



# Romantic Spain

David Roberts and  
Genaro Pérez Villaamil

## CATALOGUE

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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.

- 2.11 David Roberts, *The Tower of the Giralda, Seville*. 1837. Hand-coloured lithograph, 520 × 375 mm, from *Picturesque Sketches in Spain Taken During the Years 1832 & 1833*, London, Hodgson & Graves, 1837. Instituto Ceán Bermúdez, Madrid

Inscribed: 'THE GIRALDA. SEVILLE'.

Bibliography: ROBERTS 1837, pl. XIV; CALVO SERRALLER ET AL. 1991, p. 340; CABRA LOREDO 1994, p. 49; *CATÁLOGO DE LA COLECCIÓN DE ESTAMPAS* 1996, p. 89, cat. 184; RODRÍGUEZ BARBERÁN 2007, cat. 124; GÁMIZ GORDO 2010, p. 63.

- 2.12 Stengel & Co., Dresden, *Calle Mateos Gago and the Giralda, Seville*. c. 1904. Postcard (phototype), 140 × 90 mm. Colección Antonio Gámiz Gordo

David Roberts wrote to his family from Seville in May 1833, stating that the cathedral was one of the most picturesque and most magnificent buildings in the world; the sight of the tower alone made it worthwhile travelling there from England.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the Giralda tower, the city's main landmark, appears in many of Roberts's views captured from different spots such as Itálica, San Juan de Aznalfarache, Cruz del Campo, Maestranza and the Plaza de San Francisco, and surrounding the cathedral (Calle Placentines, Door of Forgiveness, Courtyard of the Orange Trees).

This view of the Giralda (cat. 2.11) was depicted from what is now Calle Mateos Gago. This street was then called Borceguinería, after the *borceguineros* or bootmakers who lived there – something of a coincidence given that Roberts's father was himself a shoemaker. In the lithograph, however, the shop signs are more varied, belonging to a tailor, an artist and a furrier: 'Santiago García, Maestro Sastre', 'Artista' and 'Peletería Benito Fernández'.

The proportions and details of the Giralda are realistic and fairly lifelike. The gentle light suggests that the scene was drawn in the morning. The rest of the elements have been manipulated, however. Comparison with Robert's original drawing<sup>2</sup> shows that the street is wider and longer in the lithograph and that houses have been added in the background. There are also major differences between urban reality and the scene depicted in the drawing and the lithograph; it should be borne in mind that substantial changes were made to the alignment of the façades for the Ibero-American Exhibition of 1929. The street was previously very narrow, as shown in a drawing by J. F. Lewis of a *Religious Procession*<sup>3</sup> and a few postcards published in 1904.<sup>4</sup>

To the right of the Giralda is the Courtyard of the Orange Trees and to the left the cathedral roof, noticeably



CAT. 2.12

distorted, with its steeply sloping buttresses rising above it. These features do not appear in the earlier drawing and were not visible from the narrow street. The roofs are, however,

<sup>1</sup> Roberts to Hay, 4 May 1833 (NLS, Acc. 3521, fol. 62).

<sup>2</sup> Sotheby's, 14 July 1988, lot 186; Christie's, 5 June 2007, sale 7397.

<sup>3</sup> QUESADA 1996, p. 81.

<sup>4</sup> Postcards Stengel & Co., Dresden, c. 1904, nos. 28424, 28478 (Colección Antonio Gámiz Gordo).



CAT. 2.11

found in another postcard of 1904 taken from a rooftop terrace in that street, which highlights the differences between the picture and reality (cat. 2.12).

The imaginary street is populated with figures dressed in folk costume, as if performing a theatre play. They recall the artist's professional beginnings as a painter of stage scenery and his influence on Villaamil, who produced two similar oil paintings in 1833 (cat. 2.10) and 1838,<sup>5</sup> and on Joaquín Domínguez Bécquer (1817–1879).<sup>6</sup>

Although the index of published plates indicates that the lithograph is by W. Gauci, it should be remembered that Roberts was disappointed with the first proofs and revised them between 1836 and March 1837.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the aforementioned manipulations would have stemmed from his own decisions.

In short, this is one of the most beautiful and faithful representations in the graphic history of the Giralda, though the street depicted in the foreground is an imaginary setting.

AGG and MPS

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<sup>5</sup> ARIAS ANGLÉS 1986, pp. 207, 219.

<sup>6</sup> QUESADA 1992, p. 110.

<sup>7</sup> BALLANTINE 1866, p. 76.