

THE FAÇADE OF ST. PAUL'S, MACAO: A RETABLE-FAÇADE?

CESAR GUILLEN-NUÑEZ

Introduction

This paper will look at the façade of the church of Madre de Deus, Macao, popularly known as *ruínas de São Paulo* (Ruins of St. Paul's), from a perspective different to that familiar to most, including scholars. For I believe the surviving frontispiece should be classified as a *fachada retablo*, that is, as a retable-façade.

A retable-façade is a kind of structure that has been given this appellation by modern Hispanists because of its similarities to carved Spanish altarpieces. Altarpieces, also known as retables (whence the façade's name), were as popular in Portugal as they were in Spain. Curiously, retable-façades were less frequently used in Portugal and are practically unknown in Portuguese colonies. I hope therefore that it will not seem too fanciful to start this paper by asking the question: is the surviving front of St. Paul's just such a façade? And if so, then how could such a structure have appeared in seventeenth-century Macao, Portugal's most treasured possession in Southeast Asia? (Fig. 1).

Before continuing, I must point out that part of this paper has been adapted from a thesis on the subject that I completed in 1997 for University College London. The thesis itself evolved from an unpublished youthful article written a number of decades ago, after many years' interest on the extraordinary phenomenon of the retable-façade. Eventually a few of my ideas on the façade of St. Paul appeared in a book on Macao that I wrote almost twenty years ago.¹

Some art historians may disagree with my identification of the façade of St. Paul's as a retable-façade, mainly because of the lack of primary sources backing up the idea. Perhaps it will not be thought too irrelevant to consider that in recent years the tourist trade in Macao has readily echoed it, as is true of a small number of Portuguese researchers steeped in Lusitanian architectural traditions. Although the latter come from outside the field of the retable-façade their writings at least imply an acceptance of the idea. Unfortunately they only include a discussion

of the façade as part of broader surveys on the church of St. Paul's or the architecture of the Jesuits in China and, regretfully, not much new has been added to this particular question.²

In order to make clearer certain developments related to the façade of St. Paul's a limited number of churches and altarpieces in Spain and in Portuguese India will be discussed. But because of limitations of time any detailed references to the ground plans, elevations and dimensions of St. Paul's or any of these structures or buildings will be left out. It is mainly the façades of buildings as they relate to the main topic that is of greater importance here. Besides these analogies I will further explore some relevant questions on the development of Jesuit buildings in India first expressed in an article written several years ago.³

The Church of St. Paul's, Macao

What once was the Jesuit Church of Madre de Deus, or St. Paul's is today merely a church front, some 70 feet high,⁴ with narrow sections of aisle-walls holding it up at either side at the back. This seventeenth-century ruin is the only remnant of a catastrophic 1835 fire, which destroyed the entire complex of educational and residential buildings of which it was part (Fig.1).

The impression that it makes today, when it is mainly admired as a relic of a bygone age, is quite different from that which it made to visitors over three and a half centuries ago. At that time the church stood in full visible splendour on a hill near the city walls, facing the Portuguese city below and the open sea beyond. Ironically a fire in November of 1600 had destroyed a previous church, which led to the construction of the church of Madre de Deus, the one that in time became the most splendid Christian temple in a transitional Early Baroque style ever to have been built in China. Seventeenth-century visitors marvelled at what was then the new church of a university college, started two years after the November fire and at the time only recently completed with the addition of a brand new façade.

This added structure was an amazing showcase of artistic and social co-operation. Artists of East and West had created it. The Portuguese rector had supported it. The wealthy citizens of Macao had financed

it, following social precedents with roots in the great cathedrals of the Middle Ages in Europe.

The testimony of the English merchant, Peter Mundy, today well known to historians of Macao, is a good example of the effect that this novel façade produced. He had actually arrived as one of the English factors in the fleet of Captain John Weddel, which first entered Macao waters on the fifth of July 1637. In fact, Peter Mundy formed part of a party that was allowed by the Portuguese to disembark in Macao on the twenty-eighth of the month, with a missive from Charles I of England to the Captain-General of the city.

On the very day of landing he and the others went to visit the College of St. Paul's and its church at the invitation of the Jesuit fathers. Mundy waxes lyrical about the splendours of the façade and the church claiming that, 'there is a New Faire Frontispiece to the said Church with a spacious ascent to it by many steps; the 2 last things mentioned of hewen stone.'⁵

One cannot help wondering if Peter Mundy's admiration of the frontispiece was not equally due to the fact that he had before his eyes an impressive retable-façade, something that in all likelihood he has never seen before.

Retable-Façades

Before continuing, it may be necessary to briefly make clear some basic facts about retable-façades. What are they? When did they acquire this rather peculiar name? As already briefly mentioned a retable is a kind of Iberian wooden altarpiece, one that was often elaborately carved. One could argue that altarpiece-façade is just as accurate a term as the invented phrase retable-façade; but for a number of sensible reasons on which it is not necessary to comment here contemporary art historians have opted for the latter. In certain formal and functional aspects they are not unlike medieval English reredos, although there are important differences.

The history of what one could call their discovery as types is quite recent. It was mainly during the last century that specialists began noticing groups of unusual church façade in Spain and Latin America

that bore an uncanny resemblance to retables. In fact, many look like stone altarpieces carved in high relief applied to the façades of churches. Although the phrase retable-façade is not actually found in contemporary sources, a number of accounts from the seventeenth century and later supported the findings of modern specialists by alluding to retables when describing some of these façades.

These rather puzzling structures had actually first appeared towards the end of the fifteenth century embellishing the front of several Late Gothic churches in Spain, and have apparently no counterpart in Europe or anywhere else. What is equally surprising is the fact that most of the artists who helped invent the type were not themselves Spanish. They often came from countries beyond the Pyrenees, such as Holland, Germany or France, and had been attracted to northern Spanish kingdoms by the patronage of kings, the church or the nobility. If they actually invented retable-façades is a mystery that has yet to be solved.

Retable-façades come in all shapes and sizes. Stylistically they range from the Late Gothic to the Late Baroque and beyond. Artistically they go from the sublime to the prosaic. Some of the finest examples of the genre were created in Spanish Latin America and in Portugal, though, as mentioned, they are practically unknown in Brazil and other Portuguese colonies. In fact, Reynaldo dos Santos and R.C. Smith have argued that retable-façades in Portuguese architecture only occur due to Spanish influence.⁶

Santa Maria A Grande

One of the masterpieces of this type of façade is that of the church of Santa Maria A Grande (St Mary Major), in Pontevedra, Galicia, in the Northwest coast of Spain (Fig. 2).

I could equally well have chosen from amongst several works to demonstrate the more distinctive features of retable-façades. But I have selected Santa Maria A Grande because I believe it has unique features in common with the façade of St. Paul in Macao. To begin with, like St. Paul's, Santa Maria a Grande's fantastically ornate façade faces the river below from an imposing promontory.

Equally relevant are the economic and cultural reasons that brought

the town of Pontevedra into prominence during the first half of the sixteenth century. They provide interesting insights into the social factors that favoured the development of this kind of structure, and remind us of Macao's pre-eminence in the region due to the trade with Japan.

From Late Gothic times the town became the centre of a *cofraria* or confraternity of Pontevedra seamen in the southern region of Galicia. Its wealthy trading ships sailed to Portugal, France and Italy and the church's construction by the *cofraria* was a direct result of the city's commercial prosperity.⁷

Cornelis of Holland and Juan Nobre, probably a Portuguese, started work on the façade of the church in 1541. These master masons and their team of artists actually superimposed their large carved Late Gothic decoration onto the front of an early sixteenth-century church.

This highly decorative "stone altarpiece" is in fact fitted, in imitation of a real main altarpiece, into the apse-like space created by the wall of the church and the two large plain buttresses framing it. Apart from its function as a refined embellishment to the church and city, the sole reason that such a large decorative work should be erected outdoors on top of a high hill was evidently that it could be seen for miles around and from the river below, especially by seamen and traders aboard ship.

It is divided into five bays, comprised of a large central bay and two adjoining narrow ones at either side, divided horizontally into five storeys. The three lower storeys are sculptured and stand forward, away from the two upper ones executed in lower relief. Stone steps lead to a sumptuous terrace and to an equally sumptuous façade (Fig. 3).

In spite of its 1541 date, rather outmoded Early Plateresque baluster columns are used throughout. But there is little one can say against the delightful Netherlandish fantasy of these columns and their carving (Fig. 4).

More important to my arguments are the reliefs of its central bay. They have as focus a depicting the Dormition of Mary, which in style recalls Gothic retables of the School of Cologne and others (Fig. 5). 8

In imitation of a real altarpiece the Dormition of Mary is followed higher up by an image above a rose window representing the *Assumpta*, or the Assumption of Mary into heaven, a favourite theme of Iberian retables, often combined with the theme of the Dormition. Above her there is a high relief of the Trinity with a Golgotha group at the summit. These images are quite typical of the iconography of contemporary retables and follow the sometimes-convoluted theological arguments of the Christian art of the period.

As the intricacies of the Late Gothic style gave way to the Italian Renaissance, the artistic potency of retable-façades persisted under different forms, dimensions and styles, and in different places. It spread to Southern Spain after the *Reconquista*, where it developed its own Renaissance characteristics. Later, mainly in a Mannerist style, it appeared in Portugal. Finally some of the most amazing examples of the genre sprouted in Spanish colonies in Mexico and Peru in a Baroque and Rococo style, sometimes displaying the artistry, or otherwise, of indigenous craftsmen.

Although such structures are not usually found in Portuguese colonies there are nonetheless unusual developments in the decoration of some Jesuit church façades in Portuguese India, which can give insights to later developments in their Macao church. The study of these Indian examples is also useful in another respect. Instead of studying the Macao church in isolation, as is usually done, a comparison with these and a selected number of buildings in India can help us obtain a more coherent chronological and stylistic perspective for the façade of Madre de Deus.

To trace back some of these developments in Jesuit architecture the city of Goa, today known as Velha Goa, is an obvious starting point because of its importance within the Portuguese empire in Asia. In fact, soon after Afonso de Albuquerque captured it from Yusuf Adil Khan in 1510, it came to be considered by the Portuguese as the capital of the whole Portuguese Empire in the East. It eventually became not only the seat of the vice-royalty, but equally of a huge Bishopric, which encompassed the entire region from the Cape of Good Hope to China. In the seventeenth century it counted some seventy religious establishments, including thirty-one churches.⁹

Some of the aspects of Christianity introduced by the religious orders, including the Jesuits, are rather disturbing as they harked back to the Dark Ages, with street spectacles of burning heretics and bleeding flagellants. But in all fairness it should be pointed out that the gruesomeness of these spectacles was nothing new to the East. Moreover, there was also a much more positive, Renaissance side to Iberian colonisation, as seen in the unique buildings of the period that have survived in Velha Goa and elsewhere in India.

Velha Goa reached its greatest period of administrative importance and commercial prosperity during the last three decades of the sixteenth century, a fact reflected in the mentioned civic and religious buildings. For this very reason the passage to India and the sojourn in Goa was practically mandatory for many of the great Jesuit missionaries, scientists and artists arriving from Lisbon under the wing of the Portuguese *padroado* on their way to Macao, China or Japan.

The Arch of Triumph motif

It is not possible in this paper to give an adequate survey of what some term Indo-Portuguese churches. Instead I would like to focus on the Arch of Triumph, a characteristic architectural theme used in the decoration of façades that is linked in very interesting ways to that of the retable-façade.

As will be mentioned later in these pages, it has been argued that a couple of Jesuit church fronts in Goa have arches of triumph as decoration that resemble retables. Moreover, there are some church fronts in Goa that seem to me to have been influenced by the type of façade known as a *capilla abierta*, or open chapel, used above a main entrance for the display or celebration of the Eucharist. It may be inferred from this that the probable use of retable inspired façades by the Jesuits or others in Goa makes it more plausible that they chose this particular decorative structure for their Church in Macao, albeit in a radically different and more elaborate style. But as will be seen, that style itself was part of a clear process of stylistic development already started in Goa.

The Arch of Triumph is a well-known structure that was used by Italian Renaissance architects for the decoration of the elevation of

buildings. The Arch of Triumph motif is also found in Renaissance Spain, where the architect Alonso de Vandelvira seems to have been one of its main exponents.¹⁰

The number of Arches of Triumph appearing at this time on the portals of both Spanish and Portuguese buildings at home and in the colonies is very large. It was particularly favoured in the decoration of church façades. We must remember that this is the period of the Counter-Reformation, or what some prefer to call the Catholic Reformation. Although architects could be flexible in their use of it, its more symbolic connotations for Spaniards and Portuguese in their newly conquered territories were, broadly speaking, mainly twofold: to celebrate their secular victories in battle and to celebrate the triumph of the Church over paganism.

In Spanish colonial architecture of the sixteenth century it appeared at a time when building decoration had not yet acquired the richer, more elaborate styles of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Many of the buildings in question were often technically solid but with little exterior ornamentation and this particular motif often formed the most striking decorative element of the elevation.

In respect of Spanish Colonial architecture in South America, Dr. Valerie Fraser of the University of Essex, in the U.K., has brought the motif into disrepute. Dr. Fraser carried out a comparative study of contemporary sources and colonial church façades in South America. She came to the conclusion that in these colonial façades the symbolic meanings previously given to the motif by Italian Renaissance architects, such as triumph over death, etc., was gradually mutated into a symbol of Spanish cultural superiority.¹¹

The civilizations the Spanish encountered in the New World had no knowledge of the arch prior to the arrival of Europeans. After the Spanish Conquest their degree of cultural development came to be judged according to Spanish cultural values. Consequently, the employment of the Arch of Triumph in colonial South America served ideological as well as artistic purposes, expressing the perception the conquistadors had of the conquered.

Although I cannot discuss the pros and cons of Iberian colonialism

here, I do agree with some of Dr. Fraser's affirmations. Given the fact that arches of triumph also appeared in Portuguese India they are partly relevant to my research and, historical and cultural differences aside, it would be difficult to gloss over certain implications present in her arguments. While keeping these in mind, it is equally important not to lose sight of more purely art-historical questions.

During the sixteenth century the Portuguese introduced the Arch of Triumph as a decorative element in the façades of both their civic and religious buildings in India. Since this a subsidiary contention to my main argument, I cannot but treat it summarily by means of a number of examples.

