THE CRAFTSMAN

THE FRANCISCAN MISSIONS OF THE SOUTHWEST, NUMBER VII. SOME ARCHITECTURAL DETAILS. BY GEORGE WHARTON JAMES

The broader knowledge we gain of the Franciscan Mission structures, the greater becomes our respect for their architects and builders. Their boldness, originality and diversity at once please and instruct us. It is not my purpose, in this article, to analyze all the varied forms of the Mission architecture, or to discuss technically the successes or the failures consequent upon their use. Purely as a layman, addressing himself to those sufficiently interested to allow one without technical knowledge to comment upon details which give marked individuality to these generally similar structures, I shall present a series of photographs which I have made within the past few months.

Even in a cursory survey, one cannot fail to observe the differences in façades, pediments, campanarios (bell-towers), columns, buttresses, door and window arches, etc., presented by Mission architecture. Some of these we shall now consider.

_**Façades.**_ Opinion is divided as to which is the most striking, pleasing and architecturally correct of the Mission façades. Perhaps that of Santa Barbara (see Craftsman, January, 1904, page 322) would receive the largest number of votes, were the question to be decided by such a test. Those whose tastes incline toward the more ornate Spanish styles, would choose between the two San Carlos buildings at Monterey: that of the town, and the yet more famous and historic one of Carmel Valley, both of which are pictured in the Craftsman for January, 1904, pages 330 and 332. It will be easily conceded that in elaborateness of design the Monterey façade leads all others. But elaborateness is not always the most pleasing quality, nor yet is it always united

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![Figure I. Façade of San Francisco de Asis (Dolores); San Francisco, California. Photograph by H. C. Tibbitts](image-url)
with perfection. The simple dignity of
the Carmelo façade, the doorway, the cen-
tral star window, with the severely plain
gable, broken only by the impressive sweep
of the semi-circular arch, make a pleasing
combination which is worthy of study.

That of San Luis Rey (see Craftsman
for January, 1904, page 324), is, perhaps,
the most distinctive of them all. It con-
tains all those features which are recognized
as typically “Mission:” such as the curved
and stepped pediment, the lantern crowning
the same, and the two-storied, pierced bell-
tower, with chamfered corners and lantern
crown.

The façade of San Francisco de Asís
(Dolores), which is here presented in Fig-
ure 1., differs widely from any of the others.
It has two stories, resting upon a solid, pro-
jecting double foundation, the front of
which is cemented. The lower story con-
ists of four columns, two on either side of
the doorway, the arch of which is supported
by simple right-angled stone doorposts,
crowned with a half-round cornice. The
base consists of a double plinth and a nar-
row fillet or cushion, upon which the plain
shaft rests. Its cap is simple, being com-
posed of two enlarged sections of the shaft,
divided by a fillet, and topped with a plain
abacus.

A double membered cornice now stretches
across the whole building and becomes the
base for the upper portion of the façade;
thus forming a kind of rude entablature.
Resting upon this cornice, yet retired some-
what behind the lower columns, are six en-
gaged columns; the two outer ones being
but three or four feet high, the second pair
somewhat higher, and the inner pair from
six to eight feet in height. In the central
space between the two highest columns, the
wall is pierced by a rectangular void; room
being thus afforded for a small bell. In
the two next outer spaces, similar piercings
occur, the tops of which are arched, and in
these hang two larger bells. Each bell has
a wooden carriage to which it is fastened
with rawhide thongs, the latter giving an
excellent example of the toughness and dur-
ability of this material.

The remaining vestiges of the San
Diego façade (see Craftsman for April,
1904, page 41), are similar in style to the
central part of that of San Luis Rey (see
Craftsman for January, 1904, page 324),
although it is less elaborate than its near
northern and later built neighbor.

San Gabriel is peculiar in construction,
as it has no façade; the side of the church,
with its buttresses and stairway into the
choir gallery forming the main front. Attached to this, at the left, stands the campanario (see Craftsman for January, 1904, page 329), without which the entire structure would be dull and ineffective. Of a similar character, and yet quite different in detail is the façade of Santa Inés (see attached to the church wall, which gives dignity and character to the façades at San Gabriel and Santa Inés.

San Luis Obispo (see Craftsman for April, page 46), San Juan Bautista (Figure II), and San Miguel (see Craftsman for May, page 207), make no pretense to imposing façades. The chief entrance is at the end of the main church building. Somewhat more elaborate, and made imposing with its massive tower at the right, and large hipped buttress at the left, is the façade of San Buenaventura (See Figure III). Here, too, the arched and corniced doorway, with the simple pilasters, and the triangular entablature pierced by a square window aperture and a bracketed niche for a statue, break the monotony felt in the three previously named structures.

