baroque» examples occur in major metropolitan centers. See M. TOUSSAINT, *Colonial Art in Mexico,* Austin, Texas, 1967, for illustrations of these examples (although not using the term «Neo-Baroque»).

7 N. PEVSNER, «The Architecture of Mannerism», *The Mint. Miscellany of Literature, Art and Criticism,* London, 1946, 116 ff.; reprinted in H. SPENCER (ed.), *Readings in Art History,* New York, 1969, II, 119-148 (from which edition I shall quote Pevsner).

8 W. LOTZ, «Architecture in the Later 16th-Century», *College Art Journal,* XVII, 1958, 1299-139; ídem, «Mannerism in Architecture: Changing Aspects», *Acts of the XX International Congress of the History of Art,* Princeton, 1963, vol. II, 239-46; C. NORBERG-SCHULZ, *Meaning in Western Architecture,* New York, 1975, 255 ff.

9 J. A. BAIRD, «El manierismo en México», in *Homenaje a Justino Fernández,* México DF, 1966; J. A. MANRIQUE, «Reflexión sobre el manierismo de México», *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas,* XL, 1971, 21-42; J. DE MESA & T. GISBERT, «Renacimiento y manierismo en la arquitectura 'mestiza'», *Boletín del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas,* III, 1965, 9-44; S. SEBASTIÁN LÓPEZ, «Notas sobre la arquitectura manierista en Quito». *BCIHE,* I, 1964, 113-120; *ídem,* «La decoración llamada plateresca en el mundo hispánico», *BCIHE,* VI, 1966, 42-85. (See also note 29 below.) Burke *(op. cit.)* especially stresses the persistence of the print-derived «Neo-Mannerist» style in 18th-century Mexican painting; see also J. F. MOFFITT, *Spanish Painting,* London, 1973, 61 ff., for the development of 16th-century Mannerism in painting in the Iberian penninsula.

10 The characteristic Hispanic portal-facade, or *«fachada-retablo»,* in its Latin American development has been more carefully studied by E. W. PALM, «La fuchada-retablo de azulejos en Puebla», *Comunicaciones Proyecto Puebla-Tlaxcala,* XV, 1978, 99 ff.;

Over 30 years ago Pevsner had observed in speaking of Italian Mannerist architectural exteriors that «narrower and broader spaces alternate, but the difference is not marked enough to make one feel certain of its meaning [due to] alternatively exclusive rhythms in the finished front». Pevsner's conclusion was that such a:

«denial of expressing strength-to-carry [and], as well, weight-of-load is one of the most significant innovations of Mannerist architecture. ...Now the wall ceases altogether to be mass...nor is the Mannerist wall a system of active forces...owing to the insistence of the Mannerist [architect] upon discordant motifs and contradictory directions everywhere. ...The curious thing about [such a] facade is its seeming paperiness [having] something of the appearance of a mere screen [which is] excessively delicate and flatly ornamented. The gradation of parts which the Renaissance had evolved is given up as well. [Furthermore, a] tendency to excess within rigid boundaries is one of the characteristics of Mannerist space. ...The wall again seems to have no solidity; it is only a screen just strong enough to act as a background for innumerable ornamental motifs and scenic reliefs displayed in a confusingly intricate manner: [expressing] overcrowding, but no melée... [This is a system in which] the total lack of a predominant accent, in spite of the stiffest formality otherwise, is mot disquieting. ...There is monotony instead of graduation, no crescendo, no climax upward. Nor is there a climax in width».

Moreover, neither is there a climax in depth in such buildings. Although Pevsner's descriptions of European Mannerist architectural symptoms are admittedly generalized, it would appear that one might find them broadly applicable to a great many examples of Mexican (and Spanish) architecture of the 18th-century [11]. Nevertheless, the proofs for the Mexican Neo-Mannerist hypotheses are searched for in the details, for this is where the conclusive evidence (or «God», according to Warburg) is to be found.

Accordingly, any application of these generalized observations to 18th-century Mexican facades ought to be sharply focused by analysing this overall Neo-Mannerist syndrome as it may be specifically demonstrated by a single

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Spanische und Hispano-Amerikanische Architektur («Propyläen Kunstgeschichte», IX). Berlin, 1970, 226 ff. Kügelgen-Kropfinger (1979, 278) cites the definitive 18th-century *Diccionario de la lengua castellana... compuesto por la Real Academia Española*, where the *portada* is defined as the «ornato de Architectura o Pintura que se hace en las fachadas principales». In another article, now in press, I further explore the historical roots of the distinctive design traits of the transhispanic *fachada-retablo;* see J. F. Moffitt, «Tepotzotlán: ¿el Islam latente en América? Observaciones en torno a la portada esculpida hispánica, *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas UNAM,* LIII, 1984».

[11] Other distinctive Mexican Neo-Mannerist» architectural examples (also illustrated in Toussaint, *op. cit.)* might include the following 18th-century monuments (here arranged in no particular order): Mexico DF, La Profesa (San José el Real), Santísima Trinidad, Monasterio de San Francisco; Oaxaca, La Soledad, Guadalajara, Santa Mónica; Puebla, San Cristóbal, San Francisco; Atlixco (Puebla), La Merced; Acatepec (Puebla), San Francisco; Santa Cruz (Jalisco), Santa Cruz de las Flores; Texcoco, San Antonio; Zacatecas, Cathedral; Taxco, Santa Prisca y San Sebastián; San Miguel Allende, La Salud; Tlaxcala, Nuestra Señora de Ocotlán; Tepotzotlán, San Martín; Guanajuato, La Valenciana, and so forth. It will be noted that (with the exception of Mexico City, Puebla, and Guadalajara) most of these «Neo-Mannerist» type of buildings are to be found in provincial towns (to the contrary of the «Neo-Baroque» buildings cited in Note 6); obviously, patronage and function played a critical role in these examples.

architectural motif: the *pilaster.* As we recognize, according to traditional usage, a pilaster is a vertically aligned, shallow pier or column which projects only slightly from a wall. Furthermore, according to correctly classical architectural principles, not only does a pilaster look like a column shown in bas-relief, but it must also adhere to the canonic appearance of one of the established classical orders, either Doric (Tuscan), Ionic or Corinthian. So much for the «proper» way of handling the traditional pilaster-motif, for we are all familiar with the nearly inevitably correct way in which this motif had been handled by the Italian and French architects of the Renaissance and Baroque periods. It is noteworthy, however, that the pilaster was nearly inevitably to be treated in an entirely different way by the Mexican and Spanish architects of the 18th-century.

A distinctively Hispanic, and most idiomatic, translation of the traditional pilaster-motif is the curious device known as the *estípite* [12] (fig. 3). The simplified line-drawing of the imaginative and complex column to the left in the illustration represents a part of the main portal of the Church of San Hipólito in Córdoba, Spain, and it is dated 1736, and next to it is placed a contemporaneous *estípite,* which is a detail from the *Altar de los Reyes* in the Cathedral of Mexico City, which was designed and executed by Jerónimo Balbás from 1719 to 1739, and thus it has a direct bearing upon the *estípites* of the nearby Sagrario Metropolitano. This graphic pairing also makes apparent the close sibling relationship *(parentesco)* and the temporal simultaneity between one column-variation and the other, and —more importantly— between Spanish and Mexican architecture in general.

The Hispanic *estípite* is an imaginative, «free-form», variation on the pilaster which, although originally derived from «correct» classical architectural practice, now becomes an anti-classical device which literally «up-sets» the original function of the attached column or compound-pier. In the Hispanic «translation», the original, essentially symbolic, load-bearing function of the vertical member now becomes visually denied by its reversed, or upside-down, downward tapering appearance. Moreover, the emphatically emphasized and irregular silhouette of the *estípite* optically shifts this symbolic load-bearing potential towards the edges, as opposed to the central axis where it rightfully belongs. The complex mix of innumerable *estípites,* and the addition upon these of further, equally complex, superimposed, abstract sub-motifs, completes the ensemble of the *portada,* and the resulting effect is expressive

12 The significance of this motif within the panorama of Colonial Mexican architecture has been recognized by VÍCTOR MANUEL VILLEGAS, *El gran signo formal del barroco. Ensayo histórico del apoyo estípite,* México DF, 1956. As those familiar with this work will recognize, the historical and terminological investigation carried out in ths paper presents some materials which are beyond the scope and interests of Villegas' study.

of the ultimate goal of the Hispanic designer: the creation of an «architectural wall-screen» *(pantalla arquitectónica),* by which there results a dissolution of convergent, «perspectival», structural masses [13].

