



# 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.

1.5 **David Roberts, *Málaga, Spain*. 1833.** Watercolour and pencil heightened with bodycolour, on two sheets of paper totalling 215 × 663 mm. Colección Jesús Moraime

**Inscribed:** Lower left: ‘Malaga. March 6<sup>th</sup> 1833’; lower right: ‘David Roberts. 1833 MALAGA’; back: ‘To Mrs Patrick Black with the artists [sic] sincere and best wishes’.

**Provenance:** Mrs. Patrick Black; private collection; Sotheby’s London sale, Old Master & British Drawings, 6 July 2010, lot 263.

**Bibliography:** ROBERTS 1837, pl. XIX; RUIZ PADRÓN 2016, pp. 207–22.

According to the passports held in the National Library of Scotland, David Roberts arrived in Málaga on 25 February 1833 and departed for Gibraltar on 16 March that year. During the weeks he spent in the city he was accompanied by his friend, the British consul William Mark, who showed him around the most interesting places.<sup>1</sup> He made various drawings, which he used as a basis for three views published in 1835 – one of the cathedral, another from Gibralfaro and a vignette of the Alcazaba – as well as a lithograph of the city and harbour published in 1837.<sup>2</sup> He also produced a rare view of the English Cemetery.<sup>3</sup>

This beautiful panoramic view on two adjoining sheets of paper shows the harbour from the west end, at an angle of about 75 degrees. The city’s main landmarks are depicted in a fairly true-to-life manner: the cathedral, the row of buildings known as Cortina del Muelle, the customs house or Palacio de la Aduana, the fortified ensemble comprising the Alcazaba and the Castle of Gibralfaro, the brand-new eastern dock including the Battery of San Nicolás and, at one end, the port lighthouse. A great many boats are grouped together by the dock in a dense cluster of overlapping hulls and masts. The outline of the mountains bathed in midday light is faithfully rendered in detail (the silhouettes of the various peaks are fully recognisable) in the background to the scene.

This is therefore a highly accurate view, which is of great documentary significance to the visual history of the

city as it helps to understand the urban landscape and its evolution. The seafront as it appears in the drawing is unrecognisable today, because the port area underwent extensive alterations at a later date. In the twentieth century the quays were enlarged and the former breakwaters with defensive batteries at their ends were replaced by different constructions. These are now due to be redeveloped and offer the privileged viewpoints that had already attracted Alexandre Laborde (1812), Nicolas Chapuy (1842) and José Vallejo (*c.* 1850).<sup>4</sup>

The present watercolour is executed with great technical mastery. The artist conjures up a highly sophisticated, atmospheric landscape. A series of receding planes, marked by a subtle chiaroscuro, create a remarkable spatial depth. According to the artist’s subjective vision, the various, carefully drawn elements of the scene capture the character of the landscape and its diverse architecture. The crisp, firm lines of the customs house and the luminous watercolour tones applied to its façade contrast with the sinuous, organic lines of the Alcazaba, the decay of which is expressed by the opaque wash that echoes the ochres of the hillsides.

This view was interpreted somewhat freely in W. Gauci’s later lithograph of 1837. Gauci afforded the buildings a more monumental appearance and compressed the scene to adapt it to the format of the book.

AGG and LRP

<sup>1</sup> GIMÉNEZ CRUZ 2002, pp. 157–86.

<sup>2</sup> ROSCOE 1835, frontispiece, pp. 259, 274. ROBERTS 1837, pl. XIX.

<sup>3</sup> FERRER MAESE 2002, pp. 7, 25.

<sup>4</sup> RUIZ PADRÓN AND GÁMIZ GORDO 2019.



CAT. 1.5