Santa Cruz much resembled San Buenaventura, as a glance at the Craftsman for May, 1904, page 208, will show, although it will be noted that there are two buttresses; that there is no triangular entablature; and that the tower recedes, instead of projecting along the right wall as at San Buenaventura.

San Rafael had a side entrance at one end of the church building (see Craftsman for May, 1904, page 208), with twin star windows, one above the other.

Most interesting and unique, perhaps, in this respect, is San Antonio de Padua, im-
cornice stretches unbrokenly across from the bases of the two side bell towers, followed by a third, which extends from the bases of the arches of the side towers, forming a base for the central bell piercing. There is still a fourth cornice above this upper bell arch, and all the three bell spaces are likewise divided by simple cornices. The result is a most pleasing whole.

2. Pediments. At first one might believe that little or no diversity could occur in the Mission pediments, yet important variations may be observed. If we take that of San Luis Rey as the typical curved and stepped pediment, we shall find that it stands absolutely alone. Let us analyze it! Beginning at the lantern, we find that this detail rests upon a flat top, making a sharp downward curve to the perpendicular and resting on a narrow horizontal platform; then, perfectly shown in the Craftsman for April, page 42. Here the façade is built some ten or twelve feet in advance of the front end of the church. Then, the intervening space is arched over to form a closed entrance. This façade is of burnt brick, although the church is of adobe, and, while the latter is in sad ruins, the former is almost as perfect as when built. At the bottom are three arched entrances: all being semi-circular, and the largest in the center. The pediment is of the Mission order, and will be later described. Above the entrances are three piercings for bells; the lateral ones contained in tower-like extensions, which were formerly surmounted by crosses. The monotony of the plain brick work is destroyed by a series of dividing cornices, one of which reaches across from the bases of the entrance arches. The next higher
Figure VI. Mortuary chapel at San Luis Rey.
Figure VII. Ruined entrance to garden at San Luis Rey
a concave and convex curve reaches another horizontal platform, followed by a final concave and convex curve to the supporting cornice.

Now compare this with the five other existing pediments! That of San Gabriel has already been described. It is the pediment of the campanario (see Craftsman for January, 1904, pages 323-327). That of San Carlos at Monterey shows a long, sweeping, convex curve, with a flat termination at the bottom, and scrolls at the top connecting with a slight arch. It can scarcely be placed in the same class.

The pediment of San Diego (see Craftsman for April, 1904, page 41) is in ruined condition, showing merely the double (concave and convex) curve; while that of Santa Inés (see Craftsman for January, 1904, page 326) is a pediment to the cam-

panario. Here we find a succession of convex curves; three in the series dropping down from the central arch on which the cross rests, make the pediment. The pediment of San Antonio (see Craftsman for April, page 42) is again different. The bricks of the crown are stepped, there being eight or nine layers. Then follows a double brick cornice, the edges of the brick being molded to the half round. Next is a concave curve, a perpendicular step, resting on a flat platform, followed by two more concave curves of unequal length.

Here, then, we have the proof that of six Mission pediments no two are alike.

3. Campanarios. The bell-towers show almost equal diversity. There are eleven Missions which had (or have) distinct bell-towers, not including the quaint one at the Pala Asistencia. The points of similarity between San Gabriel and Santa Inés have been already indicated, and the uniqueness of that of San Antonio has been discussed.

San Luis Obispo formerly had three pierced apertures in the main wall of the church above the doorway, shown in the Craftsman for April, 1904, page 46; but when the restoration took place, this interesting feature was abolished by blocking up the apertures and building an ugly, inharmonious, detached wooden tower. The same style of aperture characterizing San Luis, it will be remembered, is that which obtains at Dolores (San Francisco).

San Juan Capistrano has a unique cam-

panario, since it is composed of a wall joining two buildings, and pierced with four apertures, as shown in The Craftsman for May, 1904, page 200.

Of bell-towers proper, there are six; the best known being those of Santa Barbara.
and San Luis Rey. Between these two there are only slight differences, which were indicated in the January article. The bell-tower of San Buenaventura (see Figure III.) is very similar except that it shows no chamfers, and that the corner finials are different. The tower of Santa Cruz has disappeared, but it belonged practically to the same class.

