A GUIDE TO THE

CAVE OF ALTAMIRA

AND THE

TOWN OF SANTILLANA DEL MAR

(PROVINCE OF SANTANDER, SPAIN)

PUBLISHED BY THE

«JUNTA PROTECTORA DE LA CUEVA DE ALTAMIRA»

MADRID, 1927

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TALLERES ESPASA-CALPE, S. A., RÍOS ROSAS, 24.—MADRID

THE CAVE OF ALTAMIRA

The cave of Altamira is situated in the Municipal district of Santillana del Mar, between Torrelavega and Comillas in the Province of Santander. It lies on high ground a mile and a half to the South West of Santillana, the ancient capital of Eastern Asturias, the interesting monuments of which are described in the second part of this booklet (1).

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(1) See itinerary on p. 41.

The cave in prehistoric times.

The cave of Altamira, like all caves formed in limestone strata, was fashioned by Nature, whose only tools were the drops of rain-water that filtered through, year after year and century after century. Percolating through the crevices of the surface, the water gradually reached the lower layers and, by dissolving the lime contained in the rocks, altered both their chemical and physical nature. In this very slow process of dissolution the fissures widened, channels in the limestone beds were opened up and grew into cavities. Thus the cave was formed and, once communication had been established with the outside world, it was ready to serve as a refuge for wild beasts, and finally for man. Caves were thus the earliest dwellings of Mankind.

When prehistoric man first set foot in the

cave, the conditions under which those remote ancestors of ours lived were very different from those of the present day. The whole of our continent was at that time in the grip of an ice age (in geological terms, the last glaciation of the quaternary period). The North of Europe lay buried under a thick mantle of ice, and from the Alps and Pyrenees gigantic glaciers spread down, rendering those mountain ranges quite impassable. At that time also the high crags of the Cantabrian Range, the "Picos de Europa" and "Picos de Cornión", sent great rivers of ice down their mountain slopes and a narrow strip of coastline alone provided hospitable conditions for the early Cantabrians.

This picture of a land of brief and cold summers and interminable winters would be incomplete without a mention of certain mammals driven to these latitudes by the Northern ice, the mammoth or woolly elephant standing four metres high; the woolly rhinoceros; and the reindeer of Greenland. The woods, mainly composed of pine and beech, provided food and shelter for the deer, hart and giant stag; also for the wild boar, mountain goat and chamois. Over the grasslands stretching between the patches of dense forest roamed great herds of wild horse, wild cattle and bison akin to those still existing in North America. Hard on their heels, in ceaseless watch, followed the cave-lion, the cave-

hyaena and the cave-bear; and all around prowled the wolf and the lynx. In their midst lived Man.

Man in that age, an age so remote as to be reckoned at twenty thousand years before Christ, was ignorant both of agriculture and the art of domesticating animals. He did not know how to make use of metals nor had he any skill in polishing stone. His stone implements and weapons he fashioned by chipping them with other stones; for certain purposes, however, fossil man showed extraordinary skill in contriving implements from the bones, horns and antlers of animals slain in the chase.

Prehistoric man was first and last a hunter. As such, he had no fixed abode, but lived the uneasy life of a nomad, staying here a while, and there a while, as Nature itself provided; his sojourn would be prolonged if game were abundant, or shortened if it were scarce, when he would resume his wanderings in search of animal food.

On the occasion of one of these great hunting raids along the Cantabrian coast prehistoric man struck upon the cave of Altamira, to which he returned repeatedly in search of refuge or rest, appropriating to his use the hall lying next the entrance. We may picture to ourselves the small horde of hunters fleeing from rain and cold and settling down in the gloomy

cavern, where they would set fire to heaped-up branches so as to warm themselves, roast their meat and cook their vegetables, and ward off wild animals at night.

There also they made their implements, hewn mainly from flint and quartzite. Among the deposits laid down in thick layers are found knives, scrapers and other like utensils, all admirably suited for flaying and cutting up dead animals, the tendons and long hair of which were used for sewing. It is surprising to note the extraordinary skill with which man gave a finely pointed shape to pieces of quartzite intended for spear or arrow heads.

Numerous implements of bone or antler have also been found. The first stage in their manufacture was the separation of a rough splinter, which was then fashioned into the shape of a point, a bodkin, a spatula, etc., and lastly polished. The finely pointed needles of that remote age are so perfect as to be comparable with the steel needles of our time.

