

SAN MARTIÑO DE BARCIA DE MERA

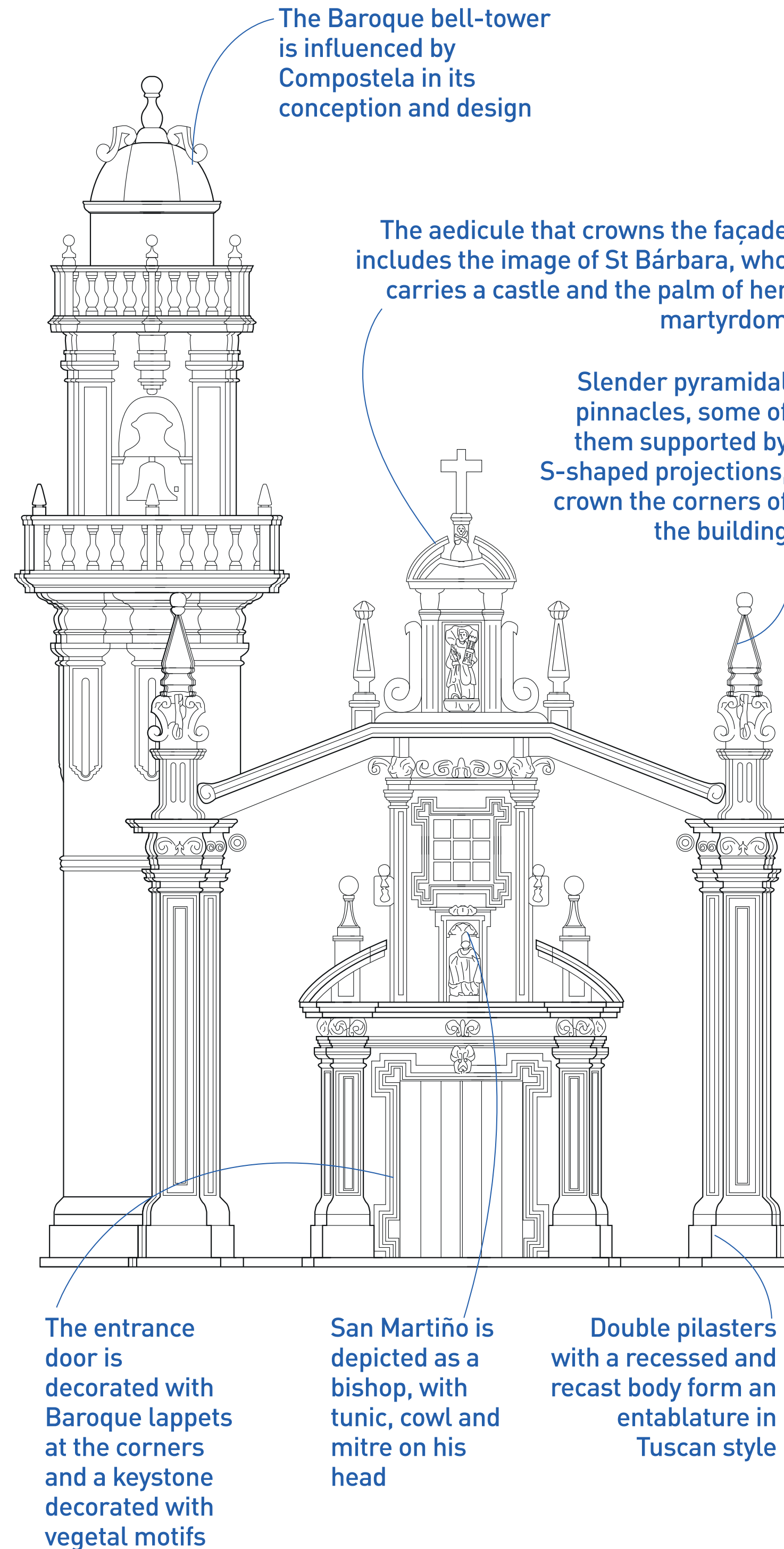
17th-18th CENTURIES

PARISH CHURCH

Between 1616 and 1642, the phenomenon of the emigrants otherwise known as Indianos emerged in Barcia de Mera, showing a growing rise in parish life. As an exponent of this economic progress, a result of emigration to America, we witness the promotion and prosperity of associations, the donations of liturgical objects and the concern for the improvement and conservation of the church. This activity prompted the locals to level the ground where the church stands today, enclose the atrium with walls and put up gates.

The reconstruction work on the new church began in 1676, with Don Antonio Pérez Rivera as Abbot, and was executed in two successive stages with the intervention of different construction work. Between 1690 and 1733, Dr. Alberto Bello Barreyro, who was Abbot for 43 years, took the lead role. He was the real driving force and the main contributor to the large expenses of the work that was undertaken.

The church is of large dimensions, constructed entirely with a double wall of fine granite masonry laid in stone. It has a Latin cross plan, with a very long chancel, almost the same length as the nave, but much taller, a dimension that stands out above all on the exterior views of the church. Both the presbytery, erected at the end of the 17th century, and the nave, transept and doorway, built in the mid-18th century, are the work of anonymous authors, although, of course, belonging to the school or inspired by the work of the architect Casas Novoa, especially with regard to the façade of the Obradoiro of the cathedral of Santiago.



