

## Contents

- 7 Foreword
- 9 Introduction  
ALEXANDRA LETVIN
- 25 Reimagining a Mallorcan Patio:  
A Winding Journey from Palma to Princeton  
ALEXANDRA LETVIN
- 71 Study Room
- 89 The Installation History of Princeton's Mallorcan  
Stairway and Gallery, ca. 1925–2025  
ELENA TOROK
- 139 Notes
- 153 Acknowledgments
- 155 Image Credits

## Introduction

ALEXANDRA LETVIN

An impressive architectural ensemble comprising a stone stairway, balustrades, and columns greets visitors to the Entrance Hall of the Princeton University Art Museum (see pp. 72–73). Together these elements offer a rare surviving example of a classic feature of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century stately residences, or *casas señoriales*, in the Mediterranean island city of Palma de Mallorca: the interior patio, in which an outdoor stairway leads to a second-story open-air gallery lined with balustrades and often columns {1}. A 1955 gift to the Museum from Baroness Cassel van Doorn, a European émigré to New Jersey, Princeton’s patio elements—affectionately known as the Spanish Stairs—served both an aesthetic and a functional purpose in the Museum’s gallery of medieval art for more than fifty years {2}. In 2021, in preparation for the construction of the Museum’s new building, the patio elements—referred to throughout this volume as the Mallorcan stairway and gallery—were carefully deinstalled. Collectively weighing more than twenty-one thousand pounds, the individual stones were packed into twenty-one crates and transported in three semitrucks to EverGreene Architectural Arts in Maryland, where they underwent a multiyear conservation treatment. As this work unfolded and plans developed for the stairway and gallery to be installed in the Museum’s new building, questions about their origins began to emerge.

Although the ensemble had been on continuous display for decades, the Mallorcan stairway and gallery were so seamlessly integrated into the fabric of the 1965 Museum building that little attention had been given to their history or provenance: where they came from and how they came to be at Princeton.<sup>1</sup> The Museum’s internal records offered

few leads for tracing this history. The accession card documenting the stairway and gallery's entrance into the collections noted only that it was "Acquired (by auction gallery?) from Mr. Arthur Byne of Madrid, Spain, on September 19, 1929" {3}. The sparse curatorial file provided additional intriguing—if apparently conflicting—clues. Four photographs of drawings showed the elements in a different arrangement from their 1965 installation at Princeton (see figs. 42–45). They are accompanied by an introductory sheet with Arthur Byne's name and an inventory number—"S/B Lot #275, Art. #1 to 65"—with no connection to the Art Museum's cataloging system {4}. Additionally, three architectural blueprints dated September 1942 for an alteration and addition to the residence of Baron and Baroness Cassel van Doorn at 240 Broad Avenue in Englewood, New Jersey, depict the elements in yet another configuration (see figs. 61–63).

These disparate pieces of information and the evidence of the stones themselves guided cross-disciplinary research that allowed for the history of the Mallorcan stairway and gallery and its journey to Princeton to come into focus. The resulting transatlantic narrative begins in fifteenth-century Mallorca and ends in twenty-first-century New Jersey. It brings together well-known figures of the twentieth-century art world such as William Randolph Hearst with lesser-known ones such as Arthur Byne, Josep Costa Ferrer, and Baron and Baroness Cassel van Doorn, revealing how the interventions of dealers, restorers,



{1}

Miguel Joarizti and Heribert Mariezcurrena, "Patio de la casa del Conde Ayamans," photoengraving in Pablo Piferrer and José María Quadrado, *Islas Baleares*, vol. 27 of *España: Sus monumentos y artes, su naturaleza e historia* (Barcelona, 1888)



{2}  
Mallorcan stairway and  
gallery, installed in the  
Princeton University Art  
Museum, McCormick  
Hall, after 1966

CAT. NO. ✓  
ACC. NO. 55-3282

THE ART MUSEUM, PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

OBJECT STONE: Spanish  
Stairway, balustrade, and columns  
~~16th-17th century~~ 1549

PROVENANCE Palma de Majorca

DIMENSIONS

CONDITION Good.

