

AN IMPORTANT COLLECTION  
OF LATE  
EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY  
VALENCIAN DRAWINGS

JOSÉ CAMARÓN BORONAT

1731-1803

RAFAEL XIMENO Y PLANES

1759-1807

JOSÉ CAMARÓN Y MELÍA

1760-1819

VICENTE LÓPEZ Y PORTAÑA

1772-1850

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# Introduction

This collection of drawings by late eighteenth-century Valencian painters, for long kept loose in an old folder, seems remarkably to have remained together from the time the drawings were first made, probably thanks to the care of a pupil or descendant of one of the artists whose work is represented. The drawings are mostly religious in subject matter – a reflection of the domination of ecclesiastical patronage throughout Spain in the eighteenth century. This was a time of great expansion in the construction of ecclesiastical buildings, from great monasteries, metropolitan parish churches and country churches to the smaller chapels of military orders and so on. These new structures transformed the appearance of both town and country, substituting the old-fashioned Moorish and Gothic monuments with up-to-date buildings in the new Late Baroque and Rococo styles. These new buildings needed interior decorations – altarpieces, wall decorations and the like – in keeping with their wonderful exteriors. Commissions for such decorations kept artists, from both the capital and the regions, in steady employment.

The drawings also reflect some of the change that occurred in Spanish painting during the second half of the eighteenth century – this was the troubled cultural climate from which the greatest genius of the period, Francisco de Goya (1746–1828), was to emerge. In many there seems a lack of physical substance to the figures, partly a result of greater attention to chiaroscuro effects than the delineation of solid form. Finally, the piety of expression of some of the figures reflects the religious sentimentalism then prevalent in Italy and Spain, pointing to a devotional climate that seems incomprehensible in today's world of material worship.

Valencia is Spain's third largest city and is located near the middle of the country's long, Mediter-

anean seaboard, at the mouth of the River Turia. It is the capital of a fertile agricultural zone known locally as "La Huerta", and its long and distinctive artistic traditions go back at least as far as the Renaissance period, benefiting from ready economic and cultural contacts with the country's capital, Madrid, as well as from trading links with foreign countries such as Flanders and Italy – these latter brought distinguished foreign painters to settle for periods in the city. By the beginning of the seventeenth century (Spain's "Golden Age" of painting), Francisco Ribalta (1565–1628), who had settled in Valencia in 1599, established the new sentimental Baroque idiom of painting in the city, founding what may be considered as the beginnings of a recognizable native school, which replaced the more old-fashioned, popular religious style practised by Juan Vicente Maçip (c. 1523–1579), better known as Juan de Juanes, and his followers.

As elsewhere in Spain during much of the eighteenth century, the development of painting in Valencia was profoundly affected by the great fresco decorations painted by the visiting Neapolitan painter, Luca Giordano (1634–1705) in Madrid and at the Escorial. Antonio Palomino's own large-scale decoration on the vault of the Iglesia de los Desamparados (Church of the Homeless, or Abandoned) in Valencia, carried out in 1701, is therefore wholly Giordanesque in spirit. Indeed, the impact of the style of foreign artists resident in Madrid on painting in Valencia continued to be felt throughout the eighteenth century, with the arrival in the capital of a string of such long- and short-term visitors. They include another Neapolitan, Corrado Giaquinto (1703–1766), who was in Spain from 1753–62; the great Venetian painter, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696–1770), who came to the city together with his two sons, Giandomenico (1727–1804) and Lorenzo Tiepolo (1736–1776), the latter

staying on at the Spanish royal court after his father's death, dying in Madrid himself six years later; and, finally, the German painter Anton Raffael Mengs (1728-1779), who was settled in Spain from 1761-1769 and 1773-1777, principally in order to work on the ambitious decorations of the royal palaces at Madrid and Aranjuez.

The impact of the work of these foreign painters on the development of eighteenth-century Spanish drawing is remarkable. This is especially seen in the preference given to a new pictorial technique of brush drawing in grey wash, with occasional touches of the pen in black or grey ink, over under-drawing in black chalk, which replaced what had hitherto been the favourite medium in seventeenth-century Spanish drawing – pen and brown wash. Giordano had brought the new method of brush drawing in grey wash to Spain, and his younger compatriot Giaquinto continued to privilege its use. The popularity of this new grey-wash style of drawing among the younger generation of Spanish painters is not only apparent in the sketches of those active in the capital – it is put to brilliant effect by Goya – but it is also seen in those by artists active in other centres, such as Valencia.