Again, the keys to Hispanic architectural vision, means and ends are best seen in its minor details. Another distinctive, and thus similarly favored, Hispanic variation on the pilaster-column is the lavishly decorated and violently twisted, and hence potentially instable, so-called «solomonic column». As it is generally believed, in Spain the Solomonic column apparently preceded the *estípite* in development —and certainly in popularity [14]. Nevertheless, it was the *estípite* which was to become predominant in the 18th-century, both in Iberia and in the New World. The popularity of the *estípite* after around 1720 may be accounted for by its inherent ability to be broken up into so many component parts, thus increasing its «de-spatialized», carpet-like complexity and visual unintelligibility. On the other hand, the potential distortions to the *columna solomónica* were limited by the uniform spiralings of its shaft. But whether such non-supportive decorative members be either *solomónica* or *estípite,* the end result was largely the same and, moreover, these devices of such a patently Neo-Mannerist character are as characteristic of Mexican architecture as they are of the contemporaneous architecture of the mother-country, Spain. In effect, whatever the place, the *estípite* is the key which

[13] For a detailed and suggestive discussion of the unique mechanics of Hispanic architectural design conventions, see the classic 1947 study by F. CHUECA GOITIA, *Invariantes castizos de la arquitectura española* (new ed.: Madrid, 1971).

[14] The Solomonic column is the typical architectural member of the first (i. e. late 17th-century) phase of the Baroque style in Spain, a style which is (probably incorrectly) largely associated with the Churriguera family. Nevertheless, the typical *columna salomónica* appeared as early as 1597 on the Sagrario of the High Altar of the Cathedral of Seville (E. LAFUENTE FERRARI, *Las artes de la madera,* Madrid, 1941, 25). In fact, as is well known, the so-called Solomonic column is a device typical of Hellenistic art. Most likely, its revived popularity in the 17th-century (cf. Bernini's *Baldacchino)* is due to a twisted column placed in St. Peter's, which had been believed to have formed part of the «Temple of Solomon» sacked by the Emperor Titus. For the iconographical significance of the Solomonic column in Renaissance period paintings, see J. A. Ramírez, *Construcciones ilusorias: Arquitecturas descritas, arquitecturas pintadas,* Madrid, 1983, p. 139 ff. (this is, incidently, a book which deserves to be available in translation to English-speaking readers). As the work of the Hermanos Churriguera —José Benito (1665-1725), Joaquín (1674-1724), Alberto (1676-1750)— was carried out exclusively in the 18th-century (José Benito, for instance, did not become an architect until 1709: Nuevo Baztán), the typically «churrigueresque» solomonic column-device may not be considered in any way of their invention. This characteristic motif, for example, also appears in Granada on a retablo in the Jesuit Church, which was designed in 1630. It thereafter appears in many Andalusian churches. For a recent study on these famous Barcelona-born architects, incorporating the most significant scholarship, see A. RODRÍGUEZ G. DE CEBALLOS, *Los Churriguera,* Madrid: C. S. I. C., 1971. Nevertheless, one can call the art of the Churrigueras «Baroque» as there is a consistent tendency to achieve an effect of closely knit unity, especially evident in their retablos, an effect achieved by subordinating all the subsidiary centers of interest to a single predominant motif, usually a painting or an elaborate tabernacle. Especially noteworthy is the absence of the estípite in the work of the Churrigueras. Nevertheless, the *estípite* was indeed known —and frequently used— in Spain as early as the 16th-century, as I shall point out.

unlocks the strategems —and, as well, the sources— of the unique 18th-century Hispanic architectural syndrome.

In the case of 18th-century Mexico, it must be stressed that the taste for and use of supposed «neo-Mannerist» architectural principles and devices does not, of course, in any way necessarily presuppose any of the intellectual concerns nor the particular social situations which originally inspired the genesis and popularity of this style in 16th-century Italy. One would additionally like to have put out of mind all the pejorative connotations commonly associated with the adjective «mannerist», as here the intention only is neutrally to discuss a body of observable morphological phenomena which may be for convenience's sake subsumed under this stylistic heading [15]. In part, one may choose to account for the resurgence of this Late Renaissance mode of plastic expression as being the result of a synthesis of two complementary systems: the pre-Columbian mental set, that is the visual traditions and techniques of indigenous Mexican workers, and the first «classical» Renaissance style of Spanish architecture, namely the Plateresque, *«a lo romano»* [16].

Like Italian Mannerism, the 16th-century contemporary Spanish mode of the Plateresque delighted in inorganic, structureless, and excessively encrusted surfaces. According to the frank admission of its first major theoretician, Diego de Sagredo *(Medidas del Romano,* 1526), «there is a diversity of ornament which is added more for decoration than for necessity» [17]. In practice, it appears that, beginning in the mid 16th-century in Latin America, the

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15 For a well-rounded discussion of 16th-century Mannerism as both an artistic and cultural phenomenon, see J. SHEARMAN, *Mannerism: Style and Civilization,* Harmondsworth, 1967. (I have elsewhere dealt with other stylistic and expressive qualities associated with Mannerism, which may also be viewed as a perenially recurring style-pattern; J. F. MOFFITT, «An Historical Basis for Interpreting Styles of Late 18th-to Late 20th-Century Pictorial Artworks», *Leonardo: International Journal of the Contemporary Artist,* XII, Fall 1979, 295-300).

16 For an excellent introduction to the sources and intentions of Plateresque design. see E. ROSENTHAL, «The Image of Roman Architecture in Renaissance Spain», *Gazette des Beaux-Arts,* LII, 1958. 326-46. The Mannerist parallels in Plateresque design have been observed by J. M. CAAMAÑO, «Aspectos del manierismo hispánico», in *España en las Crisis del Arte Europeo,* Madrid, 1968, 141-7, noting especially «la repetición de elementos, comparable a la de los acentos verticales en las pinturas manieristas... con sus aliteraciones. antítesis, paralelismos, similícadencias». That the Plateresque was a style likely to have been primarily employed as a vehicle for «architectural rhetoric» is a point ably demonstrated by the recent iconological investigations of SANTIAGO SEBASTIÁN LÓPEZ, see especially his *El simbolismo de los programas humanísticos de la Universidad de Salamanca,* Salamanca, 1973, and his more recent survey on *Arte y Humanismo,* Madrid, 1978.

17 «Assi es verdad que en los edificios ay mucha diversidad de ornamentos que se ponen más por atavío que por necessidad sin tener medida determinada»: D. DE SAGREDO, *Medidas del Romano,* Toledo, 1526 (modern fascimile: Madrid, 1976, with no pagination or folio numbers). Sagredo also refers to his decorated columns, the ancestor of the later *estípites,* as «columnas monstruosas». Sagredo's treatise is very likely to have been known —and herefore, often employed— in Spanish America, according to J. MCANDREW, *The Open-Air Churches of Sixteenth-Century Mexico: Atrios, Posas, Open Chapels, and Other Studies,* Harvard University Press, 1969, 107, 323, 551 (etc.).

Spaniards, rarely what could de called «professional» architects, supplied the general designs and particular motifs while the actual work, from the cutting of the stone to the gilding of the altars, would in turn have been executed by Indian or metizo workers [18]. The result was a true hybrid, a *metizo* style, for, certainly in the case of Mexico, the Indians had already attained a high level of aesthetic attainment by the time of the conquest, and perhaps some elements of pre-Columbian style had survived the conquest of Mexico. For example, Alfred Neumeyer has shown how, as handled by the early 16th-century native artisans, «abstract symbols, cut more or less flatly in the stone, tend to become ornaments...[but] the native traditions...only provided the techniques and patterns, while the final form was caused by the new ideological [Catholic] configuration»; nevertheless, and this will be seen to be an important point, «the Spanish colonizers provided the designs in the form of work drawings or of prints» [19]. It is my contention that these prints

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18 Kügelgen-Kropfinger (1979, 276) cites a rare pair of 18th-century documents which seem to indicate the (previously largely hypothetical) active participation by townspeople in the erection and decoration of ecclesiastical structures. As she speculates on the basis of her archival findings, «representates del pueblo [debieron] de haber participado tanto en la financiación de la obra, como en la contratación del artista y de los artesanos, el desarrollo del programa, etc». See also G. GASPARINI, «Análisis crítico de las definiciones de 'arquitectura popular' y 'arquitectura mestiza'», *Boletín del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas,* III, 1965, 51-66.

