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The Churches of the Jesuit Guaraní and Chiquitos Missions: Rethinking the Architectural History of the Missions

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The Churches of the Jesuit Guaraní and Chiquitos Missions: Rethinking the Architectural History of the Missions

ECKART KÜHNE

Introduction

Founded in 1609, the famous Guaraní missions were part of the Jesuit province of Paracuaria, which covered what is now central and northern Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay, parts of southern Brazil, and southeastern Bolivia. In the seventeenth century, the entire region was still sparsely populated and of little economic importance, as there were no mines of any productive value. Most of the population was indigenous, mostly Guaraní; by 1680, the Jesuit Guaraní missions alone had more inhabitants than the rest of the La Plata basin combined.[1] The Jesuit province was relatively poor, with few powerful and wealthy patrons, and was unable to rely on experienced local builders and craftsmen. The Jesuits therefore engaged brothers (*coadjutores temporales*) with technical or artistic training, mostly from Central Europe or Italy, and had to develop special construction methods adapted to the province's limited economic resources in order to build churches that were nevertheless impressive and could accommodate thousands of worshippers. In this way, the Guaraní missions developed a unique type of building that was clearly influenced by the indigenous population: the multi-aisled wooden skeleton church. Not a single one of the thirty large Guaraní mission churches has survived: all that remains of them are ruins, carved images of saints, and a few outbuildings.[2]

You have to travel to the tropical lowlands of eastern Bolivia to get a good idea of the architecture of these churches. The Chiquitos missions followed the example of the Guaraní missions and belonged to the same Jesuit province but were founded a good eighty years later. Their ten mission villages still preserve many colonial works of art, an important music archive, and six well-preserved colonial mission churches that are now on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The Chiquitanos still maintain many traditions from the mission era and are the largest indigenous nation in the Bolivian

1. Ernesto J. A. Maeder, *Aproximación a las misiones guaraníticas* (Buenos Aires: Universidad Católica Argentina, 1996), 41.

2. Basic bibliography on Guaraní mission architecture: Ramón Gutiérrez, *Evolución urbanística y arquitectónica del Paraguay, 1537–1911* (Asunción: Ediciones Comuneros, 1983), 109–62; Bozidar Darko Sustersic, *Templos jesuítico-guaraníes: La historia secreta de sus fábricas y ensayos de interpretación de sus ruinas* (Buenos Aires: Universidad de Buenos Aires, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 1999); Horacio Bollini, *Misiones jesuíticas, visión artística y patrimonial* (Buenos Aires: Corregidor, 2009); Ramón Gutiérrez and Graciela María Viñuales, eds., *Las misiones jesuíticas de la región guaranítica: Una experiencia cultural y social americana* (Buenos Aires: CEDODAL, 2013)

lowlands.[3] My own research in Chiquitos focused on Martin Schmid's (1694–1772) churches and their restoration.[4] Thanks to decades of building surveys, restorations, art inventories, and archival studies in Chiquitos, these buildings, their artistic decoration, and the lives of their creators can now be attributed, dated, and analyzed much more precisely than is possible in the Guaraní missions. The following proposal of a different architectural history of the Jesuit missions is therefore based primarily on the mission of Chiquitos, but it also attempts to propose a new interpretation of the architecture of the Guaraní missions based on documents and studies already published and on a close examination of the preserved buildings and ruins.

The Jesuit missions of Mojos were located on the tributaries of the Amazon River in the northeastern lowlands of Bolivia. Although they were part of the Peruvian Jesuit province, they had many similarities to those in Chiquitos and Paraguay. Only one old, much-altered church remains, in San Ignacio de Mojos, but many works of art and living traditions bear witness to the Jesuit era. They will also be used for comparison.[5]

The Phases of the Mission Architecture

New research on Chiquitos challenges the conventional interpretations of the architectural development of the Guaraní missions proposed by South America's leading architectural historians since the mid-twentieth century.

Previously Proposed Phase Classifications:

Busaniche 1955:

1. Temporary buildings until about 1635
2. Wooden skeleton buildings with tile roofs
3. Vaulted buildings from about 1730

Buschiazzo 1956:

1. Wooden skeleton buildings with adobe walls, seventeenth century
2. Wooden skeleton buildings with stone walls, without portico, late seventeenth to early eighteenth century
3. European-style vaulted buildings, mid-eighteenth century

Sustersic 1999:

1. Emergence of the building type, 1610–41
2. Simple buildings with tile roofs, 1641–95

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3. Basic bibliography on Chiquitos: Eckart Kühne, ed., *Martin Schmid 1694–1772, Missionar—Musiker—Architekt: Ein Jesuit aus der Schweiz bei den Chiquitano-Indianern in Bolivien* (Lucerne: Historisches Museum, 1994); Pedro Querejazu, ed., *Las misiones jesuíticas de Chiquitos* (La Paz: Fundación BHN, 1995); Roberto Tomichá, *La primera evangelización en las reducciones de Chiquitos, Bolivia (1691–1767): Protagonistas y metodología misional* (Cochabamba: Editorial Verbo Divino, 2002); María José Diez, *Los bienes muebles de Chiquitos: Fuentes para el conocimiento de una sociedad* (Madrid: Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional, 2006).

4. Eckart Kühne, "Die Missionskirchen von Chiquitos im Tiefland von Bolivien: Bau und Restaurierung der Kirchen von Martin Schmid (1694–1772)" (PhD diss., ETH Zürich, 2008).

5. María José Diez, *Las misiones de Mojos: El barroco en la frontera*, vol. 1, *Apuntes de historia, geografía y economía*, vol. 2, *Arte y arquitectura*, Scripta Autochtona 18 and 19 (Cochabamba: Itinerarios, 2017).

3. Elaborate buildings of cut stone, with wooden cross domes, 1695–1730
4. Vaulted buildings without wooden skeleton, 1730–68

In 1955, Hernán Busaniche distinguished three phases: first, only temporary churches until about 1635, then those with wooden skeletons and tile roofs, and finally, from 1730, the vaulted buildings.[6] In 1956, Mario Buschiazzo excluded the first phase, since no buildings from that period have survived, and divided Busaniche's second phase into a first with adobe walls and a second with stone walls, assuming that the buildings of this second phase did not have a portico.[7] Bozidar Sustersic finally combined the two proposals in 1999 and came up with four phases, to which he assigned exact time periods and individual outstanding architects.[8] As a time limit, he chose, first, the Battle of Mboboré in 1641, which ended the threat of the slave hunters from Sao Paulo; second, the arrival of Giuseppe Bressanelli (1658–1728) around 1695,[9] to whom Sustersic attributes numerous buildings, altars, sculptures, and architectural innovations, including the transepts with wooden domes and the façades without porticoes; third, the arrival of Giovanni Battista Primoli (1673–1747) around 1730, architect of the monumental church of San Miguel.

