

Traditions of the European basilica model in the sacred architecture of Colonial Latin America

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In the following study I would like to discuss two issues. The first one concerns the existence of the architectural model of European basilica in the area of Colonial Latin America, while the other involves the tradition and functions of atrium in colonial architecture.

BASILICA MODEL

The basilica layout is relatively rare in the architecture of Latin America. Simpler plans were predominant, e.g. single-nave churches, often including a transept, sometimes with a crossing dome emphasizing the intersection of the central nave and the transept. In particular, it was the first missionary churches that took the simplest architectural forms. It was related to the conversion of new areas and evangelization of further tribes and groups of Indians. Another significant factor was a feeling of uncertainty about the later fate of the new mission in its first stages.

Occasionally, however, the European basilica – both from the medieval and modern perspective – became an inspiration for the colonial architecture in

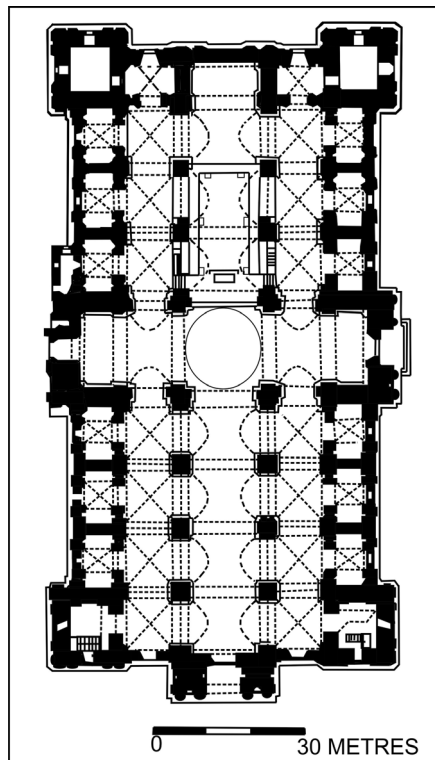
America, functioning as a proven model that emphasized the significance of sacred establishment. It seems that there are a few types of churches for which the adaptation of the basilica model is most significant. It would be either a building with a basilica layout, or with general reference to this model in the European architecture, or with reference to a specific project in the Old World. For the purpose of this study, the term basilica is applied to all three-nave churches – regardless of their proportions – with the central nave lit by clerestory windows located in the walls above the aisle roofs or in the vault over the central nave.

CATHEDRALS

The most significant group of Latin American churches in which the basilica layout can be encountered comprises cathedrals. Here, it would be appropriate to review a general mechanism forming the colonial architecture. It is widely known that architectural forms closest to European architecture were built in large metropolises. Not all of these cities were capitals of vice-kingdoms. However, due to the vastness of conquered and evangelized America, there were a lot of cities – still existing – which served as cultural and political centres and were also important centres for minor administrative areas. They were often – but not always – ports. In remote areas, inhabited mainly by the local population, architecture took forms different from European standards. Construction-wise or space-wise, these are extremely simple, even miserable temples, but their individuality and extraordinary character come from ornamentation. In America, there are quite a few areas (above all, Mexico and the Andean uplands of Peru and Bolivia), in which the so-called ‘mestizo’ art was developing. It was an output based on European models, but transformed according to local tastes and sense of beauty. The result is extraordinary – and far from the architecture of the Old World.

Cathedrals built in the major urban centres were used by the congregation, but served also as places of religious manifestation, emphasizing the significance of Christianity in conquered territories. Despite the fact that the plans of first cathedrals in America are quite similar, there were substantial differences between space layouts related to ichnography. Predominant plans concerned three-nave temples inscribed within an oblong and having clearly marked tower bases in a facade alone, or in a facade and a chancel. Such buildings include cathedrals in: Mexico, Puebla, Guadalajara, Santo Domingo, Lima and Cuzco. Nevertheless, only some of the buildings took the spatial form of a basilica

(Mexico, Puebla, Guadalajara), the others were hall churches (Santo Domingo, Cuzco, Lima).



[Fig. 1. Juan de Herrera, plan of Cathedral, Valladolid, 1582–1596, (2007, draw Ewa Kubiak after: Fernando Chueca Goitia, *La catedral de Valladolid: una página del siglo de oro de arquitectura española*, Madrid 1947, fig.9, p. between 98/99.)]