19 ALFRED NEUMEYER, «The Indian Contribution to Architectural Decoration in Spanish Colonial America», *Art Bulletin,* XXX/2, 1948, 104-21. But see also later rebuttals by G. KUBLER («On the Extinction of the Motifs of Pre-Columbian Art», in *Essays in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology,* Harvard, 1961, 14-34), and by A. BONET CORREA («Integración de cultura indígena en el arte hispanoamericano», in *España en las crisis del arte europeo,* Madrid, 1968, 179-86). Both of these authors play down the role of the Pre-Columbian «native element» in developed, that is «Europeanized», Mexican Colonial art and architecture. Nevertheless, although Kubler's study in particular seems to fit most closely the extent visual evidence, it is still questionable whether the role of the indigenous craftsmen can be entirely dismissed, especially in the case of architectural decoration. Nor is it justifiable to ignore entirely the possibility of the survival of formal patterns of pre-Columbian deisgn, even when these are, as Kubler puts it, «repeated without comprehension». As such analyses in the end are problematic, especially as one inevitably seems forced to deal with the material in the dubious terms of a largely hypothetical pre-Hispanic «collective unconsciousness», then perhaps a better solution is to deal with a recognized parallel situation found in the history of European art; in this case I am referring to a specific instance of another such clear-cut instance of *cultural-stylistic synthesis.* In short, as viewed from a larger art historical perspective, the Spanish-Amerindian synthesis, which occurred in the later 16th-century, largely parallels the «Sub-Antique» phenomenon which occurred throughout the Mediterranean during the transition from Late-Classical to Early-Christian art. As in the case of early colonial Mexico, this art was the concrete result of a shift from strictly pagan to Christian functions. More to the point, in the stricly visual sense, in such «Sub-Antique» art one sees, according to Ernst Kitzinger, «the attempt to superimpose some abstract principle on the natural forms of Graeco-Roman art... the border countries of the [Classical] world opposed deliberate stylization to the realism of classical art. ...[A Sub-Antique] artist is not interested in such things as three-dimensional space and the anatomy of the human body. For these he substitutes other values. His concern is the abstract relationship between things--rather than the things themselves. ...A composition [is] thus arranged like a geometrical pattern on a single plane, with a blank background of indefinite depth [enhancing the] symbolic and transcendental character». E. KITZINGER, *Early Medieval Art,* London, 1940, 11, 14 (see also A. RIEGL, *Die spätromische Kunstindustrie,* Vienna, 1901).

were the decisive factor, and the ways by which these printed, mass-produced, architectural or decorative images found their way to parts of the New World has been discussed at some length by Pal Kelemen, and documented in some detail by Irving Leonard [20]. In any event, such prints in themselves would have further enhanced the evident tendency in these Mexican facades towards flatness and linearity.

Neumeyer had supposed that «a [Spanish] draftsman must have traced the designs...which were copies from previous executions of the same motif, or [taken] directly from woodcuts». In particular, Neumeyer has also cited «Mannerist volute ornamentation» and «the Flemish 'strap-work'» as «the basis for the decorative system», although, as he argued, such «Flemish strap-work and Italian mannerist ornament had an underlying Indian concept of forms». This supposed «native» element he observed especially in «the flattening of the ornament [in which] the designs are flush with the stone, uniform to the point of monotony, and coactive with the shadow pattern of the removed parts... [This] deep-cut ornament, with its shadow pattern, can be understood only if seen from a certain distance». These techniques produced, whatever their sources, what Neumeyer called «the 'anti-classical' manner: juxtaposition instead of coordination, isolation of each part instead of organic growth [, forming] one pattern, but the units as such remain unrelated to the to the neighboring ones...[becoming] a part of the intentionally mazelike overall texture of the surface. ...The principle of *horror vacui* has vanquished the Renaissance-Baroque principle of organized surfaces and of design in depth. This isolation from part to part...would be the very contrary of the stylistic principles of the Baroque».

Whether or not one chooses to agree with any or all of Neumeyer's conclusions in regard to the aesthetic concerns, artistic means, and social formations of the colonial artisan (and admittedly some of his observations about «indigenous» characteristics have been considered controversial by some critics), it is an undeniable fact that we are dealing with art forms that were created at a considerable, physical distance from the mainstream of European art [21]. Nevertheless, it *was* the clear intention on the part of these

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20 See Keleman, 1967, particularly plates 20, 138-9; appendix, plates 190-2; pp. 55-57, 200-212 (dealing with the influence of European prints on Peruvian painting). For documentation on European prints in Mexico, see the articles by I. A. LEONARD, in *Hispanic Review,* IX, 1941, 1-40; and XVII, 1949, 18-34, as well as his more recent monograph, *Books of the Brave,* New York, 1964.

21 It is perhaps a bit dangerous to presuppose that «Indians» (*qua* Indians) contributed much to the aesthetics or style of architecture as late as the 18th-century (but cf. note 19). In 1519, the year of the *conquista,* the total indigenous population of México is estimated to have been as high as 22 million. By 1620, however, after only one century of Spanish rule, the population had been drastically reduced, falling to perhaps only one million, including penninsular-born and *criollo* Spaniards. During the 18th-century, however, the population grew again, reaching a figure of perhaps 6 to 7 million by the end

colonial designers to create specifically «European-style» buildings and decorations. Naturally, the creators of these structures in Mexico would have had to rely upon whatever means were available to them, especially prints, as those would have served to communicate, in as clear and accessible a manner as possible, the essence and appearance of that European-style architecture toward which they so obviously aspired. In the end, it will be the specific means of this putative vehicle of communication which now provides us with a considerably less hypothetical basis for arriving at an evaluation of the underlying general stylistic character of 18th-century Mexican architecture.

What remains now is a consideration of the physical evidence for a likely and easily accessible model or pattern for the 18th-century Spanish clerics who, although largely un-tutored in the art of architecture as such, were obligated to show their (as it may be assumed) sometimes non-Spanish speaking and probably illiterate workman a *visual,* and hence readily graspable, statement of the plastic ideas which they wished these artisans to translate directly into stone [22]. Accordingly, we are looking essentially for published works with illustrations, particularly as the use of internationally circulated ornamental source-books for such purposes has been recognized to have been apparently common practice [23].

A specific published work worthy of citation to prove our point of the European Mannerist roots of the details of 18th-century Mexican facade decoration is a lavishly illustrated German publication dating from the end of the 16th-century: Wendel Dietterlin, *ARCHITECTURA von Ausstheilung, Symmetrie und Proportion in der fünff Seulen* (Nuremberg, 1598; illustrated

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of the Viceroyalty. Of this population, it is supposed that only one-third were pure-blooded Indians, but of the remainder probably less than one-sixth were pure-blooded Occidentals. The rest were *metizos,* or of mixed blood. Our slight knowledge of the demographics of colonial Mexico, in other words, does not allow *any* clear general notion of «who did what», particularly in the case of the design and execution of the architecture of the 18th-century. Nevertheless, it is logical to suppose that in this period most of the work was done by *castas* or *metizos.* The *castas* has come to occupy more and more important positions in the colonial labor-force, first as skilled workers, and later as scribes, then as petty bureaucrats, and eventually as high officials. See ROBERTO WHITE, «Introduction», in *Spain and New Spain (op. cit.),* 9-14; See also P. CARRASCO, «The Civil-Religious Hierarchy in Mesoamerican Communities: Prehispanic Background and Colonial Development», *American Anthropologist,* LXIII, 1961, 433-97.

22 For a useful summary of what little is now known of the actual training received by indigenous artists in colonial Mexico, see the short study by MARÍA CONCEPCIÓN GARCÍA SÁIZ, *La formación artística del indígena en Nueva España,* Seminario de Historia de América: Universidad de Valladolid, 1977.

