Editors' Introduction

Architecture of Colonizers/ Architecture of Immigrants: Gothic in Latin America from the 16th to the 20th Centuries

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postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies (2015) 6, 243–257.
doi:10.1057/pmed.2015.23

The Late Gothic, by Paul B. Niell

The construction of Late Gothic architecture in the Americas dates almost to the moment of European arrival. In 1496, the brother of Christopher Columbus, Bartolomé, established the first Spanish colonial city in the hemisphere, Santo Domingo, on the southern shore of an island which the conquerors named Hispaniola or Española (now comprising Haiti and the Dominican Republic). In this colonial urban landscape, churches, convents, private houses and civic buildings co-opted elements of the Gothic style, such as quadripartite and stellar ribbed vaults,¹ tripartite windows, tracery and ogive arches.² Based on the colonial situation, including the Spanish encounter with Amerindians and desires to extract material wealth from the new lands, Gothic forms in early Santo Domingo provided a sense of cosmopolitan sophistication and religious sanctity on a frontier relatively unknown to Europeans. Such forms also assisted in the assertion of Spanish colonial rule, the presence of the Church and aristocratic claims to property and new wealth. In Spain,

1 In addition to a regular set of diagonal ribs, stellar vaults are composed of tiercerons and often include liernes as well. Tiercerons are ribs that spring from the corners of a bay and meet at some point on the ridge rib, but not at the center. Liernes link to tiercerons, thus producing even more complex vaulting patterns.

2 On the late Gothic in early Santo Domingo, see Angulo Iníguez (1945, 79–120).

it could be said that Gothic was the inheritance, refinement and innovation of medieval forms in use for centuries on the peninsula and abroad, and was at the time of Columbus' fateful journey in 1492 a visual idiom strongly favored at the court of Spanish Queen Isabella I. In the early days of Spanish conquest in the Caribbean and on the American mainland, Gothic forms came into frequent use, often synthesized with Italian classicism and Islamic styles in Spain.

After the Spanish conquest of the mainland in the 1520s, the Franciscan, Dominican and Augustinian friars carried Gothic forms inland and by the mid-sixteenth century had erected dozens of conversion centers in the Viceroyalty of New Spain (see Angulo Iníguez, 1945; Kubler, 1948; Kubler and Soria, 1959; Toussaint, 1967). These complexes frequently included open chapels or *capillas de indios* (Indian chapels), such as those at the convents of Coixtlahuaca, Cempoala, Cuernavaca and Teposcolula, all of which contain stellar rib vaulting. Mendicant complexes incorporated single-nave churches, which typically appropriated a variety of Gothic elements. In many of these structures, multiple types of rib vaulting can be found in portions or throughout the choir and nave. The stellar rib vaults in the apse of the Dominican church of Oaxtepec, for example, and at the Franciscan church of Huejotzingo, both in Mexico, attest to the ambitions of the clergy. In South America, Gothic rib vaulting and motifs are found in the mendicant churches of San Agustín in Quito, Ecuador and in Peru at the Church of Santo Domingo in Lima, San Agustín in Saña and at Guadalupe (Wethey, 1949; Bayón and Marx, 1992; Rodríguez-Camilloni, 2006, 2709–2725). Gothic elements legitimated mendicant church complexes through stonework, technology and grandeur, and functioned, in part, to impress Amerindian converts. The reception of stone vaulting by indigenous people was recorded by friar Gerónimo de Mendieta (1525–1604) in his *Historia eclesiástica indiana*, written in New Spain in 1596:

Lo que ellos no habían alcanzado y tuvieron en mucho cuando lo vieron, fué hacer bóvedas, y cuando se hizo la primera (que fué la capilla de la iglesia vieja de S. Francisco de México, por mano de un cantero de Castilla), maravilláronse mucho los indios en ver cosa de bóveda, y no podían creer sino que al quitar de los andamios y cimbra [cimbria], todo había de venir abajo. Y por esto cuando se ovieron de quitar los andamios, ninguno de ellos osaba andar por debajo. Mas visto que quedaba firme la bóveda, luego perdieron el miedo.