The idea of a rectangular plan, in which a three-nave church is inscribed, comes from the tradition of late gothic architecture. Former classical gothic cathedrals in Spain were in most cases three-nave buildings, usually with a distinct transept, a polygonal apse, an ambulatory and a ring of chapels, just like those in Avila, León, Palencia, Segovia, Toledo or Barcelona.¹ Later on, the rectangular plan becomes more popular – the chancel has a straight ending, and the transept does not protrude beyond the line of side walls restricting the temple. This solution can be found i.e. in Salamanca and Seville (instead of three, there

¹ PÉREZ MONZÓN 2003: 110, 170, 204, 236, 270, 344 [reference to cathedral plans].

are five naves here).² This model was used in Renaissance architecture – however, the language of architectural forms became more classical. Projects carried out in Latin America were mostly influenced by two buildings: the cathedral in Jaen³, and – first and foremost – the cathedral in Valladolid designed by Juan de Herrera. [fig. 1] The architect continued the construction of the building that had been started in 1527 according to the design of five artists: Francisco de Colonia, Juan de Alava, Juan Gil de Hontañón, Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón and Diego de Riaño⁴. In his project, Herrera adapted the plan designed by his predecessors; the cathedral had identical dimensions, but the architect completely changed its architectural form. The cathedral was designed as a perfectly symmetrical basilica – both plan-wise and spatially, with four towers in the corners, and four portals. Although the church was not built in accordance with Herrera's intentions⁵, in distant America the preserved draft served as a model much more effectively than the realization itself could do. Cathedrals in Mexico [fig. 2] and Puebla are closest to the Spanish model⁶. [fig. 3] Both were designed as three-nave churches of the basilica type with a plan inscribed within an oblong and with four corner towers. The beginnings of the construction of both buildings date back to the second half of the sixteenth century, the first one was erected according to the plans of Claudio de Arciniega, the other – Francisco Becerra. However, in both cases only two towers in the facade were built. Nevertheless, the idea of two towers on the chancel's side was present until the beginning of the seventeenth century⁷. As far as the cathedral in Mexico is concerned, strong influence of the Spanish project in Jaén is also emphasized (architect – Andrés de Vandelivira)⁸.

² It is also dictated by the size of the mosque replaced by Seville cathedral; (PÉREZ MONZÓN 2003: 212, 258–261).

³ GORRITI YANGÜAS 2005: 374–384.

⁴ The last of them worked as the first construction manager until his death in 1534. The work proceeded slowly and slowed down even more in the middle of the century. In 1577 Rodrigo Gil de Hontañón, the last of the cathedral's co-originators, passed away leaving a vacancy for a head architect. Soon afterwards, Juan de Herrera was chosen for the position; (GORRITI YANGÜAS 2005: 402–403).

⁵ Following the Herrera's death, Francisco de Praves took over – he held the function of *maestro mayor* until 1627. Three apses provisionally closing the central nave and aisles were built, which completely contradicted Herrera's plans. The inauguration of the temple took place on 26 August 1668; in 1713 the construction of some of the chapels was finished (this time in conformity with Herrera's design). Nevertheless, numerous changes made in order to finish the work as soon as possible (so-called temporary solutions that finally stayed unchanged) – deformed permanently Herrera's original design, (GORRITI YANGÜAS 2005: 404).

⁶ But also in: Gaudalajara and Mérida; (CHUECA GOITIA 1947: 177–192).

⁷ GUTIÉRREZ 2002: 44–45.

⁸ KUBLER, SORIA 1959: 74–75.



[Fig. 2. Claudio de Arciniega, Diego de Aguilera, Interior of the Cathedral, Mexico, 1567–1569/1593–1603/completed in 1667, (2009, photo. Ewa Kubiak)]