Nor is there any doubt that prehistoric man knew how to work in wood; and specimens of his adornments have come down to us in the shape of teeth or perforated shells, or small discs of bone or stone with decorative stripes. These were most likely amulets or protective talismans. The frequent occurrence of dyes, particularly ochre, furnishes ground for the belief

that these men of prehistoric age painted their face or body.

All these materials have been found in profusion in the hall of the Altamira cave, whence they have been removed to the Museum established in the keeper's house (1).

These specimens were obtained from the clay layers of the floor, where they lay mixed with ashes, charcoal, pieces of stone and burnt or broken bones of animals. The fact that these bones are mainly of bison, common stag and wild horse shows that these were the animals chiefly hunted by primitive man. The simplest method of catching bison or wild horses would be by means of concealed pits, made across their habitual tracks and covered with grass or foliage. Large bags might also be secured by beating game, the animals being driven towards gulleys or precipices and there shot down with bows and arrows or killed in some other more or less cruel fashion. Akin to this form of the chase was that of ruthless persecution; a group

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(1) For the guidance of the specialist it should be mentioned that the Altamira deposits cover two periods. The deeper level is of the Lower Solutrean, containing pointed implements shaped like laurel leaves with a concave base, and shouldered points, frequently with a lateral fang. The upper level contains remains of the ancient Magdalenian culture, such as numerous worked bones, some chieftain's staves, and shoulder-blades with engravings of animals, mainly hinds.

of hunters would round up the chosen game, especially the young, pregnant females, or wounded animals, and drive them without stay for rest or food towards unfavourable ground until they dropped from sheer exhaustion.

An important complement of meat food was vegetable sustenance in the shape of wild fruits, seeds, berries and mushrooms. The inhabitants of Altamira would frequently cross over to the seashore, only a few miles away, and bring back great quantities of shellfish (particulary limpets) for their womenfolk, children and old men; this is shown by the abundance of shells found in the cave. Nor are the vertebrae of fish, especially trout, lacking.

The most interesting point of all, however, is that these cave-dwellers had a feeling for art. Many of the implements above-mentioned are adorned with designs of great variety, such as zigzag lines, triangles or stripes, arranged with a certain symmetry. More curious are a number of shoulderblades of stag, on which marvellously lifelike outlines of animals, mainly hinds, were engraved with flint tools. Some of these engravings are real artistic creations, and it is not surprising that their authors should have conceived the idea of attempting works of an even loftier kind. These are the paintings with which fossil man embellished the interior of the cave, and that have made Altamira famous through-

out the world. They form the subject of a later chapter.

The glacial period alluded to above had not yet come to an end, nor had the present geological age begun, when a catastrophe befell the cave of Altamira. The whole ceiling of the front half of the hall fell in, leaving the primitive cave-dwelling in ruins. The entrance thereby became obstructed and remained so for thousands of years, with the result that Altamira was hidden from human knowledge until its rediscovery fifty years ago. To that fortunate accident we owe the fact that the contents of the cave, both deposits and paintings, have come down to us intact and well-preserved.

The rediscovery of the cave in 1868.

In the year 1868 a man of the neighbourhood who had gone out to shoot, by accident discovered the entrance to the cave, which, owing to the collapse of the roof, had lain hidden for thousands of years; his dog happening to get trapped among the rocks whilst pursuing some vermin, several of the fallen boulders had to be removed for its release, and so the old entrance was opened up.

The interior of the hall, however, was strewn

with debris of rock, so that in the ensuing years few people ever took shelter there from rain or cold. In 1875 the cave was first explored by don Marcelino S. de Sautuola (1831-1888). It was then known by the name of "cueva de Juan Mortero", a name soon abandoned for that of "cueva de Altamira", from the property on which it is situated. Nor could there be a happier designation, for the spot offers a splendid panorama. To the South rise the majestic mountains of the Cantabrian Range; to the West the sharp "Picos de Europa", clothed almost throughout the year in dazzling snow; to the North stretches a dark blue band of sea; and in the North East are the rolling hills surrounding Santander.

Sautuola, a pioneer of prehistoric studies in Spain, renewed his explorations and in 1879 was surprised to meet with further collapses of rock. These we now know to have been due to the quarrying carried on, a few years before the rediscovery of the cave, on its very surface. In the course of the workings a layer of rock more than a metre thick had been removed from the solid stone roofing, and by the use of explosives the whole of the surface above the cave was shaken and the contents, which had lain intact for so many thousands of years, were in danger of rapidly disappearing. The immediate consequence of the explosions was a

Entrance to the Cave of Altamira and memorial to M. de Sautuola

Marcelino S. de Sautuola
(1831-1888)

visible dislocation of the ceiling; a number of cracks were formed through which water percolated into the interior of the cave with the imminent risk of damage to the prehistoric paintings.