[What they had not experienced and did not hold in high regard when they saw it, was the making of vaults, and when the first one was made (which was the chapel of the old church of San Francisco de México, built by a stonecutter from Castile), the Indians marveled in seeing a thing vaulted, and they could not believe that when the scaffolding and centering were removed that the whole thing would not come down. And so when it was resolved to remove the scaffolding, none of them dared to walk underneath. But when they saw that the vault stayed in place, they lost their fear.

(Mendieta, [1596] 1945, III, 61, trans. ours)]

The highest levels of Catholic clergy in colonial Latin America also favored incorporating Gothic rib vaults into a number of cathedral projects. As powerful bishops brought mendicant convents under episcopal authority, the construction of rib vaults in cathedrals took on a new symbolic cast, as a statement of the power and extent of episcopal jurisdiction. Like some single-nave churches in colonial Latin America, cathedrals could begin with *artesonado* wooden ceilings that were then gradually replaced by vaulting, as in the Cathedral of Puebla. Due to the amount of time required for construction, most early colonial cathedrals evince multiple styles. To Gothic forms, Renaissance and Baroque were added, such as barrel and domical vaults, thereby evoking the grandeur of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Rome and the Vatican. The Mexico City cathedral (1573–1813), for example, reveals a tension in its early building fabric between Herrerian Renaissance in the central nave and Gothic star vaults over side chapels. Only in the Cathedral of Guadalajara in Mexico, according to our present knowledge, was there an attempt to employ Gothic vaulting throughout, with stellar rib vaults covering the entire nave and side aisles. Extensive rib vaulting systems are also found at the sixteenth-century Cathedral of Santo Domingo in the Caribbean and at the cathedrals of Lima and Cuzco in South America.

In order to account for the sources of early colonial architecture, both with respect to form and meaning, it is necessary to take into consideration late medieval/early modern Spanish architectural history and local conditions in the Americas. The tierceron-vaulted bay system in the Cathedral of Santo Domingo reveals a general kinship to contemporaneous works in Spain, such as the Cathedral of Seville, completed in 1507, and the Cathedral of Las Palmas in the Canary Islands (1500–1570), three places brought into systematic contact by Spanish colonialism and the transatlantic fleet system. Gothic vaulting in Santo Domingo symbolically extended the culture of the metropolis out to the frontier. Stone vaults lent an air of solemnity to the sacred space while also conveying a sense of permanence to the Spanish occupation. More specifically, the Gothic style carried a host of ideological messages tied to the history, politics, and economic development of ancient, medieval and early modern Iberia that assisted in the project of colonization.

From the twelfth to the early sixteenth century, the Gothic style proliferated in Spain.³ Churches and cathedrals employed ribbed vaults, compound piers, tracery, and heraldic devices in an age of contested political and territorial terrains. As Christian kings increasingly consolidated power over southern Islamic polities, Gothic became one of several unifying visual languages. By the late fifteenth century, Isabella I of Spain continued to look to northern Europe for its perceived stylistic modernity while also assimilating the Gothic style that already existed in Spain, often combining it with the classicism of Italy and Islamic forms of Iberian provenance. This complex artistic milieu offered the Spanish monarchs and elite clergy a means of asserting royal power and presence, ensuring continuity of the

3 The Gothic style in Spain included quadripartite ribbed vaulting, compound piers, tripartite windows and flying buttresses, as in the cathedrals at Burgos, Leon and Toledo (all begun in the thirteenth century). The late fourteenth- to sixteenth-century cathedral of Pamplona employed star vaulting. Similar vaults were constructed in the late Gothic period in the cathedrals of Palencia, Seville, Burgos, Murcia and many others (see Torres Balbás, 1952; Chueca Goitia, 1965).

royal line, establishing Christianity as the kingdom's faith and exercising authority over recalcitrant nobles.