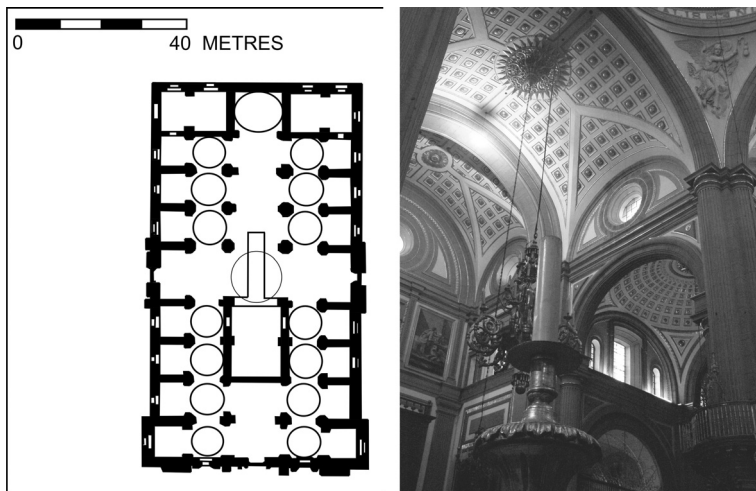
The basilica model is also present in cathedrals built in the baroque period. The cathedrals in Sucre (or Chuiquisaca, Bolivia) and Córdoba (Argentina) [fig. 4] can serve as an example of South American realizations from the end of the 17th century. Both were created in the place of former, more modest churches. However, when the churches were elevated to cathedral status, it was decided to change their form and, as a result, the basilica model was chosen⁹. Sometimes, the fate of a building was reverse, for example in Chihuahua (Mexico), still a small town at the beginning of the eighteenth century, or in Zacatecas (Mexico)¹⁰. [fig. 5] Both were built as parish churches. The one in Chihuahua was designed in 1725 as a single-nave church with a transept and a crossing dome, however, in 1717 the bishop of Durango, Benito Crespo, decided to change the plans and extend the church – in the face of the region's expected mineral resources, the bishop found it necessary to build a church capable of serving as a cathedral in the future – therefore the basilica model was chosen for the project¹¹. The situation was the same with the temple in Zacatecas – also here a decision was taken to build a church that «tan capaz que puede servir de catedral»¹².

⁹ GUTIÉRREZ, PAGE 2002: 196–199.

¹⁰ BARGELLINI 1991: 306–309; 380–391.

¹¹ BARGELLINI 1991: 46.

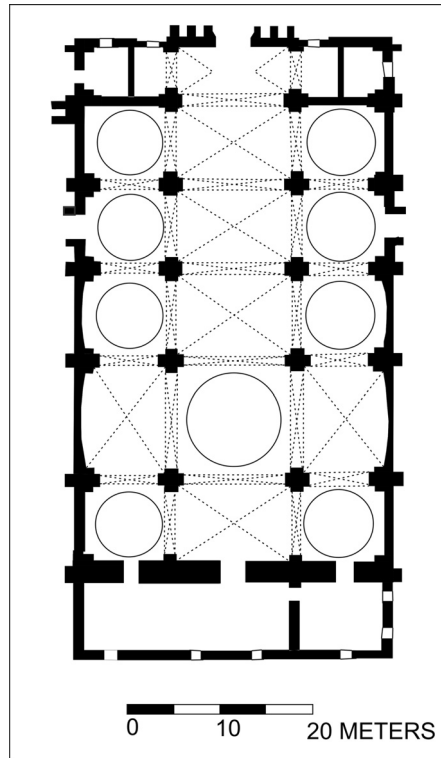
¹² A quotation from *Gaceta de México* (January 1730) after: BARGELLINI 1991: 46.



[Fig.3. Francisco Becerra (?), plan of Cathedral, Puebla, 1575–1649, (2007, draw Ewa Kubiak after: George Kubler, Martin Soria, *Art and architecture in Spain and Portugal and their American dominions 1500 to 1800*, Harmondsworth/Middlesex 1959, fig.31, p. 74.); interior of Cathedral, Puebla, 1575–1649 (2009, photo. Ewa Kubiak)]



[Fig.4. José Gonzalez Merguelte, Andrea Bianchi, Juan Bautista Pardo, Vicente Muñoz, View of the Cathedral, Córdoba (Argentina), 1698–1710/1728–1739/1752–1756, (2008, photo. Ewa Kubiak)]



[Fig.5. Plan of the Cathedral, Zacatecas, after 1729, (2007, draw Ewa Kubiak after: Bargellini Clara, *La arquitectura de la Plata. Iglesias monumentales del centro-norte de México*, 1991, fig. 163, p. 380)]

MONASTIC ARCHITECTURE – JESUIT AND FRANCISCAN CHURCHES

Another group of temples in which the basilica model is relatively frequent are monastic churches; however, this refers almost exclusively to complexes erected in large urban centres. It is impossible to characterize the whole monastic architecture – so I will use a few examples derived from the architecture of the Society of Jesus and the Franciscans– two of the most popular orders in America. It must be added here that basilica churches are present in the architecture of many other congregations – such as the Dominicans, Augustinians or the Mercedarians.