From the point of view of Chiquitos, these divisions are hardly convincing:

1. The churches of Chiquitos show that it is possible to create a sophisticated architecture out of adobe without the use of stone. The materials used to build the walls depended mainly on local availability. In the case of churches with a wooden skeleton, where the roof is supported by the wooden structure, it does not matter whether the non-bearing walls were made of adobe, or of stone with clay, or of stone in the lower part of the wall and adobe in the upper part.
2. The portico was an essential element in all the mission churches of the Guaraní, as well as in the villages around Asunción, in Chiquitos, and in Mojos.[10] It had important ceremonial functions in the celebrations of holy week and the village's saint's day (in Chiquitos and Mojos to the present day), and it was also the place for prayers and catechism lessons for the girls.[11] With the sole exception of San José de Chiquitos (see below), there is no documentary or archaeological evidence of a single mission church with a wooden skeleton and without a portico (as assumed by Buschiazzo and Sustersic).
3. The existence of several Guaraní mission churches "in stone, brick and tiles, [...] most with three naves, some with five, some with transept and dome, covered with wood" is documented as early as 1687,[12] years before Bressanelli's

6. Hernán Busaniche, *La arquitectura en las misiones jesuíticas guaraníes* (Santa Fe: El Litoral, 1955), 21–26.
7. Mario Buschiazzo, "La arquitectura de las misiones del Paraguay, Moxos y Chiquitos," in *Historia del arte hispanoaméricano* 3, ed. Diego Angulo Íñiguez (Barcelona: Salvat Editores, 1956), 685–718, here 690.
8. Sustersic, *Templos jesuítico-guaraníes*, 29–64.
9. The spelling of Jesuit names follows Charles E. O'Neill and Joaquín M. Domínguez, eds., *Diccionario histórico de la compañía de Jesús* (DHCJ) (Rome: Institutum Historicum S.I., 2001).
10. Kühne, "Missionskirchen," 30–32.
11. Prayer and instruction for the boys took place in the parish courtyard, which was only accessible to men.
12. Francisco Jarque and Diego Francisco Altamirano, *Las misiones jesuíticas en 1687: El estado que al presente gozan las misiones de la Compañía de Jesús en la provincia del Paraguay, Tucumán y Río de la Plata*, ed. Ernesto Maeder (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de Historia, 2008), 51, 89.

arrival, who cannot therefore be the inventor of this typology, as Sustersic suggests.

4. In Chiquitos, the construction of elaborate churches with a wooden skeleton and of vaulted buildings without a skeleton began in the same years. In the Guaraní missions, too, both types of buildings seem to have been constructed at the same time. Therefore, it makes little sense to postulate a separate phase based on only three exceptional buildings with an experimental character (San Miguel, Trinidad, and Jesús, see below).

For these reasons, I propose a different and more coherent model, based on the institutional development of the mission villages as part of the colonial state, as formulated by Javier Matienzo:[13]

Table 1.1. Phases of the Institutional Evolution of the Missions

Phase	Beginning		Guaraní	Chiquitos	Mojos
1. Preliminary	First contact		1609	1691	1667
2. Reduction	First book of baptisms		1633	1695	1682
3. Municipal	Tribute obligation		1661	1754	1764
4. Civil-secular	Expulsion of the Jesuits		1768	1767	1767
		Argentina	**Paraguay**	**Brazil**	**Bolivia**
5. Republican	National independence	1810	1811	1822	1825
6. Liberal	Dissolution of communities	~1820	1848	1828	~1860

1. *The preliminary phase* lasted from the first contacts of Jesuit missionaries with an indigenous group to the establishment of a permanent settlement.
2. *The reduction phase* began with the opening of a baptismal register, which is usually recorded in later census documents as the official date of foundation.
3. *The municipal phase* began with the *empadronamiento*, the official census by a judge of the Audiencia de Charcas and the obligation to pay taxes, which transformed the previous reduction into a municipality and a *doctrina* (parish).[14]
4. *The civil or secular phase* began with the Jesuits' expulsion in 1767/68. The villages received a civil official as administrator and a cleric as parish priest, but otherwise their organization was largely maintained.

13. Walter Matienzo, "Las reducciones como antecedente de los municipios de indios: El caso de las misiones jesuíticas de América meridional," *Anuario de estudios bolivianos, archivísticos y bibliográficos* 15 (2009): 319–38.

14. In the Guaraní missions, the first *empadronamiento* was realized in most villages in 1657, and the tax obligation began in 1661; see Ernesto J. A. Maeder, *Misiones del Paraguay: Construcción jesuítica de una sociedad cristiano guaraní* (Resistencia: Instituto de Investigaciones Geohistóricas, 2013), 135–39.

5. *The republican phase* began with the independence of the nation states between 1810 and 1825.
6. *The end of the missions*: most of the villages in what is now Argentina were destroyed in the wars of independence around 1820, and those in Brazil were abandoned by the Guaraní in 1828. In Paraguay, the communal organization and property of the mission villages were abolished in 1848, and in the lowlands of Bolivia, not until around 1860, in both cases as a result of liberal reforms.

Each of these phases corresponds to different architectural forms and construction methods. The early development of the mission churches was very similar among the Guaraní and in Chiquitos, although with a time gap of almost a century. In Chiquitos, it is clear that the creation of the first monumental churches and the introduction of important durable technologies, such as fired bricks and tiles and fired lime mortar, occurred immediately after the official census (1754). This means that the official status of municipality was required to reform the buildings. In the Guaraní missions, such a close connection cannot yet be proven, but it seems probable that the introduction of characteristic building materials and features, such as stone walls, wooden vaults, transepts, and cross domes, also dates from the very beginning of the municipal phase (1657/61).

Table 1.2. Institutional Development and Architectural Forms (Guaraní Missions and Chiquitos)

Phase	Architecture
1. Preliminary	Traditional indigenous buildings
2. Reduction	Provisional, wooden skeleton, bahareque walls, grass or palm trunk roofs
3. Municipal	Monumental with wooden skeleton, adobe or stone walls with mud, tile roofs; in addition, a few exceptional massive buildings without wooden skeleton
4. Civil-secular	Following the models of the previous phase but with reduced resources
5. Republican	Precarious, maintenance of existing buildings
6. Liberal	Destruction of many colonial buildings

Origin and Development of the Wooden Skeleton Churches (Preliminary and Reduction Phase)

In preparation for the founding of a village, the Guaraní or Chiquitanos would first make a clearing, erect a cross, and build a chapel and a hut for the priest, all without formal instruction from the missionary. We must consider the churches of this phase as buildings with traditional indigenous forms and constructions, made of tree trunks anchored in the ground and a huge roof covered with grass, reeds, or palm leaves. The form of these churches was certainly very varied, due to the great ethnographic variety in the vast territory that was later occupied by the Jesuit missions.