In late medieval Iberia, stylistic plurality was everywhere in evidence. Succession of styles marked efforts to mine the past in order to reinforce myriad agendas of the present. The Peninsula contained an accumulation of visual styles from Roman, Visigothic, Islamic, Jewish and Christian civilizations. Late Gothic style in the era of the Catholic kings, Ferdinand and Isabella, as Jonathan Brown points out, was a multifaceted and multivalent phenomenon made at 'an elastic moment' when 'traditional and innovative, native and imported' artistic forms comingled producing a visual heterogeneity (Brown, 1991, 41–49). As the sixteenth century dawned, classical revivalist styles became common; this included an ornamentally charged style (previously referred to as Plateresque, named for the surface ornamentation favored by the silversmith, *el platero*), and more severe forms, sometimes referred to as *a la romana*, that is, in the Roman or Renaissance manner. This classicizing artistic expression dominates the buildings constructed for the Spanish King Philip II in the later sixteenth century by the celebrated Spanish architect Juan de Herrera (1530–1597).

When Europeans invaded the Americas, beginning with Columbus' arrival in 1492, the Gothic was foregrounded in the colonial project along with classicism and Ibero-Islamic forms. The deployment of this diverse artistic repertoire was caused by several factors arising from the colonial situation, chief of which involved matters of location and availability of materials. While some consistency is found with certain strategies of colonization, Spanish claims in the Americas operated in multiple environments, among varying Amerindian populations and with different conquistador histories, all of which impacted stylistic choices in one way or another. As some of the essays in this volume demonstrate, the selection of Late Gothic forms in the early Spanish colonial Americas could result from deliberate choices in a field of alternative architectural styles and construction strategies based on European and/or Amerindian building technology. Gothic was eventually followed by later styles, but in some areas it was re-appropriated in the seventeenth century for technical reasons (see in this volume H. Rodríguez-Camilloni's essay).

Late Gothic ecclesiastic, civic and residential architecture in Latin America is still a wide-open topic for research. How builders and architects of early projects acquired architectural knowledge and familiarity with European ideas could stand further investigation. The training of Amerindians to build Gothic structures is particularly understudied, as is their reception of these works. Finally, the geographic distribution of Late Gothic in Latin America remains unmapped, especially the frequency of Gothic forms in rural environments.

As with later styles in colonial Latin America, the dialectic between imperial and local meaning remains opaque with respect to Late Gothic works. To what extent did a given style signify a proto-national and/or imperial Spanish identity in the early decades of New World colonization? How were such forms

understood by European travelers to and from the Americas? To what extent did Gothic forms signify a space outside the monarchical orbit when these were taken up by the mendicants when building their conversion centers? There is still much to learn about how style itself was perceived in this early period. And what about later? Did Gothic forms continue to be relevant and meaningful to Latin American society alongside Renaissance, Baroque and Rococo successions? One thing appears clear, and that is that Late Gothic enjoyed a much different life in the Americas than it did in Europe.

The Gothic Revival, by Richard Sundt

Late Gothic forms in Latin America, which nearly from the start had been employed in conjunction with those based on classical traditions – Renaissance at first and then Baroque – had by the middle of the seventeenth century lost favor in the New World. During this same time in Europe, Baroque was in full swing but the Gothic style nevertheless persisted in some quarters, particularly in England. The term Gothic Survival has been used to describe this architectural phenomenon (Clark, 1929, 1–24; Lewis, 2002, 10–12).⁴ If Gothic never truly died out in the Old World, there can be no question that during the Romantic era (c. 1750–1850) this medieval style enjoyed a vigorous revival, with the first tentative steps taken in England in the early eighteenth century (Brooks, 1999, 51–104). By the middle of the following century, the Gothic Revival had reached maturity and was popularly used throughout Europe, especially for ecclesiastical architecture.