23 For studies of such sources in general, see J. WEINGARTNER, *Das kirchliche Kunstgewerbe der Neuzeit,* Innsbruck, 1927; D. GUILMARD, *Les maîtres ornamentistes,* Paris, 1888; P. JESSEN, *Der Ornamentstich,* Berlin, 1920; R. BERLINER, *Ornamentale Vorlage gebl blätter,* Leipzig, 1925-6; J. EVANS, *Pattern,* Oxford; 1931; *Katalog der Ornamentstichtsammlung der Staatlichen Kunstbibliothek Berlin,* Berlin, 1936; E. FORSSMANN, *Säule und Ornament. Studien zum Problem des Manierismus in den nordischen Säulebüchern und Vorlageblättern des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts,* Stockholm, 1956.

by 203 elaborately engraved plates)[24]. The mention of this specific graphic source should also be considered in the light of a statement, published in 1963, by Joseph Armstrong Baird, noting that «the importance of northern Mannerism has never been fully evaluated in connection with Hispanic and Mexican [architectural] work of the 18th-century»[25].

The point is that, whatever its particular source for the Hispanic designer, the Mannerist repetoire of classically-derived figurative and ornamental motifs and compositional schemes in any event would have easily adapted itself in Spain to the pre-existant traditions and patterns of Medieval, Mudéjar and Renaissance Plateresque design principles. In the New World, the synthesis of indigenously Iberian visual traditions and more «contemporary» Mannerist formulas (mostly imported from the Germanic North) then either replaced or complemented the schematic vigor of pre-Columbian indigenous ornamental concepts. The mutual compatibility of these pre-Mannerist styles —Mudéjar, Plateresque and pre-Columbian Mexican— is revealed in their common approach to architectural design and decoration, for in retrospect they all seem to have in common a primary interest in the angular and intricate, linearized and cellularized surface; in short, the primary interest was focused upon the prodigally ornamented and *encrusted wall.* To the contrary, what the various Hispanic styles seem to *lack* in common is any great or continuing interest in the larger structural problems of geometrically expanded and articulated *interior spaces;* whereas, as one could argue, to the contrary, it was precisely the manipulation of interior spaces, that is plastically enclosed, scenographic spatial-units, which so often characterizes the major interests of the non-Hispanic, Baroque architects of the Old World[26]. On the other hand, as long ago shown by Fernando Chueca Goitia, the characteristics of prodigal ornament, geometric minutiae, staccato and overlapping minor rhythms, shallow linear compartmentalization and virtuoso denials of space are all factors which represent a characteristic manner of treating architecture which had long been ingrained in the traditional practices of the Spanish

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24 I am using the convenient modern facsimile published by Dover: *The Fantastic Engravings of Wendel Dietterlin,* New York, 1968. Another engraved pattern-book, likely to have been employed by Mexican designers (but unfortunately unavailable to me for study), is J. VREEDEMAN DE VRIES, *Architectura oder Bauung der Antiquen...,* Antwerp, 1565; see J. von SCHLOSSER, *La Letteratura artistica: Manuale delle fonti della storia dell'arte moderna,* Florence, 1967, 412, 421.

25 J. A. BAIRD, «Mexican Architecture and the Baroque», *Acts of the XX. International Congress of the History of Art,* Princeton, 1963, III, 191-202 (quoted on pp. 197-8).

26 For instance, «the buildings of Spanish America include only a very small number whose conception of plan and of space can be shown as baroque in the real sense of the term»: I. BOTTINEAU, *Iberian-American Architecture,* London, 1970, 3. Later, Bottineau (p. 83) cites a study by Jean Rousset (1913), defining baroque architecture as «the interpretation of forms embedded in dynamic compositions, unified and animated by expanding movement».

designer [27]. Perhaps curiously, these are also factors which are immediately apparent in non-Spanish, Late Mannerist engraved architectural prints, such as those published by Wendel Dietterlin in 1598. Furthermore, the hypothetical use of such Mannerist pattern-books of «timeless» application and utility, already proven to have been used by colonial painters, neatly solves the problem of the stylistic time-lag in 18th-century Mexican architecture, to which we have already referred [28].

The validity of this thesis dealing with the influence of Mannerist prints may now be quickly summarized, as well as demonstrated, in purely visual terms. For example, the 11th and 51st plates of Dietterlin's *Architectura,* (figs. 4,5), illustrating ornamental pilasters, reveal a striking resemblance to the grouping of *estípites* flanking the main portal of the Sagrario (fig. 2). On the other hand, the 28th and 72nd plates of the *Architectura,* which illustrate elaborate and truly «fantastic» wall-carvings and portals, seem a likely *locus classicus* or *«locus manieristicus»)* for the crowded and complex structural patterns of the entire portal-ensemble of the Sagrario (fig. 1).

Certainly these few examples, chosen more or less at random, seem to provide telling visual evidence for a direct relationship between Mexican 18th-century «Baroque» architectural design and the convoluted and imaginative, engraved architectural caprices of the late 16th-century Mannerist designers of the Germanic North [29]. Obviously in a paper of this length one

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27 Besides CHUECA *(op. cit.),* for a detailed analysis of the ingrained visual configurations of the Hispanic designer, one consults the classic study by OSKAR HAGEN, *Patterns and Principles of Spanish Art,* University of Wisconsin Press, 1948. Also useful is an article by J. A. BAIRD, «Ornamental Tradition in Spanish Architecture», *Country Life Annual,* 1961, 82-7.

28 MARCUS BURKE, *op. cit.,* discusses a similar stylistic «time-lag» in 18th-century Mexican colonial painting which he, too, feels must be attributable to the tardy influence of late Mannerist print-sources (see also his extensive bibliography, citing other scholars, who have dealt with this critical isue of graphic models).

29 Although scant attention has been paid to this problem, it may be mentioned that O. SCHUBERT *(Geschichte des Barocks in Spanien,* Esslingen, 1908, 224-39) briefly mentioned the mannerist qualities of what he called the 18th-century *«Plattenstil»* in Galicia. BAIRD *(op. cit.,* 1963, 198) states that «studies of Wendel Dietterlin, Jan Vreedeman de Vries, and the other late 16th-century northern Mannerist ornamental masters, have still to be written in terms of their role in the creation of a decorative language and complex of attitudes which led to the so-called 'Mexican Churrigueresque' or 'Ultra-Baroque'». George Kubler, on the other hand, seems certain of the use of such pattern-books, especially by the early 18th-century Andalusian designers, citing the «estípites introduced by Balbás at Seville and Hurtado at Granada. Consciously inspired by Mannerism, both artists borrowed from engravings of Vredeman de Vries and Wendel Dietterlin». (G. KUBLER & M. SORIA, *Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and Their American Dominions, 1500-1800,* Harmondsworth, 1959, 188). Kubler also observes the possible influence of Dietterlin in the *retablo* of the Hospital de la Caridad in Seville, which was «imitated throughout Spain until the mid-18th-century» (pp. 36-7). In Latin America, he also sees an influence from Dietterlin in the Dolores Church of Tegulcigalpa in Honduras (p. 84), and in the church of San Francisco in Lima (p. 93). In this connection, in Portugal, he also mentions the facade-designs of the Jesuit and Carmo churches of Oporto, «surely drawn from engravings by the German ornamentalist Wendel Dietterlin» (p. 106). Kubler also remarks upon motifs originating from Vreedeman de Vries

can only hope to introduce to the reader the general configurations of a broad topic of some importance, which must be pursued comprehensively at some length and in much greater detail by future investigators. If successful, future research into the possible published sources of Mexican architectural decoration will incidentally help to alleviate the apparent «identity-crisis» felt today by some students of architectural style in colonial Latin America [30].

In the larger view, however, we might now even venture to simplify the stylistic problem yet further: in truth, «Mexican» architecture *is* «Spanish» architecture, and as such, according to Chueca Goitia, it «belongs to a superior being which I would call 'Trans-Hispanic'» [31]. By the 18th-century, the New World examples, as one would expect, came to parallel the appearance and functions of their Iberian-penninsular models much more closely than had been possible in the first period of truly «colonial» Mexican architecture in the (literally) unsettled 16th-century. In this later —more settled, more «Europeanized» and, in short, more «civilized»— period the social patterns of Mexico correspond to a larger degree to those of the mother-country. It is also in this period, the 18th-century, that Mexican architecture acquires its characteristic Dietterlin-like motifs and compositional modes. Nevertheless, it is of interest to note that this general phenomenon —which would appear to be a kind of «Dietterlin redivivus» from the narrowly focused viewpoint of minor motifs— had been surely initiated in Spain, especially in Andalucia.