Once the reduction was established, the missionaries cautiously imposed certain changes they considered necessary for an orderly worship service. For example, the church had to be a long room with a free central axis from the entrance to the high altar, without wooden pillars under the roof ridge, with the main entrance in the village square, and with walls made of bahareque (wooden wattle and daub). Early visitation reports for Chiquitos in 1725 requested that the churches be lockable to protect them from any desecration and thus have wooden doors with shutters, and that the missionaries' house adjacent to the church be firmly walled so that women could not enter the courtyard, in order to maintain the Jesuits' seclusion.[15] These churches probably looked like some of the temporary mission churches with steeply pitched roofs, built around 1900 in newly founded or relocated villages in Mojos and Guarayos in Bolivia, which are known from early photographs.

Later, still in the reduction phase, the bahareque was replaced in church buildings by the more durable adobe—sun-dried brick—and because of the high risk of fire, the grass or reed roofs were replaced, at least in Chiquitos, by roofs of hollowed palm trunks. The low roof pitch of the palm-trunk roofs corresponded to the later tile roofs.

The missionaries did not impose a ready-made model imported from outside but gradually adapted the existing indigenous buildings to the new requirements. The influence of the Guaraní and Chiquitano on the construction methods should not be underestimated, since only they had enough practical experience with the local woods, with the construction of walls made of bahareque, and with dense roofs made of grass or reed. Officially, they were also the builders and owners of these churches. As with all community work, they were not paid but only fed during the working days. Since the fathers did not pay for the work, they could not act as authoritarian foremen but had to try to convince the Indians by making compromises. They were much more willing to give in on construction or aesthetic issues than on religious or moral ones.

This led to the creation of the Paraguayan multi-aisle wooden skeleton church, first defined by Buschiazzo in 1952[16] but best described by José Cardiel, S.J. (1704–81) in 1747:

> These buildings are constructed very differently from those in Europe: the roof is built first and then the walls. Large tree trunks, worked with an axe, are anchored in the ground, the trusses and purlins are laid on top and then the rafters, battens and tiles. Only then are the stone foundations built [...], and the wall above is made of adobe, with the tree trunks or pillars, which are called *horcones* here, remaining in the middle of the wall and bearing the entire weight of the roof; the wall bears nothing. [...] Since each village has only one [church], it is necessary that it should be sufficient for as many thousands of people as enter on feast days for the sermons and the Mass [...]. They have three naves, and there are two with five naves. In our experience, the walls [made of adobe] are more durable than those made of stone without lime [mortar]. Since

15. Kühne, "Missionskirchen," 94–97, 370–73.
16. Mario Buschiazzo, "La arquitectura de las misiones de Mojos y Chiquitos," *Anales del Instituto de Arte Americano e Investigaciones Estéticas* 5 (Buenos Aires, 1952): 23–42.

> they are [plastered and] painted white inside and out, their raw material is not recognizable, and so that the weather does not damage them, they have wide porches on all sides to protect them. [...] The *horcones*, which serve as pillars, are either columnar or square, decorated with paintings and gilded. The vault, made of planks, is decorated in the same way [...]. All churches have a large portico that covers their entire width, and a tower next to it, and some have two towers on each side.[17]

The main characteristics of the Paraguayan wooden skeleton church are:

1. Three or more naves with wooden pillars that do not rest on foundations but are partially buried in the ground.
2. A large roof resting on a skeleton of wooden pillars, built first, before the non-bearing walls.
3. A large portico in front of the main façade, under the extended roof.
4. All exterior walls are protected from rain by porches with wooden pillars.

This unique type of construction is found only in the subtropical and tropical forest areas of the La Plata Basin and in the eastern lowlands of Bolivia. It prevailed throughout the region from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries and in some rural areas even well into the twentieth century.[18]

This construction method contradicts a basic rule of building both in Europe and in colonial Ibero-America. Since at least the year 1000, wooden pillars have never been buried in the ground in permanent buildings in Europe—if postholes are found during church excavations, they belong either to a very old building or to scaffolding. Although multi-aisle churches or market halls with wooden pillars are rare in Europe and other parts of the Americas, they are not entirely uncommon: examples exist in France, England, Germany, Switzerland, on the Caribbean islands, in Central America from Mexico to Panama, in Colombia and Venezuela, on the Peruvian coast, and in southern Chile, but none of these buildings combine the four characteristic features of the Paraguayan wooden skeleton church, and their wooden supports are always placed on stone or masonry foundations, with very rare, small, and modest exceptions.[19]

But in Paraguay, the Jesuit missionaries apparently trusted the Guaraní's building experience more than the construction rules of their own culture. This is one of the reasons why so few of these churches have survived. Even the best wood rots in the long run in areas of fluctuating soil humidity, in the Americas as well as in Europe.

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17. José Cardiel, "Carta y relación de las misiones de la provincia del Paraguay," in *José Cardiel S.J. y su carta-relación (1747)*, ed. Guillermo Furlong, Escritores Coloniales Rioplatenses 2 (Buenos Aires: Librería del Plata, 1953), 115–213, here 154–56. My translation, as with all subsequent quotations from Spanish or German texts.

18. Whether the churches in the Jesuit missions of Maynas (in Ecuador and Peru) also belonged to this type is highly questionable.

19. Kühne, "Missionskirchen," 23–25, 246–25 (tables), 339–43 (images). The list in my thesis includes about eighty buildings.

The Churches of the Period of Prosperity in the Guaraní Missions (Municipal Phase)

Since the end of the incursions of the slave hunters from São Paulo into the Guaraní missions, thanks to the victory of the Guaraní in the Battle of Mboboré in 1641, the surviving or relocated Guaraní villages flourished in the area between the Paraná and Uruguay Rivers. In the official census of 1657, there were twenty villages with an average population of over three thousand. Unlike in Chiquitos, the probable close relationship between this official census and the appearance of monumental churches must remain hypothetical, as assumed above, because there are few confirmed dates of construction.