It is assumed that the most popular form of a Jesuit church is a single-nave church with two rows of chapels on the sides (connected with one another), often with a transept, a crossing dome and a modest chancel – in general it is

about various spatial variants derived from the model of Gesù church in Rome. In fact, this layout is quite popular and may be found in many projects in Latin America – both in Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries. These include Jesuit temples in Quito (Ecuador)¹³, in Bogotá (Colombia)¹⁴, San Pablo in Lima (Peru)¹⁵ [fig. 6] or Salvador de Bahía (Brazil)¹⁶. However, simpler solutions are equally frequent – single-nave churches with shallow chapels between pillars, such as in Cuzco¹⁷ or San Pedro in Juli (Peru)¹⁸. Wooden missionary churches in different parts of Latin America take a unique form – they often include a central nave and two aisles, but with a gable roof with an open rafter framing – Achao (Chile)¹⁹, San Francisco Javier or San Rafael (Santa Cruz region, Bolivia)²⁰. There are also many quite modest single-nave and single-space temples – like in Andahuaylillas (Peru)²¹, Tópaga (Colombia)²², Juan Bautista and Asunción in Juli (Peru)²³. Contrary to the recognized patterns, some Jesuit churches are basilicas – mainly in the territory of New Spain, for instance an accompanying church to ‘Casa profesa’ in Mexico, the church of the Jesuit college Esprit Santo in Puebla or the church ‘La Purísima Concepción’ in Zacatecas²⁴. All these buildings are very slender in their proportions. Interestingly, three of the abovementioned buildings were erected in the centres, where cathedrals with basilica-type layout had already existed and undoubtedly served as models. [fig. 7]

The Jesuit church in Argentina represents a very interesting design – its spatial form may be described as a gallery basilica. The same layout (the same structure) may be seen in Colombian churches in Cartagena and Popayán.

¹³ ORTIZ CRESPO 2002: 91.

¹⁴ ARBELAEZ CAMACHO 1966: 92.

¹⁵ VARGAS UGARTE 1956: 16–17.

¹⁶ AROEIRA NEVES 1980: 23.

¹⁷ VARGAS UGARTE 1963: 70

¹⁸ GUTIÉRREZ [and others] 1986: 331–333.

¹⁹ BAILEY 2006: 224.

²⁰ MESA, GISBERT, 2002: 247–251.

²¹ WUFFARDEN 2002a: 40–141.

²² WUFFARDEN 2002b: 233–235.

²³ GUTIÉRREZ [and others] 1986: 338–339.

²⁴ BARGELLINI 2002: 294; WUFFARDEN 2002c: 302–303, 306.



[Fig. 6. Jesuit Church S.Pablo – Interior, Lima, 1624–1638, (2008, photo. Ewa Kubiak)]



[Fig. 7. Johann Kraus, Andrea Bianchi, Giovanni Battista Primoli, Jesuit church – Interior, Buenos Aires, 1712–1733, (2008, photo. Ewa Kubiak)]

It is also possible to find examples of basilica buildings among Franciscan churches. Like in case of the Jesuit architecture, architecture was adapted to the place where the church was created. Small temples with simple forms were built at missions and in small towns, the greatest temples (basilicas as well as

pseudo-basilicas) were erected in big cities like Cusco (Peru), La Paz (Bolivia) or Salvador de Bahía (Brazil).



[Fig. 8. Vicente das Hags (?), Franciscan Church – Interior, Salvador de Bahía, 1708–1723, (2005, photo. Ewa Kubiak)]

Most of them presents traditional solutions, but e.g. in Salvador, the Franciscan church, despite its basilica form²⁵, fits perfectly into the local architectural tradition. [fig. 8] The main nave is exceptionally wide, covered by a coffer ceiling based on richly decorated covings. Most local churches are simple one-nave temples, very wide and hall-like. Windows illuminating the Franciscan church do not go directly outside but to corridors above the side naves: thanks to this, the outer cubical form does not reveal its inner character. However, in the Franciscan church in Potosi (Bolivia), a pseudo-basilica form was selected. Even though in some studies one can find statements like «San Francisco es una iglesia de tipo de basilica»²⁶, but it does not seem to be a very precise description. It is a three-nave church; side naves are slightly lower than the main one, but there are no windows above the side naves, so it seems more suitable to call it a pseudo-basilica. Pseudo-basilica layout was also implemented in a Franciscan church in Cusco, although some studies claim that the church – ‘is conformed to basilica-type ground plan’²⁷.

