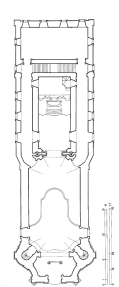
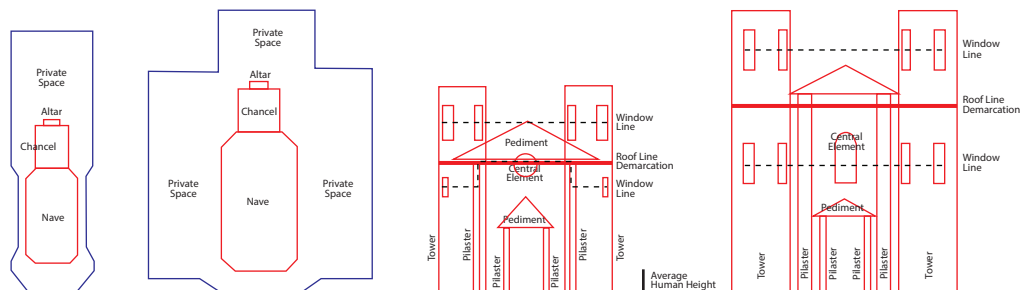
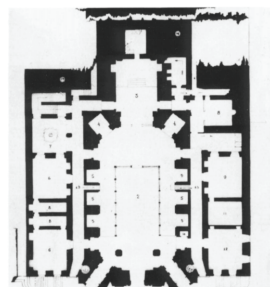


Case Study Introduction

The relationship between the Sao Francisco church in Ouro Preto and the Conceicao da Praia in Salvador is the focus of consideration because the Sao Francisco is among the first churches to be designed in a distinct Brazilian Baroque style and the Conceicao da Praia is an imported Portuguese church on Brazilian soil. Studying these two churches enables me to study an iteration of Baroque development that addresses both the arrival of Portuguese Baroque to Brazil, the dissemination of Baroque within Brazil, and the development of a distinct Brazilian Baroque style. I am utilizing comparative case studies between the Conceicao da Praia church in Salvador and the Sao Francisco church in Ouro Preto, including diagrammatic analyses of plan, façade, and quadratura ceiling, as well as a comparative urban and social historical analysis of Salvador and Ouro Preto. From this research I infer that the Sao Francisco church's design exists because of the Conceicao da Praia as evidenced by the strong design parallels and that their divergences in design are due to the differences in their city's sources of income, social makeup, and geography.



Sao Salvador,
Ouro Preto



Conceicao da Praia, Salvador



Sao Salvador, Ouro Preto



Conceicao da Praia, Salvador

Front Facade

Study of the church facades shows a developmental connection due to their notable parallels in composition while their variations show some of the distinctly Brazilian developments of the Minas Gerais region. Both churches are monumental in size, but the Conceicao da Praia is more so due to the interior private space on either side of the public space which relates to the massing on either side of the center of the front façade. The Sao Francisco's front façade is less monumental due to the interior private space being situated towards the back of the structure. These aspects of the facades are likely due to constraints or lack thereof provided by the geography of each region.

The façade of the Conceicao da Praia has a large pediment under the roofline supported by large pilasters and a smaller pediment and pilasters framing

the central entry. On either side of the pediments are two square towers that have been rotated 45 degrees from the façade's plane. At the center, above the main entry door is an arch window that is in line with the windows on the towers. Above this line of windows is a division in the façade that carries the roofline across the center of the façade. These aspects of the façade, with the exception of the rotated towers, reflect Portuguese design trends of the time period.

The façade of the Sao Francisco is compositionally similar to the Conceicao da Praia but it has Baroque variations that make the façade more dynamic. The two towers are round and set back from the façade, giving the façade more depth and movement. The main entry door is framed similarly to the Conceicao da Praia, but rather than a formal pediment it is framed by intricately carved designs of ribbons, cherubs, and the Virgin Mary. The composition forms a roughly triangular shape which is supported by pilasters. The medallion featuring Saint Francis of Assisi takes the place of the arch window of the Conceicao da Praia and is pulled down from the level of the windows on the towers. The division of the façade indicating the roofline of the rest of the church arches around the curved window making the composition more fluid. The Sao Francisco's dynamical façade design is representative of the Minas Gerais region.