Indian Urban Examples and Damão's Episcopal Church

Two of the finest examples showing the employment of arches of triumph in urban architecture in India, the Arch of the Viceroys, Goa, and that of the ruins of Baçaim Fort, will suffice to illustrate my point.

The first of these, constructed in 1599 under the orders of Dom Francisco da Gama, grandson of Vasco da Gama, formed part of the main city gate leading to the Governor's Palace. It is the work of Julio Simão, a locally born architect of French descent.

Simão employed a subdued rusticated idiom for the articulation of the main structures of his design with an almost inconspicuous use of the classical orders. The decoration of the structure as a whole is sparse, consisting mainly of carved metopes, of pyramids with spheres at the corners of the first storey and the royal coat of arms at the top.

In the original design a niche above the main entrance arch displayed a statue of Vasco da Gama with an image of St. Catherine in a small attic above. The latter intruded into the pediment below in typical Mannerist fashion.

The use of rustication was popular amongst certain cinquecento Italian Mannerist architects such as Giulio Romano. In this instance rustication combined with an arch of triumph was evidently intended to convey the victory and strength of the Portuguese crown, although it is obvious that considerations of a purely aesthetic nature must equally

have prompted its choice.

The Arch of Triumph seen in the entrance to Baçaim Fort is another variant on the motif (Fig. 6). This example is in a style that, without generalising too much, could be said to have belonged to a Late Renaissance Iberian style in architecture. For self-evident reasons specialists have given it the name *estilo chão* (plain style) for Portuguese buildings and *estilo desornamentado* (unadorned style) for Spanish ones.¹²

Thin moulded pilasters frame a rectangle into which the entrance arch is built. The latter was framed by both moulded pilasters and paired Corinthian columns in the round, today missing. Topping the arch is an *entablature with a low relief showing the royal arms of Portugal*. Above it one may see a niche framed by coupled half-columns for an image of a Christian saint, a feature that differentiates it from a classical Roman Arch. The columns of the niche and the ones below stood on bases decorated with a simple diamond shape.

These two examples show a characteristic use of the motif in secular structures. But it is its use in religious architecture that is of greater relevance for this discussion. In this respect the *Sé* or Episcopal Church, Damão, shows one of the most illuminating examples.

Constantino de Bragança, Viceroy of India, captured the Muslim city of Damão, which lies in the southern coast of Gujarat, in 1559. One of the most satisfactory uses of the Arch of Triumph in a plain style in India is to be found in the portal of the city's *Sé* or Episcopal Church (Fig. 7).

The charmingly provincial mathematical simplicity of its elevation consists of an acute triangle placed on a rectangle. The triangle in fact delineates a steep gable with a round window, while the rectangle on which it rests is the wall of the main façade. Its ground plan and interior are equally simple, the latter displaying picturesque whitewashed walls.

The only embellishment on the façade is the large Arch of Triumph, which stands austere in granite in front of the wall. It is quite similar to that of the ruins of Baçaim Fort, except that here paired classical columns on tall pedestals frame only the main arch. On the entablature above flat pilasters and a pediment, united to the lower storey by segmental

brackets, enclose a window. Typical Late Renaissance ornaments and geometric designs of various kinds, such as spheres on pedestals, top the entablature and pediment.

Jesuit Churches in India

Perhaps the most ingenious exploitation of the motif in India was by the Jesuit Fathers, whose building schemes form such an important part of the history of art of Colonial Iberian architecture in Asia and the Americas. It can be seen not only on the façade of the now vanished collegiate church of São Paulo in Velha Goa, but also in the Church of their College of São Paulo in Baçaim.

The Arch of Triumph decoration of their Baçaim church is of great interest for my main argument because at least one art historian has noticed its structural similarities to that of retables. David M. Kowal's recent article implies that not only the façade of the Baçaim collegiate church, but also that of Velha Goa should be so considered and he describes them as "retable-like." Not all art historians would classify any of the church fronts in Portuguese India as retable-façades, including those of the Jesuits, although it is difficult to dismiss D. Kowal's claim for these two churches.¹³

The name of the church at Baçaim, built between 1561-1579, is actually *Nome de Jesus* (Name of Jesus). Its large Arch of Triumph indeed resembles those appearing in a number of Renaissance retable-façades in Southern Spain, such as that of the church of St. Elizabeth, in Seville.¹⁴

As far as the Arch of Triumph motif itself is concerned, the most important sixteenth-century example in India may be seen in the Church of São Paulo in Velha Goa. Moreover, one could take 1560, the year when building of the new college and church of São Paulo were initiated, as signalling a more ambitious phase in the Society of Jesus' architectural projects in India.

When it was completed in 1572 São Paulo was not only the first major church built by the Jesuits in India, it was also one of the most masterful Portuguese churches in Asia, attesting to the importance that the Jesuit fathers attached to it.¹⁵ Its association with St. Francis Xavier

himself, as well as the whole of their missionary activity in Asia and the Far East, including Macao, accounts for this. Sadly, as in Macao's *Madre de Deus* (which apparently was popularly called St. Paul's because of the Goa college and church), today only a pitiful ruin remains of this artistic and historic treasure, with merely a section of the entrance façade with its stone portal standing (Fig. 8).

The entangled history of the church's abandonment and final decay need not concern us here. But conveniently for my main arguments, the small section that does survive displays an Arch of Triumph integrated to the wall. Here engaged Corinthian columns, paired and elegantly fluted, standing on bases decorated with diamond-shaped reliefs and carrying a broken entablature frame the half-circular entrance arch. Artistically and technically this feature is close to the sophistication of Italian Renaissance architecture.

Since neither the famous college nor its church survives, Mário Chicó attempted to reconstruct the latter by means of drawings based on contemporary descriptions. He believed it to be the prototype for one of two types of Indo-Portuguese churches. He also convincingly argued that of the two types that of the façade of São Paulo is the closer to Serlio and Italian Renaissance architecture.¹⁶

In Chicó's published drawing the façade of the church is shown as having three storeys, plus a pedimented attic. The three storeys are divided into three bays by projecting pilasters with entablatures, with openings for entrances and square and round windows. There is a niche for a titular image in the attic, which is joined to the floors below by the pilasters of the middle bay and by volutes.

It's an imaginative reconstruction, especially the fact that the façade has comparatively little decoration. It relies for effect on the more purely abstract lines of the design and on the main feature of its decoration, its Arch of Triumph.

The artistic and symbolic potency of the motif and its application as decoration to the façades of religious architecture was one that was not actually initiated by either the architects or the religious members of the Society of Jesus in Italy, Spain, Portugal or India. Rather it was one that the Jesuits had readily accepted and were able to effectively

exploit for the decoration of the façades of some of their Indian churches of the last third of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the next. The theme would later be adapted to the more ornate decoration of the façades of the churches of their Casa Professa in Velha Goa and of the Jesuit College in Diu.

Minor Basilica of Bom Jesus and the Diu Collegiate Church

Not only the Bom Jesús, but, as we shall see, the façades of the collegiate churches in Diu and of Madre de Deus in Macao point to a further stylistic development of the architecture of the Society of Jesus in Asia.

It could be argued that the façade decoration of the three mentioned buildings reveals a transitional phase, one in which a Late Mannerist decorative idiom is elaborated to the utmost. Moreover, in the Church of Madre de Deus in Macao this idiom already heralds the Baroque style.

In India even before Jules Simão's appointment as chief of the cathedral works the Jesuits had begun work on what was to be their finest building project in India. This was their Casa Professa, or Profess House, begun in 1583-85, whose cloisters were also designed by Simão (Figs. 9,10).

Today the church of the Profess House, originally dedicated to the Child Jesus, is better known as the Minor Basilica of Bom Jesus. It was started on the 24 November 1594 to the plans of G.B. Cairatti, an Italian architect from Milan, and completed about twelve years later. Perhaps its chief attraction today is the so-called incorrupt body of St. Francis Xavier and its magnificent 1690s funerary monument by Giovanbattista Foggini.¹⁷

The design of the front of the Bom Jesús, if not of its ground plan, indicates that the architect followed the general lines of the façade of St. Paul as reconstructed by M. Chicó (Fig. 9). There is the same division into three storeys and three bays, plus attic and pediment joined to the storeys below by gracefully curved brackets. Not only the façade but the whole building is crowned by numerous Herreresque spheres on bases placed as accents to the line of rising unifying pilasters. The Arch

of Triumph theme itself has been incorporated here into a more sumptuous design and at first glance is not immediately apparent.

Although it is not possible to discuss it in detail, one should at least take note of the articulation of the façade. Its luxuriously applied decoration is executed in a soft local stone and stands out from the brick wall, once coated in white plaster. It starts with Corinthian columns on three bays of the ground floor that connect to Doric and Corinthian pilasters in the two storeys above and a fanciful Mannerist Composite order with decorative shafts in the attic. But the overall design is highly compartmentalized by means of large buttresses framing the corners and central bay in the shape of classical brick pilasters rising on all storeys.

However, in spite of similarities, one can see a marked difference to the churches the Jesuits has built previously. Quite novel are the Mannerist carvings now embellishing practically the whole design of the façade of the Bom Jesus. The rendition of the symbol of the Society of Jesus in the attic, inside an oculus framed by a Mannerist cartouche upheld by eight angels, as well as other unusual details, is typical of the Mannerist style (Fig.10).

Started in 1601 the Collegiate Church of the Society in Diu is the second most important example of a new development in Jesuit churches in India. Its proper name is *Espírito Santo*, or Church of the Holy Spirit. The design of the front elevation basically reproduces that of the Bom Jesus, except that it has been greatly unified by the abolition of the third storey and the compartments created by the buttresses in that building (Figs. 11,12).

In ornamental extravagance its carved white stucco decoration outdoes the Bom Jesus and it has been argued that this is partly due to the influence of Indian architecture.

Both the influence of retables claimed by D. Kowal for the Jesuit portals showing arches of triumph in Velha Goa and Baçaim, as well as the decorative complexity of the fronts of the Bom Jesus and *Espiritu Santo* are new developments. They point the way towards the even more novel departures seen in the façade of the Church of Madre de Deus in Macao.

The Façade of São Paulo, Macao

These novel trends in Jesuit architecture in India occurring at about the turn of the century may have reached their apogee in the church of their new college in Macao, opened to the public on Christmas day, 1603 (Figs. 1, 13).

However, amongst other important differences with churches in India, here there is no Arch of Triumph as such: there is not even an entrance arch, but straightforward lintel-and-post doorways. Could the reason for its absence be that Portugal never did conquer Macao? This is an attractive conjecture, although a more likely explanation is that the architect or designer of the façade of St. Paul's was simply following St. Charles Borromeo's recommendations to architects concerning the façades of ecclesiastical buildings. In his influential *Instructions* of 1572 Charles Borromeo recommends the use of lintel and post for entrances of Christian churches instead of the arch, which he considered a pagan structure¹⁸. Be that as it may, the idea that the façade of Madre de Deus represents a symbolic arch of triumph of sorts, although one not based directly on an Arch of Triumph but on some other structure, should not be discarded altogether.

Apparently seventeenth century visitors, many of whom had seen the churches of the Jesuits in Goa, did not find the lack of arches too unusual. What they do imply in their chronicles is that this façade was something particularly surprising within the architecture of the Society of Jesus, not only in Asia but elsewhere. The way they reacted not only to the magnificent interior of the church but also to its façade is significant. In the case of the latter were they looking at something not merely visually striking but also quite novel? As already surmised at the start of this paper, were they in fact looking at the first retable-façade in China?

This is not as improbable as it may seem. Today, once certain historical and art-historical associations are made, the surviving façade of the church recalls the outburst of altarpiece construction that took place in the Iberian Peninsula and its overseas colonies from the last decades of the sixteenth century.

Until the Portuguese revolt of 1640 and the restoration of the House

of Bragança, Philip IV of Spain ruled Portugal as Philip III during the construction of the façade. Before him two other Philips had reigned over Spain and Portugal, beginning with Philip II, crowned Philip I of Portugal in 1580. Throughout most of this highly controversial historical period very large altarpieces in a classical style were being built in Spain and Portugal. The prime instance of late sixteenth-century classical altarpieces of huge dimensions is the massive main retable of the church of the Escorial.

It is rather frustrating that no known contemporary source actually establishes any sort of comparison between the frontispiece of St. Paul and these retables. Even in our days specialists have ignored the connection. The reason may be that the façade of St. Paul does not conform to known examples of retable-façades. Even in the largest surviving examples the actual retable configuration is contained within the elevation by various means, such as the large buttresses found in *Santa Maria A Grande* in Pontevedra. They indicate to the viewer that this is a simulated stone altarpiece cleverly applied to the front of the building for his or her admiration and astonishment. At St. Paul's there is no containment, no similar signalling to the beholder that its designer intended a metaphorical retable. Here the altarpiece simile seems to extend to the whole of the church's front. This fact would certainly make this façade unique, but would not necessarily exclude it from classification as a retable-façade.

Given the lack of primary sources that would justify such a classification one must largely rely on the visual evidence. The following section shows how an analysis of the façade's structure and of its iconography can lead to reasonable conclusions supporting this hypothesis.

Artists and Dates of Construction

Who the architect and artists of the surviving frontispiece were and when they built it is a question that has eluded scholars due to a lack of contemporary sources. These sources plainly state that the architect of the church was the Italian Jesuit Carlo Spinola and one can surmise that he drafted the design of the elevation, but no one really knows. Spinola died a martyr's death in 1622, before the construction of the façade.

Work on it could only have started after the beatification of St. Francis Borgia at the end of 1624. His statue and that of St. Luís Gonzaga appear in niches on the second storey of the façade with pedestals only bearing the title *beatus*, not saints. Francis Borgia was only canonised in 1670 but had been beatified by Pope Urban VIII on the 23rd November 1624. Luís Gonzaga had already been beatified in 1605 (Figs 14.15).

The statues of Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier also appear in the second storey and on their pedestals are given the correct title of saints. Both had been declared saints in 1622 with spectacular canonisation ceremonies in Rome, Spain and Portugal. We know from a 1644 Annual Letter written from the college in Macao that the façade was completed the year that this letter was dated. It seems therefore very probable that the frontispiece was constructed between 1625 and 1644 and that the impulse for its construction or reconstruction was very likely the canonisation of Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier.