HOW ACQUIRED Gift of Baroness Cassel van Doorn.

DESCRIPTION See folder in gift file under <sup>Doorn</sup> for photographs and architectural blue prints.  
Two arcaded galleries with carved parapet; two windows; stair parapet; newel post; panels for landing.  
Acquired (by auction gallery?) from Mr. Arthur Byne of Madrid, Spain, on September 19, 1929.  
Winter of 1964-1965: installed in the second floor of old McCormick Hall, in the mediaeval-renaissance gallery. The stairs lead to the Print Room. The balustrade and columns have been used to screen off the north and south ends of the room. INSURANCE FREE  
Dated column-base in center of northern section.

{3}  
Accession card for the Mallorcan stairway and gallery, 1955. Princeton University Art Museum, Curatorial Files

collectors, and museums can—intentionally or unintentionally—fundamentally change and obscure an object’s appearance, meaning, and history. This wide-ranging story is detailed in the two essays that follow. The first introduces the individuals throughout the twentieth century who facilitated the journey of the stairway and gallery to Princeton; the second essay reveals how these individuals restored and reconfigured these elements and, in the process, reinterpreted them.

### Mallorca

While long referred to as the Spanish Stairs, Princeton’s architectural elements came not from mainland Spain but rather from the island of Mallorca. Along with Ibiza, Menorca, and Formentera, Mallorca is part of the archipelago off the eastern coast of Spain known as the Balearic Islands. Although it has long been part of Spain, it has a rich and distinct identity shaped by its medieval history and a strategic location in the Mediterranean Sea that made it an important cross-roads for trade, linking Africa with Europe and the Mediterranean with the Atlantic Ocean {5}.

Mallorca had been controlled by a series of Muslim rulers since 902. In 1229 James I, the Catholic king of Aragon, wrested power over the island from the Almohad Caliphate, a North African Berber Muslim empire.<sup>2</sup> When James I died in 1276, his will divided his vast territories between two sons: Peter inherited the mainland Kingdoms of Aragon and Valencia and the Principality of Catalonia; James

{4}  
The lot description accompanying four photographs of now-lost drawings made by Arthur Byne in 1929, from the International Studio Art Corporation’s Inventory Album 83. Princeton University Art Museum, Curatorial Files

S/B LOT #275 - ART. #1 to 65

This is No. 1 of 4 photographs  
- showing main view of -

THE MAJORCAN PATIO AND STAIRWAY FROM  
PALMA DE MAJORCA, SPAIN

SPANISH ..... XVI CENTURY

Consisting of two Arcaded Galleries with carved Parapet, two stone windows, a Gothic stone parapet, newel post and several perforated panels of the landing.

Acquired from Mr. Arthur Byne, Madrid, Spain ..... 9/19/29

Note: The ceiling shown in this photograph was not included in this lot.

A -  
C - (ANY)

*Sold*

CLASSIFICATION: BUILDINGS AND PARTS

I.S.A.C.

{5}  
Map of the western  
Mediterranean



(known as James II of Mallorca) was given the newly created Kingdom of Mallorca, which comprised the Balearic Islands, the seignery of Montpellier in Languedoc, and Catalan lands east of the Pyrenees, including Roussillon and Cerdagne. Peter's opposition to his brother's inheritance led to a period of war and uncertainty that ended in 1298 with an agreement in which James II retook the Kingdom of Mallorca but pledged fealty to the king of Aragon. The Kingdom of Mallorca was short-lived, however. In 1343 King Peter IV of Aragon invaded and installed a governor who ruled on his behalf. In 1479, under the "Catholic Monarchs" King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile, the dynastic union of Spain was achieved, although the two kingdoms remained distinct until the early eighteenth century.