The rehabilitation of Gothic had many causes besides Romanticism's nostalgia for the past and fascination with ruins and decay, which sadly was the state of many structures dating to the Middle Ages. Interest in Gothic was also driven by other cultural forces that emerged during the course of the nineteenth century. In England, the Oxford Movement, launched in 1833 by prominent Anglican theologians, sought to defend the Church of England as a divine institution by stressing its Catholic, pre-Reformation heritage. Central among the issues for which Oxford divines argued in their tracts were the doctrine of apostolic succession, Christ's real presence in the Eucharist and the centrality of this sacrament in worship (Nockles, 1994, 146–227). Through the Cambridge Camden Society, founded in 1839 and later renamed the Ecclesiological Society (1846), this body – composed largely of sympathizers with the Oxford Movement – found in Britain's medieval churches the perfect model for the construction of new houses of worship (White, 1962, Chapters 2–4, 7). By making the sanctuary narrower and lower than the nave, in accordance with medieval practice, ecclesiologists felt that such a division of space and form would serve to emphasize the sacredness of the area reserved for the celebration of the Eucharist (Symondson, 1995, esp. 192, 196–198; Yates, 2000, 127–143, 150–174).

4 Brooks (1999, 23–27) cautions against applying the term 'survival' too generally.

Germany was swept into the Gothic movement at a slightly later date. Initially, attraction to the style centered on its formal characteristics. These were commented upon by the celebrated poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) in his 1772 essay concerning Strasbourg cathedral's façade and its presumed architect, Erwin von Steinbach. In *Von deutscher Baukunst*, Goethe marveled at the energy of Gothic forms and their power to move the 'rugged German soul' (Germann, 1978, 89; Lewis, 2002, 61–63). But in contrast to England, Gothic in the German-speaking sphere would eventually take on a more secular and political tone. With Napoleon's defeat in 1814, which opened the door to German liberation, plans were set to complete the High Gothic cathedral of Cologne, whose construction, begun in 1248, had not advanced much beyond the chevet, save for a portion of the west front (Lewis, 2002, 67–76).

The project to finish the entire structure was suggested by the historian Joseph von Görres (1776–1848) as a way of celebrating the identity and unity of the German nation (Lewis, 1993, 36–45, and 2002, 67–74; Germann, 1978, 81–97). Owing to Cologne's enormous scale, superb engineering, highly refined architectural detailing and the decades-long campaign to complete it, it is not surprising, as Lewis points out, that this great monument 'dominated the course of the German Gothic Revival' (Lewis, 2002, 76). This is most clearly reflected in such important and high profile ecclesiastical edifices as the Votivkirche in Vienna by Heinrich von Ferstel (1828–1883) and the cathedral at Linz (Austria) by Vincenz Statz (1840–1898) (Germann, 1978, 141, 149, and Lewis, 2002, 131). Both architects hewed closely to High Gothic principles of design and structure. By the later nineteenth century, however, thirteenth-century orthodoxy was challenged by numerous architects, including Friedrich von Schmidt (1825–1891), who, like Statz, had earlier been associated with the Cologne building lodge (Lewis, 1993, 114, 128–130). Schmidt's design for the church Maria vom Siege, erected in Vienna between 1864 and 1875, is in the shape of a twin-towered octagon capped by an imposing dome. However incongruous for a Gothic-styled edifice, the dome nevertheless enjoyed considerable vogue not only in German-speaking regions but also in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In France, more than in Germany itself, 'the cathedral – both as a symbol and a storehouse of forms – came to play a central role in the French revival' (Lewis, 2002, 102). Both the High Gothic style, as exemplified in the Chartres-Reims-Amiens triumvirate, and the Early Gothic of the twelfth century, as in Noyon and Paris, served as sources of inspiration. One of the earliest Neo-Gothic churches is Ste.-Clotilde in Paris. It was designed around 1838 by Franz Christian Gau (1790–1854), a German architect educated in France, and completed in 1857 under the direction of a Frenchman, Théodore Ballu (1817–1885) (Germann, 1978, 137, 142; Lewis, 2002, 101–102). The façade's composition owes a great deal to Reims, but the rest of the church, both internally and externally, takes its cue from Amiens (albeit in simplified form). The High Gothic and Early Gothic were subtly melded by Jean-Baptiste-Antoine Lassus (1802–1857) in his design

for the church of St Jean-Baptiste (1854–1859) in Paris' Parc Bellville *quartier* (see Germann, 1978, 141–142, 145). Even Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc (1814–1879), whose admiration for the High Gothic of Amiens knew no bounds, turned to Parisian forms of Early Gothic for some of his churches, such as St-Martin (1865–1867) at Aillant-sur-Tholon (Germann, 1978, 238–239).

