

*Die Iberische Halbinsel und Lateinamerika gelten nicht als Kernländer neugotischer Kirchenbaukunst. Dennoch überraschen sie mit einer vielfältigen Rezeption gotischer Architektur, und gerade auf dem südamerikanischen Kontinent erheben sich wohl mehr neugotische Sakralbauten des 19. bis 21. Jahrhunderts als irgendwo anders. Besonders bemerkenswert ist der vor allem in den letzten Jahrzehnten forcierte Neu- und Weiterbau dieser Monumente.*

*Die Autoren liefern Einblicke in eine von der Kritik weitgehend unbeachtete, aber dennoch extrem präzente Baukultur vom Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts bis heute.*

*Pese a que ni la Península Ibérica ni América Latina se consideren regiones centrales de la arquitectura sagrada neogótica, ambas sorprenden con una variada recepción de tal estilo. De hecho, el lugar donde existen más edificios religiosos de este tipo, de los siglos XIX al XXI, es Sudamérica, y resultan particularmente notables en las últimas décadas los esfuerzos de nueva construcción o de ampliación y mantenimiento de estos monumentos.*

*Los autores proporcionan información sobre una tradición de arquitectura apenas tratada por la crítica, pero profusamente usada desde finales del siglo XVIII hasta nuestros días.*

Borngässer/Klein (Hrsg./eds.) ■ Neugotik global – kolonial – postkolonial / Neogótico global – colonial – postcolonial

*Barbara Borngässer / Bruno Klein (Hrsg./eds.)*



**Neugotik global – kolonial – postkolonial**

*Gotisierende Sakralarchitektur auf der Iberischen Halbinsel und in Lateinamerika vom 19. bis zum 21. Jahrhundert*

**Neogótico global – colonial – postcolonial**

*Arquitectura sagrada gótica en la Península Ibérica y América Latina del siglo XIX al XXI*

IBEROAMERICANA  
VERVUERT



Barbara Borngässer und Bruno Klein (Hrsg.)

**Neugotik global – kolonial – postkolonial**

**Neogótico global – colonial – postcolonial**



# **ARS IBERICA ET AMERICANA**

Band / Vol. 21

Kunsthistorische Studien der Carl Justi-Vereinigung

Estudios de Historia del Arte de la Asociación Carl Justi

Herausgegeben / Editados  
in deren Auftrag von / por encargo de

Barbara Borngässer, Henrik Karge, Margit Kern, Bruno Klein,  
Martin Warnke

Barbara Borngässer und Bruno Klein (Hrsg.)

**Neugotik**  
**global – kolonial – postkolonial**  
Gotisierende Sakralarchitektur auf  
der Iberischen Halbinsel und in  
Lateinamerika vom 19. bis  
zum 21. Jahrhundert

**Neogótico**  
**global – colonial – postcolonial**  
Arquitectura sagrada neogótica en la  
Península Ibérica y América Latina  
del siglo XIX al XXI

VERVUERT • IBEROAMERICANA • 2020

Bibliografische Information der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek  
Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der Deutschen  
Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Daten sind im Internet über  
<http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

Alle Rechte vorbehalten / Reservados todos los derechos

© Vervuert Verlag 2020  
Elisabethenstr. 3-9, D-60594 Frankfurt am Main  
Tel.: +49 69 597 46 17  
Fax: +49 69 597 87 43  
[info@iberoamericanalibros.com](mailto:info@iberoamericanalibros.com)  
[www.iberoamericana-vervuert.es](http://www.iberoamericana-vervuert.es)

© Iberoamericana 2020  
Amor de Dios, 1, E-28014 Madrid  
Tel.: +34 91 429 35 22  
Fax: +34 91 429 53 97  
[info@iberoamericanalibros.com](mailto:info@iberoamericanalibros.com)  
[www.iberoamericana-vervuert.es](http://www.iberoamericana-vervuert.es)

ISBN 978-3-96456-893-9 (Vervuert)  
ISBN 978-84-9192-094-6 (Iberoamericana)

Umschlaggestaltung / Diseño de cubierta: #####

Umschlagbild / Ilustración de cubierta: #####

Satz / Maquetación: Dr. Rainer Ostermann

Gedruckt auf säure- und chlorfreiem, alterungsbeständigem Papier gemäß ISO-Norm 9706 /

Este libro está impreso íntegramente en papel ecológico sin cloro según ISO 9706

Gedruckt in Spanien / Impreso en España

## INHALT / ÍNDICE

Vorwort	7
<i>Barbara Borngässer / Bruno Klein</i> . . . . .	
Prólogo	9
<i>Barbara Borngässer / Bruno Klein</i> . . . . .	
Neugotische Architektur auf der Iberischen Halbinsel und in Lateinamerika	11
<i>Bruno Klein</i> . . . . .	
Farbtafeln / Láminas en color . . . . .	25
La arquitectura neogótica en la Península Ibérica y América Latina	49
<i>Bruno Klein</i> . . . . .	
James Murphy's <i>Batalha Album</i> : A Reference in Neo-Gothic Architecture and in the Restoration of Gothic Buildings in Portugal	61
<i>Maria João Baptista Neto</i> . . . . .	
Las interpretaciones del gótico en la obra del arquitecto Josep Vilaseca, entre lo arqueologista y lo victoriano	77
<i>Joan Molet i Petit</i> . . . . .	
Revisitar el gótico en la arquitectura civil barcelonesa de finales del siglo XIX. El caso del arquitecto José Doménech y Estapá (1858–1917)	93
<i>Sergio Fuentes Milà</i> . . . . .	
Neo-Gothic Controversial Cases in Catalonia in the Nineteenth Century	109
<i>Judith Urbano</i> . . . . .	