Cross vault of the chancel

Details of the Sun and Moon carved in one of the keys of the nave

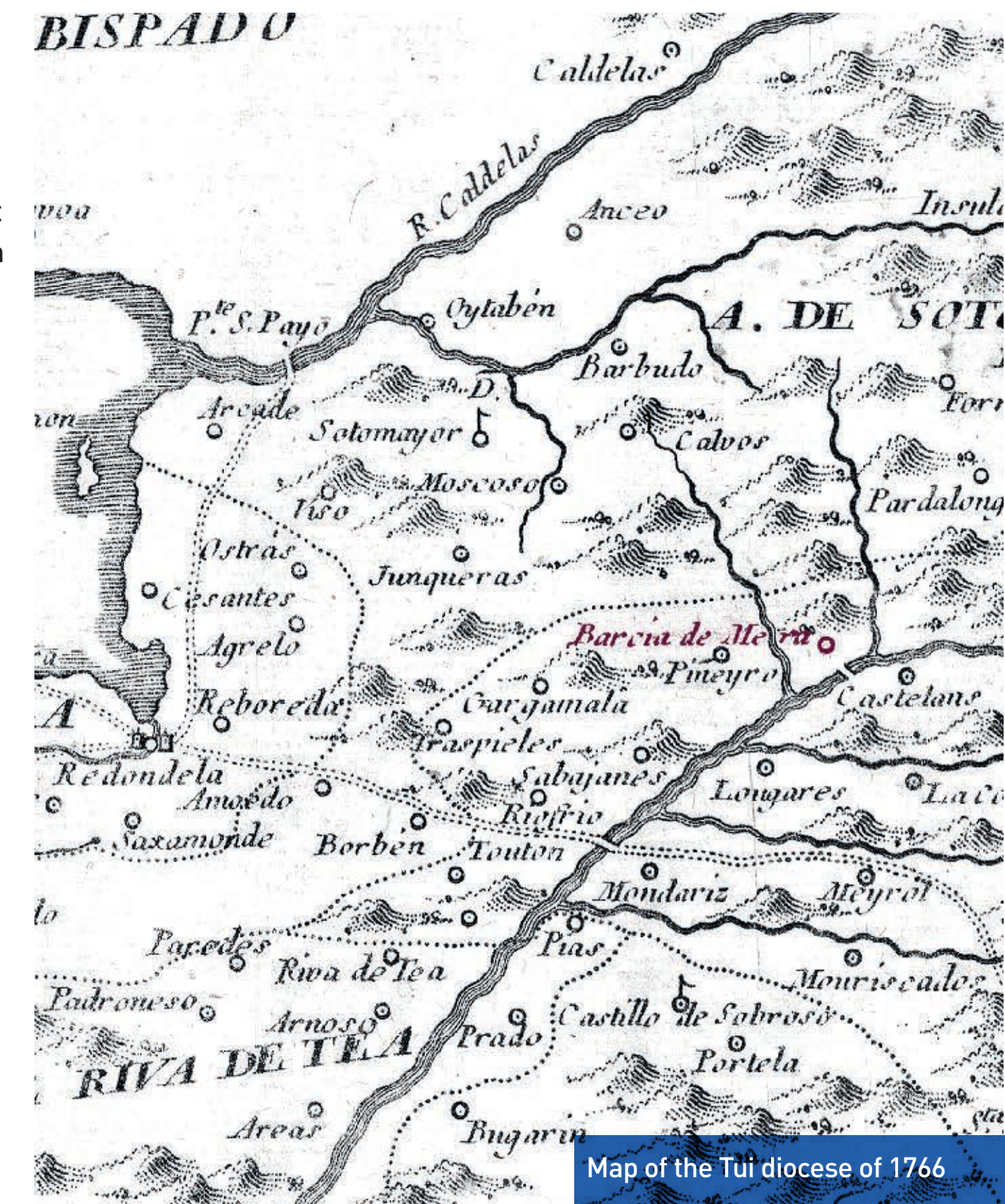
A film setting church

In the early 1980s this church was chosen by the film director Jaime de Armiñán to shoot a scene for the film "La hora bruja" (1985), starring Concha Velasco, Francisco Rabal and Victoria Abril. The filming, which took place in different locations in the region of O Condado, also took place at the top of the bell tower of the church of San Martiño, where Victoria Abril and Paco Rabal starred in a love scene.

Historical notes

The historian Ávila y la Cueva states that in the 13th century "this parish was already known by the name of Barciademera. Its patron saint is Saint Martin, whose festival is celebrated on the 11th of November, the day of St Martin. It has a population of 260 inhabitants who correspond to the authorities of A Cañiza for contentious matters, and to that of Cobelo for political and governmental matters. Its tithes are worth 33,500 reals, all of which are received by the parish priest: he has one of the best rectory houses in the bishopric, which was built up from the foundations around the middle of the 18th century by Dr. Alberto Barreyro y Bello. [...]

It also boasts a churchyard, whose annual production is regulated free of cultivation at 398 reales. The church factory does not receive any income nor does it own anything. It pays the Episcopal Dignity of Tuy 65 leonese salaries, 1 pound of wax, 90 old maravedis. These earnings are of Royal and Ordinary presentation at present: but [...] in the visit made to the church on 5th October 1566, it is said that it was then under the patronage and provision of the Monastery of Melón".



Map of the Tui diocese of 1766