From the 1660s until at least 1730, all new church buildings in the Guaraní missions were wooden skeleton churches with a large portico and side porches. Depending on the materials available locally, the non-bearing walls were made of a combination of adobe, quarry, and/or hewn stone, always without lime mortar, only clay. Most of these churches were spectacular, high, and very spacious, with a non-projecting transept, a wooden-domed, pyramid-shaped crossing, and with wooden vaults, at least over the presbytery, and sometimes probably over the nave and transept. At least seventeen of the twenty-seven wooden skeleton churches in the Guaraní missions had a transept and/or a crossing dome.[20] The only known interior photograph of one of these churches, San Ignacio Guazú, shows very tall and slender pillars supporting wooden arches and a painted roof.[21] A much better impression of these interiors is given by the church of San Buenaventura de Yaguarón near Asunción (Paraguay), a Guaraní mission founded by Franciscans in 1585, the largest preserved colonial church in Paraguay. Inaugurated in 1772, it has high and slender pillars, wooden arches in the nave, and a wooden vault over the presbytery but no transept and no crossing dome. It has an exuberant high altar by the Portuguese artist José de Souza Cavadas and paintings in baroque style from the 1960s.[22]

At the same time as the first of these monumental Guaraní mission churches were probably being built, the Jesuits were also constructing the great new church for the Jesuit college in Córdoba, Argentina, the capital of the Jesuit province of Paracuaria. The oldest surviving church in Argentina was covered with wooden vaults in 1667 and consecrated in 1671. The church and the domestic chapel of the novitiate have magnificent gilded high altars, a pulpit, and carved cornices and friezes on the vaults, as well as figurative and ornamental ceiling paintings, most of which certainly date from

20. Kühne, "Missionskirchen," 250–51.

21. First published in Miguel Solá, *Las misiones guaraníes: Escultura, pintura, grabados y artes menores,* Documentos de Arte Argentino 20 (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1946), lxxix.

22. Josefina Plá, *El templo de Yaguarón: Una joya barroca en el Paraguay* (Asunción: Editorial del Centenario, 1970); Gutiérrez, *Evolución urbanística*, 286–88, 303–7; María José Diez, "Historia material de la iglesia de San Buenaventura de Yaguarón," *Revista paraguaya de historia* 5, no. 1 (Asunción, 2022): 9–50.

the construction of the buildings and were probably designed by Peruvian masters.[23] The church is built on a Latin cross plan, with a single nave, a transept, and a high cross dome under a pyramidal roof.[24] The similarity in volume to the Jesuit mission churches is striking. The walls are made of quarry stone with good lime mortar, but the Jesuits were faced with the problem that the width of the nave, of more than ten meters, seemed too great to close it with a masonry vault, and in Córdoba there was neither good wood nor experienced craftsmen to construct a large brick vault or a large conventional wooden roof. So, the Jesuits decided on another, quite unique solution, based on an old, little-known textbook by the French Renaissance architect Philibert de l'Orme (1510–70), whose *Nouvelles inventions pour bien bastir et à petits fraiz* (New inventions for building well and cheaply [1561]) demonstrated that it was possible to build a very strong and material-saving vaulted roof from short, well-wedged wooden planks.[25] The book was specially ordered in Europe, and the Belgian brother Felipe Lemaire (1608–71) built all the vaults and the crossing dome of the Jesuit church according to its instructions, as well as the vault of the novitiate's domestic chapel, with short wooden planks prefabricated in the Guaraní missions.[26]

De l'Orme's ingenious construction technique was rarely used during his lifetime and was almost forgotten in Europe during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries until it was rediscovered in Europe shortly before 1800; it went on to flourish in France, Prussia, and the United States.[27] For more than a hundred years, however, this construction method was very successful in the Río de la Plata region. It is well documented for the churches of the Jesuit colleges of Salta, Santa Fe, and Asunción and is still preserved in two village churches in Paraguay: the wooden vault over the presbytery in Yaguarón was built around 1760, just like the one in Córdoba, while the one in Capiatá

23. Sustersic's attribution of the altars to Bressanelli (*Templos jesuítico-guaraníes*, 54n78) must be rejected, since they are far too antiquated to be dated after 1691, and there is no evidence of any Italian influence. The best comparative examples can be found in Cuzco, such as the anonymous high altar of the church of Santa Catalina, with Solomonic columns and double consoles, from 1660; see Diego Angulo Íñiguez ed., *Historia del arte hispanoaméricano* 3 (Barcelona: Salvat Editores, 1956), 540. Solomonic columns on altars have been common in Spain and South America since the mid-seventeenth century; see Martha Fernández, *Cristóbal de Medina Vargas y la arquitectura salomónica en la Nueva España durante el siglo XVII* (México, D.F.: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas, 2002).

24. Mario Buschiazzo, *La iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús de Córdoba*, Documentos de Arte Argentino 12 (Buenos Aires: Academia Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1942); Marina Tarán, "La manzana jesuítica y la iglesia de la Compañía en Córdoba," in *Arquitectura colonial argentina*, ed. Marina Waisman (Buenos Aires: Ediciones Summa, 1988), 36–39. Josefina Piana and Melina Malandrino, "Córdoba, 1767: Los edificios centrales de la provincia jesuítica de la Paracuaria," in *XIII Jornadas Internacionais sobre as Missões Jesuíticas: Fronteiras e Identidades*, Actas en CD-ROM (Dourados: n.p., 2010).

25. Philibert de l'Orme, *Nouvelles inventions pour bien bastir et à petits fraiz* (Paris, 1561). Facsimile edition: De l'Orme, *Traités d'architecture*, ed. Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos (Paris: Lénoce Laget, 1988).

26. Carlos Page, "Las cubierta y pinturas de la iglesia de la Compañía de Jesús de la ciudad de Córdoba (Argentina)," *Artigrama* 26 (Zaragoza, 2011): 625–48.

27. Rainer Graefe, "Die Bogendächer von Philibert de l'Orme," in *Zur Geschichte des Konstruierens*, ed. Rainer Graefe (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1989), 99–116. Jean-Marie Pérouse de Montclos, "La charpente à la Philibert de l'Orme: Réflexions sur la fortune des techniques en architecture," in *Les chantiers de la Renaissance, Actes des colloques tenues à Tours en 1983–1984*, ed. Jean Guillaume (Paris: Picard éditeur, 1991), 27–50.

is much simpler.[28] Everything indicates that the wooden vaults in the churches of the Jesuit Guaraní missions were also made in the same way as those in Córdoba but with lower cross domes, and that this technique was introduced there by Felipe Lemaire when he supervised the production of the prefabricated wooden planks for Córdoba.[29]

The most famous of these typical mission churches is that of San Ignacio Miní, Argentina, where impressive ruins of the church and the whole village are preserved. The church was built after a village relocation in 1696, with three naves, non-projecting transept, crossing dome, and portico, with stone walls and a wooden skeleton. It is richly decorated with stone carvings on its façade, portals, and window frames.[30] The position of the windows and the negatives of the destroyed wooden supports in the walls show that the church had a transept from the beginning. The masonry is made up of irregularly shaped quarry stones laid in clay, combined with uniform ashlars in the area of the openings and sculptures, clearly showing that both types of masonry were used simultaneously for different needs rather than indicating different phases of construction, as Norberto Levinton suggests.[31] The church is often attributed to the Italian sculptor Bressanelli, but there is no stylistic affinity between the sculptures attributed to him and the stone carvings of San Ignacio Miní. They cannot be the work of a European-trained artist, because the violations of the rules of baroque art are too gross, as Fernando Chueca Goitía has pointed out: if they were made by Italian Jesuits, "the truth is that they had completely forgotten the architectural language of their native country."[32] It is more likely that these sculptures were designed by a talented Jesuit priest with no architectural training, similar to Schmid and Bartolomé de Mora in Chiquitos (see below), and executed by very skilled indigenous craftsmen.