This new drawing type is evident above all in the work of the Valencian artist Mariano Salvador Maella (1739-1819), who was by far the most successful painter in the city and who was also long active in Madrid (sadly his work is not represented in the group shown here). Maella used the technique of brush drawing in grey wash throughout his career, influencing an entire generation of younger painters from the city, including Rafael Ximeno y Planes and Vicente López y Portaña. All three painters modified what was essentially a Neapolitan Rococo technique by reference to the more static

forms taken from the Neo-classical compositions then being introduced to Spain by Mengs. Hence a distinctive “Spanish” drawing type came into being, albeit founded on recently imported technical and formal practices. This flourished among native painters throughout the second half of the eighteenth century and beyond.

Of the drawings in the present catalogue, one is by José Camarón Boronat (1731-1803), who specialized in the painting of devotional works. The greater part of Camarón Boronat's early training was spent in Madrid, but in 1753 he returned to Valencia, where he was successfully active for much of the second half of the eighteenth century.

The largest number of drawings by far is by Rafael Ximeno y Planes (1759-1807), a painter and illustrator who emigrated from Spain to Mexico in 1793. The drawings by Ximeno y Planes included here belong to the Valencian period of his career and were carried out before his departure for Mexico. His work in Mexico became part of the current that swept away the local Baroque idiom of painting, replacing it with the new, more internationally acceptable Neo-classical style. As Director General of the Academia de las Nobles Artes de San Carlos in Mexico City, Ximeno y Planes played a leading role in the replacement of the ancient guild system with a more centralized academic training.

Other drawings are by the later painters José Camarón Meliá (1760-1819), son of José Camarón Boronat, and from the circle of Vicente López y Portaña (1772-1850).

In compiling the present catalogue, I should like to thank D<sup>a</sup> Manuela Mena Marqués, D<sup>r</sup> Xavier Bray and Nicholas Turner.

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# Biographies

## JOSÉ CAMARÓN BORONAT

(Segorbe [Castellón], 1731 -Valencia, 1803)

As a youth, Camarón Boronat trained in his native Segorbe, in the province of Valencia, in the workshop of his father, the sculptor Nicolás Camarón Boronat. In 1749 he transferred to Valencia and, three years later, settled in Madrid, where he seems to have studied in the workshop of Francisco Bonay (fl. mid 18th century), a landscape painter also originally from Valencia. During Camarón Boronat's Madrid period he worked largely as a landscape painter, though he also made copies after Titian, Rubens, Van Dyck and Murillo. In 1753 Camarón Boronat returned to Valencia, where he became teacher of painting at the Academia de S. Bárbara, a newly opened academy of fine art. From this time he painted mostly religious works, for which he received widespread recognition, for example the altarpieces of the *Crowning with Thorns* and the *Death of St Francis* in Valencia Cathedral. He was soon to become an influential personality at the city's principal artists' academy, the Real Academia de Bellas Artes de S. Carlos, where he was appointed Académico de Mérito, in 1768, and Director General, from 1796 to 1801.

Camarón Boronat was expert in a wide range of pictorial genres and, in the words of the Marcos Antonio de Orellana, the biographer of Valencian artists, made: "pinturas festivas, damiselas, mascarás y figures de gracejo, donaire y donosa composición". He was also a capable draughtsman, often preparing both his paintings and engravings with drawings. Like so many other Spanish artists of the time, his style as a draughtsman is much indebted to that of Corrado Giaquinto.

## RAFAEL XIMENO Y PLANES

(Valencia, 1759 -Mexico, 1807)

Painter, illustrator and draughtsman, he was the son of a silversmith. His early training in Valencia was with his maternal uncle, Luis Planes (1745-1821). He continued his training at the Academia de San Fernando, Madrid, and in Rome (1783). For the compositional study Ximeno y Planes submitted for the academy's competition, see Azcárate Luxan, Durá Ojca *et al.*, pp. ■-■. He was much influenced by Anton Rafael Mengs and Mariano Salvador Maella. In 1786, he was appointed deputy director of the Academia de San Carlos in Valencia.