In contrast to Germany, and to a greater degree in France, it was not the large cathedrals but the smaller and simpler parish churches that played a formative role in creating England's version of the Gothic Revival (Lewis, 2002, 102). Judging from results, this proved in the long run not a defect but a virtue because it allowed innovation. For one thing, it released architects from the pressure of having to design according to a specially sanctioned medieval canon. And second, this freedom suited the Church of England as it undertook to disseminate Christianity throughout the British Empire. Anglican evangelization required edifices suitable to warmer climes and constructed of locally available materials and/or familiar to indigenous builders. Such circumstances demanded of English architects greater flexibility in matters of design. Their aim was not reviving the purity of medieval Gothic, but rather making it a starting point for a Gothic architecture capable of responding to the needs of the Anglican Church in the nineteenth century both at home and abroad (Brooks, 1999, 348). This orientation and use of the past helped secure for England a position of leadership in the Gothic Revival that by the early 1840s was acknowledged throughout Europe (Brooks, 1999, 266). More than any other country, England had developed, as Lewis rightly notes, a 'healthy Gothic Revival,' a movement that 'permit[s] the style to evolve further, bending to the demands placed upon it and making use of the means available' (Lewis, 2002, 108).

England was chiefly responsible for spreading Neo-Gothic beyond Europe, but the country's reputation as the style's creative center was not itself the contributing factor. As increasing numbers of British subjects left their homes to establish new ones in the far-flung lands of the Empire, it was necessary for the various Christian bodies, both Protestant and Catholic, to provide their overseas adherents with suitable houses of worship, as well as full ministerial support. Colonization also created the opportunity for evangelizing the vast numbers of indigenous people who had now come under British rule. Missionary societies representing the principal denominations undertook the task of conversion, and that of course meant building churches for their new followers. The intention of missionaries was in most cases to erect Western-style edifices for their new flocks, and by the 1840s the churches they constructed were invariably in the Gothic idiom (Sundt, 2010, Chapters 1, 3, 4).

The most recent surveys of Gothic Revival track the spread of the movement over an impressive expanse of the world's surface, one that covers both the northern and southern hemispheres: Canada and the United States, Australia and New Zealand, parts of Africa, Asia, and even such remote outposts as the island of Tristan da Cunha, a British possession in the south Atlantic (Brooks, 1999, 6,

282–288, 375–379; Lewis, 2002, 93, 106–107). The only large territory not included in any of the recent and earlier studies are the countries lying south of the United States border, countries which are either Spanish- or Portuguese-speaking and not colonized by Britain.⁵

5 For completeness' sake, three other regions with Gothic Revival buildings are Polynesia (Küchler and Were, 2005, 40, 135); Melanesia (Anonymous, 2010); and the Caribbean (Mann, 2010).

Yet, in Mexico, Central America and South America, there is a substantial corpus of Neo-Gothic buildings; most are churches, but there are also civic structures, schools, residences and commemorative monuments. To date, this body of architecture has remained practically unknown both to scholars and the public at large. This is not surprising since Latin Americans themselves have only recently initiated the systematic investigation of their own Gothic Revival architecture. Moreover, only a very small portion of this research has been published so far, and most of it is in Spanish. This collection of essays in English, some new and others revised versions of papers delivered at the Society of Architectural Historians conference held in Chicago in 2010, is intended, therefore, as a first step in bringing the world's attention to the existence of Neo-Gothic in Latin America.

6 The chapel is treated in this volume by F. Corti, and pictured in Figure 1 of his article.

What will be surprising to most, besides discovering Neo-Gothic where none was presumed to exist, is how early the style was introduced into Latin America relative to its beginning in the United States and in the Anglophone colonies. Based on current research, the first Gothic Revival building in the Latin world was the funerary chapel designed in 1833 for the Protestant cemetery in Buenos Aires, and now demolished. However modest as a piece of architecture, this boxy edifice (known through an 1841 lithograph)⁶ shows that while the implantation of Gothic Revival in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking world lagged behind the United States and Canada by some half a century or so (Pierson, 1978, 113–134; Coffman, 2008, 8–14; and personal communication, 4 July 2011), it was contemporary with its first manifestation in Australia, around 1834 (Andrews, 2001, 32–34), and eight years earlier than in New Zealand, which did not acquire its first Neo-Gothic structure until 1841 (Stacpoole, 1976, 32–34).

