



Interior view of the Alhambra, drawn by Jean Lubin Vauzelle and engraved by Antoine Claude François Villerey with etching added by J.J. de Laporte (II, pl. 20)

Laborde, Alexandre Louis Joseph de, Comte

Paris 1773 – 1842 Paris

Voyage pittoresque et historique de l'Espagne.

Paris, De l'Imprimerie de P. Didot l'aîné avec les caractères de Bodoni, 1807–1820

Two volumes bound as four, FOLIO (580 × 440 mm):

Volume 1, part I (1806): (61)ff. letterpress, signed π^1 (half-title) a–z¹ 1–36¹ 36bis¹ and paginated (2) i–xlvi 1–72 (2); plus engraved title, portrait (*S.A.S. Le Prince de la Paix* [*i.e.* Manuel de Godoy]), and sixty unnumbered plates (figures nos. 1–88) interleaved with the text. Volume 1, part II (1811): (32)ff. letterpress, signed π^1 (half-title), $2\pi^1$ (title-page) 37–66¹ and paginated (4) 73–130 (2), plus seventy-six unnumbered plates (figures nos. 89–189) interleaved with the text.

Volume 2, part I (1812): (43)ff. letterpress, signed π^1 (half-title) $2\pi^1$ (title) a–z¹ 1–18¹ and paginated (4) 1–xlv (1, blank) 1–36; plus eighty unnumbered plates (figures nos. 1–90) interleaved with the text. Volume 2, part II (1820): (62)ff. letterpress, signed π^1 (half-title) $2\pi^1$ (title) a–z¹ aa–ss¹ 1–19¹ and paginated (4) i–xci (*i.e.* 81, pp.35–44 skipped in numeration) (1, blank) 1–36 (2); plus fifty-six unnumbered plates (figures nos. 1–70) interleaved with the text, and two double-page maps.¹

Tissue guards before plates. A few plates browned or spotted, mostly in margins; overall in excellent state of preservation.

BOUND as four volumes in russia leather, dyed violet, covers decorated with frames of gilt and blind ornament.

FINE COPY of this encyclopaedic work, composed of plates complementary to a series of historical discourses, remarks on the geography and natural history, manners and customs, of the different regions of Spain. It is 'the most magnificent, extensive, and accurate work published on Spain to that date'.² The author organises the material in four parts: 'La España romana' (Cataluña, Valencia, Extremadura), 'La España árabe' (Andalucía,

¹ For a list of plates, see André Monglond, *La France révolutionnaire et impériale: annales de bibliographie méthodique et description des livres illustrés*, VII (Paris 1953), cols. 243–258.

² National Gallery of Art, *The Mark J. Millard architectural collection. Volume 1: French books, sixteenth through nineteenth centuries*, by Dora Wiebenson and Claire Baines (New York & Washington, DC 1993), pp.216–220 no. 83 (quotation p.220).

including the Alhambra and Granada palaces), ‘España gótica y medieval’ (the Basque country, Aragón, Asturias, León), and ‘La España moderna’ (Navarra, Aragón, Castilla, in particular Madrid). Spain was then largely unknown to European travellers, and this book is claimed to have played a major role in the creation of that fascinating and exotic, but entirely fictional country, ‘la España de Mérimée’.³

Laborde conceived the idea of writing a *voyage pittoresque* while travelling in Catalonia in 1797.⁴ Work began in earnest when he returned to Spain in 1800, as an attaché to Lucien Bonaparte’s embassy (concluded by the Treaty of Aranjuez, signed on 21 March 1801), when numerous draughtsmen were employed to make topographical views, plans, elevations, and details of buildings, and to reproduce paintings and other art works, inscriptions and monuments.⁵ Both Spanish and French artists were engaged; the busiest were the architects François Ligier (or Liger) (1755–*fl.* 1803) and Jacques Moulinier (1753–1828),⁶ the painters Jean Lubin Vauzelle (1776–1837) and Florent-Fidèle-Constant Bourgeois du Castelet (1767–1841), and one Dutailly (*fl.* 1790–1803). Laborde himself made twenty-eight drawings; Dominique Vivant Denon (1747–1825) contributed at least five. A huge corpus was created, many more drawings than eventually utilised for the book.

Substantial groups of the drawings are now in the Collection Jacques Doucet in Paris (255 sheets, acquired 1967)⁷ and in the Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya in Barcelona (160

sheets, acquired in 1958);⁸ at least four drawings are in the Arxiu Històric de la Ciutat de Barcelona, and nine are recorded in Spanish private collections.⁹ Some 274 drawings were once gathered in a luxurious copy of the book printed on vellum.¹⁰

By 1805 Laborde had begun to pass these drawings to printmakers.¹¹ Some Spanish engravers were employed, but French engravers and etchers again predominate, with Louis Pierre Baltard, Jean Jérôme Beaujean, M.A. Benoist, Edmé Bovinet, Jacques-Joseph Coigny, Robert Daudet, François Déquevauviller, Jean Desaulx, Charles Louis Lingée, F.B. Lorieux, and Jean-Baptiste Reville especially favoured.