The initiative for founding the Macao College as the seat of the Japan missions, later expanded to include China, was due to Alessandro Valignano, the Father Superior and Father Visitor of the Jesuits in the East. As stated, the architect of the church was Father Carlo Spinola, an Italian from Naples. The reputed decoration of the façade at the hands of Chinese and Christian Japanese craftsmen was very likely carried out under the direction of Giovanni Nicolao, an Italian Jesuit painter from Nola. From this it is only too obvious that Italian Jesuits with a Late Renaissance mentality were highly influential in its creation, something characteristic of the historical period in question.

J.E. McCall, whose pioneering research is fundamental to the subject, has studied the activities of Giovanni Nicolao. Yoshitomo Okamoto, in his *Namban Bijutsu*, also gives important insights on Father Nicolao, who had actually opened a school of fine arts for young Japanese seminarians as apprentices in Western painting, printmaking and sculpture in various missionary colleges in Japan.¹⁹ But apart from Giacomo Niva, a Chinese-Japanese painter and the most brilliant of Nicolao's pupils, we hardly know the names of the other Chinese and Japanese artists who may have formed Nicolao's team in Macao. Unfortunately, this was apparently Jesuit practice at the time. Their famous annual letters sent from China or their Macao College, today

kept in the archives of the Society of Jesus in Rome and elsewhere, indicate that they were understandably interested in the names of their martyrs, but much less so in those of their artists, no matter what names contemporary researchers may have been able to find. Nevertheless, the sculptures of Chinese lions and the reliefs of Japanese flora, which decorate the façade, show that under their wing these mainly anonymous Asian artists were at least free to express their native sensibilities.

The 1644 Annual Letter

What cannot be established, except through a careful examination of the façade, is if these artists were under the influence of contemporary altarpieces. But again it should be recalled just how important the design of retables had become in the Iberian universe. Latin American Baroque and Rococo retable-façades clearly testify to the ascendancy of the features of retables over those of retable-façades.²⁰ I would argue that a similar influence was already at work in the design of the façade of St. Paul's.

The *Litterae Annua* of 1644 for the Japan Province penned by António Ferreira, in the archives of the Historical Institute of the Society of Jesus, in Rome, is an exceptional document of exceptional relevance for this paper. It is already known to scholars from competent but slightly inaccurate eighteenth-century transcripts by Fr. José Montanha in the *Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino* in Lisbon, and has been quoted since 1955 by Fr. Videira Pires and others. But the original manuscript has remained quietly filed and largely ignored in the Archives of the Society of Jesus in Rome. The original passage in the *Annua* that describes the façade as it reached completion in 1644, and which I would like to quote to the honourable audience and members of the Royal Asiatic Society in Hong Kong for the first time in public form my translation of the Portuguese text, reads as follows:

'Alms were given this year to crown the main façade of this Church, which is all of carved stone in a Roman manner. From top to bottom it has three orders of columns with their pedestals, six arched niches in good proportion; four of the ones which are half domes are on the first frieze amongst the orders of the second order of columns, each by itself next to the opening of the three windows of the choir: in them there are the half length figures of our Saints Ignatius, Xavier, Borja and Gonzaga,

each one in his niche, over stone bases with their names carved on them *in the same order as we have them on the main altar*: all in bronze with their foundry signs: *hands and faces painted red; vestments gilded throughout the length of the body*, with no other colour. On the second frieze and third storey with columns that rest on the middle window the Image of Our Lady of the Assumption, titular saint of the Church, has its niche, which image steps on a large gilded moon; over her head two Angels in the round of the same metal appear to be holding a closed crown, each one of which holds out his arm on the side where he is. Below these another pair seem to go through the air giving a hand in favour of Our Lady's ascent.

The third frieze, which runs underneath the last storey, gave place to the last niche. It has on its base the Image of the infant Jesus with a cross on the globe of the world on his hand and which does not differ from the others in anything, except that it is of lesser height than them. Inside the field of the pointed summit which makes a straight triangle - on which rests the stone pedestal on which is to be fixed the iron cross with rod arms that is the crown of the whole work, for which alms were given this year as I said above - from the middle of rays carved in the stone, a kind of image of a dove goes fourth, representing the Holy Spirit with its wings wide open, in gilded bronze and of significant size. Note: for all of this magnificent and sumptuous work expenses were met with alms' (*italics mine*).

There are several quite remarkable points here. Apart from their gilded garments, the first is that the faces and hands of the images of the Jesuit saints were painted red. That these bronzes were painted is highly unusual. If the faces and hands were actually painted red is perhaps arguable. But the gilded garments of the four bronzes could well have been intended to imitate the technique of gilding practised on carved statues since Late Gothic retables.

Brightly painted images are known in medieval Spanish portals, an obsolete practice in the seventeenth century. It was, however, still in use in the case of some Latin American retable-façades, as the researches of Humberto Rodríguez-Camilloni on the façade of San Francisco, Lima, Peru, have disclosed.²¹

What has equally remained unknown because it is missing in José

Montanha's transcripts, is the fact that the main altar of Madre de Deus, long lost after the 1835 fire (if not before), had statues of the four Jesuit saints in an order that echoed that of the façade. This third point implies that the design of the façade of Madre de Deus may have been conceived in relationship to that of the main retable inside. The religious and artistic interaction between a retable-façade and a main retable is a development known in some Latin American retable-façades at a later date, of which that of the Jesuit College in Tepozotlán, outside Mexico City, may be the most remarkable example.

The Architectural Structure of the Façade

One of the most remarkable features of this work's design is the use of projecting classical orders as main structural elements. However, it is not the use of the orders per se that relates this design to contemporary retables.

From the point of view of architecture, what the use of the Ionic order for the first storey, the Corinthian order for the second and the Composite for the third and fourth reveals is a rather a sophisticated knowledge of the canons of ancient Roman architecture (Fig. 16). This is perfectly compatible with contemporary architectural practice. At the time Renaissance and Mannerist theorists had made these canons accessible to architects throughout Europe in a number of illustrated publications.

Whoever designed the façade of St. Paul's had evidently had a thorough grounding on these canons. How did he get such knowledge? Most likely from the sixteenth-century illustrated books by Serlio, Palladio or Vignola. Editions of their books circulated not only in Italy but also in the Iberian Peninsula. As the researches of Sylvie Deswarte show, knowledge of the Vitruvian orders had reached Lisbon, Portugal, quite likely around 1549 via *Da Pintura Antigua* by the Portuguese Francisco de Holanda. Holanda had underhandedly appropriated his main ideas from Serlio and published them in a luxurious edition as his own.²² In Spain, Francisco de Villalpando had already translated Books III and IV a few years before Holanda's book appeared, and his translation was known in Portugal.

These classical columns are important for my arguments because

they stand free of the wall in a way that is not usual in the more orthodox building practices of architects, but which had many precedents in sixteenth and seventeenth-century Iberian altarpieces. They appear in the four storeys of the front as if they were delineating the nine vertical bays of a large post-Tridentine altarpiece (Fig. 17).

Although both Hugo-Brunt, of the Department of Architecture of the University of Hong Kong, and Professor J. B. Bury have already noted that they are freestanding, their arguments for the façade follow a different line. As an architect, Hugo-Brunt was sensitive to the fact that much of the architectural elements of the façade were used in a highly unorthodox decorative way.²³ But neither Hugo-Brunt nor J.B. Bury connect this feature to either retables or retable-façades.

However, Professor George Kubler, of Harvard University, has noted that the theme of the projecting column with entablature, in which a continuum is formed in order to lead the eye upwards, is one that would later become a characteristic feature of Latin American retable-façades.²⁴

Likewise in the façade of St. Paul's each column supports the column directly above it in order to create a vertical ascent that leads the eye upwards.

The columns' bases shafts and capitals were laboriously carved from three separate granite blocks, with practically all the shafts carved out of one piece. They could almost be the highly decorative wooden supports of an altarpiece, with no genuine functional purpose. Although the unorthodox employment of classical columns and other architectural features is characteristic of Italian Mannerism this kind of decorative, juggling use of supports and pinnacles is much more typical of the artistic idiom of Mannerist altarpieces in Spain and Portugal.

Contemporary accounts are obviously right in praising the classical erudition shown by the designer of the façade. However, closer inspection reveals that not all details conform to orthodox classical canons. Some of the subsidiary sculptures adorning the façade are of Chinese or Japanese origin. At the extreme sides of the two upper attics, right next to obelisks, there are four Chinese lions emerging in front of squat corner obelisks or ornamental balls on pedestals (Fig 18). Another

pair emerges at the back of the fourth storey. These six lions obviously served the same purpose as the gargoyles of Gothic churches, and may be void of iconographic meaning. In this case more important than classical orthodoxy for the Jesuits was evidently the incorporation and integration of Chinese and Japanese decorative motifs.

Purpose of Decoration

One of the most striking features betraying the influence of retables is the profusion of religious symbols adorning the walls of the frontispiece, an esoteric hieroglyphic language growing in iconographic intensity as it moves towards the top. In purely architectural terms this richness of imagery appears to be mainly artistic and non-functional, and is not found to this extent in the decoration of more conventional church façades. However, it is something typical of Counter-Reformation altarpieces, one of its main purposes being a didactic one. Not only the structure, but also the decorative dialogue of the façade also reveals it to be a mixture of medieval scholasticism and Renaissance classicism.

Another characteristic of retables found in the façade is the hierarchy and progression of symbols and sculptured images that goes from bottom to top. For example, instead of the geometric decoration of the first storey, the second storey's bays display naturalistic bas-reliefs of palm trees. The bronzes themselves start with images of blessed and saints, above which appear those of the Virgin and Jesus.

The upper half of the façade consists of a third storey united to those below by carved volutes, and a fourth storey or attic joined to it by segmental brackets and crowned by a large pediment displaying the dove of the Holy Spirit.

In this upper half there are several Chinese inscriptions, further attesting to the didactic purpose of the decoration. Although these apparently were not the work of Chinese artists knowledgeable of calligraphy, ²⁵ they are quite legible and visible from the upper steps and the entrance courtyard below. There can be little doubt that their main purpose was to make the iconographic and calligraphic messages of the frontispiece, largely concentrated in the upper half of the façade, clear to the Chinese population and to potential Chinese converts.

True, the originality and beauty of carvings and images constituted an aesthetic experience aimed at everyone in the city. But one cannot help thinking that this complex text, with its erudite cross-referencing, was partly conceived with the more literate and bookish administrative and literati class in mind. After all, attracting the upper and educated classes had recently evolved as a novel Jesuit method of missionization that had borne rich fruit for Matteo Ricci and his confreres in the Chinese mainland.

One of the Chinese inscriptions states: 'The Holy Mother tramples on the dragon's head,' a reference to the Book of Genesis (Fig. 19). Both the left and the right scrolls have carved inscriptions in relief (as opposed to those explaining the dragon, which are incised), consisting of six large vertical characters. Like those on the dragon, they explain the two images spreading horizontally across the scroll inside a frame. The ones on the left, before the claws of another strange monster, with tail, short antlers, a snout, large bat's wings, breasts and shot through with an arrow, read: 'The Devil tempts mankind to do evil things' (Fig. 20).

On the right we read: 'Remember Death and do not sin,' a kind of *memento mori* epigram at the bony feet of a grimacing skeleton also shot through with an arrow (Fig. 19).

Main Image

References to the Devil, who tempts humanity to sin (whose wages is death), form part of the complicated iconography of the façade. Directly or indirectly the entire iconographic programme revolves around its titular image depicting the Assumption of Mary (Fig. 21)

It is the largest bronze in the frontispiece, measuring practically six feet in height, and like all the bronzes of the façade of rather shallow 3-D casting and flat at the base. It is surrounded by reliefs of music-playing and incense-burning angels, amongst the finest in colonial religious imagery by East Asian artists (Fig. 22). The Assumption is combined with an Infant *Salvator Mundi* in the attic above, and with the Dove of the Holy Spirit in the pediment (Fig. 23).

The Virgin's Assumption in bodily form into heaven is one of the

most inscrutable of Roman Catholic mysteries. Of Eastern European origin, it was popularised in large numbers of altarpieces throughout Europe from the Late Gothic onwards.

What made it so specific to Roman-Catholic ritual is the powerfully Eucharistic connotations given to it by Counter-Reformation theologians and retable programmers. From retables the theme passed to retable-façades, as seen in *Santa Maria A Grande* in Pontevedra.

Today there are no angels crowning the head of the image of Mary as she soars to heaven, nor is there a half moon beneath her feet. But the impressive array of symbols carved on the bays, bases and end-volutes of the third storey show that many are attributes related not so much to the Assumption, as to a type of the Virgin known as the *Tota Pulchra*. Moreover, there is a closer correspondence between the latter and the image of Mary as the Immaculate Conception (Mary conceived by God without original sin, a controversial religious belief, at the time bitterly contested by the Dominicans). The name *Tota Pulchra*, by which this image is known to art historians is closely linked to the concept of immaculate. It is derived from a passage in the Cantic of Canticles singing the virtues of the beloved, in which King Solomon, the reputed author, proclaims: "*Tota pulchra es amica mea, et macula non est in te*" ("You are wholly beautiful, beloved, and there is no stain in you"), (translation mine).

In all likelihood the artists of the frontispiece created their masterpiece from prints illustrating the attributes of the *Tota Pulchra* following a complex theological programme. Typical are the pediment reliefs of St. Paul's showing a sun and a moon, referring to the woman *pulchra ut luna* and *electa ut sol*, derived from The Cantic of Canticles and very similar to those depicted in contemporary prints (Fig. 24).

A good indication that the artists copied or derived their images from such prints is the fact that not all the symbols of the *Tota Pulchra* originate in The Cantic of Canticles. Some evolved from the Litanies of the Virgin (including the more popular Litany of Loreto) and a number of Old Testament sources, such as Genesis, Ezekiel and the Book of Proverbs. These are also present in the decoration of the façade.

What makes this supposition reasonable is that numerous

impressions and variations of this image circulated at the time in Europe; 26 the Jesuit fathers had actually been instrumental in introducing similar prints to the East. Apart from prints, Charles Boxer, amongst others, has remarked how the Portuguese had carried *retablos* with them to Japan.²⁷ It therefore seems equally plausible that related altarpieces might have been present in the minds of the artists of the façade.

Besides the mentioned attributes, the unknown programmer of the decoration also incorporated themes from St John's Book of Revelation 12. 1 and 12.3 (John 12.2 was by now conveniently glossed over in artistic representations of the theme), as well as from other sources.