It was Sautuola's little daughter who in 1879 discovered the paintings when accompanying her father on one of his visits. She had on that occasion penetrated by the light of a candle into the deep recess or chamber that opens out behind the hall and there, with a shrill cry of "Toros!", called his attention to the animal pictures on the ceiling and walls. Sautuola, as is shown by his report of the discovery published in 1880 under the title "Breves apuntes sobre algunos objetos prehistóricos de la provincia de Santander" (Brief notice of some prehistoric objects found in the Province of Santander), realized at once the great value and extraordinary antiquity of the wonderful polychrome frescoes representing almost solely bison. At first this unexpected discovery met with doubt and scorn. Regardless of the striking artistic value of the work, a number of learned Spaniards and Frenchmen attributed it merely to the untutored hand of modern shepherds; in so doing, they lost sight of the fact that many of the paintings represent bison, an animal that disappeared from Spain long ago and could only have been painted in an age when it lived

in these latitudes, that is to say, during the last glacial period.

Soon, however, Sautuola's thesis found champions in Spain, foremost among whom was don Juan Vilanova y Piera, a professor of the Central University; but, unfortunately both Sautuola and Vilanova died before justice was done to their ideas. A simple monument, erected by the Athenaeum of Santander over the entrance to the cave in 1921, now perpetuates Sautuola's glorious discovery and identification of the rock paintings of Early Man.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a number of caves with paintings or engravings on their walls were discovered in the South of France; such are the "Grotte de la Mouthe" (1895), Pair-non-Pair (1897), Les Combarelles (1901), Font de Gaume (1901). As these paintings also represent animals that disappeared thousands of years ago, their authenticity was no longer open to doubt. Sautuola's memory was rehabilitated and his discovery honoured the more by the fact that in none of the sixty-two painted caves hitherto found in the South of France and North of Spain does the art of rock painting stand out in such vivid beauty as at Altamira. The paintings of this cave were studied and carefully copied in 1902 by Emile Cartailhac and Henri Breuil, and in 1906 under the auspices of the Prince of Monaco appeared the

lavishly illustrated volume in which they are faithfully reproduced. The title of this work is "La Caverne d'Altamira à Santillane, près Santander (Espagne)".

Thenceforward the fame of the cave has grown, as has the number of visitors attracted to it, of whom foreigners form a large part. Its very fame, however, entailed certain duties in regard to the conservation of the cave itself, the final collapse of which was imminent in 1925, and of the paintings, which were threatened with decay; facilities were also required to enable the public to contemplate and study the pictures at greater ease.

The Duke of Alba came to the rescue. A Committee was formed under his chairmanship for the purchase of the site, and in 1925 the keeper's house containing a small museum was built. The paths inside the cave have been improved and above all a deeper, circular way cut around the "Hall of the Paintings". The acetylene lamps, the use of which was objectionable in every respect, have been replaced by electric reflectors. For the first time also a systematic research has been conducted into the deposits underlying the entrance hall, and, to support the ceiling of the latter, a massive containing wall has been built.

The work of conservation was terminated in

1926, thus preserving for Spain and the civilized world in general a monument that is unique of its kind.

A visit to the cave.

The guide will now lead the way into the cave, the entrance to which faces the Northwest and the total length of which is about 270 metres. The entrance hall (marked A on the plan), which formed the dwelling-place of prehistoric man and now is shut off to a great part by the massive wall built to support the roof, has first to be crossed.

After a few moments a second wall is reached, through which a door leads into the most interesting part of the cave, the so-called "Hall of the Paintings" (marked B on the plan). Approximately rectangular in shape, it measures 18 metres in length by 8 or 9 in width and is very low, the height falling from 2 metres at the entrance to 1,70 metres in the centre and 1,10 at the end. The relative lowness of the ceiling explains why it was chosen by the prehistoric artists as a suitable spot for their work. Recently a circular path has been cut to allow the visitor to inspect the hall at his ease and view the work from a better angle. A glance, on entering the hall, is sufficient to show that most of the works of art consist of *paintings*. The materials used

Keeper's house and museum

A Painting from the Cave: Head of a bison

for colouring were charcoal for the darker tones, and ochre for the shades of yellow, red, reddish brown and earth brown. These were generally crushed and prepared in a liquid form; and animal grease was probably used as a vehicle. The prehistoric artists traced the lines and applied the splashes of colour on their rock canvasses with the aid of brushes or the like, thus producing veritable "oil paintings", which adhered strongly to the stone surface and, having become slightly fossilized, have remained in an admirable state of preservation. Occasional use was made of finely pointed pieces of ochre as pencils. Often the surface is seen to have been carefully prepared in part by washing or scraping, so as to obtain greater perfection of outline and softer shading of the painting. Many of the figures are partly engraved, and often the outlines and more pronounced features, such as eyes, ears, horns, snout, feet and hoofs, were first traced on the stone, either very lightly or strongly. Flint tools were used for these engravings, which would serve as a rough sketch of the picture to be produced.