Octagonal Nave

The public interior of the churches have a stronger design relationship than the exterior, exhibiting another element of Baroque dissemination. Although in plan the private space of the two churches vary in location, their naves are very similar in configuration. Both are elongated octagonal spaces with a spacious chancel leading to elaborate altars and retables. The style of each altar and retable are the least similar aspect of the interior space. A series of niches holding statuettes line the left and right sides of both naves, and although both naves have a row of openings above these niches, the type of openings differ. The Conceicao da Praia has private space in plan on the left and right side enabling gallery openings, whereas the Sao Francisco has clerestory windows.

Quadratura Ceiling

Quadratura ceilings are a distinctly European phenomenon so its appearance in Brazil is a notable sign of Baroque dissemination. The vast space of the naves are complemented by the quadratura ceilings in both churches and the shape of the nave allows for a spacious ceiling canvas. The edges of the ceilings are vaulted, enhancing the paintings' spatial illusion, but the majority of the ceiling is flat. The quadratura paintings are compositionally related, though the painting in the Sao Francisco is both compositionally and artistically simpler in execution. The artist for the Conceicao da Praia had European training and funding from the Portuguese

Emily Matt

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References: <http://emrose622.wix.com/brazilbaroque>



Crown whereas the quadratura paintings are compositionally related, though the painting in the Sao Francisco is both compositionally and artistically simpler in execution. The artist for the Conceicao da Praia had European training and funding from the Portuguese Crown whereas the artist for the Sao Francisco had training passed on from an artist with European training and local funds, which was smaller but still significant. The smaller nave of the Sao Francisco church means the composition is compressed as compared to the more elongated composition in the Conceicao da Praia, but both portray the Virgin Mary as the central figure framed by a scalloped shape frame. This frame, and most of the painting, is more architectural in appearance in the Conceicao da Praia and includes two implied vaults on the near and far sides that suit the longer length of its nave.

Geography

Variations in the designs of Brazilian Baroque churches can be attributed to the geography of each region, which was determined with topographical maps and textual research. The geography of Salvador varies, with flat regions and steep hills. The Conceicao da Praia is in a flat area along near the coast with a significant street wall formed by its adjacency to other buildings along this road. I speculate that the location for the Conceicao da Praia was chosen based on its proximity to the coast since the church was imported from Portugal and assembled in Brazil.

By contrast, Ouro Preto is in a mountainous region situated in valleys around the contours of the land. The Sao Francisco is at a higher elevation than much of the adjacent area, situated on a slope that has been built up to create flat, buildable ground. Given the orientation of the church in relation to the slope the geography still may have limited the possible configuration of the design in order to fit the built up area on the slope.

Social Demography

The urban historical analysis shows that the two cities developed distinctly: Salvador developed along the coast as a prime port city and Ouro Preto developed inland, starting as a mining town due to the discovery of gold. The founding inhabitants of each city vary in demographics and origin due to the cities' formation context. In terms of social demography, Salvador had a significant number of African slaves with a small proportion of Portuguese while Ouro Preto had a significant number of mulattos and African slaves with a smaller proportion of Portuguese.

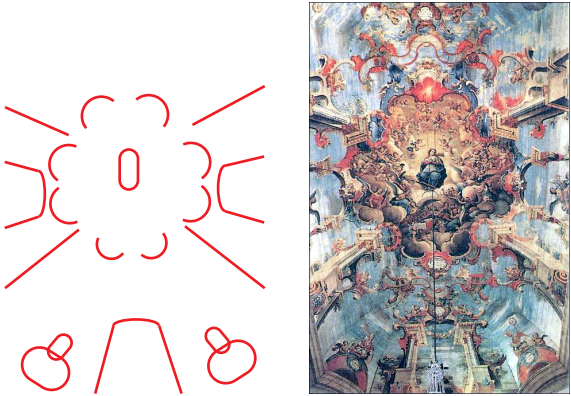
Urban Setting

Salvador is an example of Renaissance urban structuring, with an administrative and residential defensive upper city overlooking a commercial port lower city, adapted to the colonial site. In this urban configuration churches are often adjacent to markets or squares. The Conceicao da Praia is near to a current day square and much of the area is protected for historic preservation so it is a fair assumption that this square existed around the time that the Conceicao da Praia was constructed.

