

Morgan, Julia and Arthur Byne, 1921

5-A-44-02

File

September 3, 1921

Mrs. Arthur Byne
Hispanic Museum
156th street W.
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mildred Stapley Byne:

Do you happen to have any detail photographs of that queer animal bracket cornice at Sanguesa (Navarra)- Casa de Propriedad Particular, Detalle del Alero de la Fachada. (Vease lamina n. 39), illustrated on page 40 of Arte Y Decoracion En Espana II. If you have, would you have some very large enlargements made and send them out? If you are in Spain and not in New York, could you have photographs made of each bracket and put the measurements on, - or if in New York, do you know any one in Spain and handy to the "cornice" who could and would get the photographs? This all at the request of Mr. Hearst, who has taken a great liking to these brackets and wants them copied for a house we are building here in California, on top of a mountain - many a mile from civilization. I will remit promptly if you will give me an idea how much to send.

May I also say a word of thanks for the Spanish Ceiling book, as well as the "Rejeria" and the Spanish Architecture of the Sixteenth Century. I have wished so often it had been possible to visit with you that day in New York, and to thank Mr. Byne and self both for your gift as it were, to me, of so much rich and interesting new material.

Sincerely,

September 19, 1921.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Stapley-Byne,
Hispanic Museum,
150-6th St., New York.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Byn:

As usual, I jump into it breath-
lessly, to know if you have any more photographs of the
"Hero" ceiling at Granada, or a copy of the inscriptions
accompanying the heads. Mr. Hearst is very much inter-
ested in it and would like to get a full set of photos
and the text or subject matter. We are building for
him a sort of village on a mountain-top overlooking the
sea and ranges and ranges of mountains, miles from any
railway, and housing incidentally, his collections as
well as his family. Having different buildings allows
the use of very varied treatments; also the fact that all
garden work is on steep hillsides, requiring endless
steps and terracing.

If you have any specially interesting garden
plates, I would much like it if you would send me what
you think would be helpful - say to the extent of \$100.
to \$200.

If you are in Spain, and have not your plates handy,
perhaps you could get someone at Granada to copy the inscrip-
tions and Mr. Hearst will meet the expense and trouble to
you.

As always, Yours sincerely,

Hearst

October 1, 1921.

Miss Julia Morgan,
Merchants Exchange,
San Francisco.

// Dear Julia; //

I can't tell you what a pleasure it was to hear from you especially as you were disposed to say kind things about our //poor// Spanish products. //By the oddest coincidence the same day brought a letter from Bab Kalisher the first in five or six years. //

I knew at once what cornice it must be though I had not seen Arte y Decoración. While my husband got out his negatives I turned to my notebook and found the following entry. "Sanguesa mansions have the typical Aragonese alero or cornice of carved pine. Many have been sold in the last few years to the antiquarians. The finest remaining one is on the Casa Valle-Santorio but this too is sold and only awaits the end of the war to be taken down and boxed" (1917). We have not returned to Navarre since then but I am sure we would find the Baroque facade in question shorn of its regional note.

The fine alkali dust of centuries has never been cleaned from the cornice and the whole work is one monotonous drab color with no oiled highlights as would be the case if taken care of. Photography is therefore not very satisfactory and my husband says that what he is sending is no better than that in Arte y Decoracion. He has however a rough sketch with dimensions which may be of some assistance. The truth is that the corbels in question are so vague and formless that if you had them at the end of your drawing board you would still find the motif intangible. The sketch was made from an attic on the other side of the street. Photographs and sketch are being sent under separate cover. //The price for Mr. Hearst is \$10.00. //If ever you wish anything of the same nature //for yourself// it is yours for the asking.

