



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.

2.5 David Roberts, *Golden Tower*. 1833. Oil on panel, 39 × 48 cm. Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid [P002853]

Inscribed: Lower right: 'D Roberts 1833'.

Provenance: Collection of the Duke and Duchess of Montpensier in Seville; acquired by the Museo Nacional del Prado in 1943. It could have been a present from David Roberts to viceconsul Julian B. Williams in 1833¹; acquired by the Museo del Prado in 1943.

Bibliography: *CATÁLOGO DE LOS CUADROS* 1866, no. 365–66; BALLANTINE 1866, p. 60; *MUSEO DEL PRADO* 1972, p. 567, no. 2853; *IMAGEN ROMÁNTICA DE ESPAÑA* 1981, p. 43; SIM 1984; CALVO SERRALLER ET AL. 1991, p. 188; CALVO SERRALLER ET AL. 1993, p. 321; RODRÍGUEZ REBOLLO 2005, cover; RODRÍGUEZ BARBERÁN 2007, p. 56; FERNÁNDEZ LACOMBA 2007b, vol. 1, p. 62; SOLKIN 2010, p. 92; VALDIVIESO AND FERNÁNDEZ 2011, p. 15; BARÓN 2012, pp. 305–33; BARÓN 2014, p. 25; *PINTURA DEL SIGLO XIX* 2015, p. 509; ZOIDO NARANJO AND RODRÍGUEZ RODRÍGUEZ 2015, p. 45.

Exhibitions: *La Sevilla de Richard Ford*, Centro Cultural El Monte, Seville, 2007, cat. 115; *Vistas monumentales de ciudades españolas. El pintor romántico Genaro Pérez Villaamil*, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, 2014–15.

This oil painting forms a pair with Roberts's view of Alcalá de Guadaíra castle (cat. 2.2), also in the Prado Museum, which is similar in size and in the careful handling of the landscape and water.

The Torre del Oro (Golden Tower), like the Giralda tower, is a crowning achievement of Almohad architecture and a symbol of Seville. This twelve-sided construction was built around 1220 at the former mouth of the Tagarete stream as the end of a section of a defensive wall. The wall, which connected it with the Torre de la Plata (Silver Tower), was demolished around 1822, leaving it freestanding. The top part of the upper structure and the balconied windows were added during the restoration after the earthquake of 1 November 1755.²

From the sixteenth century onwards, the tower was the salient feature of countless views looking towards the River Guadalquivir and harbour, emblems of the city's prosperity.³ It is important to remember that Seville enjoyed a period of splendour on account of its monopoly on trade with the Americas, and many published images therefore displayed the popular motto 'Quien no ha visto Sevilla, no ha visto maravilla' (He who has not seen Seville has not seen wonder).⁴

In the nineteenth century, many travellers such as Ford,⁵ Roberts⁶ and others⁷ depicted this view of the Torre del Oro and its surrounding area from the Gordales bend

when approaching the city by boat. The course of this stretch of the river was altered before the Ibero-American Exposition of 1929, and the Seville Fair is now held there.

On the left is the convent of Los Remedios, which was often flooded due to its proximity to the river.⁸ It was confiscated and sold in 1835 and demolished in 1844. Its church, which is still extant, was converted into the Instituto Hispano-Cubano in 1928. The Remedios district sprang up around it in the twentieth century. Visible in the background is the Barcas bridge, of Islamic origin, which connected the city with the suburb of Triana and the Aljarafe district until it was replaced by the current bridge around 1855.

The scene features boats and people in the foreground, and in the distance are figures on the avenue of Paseo de las Delicias, which had been completed a few years earlier. The Palacio de San Telmo is hidden behind vegetation. The Golden Tower stood closer to the water in the artist's day, as the current quays of the harbour had not yet been built. Positioning himself at a certain distance from the centre of Seville, David Roberts thus masterfully captured this delightful outlying landscape, which has a very different appearance today owing to the expansion of the city and its harbour.

AGG

¹ Roberts to Hay, 2 July 1833 (NLS, Acc. 8729 1); Brackenbury to Roberts, 30 August 1833 (NLS, Acc. 12158); BALLANTINE 1866, p. 60. I am grateful to Krystyna Matyjaszkiewicz for this information.

² FALCÓN MÁRQUEZ 1993.

³ GARCÍA BAQUERO AND SERRERA CONTRERAS 2007; PORTÚS 2007.

⁴ GÁMIZ GORDO AND DÍAZ ZAMUDIO 2019.

⁵ RODRÍGUEZ BARBERÁN 2007; RODRÍGUEZ BARBERÁN, GÁMIZ GORDO AND ROBERTSON 2014.

⁶ Drawing signed and dated 1833 in The Morgan Library & Museum, New York (1974.12).

⁷ CALVO SERRALLER ET AL. 1991.

⁸ FERNÁNDEZ ROJAS 2008.

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CAT. 2.5