Unlike Europe, where the medieval past provided the source for the Continent's revival of Gothic, Latin America's revival did not reach back to its own Gothic heritage; in other words, it did not build on the architectural achievements discussed and analyzed in the first set of essays in this special issue. Latin Gothic Revival is, instead, a European import. If the first ventures in Neo-Gothic occurred in what constitutes Argentina today, this can be easily accounted for by the country's idiosyncratic political and cultural situation within Hispanic America. Until the middle of the eighteenth century, Buenos Aires and its surrounding region lacked the importance and wealth that Peru and Mexico had enjoyed for several generations following colonization. As a result, the southern part of South America did not possess an architectural patrimony of similar richness, nor one early enough for architects to have incorporated Late Gothic elements in their own formulations of Neo-Gothic.

Given this situation in the Buenos Aires region, but, on the other hand, the presence of about 7000 British residents there by the late 1820s, it was only

natural for this community to seek out English or Scottish architects to design its churches (Corti and Manzi, 2001, 289). When the British community in 1833 erected its third ecclesiastical building in Argentina, the aforementioned cemetery chapel, it was executed in a form that by then was becoming fashionable throughout Britain for much ecclesiastical architecture. Although simple and of modest proportions, this edifice would have been in a style familiar to most British people living in or planning to settle in Argentina.⁷

In Mexico, although rich in Late Gothic monuments, the Gothic Revival also drew inspiration directly from Europe. The patrons of the first Neo-Gothic churches were confessionally Catholic and culturally Hispanic or Italian. Mexican preference for French and Italian Gothic was due to the influence of Javier Cavallari (1811–1864), an Italian architect and professor from the University of Palermo (Revilla, 1908, 396, 400–409). He arrived in Mexico in 1856 armed with books and other materials to form a library and ‘gallery’ of architecture for Mexico City’s San Carlos Academy. Besides directing its School of Civil Engineering and Architecture, Cavallari devised its curriculum. The required readings were heavily centered on French history and theory and included the works of Viollet-le-Duc among other luminaries of the period. As a result, any of the Academy’s graduates were favorably disposed to French Gothic and they did not hesitate applying selected features of High Gothic decoration and structure to their church designs.

The rise of Neo-Gothic in Latin America and the particular direction it took in Mexico and Argentina are considered in the last three essays of this volume. Readers should avoid concluding that Neo-Gothic was limited to just these two countries, or that it was not a continent-wide phenomenon. A survey using internet sources and printed materials shows that the Gothic Revival movement reached most if not all countries in Latin America. Unfortunately, for the larger portion of this region, scholarship on the monuments seems to be lacking or is not readily accessible, hence the limited territory covered by the essays in the present volume.⁸ If nothing else, this situation should encourage scholars and students to investigate a topic in architectural history in which it is still possible to conduct pioneering research, both in the field and in archives, and also by consulting national inventories of historic buildings. A cursory survey of three monuments from other countries not included in this essay collection hints at the riches to be found and the variety that exists within Latin Neo-Gothic.

Brazil

The Cathedral of São Paulo (1913–1967) is impressive for its enormous scale (111 meters long) and the mighty dome crowning its crossing (Figure 1). Internally the building is spatially exhilarating and complex due to the dome and the employment of tall side aisles (Anonymous, 2011d). The cathedral was designed

⁷ Although during the eighteenth century the number of Gothic Revival churches were still few in number (Brooks, 1999, 101–104), this changed by the early nineteenth century. Of the 214 churches built between 1818 and 1833 through the Church Building Act (1818), 174 were ‘in a style then described as Gothic Most of them had pointed arches, and the pointed arch is, at this period, the only workable distinction between Gothic and the other styles’ (Clark, 1929, 116–117). The cemetery chapel was of this simple sort, as were the early churches in the United States and Canada, none of which would have been to the liking of A.W.N. Pugin, the chief spokesman and critic of the Gothic Revival. It was not until the mid 1830s that the first serious expressions of Gothic began to emerge (see Stanton, 1968, 55; Brooks, 1999,

229–232;
Andrews, 2001, 6;
Coffman, 2008,
28).