In contrast to these traditional wooden structures, some magnificent and very different churches were built that ignored the pragmatic Jesuit rules of appropriateness and functionality. San Miguel, Trinidad, Jesús, and San José de Chiquitos show that enterprising and charismatic village priests were allowed to realize divergent and exaggerated projects, despite the rules of the order, as long as they had the support of the indigenous communities.

It was not until about 1700 that Jesuit brothers with serious architectural training arrived in the Jesuit province, including the Bohemian Johann Kraus (1659–1714) in 1698 and the Italians Giovanni Andrea Bianchi (1675–1740) and the already mentioned Primoli in 1717. They worked mainly in Córdoba and other cities, in the estancias of the Jesuit colleges and especially in the burgeoning port city of Buenos Aires, where

28. Many thanks to Carlos Page for showing me the roofs of the Jesuit church in Córdoba and to María José Diez for the photos of the vaults of the churches in Paraguay.
29. Pedro Hurtado Valdez, "Bóvedas encamonadas: Origen, evolución, geometría y construcción entre los siglos XVII y XVIII en el virreinato del Perú" (PhD diss., Universidad Politécnica Madrid, 2011), 164–67.
30. Vicente Nadal Mora, *Monumentos históricos de misiones: San Ignacio Miní* [1955], segunda edición facsimilar (Buenos Aires, 1995); Carlos Luis Onetto, *San Ignacio Miní: Un testimonio que debe perdurar* (Buenos Aires: Dirección Nacional de Arquitectura, 1999); Norberto Levinton, *San Ignacio Miní: La identidad arquitectónica* (Buenos Aires: Contratiempo Ediciones, 2009); Horacio Bollini, *La reducción de San Ignacio Miní y el barroco* (Corrientes: Moglia Ediciones, 2012).
31. Levinton, *San Ignacio Miní*, 47–67.
32. Fernando Chueca Goitia, *Historia de la arquitectura occidental VIII: Barroco en Hispanoamérica, Portugal y Brasil* (Madrid: Dossat Bolsillo, 1985), 199.

they erected several buildings with brick vaults.[33] Rarely did any of these professional architects reach the Guaraní missions.

However, around 1730, in the village of San Miguel Arcángel—now São Miguel das Missões, Brazil—the parish priest Francisco de Ribera (1668–1747) and the village community decided to work with the Italian architect Primoli to build a masonry vaulted church, despite the lack of basic materials: there was no lime in the mission area, importing it would have been too expensive, and the soft local sandstone was unsuitable for vaults. Nevertheless, the architect planned a grandiose, inappropriate, and hardly feasible solidly vaulted church based on classical Italian models.[34] The plan was for a three-nave basilica with massive piers, a projecting transept, a high crossing dome, and a tall bell tower but without the important portico needed for the catechesis of girls and holy week celebrations. Construction work began around 1730, and the date 1739 appears on a capital of the tower.[35] It is noteworthy that this church was built during the worst internal crisis of the mission: between 1732 and 1740, as a result of devastating epidemics, famine, and the crown's foreign commitments, the population of the missions fell by almost half; there were uprisings, and many Guaraní fled the missions. San Miguel was the only one of the thirty villages whose population continued to grow during this period.[36] When the difficulties of the construction became apparent, a dispute arose between the priest and the architect, and both had to leave the village. Ribera, probably the initiator of the project, was allowed to return in 1740 but not as parish priest, only as coadjutor. Another architect, possibly the Jesuit José Grimau (1718–76), completed the church in 1747 with wooden vaults and added a large vestibule, also in classical style, in front of the existing church. The original plan of this vestibule seems to have survived, but it was usurped in 1780 by the Portuguese military engineer José María Cabrer (1761–1836), who probably added a cartouche with a text and his signature.[37]

Although Primoli was partially unsuccessful with his San Miguel project, he had the opportunity to build another, even more ambitious church in Trinidad del Paraná (Paraguay), beginning in 1739. Its ruins, with the remains of stone and brick vaults, are

33. Dalmacio Sobrón, *Giovanni Andrea Bianchi: Un arquitecto italiano en los albores de la arquitectura colonial argentina* (Córdoba: Corregidor, 1997).

34. Ramón Gutiérrez, "La misión jesuítica de San Miguel Arcángel y su templo," *Documentos de arquitectura nacional y americana* 14 (Resistencia, 1982): 63–91; Luiz Antônio Bolcato Custódio, *Remanescentes da igreja da redução de Sâo Miguel Arcanjo: levantamento cadastral* (Porto Alegre: Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional, 1994); Sustersic, *Templos jesuítico-guaraníes*, 67–76.

35. Bolcato Custódio, *Remanescentes*, 4, fig. 1.

36. Ernesto Maeder, "Del esplendor a la crisis: Las misiones de guaraníes entre 1734–1744," *Temas de historia argentina y americana* 3 (Buenos Aires, 2003): 115–29; Robert H. Jackson, "Murphy's Law at Work: Climate Anomalies, Famine, and Mortality Crises on the Jesuit Missions among the Guarani, 1733–1740," *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 10 (2023): 278–306.