René Taylor had some time ago dealt with what should by now be considered a continuing, latent strain of Mannerism which pervades a great deal of Iberian architecture. This is a persistent phenomenon which, in its later phases, might be called Hispanic «Neo-Mannerism», of which Taylor has stated that «in Spain it comes later and survives longer» [32]. He found the characteristics of this indigenous, Iberian-Mannerist architectural style, for instance, predominant in the Escorial as early as the mid-16th-century. However, more useful for our immediate purposes is his examination of the

(see his pp. 107, 158, 171,176-7, 187; and my note 23 above). For the widespread usage of Germanic prints by Mexican painters, see BURKE, *op. cit.*, p. 29 ff.

30 Part of the problem of this «identity-crisis» (Mullen's apt phrase), I think, is likely due to the influence of archaeological methodology. As the study of Latin American art and culture presupposes a firm grounding in pre-Columbian (hence archaeological) studies, this is perhaps inevitable. In the particular sense, I am referring to the arguments dealing with «diffusionism» (civilizations formed by external influences) versus «Synoecisms» (independently formed civilizations), for which one consults: G. DANIEL, *The First Civilizations: The Archaeology of Their Origins,* New York, 1968. Certainly, however, in the case of Spanish colonial architecture, a difffusionist thesis is historically appropriate; hence Mannerist patternbooks are the logical, perhaps, esential, component, just as Nordic prints were known to have been essential for the colonial Mexican painter, as shown by the studies of Burke and others ctied here.

31 F. CHUECA GOITIA, «Invariantes en la arquitectura hispanoamericana», *Boletín del Centro de Investigaciones Históricas y Estéticas,* VII, 1967, pp. 74-120.

32 R. C. TAYLOR, «Francisco Hurtado and His School», *Art Bulletin,* XXXII, 1950, 25-61 (quoted from p. 51).

gilded *Retablo de Santiago* in the Sagrario of the Cathedral of Granada, which was designed by Francisco Hurtado in 1707, and immediately thereafter executed by Juan de la Torre [33] (fig. 8). According to Taylor, this structure employed «the first known example of the the use of the *estípite* in Granada» [34]. This work he additionally cites as «the first clear anticipation of that dissolution of the architectonic substructure which becomes increasingly common after 1720» [35]. As he concluded, «what is termed Baroque in Spain is little more than decorated Mannerism» [36]. Furthermore, «this style originated in Spain, and [thence] was borne to her overseas possessions [including Mexico]» [37]. Taylor discusses how, after 1720, building styles in both Mexico and in Spain become similar, having in common the gradual elimination of the architectural substructure, «until often little more remains than large tracts of flat surface decoration [in which] the decoration, instead of emphasizing the architectural members, tends to dissolve them into the background» [38]. And, in this post-1720 phase of the supposedly «Baroque» architecture of both New and Old Spain, one observes (as did Taylor) the triumphant predominance of that ubiquitous and supremely Mannerist device *par excellence,* the *estípite.* And, as we have repeatedly observed, it was precisely this characteristic but extravagant motif, the *estípite,* which had appeared in such an emphatic and repeated manner in Wendel Dietterlin's *Architectura* [39].

At this point however, like the *estípite,* we may perversely turn our arguments literally «upside down». Accordingly, now we would argue that, even though the characteristically 18th-century Hispanic *estípite* certainly may have been decisively influenced in its development by the particulars, for example, of Wendel Dietterlin's engraved motifs, nevertheless, the real origins of the *kind* of employment of this peculiar motif are certainly not only much earlier than 1598 but, indeed, the *estípite*-ridden Mexican facades of the 18th-century probably owe very little to specifically Germanic ideas. In short, the real sources of the characteristic ensemble of a typical Hispanic

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33 The document of payment to Juan de la Torre has been published by Taylor: Appendix II, no. 14, p. 57; it is dated 3 October 1707.

34 *Ibid.,* 36.

35 *Loc. cit.;* see also KUBLER & SORIA, *op. cit.,* 188.

36 Taylor, 53.

37 *Ibid.,* 45.

38 *Ibid.,* 46. As Taylor says elsewehere (p. 26), «one of the peculiarities of Iberian Baroque is that, in contrast to the complexity and mobility of [the applied decoration of] its elevations, it displays in the mayority of groundplans a slavish adherence to the practice of Mannerism. Indeed, it is precisely the combination of static shape and hyperfluid decoration which so frequently gives the latter the appearance of being 'stuck on' and unrelated to the substructure... The exciting new spatial discoveries of the Italian Baroque masters evoked not the slightest interest».

39 For other examples of «proto-*estípites*» in Wendel iDetterlin's *Architectura,* see his plates nos. 1, 14, 21, 33, 54, 55, 56, 61, 63, 69, 70, 74, 76, 85, 89, 98, 100, 102, 104, 107, 109, 113, 124, 132, 142, 154, 156, 157, 158, 162, 178, 184, 191, 193, 194, 195, etc.

sculpted *portada,* for instance, the *«pantalla arquitectónica»* of the Sagrario Metropolitano, are most likely to be found in earlier, penninsular Spanish practices. From this amplified historical and stylistic perspective, one sees that, although the identity and treatment of individual motifs may have been somewhat altered by the mid-18th-century, nevertheless —according to its *overall* design principles— the distinguishing characteristics of the *portada* of the Sagrario Metropolitano are best described as being backward-looking and «Neo-Plateresque», thereby suggesting yet another important stylistic linkage to 16th-century architectural practice.

However, at the outset of this second level of investigative interpretation, one must recognize two basic historical facts about the current style-term *«Plateresco»* (meaning literally «work done in the manner of a silversmith»), precisely as these are points commonly overloked in the rather sparse critical literature on the subject. In the first place *«plateresco»* was not really a term employed in the 16th-century to describe any major architectural style as such. Moreover, this term does not even appear to have been commonly used in even any kind of generalized architectual context until the 17th-century. However, even then, we find Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga only referring, in 1677, to this architectural phenomenon in a very limited sense, that is, that «Plateresque» is then only used to describe a particular architectural *order* (or, better, a «grotesque» motif), namely: «The Composite, covered all over with foliage and fantasy of excellent design, called by craftsman *'plateresco'*» [40]. In the second place (to make matters even more complicated), in its general appearance, the «Plateresque phenomenon» does not now appear to be an exclusively Spanish style; instead it was a *gusto* which was common to a great deal of later 16th-century Italianate (Mannerist) decoration found in several countries, including of course Italy [41], particularly Lombardy [42] —but perhaps more notably in France. In this light, it then seems noteworhy that the 1562 «Plateresque» architectural manuual of Diego Sagredo, *Medidas del Romano,* had early been translated into French (as *Raison d'architecture,* Paris, 1531; with subsequent editions in 1539, 1542, 1550, and two more reprintings in 1551). However, as just shown, as late as 1677, Zúñiga had defined *plateresco,* not as a true architectural style but

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[40] D. Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Anales eclesiásticas y seculares de la ciudad de Sevilla,* Madrid, 1677, 525.

[41] Actually, it would appear that it was the *Italian* Mannerists who were the first to employ that arbitrary pilaster-motif which came to be known as the *estípite.* This device was perhaps first employed by none other than Michaelangelo in the Laurenziana (1526). It may be assumed then that it was from such originally Italian sources that Dietterlin and his compatriots picked up the motif, and eventually, as we have seen, it was subsequently «imported» into the New World in the form of printed pattern-books.

[42] See, for instance, the *«arte decorativa»* proposed by il Filarate, the architectural theorist employed by the Sforzas in Milan; J. R. Spencer, *Filarete's Treatise of Architecture,* Yale University Press, 1965, 2 vols.

instead as the capricious decorative employment of a particular order: «The Composite». Actually, as early as 1567, the great French architect Philibert de l'Orme had also referred to *«l'ordre composé»*, in the employment of which must artistic license was allowed, that is, «il est permis à l'exemple des anciens d'inventer & faire nouvelles colonnes» [43].