Vicente Lampérez y Romea – Gotik als Idealbild und historisches Phänomen. Die Restaurierungen der Kathedrale von Burgos und die neue Westfassade der Kathedrale von Cuenca <i>Henrik Karge</i> . . . . .	123
Die Almudena-Kathedrale zu Madrid – Abbild funktionaler und historischer Diversität? <i>Bettina Marten</i> . . . . .	141
The Religious Orders and the Expansion of Neo-Gothic Architecture in Latin America <i>Martín Checa-Artasu</i> . . . . .	159
El templo de la Merced de San José de Costa Rica: punto de partida para estudiar los primeros templos decimonónicos y su evolución neogóticos en Centroamérica <i>Maria Aranda Alonso</i> . . . . .	171
Una reinterpretación mexicana del neogótico: la torre parroquial de San Miguel de Allende, Guanajuato <i>Martín Checa-Artasu</i> . . . . .	185
Lokale Identitätskonstruktionen und globale Netzwerke – Gotikrezeption an Kirchen und Postgebäuden im frühen 20. Jahrhundert in Mexiko <i>Margit Kern</i> . . . . .	199
Neogótico in Sudamérica, a ejemplo de Argentina <i>Pablo de la Riestra</i> . . . . .	213
A construção da Catedral da Sé, São Paulo, 1913–1954 <i>Paula Vermeersch</i> . . . . .	219
Modernidad gótica. La arquitectura sacra de Paul Linder entre Weimar y Lima <i>Joaquín Medina Warmburg</i> . . . . .	227
Simon Gramlich and the Neo-Gothic Churches in Southern Brazil <i>Thayse Fagundes e Braga</i> . . . . .	243
Neugotik und Moderne im Süden Brasiliens: Die Kirchenbauten Gottfried Böhms <i>Barbara Borngässer</i> . . . . .	251
Autorinnen und Autoren . . . . .	263

# RELIGIOUS ORDERS AND THE EXPANSION OF NEO-GOTHIC ARCHITECTURE IN LATIN AMERICA<sup>1</sup>

*Martín Checa-Artasu*

## *Neo-Gothic and the Catholic Church in Latin America*

There is a close, and probably overlooked relationship, between the development of neoGothic architecture and the evolution of the Catholic Church in Latin America in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, when this architectural style peaked. Neo-Gothic was one of many historicisms born in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and it became the style of choice for many architects because of personal taste, formative influences and clients' requests. Clients were mainly members of the Catholic Church, who appreciated this style's symbolic and ecclesiastic character. Although it certainly brought the church great socioeconomic wealth, this style also had a versatile mystical component because neo-Gothic architecture was associated with the idea of celestial Jerusalem and it meant a transcendent approach to that which was sacred.

Being a foreign style, it found conducive circumstances to settle in America but was also profoundly influenced by historicist and restoring theories from France; English ecclesiological trends that saw it as an ideal model for temple construction (spread across Canada and the United States through manuals and blueprints); and the Roman Catholic Church itself, for which it was a reminder of the central role in society that the Church had played in the past.<sup>1</sup> All these diverse influences coming together resulted in neo-Gothic becoming a style that looked deep into the past in order to approach modernity.<sup>2</sup> This concept is seen in new and restored temples of that period in towns and cities all over the continent.

The role of the Catholic Church in Latin America throughout the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century was complex and had multiple facets.<sup>3</sup> There was a new positioning towards

1 Martín CHECA-ARTASU, «Chapter 128: The Catholic Church and neo-Gothic Architecture in Latin America: Scales for their analysis», in: Stanley D. BRUNN (ed.), *The Changing World Religion Map: Sacred Places, Identities, Practices and Politics*, 5 vols. Amsterdam, Springer Netherlands, Vol. 4, 2015, pp. 2437–2451.

2 Paloma GIL, *El templo del siglo xx*, Barcelona, Editorial Serbal / Col.legi d'arquitectes de Catalunya, 1999.

3 Ricardo KREBS, *La Iglesia de América Latina en el siglo XIX*, Santiago de Chile, Ediciones Universidad Católica de Chile, 2002, pp. 315–320.



liberalism and the construction of a secular state that was confronted with the defensive attitude of the Church in several Latin American countries. This new positioning had a number of effects, such as religious pluralism and the expansion of Protestantism; the development of positivism among intellectual and political elites; state regalism, Romanized through agreements between the Holy See and American countries; and the dissemination of Papal Encyclicals as well as from other heads of the Vatican.

As a result, the Church reinforced its role as Ultramontane in different nations and took a combative attitude towards liberalism, Protestantism and secularism. Several Catholic orders, willing to be reinstated in the Americas after their downfall in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, also played their part in the recovery of Catholicism in Latin America. This recovery was not devoid of asset disposals, exiles, violence and even wars; all stemmed from the long-existing conflict between the Church and the state, or between liberals and conservatives, that escalated in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

In this confrontational environment the Church had to renew clerical education in new seminaries, some of which were reluctant sanctums in ultramontane positions. As a result, the training and education of apostolic clergymen and the Church's internal administration and geographical distribution improved. That way, new dioceses, churches, synods and Episcopal conferences came about. The most prominent example was the celebration of the Latin American plenary Council in Rome in 1899. Some of these elements restructured and revitalized the Church's evangelical and social agenda, sometimes geared towards active politics. Catholic-inspired parties were founded with the blessing of the Church to combat the prevailing secularism.

