



Romantic Spain

David Roberts and
Genaro Pérez Villaamil

CATALOGUE

Publishers

Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (RABASF)
Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica (CEEH)
Instituto Ceán Bermúdez (ICB)

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Binding

Sucesores de Felipe Méndez

First published by

Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando
C/ Alcalá, 13 (Madrid)

Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica
C/ Felipe IV, 12 (Madrid)

Instituto Ceán Bermúdez
C/ Ruiz de Alarcón, 13 (Madrid)

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Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica, 2021
Instituto Ceán Bermúdez, 2021

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ISBN: 978-84-18760-03-7
Depósito legal: M-25512-2021

Printed and bound in Spain

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Cover image

Genaro Pérez Villaamil, *View of the Giralda from the calle Borceguinería* (cat. 2.10). 1833. Oil on canvas, 82 × 62 cm. Leopoldo P. de Villaamil Alfaro.

Front flyleaf

Genaro Pérez Villaamil, *Patio of the Archbishop's Palace at Alcalá de Henares* (cat. 5.13). C. 1840. Ink and wash on paper, 305 × 360 mm. Instituto Ceán Bermúdez, Madrid.

Back flyleaf

David Roberts, *Alcalá de Guadaira* (cat. 2.1). 1833. Pencil, watercolour and gouache on paper, 251 × 356 mm. Instituto Ceán Bermúdez, Madrid.

3.29 **Genaro Pérez Villaamil**, *Interior of Seville Cathedral*. 1838. Oil on canvas, 75 × 65 cm. Museo Nacional del Romanticismo, Madrid [CE2039]

Inscribed: Lower left: 'Pérez de Villaamil, 1838'.

Provenance: T'Serclaes Collection.

Bibliography: ARIAS ANGLÉS 1986, fig. 41, cat. 75; ROBERTSON 1988, p. 269; CALVO SERRALLER ET AL. 1991, p. 176; QUESADA 1992, p. 102; QUESADA 1996, p. 90.

Exhibitions: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid, 1838.

This oil painting by Villaamil shows the interior of Seville Cathedral during the Corpus Christi celebrations. The view is captured from the nave, near the main entrance called Door of Assumption. The Gothic nave and aisles are bathed in an intriguing warm light, which the painter has manipulated to emphasise the marble, jasper and bronze surfaces of the back choir. Behind it, on either side of the nave, stands the monumental organ. The artist also depicts the crossing that collapsed and fell on the organ on 1 August 1888 as the result of a minor earthquake, which toppled a pillar and the lantern dome. The magnificent altar placed on the high altar during the festivities is visible in the background.

In 1833 David Roberts produced a large oil painting of the *Interior of the Cathedral of Seville During the Ceremony of Corpus Christi* (cat. 2.6)¹ including a complex, lifelike scene showing the monstrance, the canopy and an altar with a baldachin installed against the retrochoir. This oil painting inspired Villaamil to produce a very similar one in 1835 with slight variations (cat. 2.8).

Back in England, in 1837 Roberts made a similar drawing (cat. 3.28), which was engraved by W. Wallis and published in *The Tourist in Spain and Morocco* in 1838.² He used a similar viewpoint but did not include the festive scene mentioned above or the altar installed against the retrochoir. To execute it, he had to invent details he may not have been able to see in 1833 because they would have been covered by the temporary altar and are not found in earlier drawings

of his. This explains why, in the centre of the retrochoir, he depicted a sculpture instead of the Gothic picture of *Santa María de los Remedios*, which actually hangs in this space. Above the small doors on either side he drew paintings where there are in fact openings with railings, and topped everything with a larger number of crests, which are somewhat distorted. He also invented double columns where the retrochoir meets the Gothic pillars, which are covered in red fabric in another drawing of his.³ These details do not match those depicted in the detailed view drawn by Chapuy and lithographed by Asselineau, which captures a similar perspective and was published in Chapuy's *Le Moyen-Âge monumental et archéologique* (1844–51).⁴

The fact that this oil painting by Villaamil incorporates the features invented by Roberts indicates that it must have been based on the abovementioned steel engraving published in 1838.⁵ However, the Spaniard made significant changes of his own, depicting two large stained-glass windows in the upper left corner between the Gothic columns (whereas Roberts drew only one) to heighten the luminosity of the space. And instead of the complex foreground scene in the above oil paintings and a similar picture by Joaquín Domínguez Bécquer entitled *Procession in the Interior of the Cathedral*, dated 1836,⁶ here we find a simple scene with common folk.

AGG and MPS

¹ CALVO SERRALLER ET AL. 1991, núm. 102, p. 323; RODRÍGUEZ BARBERÁN 2007, cat. 126, p. 64.

² ROSCOE 1838.

³ CALVO SERRALLER ET AL. 1991, p. 178.

⁴ *VER SEVILLA* 2002, pp. 58–59.

⁵ Villaamil had views published by Roberts in his studio. ARIAS ANGLÉS 1986, p. 182.

⁶ CALVO SERRALLER ET AL. 1991, p. 331.



CAT. 3.29