In spite of a certain confusion of historical precedent (compounded by an evident stylistic ambiguity), «Neo-Plateresque» still suggests itself as an especially attractive stylistic demoninator for the Sagrario and its ilk, especially granted the possibility of an 18th-century Mexican revival or, even better, continuation of what must have been perceived as a «native» style, that is, the first style of specifically Christian architecture in Mexico in the 16th-century, *«el plateresco mejicano»* [44]. The Mexican Neo-Plateresque architectural hypothesis becomes even more tenable when it is observed how closely the earliest written definitions of the original Iberian *Plateresco* motifs of the 16th-century conform to the recognizable visual characteristics of that *estípite*-based 18th-century New World style which we have seen to display characteristic Neo-Mannerist tendencies. Like the *«orden compuesta plateresca»* described in 1677 by Zúñiga, the later Mexican *estípite*-facade is essentially a decorative ensemble based upon the planarized and carpet-like repetition of individual, diminuative architectural orders —reduced to bizarre pilasters— which can only be described as belonging to that class called «composite», sanctioned for 16th-century architects «à l'example des anciens d'inventer & faire nouvelles colonnes». Quite to the contrary, however, Zúñiga spoke of his 16th-century Plateresque predecessors as those:

> «Master-builders who, in accordance with the fashion of their times, violated in much of their ornament the rules of ancient Roman architecture with *fantasías plateresca*s. ...[Such works,] although very pleasing and rich in beautiful things, are. nevertheless, not of that majestic perfection which seems preferable to those men who are instructed in the rational architecture which the Greeks handed down to the Romans. ...[Those 16th-century designers] esteemed foremost the display of their fantasies —which enjoyed then more applause than now— putting these above the rigorous rules of art...executing some stome relief-works of admirable finesse in which less regard is paid to architectural [spatial] majesty, and rather more attention is paid to the stimulation of one's curiosity» [45].

By the time of the execution of the Sagrario Metropolitano in the 18th-century, however, we find that the authoritative *Dictionary* of the Spanish Royal Academy had come to narrowly define the adjective *plateresco* as referring to just those «ornaments which are superimposed upon works of architecture, conforming only to the fancies of the craftsman, [a term]

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43 P. DE L'ORME, *L'Architecture,* Paris, 1567, livre VII, chapitre xiii.

44 For which, see TOUSSAINT, *op. cit.*, chapter 5, «Renaissance Architecture», 77ff; and J. FERNÁNDEZ, *Arte mexicano, de sus orígenes a nuestros días,* México DF, 1968, «Arte de Nueva España», 53ff.

45 ZÚÑIGA, *op. cit.*, 546-7.

derived from the freedom with which silver *(la plata)* is worked by the *platero* in orden to create yet more ornament» [46]. On the other hand, Sebastiano Serlio's *Architecttura* (Venice, 1537) was a work much studied by Hispanic architects on both sides of the Atlantic. In the standard Spanish translation (1552) of Serlio's universally consulted treatise, an 18th-century Mexican architect would have found an authoritative discussion of the prototypical Plateresque *«Orden Compvesta»,* noting that this motif is loosely defined as a «manera de columna mezclada dellas [otras] mismas». Accordingly, this device appears on the frontispiece *(portada!)* of Serlio's architectural manual (fig. 9). Although Serlio's herm-*estípite* is also given the sanction of classical precedent —«aprouada con la autoridad delas obras Romanas antiguas»— nevertheless, warns Serlio, «ha de tener siempre respecto a no corromper el subjecto de las cosas ni su origen» [47]. Serlio's well intentioned *caveat,* not to corrupt either the subject or the origins of the «Composed Order», was evidently often ignored in the 18th-century wave of enthusiasm for the ubiquitous *estípite,* which is after all —either with or without the apparently original herm-figures— just a *«pilastra compvesta».*

One may conclude this parenthetical examination of the origins and vagaries of critical appraisals of the term *plateresco* —which we may now perceive to have originally largely (and vaguely) referred to ornamental ensembles of applied pilasters— by citing Fray José de Sigüenza, the enthusiastic chronicler of Philip II's auster Monastery-Palace of the Escorial and, therefore, a champion of the *«estilo desornamentado»* (The Un-Ornamented Style) appearing in Spain at the end of the 16th-century. In 1605, this author had said of Plateresque decoration that «if this work [the Escorial] were good for nothing else it would still be useful to eradicate this [Plateresque] uncouth rusticity *(selvatiquez),* for so we must call this style» [48]. To this there must be added the comments of Juan de Arfe y Villafane, another, even earlier, exponent of the *estilo desornamentado,* which can also be described as a kind of «Anti-Mannerist» movement independently launched on Spanish soil [49]. In his *Descripción de la traza de la custodia de la Iglesia de Sevilla* (1587) —an important source apparently easily overlooked by the architectural historian— one finds what may be the first known mention of the *estípite,* which Arfe named outright, and some ten years before the publication of Dieterlin's *Architectura.* This citation is also useful as it esta-

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[46] *Diccionario de la lengua castellano, compuesto por la Real Academia Española,* Madrid, 1737, vol. V, «O-R».

[47] *Tercero y Qvartro Libro de Arquitectura de Sebastián Serlio Boloñés...,* Toledo, 1552; see especially chapters ix, x, and xi of Book IV: «De la orden compvesta».

[48] J. DE SIGÜENZA, *La Fundación del Monasterio de El Escorial* (new ed.: Madrid, 1963, 210).

[49] For more on Spanish Anti-Mannerism, see my *Spanish Painting,* 79ff.

blished the proof for one's thesis concerning the originally printed, or engraved and imported, origins of the Hispanic *estípite*.

Arfe, like Sigüenza, praised the *estilo desornamentado* of the Escorial, stating that this massive structure «exhibits truth and magnificence». At this point, he then compares its severe, almost Neo-Classical, simplicity to the excesses of the preceeding architectural style, that is, the Plateresque, which, according to this author, was characterized by:

«trifles of shallow relief *(resaltillos),* [including] *estípites,* mutiles, brackets and other such tomfoolery, which had been hewed to by thoughtless and brash artificers precisely because they had seen these motifs in Flemish and French broadsheets and prints *(por verse en los papeles y estampas flamencas y francesas).* These they call decorative, but, more accurately, they destroy their works with these motifs, losing thereby all sense of proportion and meaning» [50].

At this point, we should re-examine the overall design system of the sculpted portal-ensemble of the Sagrario to determine just how faithfully this structure conforms to 16th-century Plateresque compositional principles —which actually do have «proportion and meaning», although this is anti-classical in nature. As Fernando Chueca Goitia has pointed out, upon the facades of the building in Mexico City there is displayed:

«a torrent of forms without pause or rest. At first, its complications overwhelm us, but after a while, when we begin to analyze these over-loaded screens, we will begin to perceive that its basic format could not be more simple, as it is based upon two patterns of *estípites,* one being placed above the other, leaving only a hollow area for the door, and this effect we have called the «altarpiece-facade» *(fachadas-retablos)*... This direction, initiated [in Spain] by Churriguera and the Andulusian *retablo* designers, arrived at a paroxism in America. There, oneis not dealing with *retablos* as such, but intead with a series of columns (generally *estípites)* or of pillasters, placed so close to one another as not to allow any room for statutes, the ultimate residue of the original configurations of these *retablos.* ...At this point, it can not be called a *retablo* but instead an abstract, decorative pattern based upon architectural motifs which are monotonously reiterated and which have lost all their figurative meaning...this represents a return to the abstracted and ornamentalized type of «carpet-facades» *(fachadas-tapiz)* which were current in Spain at the end of the Middle Ages» [51].

The apogée of the late medieval style to which Chueca refers is, of course, the Plateresque, and the epitome of this ornamental manner is to be seen in the facade of the University of Salamanca (ca. 1525-30) (fig. 10). As Chueca has observed o the Salamantine structure:

«The decoration of this facade is based upon rhythmns like those of an Islamic melody in which only the serial solution is recognized, and not the simultaneous accord.

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50 Arfe (MS.), as quoted by J. A. CEÁN BERMÚDEZ, *Diccionario Histórico de los más ilustres profesores de las Bellas Artes en España,* Madrid, 1800, vol. I, 61 (I suspect that the name of the artist responsible for these «estampas flamencas» was Jan Vreedman de Vries; for his 1565 publication, see note 24).

51 Chueca, in his 1967 article (cited in note 31), and now included in his 1971 anthology, *Invariantes castizos,* 194-5.

...Each fragment of this facade is a petrified instant which is followed immediately by yet another, without interpolations of resonance, each motif being as clear and distinct as the hand-clap in the *cante jondo*. What is missing is all trace of integrative harmony and all focal intention, factors which cannot exist in this facade due to the lack of a single dominant element» 52.