This is the context in which we need to understand neo-Gothic, its role beyond architecture and its character as a landmark, since it shows the way the Church moved up in American territory. Several neo-Gothic constructions became landmarks as they shaped the landscape and incorporated the Catholic Church to political and economic elites. This led to the legitimization of the national construction of American republics. A further analysis of the internal structure of states and architectonic creations reveals how renewed and redefined religious dedications justified the states' concrete actions towards national construction and reconciliation. Those justifications were given special attributes and a sacred character by the Church and the Pope himself, who was highly respected at the time. Many American countries were institutionally weakened by long revolutions and coups d'état and the new relationship they established with the Church is fundamental to explain political actions in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

An example of this is the widespread use of dedications to the Sacred Heart of Jesus to consecrate towns, regions and even entire nations that happened during the period of emergence and dissemination of neo-Gothic. Indeed, Pope Pius IX established the liturgical celebration of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1856 and Pope Leo XIII consecrated mankind to the Heart of Jesus in the encyclical *Annum Sacrum Pos* (1899). However, this dedication dates back to 1675. Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque, a member of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary, had a revelation of Jesus Christ with his chest open and the message that it represented mankind's ingratitude towards Jesus Christ's love. The dedication was brought to the Americas by the Jesuits in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. After they were

expelled, the dedication remained, and, upon the return of the Society of Jesus and other religious orders, it acquired a renewed vitality.<sup>4</sup>

From its beginning, this dedication was conceived as a representation of spirituality reflected in a vital organ and a grievance-reparation relationship that led to mechanisms of persuasion, domination and submission that members of the communities assumed as truly representative of themselves.<sup>5</sup> That explains why the consecration of territories was understood as a collective amendment. Believers in those communities, sometimes entire nations, would admit to the pernicious effects of their actions on the Heart of Jesus and their Church and would offer heartfelt self-deprecating prayers in search of atonement.<sup>6</sup>

### *Religious Orders and Neo-Gothic in Latin America.*

In the 1850s, as secularization acts were passed, many religious orders found their way into the Americas. The Salesians were newcomers and spread out across the continent with a clear civilizing and educational agenda. Some have arrived earlier from Spain, like the Discalced Carmelites, who spread out throughout different countries; or the Jesuits, who had been expelled in 1776 and gradually returned to different countries in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and settled in towns and cities. Other orders arrived from Germany and France. Most of them focused on education as their main strategy for missionary action. All of these orders played an important role in the provision of educative and sanitary infrastructures to different territories and cities, on many occasions, with the approval of local governments. Consequently, religious orders built colleges, technical schools, hospices and lazarettos, frequently located next to churches, chapels and temples. Design and construction were undertaken by the priests themselves, who often came from European countries and who brought with themselves medievalizing artistic styles from the old continent. Although little is known about the reasons why a particular style was adopted, it is clear that neo-Gothic became the style of choice for the building production of many religious orders. So, all values associated to neo-Gothic and its relation to the Church will be present: return to the glorious past, some medievalism ideas like hidden wisdom, religious intimacy, the hopeful ideals of faith and atonement, etc.<sup>7</sup> Additionally, the missionary action of different orders incorporated a sense of transcendence to it. From a mundane standpoint, there is little known about the actual agents of this architectonic production. In some cases, there is an architect or engineer who did not belong to the order and was commissioned the works. There is more information in those instances where the master builder or the architect were members of a religious order. The latter is the case for the best known constructions. We have found examples of architects who worked

4 Gabriela DÍAZ PATIÑO, «Imagen y discurso de la representación religiosa del Sagrado Corazón de Jesús», in: *Plura, Revista de Estudos de Religião*, vol. 1, n. 1, 2010, pp. 86–108.

5 *Idem*, p. 97.

6 Leonardo CAPELLUTI, «La devoción al Sagrado Corazón de Jesús. Consideración al libro *Amó con corazón de hombre*», in: *Revista Teología*, vol. 44, n. 93, 2007, pp. 239–252.

7 Louise D'ARCENS, «Introduction: medievalism: scope and complexity», in: Louise D'ARCENS (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Medievalism*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2016, pp. 1–13.

alone and in one country and others who formed working teams and technical bureaus and worked in different countries.

The following segments briefly review the contribution to neo-Gothic of the Jesuits, the Salesians and the Discalced Carmelites.

### *The Jesuits and Restrained Neo-Gothic*

As mentioned earlier, the Jesuits were expelled from the continent in 1776 and allowed back in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Upon their return they approached their insertion in American societies with a new urban perspective that included the construction of schools, universities, education centers, and churches and chapels. It is in their religious buildings that neo-Gothic became their style of choice. Two examples can be identified. The first can be found in La Paz, Bolivia, through the work of Eulalio Morales (1837–1907), a Jesuit cabinetmaker and carpenter born in Puertollano, Ciudad Real. He showed his qualities as a builder in their mission in Peru, but it was in Bolivia where his work blossomed. There, he designed the order's schools in La Paz, and as many as forty churches too, many in restrained neo-Gothic style. The most remarkable one is the Church of San Calixto.<sup>8</sup> It is worth mentioning that the Jesuits settled in Bolivia in 1881 thanks to the support of the nation's president, Mariano Baptista. This was indeed exceptional as they had suffered difficulties and ups and downs in Peru and Ecuador.<sup>9</sup> A second example can be found in Venezuela, although with ramifications in Cuba, as well, under the care of Jesuit master builder Luis María Gogorza y Soraluze (Azpeitia 1875 – Loyola 1947).<sup>10</sup> He displayed his architectural activity in the 1920s and built several neo-Gothic churches. One is the Church of St. John the Baptist in Valera, Trujillo, Venezuela, started in 1927 and finished in 1953; and another one is the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Saint Ignatius of Loyola parish in Havana, Cuba, a work of magnificent decoration and composition, started in 1914 in collaboration with father Francisco Cendoya (1885–1946).