As regards the execution of the paintings, there are several variants. The designs executed in completely uniform colour are somewhat older, as are those that are shaded in colours applied in various ways. The culminating point

is represented by the polychrome paintings, which are also the most recent.

It happens also at Altamira that engravings or paintings are laid directly one upon another in a curious medley; this renders the older drawings particularly difficult to recognize, and some have even been obliterated. In addition there is the damage done, to the polychrome paintings by infiltration, in the course of centuries, and by the misguided curiosity of visitors in the last forty years, when supervision was lacking.

The more important paintings are distributed over the left half of the chamber, as seen from the entrance; those lying on the right hand are of slight interest, and badly preserved.

A glance at the roof of the cave shows a number of striking natural protuberances. As prehistoric man lay resting from his raids in sight of these bosses of rock, he would not unnaturally conceive the idea of making use of their plastic effect so as to enhance and render more lifelike the figures of bison he painted there. To this artistic play of fancy some of the finest figures owe their origin; the bosses, accentuated by colouring, heighten the relief of the body, to which the artist skilfully added head, feet and tail. As the salients of the rock recall forms of bodies at rest, almost all the animals are shown in an attitude of repose,

with heads on a level with the ground and legs drawn close to the body. Three classic figures of bison in relief deserve special mention; they are grouped at the beginning of the circular path and measure respectively 1,45 metres, 1,40 metres and 1,50 metres in length.

Along the left wall are the following noteworthy paintings:

A wild boar, show running (1,60 metres); rather faint.

A headless bison (1,50 metres).

A bison standing (1,50 metres). The artist has availed himself of a natural rounding-off of the rock to impart a particularly striking effect to the region of the shoulders.

A bison in the act of stretching itself (1,90 metres); here also the artist has turned the configuration of the stone roof to good use.

A bison lying at rest (1,90 metres). This is one of the finest things at Altamira. The head is turned backwards; the horns, eyes, ears and snout are exquisitely outlined in light red and the skilful treatment of the thighs and legs adds to the life-like appearance of the figure.

A wild horse (1,60 metres), with a finely shaped head. The lower part of the body down to the feet is obliterated. Within this figure is another slightly older drawing in light red, showing the outline of a hind or colt.

A wild boar (1,45 metres), underneath which

appears an older drawing also of a boar, the feet of which are still discernible.

A fine figure of a hind (2,20 metres). Beneath the head is the image of a small bison in black.

Towards the centre of the cave near the circular path are further figures of bison, two of which may be specially mentioned here. One represents a bison standing erect (1,60 metres), of which the head is extraordinarily expressive. The other, just behind, is 1,50 metres long. The body is reddish brown with a large patch of intense black; the head, painted mainly in black, has an almost devilish aspect.

Here ends the visit to the "Hall of the Paintings", which has been aptly termed the "Sixtine Chapel of Prehistoric Art". Few spots in the world can make so deep and lasting an impression on the mind of the visitor. From the roof of the hall these paintings, conceived in the imagination and drawn by the hand of the cave-dwellers of fifteen to twenty thousand years ago, seem to look down upon us in astonishment. No less astonishment is felt by the spectator, who perceives that artistic perfection had been achieved in that remote age, and, comparing it with the vaunted progress and civilization of to-day realizes that the material aspect of life alone has changed. As he gazes at the paintings of Altamira, he is struck with

awe by the aesthetic sense and realism of this primitive people, whom he had imagined as living in a state of abject barbarism.

The inspection of the cave may be continued through picturesque galleries and chambers, which, however, contain but few of the engravings and paintings of prehistoric man. After the chamber B, we reach the large hall C containing a small recess covered with red figures in the shape of ladders, which undoubtedly had a magical meaning.

The long passage D, with some engravings and paintings of bison in black, leads to the majestic hall E. The roof, some 18 metres wide, is flat, thus providing a natural solution of the problem of architectural balance. A little lower down to the left lies the room F, on the right wall of which is a fine painting of a black bison. A gallery G branches out from E to the chamber H, where the excursion through the cave ends; for the passage I, besides being impracticable, contains nothing of interest.