Knowing, as we now do, the charm of the traditional Spanish house we envy you architects of California your opportunity to create something fine in this line. We have promised to publish a series of Andalusian cortijos, or granges, for your benefit, Andalusia being that part of Spain that most resembles California; but the Spanish Romanesque, and Spanish Furniture, both under way, put the country house far off into the future. Meanwhile, if we can't build Spanish residences, we can furnish them. Our opportunities for disposing of good old private collections were so numerous that it seemed a pity not to take advantage of them, so we have become antiquarios. My husband went for a brief trip to N. Y. last January and made

arrangements with several decorators there to send them complete Spanish interiors or separate pieces. We intended doing this only in a casual way, but the fact is we were almost overwhelmed with orders and have sent off a dozen large shipments since his return in March. Many things are brought to our attention to be quietly sold that would never reach the ordinary dealer, // and our good judgment and fair dealing stand high both with the seller and the purchaser. Should you know anyone in S. F. who wants genuine old Spanish articles sent direct, anything from a bride's chest of old linens to the contents of a whole cast castillo, will you be good enough to mention us? Or old paintings--we recently sent a fine one to the Brooklyn Museum. //

So many American architects have visited Spain during the last year--do you never think of coming? We are now permanent residents, and have a nice studio apartment--"here you have your house" as the Spanish say, and a warm welcome awaiting you should you come to Madrid. My husband joins me in kind regards and regrets that he has no better cornice material to offer. We have a number of Zaragoza examples but they are not fantastic like the Sanguesa.

Sincerely yours,

Mildred Stapley Byrne

// A personal cheque on any S. F. bank is perfectly negotiable here at the National City Bank. //

MONTE ESQUINZA, 6
MADRID

Oct. 22, 1921.

Miss Julia Morgan,
Merchants Exchange,
San Francisco, Cal.

Dear Julia;-

Your second letter, of September 19th, outlining what you are doing for Mr. Hearst interested us very much. We envy you the chance to create something unique in the surroundings described. We hope we may be of a little use. When it comes to the interior of your house or houses the forthcoming SPANISH INTERIORS AND FURNITURE (Helburn, N.Y., ready in November) may offer a few valuable suggestions.

If only Mr. Hearst were inclined to buy a certain private collection here (just put into our hands to sell), the house you are building would then harbor the finest Spanish display in the country; that is, assuming that he has already started as a Spanish collector. We have put it before the trustees of the Metropolitan Museum who consider sending an expert to look it over. Unlike most Spanish art that finds its way to our country it is not of the XVII and XVIII centuries but of the XVI and XV. Included are two ceilings of carved pine with magnificent friezes, perfectly intact, of type illustrated in plates XLVIII and XLIX in the CEILING BOOK. A third, more rare, is the celebrated Teruel example from the Casa del Judio--late XIV century, painted figure panels, very naive. The collection embraces much fine furniture and a great quantity of polychrome sculpture. The price, considering that the exchange is highly favorable to an American buyer, is low--\$375,000. Should you be instrumental in disposing of it your commission would be two and a half percent of the purchase price. A few specimen photographs are being forwarded to you under separate cover.

As to the Granada ceiling which attracted Mr. Hearst we have but little more material than that published. As there is no one who could be commissioned to photograph it and take intelligent notes, my husband or I will make the trip combining it with business of our own in Seville. We will then be able to send you exhaustive data (provided always the ceiling has not been sold); but you will hardly get your material before Christmas.

Your query concerning gardens is especially gratifying. Having collected a great amount of material on this subject it has been a great disappointment to us that no publisher considers it "popular enough". Under separate cover you will receive a number of photographs and a few tracings from sketch books, with color notes. The essential feature as you will see is the colored tile.

The climate of the Eastern States does not permit its use, hence, perhaps, the lack of interest on the part of publishers. All tile accessories are made to-day in the same tradition as of old and if you decide on any we will go to the kilns and see that you get the right thing, provided of course you give us an outline of your scheme.

All sorts of success in your undertakings and kindest wishes from us both,

Sincerely yours,

Mildred Stapley Byrne

Monte Esquinza 6, Madrid

Oct. 29, 1921

My dear Miss Morgan:

I am sending herewith some fifty-eight photos representing a small part of the private collection of which my wife wrote you last week. Wooden sculpture, polychrome, being the great feature, I enclose a number of the best pieces. It is no exaggeration to say that such another collection embracing so many different forms of art can never again be assembled in Spain; and the price is low to an American buyer, considering the exchange--over seven pesetas to the dollar. If you see no chance of interesting anybody may I trouble you to return the photos?