### *The Salesians and their Medieval-Style Architecture.*

The Salesian Congregation, founded by Don Bosco in 1859 and approved by the Church in 1864, reached several American countries but was most notably present in Argentina. The Congregation became important in towns and in the colonization process of vast territories

8 Antonio MENACHO, S.J., «Eulalio Morales», in: Charles E. L. O'NEILL, Joaquín María DOMÍNGUEZ (eds.), *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús: biográfico-temático*, Vol. 3, Salamanca, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, 2001, p. 2738.

9 Manuel REVUELTA GONZÁLEZ, *Once calas en la historia de la Compañía de Jesús*, Salamanca, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, 2006.

10 Serenella CHERINI-RAMÍREZ, «La obra arquitectónica del H. Luis M. Gogorza, S. J. en Venezuela», in: *Congreso Internacional Centenario Archivo Arquidiocesano de Mérida 1905–2005*, Mérida, Centro Editorial Litorama, 2005.

P. MARCHENA, S.J., «Luis María Gogorza y Soraluze», in: Charles E. L. O'NEILL, Joaquín María DOMÍNGUEZ (eds.), *Diccionario histórico de la Compañía de Jesús: biográfico-temático*, Vol. 2, Salamanca, Universidad Pontificia de Comillas, 2001, p. 1776.

in La Pampa and Patagonia.<sup>11</sup> Promoting education at all levels became the backbone of their missionary work. They established schools, universities and craft schools and introduced a teaching method that imbued Catholic values to any learning activity. This resulted in many of their members becoming all types of professionals, including architects and builders.

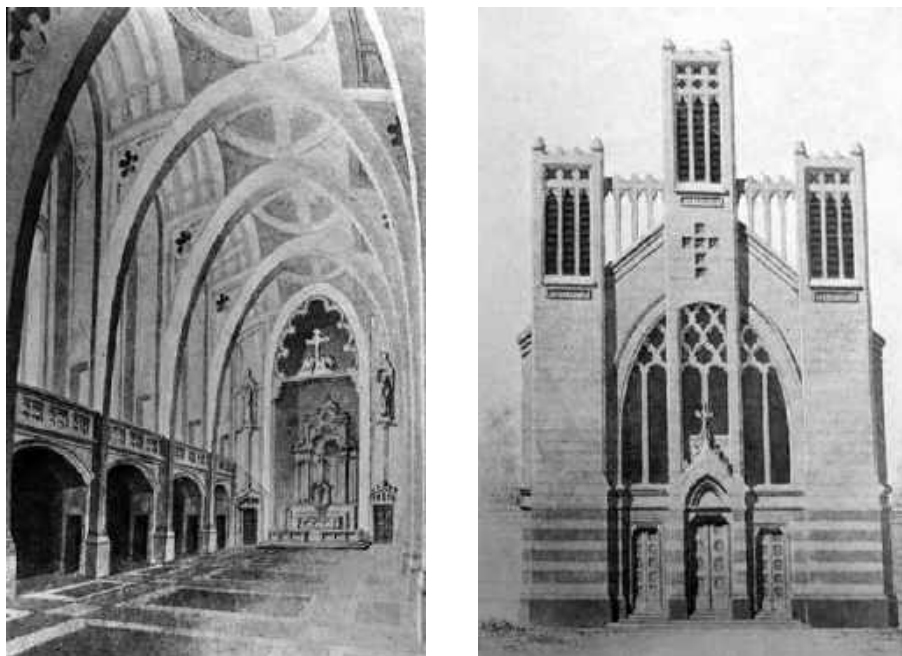
It is worth mentioning that the Salesians used architectural form as an identifying mark of their activity. The congregation used medieval styles, especially Romanesque and Gothic, to build their education centers and churches. They aimed at an Italian, restrained, solid style in line with the Congregation's values. These values stand out particularly in Ernesto Vespignani's (1861–1925) neo-Gothic projects in Argentina. Born in Lugo, Ravenna in 1861, he studied architecture in the Albertina Academy in Turin, where he was influenced by Camillo Boito. In 1889, he was ordained a priest and soon after he founded the Salesian Central Technical Office of Architecture in the order's School of Arts in Turin. He arrived at Argentina in 1901 invited by his brother who then was Superior General of the order in the country. There he carried out a large number of architectural works, from which the construction of churches and chapels in eclectic medieval styles stands out; as well as schools across Argentina. In Buenos Aires, he built the Church of San Carlos in the Almagro district (fig. 1), the Shrine of Our Lady of Buenos Aires and the Basilica of the Blessed Sacrament. In Patagonia he built the churches of Viedma, Rawson, Colonia Vignaud, Rodeo del Medio and Fortín de Mercedes. He also left his mark in other countries. In



**Fig. 1:** Old postcard. View of church of San Carlos in the Almagro district.

11 María Andrea NICOLETTI, *Indígenas y misioneros en la Patagonia. Huellas de los salesianos en la cultura y la religiosidad de los pueblos originarios*, Buenos Aires, Ediciones Continente, 2008; Cayetano BRUNO, «Los Salesianos y las Hijas de María Auxiliadora en la Argentina: 1911–1922», in: Cayetano BRUNO, *Los Salesianos y las Hijas de María Auxiliadora en la Argentina*, Vol. 3, Buenos Aires, Instituto Salesiano de Artes Gráficas, 1984, p. 263.