In 1793, he transferred to Mexico, where he became Director General of the Academia de las Nobles Artes de San Carlos in Mexico City. He was a prolific book illustrator both in Spain and Mexico. In Mexico, he painted the frescoes in the churches of Jesús María and the Profesa, as well as the great *Assumption of the Virgin* in the cupola of the cathedral. He was also much active as a portraitist, creating the prototype of the modern portrait in Mexico, without identifying inscriptions or heraldic signs, hitherto traditional in Mexican portraiture.

## JOSÉ CAMARÓN Y MELÍA

(Segorbe, 1760 -Madrid, 1819)

Painter and draughtsman, he was the son of José Camarón Boronat and was trained at the Academia de San Carlos at Valencia, winning in 1776 the Rome prize. After his return to Valencia, he became a member of the Academia de San Carlos in 1786. Soon after, he transferred to Madrid, where he became Painter to the King and afterwards Deputy Director and, eventually, Honorary Director of the

Academia de San Fernando. He was much active in the provision of designs for the Royal Porcelain Factory at Buen Retiro, Madrid, and in the period 1807-1815, provided drawings for engraving after pictures in Spanish Royal Castles for the Real Calcografía, Madrid. In 1798, Goya painted his portrait.

### VICENTE LÓPEZ Y PORTAÑA (Valencia, 1772-Madrid, 1850)

He was taught by Antonio de Villanueva (1714-1785) at the Academia de S. Carlos in Valencia. In 1789 he won a place at the Academia de San Fernando, Madrid, then dominated by followers of Anton Raphael Mengs, including Maella (q.v.). López y Portaña returned to Valencia in 1790, later becoming vice-director of painting at the Academia de S. Carlos. In 1814, he was summoned to the court

of Ferdinand VII in Madrid as *Pintor de Cámara*. Shortly thereafter, together with Francisco de Goya, he was appointed first court painter, as successor to the aged and disgraced Maella. He spent the remainder of his long and successful career in Madrid, revered as one of the leading painters of the time.

López y Portaña was an accomplished painter in a number of different genres, which he carried out in various media – including fresco, oil and miniature painting. He was, first and foremost, however, a painter of large-scale religious works, which are notable for their intimate, if not popular feeling. He also had a flourishing practice as a portraitist, in the searching, slightly formal and realistic style of the day. Not only were the Royal family and the aristocracy his sitters, but also many of the best-known members of the professional classes. Among his best-known portraits is that of *Francisco de Goya* in the Museo del Prado, painted in 1826.

### List of works referred to in abbreviated form

Azcárate Luxan, Durá Ojca *et al.*

I. Azcárate Luxan, V. Durá Ojca, M. Pilar Fernández Agudo, E. Ribera Navarro and M. Angeles Sánchez de León Fernández, *Historia y Alegoría: Los Concursos de Pintura de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando (1753-1808)*, exh. cat., Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid, 1994.

Morales y Marin, 1996

J. L. Morales y Marin, *Mariano Salvador Maella, Vida y Obra*, Saragossa, 1996.

Pérez Sánchez, 1977

A. E. Pérez Sánchez, *Museo del Prado, Catálogo de Dibujos, III. Dibujos Españoles Siglo XVIII, C-Z*, Madrid, 1977.



1

José Camarón Boronat

*Two Studies from a Model of a Putto's Head*

Brush drawing in grey wash. 135×190 mm.

These studies were probably drawn from a plaster cast of the sort often found in artists' studios of the time.



2

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*Sacrifice of Abel: Design for the Decoration of a Pendentive?*

Pen and brown ink and grey wash, over black chalk.

150×212 mm

WM: the letters JP in a circle, surrounded with grapes.

Various calligraphic exercises are inscribed in brown ink at the right of the sheet, among these: *P*; *Pompeio*; *Lorenzo* [written twice]; *Cam*; and *antome*.

Cain and Abel, the first children of Adam and Eve,

brought offerings to Sacrifice to God. God refused Cain's sheaf of corn, while accepting Abel's sacrificial lamb, which was the best of his flock. Cain, seen on the left in the drawing, was angry at this sign of favour and later attacked Abel and killed him.

