ROUNDTABLE

Race and the Built Environment in the Iberian World, ca. 1400–1800

Editor's Introduction: Epistemologies of Race and Architecture in the Iberian World

In his meditations about Peruvian architecture a century after that country's independence, the twentieth-century architect, urbanist, critic, and historian Emilio Harth-Terré intertwined notions of identity, modernism, and—unlike most of his contemporaries—race.[1] Harth-Terré penned his words before postcolonial theory emerged. Since then, there have been efforts to decenter the field, although amid abiding epistemological challenges. Most of the architectural histories of the American, Asian, African, and European territories of the Iberian world in the period around 1400 to 1800 have centered on canonical architecture and buildings designed by perceived "white" European architects. The implementation of official languages, urban design regulations, and cartography—or the way the world was represented and understood—consistently tried to efface both racial and religious minorities.[2] Blood purity statutes established segregation between Old Christians and New Christians, the latter being former Jewish or Muslim people forcibly converted to Catholicism. These statutes had a tremendous impact on regulations across the Iberian world.[3] Contributors to this roundtable demonstrate that a nuanced analysis of race and architecture in this period in the Iberian world must also encompass identity, religion, and culture, as distinctions were not always grounded in skin color.[4]

The Iberian world was composed of vast, contrasting geographies and regions, and steeply hierarchical societies; the building trades were indeed hierarchical social structures as well. Legislation that required the segregation of European populations from "other" residents in cities and that prohibited racial and religious minorities from partaking in the building trades across many locales in the Iberian world had important reverberations for these groups, but also projected imperial ambitions. Recent scholarship on Mexico City and Quito, for example, has demonstrated that Amerindians and their descendants actively participated in and sometimes dominated the building trades.[5] Similarly, contributors to this roundtable also show that prevailing views on the lack of primary sources about the role played by racial and religious minorities in the building trade have been overestimated. Nevertheless, the task ahead is not without difficulties, as the names of Indigenous, Black, and Brown architects, master masons, carpenters, and stonemasons were purposely silenced in the records.[6]

The greater challenge, however, is epistemological, as the social histories of architecture have privileged a biographical model and the artist–patron relationship, and above all have insisted on placing Europe as the *umbilicus mundi* of architectural production. With the global turn, the study of the circulations of architectural knowledge, or how designs traveled, has become a popular analytical lens. At the same time, this model risks perpetuating the notion of "expansion" by focusing on how so-called European images and designs reached "peripheral regions" of the world. Plenty of evidence challenges this model of studying architecture in a connected world. The architecture of many cities across the former Spanish and Portuguese Empires, from the seventeenth century, sometimes earlier, developed in parallel ways.[7] Thus, we need to rethink how we engage with the many regions with rich architectural cultures that preceded the arrival of the Portuguese and Spanish in colonial settings, which also means reconsidering existing traditions in the Iberian Peninsula. Complex architectural traditions preceded European contact, and sophisticated architectural cultures thrived beyond the feeble boundaries of the Iberian world. Furthermore, we need to dispel the notion that only some places, some people (those of particular descent, lineage, identity, or religious background), certain forms of built architecture, and certain kinds of generated knowledge are worth studying.

This roundtable presents eleven essays, organized in roughly chronological order, that engage with existing debates and challenge long-held myths. Barbara E. Mundy demonstrates that imperial ideals of urban spatial

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segregation did not correspond to the lived realities of colonial Mexico City, Lima, and Manila. Other contributors address the memorialization of architectural *spolia* in Oaxacan churches and period writings of Islamic and Visayan architecture in postconquest Spain and the Philippines (Pilar Regueiro Suárez and Juan Luis Burke, Antonio Urquízar-Herrera, Amy Y.T. Chang). Scholars in this roundtable also study how architects, engineers, and patrons of African and Indigenous descent emerged in Goa, Brazil, and Havana (Sidh Losa Mendiratta, Miguel A. Valerio, Rosalía Oliva Suárez and Karen Mahé Lugo Romera, Alice Santiago Faria). Essays about the significant contributions of African and Indigenous builders, carpenters, and smelters and their descendants in Angola, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, and Lisbon showcase research methods for a social history of architecture that bring us closer to the realities of the built environment of the time (Sandra M. G. Pinto, Francisco Mamani-Fuentes, Crislayne Alfagali). Authors of this roundtable demonstrate that research on the intersections of race and architecture is not only pressing but can also fundamentally shift our understanding of how architecture emerged and functioned at the time.