Uruguay he built the Cathedral of Salto and the Shrine of the Sacred Heart in El Cerrito de la Victoria. In Peru he built the Temple of Mary Help of Christians and the Temple of Santa Rosa in Lima. In Bolivia he plans and begins to build the Cathedral of La Paz. Curiously, this temple that will be continued by Jesuit Morales.<sup>12</sup> He also took part in several international competitions and received a number of awards.<sup>13</sup> Vespignani did not use neo-Gothic style *sensu strictum*. His style was medieval but noticeably eclectic with Romanesque, Byzantine, and even Islamic characteristics.<sup>14</sup> His use of domes, towers and ample arches tapered at the entrances may be considered excessive and, in fact, in his



**Fig. 2:** Sketch of the temple of Saavedra in Buenos Aires, designed by Vespignani.

larger buildings in major towns, churches and temples were so pompous and grandiose that they became dominating landmarks within those cities (fig. 2).<sup>15</sup>

12 VV.AA., *La Paz en su IV centenario, 1548–1948. Monografías literaria, científica, artística, religiosa y folclórica*, Vol. 3, La Paz, Comité pro Cuarto Centenario de la Fundación de La Paz, p. 228.

13 On the biography and architectural works of Vespignani should be consulted: Carlos GIL CASSAZA, Silvia Nora WICHEPOL, «Vespignani, Ernesto», in: Jorge Francisco LIERNUR, Fernando ALIATA (comp.). *Diccionario de Arquitectura en la Argentina, Tomo S/Z*, Buenos Aires, Editorial Clarín, 2004, pp. 353–354; «Arquitecto presbítero. Ernesto Vespignani», in: *Revista de Arquitectura*, n. 52, Abril de 1925, pp. 105–110; VV.AA, *Italianos en la arquitectura argentina*, Buenos Aires, CEDODAL, 2004, pp. 251–252.

14 On this Salesian Vespignani there is a novel biography published in 1948 and entitled: *Adventures of Father Vespignani*. It was written in Spanish by Hugo Wast, pseudonym who hid Gustavo Martínez Zuviría, Argentinian right-wing politician, catholic and writer of numerous novels of easy consumption between 1905 and 1961.

15 Juan Antonio LÁZARA, «Ernesto Vespignani (1861–1926) y la imagen marcaría salesiana», in: *Trabajo de la Maestría Historia y crítica de la arquitectura*, Facultad de Arquitectura, Universidad de Buenos Aires, noviembre de 2010, unpublished.

Beyond his architectural work, Vespignani's most relevant task was replicating the Technical Office of Architecture he had founded in Italy in the Salesian Main House in Buenos Aires. This allowed other clergymen to be trained in the rudiments of architecture and construction. One of them was a prominent Salesian architect Giovanni Buscaglione (1874–1941) who emerged from that office. Born in Graglia de Biellese, Piedmont, he joined the Salesian order in 1892 and professed perpetual vows in 1896. After his spell under Vespignani's wing he was sent to Istanbul to build the city's Salesian School. Later he undertook the same task in Jerusalem and Alexandria.<sup>16</sup> In 1920, he moved to the Salesian House in Bogotá where he developed a truly noteworthy activity across Colombia until 1940. Buscaglione did use Gothic both as a decorative and as a structural element for the construction of several churches associated to Salesian schools.<sup>17</sup>

His most prominent work is the National Sanctuary of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Bogotá (fig. 3 / Taf. 12, p. 34 and fig. 4). This temple was designed in 1923 based on the blueprints of the church of San Carlos Borromeo in Buenos Aires, designed by Vespignani. It seems that master and disciple exchanged blueprints, taking advantage of Vespignani's visit to Bogotá, which would explain the great similarities between such distant churches.

The sanctuary was built between 1926 and 1938 in Gothic style. Both façade and interior present florentine reminiscences and arabesque tones. The external decoration is a lush display of bichromatic bands. Its interior contains columns and trilobate arches between naves and corridors and is decorated with maroon and cream-colored bands

It is reminiscent of cathedral interiors like those of Orvieto or Santa Maria del Fiore in Florence or even, the Mosque of Cordoba (Spain). The result is an unquestionable dream-like and peaceful atmosphere.

This church was located near the Salesian school Leo XIII, dedicated to the Pope, and it functioned as its chapel. Such proximity seems to give it a character of civic and religious symbol that confirms the full integration of the Salesians in Colombia's and Bogotá's social life. It is worth mentioning that its construction was approved by the Colombian Congress in 1926 and was given the status of national temple. It was financed through donations and alms from Bogotá Catholics, who had been long devout of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The presence of the temple facilitated the renovation and urbanization of La Candelaria district as canals were built off the river San Agustín.<sup>18</sup> Buscaglione

16 Nancy ROZO MONTAÑA, «Giovanni Buscaglione, 1920–1940. Arquitectura religiosa en Colombia», in: *Tesis de Maestría en teoría e historia*, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2000, p. 27.

