COLNAGHI



Eugenio Lucas Velázquez
Ruins with Arab Figures, 1848

EUGENIO LUCAS VELÁZQUEZ
(Madrid 1817 – 1870 Madrid)

RUINS WITH ARAB FIGURES, 1848

A pair, both signed and dated lower right

Oil on canvas
129 x 100 cm (each)
50 ¾ x 39 ⅜ in.

Provenance

Sala Parés, Barcelona, December 1943, acquired through the dealer Maragall;
Fernando Rivière de Caralt (1904–1992), Barcelona, acquired from the above;
Thence by descent to the present owners.

Literature

Gaya Nuño, J. A., *Eugenio Lucas*, Barcelona, 1948, pp. 10 and 43, figs. 3–4;
Arnaiz, J. M., *Eugenio Lucas. Su vida y su obra*, Madrid, 1981, pp. 296–297, nos. 19–20.





Populated by a multitude of figures colourfully dressed in Arab drapes and turbans, crumbling Moorish ruins majestically frame this pair of 1848 orientalist landscapes by Eugenio Lucas Velázquez (1817–1870). The long caravans, the typical clothing and the exotic water-facing setting place these works squarely in the European Romantic fascination with North Africa. The dilapidated arches and fortifications hint at a long-gone prosperity, recalling Spain's own Hispano-Muslim past. Although no specific historical site is depicted, the iconography signals a Mediterranean or Maghrebine landscape at twilight, immersed in a dream-like atmosphere. By the late 1840s such "imaginary Oriental" scenes became indeed a signature theme for the Spanish artist, melding the Romantic taste for dramatic ruins with exoticism.

The pair, conceived to be hung side by side as companion pieces, is executed in free, impastoed oil paint, with a predominance of warm earth-tones offset by bright accents of emerald green and deep crimson. The brushwork is broad and slashing in the architecture and landscape, and minute and *staccato* in the human figures and vegetation. Clouds dominate the sky, and the colouring suggests dusk with a fiery, vibrant hue. Lucas arranges the composition with the ruin's crumbling wall and arches dominating one side of the picture, their broken openings sharply silhouetted by light, while distant hills and sea recede into the background. Small groups of figures and animals – often men on foot or mules escorting cargo – gather at the base of the ruins. These figures are not rendered in detail but by quick, gestural dabs of paint that suggest human presence without modelling individual likeness.

The influence of contemporary landscape painters is evident: Lucas explicitly drew on the example of his friend Genaro Pérez Villaamil when tackling such vistas (fig. 1). He echoes Villaamil in the steep lighting contrasts and atmospheric clouds, emulating Goya's palette and inventiveness, but his own hand is apparent in the vivacious brushwork. The energetic, gestural execution is genuinely Lucas's own, reflecting the artist's signature bravura. In 1853 he signed *La plaza partida* (fig. 2), a picture at once nervous, sketch-like and chromatically opulent – qualities that would become characteristic of his later, copious, and vigorously animated output.[1] The present pair exemplifies the Romantic strand of his work: grand, exotic, and tinged with melancholic grandeur. In fact, later critics have identified these "Puerto Oriental" scenes as Lucas's first fully mature Orientalist landscapes.

Born in Madrid in 1817, Lucas Velázquez trained initially as a cabinetmaker but soon devoted himself to painting. He studied at the Academia de San Fernando and copied works by Velázquez and Goya in the Prado. His patron in Madrid, Don Leandro Álvarez de Torrijos, whose portrait he painted in 1848, supported his studies.[2] By the

[1] Gaya Nuño, J. A., *Eugenio Lucas*, Barcelona, 1948, p. 10.
[2] See Arnaiz, J. M., *Eugenio Lucas. Su vida y su obra*, Madrid, 1981.

1840s Lucas was well integrated into Romantic circles. In 1844 he married Martina Hernández Muñoz, and by the late 1840s exhibited at the National Academy. These *Ruins with Arab Figures* were painted in Lucas's early maturity, after he had established his reputation as an imaginative Romantic. He would later travel to Paris in 1852 and to Morocco in 1859, absorbing Delacroixian and Orientalist influences (fig. 3).



Fig. 1: Genaro Pérez Villaamil, *Bullfight in Guadalajara*, 1838, oil on canvas, 64 x 81.5 cm (25 ¼ x 32 ⅛ in.), Museo Carmen Thyssen Málaga, inv. no. CTB.2000.68



Fig. 2: Eugenio Lucas Velázquez, *La plaza partida*, 1853, oil on canvas, 82 x 112 cm (32 ¼ x 44 ⅛ in.), Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Havana



Fig. 3: Eugenio Lucas Velázquez, *Arab Caravans Arriving at the Coast*, ca. 1860, oil on canvas, 62.9 x 88.9 cm (24 ¾ x 35 in.), Colección Carmen Thyssen-Bornemisza, on loan to the Museo Carmen Thyssen Málaga

COLNAGHI

COLNAGHI
London

26 BURY STREET, LONDON SW1Y 6AL
UNITED KINGDOM

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
10AM–6PM

+44 (0)20 7491 7408

contact@colnaghi.com

COLNAGHI
Madrid

CALLE GENERAL CASTAÑOS 9
PLANTA BAJA, DCHA.
28004 MADRID

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
BY APPOINTMENT

spain@colnaghi.com

COLNAGHI
New York

23 EAST 67TH STREET, FOURTH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10065
USA

MONDAY TO FRIDAY
10AM–6PM

+1 (917) 388-3825

newyork@colnaghi.com

COLNAGHI
Brussels

RUE JACQUES JORDAENS 30
1000 BRUXELLES
BELGIUM

BY APPOINTMENT ONLY

brussels@colnaghi.com

© COLNAGHI 2026. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.