With the sheet turned upside down, there is an alternative study for the figure of Abel lightly drawn in black chalk.

See no. 5.





3

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*Abraham's Sacrifice: Design for the Decoration of a Pendentive?*

Pen and brown ink and grey wash, over black chalk.

148×210 mm, laid down on to a sheet of paper measuring 218×305 mm.

See no. 5.



4

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*Unidentified Scene from the Old Testament:*

*Design for the Decoration of a Pendentive?*

Pen and brown ink and grey wash, over black chalk.

149×210 mm

WM: a crown, partly cut away.

See no. 5.



5

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*St Martin of Tours Sharing his Cloak with a Beggar:*

*Design for the Decoration of a Pendentive?*

Pen and brown ink and brown wash, over black chalk.

159×214 mm

WM: G within a circle, partly cut away.

This and the three previous drawings seem to have been conceived with the same decoration in mind. From their shape, it would appear that the compositions were intended to decorate pendentives, though it is also possible that they were meant to fill spaces on a wall between pairs of arches.





6

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*Moses and the Brazen Serpent*

Pen and brown ink and grey wash, over black chalk.

152×210 mm

WM: fragment of a coat of arms, with indecipherable lettering within.



7

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*The Virgin Mourning, Seated in a Landscape, with  
the Crown of Thorns in her Lap and the Instruments*

*of the Passion on the Ground at her Feet*

Brush drawing in brown-grey wash, over black chalk.  
209×151 mm.



8

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

Recto: *The Virgin Mourning, Half-length: She Points One of the Nails of the Passion at her Heart, while an Angel at her Side Holds Another Nail*

Verso: *Part of the Ground plan of a Building*  
Brush drawing in grey wash over black chalk; lightly squared in black chalk. Verso: Pen and grey ink, with grey wash. 246×173 mm

WM: Strasbourg fleur-de-lys, partly cut away. This is apparently the same watermark as appears on 00

In the groundplan drawn on the verso, the position of the windows and the location of the different rooms are annotated in manuscript. Beneath is a scale in "*Palmos valencianos*". Offset on to the verso is the design of 7. Both the recto study and the following drawing appear to be alternatives for the same half-length composition of the *Virgin Mourning*.





9

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*The Virgin Mourning, Half-length*

Brush drawing in grey wash over black chalk.

292 × 196 mm

WM: escutcheon surmounted by a Maltese Cross,  
containing three letters: *RGD* (?).

The Virgin's raised right hand was presumably intended to hold one of the nails from the cross, as in the previous drawing.



10

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*The Death of St Dominic*

Brush drawing in grey-brown wash, with touches of pen and brown ink, over black chalk. A fine framing line ruled at the edges, in brown ink. 315×220 mm.

St Dominic was born in Spain of noble parentage, and the Order of the Dominicans, or Black Friars, that he founded was one of the most powerful in the country.

Surrounded by followers, the dying saint is here seen reclining on a bed holding a burning candle in one hand and gazing at a crucifix held up in front of him by one of the brothers. Above, Christ seated on a cloud, with the cross at his side, gestures towards the empty throne that awaits the saint in Heaven. In the foreground, are the saint's emblems – a dog, a globe and a flaming torch.





11

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*St Francis Receiving the Stigmata*

Brush drawing in grey wash over black chalk.

310×213 mm.

The composition is based on a well-known painting by Maella [ref. Morales y Marin, 1996, pp. ■-■].



12

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*Half-length Figure of St Joseph Supporting the Infant Christ, who Stands at his Side on a Ledge; the Infant Baptist in the Foreground Holds the Flowering Rod, the Saint's Attribute*

Brush drawing in grey wash. The original size of the

composition has been reduced at the top and bottom, as well as to the right, by outlines ruled in pen and brown ink. Holes to fix the paper steady, probably during the transference of the design, appear along the edges of the composition. 246×180 mm.



13

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*Martyr Saint Holding a Book Standing in the midst  
of the Faithful*

Brush drawing in brown and light grey-brown wash,  
over black chalk. 208×150 mm.