17 Asociación Pro Rescate de Archivos de Arquitectura (APRAARQ), «El Fondo Buscaglione», in: *Boletín Cultural y Bibliográfico*, n. 66, vol. 41, 2004, pp. 45–60; Fernando CARRASCO, «Breves semblanzas de ocho arquitectos del siglo xx en Colombia», in: *Ensayos. Historia y teoría del Arte*, n. 9, vol. 9, 2004, pp. 137–168; Luis J. DEL REAL, *Triptico modelo: Rasgos biográficos de tres coadjutores salesianos*. Bogotá: Escuelas Gráficas Salesianas, 1942; Mariana PATIÑO DE BORDA, *Monumentos nacionales de Colombia: siglo xx*. Bogotá, Instituto Colombiano de Cultura, 1995; Nancy ROZO MONTAÑA, «Giovanni Buscaglione, 1920–1940. Arquitectura religiosa en Colombia», in: *Tesis de Maestría en teoría e historia*, Universidad Nacional de Colombia, 2000.

18 Alberto SALDARRIAGA ROA, «La imagen de la iglesia y del estado en la arquitectura republicana: gótico, clasicismo y eclecticismo fueron los estilos definitorios», in: *Revista Credencial Historia*, n. 86, 2007, pp. 34–45; Mercedes Lucía VÉLEZ WHITE, *Arquitectura contemporánea en Medellín*, Medellín, Instituto Tecnológico de Medellín, 2003.

designed and built 42 churches as well as schools, lazarettos, seminars and houses of prayer across Colombia from 1920 until his death. Structural efficacy was his primary goal and although he based his work on certain architectural frameworks, he did not disregard neo-Gothic decorations for arches, vaults, and campaniles.<sup>19</sup> Some examples of this are: The Church of Lazaretto Caño del Oro on Barú Island (1915–1934) and the temples in Tenjo (Cundinamarca) and Corrales (Boyacá), both built in 1937.



**Fig. 4:** Interior view of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Sanctuary in Bogotá designed by Ernesto Vespignani in 1923 and built by Salesian Giovanni Buscaglione in 1927.

### *Discalced Carmelites and their Use of Neo-Gothic.*

Neo-Gothic spread across the continent along with the expansion campaigns undertaken by several countries to effectively gain control of vast territories referred to in the literature as «deserts» or «gaps». In those territories, the state was barely present, and, in many cases, this had been the case since colonial times. Religious orders, once allowed again in Latin America in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, played a decisive role for these expansionist strategies. They became outposts not only with religious motivations, but also socially and culturally.

This multipurpose action helped them to control large underdeveloped areas and to make them accessible to states. Until then, these vast areas of new nations had remained left out of any development efforts. Orders built hospices, hospitals, schools, craft schools, agricultural institutes, universities and, of course, churches and chapels. Their choice of neo-Gothic style for churches and chapels allowed them to establish their own symbols of the modernizing and building action that they implemented for the states. Several examples can be found in both urban and rural areas.

19 ROZO MONTAÑA, «Giovanni Buscaglione ...», (as at note 16), p. 70; Fernando CARRASCO ZALDÚA, «Vida y obra de dos piemonteses en Colombia», in: Rubén HERNÁNDEZ MOLINA, Olimpia NIGLIO (eds.) *Ingenieros y arquitectos italianos en Colombia*, Roma, Aracne Editrice, 2016, pp.111–119.

One of the most remarkable examples is located in Colombia. We are talking about the work of Spanish Discalced Carmelite priest: Andres Lorenzo Huarte.<sup>20</sup> He built neo-Gothic temples in Medellín and other communities in the Antioquia Department. Among them, the Church of Divine Mercy (1925–1931) built in the Manrique district stands out.<sup>21</sup> Also, he will be the designer of Church of Our Lady of Carmen in Sonsón, Antioquia. The construction of this church began in 1924 and was completed in 1932.<sup>22</sup>

In Frontino, in northwestern Antioquia, in the jungle area of Uraba, he designed the Basilica of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (1914–1929), in collaboration with Father Daniel García Puelles and local architect Manuel Callejas Muñoz.<sup>23</sup> The basilica is a central element because it symbolizes the Carmelite mission of Uraba de los Katios, as the Discalced Carmelites facilities in the region were called.<sup>24</sup>

Said mission was one of the main components of the operation to colonize the natives of northwestern Antioquia, which was promoted by the Colombian government because of the intensive gold mining activity linked to the interests of the local elites.

The Carmelites, many of which came from Spain, spread Catholicism's civilizing mantle in exchange for allowing the State to plunder the territory. Consequently, in early 1916, Frontino was promoted as capital of the Apostolic Prefecture of Uraba. This was an ecclesiastical jurisdiction governed by a Prefect directly appointed by the Vatican. This gave the Prefecture independence from the Colombian diocesan system, whose jurisdictional hierarchy worked in a similar manner to the territorial system of the Colombian State. This explains the continuous tensions between the order of the Carmelites and the clergy of Santafé of Antioquia, the closest diocese, while the Prefecture existed (1916–1941).<sup>25</sup> Carmelite priests García Puelles, member of the mission of Uraba and builder of the temple, and Huarte, resident in Medellín and author of the blueprints, designed the neo-Gothic temple thinking of the modernizing impact of that kind of architecture in the context of the jungle and within the socioeconomic structure the monks sought to establish in the territory. This happened under the protection of the State, who required the pacification of the territory because of the emergence of gold mining and the resulting attraction of national and foreign capitals. Just as they did in Colombia, the Discalced Carmelites had similar missionary, recolonizing, and educational roles in the rest of the continent, and they built temples and monasteries with the stamp of neo-gothic style and became their signature style in the whole continent. Thus, for example, the Carmelites arrived at Chile, specifically to Chillan, in the province of Ñuble, circa 1904. Six years

20 John Alejandro RICAURTE, *Vasco-navarros en Antioquia (1890–1970). Una aproximación a la historia de migrantes, religiosos y exiliados*, Vitoria, Servicio Central de Publicaciones del Gobierno Vasco, 2011, pp. 100–102.