According to a prospectus for the publication, appearing in Madrid, in April 1806, the book was projected in seventy fascicules of six prints each (420 plates altogether).¹² A year later, the Parisian publisher forecast ‘soixante ou soixante-dix livraisons... chaque livraison sera composée de trois feuilles de texte et de six feuilles de gravures’.¹³ The book was completed however in forty-eight parts (274 plates), the first two parts issued in the spring of 1807 and the last in June 1820.¹⁴ Some plates illustrative of Galicia, Asturias, the Kingdom

⁸ Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya, Gabinet de Dibuixos i Gravats, Inv. 64679/D–64859/D. *Exposición de dibujos para la ilustración del ‘Voyage pittoresque et historique de l’Espagne’ de Alexandre de Laborde*, exhibition catalogue, Palacio de la Virreina, October–November 1960 (Barcelona 1960).

⁹ A loan exhibition of seventy-one drawings was held on the bicentenary anniversary of Laborde’s publication: *El viatge a Espanya d’Alexandre de Laborde*, *op. cit.* (Barcelona 2006).

¹⁰J.-C. Brunet, *Manuel du libraire et de l’amateur de livres. Supplément* (Paris 1834), II, p.270, and (fifth edition, Paris 1862), III, col. 713: ‘Un exemplaire impr. sur Vêlin, avec les dessins originaux, au nombre de 274, a été offert aux curieux au prix de 22500 Fr’. When no purchaser was found, the copy was retained by the family for two generations; see Georges Vicaire, *Manuel de l’amateur de livres du XIXe siècle, 1801–1893* (Paris 1900), IV, cols. 742–743, locating it ‘partie de la bibliothèque de M. le Comte Alexandre de Laborde, petit-fils de l’auteur [Alexandre-Léon-Joseph de Laborde, 1853–1944, specialist in illuminated manuscripts and noted bibliophile]’. A ‘Magnifique exemplaire sur vélin avec 5 figures avant la lettre’ was offered in Gutekunst und Klipstein’s Auktion 34, ‘Livres précieux’, Bern, 22 November 1945, lot 209 (the above copy after removal of the drawings?).

¹¹ ‘Sepulcro cerca de Manresa’ (vol. 1, part I, pl. [LXXXII]), is dated 1805 after Reville’s signature.

¹² Gilles Boucher de la Richarderie, *Bibliothèque universelle des voyages* (Paris 1808), III, pp.500–503, reprinting the prospectus from the ‘Gazeta de la Corte Española’ (*Gaceta de Madrid?*) on 19 April 1806 (18 April?).

¹³ *Journal général de la littérature de France ou Répertoire méthodique des livres nouveaux*, 10 (Paris 1807), p.142.

¹⁴ The dedicatee, Manuel de Godoy, is identified on the title-page as ‘Généralissime de Armées de S.M.C., Grand-Amiral D’Espagne et des Indes, etc. etc.’, titles granted to him in late January 1807. Announcements in the monthly *Journal général de la littérature de France* allow partial reconstruction of the publication history: Livraisons 1–2 (May 1807); 3 (July 1807), 4 (September 1807), 5–6 (October 1807), 7 (November 1807), 8 (February 1808), 9–10 (August 1808), 11 (October 1808), 12–

³ Elena Fernández Herr, *Les Origines de l’Espagne romantique. Les récits de voyage 1755–1823* (Paris 1974), chapters VII and VIII; María Dolores Cabra Loredó, ‘La España prerromántica de Alexandre Laborde’ in *Historia 16* (no. 103, November 1984), pp.23–32.

⁴ The dedicatee of the *Voyage pittoresque et historique de l’Espagne*, Manuel de Godoy, claimed in his *Memorias* (Madrid 1836, I, p.217) to have conceived the project himself.

⁵ Núria Llorens, ‘Las escenas de paisaje en el Viaje a España de Alexandre de Laborde’ in *Anuario del Departamento de Historia y Teoría del Arte* [Universidad Autónoma de Madrid] 19 (2007), pp.159–177; Jordi Casanova, ‘Els monuments antics en el Viatge de Laborde’ in *El viatge a Espanya d’Alexandre de Laborde*, catalogue of an exhibition, Museu Nacional d’Art de Catalunya, 30 May–27 August 2006 (Barcelona 2006), pp.31–47.