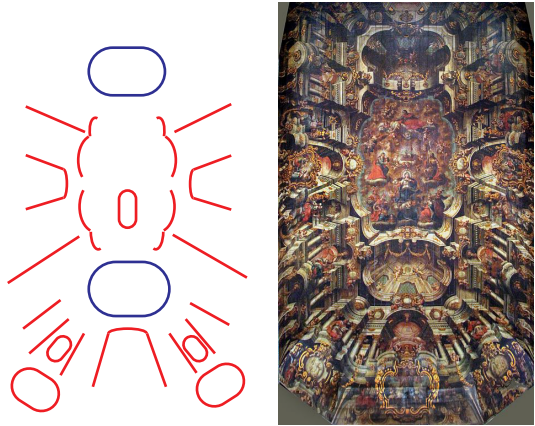
Like other mining towns in Minas Gerais, Ouro Preto grew from the mining camps situated along the slopes, adapted to the topography. The small camps crowded around different churches and chapels, turning into villages that eventually merged into a larger singular city. Many, but not all churches and institutional buildings are situated on topographically dominant sites. Like other churches in the region, the Sao Francisco church was designed with a significant front courtyard that acts as a social space in place of squares but in supplement to markets. These differences in urban foundation and structure led to a deviation in the use of church courtyards as opposed to public squares.

Conclusion

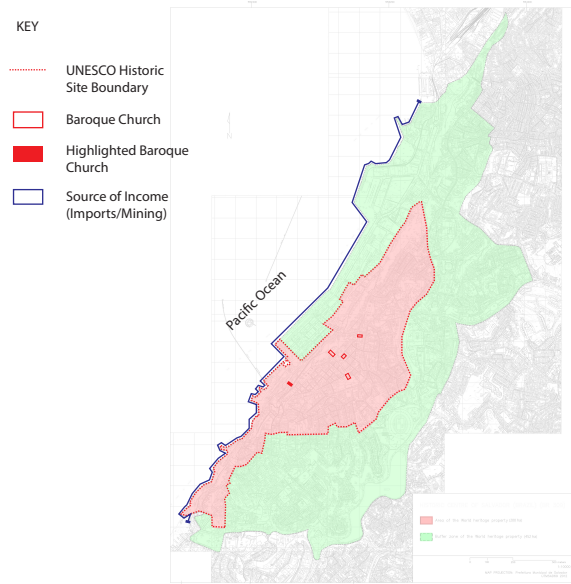
Study of the church facades, naves, and quadratura ceilings shows a developmental connection due to their notable parallels in composition while variations show some of the distinctly Brazilian developments of the Minas Gerias region. The compositional parallel despite distinct differences in geography, economy, and sociology of each region implies that the design of the Sao Francisco church's design exists because of the Conceicao da Praia.



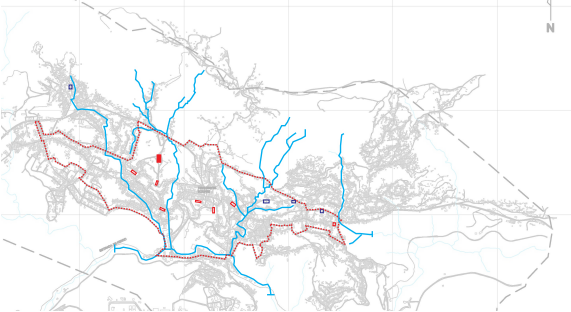
Sao Salvador, Ouro Preto



Conceicao da Praia, Salvador



Salvador, Brazil



Ouro Preto, Brazil