21 VÉLEZ WHITE, *Arquitectura ...*, (as at note 18), pp. 51–53.

22 RICAURTE, *Vasco-navarros ...*, (as at note 20), p. 102.

23 Ramón ELEJALDE ARBELÁEZ, *A la sombra del plateado: Monografía de Frontino*, Medellín, Gobernación de Antioquia, 2003, p. 105.

24 José Miguel MIRANDA ARRAÍZA, *Misioneros carmelitas en Urabá de los Katios*, Biblioteca Carmelitano-Teresiana de Misiones, Tomo 12, Vitoria, Ediciones El Carmen, 2003, p. 47.

25 Aida GÁLVEZ, *Por obligación de conciencia. Los misioneros del Carmen Descalzo en Urabá (Colombia), 1918–1941*, Bogotá, Universidad de Antioquia / Universidad del Rosario / ICANH, 2006, pp. 83 y 90.



later, Carmelite priest and architect Rufo de San José (1880–1928) started the construction of the community's monastery chapel, dedicated to Our Lady of Mount Carmel. For this work he designed a façade with a central tower, reminiscent of the medieval narthex, built in a flamboyant French Gothic style that hides a structure of great simplicity on the inside.<sup>26</sup> Such a layout, a central tower at the front and a basilica nave, was typical of the Carmelite churches. The use of Gothic exuberance seems aim at indicating the social, cultural and religious role of the Carmelites in the area at a time of notable Mapuche presence. It must be said that it was from this monastery that the Carmelite missionary expeditions into the south of the country departed (Puerto Montt, Chiloé and Tierra de Fuego). Years later, the monastery would take in some of the Carmelite priests fleeing the Spanish Civil War. In 1926 the same priest and architect, Rufo de San José, built a church in for the order Viña del Mar in a gallicized neo-Gothic style. The construction of the church of the Carmelite community started in Santiago ten years earlier, dedicated to the Infant Jesus of Prague.<sup>27</sup> This church, commonly known as the «Iglesia de los Carmelitos» (church of the Carmelites), was also Gothic and presented the same building pattern as the churches in Chillan and Viña del Mar. It has a basilica plan of 43 meters long, 20 wide and 18 high and a central tower with openwork 45 meters high that marks the main access.<sup>28</sup> At the time, the press described it as «Gothic without churrigueresque decoration, without gaudy colors, without overdecoration».<sup>29</sup> A decoration that since 1920 is complemented by 16 stained glass windows designed by Rigalt, Granell & Cia of Barcelona. This company designed works for renowned architects and decorators of Catalan modernism too.<sup>30</sup> We can find the same relation between neo-Gothic and the Discalced Carmelites. There are various examples of this in Lima, Peru, in the Church of San José, built in 1945 and designed by friar José Manuel de Santa Teresa<sup>31</sup>; in Argentina, in Buenos Aires, in the present Church of Saint Teresa of Jesus, built between 1894 and 1896<sup>32</sup>; in Montevideo, Uruguay, in the Church of the Carmelites in the El Prado district, built in 1929 after a

26 This temple has the category of National Monument, according to decree 161 of March of 2012. Consejo de Monumentos Nacionales de Chile.

27 Criss SALAZAR, «La enigmática parroquia carmelita del Niño Jesús de Praga», in: *Urbatorium [blog]*, 28 de septiembre 2008 <https://urbatorium.blogspot.com/2008/09/> [consulted 21.08.2019].

28 Myrtha PALLARÉS TORRES, *La arquitectura religiosa en Santiago De Chile 1850–1950. Razones de las reminiscencias góticas*, Tesis para obtener el título de doctora en arquitectura, Universidad Politécnica de Madrid, 2015, pp. 280–285; Myrtha PALLARÉS TORRE, *Templos católicos neogóticos*, Santiago de Chile, Editorial Universitaria, 2018.

29 Lázaro DE LA ASUNCIÓN (P. O.C.D.), *Historia de la Orden del Carmen Descalzo en Chile, 1899–1935*, Vol. 1. Santiago de Chile, Imprenta Chile, 1936, p. 174.

30 Patricio DÍAZ SILVA, *Vitrales de la Iglesia de los Padres Carmelitas*, Santiago, Proyecto Catalogación de Vitrales Patrimoniales Región Metropolitana, Consejo Nacional de la Cultura y las Artes, Fondo Nacional de Desarrollo Cultural y las Artes, 2017, p. 22.

31 His name was Manuel Vidaurre Arrarás, born in Zuazo Araquil, Navarra in 1884 y took the holy order of the Carmen in Pamplona in 1911. See the webpage of the San Jose church, Lima: <https://sites.google.com/site/remigiohernani2014/resena-historica-de-la-parroquia-san-jose> [consulted 21.08.2019].