8 For the few books
and articles that
have appeared
thus far on Latin
Neo-Gothic,
consult the essays
of F. Corti,
J. Buján and
L. Santa Ana in
this volume of
postmedieval.

Figure 1: Cathedral of São Paulo, Brazil. View of the façade, nave and dome.
Source: Morio.

by Maximilian Emil Hehl (1861–1916), a German engineer and architect who immigrated to Brazil in 1888 (Anonymous, 2011b). Hehl's nationality largely accounts for São Paulo's design. The use of a dome at the crossing enjoyed considerable favor in German-speaking regions as, for example, in the aforementioned Maria vom Siege church in Vienna. In choosing tall side aisles, the architect's

Figure 2: San Marcos Cathedral, Arica, Chile. Exterior view of the facade and tower.

Source: Antonio Rea.

nationality again reveals itself. In the late Middle Ages, the hall elevation (nave and aisles of equal height) was the preferred scheme in German lands for most ecclesiastical architecture (see Lewis, 2002, 132–133, 146–149).

Chile

The Cathedral of San Marcos, at Arica, in northern Chile, is vastly smaller than the Brazilian cathedral and more conventional in plan, essentially a cruciform basilica. This edifice is unusual in that it is of iron construction (Figure 2). The parts were fabricated in 1871 in Gustave Eiffel's workshop near Paris, shipped to Peru and then assembled over the ruins of Arica's original colonial church, which had been devastated by an earthquake in 1868 (Loyrette, 1985, 57). The actual installation of the Eiffel-fabricated edifice took place in 1876 (Anonymous, 2011a).

Colombia

In southwestern Colombia, near Ipiales, a church dedicated to Our Lady of Las Lajas commemorates the spot where an apparition of the Virgin Mary

Figure 3: Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Las Lajas, Colombia. Oblique view of the façade, tower and nave.

Source: Patricia A. Wand.

occurred in the eighteenth century. The present structure (1916–1952) is stunningly sited within a deep gorge cut by a rushing river below (Chamorro Guerrero, 1996; Estarita, 2008). The church itself is raised above the waters by a multistoried-base fifty meters tall (Figure 3). Externally, panels of blind tracery enliven the walls directly above the building's clerestory and aisle windows (Anonymous, 2011c). This surface decoration, together with the traceried fenestration and delicate pinnacles of the flying buttresses, endows the structure with a magical aura, a look that is more suggestive of a grand and precious reliquary than of a church edifice. Internally, the nave and sanctuary are heavily ornamented, and this includes employment of a full complement of patterned rib vaults, not unlike those used in Latin American churches during the colonial period (see the essay in this volume by H. Rodríguez-Camilloni). The sources of inspiration at Las Lajas are primarily Tuscan, although the composition of the tower is reminiscent of the early nineteenth-century Torre Palagi at Desio, in Lombardy.

When this brief mention of just three churches within a region covering an immense area of South America is paired with the longer essays in this anthology, there can be no doubt that the Latin American response to the

Gothic Revival was extremely varied; and while buildings in this style are not as ubiquitous as in the English-speaking world and in Continental Europe, they are not an uncommon feature of the architectural landscape of Spanish and Portuguese America.

Considering that the six essays in this volume represent one of the first attempts to present an overview of the Gothic Revival in Latin America, which until now has been a virtually unknown chapter in the history of architecture, it is obvious that a great deal more research still needs to be done on this topic, and that it should cover all the lands stretching from Mexico down to the cone of South America. Only then will scholars be in a position to begin a full assessment of Latin America's contribution to the worldwide revival of Gothic during the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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