Entirely dissimilar, and also different from each other, are the towers of the two Missions at Monterey. The Mission in the Carmelo Valley, with the egg-shaped dome, and the Mission at Monterey with the pyramidal red tiled roof, are well pictured in the January Craftsman, although the new picture (Figure IV.) Accentuates the charm of the latter structure.

The Pala campanario (Figure V.) is unique, not only in California, but in the world. Built upon a pyramidal base, it is a peculiar pedimental structure standing alone. It is two stories high, each story being pierced with a bell aperture. There are two pediment curves, and three cornices which break the monotony of its face. It was undoubtedly built by the same hands that fashioned San Luis Rey.

4. Columns. Superficial observers have often condemned the use of certain columns in recent buildings, contending that they were not “Mission columns.” But here, as in every other branch of architecture, the Mission builders enjoyed variety. A careful survey of the illustrations already published in this series will show more than one kind of column. It will be observed that I shall use the word in its broad, and not in its rigidly technical sense.

Of engaged columns in imitation of the
classical style, two marked examples are found; at Santa Barbara (see Craftsman for January, 1904, page 322), and at San Luis Rey (see Figure VI). In this illustration it will be observed that the entabla-

This mortuary chapel at San Luis Rey is most beautiful even in its desolation. Octagonal in form, it was entered from the church; the doorway occupying one side of the figure, and the altar the opposite side.

Figure XI. Arch of main entrance, San Diego.

At each angle is an engaged column built of brick, the front of which only is rounded. The rear part is rectangular and fits into the ordinary brick of the wall, allowing
the rounded surface to project. As will be seen from the picture, these columns are capped with a three-membered cornice, also of brick and, springing from column to column, there is a series of arches which serve to ornament the sides of the octagon.

Figure VII. shows the ruined entrance to the San Luis Rey garden, in which there occur two engaged columns which have not yet lost all their original charm and beauty.

Columns, engaged and dis-engaged, are seen on the façade of the San Francisco de Asís (Dolores) Mission (Figure I.).

The square piers for the colonnades of nearly all the Missions are similar to those pictured in the Craftsman for January, 1904, page 322, Figure I., and in the April number, page 44. These square piers are built of brick and plastered. At Santa Barbara, they have chamfered corners, and occasionally, as in the colonnade of the patio at San Antonio de Padua, they are built of adobe; but generally burnt bricks were used. At La Purísima Concepción, the nineteen remaining pillars are square, with chamfered and fluted corners; some of them being brick, some of stone, and some of adobe, and all plastered.

The “gnawing tooth of time” wears away objects that are neglected much more quickly than those which are cherished. Here destruction proceeds in increasing ratio. The exposed brickwork of the piers of the colonnade at San Antonio is rapidly “eroding,” and if nothing be done to arrest the decay, the masonry will soon crumble and fall.

5. Pilasters. Under this head two new illustrations must suffice. Figure VIII.

Figure XII. Distributing arch of adobe, at San Antonio de Padua

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shows the side entrance of San Luis Rey. Here it will be seen that the supporting column of the entablature above the side entrance is of chamfered and fluted brick. Much of the Missioners' brick was thus molded at San Luis and elsewhere: a point worthy of note. As it is difficult to make plaster adhere to adobe, in order to obtain an anchorage, the adobe walls, here and in other San Buenaventura, a perfectly plain plaster (except for the cornices) is used, and the general effect is good. (See Figure IX.) This plain method was employed by the Mission builders in many places, for arches, door and window frames, etc. The effect of this archway is most interesting, as showing how the Mission Fathers brought with them and utilized memories of the old world.

Mission buildings, were divided into lozenges, into which small pieces of brick were placed. These lozenges can be seen near the foot of the stairway in the picture and they are observable in many exposed portions of the walls throughout the whole line of the Missions.

At the side entrance to the church at The arch is Moorish-Gothic, with renaissance motifs in the entablature. The cross, as is evident, is a modern intrusion, to replace a lost, or stolen statue.

Figure X. shows an ornate clustered column at San Carlos. It is the entrance to the chapel of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Here is a distinct reminiscence of the Arch
of the Two Sisters in the Alhambra. The arch is Moorish-Gothic, with distinctive renascence features in the columns and the entablature. It is, without question, the most ornate piece of architectural detail found on the long line of the Missions.

6. Arches. To treat the various Mission arches as the subject deserves would require many more pages than are contained in the present number of the Magazine. The variety, although nearly all of them are included within the limits of simplicity, is far greater than one might suppose. Some of these have already been considered, such as those presented in Figures IX. and X.