14

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*Jesuit Martyr Saint Kneeling on a Cloud Taken up to Heaven by Angels*

Brush drawing in grey wash. Framing lines in brown ink ruled at the edges of the composition, in pen and brown ink. 270×190 mm

WM: Strasbourg fleur-de-lys, partly cut away. This is apparently the same watermark as appears on 7.

The saint appears to be a Jesuit. In the left and right background are scenes showing the saint and his followers being put to the sword.



15

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*The Origin of Drawing*

Pen and brown ink and brown wash, over black chalk.

154×214 mm.

The subject was a favourite one in the Neo-classical period. A Corinthian maiden, Dibutade, knowing her lover was about to depart, drew the outline of his fea-

tures from the shadow cast on the wall by his head, thereby keeping for herself a memento of him. The amorous commitment of the couple for each other is signalled by the presence of Cupid, top left. In this treatment of the subject, however, Time holds his hourglass over the top of the panel on which Dibutade traces the head, perhaps hinting at the portraits ability to transcend time.





16

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*The Arrival of a Noble Couple at a Port*

Pen and brown ink and brown wash, over black chalk.

151×208 mm.

The identity of the couple remains unknown. Their entourage accompanies the pair and the fine vessel in which they have voyaged is moored behind them, forming an impressive backdrop to the scene. To the right, boatmen unload their possessions, while other boats are glimpsed in the distance. On the left, the citizens of the port greet the couple.

See no. 17.



17

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*The Arrival of a Noble Couple at a Port*

Pen and brown ink and grey wash, over black chalk;  
squared in black chalk. 150×212 mm.

A more carefully worked out variant of the previous composition, with the figures drawn to a larger scale than their counterparts in the previous drawing. The welcoming party on the left has been reduced to two

figures, while the sub-scene of the boatmen unloading to the right has been greatly simplified. The drawing is also squared for transfer, implying that it was this version of the design that was carried to the next stage in the evolution of the finished work.

This is the sort of subject that pupils in the academies of painting in both Madrid and Valencia were given as exercises in composition. The moment shown is almost certainly taken from Spanish history.





18

**Rafael Ximeno y Planes**

*Three Scenes with Figures at the Quayside of a Port*  
 Pen and brown ink and grey wash, over black chalk.  
 295×201 mm.

The three scenes appear to be alternatives for the same composition and feature a man, possibly a naval com-

mander, addressing his companions. In the composition at the bottom, as he holds forth, the man points out to sea with his left hand. Although the three scenes do not feature the noble couple seen in nos. 21 and 22, their setting and compositional treatment are similar.





19

**José Camarón y Melía**

*Indians Firing Arrows at Two Franciscans Approaching the Shore in a Boat*

Brush drawing in grey-brown wash, with touches of pen and brown ink, over black chalk. 117×202 mm.

The drawing is laid down on to an old backing with a ruled border.



20

José Camarón y Melía

*Studies from the Male Nude in Different Poses, Including  
Six of a Youth and Two of an Old Bearded Man*

Brush drawing in grey-brown wash, with touches of  
brown ink, over black chalk. 155×215 mm.

WM: VALDX PO [?]



21

**José Camarón y Melía**

*Studies from the Male Nude in Different Poses,  
Including a Man Running to the Left Wearing a Helmet  
and a Youth Lying on a Cloud; and Study for a Section  
of Ornamental Scrollwork, with Flowers*

Brush drawing in grey-brown wash, with touches of  
brown ink, over black chalk. 152×213 mm.





22

**Circle of Vicente López y Portaña**

*The Virgin, with Angels at her Feet, Standing on a Cloud in the Heavens*

Black and white chalk on light blue-grey paper.

235×165 mm.

WM: bunch of grapes, with leaves, with the inscription: 117.

Although the pose of the Virgin is reminiscent of her appearance in compositions of the “*Immacolata*”, no crescent moon is at her feet. She is presumably being borne heavenwards following her assumption from the tomb. The style reflects that of undoubtedly autograph drawings by López y Portaña done in this same technique.



23

**Circle of Vicente López y Portaña**

*Circular, Half-length Composition of St Francis Contemplating a Skull Held in his Right Hand*

Brush drawing in grey wash, over black chalk.

A circular border in pencil surrounds the composition.

250×196 mm.

WM: J. HONIG.

Inscribed in pencil, lower centre, in the artist's hand: S. Frances[co].