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About the Institute

The Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation, a research division of Carnegie Mellon University, specializes in the history of botany and all aspects of plant science and serves the international scientific community through research and documentation. To this end, the Institute acquires and maintains authoritative collections of books, plant images, manuscripts, portraits and data files, and provides publications and other modes of information service. The Institute meets the reference needs of botanists, biologists, historians, conservationists, librarians, bibliographers and the public at large, especially those concerned with any aspect of the North American flora.

Hunt Institute was dedicated in 1961 as the Rachel McMasters Miller Hunt Botanical Library, an international center for bibliographical research and service in the interests of botany and horticulture, as well as a center for the study of all aspects of the history of the plant sciences. By 1971 the Library's activities had so diversified that the name was changed to Hunt Institute for Botanical Documentation. Growth in collections and research projects led to the establishment of four programmatic departments: Archives, Art, Bibliography and the Library.

Dear Dr. Popenoe:

Your notes do not include the corrections or supplementary remarks that were enclosed in a letter written shortly after submitting these notes for my comments many years ago. They were as follows:

The Cathedral:

Toward the end of my stay in Antigua I again spent considerable time about the Cathedral and came to some conclusions that I did not have when we talked about the building. The original towers are gone of course, and the appearance of the facade has been altered by that fact. Undoubtedly there has been considerable rebuilding in the part of the cathedral no in use. But - - the plateresque ornamentation must be almost entirely original, (dating from the mid-18th century, at least). It is unlikely that any restoration of ornament would have been as well executed as this after the Capitol was moved to the present Guatemala City.

The Archbishop's Palace:

With the exception of the old doors I would say that very little remains of the exterior appearance of this building. It was originally two stories and drawings show a loggia on the second story overlooking the plaza. If there was, it is quite certain there would not have been a heavy cornice such as one sees on this building.

Church of San Agustin:

The facade is more 'free Renaissance' than Baroque.

The Church of La Merced:

I would add the following to what you have quoted -
" - - badly done in the first story but very interesting and of good execution in the central portion above the main entrance. Also a splendid dome."

Church of Capuchinas:

The extremely heavy proportions of the cloister make this portion of the building seem entirely out of scale with the exterior of the church. This convent has the most interesting and unusual plan to be found in Antigua or, perhaps, in the entire Americas among Cononial Spanish buildings.

Dolores del Cerro:

Rather poor Renaissance bordering on the Baroque", but simple and severe

Sorry to have kept this so long. I expected to return your copy of the notes before I left Antigua but heard that you were already out of town. I was afraid that they might be misplaced if I just left them at your house in your absence.

Even after all these years I have little to add to the opinions and statements that you attribute to me.

Suzie Annis

NOTES ON THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE SPANISH COLONIAL PERIOD IN GUATEMALA

"The earlier structures in Mexico, erected in the first generation succeeding the Conquest" writes the well-known authority Sylvester Baxter, "had little architectural character. Utility was the sole consideration. The early ecclesiastical edifices were built under the supervision of the Franciscan friars, who were the pioneers of the Church in New Spain. These churches in various parts of the country have a rudely massive character, with a look of austere severity, frowningly sombre. They are commonly distinguished by battlements that suggest defensive functions, and are of an easily recognizable type that might be termed 'early Franciscan'. A noteworthy survival of this work is the old Franciscan church at Cuernavaca."

Guatemala was colonized from Mexico, and I think it is therefore logical to assume that the first structures built in this region by the Spaniards would follow the architectural style of contemporaneous work in Mexico. But so far as I am aware no buildings now exist in Guatemala, which in their present form can with certainty be attributed to the XVI century.

Nevertheless, Professor Verle L. Annis (to whom I shall refer in detail farther on) considers that we have, in the Ermita or small church which stands on the Cerro del Carmen in Guatemala City, a building which in its general outlines is characteristic of the early Franciscan style. Is it the only one of its style now to be seen in Guatemala? I do not know; but I am inclined to suspect that it is. Certainly it is to be reckoned among the oldest buildings in the republic: Jesus Fernandez, writing in 1894, states categorically that it was built, in its present form, as early as 1620. The decoration on both sides of the main doorway, Professor Annis thinks, may have been added in later times; and we know that the building was seriously damaged by the earthquake of 1917, but the restoration done after that disaster

followed very closely the original lines.

Quoting again from Baxter's classic work, "Spanish Colonial Architecture in Mexico", I believe the following remarks apply to Guatemala as well as to the country he was discussing: "The influence of the full Renaissance was dominant in Spain when the great cathedrals of Mexico and Puebla were begun, in the latter half of the XVI centuryIn the remaining part of the XVI, and throughout the XVII, both religious and civil architecture were dominated by the Baroque, with its capricious proportions, its accidental profiles, its heavy and corpulent members, its ragged fronts, its abundant, irregular and crude mouldings,- but picturesque withal, and in Spanish hands, of extraordinary character."