Even under Muslim rule, the island of Mallorca was a crucial transit point for Catalan and Italian merchants. This economic integration into Mediterranean commercial networks may have undermined Mallorca's viability as a political entity independent from the Crown of Aragon, but it also made the island a rich center for art and architecture. In its primary city, Palma de Mallorca, wealthy merchants joined the ranks of the aristocracy as patrons of art and architecture. This is reflected in the large number of *casas señoriales* constructed in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Palma. These grand homes, found across the major Catalan cities of the Crown of Aragon, often united smaller preexisting structures around a new central courtyard adorned with richly decorated architectural elements, including a stairway and gallery (see fig. 1).<sup>3</sup> This arrangement is quite common

in Islamic architecture—it provides air circulation and shade in hot climates—and its popularity in Mallorca speaks to the enduring influence of Islamic architectural modalities even as patrons and architects sought to declare a new Christian identity by embracing European stylistic languages.<sup>4</sup> In the fifteenth century Mallorcan architecture employed a Gothic vocabulary found throughout Catalan-speaking lands; the influence of Italian architecture became more pronounced in the sixteenth century.

While several *casas señoriales* stand in Palma to this day, only vestiges of their fifteenth- and sixteenth-century decoration survive.<sup>5</sup> Elaborated over the course of centuries by successive generations, these homes often included a mixture of different styles. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, shifting tastes caused many owners to remove earlier ornate sculptural work. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a growing international market for this architectural sculpture incentivized property owners and dealers to dismantle and sell remaining elements; urbanization projects, such as the creation of new thoroughfares, also led to the destruction of historic homes. Although grand stairways were the central organizing feature of fifteenth-century patios in *casas señoriales*, only one survives in Palma: that of Can Oleo, now part of the Universitat de les Illes Balears, which boasts panels adorned with sculpted tracery rosettes {6}. Better preserved are sixteenth-century stairways with iron railings that lead to second-floor galleries, but these are generally



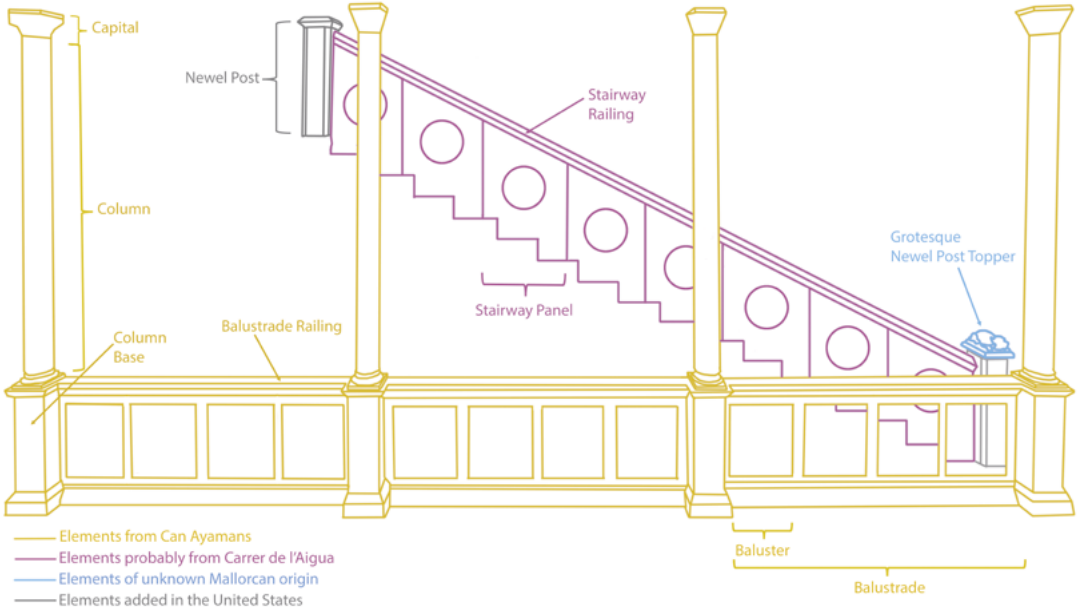
{6}  
Stairway of Can Oleo,  
Carrer de l'Almudaina, 4,  
Palma de Mallorca,  
Spain

restrained in their ornament. For the most part, nineteenth- and early twentieth-century photographs, drawings, and descriptive texts composed by visitors to Mallorca entranced by these stately homes offer the best insight into this architectural typology and its evolution.<sup>6</sup>

