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Traditions of the European basilica model in the sacred architecture of Colonial Latin America

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In the following study I would like to discuss two issues. The first one concerns the existence of the architectural model of European basilica in the area of Colonial Latin America, while the other involves the tradition and functions of atrium in colonial architecture.

BASILICA MODEL

The basilica layout is relatively rare in the architecture of Latin America. Simpler plans were predominant, e.g. single-nave churches, often including a transept, sometimes with a crossing dome emphasizing the intersection of the central nave and the transept. In particular, it was the first missionary churches that took the simplest architectural forms. It was related to the conversion of new areas and evangelization of further tribes and groups of Indians. Another significant factor was a feeling of uncertainty about the later fate of the new mission in its first stages.

Occasionally, however, the European basilica – both from the medieval and modern perspective – became an inspiration for the colonial architecture in