²⁵ BAYÓN, MARX 1989: 329.

²⁶ MESA, GISBERT 2002: 144.

²⁷ What raises greatest doubts is understanding a basilica not as a spatial form, but as a layout; (CHARA ZERECEDA, CAPARÓ GIL 2006: 91).

To sum up, according to my research, the most important criteria determining the choice of a particular (basilica or hall) architectural model in three-nave churches are: firstly, location, and secondly, function. The location aspect definitely favours big cities, or those with good prospects for growth. In the macroterritorial scale (despite the examples from the area of South America), the most important area for buildings demonstrating the basilica form is New Spain. The majority of such complexes – both cathedral and monastic – were erected in Mexico. I suppose it may be argued that the first cathedral complexes that took the form of basilica ultimately determined the popularity of this architectural model. It was then readily copied in other cathedrals, and also in certain monastic and parish churches.

ATRIUM

The second issue which is worth discussing here is the existence and function of atrium in the sacred architecture of Latin America. Although it had already been known in the European church architecture since early Christian times, the atrium as an element of a church complex vanished from later temples in projects carried out in the Old World. In America, the popularity of atrium might be attributed to a specific social situation, different from that of the 16th- and 17th-century Europe, especially in the early years of the Spanish conquest, when it resembled rather the first centuries of Christianity than the mechanisms shaping the Renaissance society. From the religious point of view, the fundamental task was to evangelize the huge masses of Native Americans, and to spread the new faith. In this context, atrium proved to be a tool supporting evangelization and, due to functional reasons, it became very popular.

The basic and direct cause for the creation of atria within the colonial architecture of Latin America was the need to exteriorize the cult, i.e. bring the liturgy out of churches and put it in the open air. It was a deliberate effort that, on the one hand, was driven by insufficient amount of space inside the temples, unsuitable for evangelization of hundreds of Indians, and on the other, by preferences and traditions of Indians, whose previous experiences had involved religious rites held outdoors in vast squares restricted by sacred buildings²⁸. According to some researchers, atrium in combination with its corner chapels is a typical Mexican solution, but such layouts are present throughout Latin America. José de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert list sixteen examples of churches

²⁸ GUTIÉRREZ 2002: 29.

with atriums and posas in the Vice-Kingdom of Peru²⁹, and the summary of the III Synod of Lima called by the archbishop Santo Torbo Mogrovejo in 1583 says that because Indians are undoubtedly most endeared and attracted to learning about and worshipping of God by outdoor ceremonies as well as splendour and sumptuousness of the religious cult, no effort should be spared to use these elements in the evangelization process – «por la forma y modo que juzgaren ser a mayor gloria de Dios y ayuda spiritual de las almas»³⁰.

In Latin America, atrium took a specific, canonized, and later repeated form. It was an area based on an almost square plan, restricted by a wall with four chapels in the corners, the so-called ‘posas’, situated in front of the church entry. In its centre, there was usually a large cross.

As an architectural element, atrium was certainly ‘brought’ from Europe to America by monks, who were the first ‘architects’ of the New World’s temples. However, the functions involved with this space are place specific. Some researchers explicitly regard atrium in America as the direct ‘successor’ of former, pre-conquest places of worship (John McAndrew³¹), but according to George Kubler, this solution is mostly related to other Christian atria. Among other things, he based his opinion on the sizes of the complexes – much smaller than those of vast squares adjacent to pre-Columbian temples³². It is also worth pointing out that the sizes of American atria exceed those known from European architecture – which was also connected with the local character. Monks founding their monasteries had almost unlimited areas of land at their disposal in order to use them in praise of God³³.

Atria in Latin America can be divided according to the types of related temples, as well as the organization of square architecture itself. They might be adjacent to the church whose form was characteristic of a Christian temple, usually a small single-nave building typical for missionary architecture. An atrium placed in front of the church can be found in Franciscan churches in Calpan, Tochimilco and Atlixco in Mexico³⁴, but such complexes are typical not only of the territory of New Spain. We can find a similar space composition in the territory of the Vice-Kingdom of Peru e.g. in the sacred establish-

²⁹ MESA, GISBERT 1962.

