

access. It brings together in a somewhat chaotic fashion a broad spectrum of Chicano literature and writers.

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Portuguese Plain Architecture: Between Spices and Diamonds, 1521-1706. By GEORGE KUBLER. Middletown, Connecticut, 1972. Wesleyan University Press. Illustrations. Figures. Bibliography. Index. Pp. xvi, 315. Cloth. \$25.00.

“Estilo chao” is translated by the author as “plain architecture,” designating a style developed when finances were at low ebb, around 1530. The tone is set in the first chapter “Cellular Compositions”: “At this time Portuguese architects . . . became fascinated with the geometric and volumetric relations of inside to outside, and thereby with the spatial possibilities of the wall itself, as membrane, as vessel or passage, as barrier, as screen, and in general as an obstacle for limit to be transformed” (p. 7).

Some contradictions appear: “The cloister at Tomar is a complicated design but the complication is simple, consisting always of paired themes and contrasts.” Three paragraphs later: “The cloister of Tomar is much more complicated than any Italian design of the same century. The rhythms are never simple or uniform” (pp. 20-21).

The chapter ends: “The delight of the eye is further enhanced by the prismatic play of light in the wall masses, by an appeal to tactile apprehension among shapes skillfully reduced to suggestions of possible motion within the boundaries of these sunny, honey-colored, and smooth grained surfaced. Touch and sight, meeting, constantly reinforce each other’s evidence. Visual resonance describes the effect of these forms: the intervals among planes are both temporal and physical” (p. 25).

Chapter Two discusses the hall church, and Chapter Three, Palladian reduction and derivations, where Islamic antecedents and other non-Palladian features are the more prominent in many examples. Chapter Four reiterates the observation, long clear to those acquainted with Latin American colonial architecture, that the Jesuits had no prescribed style. Subsequent chapters take up Spanish and Northern models, and buildings “resembling palaces or hotels.” Chapters Nine and Ten present conditions after the Restoration (1640), and the author concludes: “Another kind of confusion, this time between historical dogma and the reality of architectural history . . . has prevented

people from seeing the evidence for the existence of a Portuguese national expression" (p. 171). What people?—A similar amalgamation of outside influences took place in colonial Latin America, but the author has repeatedly expressed doubt that it achieved a similar result.

Two rather irrelevant chapters, Six and Seven, remain to be mentioned. One tells about an Austrian prince in Lisbon and Brussels—a purely historical recitation, apparently a byproduct of research, as is also "The Joyeuse Entrée (of Philip III of Spain) at Lisbon in 1619." The latter presents elaborate triumphal arches—disparate from the plain style—which were published on that occasion.

Often the text remains remote from the illustrations. In discarding old categories, the author sometimes contrives new ones, into which his subjects do not always fit comfortably. The scholarly apparatus will overwhelm, even frustrate readers. To 97 pages of text, 432 footnotes of source works are appended. The bibliography contains 332 more entries, many of peripheral interest. The subtitle reads as if borrowed from Sacheverell Sitwell, but that connoisseur and traveler has an intriguing spiced and jeweled English style. Here the writing is dense. Latin, Portuguese, Spanish, French and German technical terms abound and quotes are often without translation.

Of the 126 photographs, mostly from standard undated sources, about a dozen by the author bear recent dates. This reviewer, in his book on the art of the Americas and the Philippines, utilized photographs dated over a span of more than seven decades, to offer historical documentation of how much the buildings have since been cemented, the sculpture and painting "restored." It is gratifying to think that this device may now be more widely used.

More than 50 Portuguese monuments are catalogued here, but there is *no map*—a rare instance that an expensive, prestigious volume by a professional art historian dispenses with this elementary assistance to the reader.

A generous grant from the Gulbenkian Foundation, Lisbon, is acknowledged. Understandably a Portuguese subject would receive preferential consideration. But much of the spices and all the diamonds came from Brazil. There is not one paragraph nor photograph to indicate how this "plain style" traveled across space and time to those colonial churches of Minas Gerais which offer a revealing comparison. That would have constituted an original contribution.

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