As was also recognized by Chueca, the carpet-like approach to the rich embellishment of selected and enframed vertical zones, placed within the extended and otherwise quite bare planes of the wall, is a predominant characteristic of Plateresque sculpted portals and, as well, of the much later decorated facades of a great many 18th-century New World churches, including the Sagrario. The end result in both cases is a «pseudo-architecture», dedicated to cellularly organized, apparently laminated, decorative motifs thickly applied in rectangular clusters, creating a type of shallow relief pattern which appears to deny outright those principles of architectural mass and unilateral visual focus and climax which one would expect to find in a truly «Baroque» structure. The operational principles latent in Spanish Plateresque architecture have again been carefully articulated by Chueca:

«What is absent in the wall of the Spanish Renaissance building is that weighty cadence of well-defined plastic forms which [outside Spain] serve to exalt true archtectonic form. [In Hispanic architecture] either the wall is left audaciously bare or it is profusely decorated...either one or the other, resulting in peremptory contrasts. Due to this facta the underlying logic of the wall in classical architecture is ignored. Proof for this is seen in the entablatures of our Plateresque, which are converted into mere decorative bands, a direct result of the inflation of the frieze and the improbable atrophy of architraves and cornices, the very elements which, according to classical logic, should be the most active and predominant parts of the entablature. Moreover, columns are scarcely utilized, being instead replaced by jointed socles, which are really little more than vertical friezes. The Plateresque intention, carried out with potent artistic will, stems from an attempt to define narrow pathways, creating box-like vertical and horizontal compartments, where the caprices of the applied grotesques may be put on display. Due to this intention, the [original] logic behind the employment of the classical architectural elements becomes perverted» 53.

Nevertheless, the Sagrario of Mexico City embodies far more than just the typical *exterior* Plateresque mode of compartmentalized, planarized wall decoration. As we saw earlier, Robert Mullen had endeavored morphologically to classify colonial structures on the basis of their plans. Actually, Chueca has a far simplier (and more comprehensive) approach to the meaning of the traditional design principles of the *interior* spaces of Hispanic architecture and, appropriately, he cites the Sagrario as epitomizing the essence of these spatial*«invariantes castizos de la arquitectura española»*. As he states, although the groundplan of the Sagrario is essentially centralized:

52 Chueca, 1971, 143; see also S. Sebastián's strictly iconographic study (cited in note 16).

53 *Ibid.*, 136.

«The interior space is constructed upon a five-bay, Greek-cross plan, with four extra bays added at the corners *[figs. 11, 12]*, thereby creating a total interior space of 13 bays. ...This Greek-cross plan, however, is *not* revealed by the exterior perimeter because it has been inscribed within a perfect square, created by the addition of certain supplementary external structures which do not really constitute parts of the interior space. *Therefore, there is a masking of the foor plan* caused by is enframement within the square. Nevertheless, in its elevation, and by means of its upper silhouettes, it agains reveals the underlying cross-plan by the central dome and the four prominant gablewalls *(hastiales)*, located at the heads of the four arms of the croos. The masking walls at the corners —and this device was the invention of Lorenzo Rodríguez— descend from the tops of the gable-walls down to the corner-angles. ...This is a structure devoid of cornices, but it is also one which avoids the austerity of bare walls by hewing to the Latin American formula of irregular silhouettes *(recortes)*. This building can not be broken down into simple constituent forms, such as cubes, spheres, cylinders, and so forth, [as in a Bramantesque structure like] Santa Maria della Consolazione at Todi. It cannot be so decomposed because such forms do not preexist in it —precisely because this is not a stereometric structure but instead a planarmetric structure» [54].

Now we see broadly stated the basic stuff of such a planarmetric architecture, which is essentially an extremely simple and strictly utilitarian architecture of four, flat, centrally sculpted, walls joined together at crisp right angles, a box-like structure, constructed like so many jointed, decorated stage-flats, each dovetailed together at their lateral intersections. This was also one of the primary *«invariantes castizos»* of Spanish architecture, resorted to long before the conquest of the New World during the period of the Renaissance (and Mannerism) in the Old World. For this reason, Chueca rightly calls the buildings of Latin America the logical result of a «Trans-Hispanic» architectural order. By this, he means a distinctively Hispanic architecture which had been mentally *trans*-ported across the Atlantic, resulting in what he calls a synthetic «re-Hispanization of Spanish characteristics», by which the various regional styles of the mother-country (Andalusian, Galician, Aragonese, Catalan and Castillian) had been all brought together into one uniform conglomerate, and the results are surprisingly consistent in appearance, being found from Patagonia to Chihuahua. In architectural terms, this is the visible expression of what Chueca has called «the new Trans-Hispanic ecumenicism» achived throughout the Latin Americas by the 18th-century [55].

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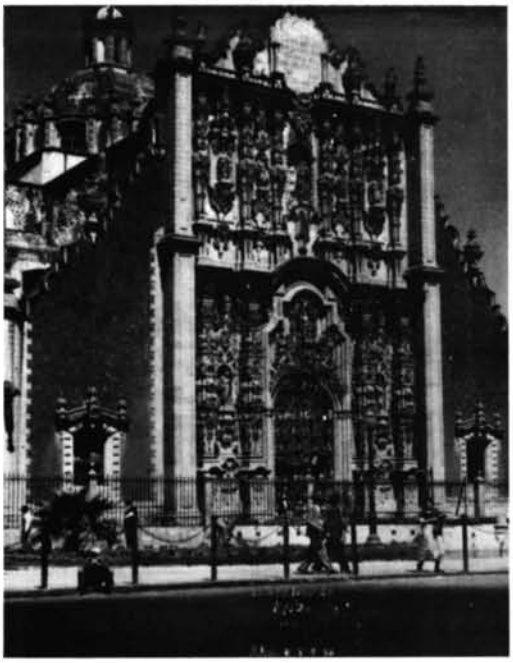
[54] *Ibid.*, 192-3. It should be noted that numerous examples of classical «stereometric» structures were, for instance, illustrated in Book III of Serlio's manual (cited in note 47). Obviously, the typical Hispanic groundplan aries from choice—and not from «ignorance».

[55] *Ibid.*, 159-60.

LAMINA I



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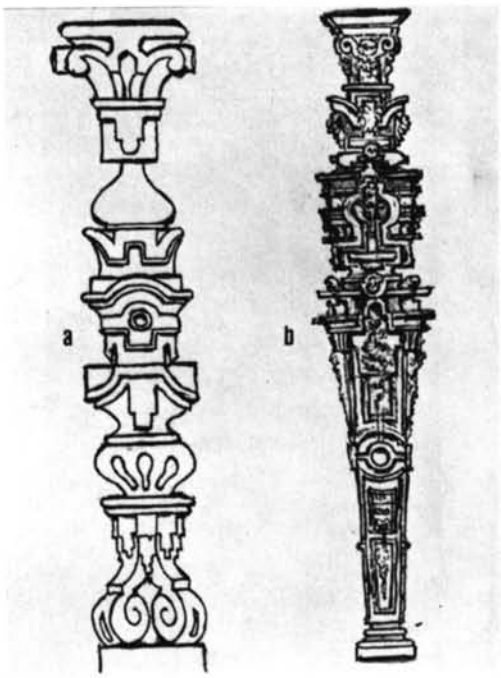

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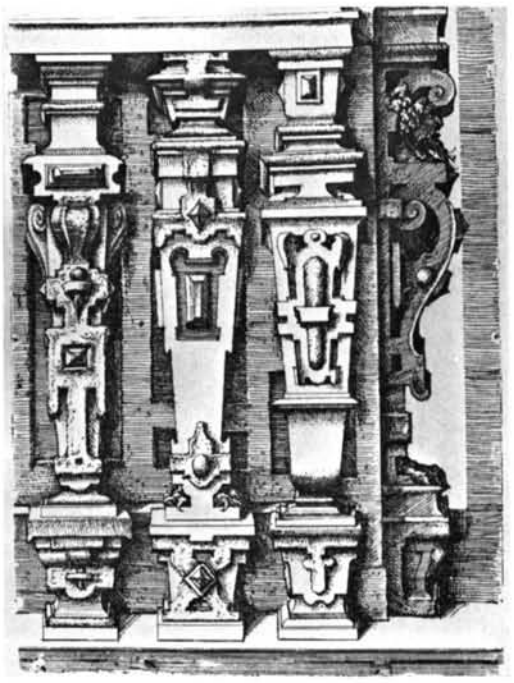

4

1. Mexico City. Sagrario Metropolitano. Main Facade.—2. Mexico City. Sagrario Metropolitano. South portal.—3. a) Córdoba. San Hipólito. Sketch of a pilaster; b) Mexico City. Cathedral. Altar de los Reyes. Sketch of the estipite.—4. Dietterlin, «Architectura», 11th plate.