³⁰ VARGAS UGARTE 1951: 374; after: GUARDA 1980: 472.

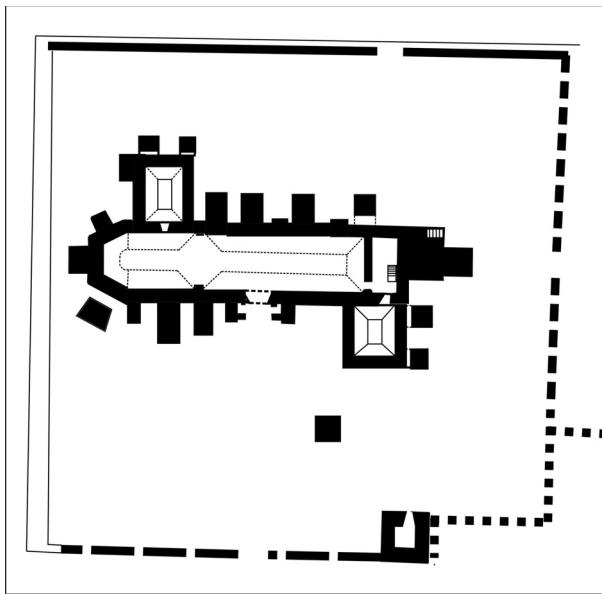
³¹ John McAndrew is the author of an extensive study on atrium and open chapels, though the book is restricted to Mexican issues only, (MCANDREW 1965).

³² George Kubler writes about atria that survived in Spanish or Italian architecture until the sixteenth century; (KUBLER 1968: 114–115).

³³ They were sometimes hindered by some functional issues, as was the case with Xochimilco, where the monastery was restricted by a former establishment – it was erected on the ruins of the city burned down by Cortez; (ZAWISZA 1969: 119).

³⁴ ZAWISZA 1969: 110.

ment in Manquiri (today's Bolivia)³⁵ or in the Santa Cruz church in Juli (Peru)³⁶. Sometimes atrium was not located at the front, but was adjacent to a side wall of the church, while the side portal usually served as the main entry to the temple. Such solutions can be found e.g. in San Miguel de Pomata (Peru)³⁷ or Copacabana (Bolivia)³⁸. In some locations, an atrium surrounded a church as in the case of Umachiri³⁹ in Peru or in San José de Cala⁴⁰ or Curahuara de Carnagas⁴¹ in Bolivia. [fig.9, 10] This layout resembles modern European pilgrimage complexes, for instance the Marian sanctuary in Swieta Lipka in Poland⁴². Complexes were sometimes fitted with a double atrium – one surrounding the temple, the other adjacent to one side of the main facility⁴³.



[Fig. 9. Plan of Church in Curahuara de Carnagas (Bolivia), 16th century, decoration 1608 and 1722, (2007 draw Ewa Kubiak after: Mesa José de, Gisbert Teresa, *Monumentos de Bolivia*, La Paz 2002, p.93)]

³⁵ MESA, GISBERT 2002: 179–181.

³⁶ GUTIÉRREZ [and others] 1986: 234–238.

³⁷ GUTIÉRREZ [and others] 1986: 320.

³⁸ MESA, GISBERT 2002: 46, 48–50.

³⁹ GUTIÉRREZ [and others] 1986: 234–238.

⁴⁰ MESA, GISBERT 2002: 101.

⁴¹ MESA, GISBERT 2002: 92–93.

⁴² PASZENDA 2000: 399–406.

⁴³ Churches in Callapa, Jesus de Machaca, Copacabana de Andamarca or Sepulturas; (MESA, GISBERT 2002: 106–107).



[Fig. 10. Atrium of Church in Curahuara de Carnagas (Bolivia), 16th, decoration 1608 and 1722, (2005, photo. Ewa Kubiak)]

However, atrium was often integrated with so called ‘capilla abierta’ – i.e. open chapel. It is an architectural form characteristic of Latin America – a small building usually consisting of an oblong or square chancel and a transverse nave open by a portico or arcades in the direction of atrium that served as the church’s nave⁴⁴.