37. First published in Gutiérrez, "La mision jesuítica," 84. The elevation is a typical presentation drawing by a professional baroque architect and bears no resemblance to Cabrer's very schematic drawings. It probably came into Portuguese hands during the 1756 campaign, as it seems that General Gómez Freire mentioned it in his official report: "This was such a magnificent building, as we can see from the floor plan and prospectus sent herewith [...]," in [Marquis of Pombal], *Kurtze Nachricht von der Republique, so von denen R.R.P.P. der Gesellschaft Jesu der Portugiessisch- und Spanischen Provinzen in den über Meer gelegenen diesen zweyen Mächten gehörigen Königreichen aufgerichtet worden* (Lisbon, 1760), 11.

still impressive today. For the architectural history of this church, I rely on Sustersic, who has written an elaborate and largely convincing history based on extensive source studies, although I come to different conclusions on many points.[38] The plan and main dimensions are largely the same as those of San Miguel, with six instead of seven bays in the nave and much stronger piers and walls. The portico was a long, vaulted corridor with large arched openings to the plaza, and with a tall bell tower above the extension of the portico; however, it was probably too narrow to be suitable for the usual events with many participants. The architectural decoration was much richer than in San Miguel: some smaller side altars, the pulpit, the portals, the windows, and the main cornice of the presbytery and transept were decorated with figurative and ornamental stone sculptures.[39] Graziano Gasparini, who made a detailed study of the ruins before they were uncovered and restored, described Trinidad as "the most ambitious and highest quality building constructed by the Jesuits in the Guaraní region, but also the one with the most deficient construction techniques."[40] In addition to the deficiencies already noted in San Miguel, the soil had a low bearing capacity, causing up to thirty-five centimeters of subsidence in the tower area.[41] Without lime mortar, the ashlar walls, arches, and vaults were unable to absorb tensile and shear forces, resulting in severe settlement that is still clearly visible above the openings. Around 1750, shortly after its completion, the crossing dome collapsed. It appears that the other large vaults were demolished to be replaced by wooden structures; however, when limestone was found nearby, they were rebuilt by Pedro Pablo Danesi (1717–69) between 1761 and 1764 with burned brick and lime mortar, despite the warnings of other Jesuits. However, the new vaults of the central nave also collapsed after only ten years of use, shortly after the Jesuits' expulsion. Two years later, only the outer walls, the crossing pillars, a side aisle, and the badly damaged façade and tower remained. Felix de Azara (1742–1821) wrote in 1784: "The church completely collapsed ten years ago; since it was made of ashlar masonry with clay, with vaults of radially laid bricks and mortar, the walls could not withstand the lateral thrust."[42] Most later historians attributed the collapse to a Spanish administrator removing a porch or an arcade. In fact, in 1774, a few months before the collapse, the demolition of the portico or the façade was ordered by the authorities, perhaps to

38. Gutiérrez, *Evolución urbanística*, 144–45, 159–61; José Antonio Perasso, *Historia y arqueología del pueblo de la Santísima Trinidad del Paraná* (Asunción: Museo "Guido Boggiani" San Lorenzo, 1992); Bozidar Darko Sustersic et al., "Trinidad del Paraná: Las revelaciones de las ruinas sobre la forma original del templo, la historia de su construcción y de sus derrumbes," in *Jesuitas, 400 años en Córdoba*, ed. Carlos Page (Córdoba: Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, 1999), 2:395–419; Sustersic, *Templos jesuítico-guaraníes*, 76–99, 123–45, 150–212; Page, "Las verdaderas causas del desplome de la iglesia de Trinidad del Paraná (1774)," in *VI Congreso Internacional de Rehabilitación del Patrimonio Arquitectónico y Edificación CICOP*, Libro de Actas (San Bernardino: n.p., 2002), 549–54.

39. According to the analysis of the building, these sculptures clearly date from the time of construction (around 1739–50) and not from the reconstruction after 1760.

40. Graziano Gasparini and Stelio Furlani, "Proyecto de consolidación y restauración de los conjuntos monumentales de Trinidad, Jesús y San Cosme: Informe técnico y planos" (Caracas: Organización de los Estados Americanos OEA, Unidad Técnica de Patrimonio Cultural, 1974 [unpublished]), 8.

41. Sustersic et al., "Trinidad del Paraná," 416.

42. Félix de Azara, *Descripción general del Paraguay* [1784–1785], ed. Andrés Galera Gómez (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1990), 290.

prevent the collapse, but this could not have been the cause of the total disintegration of the highly unstable construction.

The churches of San Miguel and Trinidad were not only too expensive and poorly built but also inappropriate, with bulky pillars narrowing the space and blocking the view of the pulpit and high altar. The traditional churches, with their thin wooden pillars, were much more suitable for the worship and preaching of large congregations.

In Jesús de Tavarangue (Paraguay), the neighboring village of Trinidad, the construction of a third church without a wooden skeleton began around 1760 after lime deposits were discovered nearby. The lime mortar finally made permanent construction possible. Slightly smaller than its two monumental predecessors, the church was designed with three naves, a non-projecting transept, and one or two bell towers.[43] The thin ashlar masonry walls indicate that brick vaults were not planned. It is not known whether a vestibule was planned, but it is probable. Construction work stopped in 1764 after a serious accident involving the Jesuit architect, Antonio Forcada (1701–67), and though it resumed after the Jesuits' expulsion, it was never completed. Massive geometric and constructional inconsistencies show that more than half of the walls visible today were built under the supervision of builders who did not know the original plans, which were probably lost when the Jesuits were expelled. In 1791, one of them stated that the church "was not built according to the rules of architecture [...]. These damages were caused by those who pretend to be masters without being them."[44] The two unfinished free-standing transept pillars are incorrect in shape and position, the walls of the side aisles are much too high, and the traces of the planned vaults in the presbytery and the transept show impracticable solutions. Probably, the original plan did not envisage a hall church with naves of equal height but a building with the shape and proportions of the traditional wooden churches, with a wooden cross dome under a pyramidal roof, wooden vaults in the nave, transept and presbytery, a common gabled roof for the three naves, and slender stone pillars in the arcades of the nave and in the open portico.

The Churches of the Guaraní Missions after 1767 (Civil-Secular Phase)

The three complexes of San Miguel, Trinidad, and Jesús clearly show that the decline after the expulsion of the Jesuits was by no means as rapid as is often assumed. Both the Guaraní and the new administrators tried to maintain the Jesuit buildings and complete the unfinished ones, but changing economic and political circumstances prevented this in the long run.

The church of San Miguel burned down in 1789 after being struck by lightning. When it was rebuilt in 1793, half of the pillars of the inner arcades and ten of the fourteen arches were completely rebuilt, the latter using bricks and lime mortar instead of cut stone and clay. It was planned to rebuild the transept as well, but instead the church

43. Gutiérrez, *Evolución urbanística*, 143–44, 158; Sustersic, *Templos jesuítico-guaraníes*, 101–21; Rafael Carbonell de Masy and Norberto Levinton, *Un pueblo llamado Jesús* (Asunción: Fundación Paracuaria, 2010).
44. Gutiérrez, *Evolución urbanística*, 144.

was shortened with a new wall.[45] The village, which had been Portuguese since 1801, was abandoned in the mid-nineteenth century.