⁶ Zenon Mezinski, ‘Etude des deux artistes Jacques Moulinier et François Liger à travers leur participation au “Voyage pittoresque et historique de l’Espagne” par Alexandre de Laborde: 1800–1820’, thesis, Histoire de l’art moderne, Université Paul Valéry–Montpellier III, 2004.

⁷ Bibliothèque Institut national d’histoire de l’art (INHA), Ms 463 (‘255 f. montés sur cartes, Mine de plomb, plume, lavis; 48 × 60 cm’). Images are available on the Library’s Bibliothèque Numérique, 6195 (<http://www.purl.org/yoolib/inha/6195>). Suzanne Dameron, ‘Dessins originaux pour l’illustration du Voyage Pittoresque et Historique de L’Espagne d’Alexandre de Laborde’ in *Actas del XXIII Congreso Internacional de Historia del Arte. España entre el Mediterráneo y el Atlántico*, Universidad de Granada, 1973 (Granada 1976), II, pp.484–486.

of León, the Basque country, and Mallorca were never realised, owing to political instability and financial exigencies. Subscribers were presented with a choice between copies printed on ordinary paper, *papier vélin*, or on *papier vélin* with the plates *avant la lettre*, each *livraison* priced respectively 21, 36, and 60 francs.

The plates have captions in French, Spanish, and English and it is likely that Laborde planned editions in all three languages. An edition in Spanish, *Viage pintoresco e histórico de España* (translation by Father Juan Fernandez de Rojas), commenced publication in Madrid in 1807, but was suspended after distribution of the third fascicule;¹⁵ no edition with the plates accompanied by an English text is known.

In January 1823 C.L.F. Panckoucke, publisher of the second edition of the *Description de l'Égypte*, circulated a prospectus for 'Nouvelle publication de 200 exemplaires', to be printed by Didot 'sur papier fin satiné' and issued to subscribers in ninety-one *livraisons* (at a pace of two per month).¹⁶ His project does not seem to have advanced further.



13 (September 1809), 14 (November 1809), 15 (April 1810), 16 (September 1810), 17–18 (April 1811), 19–20 (July 1811), 21 (November 1811), 22–23 [not advertised], 24 (July 1812), 25–30 [not advertised], 31 (May 1813), 32 (July 1813), 33 (September 1813), 34 (October 1813), 35–39 (March 1815), 40–41 [not advertised], 42 (July 1816), 43–44 [not advertised], 45 (June 1817), 46 (March 1818), 47 (May 1819), 48 (June 1820). According to the *Journal* (volume 23, 1820, p.189), the 48th *livraison* contained three plates and five leaves of text (cf. the entry in the catalogue of the British Architectural Library, *op. cit.*, p.2666, where the cataloguer speculates that it 'consisted wholly of letterpress').

¹⁵ Ana María Freire López, 'Fray Juan Fernandez de Rojas y el "Viaje pintoresco e histórico de España"' in *Castilla: Estudios de literatura* 9–10 (1985), pp.15–22, locates Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, ER 2993 (images in Biblioteca Digital Hispánica). In this copy, the printed title-page is dated 1807 with imprint 'En Madrid | En La Imprenta Real' and Godoy is identified by the titles he received in 1807. A copy in the private collection of Joan Sabaté Prats has a printed title-page dated 1806 with imprint 'En Madrid' (see reproduction in *El viatge a Espanya d'Alexandre de Laborde*, *op. cit.*, p.156 no. 76). Cf. a copy apparently containing a mixture of plates from the Madrid and Paris editions (some *avant la lettre*), in a binding displaying the insignia of Carlos IV, offered by Sotheby's, 'Travel, Atlases and Natural History', London, 4 June 1998, lot 263.

¹⁶ *Journal général de la littérature de France*, 26 (1823), pp.29–32.

REFERENCES *Katalog der Ornamentstichsammlung der Staatlichen Kunstbibliothek Berlin* (Berlin 1939), no. 2769 (different make-up); Antonio Palau y Dulcet, *Manual del libero hispano-americano: bibliografía general española e hispano-americana desde la tiempos* (Barcelona 1954), vii, 128975; British Architectural Library, *Early printed books 1478–1840: catalogue of the British Architectural Library Early Imprints Collection. Volume 5: Indices, Supplement, Appendices, Addenda and Corrigenda*, compiled by Paul W. Nash [et al.] (Munich 2003), pp.2663–2666 no. 3961; Ulrike Steiner, *Die Anfänge der Archäologie in Folio und Oktav: fremdsprachige Antikenpublikationen und Reiseberichte in deutschen Ausgaben*, published to accompany the exhibition 'Aufklärung – Antike in Buch und Bild' in the Anhaltische Gemäldegalerie, Dessau, 19 June–31 July 2005 (Ruhpolding 2005), pp.159–160 no. 133