Sometimes the church’s facade included a kind of open chapel – it was a balcony or a loggia opening to an atrium. Peruvian churches in Urcos, Cuzco (La Merced, San Jerónimo) and Ayacucho (Santo Domingo, La Merced) may serve as examples here⁴⁵. Leszek Zawisza made an attempt to compare the functional aspects of church and atrium complex to European solutions. A Francis-

⁴⁴ This solution is typical for Mexico and the territories of New Spain – it may be found in a former sacred complex in Ciudad de Mexico – San José de los Naturales, as well as Santa María Magdalena in Jihuico and San Juan Atzolcintla – both near Metzititlán in the State of Hidalgo or in an establishment in Tzintzuntzan in Michoacán State; (ARTIGA 1985); Drawings – ‘capillas abiertas aisladas tipo I y tipo II’.

⁴⁵ MESA, GISBERT 1985: 150.

can, who lived in the sixteenth century, a missionary devoted to evangelization in the territory of Mexico – Toribio Motolinia is the author of the book «Historia de los Indios en la Nueva España», in which he describes atria located in front of churches in New Spain: «courtyards are big and elegant; there are so many people that the church cannot hold them all and therefore they have their chapels on the patio and everyone listens to the mass on every Sunday and holiday»⁴⁶. L. Zawisza draws a functional parallel between these and St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, which in the 'Bernini's project' preserved the area in front of the temple enclosed by a colonnade i.e. atrium, on which crowds of the faithful gather and await the Pope to appear on the balcony located on a higher storey of the facade – like in a Mexican 'open chapel'⁴⁷. However, in America atrium was not only an extension of a closed church, but also a social and religious 'revival' of its natural surroundings. For Indians, it meant 'regaining' of open space for sacred purposes and the ability to develop procession rituals that were one of the foundations of their cultural uniqueness⁴⁸.

We can also identify a few types of atria in terms of a square's architectural setting. The general spatial organization has already been described and remained unchanged, but there were sometimes different variations. For instance, on the territory of Latin America and on the upland areas of the Andes in particular, in place of the central cross there was another, fifth chapel related to the cult of the dead (so called 'capilla Misérere'); sometimes a section of the courtyard served as a graveyard⁴⁹. Jose de Mesa and Teresa Gisbert name three main functions of atrium in Latin America – the evangelization of masses, the conduct of worship in the open unroofed space and the preservation of the cult of the dead⁵⁰.

It is also worth pointing out that some Mexican atria were fortified complexes with clear defensive features⁵¹ – all forms, however, are only variants of the above described pattern.

⁴⁶ ZAWISZA 1969: 117.

⁴⁷ ZAWISZA 1969: 117.

⁴⁸ GUTIÉRREZ 2002: 30.

⁴⁹ Also the emphasis put on the significance of such an extraordinarily important tradition among native Americans as the cult of the dead, became a tool of evangelization. However, in the Christian tradition the cult involved the burial and memory of a deceased person, while in the Andes it also surrounded the body that was mummified and treated as a sacred object. Therefore, despite the ban imposed by church authorities over the territory of Callao, the bodies were still stolen from graveyards for a long time to come; (GISBERT 2001: 211–212).

⁵⁰ MESA, GISBERT 1985: 126.

⁵¹ GUTIÉRREZ 2002: 29.

In my opinion, in case of American atria we can speak of the syncretic combination of two architectural solutions. On the one hand, there are vast ritual areas of sacred character in pre-Columbian complexes that, in spite of their variety and multicultural character, were typical of the whole of Latin America, and on the other hand, European atrium derived from the architecture of early Christian basilica. I believe these are two equal sources for the specific creation of atrium in colonial churches in America. It is definitely an individual form. Stress must be put on the uniqueness of function, as well as architecture, elements complementing the establishment's programme – 'posas', 'capillas abiertas', 'capillas Miserere'. On the whole, it should be said that atrium in Latin America is certainly an individual contribution of colonial builders to the history of architecture.