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Notes

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Emilio Harth-Terré, *El indígena peruano en las bellas artes virreinales* (Lima: Editorial Garcilaso, 1960); Emilio Harth-Terré and Alberto Márquez Abanto, *El artesano negro en la arquitectura virreinal limeña* (Lima: Librería e Imprenta Gil, 1962).

2. Walter D. Mignolo and Arturo Escobar, eds., *Globalization and the Decolonial Option* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010).

3. See, among others, João Figueirôa-Rego, *A honra alheia por um fio: Os estatutos de limpeza de sangue no espaço de expressão ibérica, sécs. XVI–XVIII* (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2011); Mercedes García-Arenal and Felipe Pereda, eds., *De sangre y leche: Raza y religión en el mundo ibérico moderno* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2021).

4. Ananda Cohen-Aponte, "Making Race Visible in the Colonial Andes," in *Envisioning Others: Race, Color, and the Visual in Iberia and Latin America*, ed. Pamela Patton (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 187–212.

5. Susan E. Webster, *Quito, ciudad de maestros: Arquitectos, edificios y urbanismo en el largo siglo XVII* (Quito: Abyla Yala, 2012); Barbara E. Mundy, *The Death of Aztec Tenochtitlan, the Life of Mexico City* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015).

6. Abilio Ferreira, ed., *Tebas: Um negro arquiteto na São Paulo escravotra* (São Paulo: Instituto para o Desenho Avançado, 2018); Heta Pandit, *Hidden Hands: Master Builders of Goa* (Porvorim, Goa: Heritage Network, 2003).

7. Laura Fernández-González, *Philip II of Spain and the Architecture of Empire* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021).

Urban Fantasies of Racial Segregation in Spanish America and the Philippines

The Spanish Habsburgs centered political control in a vast network of cities and towns. In these places, they attempted to segregate residents of Spanish descent from others, be they Indigenous, Black, or Asian. Some scholars have focused on these policies as the primary mechanism through which racialized categories were created and enforced.[1] But was the racially segregated city a lived reality? And do such representations of cities as racially segregated simply reinforce a hegemonic discourse necessary to the empire? Mexico City, Lima, and Manila offer evidence that lived experience contradicted the Habsburg ideal.

Mexico City was the largest and most important American city for the Habsburgs; its sixteenth-century urban core was memorialized in the twentieth century. A schematic representation created in the 1930s retrospectively expresses the policy of separation between *pueblos de españoles* and *pueblos de indios* (Figure 1). The latter were to be populated exclusively by Indigenous peoples and represented politically by "Indian" town councils. People of European (particularly Spanish) descent were to reside in the *pueblos de españoles*, the town councils (*cabildos*) of which were staffed by "Spanish" men. When many of the *pueblos de indios* were called upon to represent themselves for the crown in the 1580s, they mapped their towns on idealized gridiron plans, depicting ordered urban spaces that conformed to Habsburg juridical discourse and ecclesiastical expectations.[2]

But a strict spatial segregation between *indios* and *españoles* was impossible in Mexico City, a place founded upon Aztec (or Mexica) Tenochtitlan. Throughout the sixteenth century, its Indigenous residents outnumbered Spaniards and others. By about 1540, the city had three *cabildos*, two of them representing Indigenous residents. San Juan Tenochtitlan and Santiago Tlatelolco married the names of the city's two pre-Hispanic polities with those of Christian saints, and their *cabildos* made decisions in the interests of Indigenous men and women in the postconquest city. Men and women of all classes and ethnicities moved freely through the urban sphere.