Such a sophisticated and theological knowledge of Marian themes reveals the mind of a programmer ingenious enough to merit a few words. Although the identity of its author is unknown, Carlo Spinola, the architect of Madre de Deus and the artist Giovanni Nicolao, director of the art school in Japan, come immediately to mind. But I think one should also consider Dom Diogo Correa Valente as another possible candidate for authorship, mainly on account of the contents of his library in the College of St. Paul.²⁸

The Jesuit Diogo Valente was the learned but controversial Bishop of Japan resident at the College of São Paulo from 1619 to 1624, years when the façade was probably being redesigned and its construction begun. In 1624 Dom Diogo had to leave for Goa in a hurry under the shadow of the violent quarrels that agitated Macao because members of his own order had apparently partisanly elected him as Bishop of the city. But he returned again as Bishop in 1630 and so remained until his death three years later. When he was buried in the chancel of the church of Madre de Deus the decoration of the frontispiece must have been in progress. However, this is a question that can only be settled by future research.

Symbolic Meaning

The interpretation of symbols relating to Mary (and the other images) is a fascinating but complex subject that cannot be discussed in detail here. However, it is worth considering some of those adorning the façade to get a sense of their poetic and mystical quality.

Popular Jesuit devotional manuals of the times prove useful. A good example is a 1617 book of poetry that was quickly disseminated after its author's death. The *Officium parvum Immaculata Conceptionis, or Small Office*, by the Spanish Jesuit St. Alfonso Rodriguez intersperses a brilliant cluster of Marian symbols amongst its prayers. Besides the Fountain, the Spotless Mirror, the Enclosed Garden and the Cypress, the *Small Office* also sings the praises of the Palm tree, the New Star of Jacob, the Eastern Door of the Temple of Jerusalem, the Port of Shipwrecks and others. Thus, the closed door underneath the decorative pyramid topped by a globe seen on the farthest right-hand bay of the façade can be equated to Rodriguez's *porta orientalis* of the Temple of Jerusalem, taken from Ezekiel, which remained ever closed after the Lord *Yahweh* had passed through it.

Other carved symbols can be deciphered with other contemporary texts. For instance, one of the three left bay reliefs carved on the base of the third storey shows the seven-branched candlestick of the Jewish Tabernacle. Here it is reasonable to infer that this is a literary conceit typical of much of sixteenth century Mannerist literature in Europe. Thus, through allusion Mary's immaculate earthly body has been likened to a tabernacle and related to the Eucharistic mystery. This is because Mary carried the baby Jesus in her womb in the same way that the consecrated host is housed in a tabernacle, a cryptic simile known from Counter-Reformation religious literature.²⁹

Such an interpretation is further confirmed by the reliefs decorating the section of the base of the third storey below the two adjoining bays, as well as the left volute. They show a stylised vine and a small monstrelance amid branches with berries.

These reliefs correspond to the flowering plants that adorn the mirror on the right. Like the flowered pedestals of the columns, these plants seem to be more decorative than symbolic, depicting specimens of Chinese or Japanese flora in which Far Eastern artists have been encouraged to integrate more traditional painterly images with images of Western origin. As is the case with the gargoyles in the form of Chinese lions, they attest to the significant role played by Chinese and Japanese artists in the design and execution of the decoration of the church.

Other Images

A salutation in St. Alfonso's Office praises the *palma patientiae* and the *cedrus castitatis*. This allusion to both cedar and palm trees derives from Ecclesiasticus, 24, 17-18. When it comes to the date palms of the second storey, it is very much a part of the stock-in-trade immaculist symbols, particularly dear to southern Spanish poets and painters and also known from early prints, all praising Mary's Immaculate Conception. But these may equally refer to the triumph of the Society of Jesus, with the canonisation its main protagonists, Sts. Ignatius of Loyola and Francis Xavier in 1622 and the recent beatification of Francis Borgia and Luis Gonzaga.

In the fourth storey or attic The Child Jesus raises his right hand and holds an empty left hand forward. The latter undoubtedly held the lost orb mentioned in the 1644 *Annua*. It is a pose and attribute typical of the kind of devotional religious image known as an infant *Salvator Mundi*, that is, Infant Jesus Saviour of the World. The type of "Menino Jesus" as *Salvator Mundi* was well disseminated in Portuguese colonies in the East during the seventeenth-century, as a large number of Indo-Portuguese and Chinese ivory statuettes, usually nude, tend to confirm. Here the Child Jesus is framed by reliefs of angels displaying the *Arma Christi*, or symbols of Christ's suffering on the Cross. According to Christian theology, the ironically named *arma* are the "weapons" Christ used in his earthly battle against evil in order to redeem humankind. They were profoundly mystical symbols popularised in devotional literature and images since Medieval times in Europe.

The pediment is decorated with the large bronze of the Holy Spirit, originally gilded and emerging from rays, with four stars framing it. Next to it are square slabs of the sun and moon, with which the iconography of the main image of the Assumption is finally brought to full completion.

The dove of the Holy Spirit hovers over both Mother and Child with wings far outspread in an image that seems uncannily like a visual illustration of the Holy Spirit in the opening lines of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. As bronze sculpture it is impressive enough today; with its original gilding it must have appeared awe inspiring to the citizens of Macao and to seventeenth century and later visitors before the fire.

The prolific use of symbols for the decoration of the façade and the mystical poetry thus created is typical of the way images were used in the decoration of carved wooden retables. It is a topic that could be elaborated at great length, although unfortunately it is not possible here.

Conclusion

In this talk I have endeavoured to elucidate my main contention concerning the façade of St. Paul's by pointing out the way certain of its principal features relate to retables, such as the uniquely decorative nature of its classical supports and the strongly Eucharistic connotations of its decoration.

This fact connects it to Spanish retable-façades, a kind of structure not typically Portuguese but also appearing in Portuguese architecture at this time. Moreover, two significant artistic developments in Jesuit architecture in Portuguese India could be said to prefigure the originality of the façade of St. Paul's. Firstly, there is some evidence of incipient retable-façades decorating a few of the churches of the Society of Jesus in India in which the Arch of Triumph is used as principal decorative motif. Although not possible here, Secondly, at the turn of the century the Jesuits in India were willing to admit the use of a more elaborate artistic idiom for the façades of their churches, in contrast to the plain styles preferred in the Iberian Peninsula during the latter half of the sixteenth century.

Hopefully my extended inquiry has provided convincing answers to the intriguing similarities I believe exist between the unusual features seen in the façade of St. Paul's and those more characteristic of a retable-façade, even if the façade discussed remains an elusive artistic work sui generis.

NOTES

¹ Guillén-Nuñez, César, "The Relationship of the Façade of the Jesuit Collegiate Church of Madre de Deus, Macao, to Retable-Façades", M.Phil. Thesis, University College London, 1997. Guillén-Nuñez, C., Macau (*Images of Asia*), Oxford University Press, Hong Kong, 1984, pp. 52-3.

² Vid. Rafael Moreira, "As Formas Artísticas", in *História dos Portugueses no*

Extremo Oriente, Vol. I, Tomo I, *Em Torno de Macau*, (A.H. de Oliveira Marques editor), Fundação Oriente, 1998, p.489. More recently also M. Nishiyama, "The Church of St. Paul in Macao under the Transformation of Portuguese Architecture in their Colonies": a paper presented in the *Modern Asian Architecture Network* conferences held in Macao, 22-26 July, 2001.

To the best of my knowledge only two other papers on the Church of St. Paul's agree that its façade is a retable-façade. See G. Couceiro, "The Church of the College of Madre de Deus", and F.A. Baptista Pereira, "A Conjectural Reconstruction of the Church of the College of Mater Dei", as well as C. Guillén-Núñez's commentaries to both papers; all in *Religion and Culture: An International Symposium Commemorating the IVth Centenary of the University College of St. Paul, Macao, 28 Nov.-1 Dec. 1994*, Cultural Institute of Macao, and Ricci Institute, Uni. of S. Francisco, Macao, 1999, pp. 177-248. G. Couceiro's paper was adapted from his PhD thesis, "L'Eglise de Notre-Dame de l'Assomption (ou de St. Paul) à Macao et L'Art de la Compagnie de Jesus en Chine: Art et Adaptation". Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (en Sorbonne), IV Sect. Sciences Historiques et Philologiques. It has been recently published as *A Igreja de S. Paulo de Macau*, Lisbon, 1997. Baptista Pereira's paper was published in *As Ruínas de S. Paulo, Um Monumento para o Futuro / St. Paul's Ruins, A Monument Towards the Future*, (bilingual exht. catalogue), Setúbal, 1994, pp. 63-85. Although both these papers missed or ignored a number of important arguments by previous researchers on the subject, including the original dedication of the church, the iconography of the decoration and my identification of the façade as a retable-façade, they have informative sections on the ground plan of the church and other points. Videira Pires first pointed out that the original dedication of the church was to the Assumption. Vid. B. Videira Pires, "Igrejas e Cemiterios Antigos de Macau (I)", *Religião e Patria*, Ano XLVIII - No. 14, 15 Abril, 1962, p. 214 and p. 216.

Pioneering writings on the façade, its decoration and artists begin with J.F. Marques Pereira, "Em prol de umas ruínas (A proposito do frontespicio do Collegio de S. Paulo, em Macau)", in *Tai-Ssi-Yang-Kuo, Archivos e Annaes do Extremo-Oriente Portugues*, Lisbon, 1899-1902, Serie I, II, pp. 483-92. This is followed by J.D. Francis's article, "Macao's San Paolo, A symbolical Ruin", *The Macao Review*, Macao, 1930, pp. 3, 14. J.D. Francis first noticed that the iconography of the façade was a didactic sermon in stone. After these studies came those of J.M. Braga, "A Igreja de S. Paulo", *Boletim Eclesiástico da Diocese de Macau*, April 1932, pp. 246-7. M. Teixeira, *A fachada de S. Paulo*, Macao, 1940. _____, *Macao e a Sua Diocese*, Macao, 1956, III, pp. 178-81, passim.

M. Hugo-Brunt, "An Architectural Survey of the Jesuit Seminary Church of St. Paul's, Macao", *Journal of Oriental Studies*, Vol. I, No.2, July 1954, University of Hong Kong, pp.1-21. J.B. Bury, "A Jesuit Façade in China", *The Architectural Review*, VI, CXXIV, No. 743, London, Dec. 1958, pp. 412-3. _____, "Macao's St. Paul", in *Actas do III Colóquio Internacional de Estudos Luso-Brasileiros*, II, Lisbon, 1960, pp. 30-6. A version of the latter, first delivered in 1957, is found in J.B. Bury, "A Igreja de São Paulo", *Arquitetura e Arte no Brasil Colonial*, São Paulo, 1991, pp. 154-61. With few exceptions Chinese gazetteers of the Ming and Ching Dynasties seem to have ignored the faáade altogether.

- ³ Guillen-Nuñez, Cesar, "Some observations on the architecture of the Jesuits in the Orient", in *St. Paul's Ruins. A Monument towards the Future*, (bilingual Portuguese-English exht. catalogue, directed by F.A. Baptista Pereira), Lisbon-Macau, September-December, 1994, pp.49-53. Unfortunately, in this catalogue part of the original English text is corrupted by numerous typographical errors. There is however an excellent Portuguese translation, although a few lines of the original have been misinterpreted.
- ⁴ For the dimensions of St. Paul's façade vid. Hugo-Brunt, op. cit., p. 9, plates 2-10, and plate 13.
- ⁵ *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667*, Hakluyt Soc., London, 1919, III, Part I, pp. 162-3.
- ⁶ Reynaldo dos Santos, *Historia da Arte em Portugal*, III, pp. 34-6. R.C. Smith, *The Art of Portugal*, p. 86.

The literature on Spanish and Portuguese retable-façades is extensive but often only found piecemeal in more general works on Spanish and Portuguese architecture. Two pioneering researchers were B. Bevan, *History of Spanish Architecture*, London, 1938, p.135; and G. Kubler, in Kubler and Sortia, *Art and Architecture in Spain and Portugal and their American Dominions, 1500-1800*, Penguin Books, 1959, p.1. It should be noted that in the latter San Gregorio's façade is wrongly described as that of the chapel, rather than the College of San Gregorio.

The following is a selected sample of other important writing on these structures. A. Rodriguez G. de Ceballos, *La Iglesia y el Convento de San Esteban de Salamanca*, Salamanca, 1987. F.Checa, *Pintura y Escultura del Renacimiento*

en España 1450-1600, Madrid, 1988, p. 58. Some of the more important writings on Latin American retable-façades, dealing also with those of the Jesuits, Dominicans and other religious orders, include, D. Angulo Iníiguez, E. Marco Dorta, M.J. Buschiazzo, *Historia del Arte Hispano-Americano*, II, pp. 427-38, 559-66, passim. J.A. Baird Jr., *The Churches of Mexico, 1530-1810*, University of California, 1962, pp. 22-3, 37-9, passim. A. Benavides, *La Arquitectura en el Virreinato del Peru y en la Capitanía General de Chile*, Santiago, 1941, p. 54, passim. M. Collier, *The Sagrario of Lorenzo Rodriguez*, Yale University, 1973 (unpublished thesis). E. Harth-Terré, "El Inafronte de la catedral de Lima", *Arquitecto Peruano*, 1941. _____, "La obra de la Compañía de Jesus en la arquitectura virreinal peruana", *Mercurio Peruano*, 1942. P. Kelemen, *Baroque and Rococo in Latin America*, New York, 1961, p. 123 passim. A.B. Louchheim, "The church façades of Lorenzo Rodriguez: A focal point for the study of Mexican Churrigueresque architecture", Inst. of Fine Arts, New York University, 1941 (unpublished M.A. thesis). G. Navarro, *La iglesia de la Compañía de Quito*, Madrid, 1930. R.C. Smith, *A First History of Latin American Art, The 2nd. volume*, Washington, 1952, pp. 157-61. M. Toussaint, "La catedral de Zacatecas y el arte del Virreinato", *Anales Instituto de Investigaciones Esteticas*, Mexico, 1947. _____, *La Catedral de Mexico y el Sagrario Metropolitano*, Mexico, 1948. H.E. Wethey, *Colonial Architecture and Sculpture in Peru*, Harvard University Press, 1949, pp. 53-6, 58-60, passim. B. Vargas-Lugo, *La iglesia de Sta. Prisca de Taxco*, Mexico, 1974.

Late in the eighteenth century the fronts of Jesuit churches in Guanajuato, Tepozotlan and elsewhere in Mexico display several of the most important retable-façades. M. Diaz, *La Arquitectura de los jesuitas en Nueva España*, Mexico, 1982, pp. 78-80. A. von Wuthenau, *Tepozotlan*, Mexico, 1941.