### Princeton's Stairway and Gallery

The stairway and gallery elements donated to the Museum by Baroness Cassel van Doorn can now be added to the small corpus of surviving records of this distinctive form of residential architecture. Made up of more than one hundred pieces of limestone, Princeton's ensemble is composed of three primary architectural features, all of which are adorned with intricate sculptural decoration: (1) eight panels from a stairway, each featuring a tracery rosette flanked by banderoles and topped by a small object resembling spooled thread or a small wind instrument; (2) four columns, bases, and capitals and two half columns, bases, and capitals; (3) eighteen sections of balusters joined together to form multiple balustrades {7} (see also pp. 72–86). Additional accompanying stone elements include newel posts and railings for the stairway and balustrades, as well as a charming fantastical creature that sits atop a newel post.

The patio elements were long understood by the Museum to come from a single Spanish residence built in 1549, the date carved into a cartouche on one of the column bases (see p. 85). This was not an unreasonable assumption: they had been installed as a single, unified composition at the baroness's home, and the drawings and blueprints that accompanied her gift to the Museum further suggested this understanding. Stylistic examination conducted during their conservation treatment called this notion into question, however. The sculptural ornamentation of Princeton's stairway finds direct comparisons in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Mallorcan stairways, while the balustrades and columns of the gallery reflect mid-sixteenth-century stylistic developments across the island that adapt Italian models. While *casas señoriales* often contained a mixture of sculptural and architectural styles reflecting different moments of intervention and expansion, documentary evidence presented in the essays that follow reveals that, in the case of the Princeton ensemble, the stairway and gallery originated from at least two different *casas señoriales* in Palma: The stairway was likely once installed in a residence on Carrer de l'Aigua, and the balustrades and columns were once part of the galleries of Can Ayamans on Carrer d'en Morei.



{7}

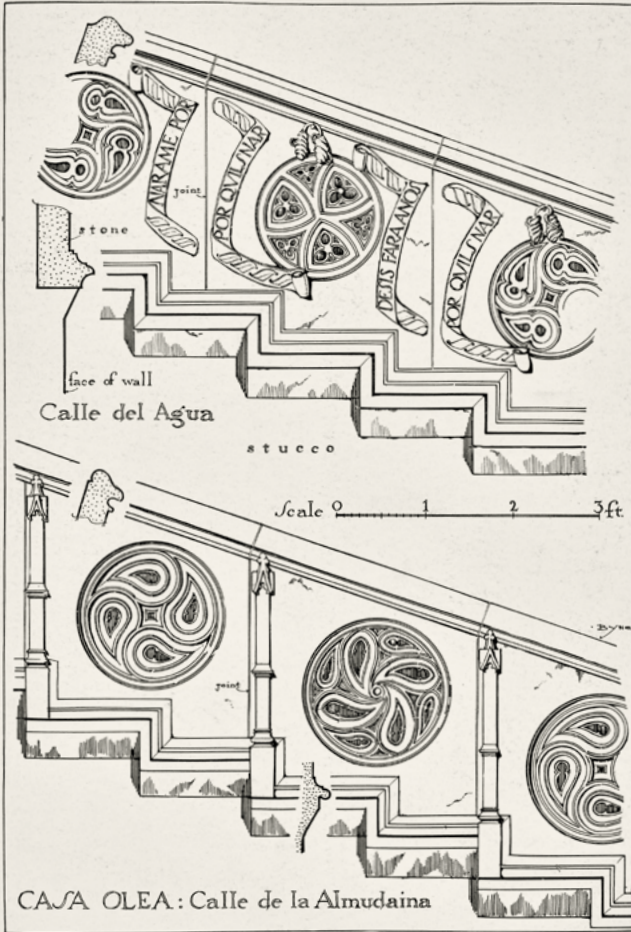
Elements composing the Mallorcan stairway and gallery, as installed in the Princeton University Art Museum, 2025. Additional gallery elements were not included in the 2025 installation