During the eighteenth century ecclesiastical architecture in Mexico was largely characterized by what Baxter terms a peculiarly Spanish outcome of the Baroque,- the Churrigueresque, in which the decorative tendencies of the Free Renaissance "went to the uttermost extreme of architectural unrestraint." In this style "the column and the anta are transformed into pillars and pilasters replete with decoration, all panels are decorated, lines are infinitesimally broken, and the sculpture becomes an integral portion of the structure, serving as decorative members."

Churrigueresque architecture, in well-developed form, seems never to have been used in Guatemala; perhaps in part because this country did not have the wealth possessed by Mexico, hence simpler, more modest buildings were the rule; perhaps in part because it did not come into vogue sufficiently early for its influence to be felt in Guatemala at the time most of its great ecclesiastical structures were being built.

Baroque, according to Professor Annis, is the dominant note in Guatemalan ecclesiastical architecture. I have already quoted Baxter's

characterization of this style: another definition which has seemed to me illuminating, - and which I culled from the newspaper report of an architect's speech in Boston a few years ago, is as follows:

"Baroque is a style which is a combination of straight lines and curves, its beauty lying in the relationship of the two. Its inception was concomitant with the rise of the Italian renaissance. It spread throughout Europe and served for an uncommonly long span until it finally degenerated into the rococo^c."

Summarizing, we are principally concerned, in studying Spanish colonial architecture in Guatemala, with the Renaissance and its sequences; first the Baroque, and ultimately its degenerate expressions known as rococo^c. To this we must add what some Mexican writers term an architectural style, but which Professor Annis prefers to consider a form of decoration, the Plateresque. This is so-called because it resembles, in technique, the decorative work done by silversmiths of the early period.

The principal, - in fact, the only, - purpose of these notes is to place on record the comments of Professor Annis regarding ~~major~~ architectural features of the principal structures of the Colonial period in Antigua Guatemala. So far as I am aware, nothing of this nature has been published. Professor Annis, I believe, is the first person to undertake a detailed study of Spanish colonial architecture in Guatemala. During the spring and summer of 1938, he spent five months in this country, - his second visit, - and brought together a vast amount of information, as well as photographs and measured drawings, from which it is to be hoped he will ~~shortly~~ prepare an authoritative technical publication. Until this appears, - and perhaps even then, for the visitor not professionally interested, - the following comments by Professor Annis should be helpful:

Antigua Guatemala

Palace of the Captains General. Completed in 1764, only nine years before the destruction of the city. Badly damaged by the earthquake - the facade was later restored. "Renaissance, not as good workmanship as the Ayuntamiento."

Palace of the Muy Noble Ayuntamiento. I believe this to be of fairly late construction, not 1540, as indicated by a tablet on the front wall. "Renaissance; heavily proportioned. No other styles involved."

The Cathedral. The facade seen at the present day has been built since 1773; it was not part of the original cathedral which was destroyed in that year. "Renaissance, with much Plateresque ornamentation."

The University of San Carlos. Now occupied by the Museo Colonial. Architecturally almost unique in Antigua; "moorish inspiration throughout, yet not definitely moorish in details."

Church of San Agustin. The facade is a good example of Baroque.

Jesuit Church and Monastery (La Compenia), now occupied by the market. "Facade of the church is mainly Baroque, but of a reserved sort. Elaborate use of fresco has made it very interesting. The decoration is in good taste; and the church has the distinction of being the only one in Antigua to have been characterized by exterior frescoes."

Church of La Merced. One of the last to have been constructed in the old capital before the earthquake of 1773. Said to have been completed in 1760. "Merced belongs to the decadent period of design. Probably intended to be Renaissance with Plateresque decoration; it is, in fact, basically Renaissance, with Plateresque decoration badly done."

Church and Monastery of San Francisco. The facade is "good,

straightforward Baroque in all its features. The portada (gateway) to the west likewise. The small chapel used at present, known as the Capilla de la Tercera Orden, together with its portada or gateway to the north were probably built since the earthquake of 1773, are entirely without character." Professor Annis considers the facade of San Francisco one of the best examples of pure Baroque to be seen today in Antigua.

Church and Monastery of Belen. The facade of the latter is "common-place; the cloister has Renaissance feeling. The Beth^{em}elites always built plainly, simply, severely". The facade of the church which stands at one side of the old monastery is probably post - 1773, and in bad taste.

Escuela de Cristo. Facade of the church "cannot be classified; Renaissance pilasters on second storey. If it were in Mexico it would suggest Early Franciscan because of its massiveness and severity", but its construction took place at too late a date for it to have been influenced by that type, - according to history, it was built about 1720.

Calvario, at the end of the Alameda of that name. The Campanario or bell tower, which Professor Annis considers one of the best bits of Baroque in Antigua, stands at the entrance; behind it is the little church, which is "Renaissance: the two small structures on either side may have been added at a later date, and are a mixture of Renaissance and Baroque."

Santa Cruz. A small church standing in a coffee plantation, across the Rio Pensativo from the ruins of Belen. Professor Annis thinks this the architectural gem of Antigua; it should not be missed by one interested in this subject. "Baroque with Plateresque decoration. Fine proportions; clean cut of its style; workmanship excellent."

Church of San Juan de Dios (Next to Hospital). "Free Renaissance with over-elaborate decoration. Proportions and lines not good. The shrine

on the East side of the church, southward from the main entrance, is good Baroque."