While Lima had been founded upon the lands of the Indigenous lord Taulichusco, its smaller population made it easier for the authorities to attempt racialized urban segregation. By 1571, Indigenous residents were corralled into a new urban neighborhood, Santiago del Cercado. With thirty-five blocks arranged around a large central plaza where a church stood, it housed approximately one thousand people. Some of the neighborhood's residents had long-term ties to the area, but others were brought to the city by Viceroy Toledo's *reducciones*, which forced Indigenous tributaries into new towns under religious supervision.[3]

memory. Thus, *spolia* were not merely reused construction materials; they were part of a long-term negotiation process, illustrating the role fulfilled by Indigenous builders as keepers of ancient cosmologies, interpreters, and intermediaries of new socioreligious realities in the face of a colonial order.

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Notes

1. Federico Fernández Christlieb and Angel Julián García Zambrano, *Territorialidad y paisaje en el altepetl del siglo XVI* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006).
2. Richard Hunter, "Land Use Change in New Spain: A Three-Dimensional Historical GIS Analysis," *Professional Geographer* 66, no. 2 (2013), 260–73.
3. Jamie E. Forde, "Broken Flowers: Christian *Spolia* in a Colonial Mixtec Household," *Colonial Latin American Review* 29, no. 2 (2020), 195–96.
4. Eleanor Wake, *Framing the Sacred: The Indian Churches of Early Colonial Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 150–51.
5. *Códice Zouche-Nuttall* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1992), fol. 21; Manuel A. Hermann Lejarazu, "The Divine Right to Hold Power in the Mixtec Capitals of Monte Negro and Tilantongo," in *Constructing Power and Place in Mesoamerica: Pre-Hispanic Paintings from Three Regions*, ed. Merideth Paxton and Leticia Staines Cicero (New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 2017), 125–41.
6. David W. Mixter and Edward R. Henry, "Introduction to Webs of Memory, Frames of Power: Collective Remembering in the Archaeological Record," *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 24, no. 1 (2017), 1–9.
7. Samuel Edgerton, *Theaters of Conversion: Religious Architecture and Indian Artisans in Colonial Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001), 7.

Asserting Caste: Santana and the Edifice of a Goan Christian Identity

Towering over the palm groves, the majestic church of St. Anne (1682–95) dwarfs the surrounding houses of the village of Talaulim in Tiswadi Island, Goa (Figure 5). In the chancel are three tombstones bearing coats of arms with skeletal motifs crowned by three-sided birettas resting on crossed keys. They belong to Goan Catholic priests, and the respective inscriptions include the sobriquet "Bragmane" (Brahman) after their names. Santana, as the church is known locally, has recently been described as the "first Goan church," but mid-twentieth-century Portuguese scholars called its architecture "Indo-Portuguese."[1] The nuance is significant, as that label fit into a broader narrative propagated by the Portuguese Estado Novo regime, portraying the colonial territory of Goa as a model of interreligious and interracial harmony hinging on the peaceful coexistence of Eastern and Western civilizations.[2] But why was such a monumental church built in the small village of Talaulim? The patronage of Francisco do Rego (1638–89), the priest who commissioned Santana, is key to understanding the context in which this building was erected.

During the mid-sixteenth century, as Jesuit missionaries worked to convert most of Tiswadi's population, they encountered "the greatest difficulty" in Talaulim, where the villagers "greeted and bade farewell" to the missionaries "by throwing stones."[3] Resistance to conversion was linked to the village's Brahman community, but despite this initial opposition, Christianity took root, and the parish church of Santana was rebuilt in 1577 on the site of a primitive church constructed a decade earlier.[4]

In the early seventeenth century, most rural parishes in Tiswadi Island, including Santana, were transferred to the care of Goan priests. This was the first step in a long path toward the empowerment of the Goan Indigenous clergy, who were trained in the colleges of Old Goa but were kept in subaltern positions by the Portuguese clergy.[5] One of the first Goan priests to challenge this racial prejudice was Matheus de Castro (1594–1679), who traveled to Rome and obtained commissions from the Vatican. Inspired by Castro's "Catholic Brahmanism" and anti-Jesuitism, other Goan priests began questioning their loyalties and asserting their caste.[6] Basing his main argument on the notion of a noble lineage through "purity of blood," Castro lashed out at both the mixed Portuguese born in India and the other Goan castes, particularly the Chardós.[7]