Princeton’s stairway stands apart from other Mallorcan examples in its inscribed banderoles, but its rosettes featuring a variety of tracery patterns find a clear formal parallel in the stairway of Can Oleo (see fig. 6). The early twentieth-century architect and art dealer Arthur Byne recognized this similarity as well: He illustrated sections of both stairways on a single page in *Majorcan Houses and Gardens*, a 1928 publication that he coauthored with his wife, Mildred Stapley Byne {8}.<sup>7</sup> Of the three panels from the “Calle del Agua” (the Castilian name for Carrer de l’Aigua) that Byne depicts, only the central one is a near-exact match to a panel in Princeton’s collections. The first and third are similar to ones at Princeton, however, and Byne’s architectural drawings frequently approximate rather than accurately document his subjects.

In comparison to the stairway, the balustrades and columns from Can Ayamans that make up Princeton’s gallery elements are extraordinarily well documented. Can Ayamans, which still stands today, was among the most significant *casas señoriales* in Palma and was illustrated and photographed several times in the nineteenth century (see figs. 1, 47–51).<sup>8</sup> Parts of the structure date to the thirteenth century, when it was owned by the Morei family, but Felip Fuster transformed the residence after purchasing it in 1531 and adorned two patios with decorative stonework.<sup>9</sup> It is possible that Fuster

MAJORCAN HOUSES AND GARDENS

PLATE 160



GOTHIC PATIO STAIRCASES, WITH PERFORATED STONE PARAPETS, PALMA

In the Gothic period the stair was attached to the patio wall and left uncovered, subsequently it was set back within the house

{8}

Arthur Byne, illustrations of stairways from a house on the Calle del Agua and Casa Olea [Can Oleo], in Arthur Byne and Mildred Stapley Byne, *Majorcan Houses and Gardens: A Spanish Island in the Mediterranean* (W. Helburn, 1928)

commissioned the sculptor Joan de Salas, active in Mallorca between 1529 and 1536, to execute this plan.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the carved decoration on Princeton's columns and balustrades bears a strong resemblance to the ornamental reliefs, figures, and masks that Salas carved for one of his documented commissions, the choir portal of the Cathedral of Mallorca {9}. The cartouche on the column base inscribed with the year 1549 postdates Salas's death in 1538; this date might correspond to another event in the house's history, however, or it might mark the completion of the entire renovation project, perhaps by members of Salas's workshop. Despite its status as one of the finest *casas señoriales* in Mallorca, Can Ayamans had been stripped of its sculpted gallery elements by the late nineteenth century. By 1925 they were in the possession of the Mallorcan dealer Josep Costa Ferrer (also known as Picarol), who commissioned a Mallorcan sculptor, Miguel Sacanell, to restore them.<sup>11</sup>

### A New Assemblage

In the late 1920s Princeton's stairway and gallery were joined together and marketed as a single ensemble from a grand Mallorcan residence.<sup>12</sup> The essays in this volume detail how this came to be, the people involved in bringing these elements from Palma to Princeton, and the physical changes these stones underwent, which forever transformed them.