H. O.

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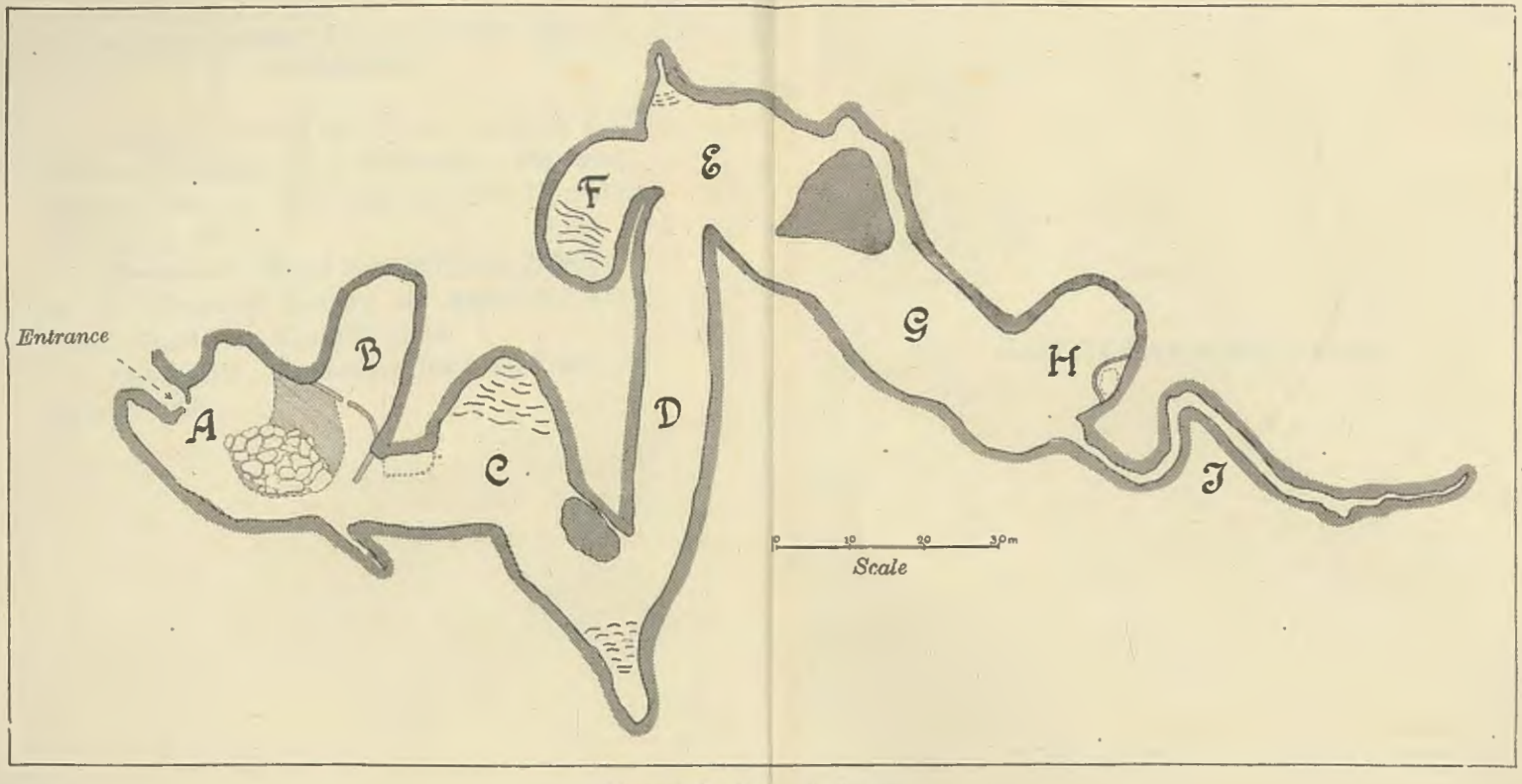

Plan of the Cave of Altamira

SANTILLANA DEL MAR

Many are the towns of Spain that by the traces they bear of a glorious past, their splendid buildings or old-world charm are worthy of becoming centres of pilgrimage for the devotees of Spanish tradition. Few provide within so small a compass such a wealth of artistic interest as the town of Santillana del Mar.