⁷ Gran Enciclopedia Gallega, XXV, Santiago, 1974, pp. 138-9. Camøn Aznar, *Summa Artis*, XVII, pp. 106-8. _____, *Summa Artis*, XVIII, pp. 96-7. F. Checa Goitia, *Arquitectura Española del Siglo XVI*, XI, Madrid, 1953, pp. 47-8.

⁸ Important carved retables were also produced in northern Europe during the fifteenth century, e.g., that of the Marienkirche, LÄbeck, or that by an anonymous master of the School of Cologne, of c. 1434, in Frankfurt Cathedral. In Flemish altarpieces the theme is quite common. W. Kinkel, *Der Dom zu Frankfurt am Main*, München-Berlin, 1988, p. 18.

⁹ Pearson, M.N., *The New Cambridge History of India: The Portuguese in India*, Cambridge, 1987. *New Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 21, University of Chicago,

1993, p. 154. Morais, Carlos Alexandre de, *Cronologia Geral da Índia Portuguesa*, Lisbon-Macao, 1993. Ms. Amita Bairg, UNESCO heritage consultant on India, kindly provided number of churches and convents in 17th century Velha Goa.

- ¹⁰ Arches of Triumph appeared in church portals at the time in Andalusia, in Southern Spain. For Vandelvira's career and famous treatise on architecture, see Barbé-Coquelin de Lisle, *Tratado de Arquitectura de Alonso de Vandelvira*, 2 vols. Albacete, 1977.
- ¹¹ V. Fraser. "Architecture and Imperialism in sixteenth-century Spanish America", *Art History*, 9, No. 3, Sept. 1986, pp. 325-35. _____, "The Architecture of conquest: building in the Viceroyalty of Peru, 1535-1633", 2 volumes, Ph.D. diss., Uni. of Essex, Colchester, 1984.
- ¹² George Kubler's classic thesis on the plain style of Portuguese architecture forms the subject of his book, *Portuguese Plain Architecture: Between Spices and Diamonds, 1521-1706*, Middletown, Conn., Wesleyan University Press, 1972. For a recent discussion of this style, see Miguel Soromenhos' article. "Classicismo, italianismo e 'estilo chão'. O ciclo filipino", in *História da Arte Portuguesa*, direcção Paulo Pereira, Volume 2, Lisbon, 1995, pp. 377-403. See in particular pp. 383-86.
- ¹³ David M. Kowal, "Innovation and Assimilation: The Jesuit Contribution to Architectural Development in Portuguese India", in *The Jesuits, Culture, Sciences, And The Arts, 1540-1773*, University of Toronto Press, 1999, pp. 482 and 488. It is somewhat ironic that D. Kowal uses the term "retable-like" for the portal decoration of the façade of São Paulo. Professor J.B. Bury dismissed an exact term in the first assessment of my MPhil thesis (see note 1) as not precise enough, one which I eventually gave up.
- ¹⁴ See flap of vol. 2, in Barbé-Coquelin de Lisle, op. cit, for illustration of the seldom reproduced portal of Saint Elizabeth Church.
- ¹⁵ *Documenta Indica*, (edited by Josef Wicki) Rome, "Monumenta Historica Soc. Iesu", 18 vols, 1948-1988. For São Paulo, see vol. 4, pp. 726-27; vol. 8, pp. 584-86; vol. 9, p. 491. For an interesting reconstruction of the site of Church and College see. Schurhammer, G., *Francis Xavier*, vol. 8, Jesuit Historical Institute, Rome, 1980, p. 457.

- ⁷ Mario T. Chico, "Algumas observações acerca da arquitectura da Companhia de Jesus no distrito de Goias: igrejas, fachada, planta e espaço interior", *Gracia de Orla*, Lisboa, número especial 1956, pp.257-72.
- ⁸ See Professor Giorgio Bonsanti's elucidating article dealing mainly with St. Francis Xavier's mausoleum in the Bom Jesus, published in *Vélha Goa*, exhibition catalogue of A. Martinelli's photos, Fundação Oriente, Macao, September 15, 2000, (unnumbered). However, vid. D.Kowal, op. cit., p. 488, who states the Jesuit Domingo Fernandes, aided by J. Simão were architects of Bom Jesus. Also *Documenta Indica*.
- ⁹ For Charles Borromeo's Instructions, see E.C. Voelker, "Charles Borromeo's *Instructiones Fabricae et Supellectilis Ecclesiasticae*, 1577. A Translation with Commentary and Analysis", Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1977.
- ¹⁰ J.E. McCall, "Early Jesuit Art in the Far East", *Artibus Asiae*, XI, Ancona, 1948, pp. 62-9. Y. Okamoto, *The Namban Art of Japan*, (translation by R.K. Jones of *Namban Bijutsu*, Tokyo, 1965), Weatherhill/Heibonsha, New York-Tokyo, 1972, pp. 99-103. See also more recently, Gauvin Bailey, "The Art of the Jesuit Missions in Japan in the Age of St. Francis Xavier and Alessandro Valignano", lecture in the *450th Anniversary of St. Francis Xavier's Arrival in Japan*, *International Symposium '98*, Sophia University 1998, pp.7-22.
- ¹¹ Guillen-Núñez, C., "Retablo and Imafrente: A Study of the Influence of the Retable on the Church-façade in Mexico and Peru", (unpublished M.A. dissertation), University of Penn., 1973.
- ¹² H. Rodriguez-Camilloni, "The Retablo-Façade as Transparency: A Study of the Frontispiece of San Francisco, Lima", in *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Esteticas*, 62, Mexico, 1991, pp. 111-22.
- ¹³ Sylvie Deswarte, "Francisco de Hollanda et les Études Vitruviennes en Italie", in *A Introdução da Arte da Renascença na Península Ibérica*, Coimbra, 1981, pp. 254-80.
- ¹⁴ Hugo-Brunt, op. cit., p. 11.
- ¹⁵ Kubler and Soria, op. cit., p. 24.
- ¹⁶ See Hugo-Brunt, op. cit., p.13, note 24.

- ²⁶ F.A. Baptista Pereira in, *Um Museu em Espaço Histórico: A Fortaleza de S. Paulo do Monte*, Macao, 1998, p. 38, fig. 36, has published one such print with a dragon very close to that seen on the façade.
- ²⁷ G. Bailey, *op. cit.*, pgs. 10, 16
- ²⁸ Teixeira, Manuel, *Macau e a sua Diocese*, II, Macao, 1940, pp. 98-100. Participation as programmers of a church's decoration by scholarly members of the Society, such as rectors of contemporary Jesuit colleges, is not unknown in Europe.
- ²⁹ Fray José de Sigüenza, *La Fundación del Monasterio de El Escorial*, Aguilar, 1988 ed., pp. 483-4.

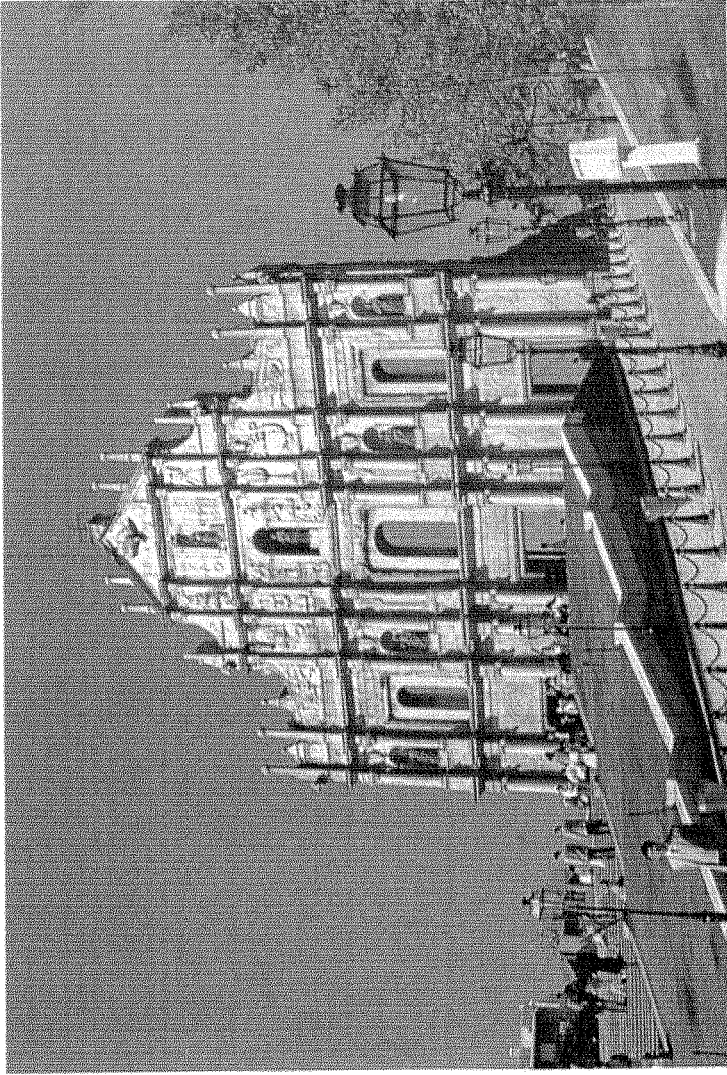


Fig. 1 Façade of Madre de Deus (Ruins of St. Paul's), Macao.

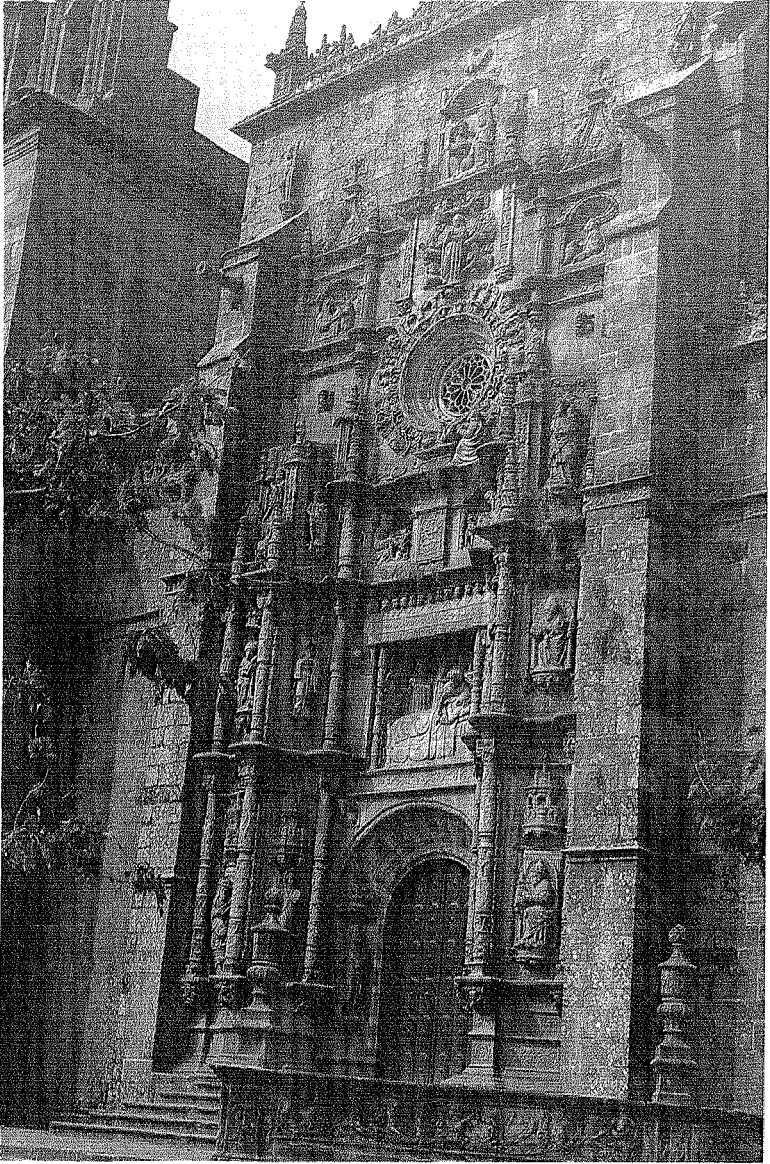


Fig.2 Façade of Santa Maria A Grande (St. Mary Major), Pontevedra, Galicia, Spain.

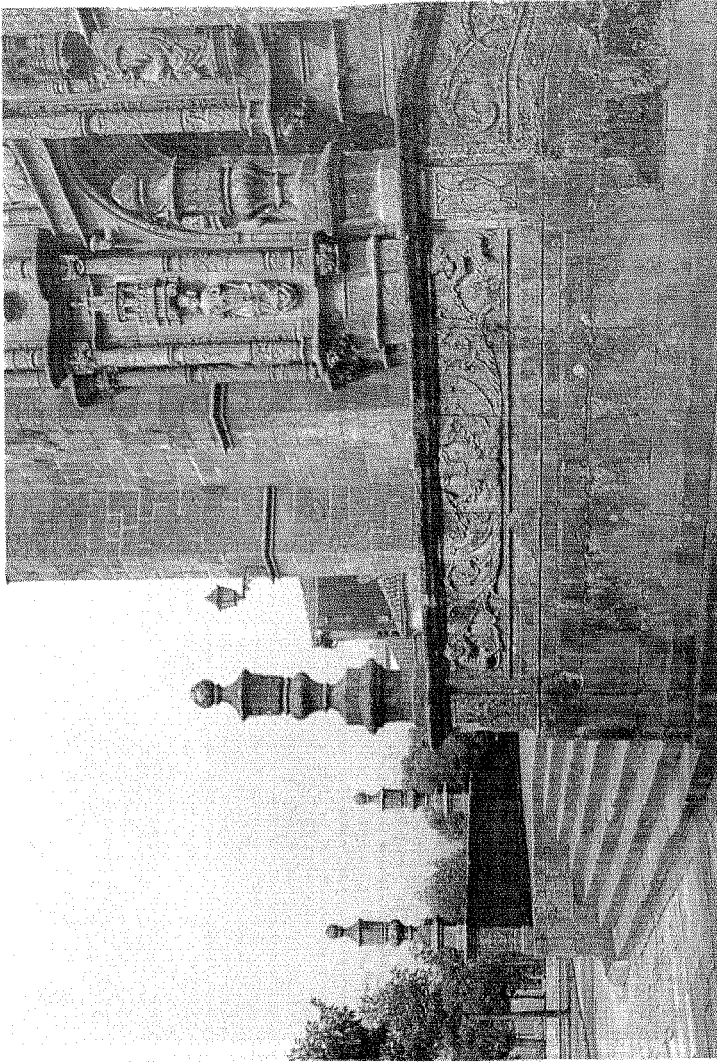


Fig.3 Santa Maria A Grande, view of terrace.