The story of Princeton's Mallorcan patio elements is remarkable for the wealth of documentation that survives regarding their creation, restoration, purchase, export, and integration into new settings in the United States. The extraordinary volume and diversity of materials related to the creation of this hybrid ensemble—from photographs and sketches to sales records and letters—offer an unusually rich opportunity to reconstruct its story. Nonetheless, the ensemble's creation and export to the United States are not without precedent or context. In the early twentieth century—a time of intense American fascination with Spanish art and culture—many collectors purchased Spanish architectural elements and even entire structures to incorporate into residences and museums.<sup>13</sup> Around 1913, for example, the German-born banker George Blumenthal acquired the spectacular early sixteenth-century marble patio from the Castle of Vélez Blanco in Almería, Spain.<sup>14</sup> He incorporated the stones into the central hall of his New York City mansion on Seventieth Street and Park Avenue along with a wide array of European art and architectural elements {10}. Upon his death in 1941, he bequeathed his home and its contents to



{9}

Joan de Salas (born Spain; died 1538; active 16th century), Choir portal, Cathedral of Mallorca, Palma, early 16th century

{10}

Patio from the Castle of Vélez Blanco, Almería, Spain, 1506–15; installed in the home of George and Florence Blumenthal, 50 East Seventieth Street, New York, NY, 1920s. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Thomas J. Watson Library



the Metropolitan Museum of Art. After years of planning, in 1963 and 1964—at the precise moment that Princeton was preparing to install the Mallorcan stairway and gallery—the Vélez Blanco patio was reassembled as the central feature of a new wing built to house the Thomas J. Watson Library at the Met {11}.<sup>15</sup>

Shortly before the patio opened to the public, Olga Raggio, associate research curator of Western European arts, articulated the Met's goal to "reproduce as faithfully as possible its original aspect," a task complicated by the lack of thorough photographic documentation of the patio and one that required her to travel to the original site in Spain to take measurements and photographs. Even with this diligent research, many changes to the patio were made to accommodate the space available at the Met, such as the orientation of the stairway and the placement of a doorway. New elements were also introduced to complete the ensemble, including Sevillian ceiling tiles and an Italian balcony and portal.<sup>16</sup> As Raggio acknowledged in internal correspondence, the project "would seem to be more correctly described as a re-adaptation of the Vélez architectural elements rather than as a strict architectural reconstruction.... Seen as a gallery, simply suggestive of a Spanish Renaissance *Patio* ... [it] appears as a harmonious and attractive area."<sup>17</sup>

As the case of the Vélez Blanco patio makes clear, with every transfer in ownership—and accompanying acts of dismantling and reassembling—the identity of architectural elements unmoored from their original contexts becomes increasingly obscured. When the Mallorcan stairway and gallery came to Princeton, significantly less was known about them than was known about the Vélez Blanco patio, making it impossible for the Museum to consider emulating the Met's example of sending a representative to Spain to measure or photograph an original site. Instead the elements were arranged to best fit the space available in the new medieval gallery and provide a historically inflected atmosphere in which to appreciate the Museum's medieval collections.

The recovery of the story of the Mallorcan stairway and gallery presented in the two essays that follow reveals that there was in fact no single original context for the elements before the 1920s, making the goal of a faithful reconstruction unattainable. This is often the case for European architectural fragments that were exported to the United States in the early twentieth century. Once integrated into museum galleries as representatives of architectural types, however, they frequently impart a visual coherence that implies an impossible



{11}

Patio from the Castle of Vélez Blanco, Almería, Spain, 1506–15. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Bequest of George Blumenthal, 1941 (41.190.482)

level of historical authenticity. While the Mallorcan stairway and gallery were previously displayed in this manner at Princeton, their new installation—an undertaking that involved the efforts of curators, conservators, art handlers, riggers, masons, designers, structural engineers, and other specialists—presents the elements as two fragments united by a shared past, making visible a history previously unknown to the Museum and inviting visitors to appreciate this monumental ensemble's grandeur.