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Resumen

LA TRADICIÓN DEL MODELO BASILICAL EUROPEO EN LA ARQUITECTURA SACRA LATINOAMERICANA EN LA ÉPOCA COLONIAL

El artículo aborda dos problemas: por un lado, la cuestión del funcionamiento del modelo de la basílica europea en las colonias de América Latina y por otro lado, la cuestión de la tradición y funcionamiento del atrio en la arquitectura colonial. Por basílica entiendo en este caso todas las iglesias – sin tener en cuenta sus proporciones – de tres naves en las que la nave principal está iluminada por ventanas ubicadas por encima de las naves laterales, bien en las mismas paredes o bien en la bóveda de la nave principal. El plano basilical es relativamente poco común en América Latina, mucho más frecuentes son proyectos más sencillos como la iglesia de nave única, a menudo con transepto, en ocasiones con una cúpula que acentúa el crucero. El esquema basilical en la arquitectura latinoamericana encontramos en primer lugar en realizaciones catedralicias. Otro grupo de templos donde a menudo se optó por este modelo constructivo son las iglesias conventuales, mayormente objetos en grandes núcleos urbanos que destacan por la presencia de construcciones de este tipo. Analizando la cuestión a gran escala, el terreno más importante para las realizaciones de forma basilical es Nueva España. La gran mayoría de este tipo de fundaciones, tanto catedralicias como conventuales, fue fundada en México. La segunda cuestión que parece interesante, es el tema de la existencia y funcionamiento del atrio en la arqu-

itectura sacra de América Latina. El atrio como elemento arquitectónico de la iglesia está conocido en la arquitectura sacra europea desde la época paleocristiana, pero va desapareciendo en las realizaciones sacras europeas de épocas posteriores. La popularidad del atrio en América Latina puede explicar la específica situación social del Nuevo Mundo, que en los siglos XVI y XVII difería mucho de la situación en Europa, acercándose en los primeros años de la conquista más bien a la realidad de la época paleocristiana que a los mecanismos que formaban la sociedad renacentista. La principal misión, desde el punto de vista de la religión, era la evangelización de la inmensa población indígena, la divulgación de la nueva fe. En este contexto el atrio resultó ser una herramienta muy útil para la evangelización, lo que le aseguró una gran popularidad.

Streszczenie

**TRADYCJE EUROPEJSKIEGO MODELU BAZYLIKOWEGO
W SAKRALNYM BUDOWNICTWIE AMERYKI ŁACIŃSKIEJ
W OKRESIE KOLONIALNYM**

W artykule zostały poruszone dwa problemy. Pierwszy z nich dotyczy zagadnienia sposobu funkcjonowania architektonicznego modelu europejskiej bazyliki na obszarze kolonialnej Ameryki Łacińskiej. Drugi odnosi się do tradycji i funkcjonowania atrium w architekturze kolonialnej.

Za bazylikę uznaje, bez względu na proporcje, wszystkie kościoły trzynawowe, w których nawa główna jest oświetlona oknami umieszczonymi ponad nawami bocznymi – czy to w ścianie ponad nimi, czy też w sklepieniu przykrywającym nawę główną. Układ bazylikowy w architekturze Ameryki Łacińskiej pojawia się stosunkowo rzadko. Przeważające są plany prostsze – kościoły jednonawowe, często z transeptem, czasami z kopułą podkreślającą skrzyżowanie naw. Najważniejszą grupą kościołów, wśród których spotykamy schemat bazyliki w architekturze amerykańskiej, są katedry. Drugą grupą świątyń, gdzie stosunkowo często pojawia się schemat bazylikowy, są kościoły zakonne – dotyczy to jednak prawie wyłącznie obiektów wznoszonych w dużych ośrodkach miejskich, które ze względu na występowanie bazylik zdecydowanie wysuwają się na plan pierwszy. W skali makroterytorialnej najważniejszym obszarem dla fundacji o formie bazylikowej jest Nowa Hiszpania. Najwięcej założeń tego typu – zarówno katedralnych, jak i zakonnych – powstało na terenie Meksyku. Drugie zagadnienie, które wydaje mi się interesujące, to problem istnienia i funkcjonowania atrium w architekturze sakralnej Ameryki Łacińskiej. Jest to forma znana w sakralnej architekturze europejskiej od czasów wczesnochrześcijańskich, jednak w realizacjach na terenie Europy atrium jako element założenia kościelnego zanika w świątyniach pochodzących z późniejszych epok. W Ameryce popularność atrium można tłumaczyć specyficzną sytuacją społeczną, która była odmienna niż ta w XVI- i XVII-wiecznej Europie. Zwłaszcza w pierwszych la-

tach konkwisty była bardziej zbliżona do realiów pierwszych wieków chrześcijaństwa niż do mechanizmów kształtujących społeczeństwo renesansowe. Podstawowym zadaniem, z punktu widzenia religii, była ewangelizacja ogromnej rzeszy Indian, szerzenie nowej wiary – w tym kontekście atrium okazało się narzędziem wspomagającym ewangelizację i cieszyło się wielką popularnością ze względów funkcjonalnych.