During the seventeenth century, many Goans abandoned Old Goa, migrating to the surrounding villages. Talaulim grew, becoming a hotbed of Catholic Brahmanism. Two of the first Goans to be knighted by the Portuguese crown, Pascoal de Frias (ca. 1630–ca. 1690) and Nicolau da Silva (fl. 1640–70), hailed from Talaulim, as did António João de Frias (1664–1721), a priest and author of a book that celebrated Catholic Brahmans.[8] Frias went on to build the church of Our Lady of Sorrows, 1699–ca. 1710, on the Island of Divar, apparently in emulation of Santana.

Do Rego, from the nearby village of Neura, was ordained a priest and continued his education in Lisbon, returning to Goa with the status of protonotary apostolic. He also defended his Brahman lineage in an unpublished, presumably lost work titled *Tratado apologetico*.[9] When do Rego became parish priest of Talaulim in 1682, he relied on the rural power base of Brahman parishioners to finance his ambitious architectural project.[10] Santana was built both in emulation of and in competition with the churches in Old Goa. Do Rego wanted to outdo the Jesuit churches in particular, as they were the major antagonists to the empowerment of the Catholic Brahman priests. The church's main façade boasts two lofty symmetrical towers, a prestigious parti reserved for the seats of dioceses of the Portuguese State of India until it was adopted by the Augustinian order in its mother church of Our Lady of Grace, 1598–ca. 1615. The nave is covered by a barrel vault with lunettes, a vault type first employed in India by the Discalced Carmelites

Figure 5 St. Anne, known as Santana, Talaulim, Tiswadi Island, Goa, India, 1682–95 (photo by Laura Fernández-González, 2019; published with permission).

in their mother church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, 1630–39. The internal elevations in the nave include Jesuit-influenced semicircular niches at the lower level and a "never-seen-before concept of moulding and ornament."[11]

In Santana, architecture condensed and projected Catholic Brahman aspirations, laying the foundations for the construction of a Goan Christian identity. During the eighteenth century, as the parishes of the Salsete and Bardês provinces fell into the hands of Goan priests, their churches were rebuilt or revamped, and the Goan landscape was thus transformed.

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Notes

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3. Gaspar Dias to the Jesuit Colleges of Lisbon and Évora, Goa, 30 Sept. 1567, in *Documenta indica*, vol. 7, ed. Joseph Wicki (Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1962), 301; Rodrigo Vicente to Claudio Acquaviva, Goa, 8 Nov. 1581, in *Documenta indica*, vol. 12, ed. Joseph Wicki (Rome: Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, 1972), 418–19.

4. Gaspar Dias to the Jesuit Colleges of Lisbon and Évora, 301.

5. Carlos M. Melo, *The Recruitment and Formation of the Native Clergy in India: 16th–19th Centuries* (Lisbon: Agencia Geral do Ultramar, 1955), 163–77.

6. Melo, 154–55, 168–72.

7. Ângela B. Xavier, "Purity of Blood and Caste: Identity Narratives among Early Modern Goan Elites," in *Race and Blood in the Iberian World*, ed. Max S. Hering Torres, María Elena Martínez, and David Nirenberg (Vienna: LIT Verlag, 2012), 125–49.

8. Francisco N. Xavier, *Nobiliarchia goana* (Nova Goa, 1862), 6; *Inventário dos livros de Matrícula dos Moradores da Casa Real*, vol. 1, *1641–1681* (Lisbon, 1911), 332.

9. Diogo B. Machado, *Bibliotheca lusitana*, vol. 2 (Coimbra: Atlântida Editora, 1966), 237.

10. José I. Gracias, "Legados e pensões a cargo das fábricas e confrarias de Goa," *O Oriente Portuguez* 10, nos. 3–4 (1913), 70–71.

11. Gomes, *Whitewash, Red Stone*, 145.