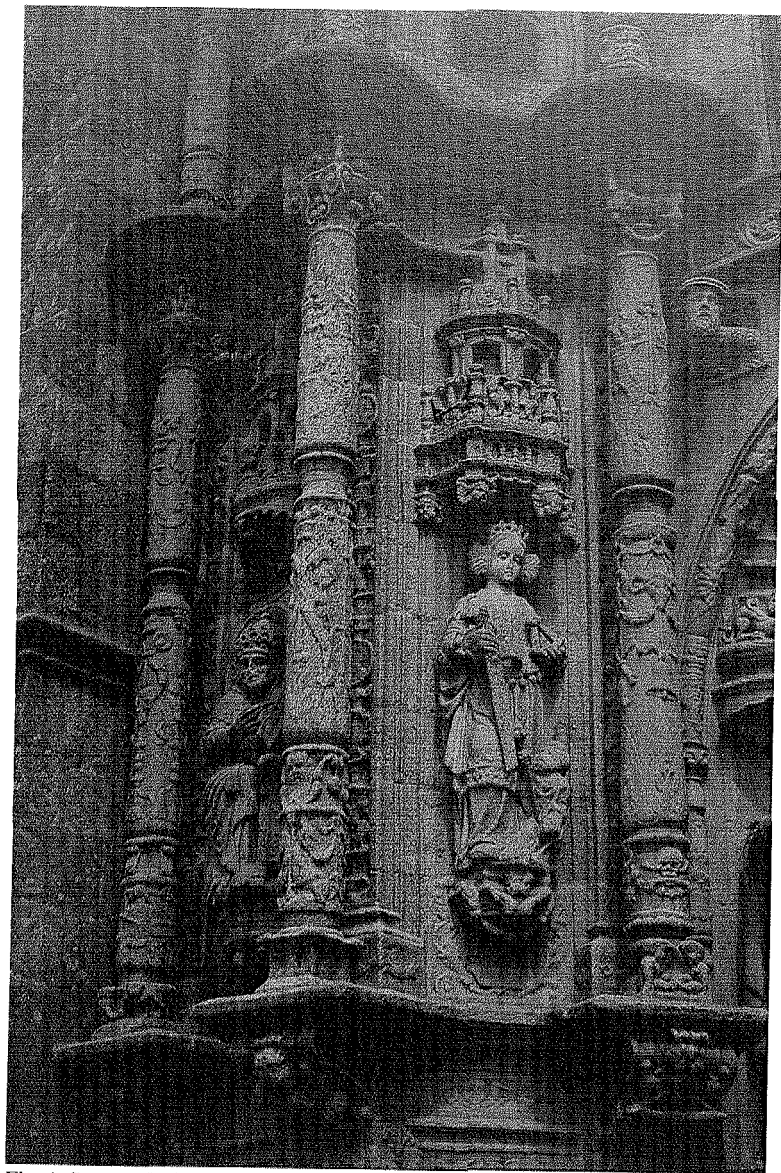


Fig.4 Santa Maria A Grande, detail of carved columns and saints.

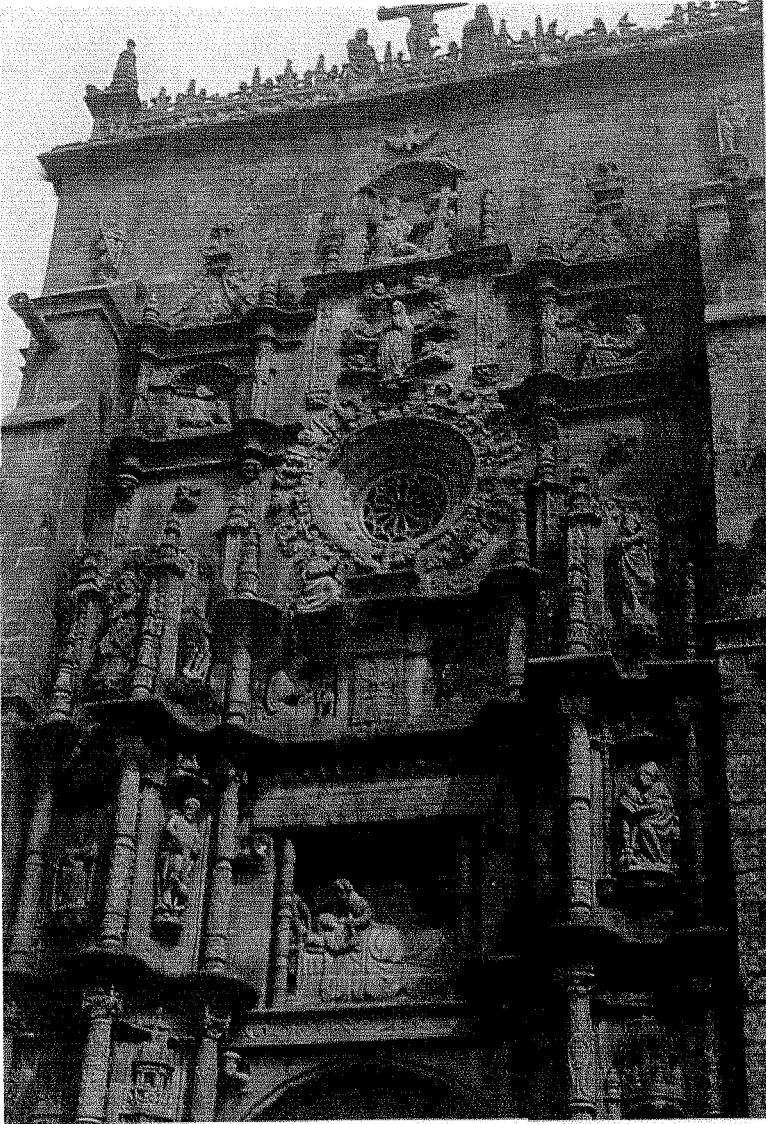


Fig.5 Santa Maria A Grande, detail of upper storeys above main entrance, with central bay reliefs of Dormition of Mary in second storey, and Assumption higher up.



Fig.6 Ruins of Baçaim Fort, showing entrance arch.

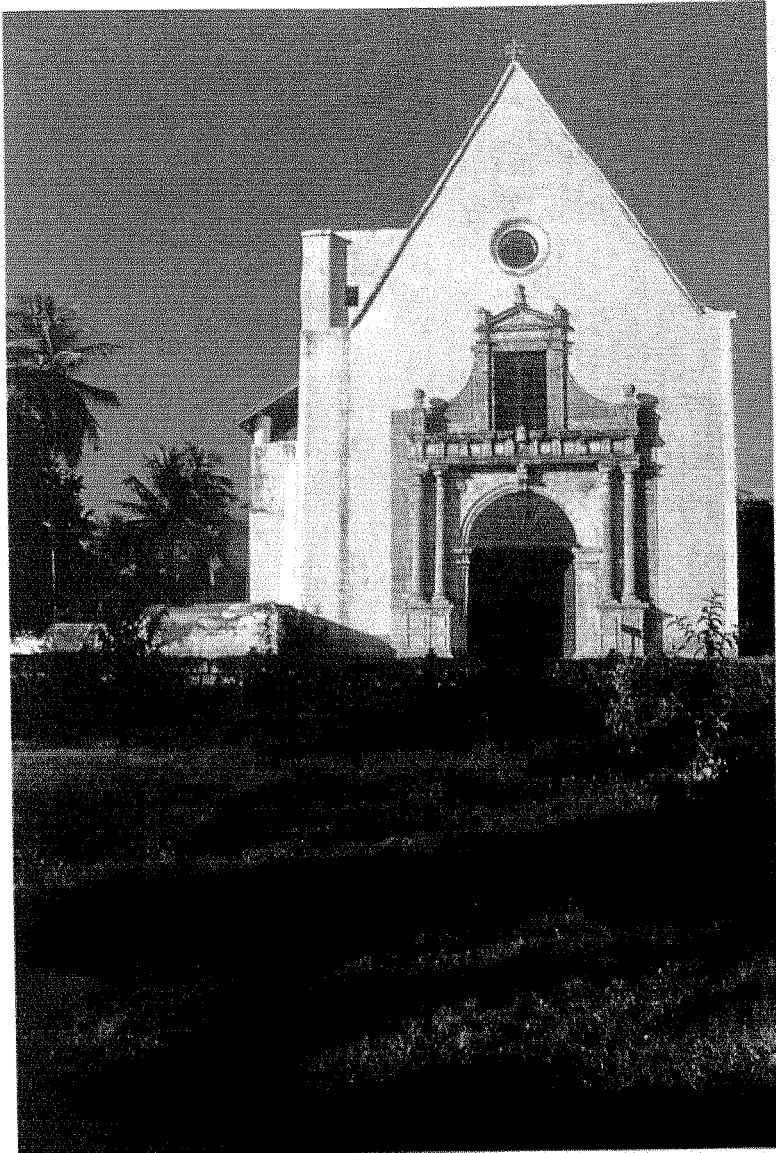


Fig.7 Sé de Damão, façade.



Fig.8 Ruin of São Paulo, Velha Goa.

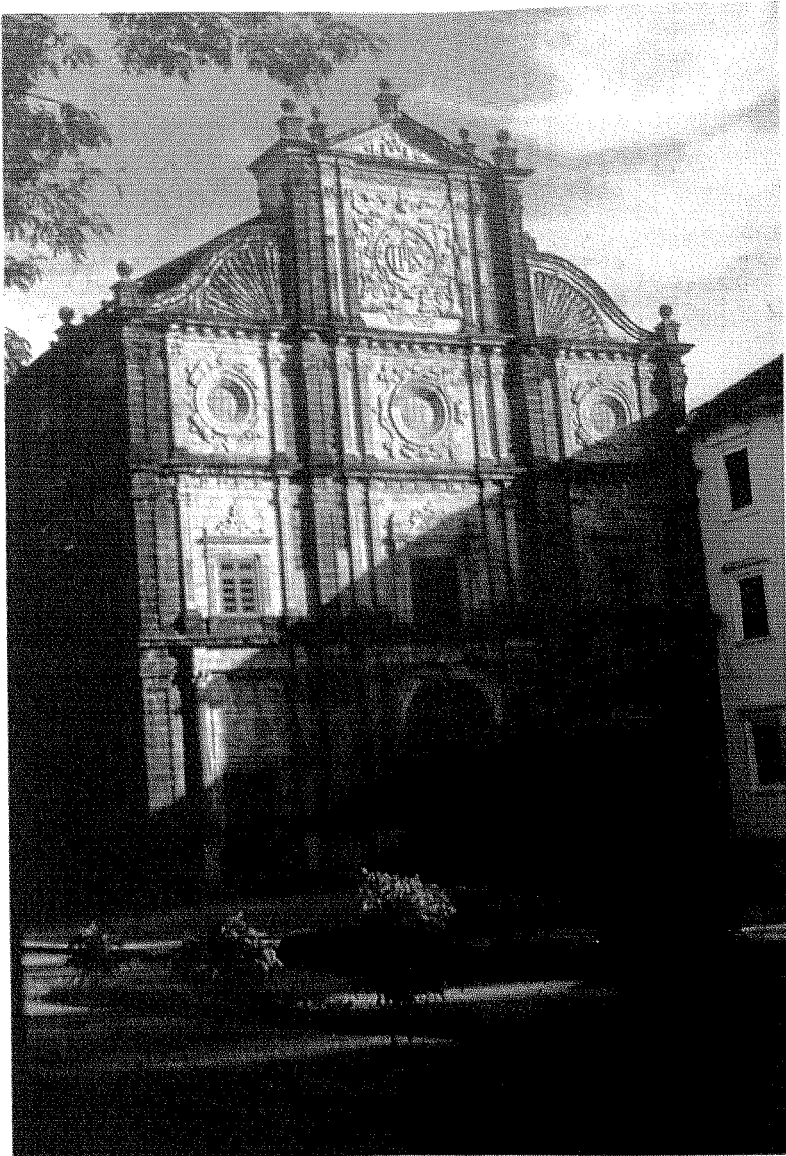


Fig.9 Façade of Bom Jesus, Velha Goa.

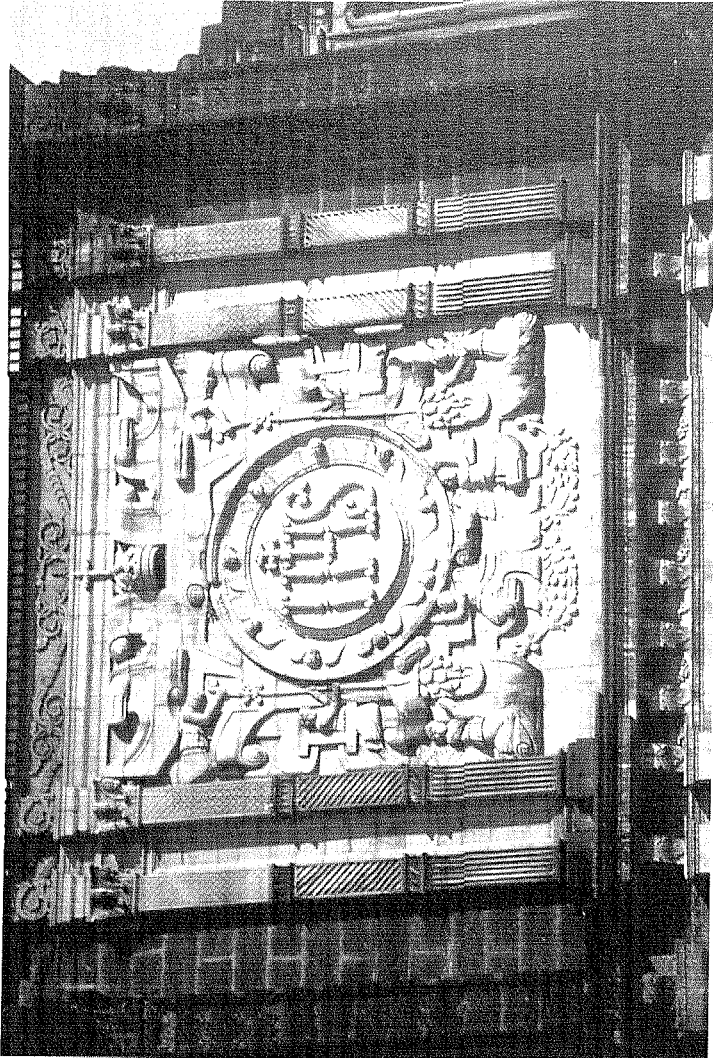


Fig. 10 Bom Jesus, detail of attic relief.