In Trinidad, after the collapse of the large Jesuit church, a new, tall, single-aisle church was built in 1776, with a portico on two wooden pillars, a side porch with elaborately decorated stone columns, and a massive, free-standing bell tower. Construction also continued on the west wing with the workshops. All of these buildings were made of stone blocks and clay, without a wooden skeleton, in some parts using recycled stones from the collapsed church. The project drawing of the new Trinidad church shows a vaulted roof, but it is unclear whether this was to be made of brick or wood; another drawing by Alfred Demersay shows this church still in use in 1864.[46]

As described above, construction continued after 1767 on the Jesús church as well. The rectory wing with refectory and sacristy and three rows of houses in the village square were completed, while the rest of the population remained in the old village one kilometer to the east, which is still inhabited today.

Finally, it can be assumed that even in the Guaraní missions, as in Chiquitos, a significant proportion of the surviving statues of saints were created after the Jesuits' expulsion.

The Churches of the Period of Prosperity in Chiquitos (Municipal and Civil-Secular Phase)

In 1745, a judge of the Audiencia de Charcas visited the Chiquitos reductions to carry out the first census, the condition for the transformation of the reductions into municipalities. His visit caused an incredible fever of construction. In San Rafael, he was received with great pomp by Father Schmid. The previous year, Schmid had yet to mention the construction of the church in his letters, but two years later the roof was erected, and in 1749 the whole church was finished. Schmid was not a Jesuit brother with a practical education, like Bressanelli, Primoli, or Forcada, but a highly talented priest who, in addition to his pastoral function, also worked as an architect, artist, musician, and instrument maker. As a musician, he introduced polyphonic baroque church music to Chiquitos and founded music schools, choirs, and orchestras. As an architect, he drew on the experience of the Guaraní missions, which he had not visited himself, and built the church of San Rafael with a wooden skeleton, adobe walls, and a tiled roof but smaller and without a transept, thus simplifying the complicated roof shape of the large Guaraní churches with up to fifteen roof surfaces to a simple saddle roof with only two surfaces. He gave the wooden skeleton stronger dimensions, had the thick wooden columns carved in a Solomonic twisted shape, and structured the adobe walls inside and out with pilasters, arches, and cornices, all carefully proportioned and molded to the material. The prefabricated ceramic ornamentation, stencil-like decorative painting, carved furniture, and ceramic figurines show how Schmid tried to control every detail, leaving no room for the creativity of the Chiquitanos.[47] After com-

45. Bolcato Custódio, *Remanescentes*, plan 3, 6, 10, 11.
46. Gutiérrez, *Evolución urbanística*, 159; Levinton, *Un pueblo*, 100, 101.
47. Kühne, *Martin Schmid*; Kühne, "Missionskirchen," 108–30.

pleting the church of San Rafael, Schmid built two similar churches in San Javier and Concepción in even less time, each one slightly larger than the previous one.

At the same time, Bartolomé de Mora, S.J. (1691–1760) began an even more ambitious and unique construction program in San José de Chiquitos. Around 1730, still in the reduction phase, he had built the nave of the church, in very simple forms, with a wooden skeleton, a roof of hollowed palm trunks, fluted wooden columns, and simple adobe walls, still without the pilasters and cornices that were added much later.[48] From 1745, he used a completely different technique with solid stone walls, excellent lime mortar, arches, and brick vaults. In 1747, he replaced the church's portico with a high façade. The impressive bell tower followed the next year, the vaulted mortuary chapel in 1750, and the mission house with vaulted rooms and porches in 1754. Perhaps he also planned to replace the wooden church with a vaulted one.[49] The decoration of his buildings, with ceramic ornaments, murals, and carved furniture, was much simpler and more schematic than Schmid's designs. Unlike Schmid, Mora had no problem with the Chiquitanos completing his design with indigenous animal and saint figures.[50]

In the ruins of the neighboring mission of San Juan Bautista, which was later moved, a bell tower remains. Its radical simplicity is related to the reduction phase, but the masonry technique is as perfect as in the buildings of San José. It must be the first work of the anonymous master, probably a Jesuit brother, who introduced the techniques of burning brick and making lime in Chiquitos around the year of the census.[51] Both were of excellent quality, as can be seen on the roofs of San Rafael, which still has its original tiles, and on the exterior walls of San José and San Juan, which still have much of their original plaster. Five years later, in 1750, he or another professional introduced the technique of building brick vaults.

Antonio Rojas (d.1770), another important artist in Chiquitos, was not a Jesuit priest like Schmid and Mora but a *criollo* or *mestizo* who worked with his family in Chiquitos for at least fifteen years in defiance of Spanish laws and Jesuit directives. He is not mentioned in any Jesuit document, but we know that his son Manuel Rojas (1752–1813) was born in Chiquitos, educated by the Jesuits, and later became a parish priest in San José and vicar of Chiquitos. In his testament of 1769, Antonio specified some of the last works he did in the missions, especially the gilding of the altars, some statues, and the ceiling paintings in the church of San Miguel. This allows us to attribute to him all the beautifully carved church furnishings of San Miguel (the best ones in Chiquitos), as well as many statues and furniture in other villages. It is also likely that he participated in the construction of the churches of San Miguel and San Ignacio,

48. Kühne, "Missionskirchen," 105–8.
49. Eckart Kühne, "Estudio histórico del complejo jesuítico de San José de Chiquitos" (San Ignacio de Velasco: Plan Misiones, 2010 [unpublished]), 44–63.
50. Eckart Kühne, "El mestizaje cultural en la arquitectura de las misiones de Chiquitos y Mojos," in *Mestizajes en diálogo, VIII Encuentro Internacional sobre Barroco*, ed. Norma Campos (La Paz: Fundación Visión Cultural, 2017), 77–85.
51. Kühne, "Missionskirchen," 99–100.

the most beautiful in Chiquitos, unfortunately destroyed in 1948. The style of his work shows that he came from or was trained in the Andean highlands.[52]

The prosperity of Chiquitos did not end with the expulsion of the Jesuits. After a decade of crisis, Chiquitos experienced a second heyday from 1780 until the wars of independence that began in 1810. The church of Santa Ana, built between 1773 and 1780, is smaller and simpler than those of Schmid and thus resemble the churches of the reduction phase. The altars of this church and the side altars of San Rafael (1770) are also rather simple. From 1780, however, works of art were created that can compete with those of the Jesuit era. These include the carved main altar of San Rafael (1783) and the side altars of San Ignacio, probably from the workshop of the late Antonio Rojas; the shimmering mica wall decorations in San Rafael and Santa Ana (since 1789); the main altar and a new adobe façade of San Ignacio (1805–7); and murals depicting King Ferdinand VII (r.1808, 1813–33) in San José (1810). Together, about half of the artwork in Chiquitos dates from the civil-secular phase.[53]