Sincerely yours,

Arthur Bygones

Free

November 1st, 1921.

Mrs. Mildred Stapley-Byne,
Monte Esquinza, 6,
Madrid, Spain.

Dear Mrs. Byne:

Your letter was very welcome and very interesting. Made a copy of it (omitting the personals) and sent it to Mr. Hearst, as he probably is the largest buyer of Spanish antiques at present in the country. I have tried at intervals to get him to get hold of you at the Museum, but for some reason -- perhaps for some personal consideration as regards Mr. Huntington, -- I could not get him to, although your books are as a gospel to him. I hope it will bring results.

The photographs and sketch mentioned in your letter have not yet arrived, although the letter was received about two weeks ago. I hope nothing has happened to them.

I am enclosing a check for Mr. Hearst's account for \$10.00 and my own for \$100. It is certainly convenient not to have to bother with foreign exchange. Would you, if you have not received my second letter in regard to the ceiling of the "Heroes" at Granada, excuse my enclosing a copy? If you would expend my check on photographs of good sized details, such as things of that period, I would be ever so much obliged.

Thank you for the invitation which sounded so pleasant -- even though one knows one would never see your casa. One trouble about an architect's work is that there is never a period when things do not overlap and to get any real time away it means the closing of one's office. Nevertheless, many, many thanks.

Sincerely yours,

JM-L
Enc.

MONTE ESQUINZA, 6
MADRID

Nov. 4, 1921

Julia Morgan,
Merchants Exchange
San Francisco,

Dear Miss Morgan;

Under separate cover and registered I am sending fifty three photographs of Spanish gardens, size 8 x 11 inches. In addition I am enclosing five sketches, traced from my notebooks, which give some idea of the use of tiles in gardens in Spain. On the photo backs we have written careful captions as to material and color, taken from our notes.

For the photographs	
I am charging \$1.50 a piece ---	\$79.50
for the sketches	25.00

\$104.50

Thanking you for your
interest in this matter,

Very sincerely,

Anthony Payne

P.S. I believe it was mentioned before that
in making payment send your ordinary cheque
to Spain

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
Telegram	
Day Letter	
Night Message	
Night Letter	

Patrons should mark an X opposite the class of service desired; OTHERWISE THE MESSAGE WILL BE TRANSMITTED AS A FULL-RATE TELEGRAM

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

GEORGE W. E. ATKINS, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

Receiver's No.
Check
Time Filed

Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

B.H. please look up address etc -

Cablegram

Send Arthur Byne Madrid etc -

~~If you can find purchase Sanguesa (?)~~

If you can trace Sanguesa cornice if forgotten

~~and send facts & price to my client New York~~

Same regards ceiling of Heros. also any other ceiling or friezes available. ~~the request~~

CLASS OF SERVICE DESIRED	
Telegram	
Day Letter	
Night Message	
Night Letter	

Patrons should mark an X opposite the class of service desired; OTHERWISE THE MESSAGE WILL BE TRANSMITTED AS A FULL-RATE TELEGRAM

WESTERN UNION TELEGRAM

NEWCOMB CARLTON, PRESIDENT

GEORGE W. E. ATKINS, FIRST VICE-PRESIDENT

Receiver's No.
Check
Time Filed

Send the following message, subject to the terms on back hereof, which are hereby agreed to

Copy

Free

San Francisco, Nov. 18, 1921.

C A B L E G R A M

Mr. Arthur Byne,
Monte Esquinza, 6,
Madrid, Spain.

IF YOU CAN TRACE SANGUESA CORNICE SEND FACTS AND PRICE
TO MY CLIENT NEWYORK SAME REGARDS CEILING OF HEROS
ALSO ANY OTHER CEILING OR FRIEZES AVAILABLE

JULIA MORGAN

Charge: Julia Morgan,
1135 Merchants Exchange.