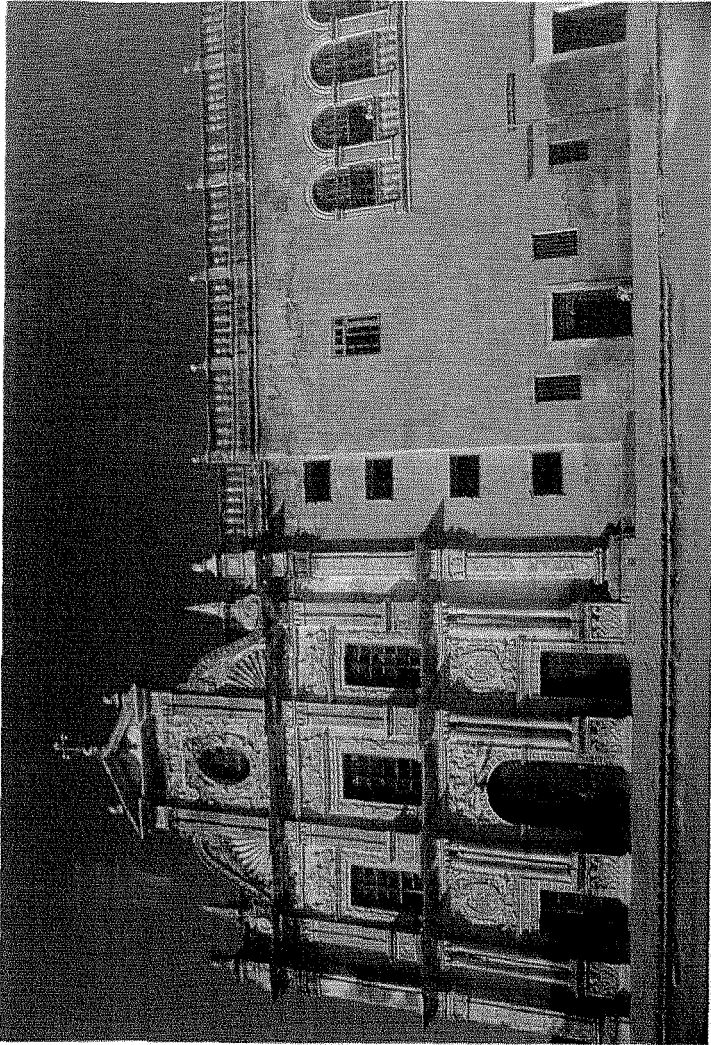


Fig. 11 Espiritu Santo, Dju, general view of church façade.



Fig.12 Espiritu Santo, Diu, detail of top storey or attic.

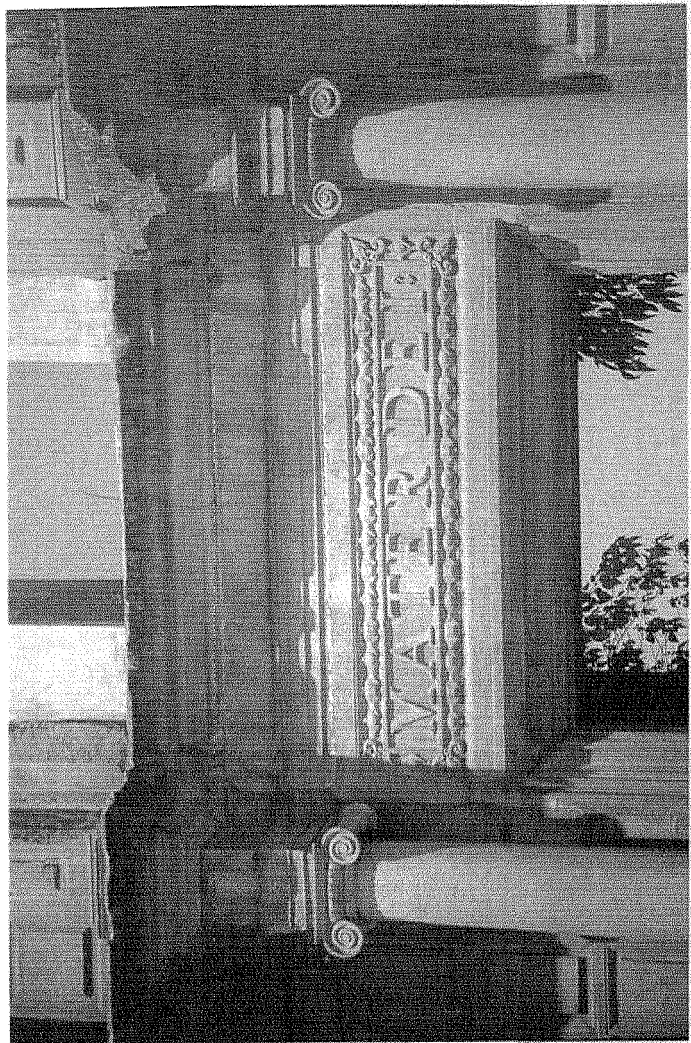


Fig.13 Façade of Church of Madre de Deus (St. Paul's), Macao, detail of main doorway inscribed *Mater Dei*.

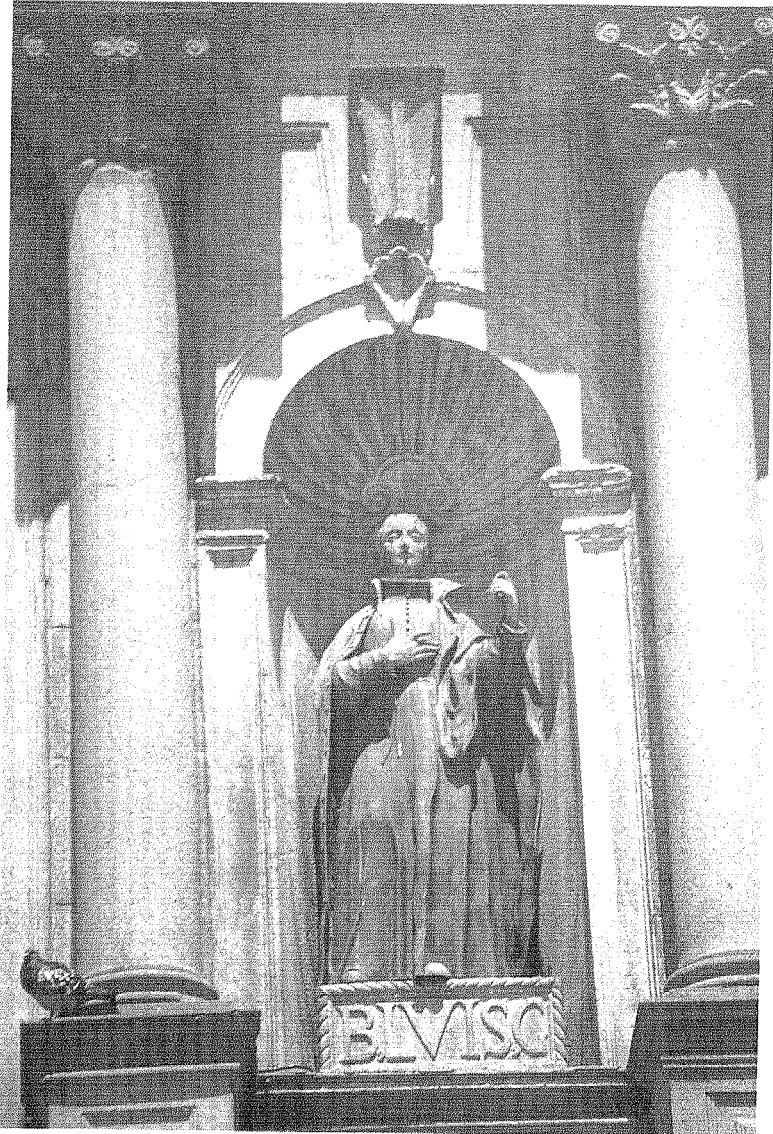


Fig. 14 Madre de Deus, Macao, bronze statue of St. Luis Gonzaga (carved “B” for Beatus on stone pedestal, with shortened version of name).



Fig.15 Madre de Deus, Macao, bronze statue of St. Francis Borgia (carved "B" for Beatus on stone pedestal, with shortened version of name).

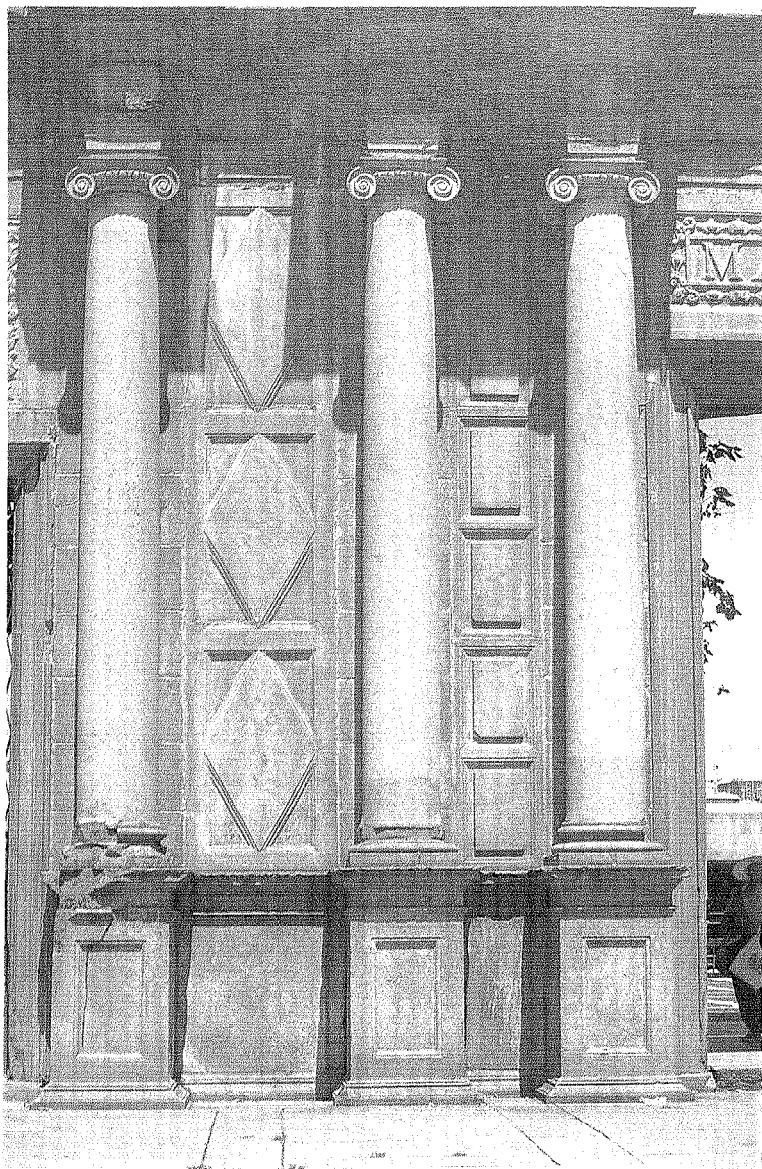


Fig.16 Madre de Deus, Macao, detail of first storey Ionic columns.

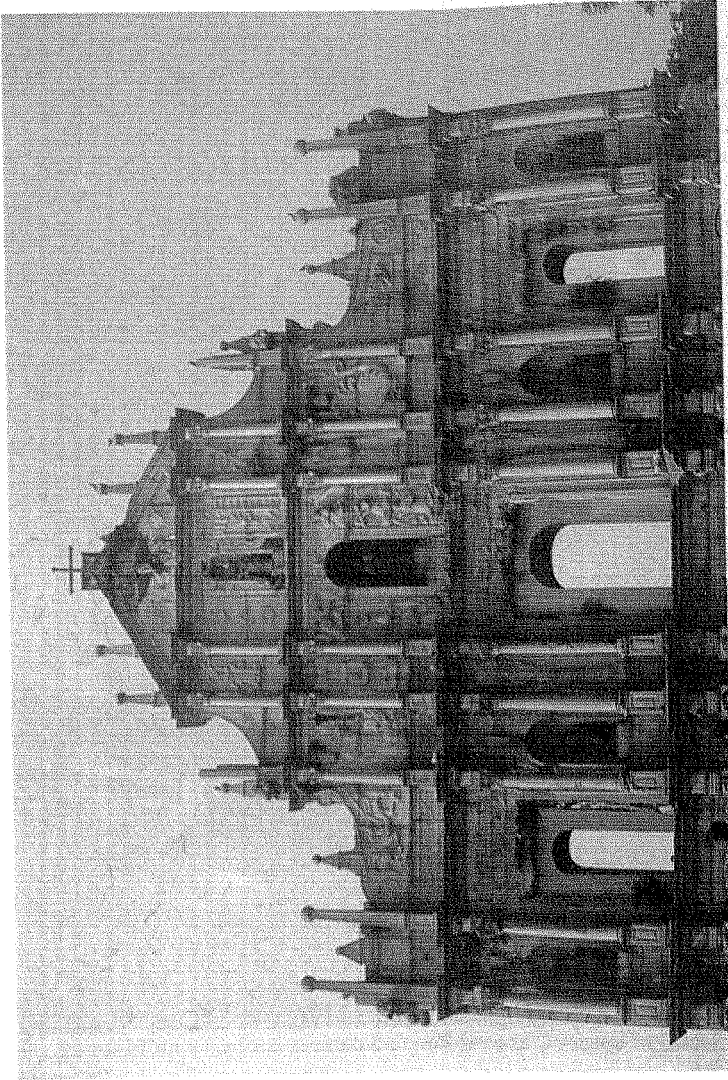


Fig. 17 Madre de Deus, Macao, with afternoon sunlight bringing out verticality of facade's columns.