During this period, the production of beeswax and cotton cloth for export increased, as did the exploitation of the Chiquitanos' labor. To compensate for this, they gained more and more control over the maintenance of the churches and the organization of the religious festivals. The importance of the sacraments diminished, the processions became more important, and some of the silver vessels for the church services were transformed into attributes for the processional figures. The walls of the churches were covered with opulent murals and shimmering mica, thus flattening the spatial hierarchy between the nave and the presbytery, and between the Chiquitanos and the priest. All of this shows how much the Chiquitanos adopted the Jesuit system, how well it survived without the Jesuits, and how successful they had been in their goal of creating permanent Christian communities.[54]

That the colonial mission churches of Chiquitos still stand today is largely due to the Chiquitanos, who maintained them for two hundred years, replacing the wooden columns that had rotted at the bottom through arduous community work. To this day, these churches remain the spiritual centers of the Chiquitano indigenous Christian culture. The orally transmitted church music with baroque roots, the ancient sermons in Chiquitano recited at church festivals, and countless other Christian customs show

52. Bernardo Fischermann, "Los Rojas, artesanos y sacerdotes cruceños en la Chiquitania," in *Festival Internacional de Música 'Misiones de Chiquitos', III Reunión Científica* (Santa Cruz: APAC, 2000), 141–50.
53. Eckart Kühne, "El culto al Rey en las misiones ex-jesuíticas: El caso de las pinturas murales de Gregorio Villarroel en San José de Chiquitos (1810)," in *Imagen del poder, Memoria del VI Encuentro Internacional sobre Barroco*, ed. Norma Campos (La Paz: Fundación Visión Cultural, 2012), 61–72; Kühne, "Die Missionen von Chiquitos und Mojos nach der Ausweisung der Jesuiten: Transformation und Tradierung," in *Transfer, Begegnung, Skandalon? Neue Perspektiven auf die Jesuitenmissionen in Spanisch-Amerika*, ed. Esther Schmid Heer et al. (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2019), 245–82.
54. Diez, *Bienes muebles*; Cecilia Martínez, *Una etnohistoria de Chiquitos, más allá del horizonte jesuítico*, Scripta Autochtona 21 (Cochabamba: Itinerarios Editorial, 2018).

that the Chiquitano, like the Guaraní, did not see the missions as an imposed way of life but as something they had actively shaped together with the Jesuit missionaries.[55]

Conclusion: Jesuit Accommodation and Indigenous Agency

The term *accommodation*, like the more recent term *inculturation*, is used by today's historians to describe the willingness and ability of Jesuit missionaries to adapt to local social conditions when communicating Christianity and also to emphasize the superiority of Jesuit missionary methods.[56] Following the Argentine architectural historian Ramón Gutiérrez, I would prefer to speak of the Jesuits' *pragmatic attitude* in organizational, constructive, architectural, and economic matters (along with a very strict attitude in religious and moral matters).[57] However, both concepts focus on the role of the missionaries and disregard the fundamental role of Guaraní and Chiquitano agency in the creation and development of their missions, which is also recognizable in many of the missionaries' accounts. The missions were not the realization of a pre-established utopian model but the result of negotiations and compromises between the Jesuits and the Guaraní or Chiquitanos.

For the Society of Jesus, questions of style were always secondary to the primary goal of teaching the faith. For them, churches were adequate if they were suitable for proper worship and promoted piety. Because of the adaptation to very different local conditions, there was neither a uniform Jesuit style nor generally binding instructions from the order on architectural and artistic matters.[58] Each Jesuit province developed a certain canon of forms and constructions appropriate to its building tasks. However, since each college or mission village was economically independent, some charismatic fathers who stayed in the same village for a long time were able to realize very distinctive projects, despite the centralism of the order, such as Francisco de Ribera in San Miguel Arcángel and Bartolomé de Mora in San José de Chiquitos. The main concern of the superiors and generals was that the missionaries would burden the Indians with too much work, and they repeatedly urged moderation. Therefore, when a priest wanted to build a large or unusual structure, such as the mission house in San José, he emphasized that it was done at the express request of the Indians.

Otherwise, the classical criteria of Vitruvius for good architecture also apply in Paraguay: buildings must be durable, functional, and beautiful. To European eyes, the churches of San Miguel and Trinidad were more beautiful than the wooden skel-

55. Peter Strack, *Frente a Dios y los Pozokas: Las tradiciones culturales y sociales de las reducciones jesuíticas desde la conquista hasta el presente, Fiesta Patronal y Semana Santa en Chiquitos* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1992); Sieglinde Falkinger, ed., *Anauxti Jesucristo Mariaboka: Manual de Sermones*, Proyecto Recopilación y Documentación de los Sermones Chiquitanos (Santa Cruz: APAC, 2010).

56. Jeffrey Muller, "The Jesuit Strategy of Accommodation," in *Jesuit Image Theory*, ed. Wietse de Boer, Karl A. E. Enenkel and Walter S. Melion (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 461–92. On the question of the singularity of the Jesuit missions, see also Mariano Delgado, "Überlegungen zur Singularität der Jesuitenreduktionen," in *Transfer, Begegnung, Skandalon? Neue Perspektiven auf die Jesuitenmissionen in Spanisch-Amerika*, ed. Esther Schmid Heer et al. (Basel: Schwabe Verlag, 2019), 31–60.

57. Gutiérrez, *Evolución urbanística*, 125.

58. Jeffrey Muller, "Historiography of the Art and Architecture of the Jesuits," in *Jesuit Historiography Online*, ed. Robert A. Maryks, https://referenceworks.brill.com/display/entries/JHO/SIM-192594.xml?0language=en (2017) (accessed June 7, 2025).

eton churches because they were much more in line with the classical architectural canon. But they can hardly be described as durable or truly functional because their construction techniques were poor, and they did not meet the basic requirements of mission churches with a large open portico and a wide, unobstructed interior. But all three of Vitruvius's criteria were met by the last Jesuit wooden skeleton churches, those of Schmid in Chiquitos: despite their wooden skeletons, they were durable enough to survive into the mid-twentieth century, though they required a great deal of maintenance. They were functional as places of preaching and worship, they fulfilled the purpose of transmitting the faith and creating Christian communities, and they continue to do so today. And in the eyes of the Jesuits and Chiquitanos, their beauty lay not only in their proportions, shapes, and colors but also in the fact that they served the greater glory of God.