ALEXANDRA LETVIN

## Reimagining a Mallorcan Patio: A Winding Journey from Palma to Princeton

The Mallorcan stairway and gallery's journey from Palma to Princeton was shaped by a succession of individuals throughout the twentieth century who transformed architectural elements from at least two *casas señoriales* (stately or noble residences) into the ensemble now on view in the Entrance Hall of the Princeton University Art Museum. When they arrived at the Museum in 1955, the stairway and gallery were associated with only two names: the art dealer Arthur Byne and Baroness Cassel van Doorn. With little known about either, the Museum long assumed that the baroness had purchased the stairway and gallery directly from Byne. Investigating the lives of these two figures and their partners unearths a much richer story about the Mallorcan patio elements, however, revealing a network of dealers and collectors in Europe and the United States who interpreted and reinterpreted these architectural fragments. The resulting transatlantic narrative illuminates broader trends in art collecting between Europe and the United States and intersects with some of the most significant cultural property debates of the twentieth century.

**Arthur Byne (1884–1935) and Mildred Stapley Byne (1875–1941)**  
Arthur Byne was an American architect who became an art dealer in the 1920s {12}. Based in Spain, he supplied wealthy American clients and museums with Spanish art, decorative arts, architectural



{12}  
Arthur Byne, undated photograph. California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. Special Collections and Archives, Julia Morgan Papers

{13}  
Christina Morton (1891–1957), *Mildred Stapley Byne*, ca. 1931. Oil on canvas. Photographed by Peter A. Juley & Son. Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC. Juley & Son Collection, Photograph Study Collection (10099237)

elements, and at times even entire buildings. With his wife and business partner, Mildred Stapley Byne {13}, he published significant texts on Spanish art and architecture that encouraged a growing appreciation for Spanish culture. As an art dealer, however, he frequently engaged in activities that today would be considered unethical and in many cases illegal, earning him and Stapley the distinction of being described recently as “the greatest plunderers of Spanish art of the twentieth century.”<sup>1</sup>

Born Arthur Gustave Bein on September 25, 1884, in Newark, New Jersey, Byne—who anglicized the spelling of his last name in 1911—grew up in New Haven, Connecticut.<sup>2</sup> He trained as an architect at the University of Pennsylvania and then continued his studies for two years at the American Academy in Rome. In 1908 he moved to New York and became a designer for the architectural firm Howells & Stokes.<sup>3</sup> A gifted draftsman and watercolorist, he won a silver medal for one of his watercolors at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco and illustrated several covers of *The Architectural Record* {14} {15}.

In 1910 Byne married Mildred Stapley, a portrait painter who had studied in Paris and New York. She had developed a fascination with Spain after attending, as “a young girl,” a lecture on El Greco given by the American painter William Merritt Chase (1849–1916).<sup>4</sup> She recalled: “I shall never forget that portrait of a Spaniard, bronzed,

{14}

Arthur Byne, *Cathedral of Segovia*, watercolor illustration for the cover of *The Architectural Record*, August 1917



{15}

Arthur Byne, *Santiago Cathedral*, watercolor illustration for the cover of *The Architectural Record*, September 1917



vivid, bold and painted with a daring disregard of the conventions of academic art. It set my imagination on fire. As I looked at it and listened to Chase discuss ‘El Greco,’ I determined to study the Spanish masters in their native land.” An avid traveler, she soon went to Spain with her mother because she “was eager to paint and sketch there.”<sup>5</sup>

Stapley introduced Byne to Spain; they traveled there together shortly after their wedding. Years later she described the impetus for that trip:

On marrying, [I] suggested to my husband, architect by profession, that Spain contained a wealth of architecture and minor art practically unknown to American architects, so here we came to look over the field and found it even richer than we suspected. Particularly struck by the grandeur and monumentality of Spanish ironwork as found in the cathedrals we began to study it with enthusiasm, photographing, measuring, drawing, and searching for information on the subject, printed or unprinted. It happened that the former sort did not exist, for Spain has been very slow to make known her artistic treasures even to her own people.<sup>6</sup>