Its pleasing name, the Romanesque flavour of which is in such perfect keeping with the ancestral character of its streets, at once calls to mind two outstanding literary figures, one imaginary and the other real,—the famous *pícaro,* the tale of whose adventures has spread the name of the town throughout the wide world, and the great nobleman, grave soldier yet exquisite poet who adorned the Court of King Juan II.

Santillana, however, even had it not been the imaginary home of Gil Blas, nor given its name to the marquisate of the author of the *Serranillas,* would yet have claim enough to live in the annals of art and figure in the pages of history.

Its origin, like that of so many illustrious towns, is lost in obscurity, and we only know

that in remote times there stood on a neighbouring site a city of the name of Planes, near which, at some undetermined date, a monastery was founded in honour of St. Juliana, the martyr of Nicomedia. Some authors claim that her body was removed from Italy to Planes at the time of the Lombard invasion in the sixth century, when in all probability the monastery was founded. The ancient name of the town still prevailed in the tenth century, and that of Santa Juliana was only applied to the religious foundation. By the eleventh century, however, the monastery had so grown in importance as to gather the lay population around it, and thenceforward the corrupted name of the martyr saint (Santa Juliana, Sancta Illana, Santillana) was given to the town and to the whole Western part of the province, which then and for a long time afterwards was known as the "Asturias de Santillana".

The Benedictine monastery of ancient Planes was famous both for its wealth and the privileges conferred upon it by the Counts and Kings of Castile, privileges that culminated in 1209 when Alfonso VIII, in giving a charter to the town, placed it under the lordship of the Abbot and Chapter of what had grown to be a Collegiate Church. Not for long did the Abbots remain in peaceful possession of their domain, for when, in the fourteenth century, the King of

Castile gave the lordship over a number of the vales of Asturias de Santillana to the House of La Vega, this powerful family laid claim to the town as well, quarrelled with the Abbot, and soon the streets of Santillana were running with the blood of partizans. King Juan II gave the final blow to the Abbot's power by granting the title of Marquis of Santillana to Don Iñigo López de Mendoza, whose extraordinary gifts gave it lasting fame. The soldier-poet hastened to take possession of his marquisate and, though he met with stubborn resistance on the part of the *montañeses*, —"stout men, well versed in the art of fighting on foot, as behoves mountaineers", according to Fernando del Pulgar—, he finally succeeded in having his claim to the overlordship recognized on the famous field of Revolgo, but not without having often found himself in dire distress and danger.

In this atmosphere of continuous fighting the city grew in the Middle Ages and took that grim, forbidding aspect still noticeable in its buildings, such as the *torronas* or keeps, whose age-stained walls recall the days when, in the words of Menéndez Pelayo, "men fought from tower to tower and from house to house... and the only form of justice known was that administered by each with his own hand".

The stormy times of the Middle Ages were followed, however, by days of greater peace and

prosperity in Cantabria. Passion cooled down and the commoner could exchange pike and arquebus for the ploughshare and the scythe; the hidalgo, richer in titles than estate, enjoy peacefully his meagre revenues; friars and canons, their prayers no longer disturbed by the clash of arms and shout of battlecries, chant their Gregorian song, though still careful punctually to collect their tithes and tributes; younger sons found in New Spain and Peru a wide field in which to pursue fortune, free from all irksome restraint... Old manors were restored and new mansions arose, lacking maybe the very rudiments of comfort, but ever emblazoned with the coat of arms in stone proudly displaying its supporters, nymphs, helmet, waving plume and arrogant motto.

Houses dating from that epoch (the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) prevail in Santillana and have left a typical imprint upon the town; intermingled with them are buildings of earlier centuries, the whole combining to form a picture of singular charm.

Thus, the traveller who passes through the streets of Santillana, finds within a short space a compendium of the civil architecture of the region in its diverse epochs, from the twelfth to the eighteenth century, so much so that a notice might be put up at the entrance to the town labelling it "Architectural Museum".

House of the Tagles

Foto Cevallos (Santander)

House of the Borgias

Foto Cevallos (Santander)

The historic *Campo de Revolgo* is perhaps the best spot from which to start on a pilgrimage through the quiet streets, in which life beats to the slow measure of bygone days. The gnarled trunks of the trees are in keeping with the time-worn aspect of the surrounding buildings. To the left, as if withdrawn from urban life, stands the *Casa de los Tagles,* a noble building typical of the eighteenth century with its double arched entrance, iron balconies, splendid coat of arms and verandah placed, according to a scheme that is rare but not unique, on the second floor.

Following the road towards the town, we pass on the left some insignificant modern buildings and on the right the *Regina Coeli* Convent, founded by Alonso Velarde in the latter years of the sixteenth century.