Of prime interest, because it was probably the first arch built, and in any case, the principal arch of the first Mission established, is the main entrance at San Diego (see Figure XI). The austere simplicity of this arch is most pleasing. It is structural and therefore satisfying; the more it is examined the more it grows upon the observer. The simplicity of the device by which it is made to stand out, should be observed. The bricks of which it is built are brought forward a few inches in advance of the main wall. Then, at the arch, the wall itself is recessed another inch or two, and arch and recess are crowned with a five-membered cornice; the members being plain flat brick, and each row set forward an inch or two beyond the row beneath.
that this Mission was the object of more care and work than any of the others. This fact is evident from the most cursory survey of the engraving on page 201 of the Craftsman for May, 1904. Here is cut stonework done by master hands; all the piers and arches being of work that the best craftsmen of to-day would be proud to own.

The doorway here shown is of gray sandstone; the key-stone, projecting several inches, being carved in a conventional eight-pointed floral design, from which a wide, deep fluting extends either side down the jambs and shows vase-like carving. Above there is an entablature, the main feature of which is a two-inch half-rounded fillet terminating in cross lines on each side. A heavy cornice crowns the whole.

In a number of instances, both door and window-arches are made square on one side.
and, owing to the thickness of the walls, they are recessed and rounded on the other, as in Figure XV., which shows the doorway to the church at San Antonio de Padua. Here, the two semi-circular arches in front of the outer side, and the elliptical arch of the inner side. The same effect is produced in stone at the Santa Margarita chapel (see to see workmen tearing down the inside walls of this chapel, preparatory to roofing the building and converting it into a barn. Here, indeed, is work for a Landmarks Club.

Another effect, often found in the door and window arches, is pictured in Figure XVIII., which shows the square entrance

Figure XVII. Main doorway, Santa Margarita Chapel

Figure XVI.) in which the arches of both doors and windows are deeply recessed.

But more striking, beautiful and structural is another doorway at the same chapel, shown in Figure XVII. Here, the curve of the ellipse of the outer side is greater than that of the inside. It made me sad almost to tears, at the time of my last visit, on the church side at San Juan Bautista, and the pointed and curved effect within the recess on the sacristy side. With this curve as a motif, there are many changes played upon it in Mission door and window arches. An arch somewhat similar to the one here presented is seen in the window above the doorway leading into the grave-
influence of the Moorish-Gothic-Renascence is apparent. Indeed, no pretense is made that this is other than a copy of many of similar doorways occurring in Spain. The arch, with the renascence scroll and the conventionalized design of the entablature, of which the egg and dart pattern is the chief feature, connect it closely with its European prototypes.

It is interesting here to note at the two Monterey churches, what is doubtless the direct influence of Padre Serra. In the archways, the columns and the towers, there is an attempt at adornment of the more ornate character which is not usually found in the other Missions. Four Missions, alone, of the earlier buildings, are prominent as expressions of architectural zeal and fervent affection. These are: I. San Luis Rey, in which Peyri’s dominating mind re-

yard at Santa Barbara, although the arch is much flatter.

At San Luis Rey, the curved motif, worked out differently and without the point, is shown in the arch leading from the church to the chapel of the Third Order of St. Francis, and pictured in Figure XIX. Here three convex curves meet at a central convex curve, thus adding another pleasing variation to those already noted.

Figure XX. presents the arch and entablature over the doorway leading from the altar to the sacristy at San Carlos Carmelo. Here the elliptical arch, with its corresponding elliptical cornice, is most effective and strong. The structural power of these simple arches, to my mind, contrasts most favorably with the effect of the more ornate ones in the Monterey church, one of which is shown in Figure XXI. Here, the direct
building, the lavish care and love of the priestly builder are evident. By reason of the short lives of these buildings, such indications of affection are intensely pathetic. What visions of centuries of power and influence must have cheered the faithful sons of Holy Church as they planned the structures destined so soon to crumble into ruin through the neglect of a ruthless people. But is love ever lost? Can affection ever be bestowed in vain? Only in the assurance that love is never really wasted, can we find comfort, as we stand in the presence of these eloquent ruins.