Los Remedios, a small church standing in a coffee plantation on the Alameda del Calvario. "Renaissance; pure, simple, unadorned."

San Cristobal el Bajo, some distance outside of town, "is straight Renaissance, and not bad."

San Jose el Viejo, built, according to Juarros, in 1687. "Somewhat Baroque, tending toward Rococo. Bad architecture."

San Gaspar, Some distance from town, toward San Juan del Obispo. "Renaissance, rather decadent, with touches of Baroque. Plateresque decoration. For a small outlying church, rather nice."

Church of Capuchinas. Facade is "pure Renaissance;- straight, cold Renaissance, well-proportioned."

Church of Carmen. "Almost pure Renaissance, with Plateresque ornamentation. Lower columns Doric, upper columns Ionic. This facade is the most consistently Renaissance-Plateresque of all structures in Antigua."

Santa Clara, Church and Convent. "Facade and side entrance of church Rococo, cloister pure Renaissance. The facade is perhaps the nearest approach to Churrigueresque to be found in Antigua, but not good enough to merit that classification."

Church of Santa Teresa. Facade of church is "Free Renaissance, and quite good; one or two Moorish features."

Santa Rosa de Lima. Facade of this small church is one of the architectural gems of Antigua. "Baroque,- good Baroque on the whole,- with tendencies toward the Rococo."

Candelaria, lower church, "very Moorish. Plateresque decoration, also of Moorish character. Door forms and niches Moorish, but the upper portion

of the building almost Renaissance. A Hybrid." *"Column Baroque"*

Dolores del Cerro (upper Candelaria), facade is "rather poor Renaissance; simple."

Jocotenango, some distance out of town on the road toward Chimaltenango, is Baroque.

GUATEMALA CITY

Iglesia del Carmen, on the Cerro del Carmen, has already been mentioned in detail.

Church of La Merced, one of the finest in the City, "more purely Renaissance than anything else in town; the dome is pure Renaissance."

The Cathedral, built about 1800, represents the "early classic revival, good Renaissance; consistently classic". The towers were destroyed by the earthquake of 1917, and have been rebuilt not quite as they were before.

4431 Angeles Vista Blvd.,
Los Angeles 43, California

April 11, 1960

Dear Dr. Popence:

We have had a considerable number of very lovely cimbidiiums blooming continuously for several months and more coming along. Betty and I are both very fond of them and would like to send some of our younger plants to Antigua before we go down in June. Would you be kind enough to give us some instructions about sending them by air mail, or whatever other carrier if not by air mail? Air express, or freight?

We would appreciate instructions as to packing, customs, inspections, or anything else that is pertinent. Are there any import papers that you could send us, or that we could obtain elsewhere? Should the plants be taken out of the pots and the roots washed clean of soil? How should they be packed?

Isaias, the boy at our house, could pot them once they reached Antigua. The immediate problems are the proper procedures of getting them on the way. Your advice and assistance would be greatly appreciated.

The year has moved along very rapidly and it will be only a matter of weeks now until we are again free to start a summer jaunt to the south. Present plans are to leave about the 22nd of June - a little later than we would like but a necessary delay after the close of school on the 17th. This year we have to leave everything in good shape here since we will not have time to do much between our return from Antigua and our departure for Europe. Our stay in Antigua will be about a month. We are scheduled to fly August 3rd by polar route to Copenhagen. We then proceed to Paris to pick up a car and from there will go directly to the northwest of Spain. We are anxious to have some of the late summer in Asturias and Galicia and some time in the Costa Brava area before we go to the Balearic Islands. Our entire program is rather extensive but it will be Spain and the Canary Islands until January or early February. Then on to Italy.

If all goes well we will get back to Antigua sometime in the summer of 1961. We will have until September of next year free since we both have sabbatical leaves for the next school year. We are trying to make the most of it.

With our very best regards to both of you,

Sincerely,



Verle L. Annis

Antigua G, 1 May 1960

Dear Verle:

Replying to your letter of 11 April, by far the best way to bring orchids down here is to bring them with you personally. In any case, what you need is the following: A Plant Inspection certificate from the appropriate authority in Los Angeles - call the County Agent to find out. With this certificate, the plants will be rec'd at the airport here and turned over to the Instituto Agropecuario Nacional, and after two or three days you can have someone claim them. The plants must come with no soil on the roots, and Cymbidiums will carry this way alright. No special packing needed, just have them in polyethylene to avoid drying out. Vinyl film (Goodyear) is what we use. You should consign the plants to someone here who can handle the formalities - it is a job and I don't know if you have an agent.

In short, I would advise that you get some Cymbidiums (which do well in Antigua) from Hugh Craggs when you get down here, unless you can bring the plants yourself. If you bring them with you, just have the Inspection Certificate from Los Angeles and leave them in the Aduana at La Aurora and come home and go to sleep and a day or two later we will help you get them out of hock. And I will help your boy pot them properly. He must have the right sort of material which is easy.

Helen joins in warmest regards to you both.

Sincerely,

Wilson Popenoe