72

November 18th, 1921.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Stapley-Byne,
Monte Esquinza, 6,
Madrid, Spain.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Byne:

Enclosed is a copy of a cablegram we sent you today at Mr. Hearst's request. He was in Mexico when he received my expurged copy of your first letter and wrote me as follows:

"I note that the letter from Mildred Stapley Byne says that a number of cornices from San Guesa Missions with carved pins, etc. have been sold, and the finest remaining one, the Casa Valle Santotio, has also been sold and awaits the end of the war to be taken down and boxed.

Inasmuch as this lady says that she and her husband have gone into the antique business, maybe she could trace this cornice and if found try to buy it for us. Also, please correspond with the lady and ask her to act as agent for us. We will want a tremendous lot of stuff for the big house, bath house, etc. and probably we could do much better from her than from the average antiquary."

Under the circumstances I had probably best tell you a little more of what he is doing here. So far we have received from him, to incorporate in the new buildings, some twelve or thirteen carloads of antiques, brought from the ends of the earth and from prehistoric down to late Empire in period, the majority, however, being of Spanish origin.

They comprise vast quantities of tables, beds, armoires, secretaires, all kinds of cabinets, polychrome church statuary, columns, door frames, carved doors in all stages of repair and disrepair, over-altars, reliquaries, lanterns, iron grille doors, window grilles, votive candlesticks, torcheres, all kinds of chairs in quantity, six or seven well heads (only one of these Spanish), marble and wood columns and door trims, a few good wooden carved ceilings, one very nice gilt and polychrome ceiling hexagonal in shape, one very fine rejere about 18' wide and 17' high, a marble sanctuary arch from the entrance to some choir, and pictures,--most of these of early type painted on wood, with a few good canvases; a number of Donatellos, lots of Della Robbias. I don't see myself where we are ever going to use

(over)

half suitably, but I find that the idea is to try things out and if they are not satisfactory, discard them for the next thing that comes that promises better. There is interest and charm coming gradually into play.

I did not show Mr. Hearst your second letter in regard to the collection, or say anything to him about it, as I thought it would be much better -- as he likes to take things up personally -- to let you write yourself and tell him that you had received our cable in regard to the frieze and ceilings, and that you just happened to have at this time this unusual collection, which you were offering to the Metropolitan Museum and which he might be interested in. I doubt very much, knowing the very large sums that have gone into the things already bought, his wanting to take the collection as a whole; but one never can tell and he may have other uses for it which he has not spoken to me of -- in New York or elsewhere. In any case I think you will find you will have a very appreciative and interested client. He has been so thoroughly the victim of some of his dealers that he will, on his side, greatly appreciate real knowledge and fair treatment.

The sketch and photograph of the Sanguesa cornice finally arrived and am very much obliged to you for it. The collection of photographs which Mr. Byne wrote had been mailed have not yet been received.

Sincerely yours,

JM-L

III/04/08/02

Monte Esquinza 6,
Madrid.
December 15, 1921

Miss Julia Morgan,
Merchants Exchange
San Francisco, Cali.

Dear Miss Morgan;

Your letter of Nov. 18 has been forwarded to the Balearic Islands where we are spending a few months. Perhaps you don't know them? Out in the Mediterranean off Barcelona, rich in art, very beautiful, and admirable winter headquarters for a study of Catalan and Valencian art which provinces are easily reached by a daily service of boats.

On receipt of your cable of Nov. 20, inquiring about the possibility of purchasing Sanguesa cornice, Ceiling of Heros, and other possible ceilings and friezes, we immediately set out for Seville and Granada, where we had some work underway, and where we knew such material could be found. A report of our investigations ~~was~~ immediately sent to Mr. Hearst (acting on your suggestion) but it might well to repeat most of the facts here.