IV. The fourth of these especially favored buildings is that of San Carlos Carmelo. Here Serra’s power and love are felt, since this building was the object of his adoration. While the whole California field, in the wider sense, occupied his heart revealed itself in a building which many consider, the king, indeed, of all the Mission structures. It also revealed the builder’s love and almost feminine tenderness in the exquisite quality of the octagonal chapel dedicated to the Third Order of St. Francis, as the stigmata over the altar clearly demonstrate. II. San Juan Capistrano, in its pristine grandeur, surpassed, perhaps, all the others. Even the ruins speak eloquently of the love and devotion of its builders. The stone work is more substantial and structural, and the ornamentation more artistic and pleasing than we find them in any other building.

III. San Antonio de Padua, although built of brick and adobe, was a structure reared by affection. The facade has been already discussed, and throughout the

Figure XX. Doorway leading from altar to sacristy at San Carlos Carmelo.

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Figure XXI. Doorway at San Carlos, Monterey

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and energy, it was upon Carmelo that he expended his most immediate affection. This was his home, his special abiding place; therefore, tower, star-window, arches, columns and walls evidence his influence.

Santa Barbara and Santa Inés came later, and they rightly belong to this same class of specially favored builders.

clad hills lead up to the deep blue California sky. We may here picture a monk of the olden days, sitting in meditation and transported in thought to a similar landscape in faraway Spain. We can imagine him thus meditating until his whole nature became saturated with the nostalgia that kills. Little by little his reason gave

But to return to the details. At San Antonio, there are a number of recessed window arches; the frame being square, while the arch within is elliptical. One of these occurs in the wall of the monastery and affords a view of the wooded plain beyond, stretching away as far as the eye can reach; while, to the right, the live-oak-

way, and he died while alive, as true a martyr as if he had been burned at the stake or pierced by a thousand arrows. Such a picture may seem a mere phantom of the imagination, but, alas! it had several proofs of truthfulness in the early days of the last century.

Figure XXII. shows the use at San Juan
Capistrano of two elliptical arches of differing axes placed side by side, in the front corridor. It is not easy to explain this singularity, unless by assuming that as the wider elliptical arch is the later one, it was so constructed, either because a wider space was needed, or the builder regarded the variation as a pleasing one. Individual taste alone could decide such a question.

Two other arches at San Juan Capistrano demand attention. Figure XXIII. is remarkable in that six arches are superposed one upon another in the perspective. The one in the foreground is an elliptical arch in the corridor. Next follows the arch in the wall of the pteroma,* a square bricked doorway. On the other side of the building is a semi-circular arch over the doorway leading into the patio. Across on the other side of the court is another elliptical corridor-arch, behind which, dimly to be seen, are another elliptical arched-doorway and a square arched gateway.

The quadrangle at San Juan was originally surrounded by corridors with picturesque semi-circular and elliptical arches. At the northeast corner, where the pteroma made a right angle, an auxiliary arch was introduced with most picturesque effect (see Figure XXIV). Such an arch is strongly structural, as a support to the corners of the two meeting lines of arches, and also to the roof covering the pteroma. The corner pier of the series thus becomes the resting place of the bases of three arches, the other spandrel of the auxiliary arch resting upon a pier built triangularly into the wall. I do not know of a similar arch in any other of the Mission corridors.

Thirty-eight arches still remain on three sides of the patio at San Juan. There are none remaining on the western side.

Another glance at Figure XXIII. will reveal the picturesque, although simple chimney at San Juan. A few hours labor in placing the brick tiles produced a pleasing feature out of a necessity too often abandoned to extreme ugliness. It is sug-

*Pteroma: The side or flank, hence, in modern usage, the space covered by the roof of a portico, and therefore including the columns and intercolumniations, although in general usage it applies only to the passage between the columns and the wall behind.—Russell Sturgis.
on the top of the wall, then a heavier brick is set over these, square with the wall beneath.

Before concluding this article, I must refer to the heavy and massive buttresses found in nearly all the Mission buildings. Two of these are clearly seen in Figure III. They are interesting enough to photograph, but I have already exceeded my allotted space. Nearly all observers, on first seeing them, ask the reason of their massiveness. But when it is remembered that San Juan Capistrano, La Purísima, San Juan Bautista and others suffered severely from the shocks of earthquakes in the early part of the last century, the motive for these tremendous masses becomes apparent. They were made extra large and heavy as a precaution against future disaster.

Many more details might be presented with both interest and profit, but the ones chosen I regard as the most important. They at least suggest that although the Mission architects and builders were dominated by one common style, they were, by no means, servile imitators of originals, or copyists of one another.

Figure XXIV. Auxiliary arch over the pteroma at San Juan Capistrano

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