Entering by the only street available in this direction, we come first to the mansion of the Marquises of Casa Mena, an eighteenth century building of severe but elegant lines, spoilt in part by the lack of eaves that formerly gave the necessary finish. Adjoining the mansion, a small building in ashlar, with pointed arch on the ground floor and lintelled windows, is a typical fifteenth century house of the region.

Opposite stands a building of the same epoch as the mansion, and similar in design; the eagle

pierced by an arrow on its shield shows it to have belonged to the noble family of Villa.

A little further on the street divides, and we take the left branch, named Juan Infante. Short as it is, it contains several interesting houses, particularly the so-called "House of the Eagle" on the left, with an exquisitely carved shield, and on the right, the ancient home of the Barreda family, now occupied by the Civil Guard.

We have now reached the admirable "plaza", where the interest aroused at our first steps through the streets is greatly enhanced. The buildings enclosing the irregularly shaped place differ greatly in age, but all are old enough for the differences to be lost in an apparent unity.

On the left is the Town Hall, built in the severe style of Herrera that prevailed in this region during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; hard by are several picturesque old buildings. Opposite the street of Juan Infante stands the tower of the Borgia family, a most interesting building of the fifteenth century, which marks the transition from the warlike days of the Middle Ages to more peaceful modern times. A spacious pointed arch affords entrance to the portico (perhaps the oldest in the province), with lateral openings, communicating on the one side with the street, and on the other, with the portico of the adjoining house; on the first story are three curtailed arches, of which the

Merino Tower

Foto Cevallos (Santander)

Building called House of the Marquis of Santillana

Foto Cevallos (Santander)

central one was filled in and those on either side were opened up at some later date; on the second story are two smaller arches. A narrow cornice and gargoyles in the form of cannon complete the external aspect of this tower. Joined to the rear of this building is another of a slightly later date, remarkable for its inner courtyard, a somewhat rare feature in the architecture of the region.

On the right stands the massive Merino Tower, hoary with age as befits the oldest lay building in Santillana. Its dour, forbidding aspect furnishes evidence of the life led by the Northern hidalgos in the thirteenth century, from which time it dates. The large-stoned pointed arch has been cut open in modern times to afford a wider entrance. Several windows, built in periods when surprise attacks were no longer to be feared, have added to the scanty light that once entered the ground floor through narrow loopholes. On the first story the double-arched window with its stone seat on the inside would be the only opening by which the dwellers of the keep could look out in times of truce. A wider opening on the second story gave access to the scaffold that in case of alarm was raised at that height, for which purpose the wall was provided with projecting stones to hold the beams. The tower was crowned by a flat run-

ning wall with battlements that have since been filled in and covered with a modern roof.

Turning to the right through the narrow street of Las Lindas we come to a reproduction of the old tower, whose twin windows with pointed arches and projecting machicolations savouring strongly of the Gothic indicate the fourteenth century as the date of its erection.

We now pass on to the Calle del Cantón, in which the house believed, on but slight authority, to be that of the Marquis of Santillana, attracts attention by its elegant simplicity. A pointed arch on the ground floor, four lintelled windows framed in Gothic moulding, alternating with sculptured coats of arms, and great overhanging eaves render the façade typical of fifteenth century houses of the "Montaña". The timber and ironwork is modern but copied from old models so as to harmonise with the rest.

A little further on is the so-called "Casa de los hombrones", which derives its name from the two lusty supporters depicted on its shield.

The House of Oreña, standing a little lower down, also displays a handsome shield overhung by wide eaves.

Here the street widens and affords a fine perspective, closed in the background by the main façade of the Collegiate Church, a handsome, well-proportioned building, of unmistakable Romanesque origin, notwithstanding the

House of the Velardes

Foto Cevallos (Santander)

Collegiate Church

Foto Cevallos (Santander)

many mutilations and incongruous additions it has suffered in the course of time.

Before reaching the entrance steps we should notice on the left the old Abbot's House, bearing among later features traces of Gothic on some of the windows.

An entrance divided into several semi-circular arches, from some of which the carved decoration characteristic of the style has disappeared as a result of careless restoration; remains of roughly hewn sculptures, loosely set in the wall; a pediment in the neoclassic style and a graceful row of arches of comparatively modern date; a small Romanesque steeple of circular design with a twin arched window; a massive square steeple over the end of the church, and another in two parts above the transept, relieved by windows and blind arcades,—such are the outstanding features of the façade of the historic church.