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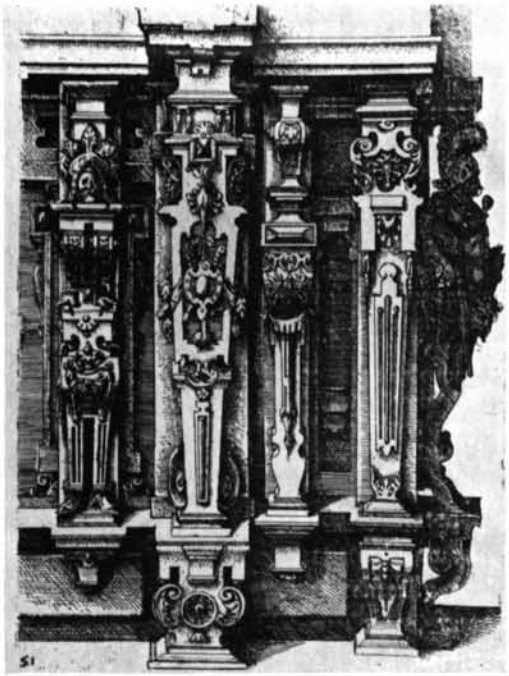

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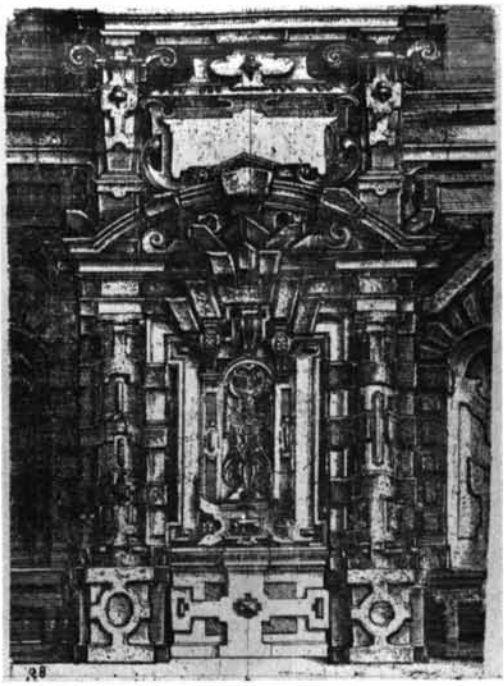

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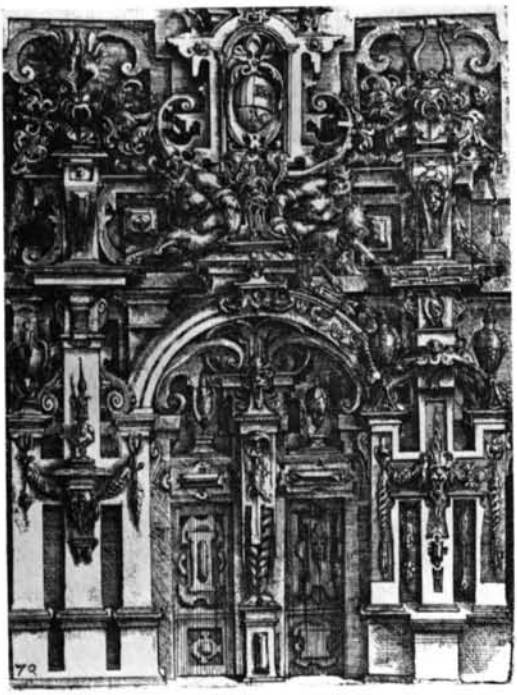

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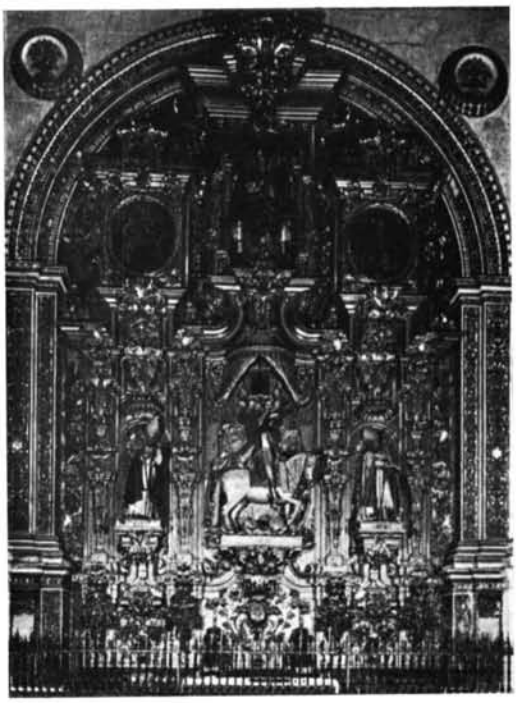
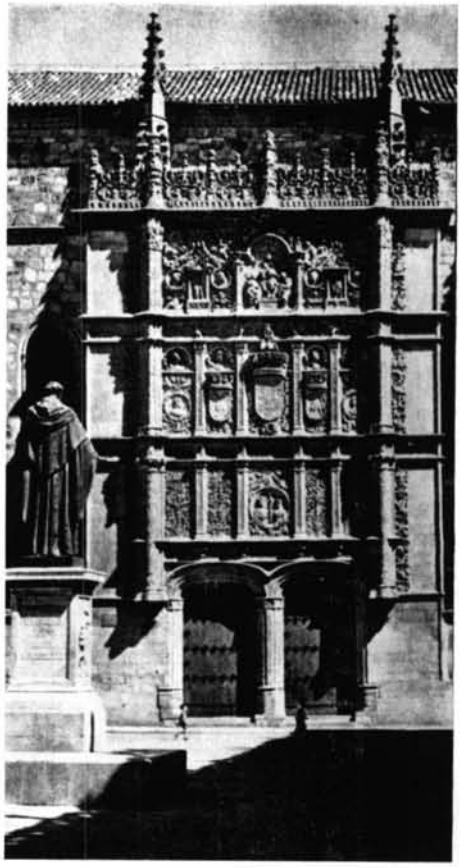


1. Dietterlin, «Architectura», 51st plate.—2. Dietterlin, «Architectura», 28th plate.—3. Dietterlin, «Architectura», 72th plate.—4. Córdoba. Cathedral. Retablo de Santiago.

1



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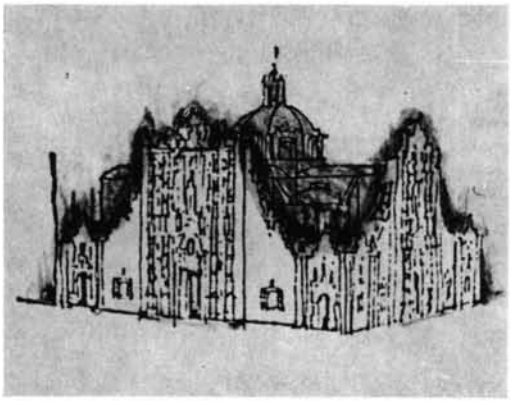

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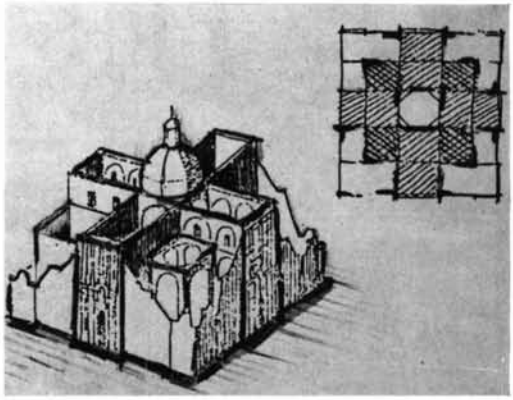

4

1. Serlio, «Architectura», Frontispiece.—2. Salamanca. Facade of the university.—3. Mexico City. Sagrario Metropolitano. Silhouette.—4. Mexico City. Sagrario Metropolitano. Plan.