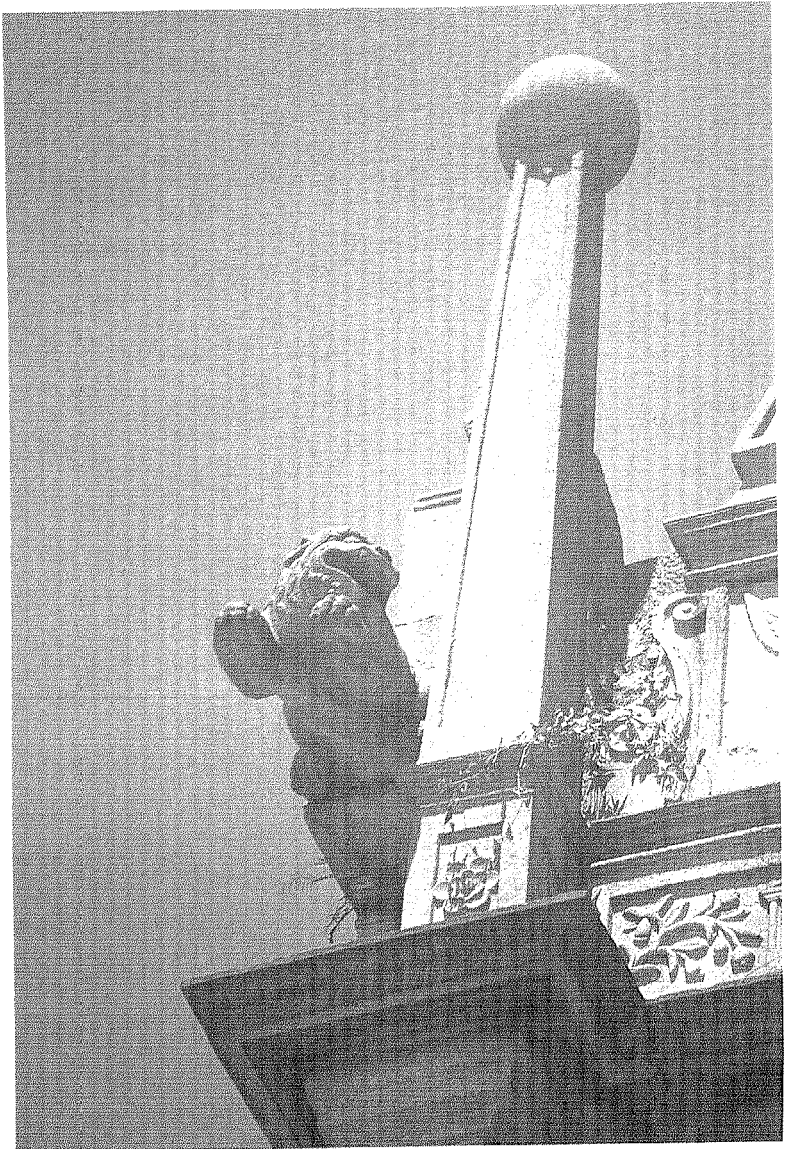


Fig.18 Detail of corner Chinese lion and decorative obelisk, third storey.



Fig. 19 Third storey relief of chimera, with Chinese characters incised and in relief.

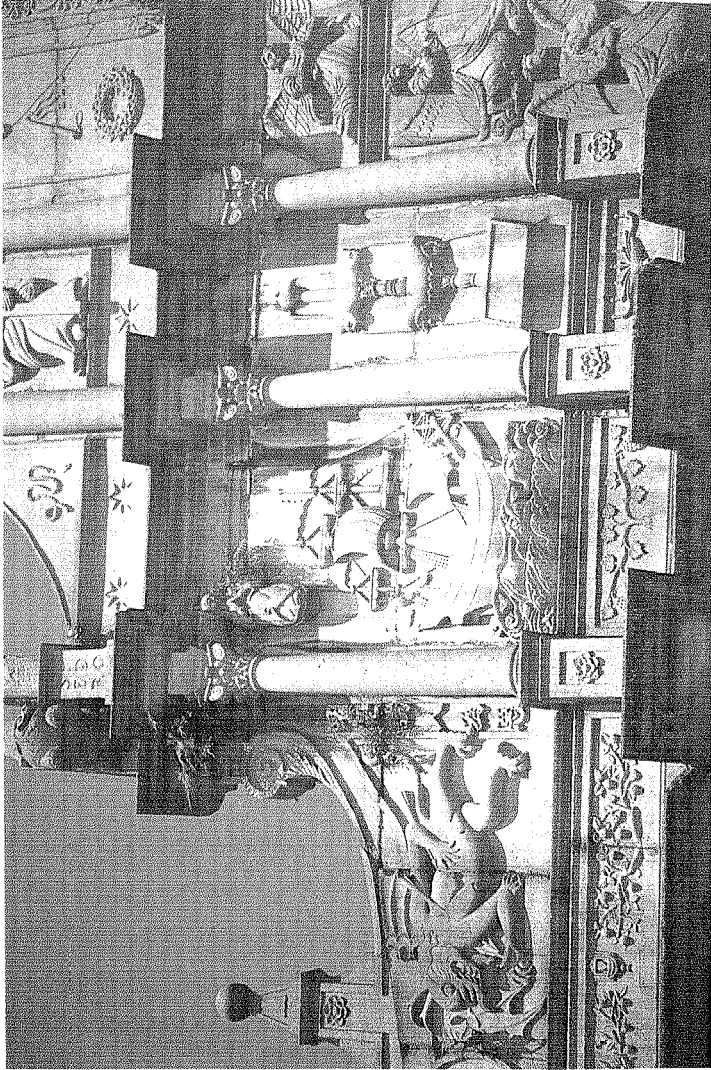


Fig.20 Fig.2 Third storey left-hand reliefs, showing fountain, Portuguese ship, the Devil and Chinese characters carved at its hind paws.

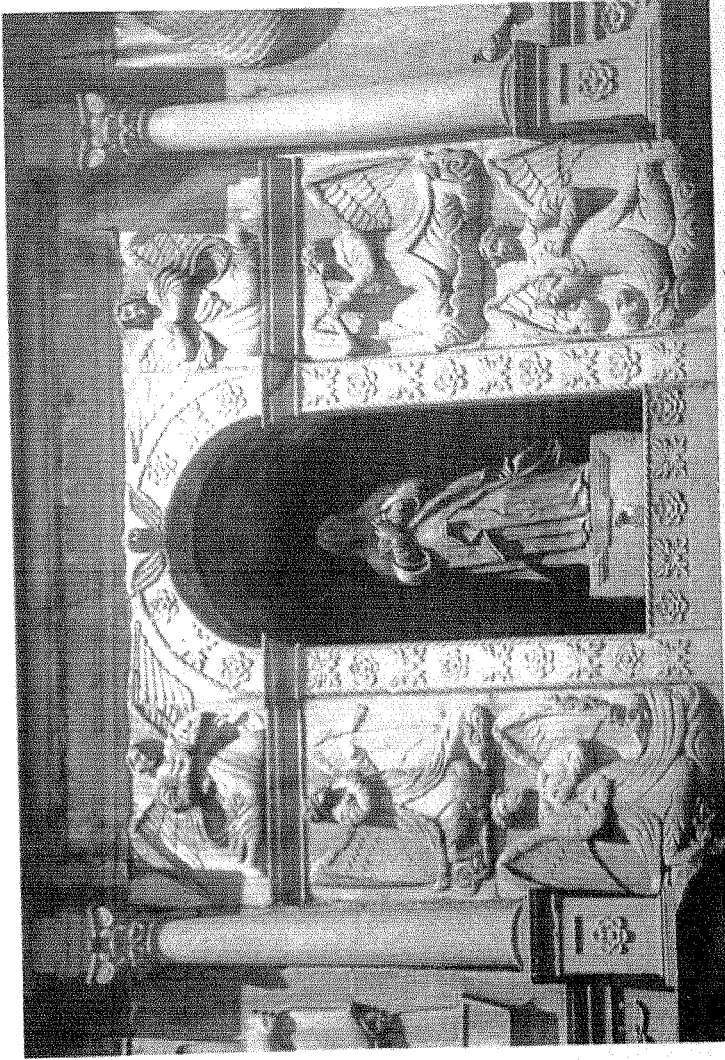


Fig.21 Detail of titular image of the Assumption of Mary, with relief of angels.

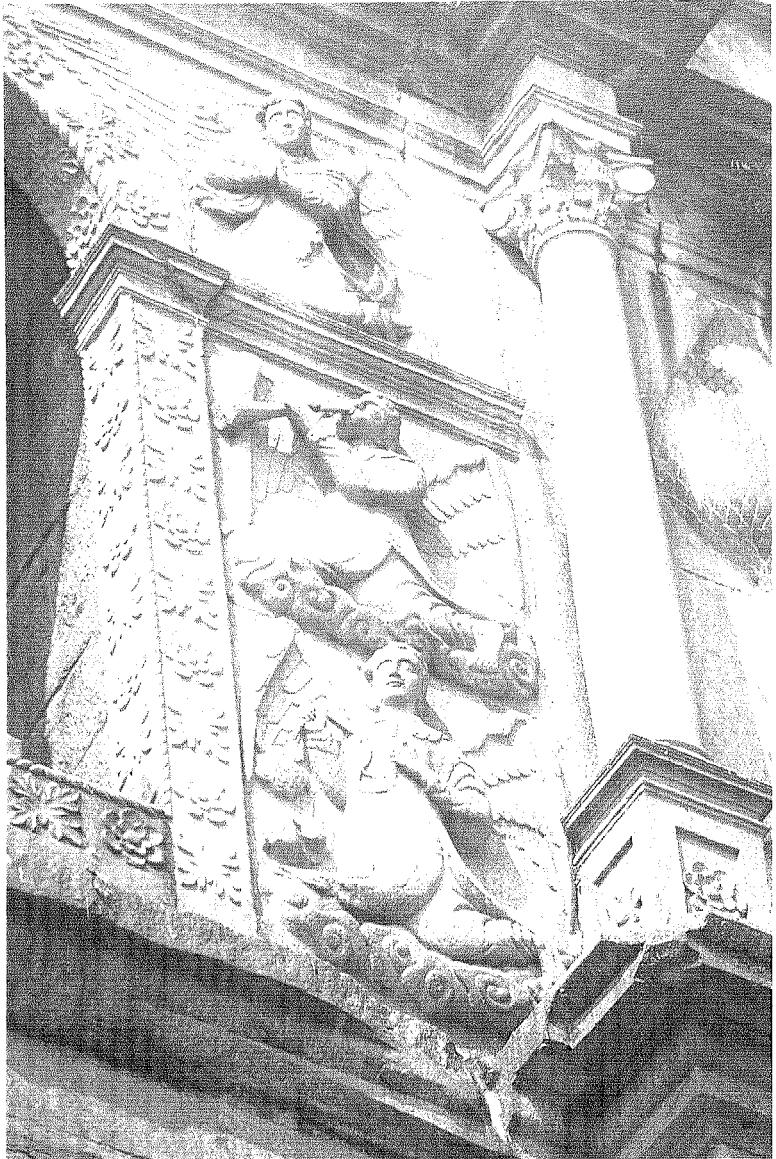


Fig.22 Right side of granite high relief of angels, incensing, trumpet playing and in attitude of veneration round bronze image of Assumpta.

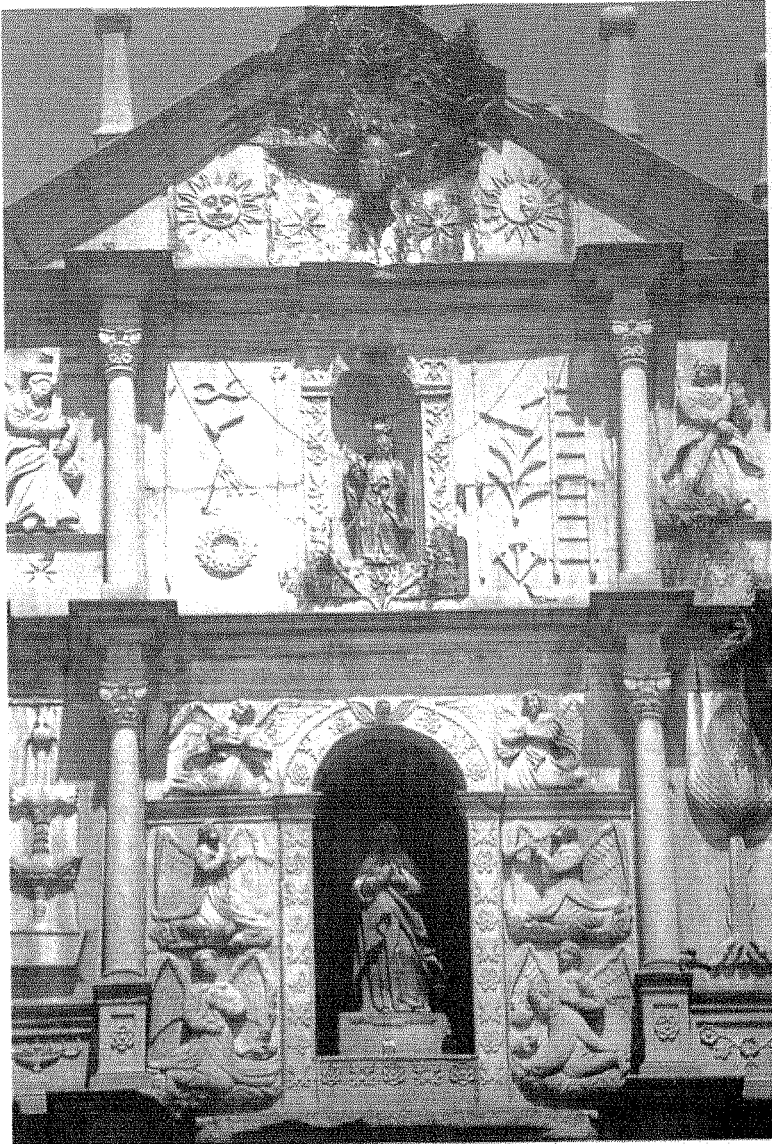


Fig.23 Detail of middle-bay of upper storeys, showing niches with bronzes of Virgin, Child Jesus and dove of Holy Spirit in pediment above.



Fig. 24 *Tota Pulchra* print: "Pulchra es et decora filia hierusalem". Bethune Breviary of ca. 1500 (from S. Ostrow, "Cigoli's *Immacolata* and Galileo's Moon", *The Art Bulletin*, June, 1966, pp. 218-35, fig. 11).