Going round the sacristy built in the style of Herrera against the transversal nave, we find ourselves in front of the apse on the Gospel side, the only apse visible from the exterior; the purity of its lines is enhanced by the vigorous contrast of the arches over its windows.

Before entering the church a glance may be cast at the home of the Velarde family that stands near by, a sixteenth century building of importance with typical stepped gables, pin-

nacles, gargoyles, bucket towers at the angles, double-arched doorway, semi-circular balcony windows, and—a feature that is strange in this part of Spain—the plateresque adornment of one of the openings.

The church, formerly a collegiate and now a parish church, was of old a famous Benedictine abbey. The monastery, according to the Rev. Father Flórez, was founded in the sixth century, though it is not mentioned in documents until the ninth. The church standing to-day is not so old, nor is it likely that in contains any traces of work dating further back than the twelfth century, notwithstanding the bold conjectures of local writers.

The present building, therefore, is of Romanesque style, that severe and hardy Romanesque that struck such deep roots in Spanish soil. It is composed of three naves with a transept, three semi-circular apses and a square steeple over the end. The pillars are designed in the form of a cross with the columns grouped on the four faces and not on the angles, whence it may be inferred that originally there was no rib vaulting.

Of the early vaulting only the quadripartite divisions of the apses, the barrels of the transversal nave and the ribbed dome standing over the transept remain; all the rest is ribbed Gothic. The columns have simple bases standing on

Capital of Cloister

Foto Cevallos (Santander)

Relief of Cloister representing St. Juliana

Foto Cevallos (Santander)

high pedestal and finely sculptured capitals.

In the centre of the church is the tomb of Santa Juliana, bearing a roughly hewn effigy of the Saint. The relics, however, are not kept here, as they were transferred to the presbytery in 1453 by order of the celebrated bishop of Burgos Don Alonso de Cartagena.

The main altar, the rich silver frontal of which is a fine example of baroque workmanship, has a beautiful Gothic Retablo of the late fifteenth century, with excellent paintings of the Flemish School. On the socle are four figures carved in relief with ingenuous realism representing the four Apostles. Behind the frontal a curious Romanesque sculpture of the figures of four saints is conserved, which may have belonged to some old tomb.

At the entrance to the left aisle is a fine coloured carving in wood representing Christ on the Cross, probably of the seventeenth century.

The cloister, situated on the North side of the church, is a beautiful example of its style. From a continuous base rise coupled shafts with large capitals of great variety and artistic value, illustrating many of the subjects dear to Romanque taste, such as religious scenes, incidents of the chase, designs derived from the flora of the region, fantastic animals, or formed simply of raments interwoven in complicated combinations.

All of them bear witness to the supreme skill and wealth of imagination of the medieval sculptors, whose strange fancies have left so many riddles yet awaiting interpretation. We may content ourselves with admiring the beauty of their work and leave to others eager to discover a hidden meaning in each symbol, the task of solving their enigmas and making their mysteries known to the world at large.

ELIAS ORTIZ DE LA TORRE
Architect.

Apse of Collegiate Church

Foto Cevallos (Santander)

Capital of Cloister

Foto Cevallos (Santander)

ROUTE

Santillana del Mar lies at a distance of an hour's easy run *by motor car* from Santander along the excellent Oviedo high road via Puente Arce and Barreda. The distance is 20 miles, or slightly more if the high road be followed through Torrelavega as far as Puente de San Miguel (see map).

To reach Santillana del Mar *by rail*, the early train on the Santander-Oviedo line (Cantabrian Railways) should be taken, which arrives at Torrelavega at 9 a. m. There the motorbus running to Comillas awaits the train and reaches Santillana at 10 o'clock. If the sole object of the trip is a visit to the Cave of Altamira, the same motorbus may be taken at 1.30 p. m. on its return journey to Torrelavega. But if a few hours can be devoted to the interesting sights of Santillana, a pleasant walk of 2 ½ miles along the road will lead to Puente de San Miguel, where an evening train may be taken back to Santander.

The Cave of Altamira lies a mile and a half to the South West of Santillana on ground rising gently to a height of 260 feet. It can be reached in thirty to thirty-five minutes walk through meadows along a path marked by signposts. The guide lives close to the cave in the Museum-house, where tickets for entrance to the cave are issued.

A visit to the cave lasts about an hour.


MAR CANTÁBRICO
Santander
Suances
Puente Arce
Santillana del Mar
Comillas
Cueva de Altamira
Barreda
Torrelavega
Puente San Miguel
Oviedo
Road
Railway

Route Map

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