32 The history of this temple can be seen in Silverio de SANTA TERESA, «Capítulo XXX: Nuevas fundaciones de carmelitas descalzas en Argentina», in: *Historia del Carmen Descalzo en España, Portugal y América*. Tomo 14: *La descalcez teresiana en América*, Burgos, Tipographia burgalesa (El Monte Carmelo), 1949, pp. 624–632.

project started by architects Guillermo Armas and Alberico Isola, who had built other structures in the same city.<sup>33</sup>

### *Conclusion*

In the lines above we have roughly outlined some examples of the presence of religious orders in Latin America and their relationship with the use of neo-Gothic architecture in their buildings. A relationship which used the style not with the bombast desired by the Catholic hierarchy but with new functions. On the one hand, in those territories where the new American states were undertaking a process of recolonization, the building of certain temples with neo-Gothic characteristics represented an element of modernization for the communities that were being evangelized and subdued. On the other hand, certain orders used neo-Gothic and other medieval historicisms as their own identifying style. This was the case for the Salesians and the Discalced Carmelites who used it for each and every church they designed, whether it was for structural or decorative purposes. Behind these works lay the architects and master builders, and often, priests and friars, members of the religious orders. These are characters that history has forgotten but must be remembered because they are the building agents who can explain the presence of neo-Gothic on American ground, but above all, the role the orders had in the expansion of this style. Their works and conception of architectural form and function can barely be intuited and will require further attention in future papers.

### *Resumen*

#### Órdenes religiosas y la expansión de la arquitectura neogótica en América Latina

La arquitectura religiosa neogótica en América Latina apareció y alcanzó su punto máximo entre mediados del siglo XIX y principios del siglo XX. Varias órdenes religiosas son responsables de este desarrollo. Estas órdenes promovieron la educación y la atención médica en los territorios en su alcance, a veces coordinados con las autoridades públicas nacionales. Además, órdenes como los salesianos, los carmelitas descalzos y los lazaristas construyeron templos, capillas y basílicas en estilo neogótico o variaciones de éste. Estas congregaciones adoptaron este estilo como su ideología y acciones para el continente americano. El presente trabajo es una breve descripción de la trayectoria profesional de algunos arquitectos. Fueron miembros de esas órdenes religiosas y desarrollaron ejemplos de arquitectura neogótica en América Latina durante ese período.

### *Figuras*

Fig. 1: Archive of Technical Office of Architecture Salesian Main House in Buenos Aires.

Fig. 2: Archive of Technical Office of Architecture Salesian Main House in Buenos Aires.

Fig. 3 / Taf. 12: Photo by Martín Checa-Artasu, 2012.

Fig. 4: Photo by Martín Checa-Artasu, 2012.

33 Julián de DIOS, *Guía de Montevideo. Guía de viajes*, Montevideo, Flor Negra Ediciones, 2007, p. 96.

lejos sin embargo de los grandes ejemplos europeos u otros centroamericanos más tardíos como la iglesia del Carmen en Ciudad de Panamá, la de la Inmaculada en Colón o la Catedral de Santa Ana en el Salvador.

El estudio comparativo de los casos costarricenses desvela la tendencia a utilizar plantas de cruz latina con torres únicas centradas a los pies del edificio. Sólo los templos metálicos de las poblaciones de Grecia y Cartago diluyeron la importancia de la misma. Con este diseño la utilización del rosetón, si es que existe, se traslada a las fachadas laterales de las naves o al transepto.

Una de las características más destacadas de las iglesias del valle Central son sus interiores volátiles generados por la mezcla de varios factores. Por un lado por la ligereza de sus estructuras horizontales y verticales y sus encuentros. Por otro por la sutileza del uso del color de los mosaicos y el manejo de la luz. La Merced de San José y la Iglesia de Vicente Ferrer son los casos más destacados. La capilla de María Auxiliadora en Granada (Nicaragua) o el templo de San Nicolás de Tolentino en Quetzaltenango (Guatemala) introducen también el color en su diseño aunque están lejos del concepto costarricense. Esta concepción genera en parte una ambigüedad entre la apreciación del espacio interior y el exterior. El caso contrario sería el de Las Mercedes de Grecia, con una percepción del exterior muy ligera gracias al metal y un interior pesado por el acabado de sus bóvedas y el revestimiento de sus pilares.

### *Abstract*

The church La Merced in San José, Costa Rica. A starting point to study the 19<sup>th</sup> century neo-gothic church buildings and their evolution in Central America

Central America presents many great examples of neo-Gothic church buildings. Costa Rica, particularly, was one of the nations which invested most in their development in the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a way to counteract seismic activity. The use of light structures gave rise to very interesting examples, such as that of Las Mercedes in Grecia, which was built entirely in metal, or that of La Merced in San José, which is used as a starting point for this study. The general analysis of the evolution of the Costa Rican panorama allows us to assess the situation of the rest of the surrounding countries, observing that only Panama and El Salvador present a single 19<sup>th</sup> century case.

### *Figuras*

Fig. 1: Foto: Néstor Vargas Vega, 2019.

Fig. 2: Foto: Néstor Vargas Vega, 2019.

Fig. 3 / lám. 13, p. 35): Foto: María Aranda Alonso, 2009.

Fig. 4: Foto: Jaime Massot Hernández [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:03-049-DMHN\\_2014\\_Iglesia\\_de\\_Cristo\\_a\\_Orillas\\_del\\_Mar\\_\(3\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:03-049-DMHN_2014_Iglesia_de_Cristo_a_Orillas_del_Mar_(3).jpg), <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>.

Fig. 5 / lam 13: Foto: Carlos Antonio Solís Tejada, 2019.