Stapley’s suggestion that the couple travel to Spain was perhaps designed to build on and take advantage of the voracious appetite

among Americans for Spanish culture that took root in the 1890s and continued until approximately 1930. Joining this fervor—known as the Spanish Craze or Spanish Fever—were artists such as Chase and John Singer Sargent, as well as several collectors who developed a newfound interest in purchasing Spanish art and emulating Spanish architecture.<sup>7</sup> For example, in addition to acquiring important Spanish pictures beginning in the late 1890s, Isabella Stewart Gardner designed in 1914 a “Spanish Cloister” {16} and adjacent chapel for her Venetian-style residence and museum in Boston, combining decorative and architectural elements from Spain, Mexico, Italy, Egypt, Iran, and Turkey to provide an atmospheric—if factitious and fantastical—setting for Sargent’s celebrated painting of a flamenco dancer, *El Jaleo* (1882).<sup>8</sup> In contrast to this hybrid approach, in 1910 the German-born banker George Blumenthal acquired a spectacular example of early sixteenth-century Spanish architecture—the patio from the Castle of Vélez Blanco—that he incorporated into the central hall of his New York mansion with somewhat greater attention to historical accuracy (see fig. 10).<sup>9</sup>

Byrne took countless photographs during the couple’s trip to Spain that may have served as his introduction to one of the great promoters of Spanish art and culture in the United States, Archer Milton Huntington (1870–1955). The son of a wealthy railroad and



{16}  
The Spanish Cloister,  
Isabella Stewart Gardner  
Museum, Boston

shipbuilding magnate, Huntington developed a passion for Spain that led him, in 1904, to found the Hispanic Society of America in New York, a public library and museum with a mission to advance “the study of the Spanish and Portuguese languages, literature and history.”<sup>10</sup> In December 1913 Byne wrote to Huntington asking for a meeting to discuss publishing a book on sixteenth-century Spanish art and noted that his friend and employer, Phelps Stokes, had already written to Huntington about Byne’s photographs of Spain.<sup>11</sup> This meeting appears to have gone well: In 1914 Huntington named Byne and Stapley corresponding members of the Hispanic Society, and in 1916 they became the society’s first curators of architecture and the allied arts, a position that primarily entailed documenting architectural sites in Spain. Between 1915 and 1918 Huntington financed four trips for the duo to travel throughout the country and photograph monuments, many of which were little known and in remote locations. Some of their approximately twelve hundred photographs were exhibited at the Hispanic Society in 1917, and all were available for consultation in the institution’s library, including a 1915 image of the stairway from the patio of Can Oleo in Palma de Mallorca {17}.<sup>12</sup>

The Bynes’ affiliation with the Hispanic Society gave them unprecedented access to sites throughout Spain, including private collections. They advertised these connections in eight books on Spanish art and architecture for which Stapley wrote the text and Byne contributed photographs and drawings.<sup>13</sup> In the preface to one of their early publications, *Spanish Architecture of the Sixteenth Century*, Byne and Stapley situate themselves within the lineage of foundational eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Spanish art historians such as Antonio Ponz (1725–1792) and Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez (1749–1829), elevating the status of their books to seminal reference texts.<sup>14</sup> A common refrain in their publications and correspondence is that their work is intended to reveal the treasures of Spain not only to an international audience but also to a Spanish one. In 1919, for example, they wrote to Huntington that some in Spain might “feel ill-used because the Yanquis have brought to light what they themselves have allowed to lie in darkness for centuries.”<sup>15</sup> This paternalistic tone also appears throughout their correspondence as dealers, often serving as a justification and guiding philosophy for their actions.

Their books were positively received in the United States and Spain. In 1922 a Spanish journalist wrote: “How can Spain pay a fitting tribute to the authors of these works, one that will indicate the gratitude the nation feels to Mr. and Mrs. Byne, a pair of wonderful,



{17}

Arthur Byne, *Palma de Mallorca: Casa Oleo, Patio Stair*, 16th century. Photograph from the 1915 Byne expedition, no. 557. Hispanic Society Museum & Library, New York