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The Image of Empire: Arts of the Viceroy II

None of the royal family ever set foot in New Spain. The king, who was a symbol and embodiment of rule, was always absent. His image had to be projected without him actually being there. Therefore; the viceroy.

The facade of viceregal palace represents a face, which looks out towards the empire.

The most important viceroys were in New Spain and Peru. In the 18th century, there were more. However, in the early period there were only two, which each had their own miniature court.

Moctezuma's Palace became the viceregal palace in Mexico City. At first, they just moved in, but they eventually tore it down and built their own.

Portraits were a way of expanding the influence of the viceroy to the edges of the colony.

Canopy rooms were rooms in Mexican palaces put aside for the king. It represents both the prestige of the homeowner and the perpetual presence of the king.

Biombo screens would often have a procession or conquest on one side and an ordered city on the other. This showed the virtues of the Spanish Empire, and how they had come along and made everything better.

The oriel window was a symbol of Hapsburg rule. The Hapsburgs came from Innsbruck, where they built their 'Golden Roof'. The Golden Rule is built on the viceregal palace, and represents the eye of the ruler. It was gilded, so that it almost looked like a reliquary. While in the oriel window, the viceroy could see you, but you couldn't see him.

Building aqueducts in your name was a way of solidifying power, as you were bringing water and health to the people.

Viceroy, governors, etc. liked to base their portraits on their contributions to public works.

The Academies in Latin America attempted to teach neoclassicism. Their severe, regulated version of classicism took hold towards the end of the 18th century. It reflected the idealism and moralism of the Enlightenment. The Spanish crown used the neoclassic style to impose more obvious symbol of power over the Americas. It used a specific architectural language. The creation of and manufacturing of imagery was put under direct royal control. The teachers came from Europe, and brought with them a European style. All the distinct Latin American styles that had developed were wiped out.

The School of Mines was an academy run by Manuel de Tolsa.

Fortress of San Felipe

Very forceful image of empire.

There were very few fortresses built in the Americas. This was probably made to guard the coast of the Caribbean from pirates. This is dramatically different than in Europe, which had walls everywhere.

Cartagena was a major center of trade, wealth, and piracy. It was an excellent port, but it was also easy to attack, hence this fortress.

The inside is very rusticated and heavy.

Italians specialized in fortress architecture. They wrote treatises, and traveled all over to build these sorts of thing. The most famous of these was Pietro Sardi, who would adapt fortresses to their geographical location.

There are multiple layers of walkways and tunnels, so people could walk very far without being seen from the outside.

Viceregal Palace

Top floor is not original. It was built after the Mexican Revolution.

Projection of authority, grandeur and strength through a combination of austerity and a concentration of power-related ornament around the doorways. It resembles a fortress, but is not. It is long and low, with fake battlements on top.

It was based on the Monastery of El Escorial in Spain. It emulates the seemingly endless wall of power, which conveys the sense of infinity. This is a very Baroque idea, as this was the age of absolute rule.

The viceroy would appear on a balcony above the doorway. This balcony would have been like an eye watching the entire colony.

It uses a very regular Renaissance Italian arcade, which is used to project an idea of civilization.

There is a focus on big doors with coat of arms over them.

The viceregal palace in Rio de Janeiro is very different, and is done in a Portuguese style, with whitewashed walls.

Spedale Maggiore

This is an ideal hospital. It was thought that it had to be architectural balanced, with as much air going through it as possible.

Filled with many courtyards.

Combination of balanced design, and idea of grandeur, and an idea of being healthy.

Reflects the idea that health was being given to the people.

Related to Brunelleschi's Spedale degli Innocenti.

La Moneda

The mint.

Good example of the new Neoclassical style. (Although it's not academic style)

Spanish architect.

Like the viceregal palaces, it has a sense of infinity, fortification, solidity, and austerity.

This is entirely flat, and uses the classical orders.

The center looks like a Roman triumphal arch.