In the first place Sanguesa must be set aside until more temperate weather; the winter in Navarre is very bitter and communications very bad. Next, the Casa de los Tiros, of which the Ceiling of the Heros forms a part, has just passed over to the Spanish government after a litigation of over a century. As the palace in question is to become a provincial museum all possibility of buying the ceiling you are interested in is passed. But, acting on your letter of September 19, we took a number of detailed photographs, made a measured drawing, took additional color notes, ^{form} and very carefully copied all the inscriptions which, such a decorative and historical part of the ceiling. Just as soon as all this data is whipped into shape it will be sent to you.

As to purchasable ceilings we were fortunate in finding a number; but one collection in particular stands out as the most remarkable opportunity we have ever seen offered. They formed part of one of the most historic XVI-century palaces in Spain and are sixteen in number. The palace in question has been sacrilegiously torn down to make room for a theatre. It was built by Gonzalo de Cordova, "El Gran Capitan" of Ferdinand the Catholic and conqueror of Naples. We investigated its ceilings years ago and published one in our book on ceilings, page 106. But the great majority at that time were hidden behind subsequent ceilings of plaster and only revealed on the demolition. They vary in size from

(2)

alcove coverings to ceilings for salons measuring fifty feet in length. We have sent a complete list of photographs and data to Mr. Hearst. Included in the same lot are a number of fine old doors, shutters, balconies, marble columns etc. A condition of the sale however is that everything must be sold in toto. But it thought to be a simple matter to dispose of any surplus in California considering the really remarkable quality of the material.

The remaining ceilings were isolated examples of far less pretension. One old house, very small and dilapidated, attracted our attention. In the way of artistic material it included a pair of old Mudéjar ceilings (half Arab, half Christian) about 8 by 23 feet; a wooden patio gallery with carved posts (10 in number); exquisitely carved eaves (120 pieces) a few old doors, marble posts, and good fragments of Moorish plaster work. All this very cheap (about \$2150. Though in this case we explained to Mr. Hearst that, owing to the amount of work to be done on our part, dismantling etc, and the small amount of money involved, our commission would have to be 20 percent instead of the usual 10).

To-day comes to our attention, in response to many inquires, the news that a convent in the province of Castile is disposed to sell a remarkable collection of 5000 XVI-century tiles, of different sizes and designs. As yet I have no price but have written for particulars.

It was good of you to explain so fully what Mr. Hearst has already collected; we can readily see that the Madrid collection of which we wrote you might not tempt him (although there is not one disappointing item in the whole); but you as architect would enjoy working with the ceilings and other structural material described above. Needless to say to you that with the decorated ceilings and the polychrome tiles you have the principal elements of the Spanish house; it is left for you to put a wall between them. If the price of tiles is not too great I shall probably buy them in any case, and if you wish select a portion for you. They rarely appear in quantity on the market to-day.

We hope the garden photographs for which you wrote have reached you safely; they were almost exclusively Andalusian. This island is famous for its gardens and we will soon be able to add another type to those you have already received. These we will count in with the hundred dollars' worth you have paid for in advance (let me remark in passing that you are the only person who ever paid us in advance for anything). I understand that you want mainly structural details. We will send you some shortly but the rest you will have to wait for until we return to our home in Madrid where the negatives are kept. The price for you

will of course be less than for Mr. Hearst but we can't make it as low as would wish because of the excessive cost of photographic material in Spain (all imported from Kodak Company).

We are preparing an account of the Madrid collection to send to Mr. Hearst, counting on your forwarding him the photographs. As he already has so much accumulated he will probably not be interested, and as soon as he decides negatively we will approach someone else unless the Metropolitan trustees finally agree to take it. We will write him also of the hundred Hispano Moresque pieces, the only authentic collection on the market here in Spain.

We feel most grateful and appreciative for you for having put us in touch with your client, and you can assure him (palabra de caballero, as they say here) that no one in all Spain is in touch with salable treasures to the extent that we are, and that we ask less profit on any transaction than the rapacious professional antiquarians.

All sorts of good wishes for the New Year. We sent you the same in the form of a view of our Madrid studio

Sincerely yours,

Arthur B. Saxe