

This holiday season, we invite everyone to visit the far-away Holy Land in nearby New Haven, Connecticut. Journey back in time to the 1830s, to Jerusalem, Bethlehem and other holy sites, through the eyes of renowned Scottish painter David Roberts. Roberts was one of the first artists to document the Holy Land visually when that region of the Middle East became more accessible to Westerners. His meticulously rendered views of the sites, monuments and ruins of the landscape of the Bible have greatly influenced the way we envision that ancient Land. They provide a beautiful record of the geographic and spiritual center of the world's three major monotheistic religions.

The drawings of Roberts' 1838–39 tour were published as lithographs upon his return to England and are now part of the collection of Duke University's Nasher Museum of Art. The Knights of Columbus Museum will present 88 of these beautifully hand-tinted images which trace Roberts' route through Sinai, Jerusalem, Petra, the Jordan Valley, the Galilee and historic northern cities. Don't miss this exclusive 10-week showing in New England, open from November 1, 2004 to January 9, 2005.

An extraordinary topographical artist, Roberts presents a realistic, accurate rendition of the area and its inhabitants. The exquisite representation of local color, dress and customs in the images, as well as their artistic quality, technical refinement and detailed rendition of revered places, offers something for everyone. Students and aficionados of art, history, geography and the Bible will find something to admire and enjoy. It's an uplifting experience.

Knights of Columbus Museum
One State Street, New Haven CT 06511-6702
Information 203 865 0400
www.kofc.org

Museum Hours
Because of the simultaneous showing with the "Creating St. Peter's" exhibition, the museum will remain on Summer Hours through January 9, 2005.

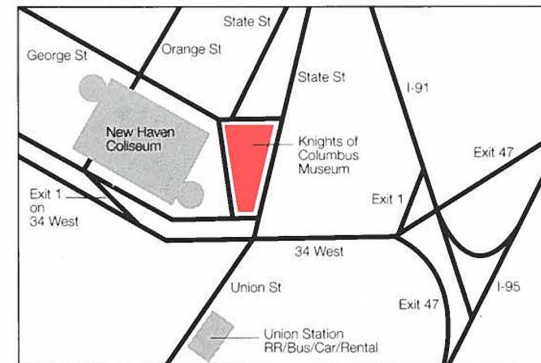
Winter Hours (Labor Day–May 1st)
Wednesday–Saturday 10am–5pm
Sunday Opens 11am

Summer Hours (May 1st–Labor Day)
Open 7 days 10am–5pm

Accessibility
The Knights of Columbus Museum is entirely wheelchair accessible and we welcome visitors with special needs.

Directions
The museum is approximately one half-mile from the Connecticut Turnpike (I-95). On I-95 take Exit 47 (Route 34 West, Downtown New Haven). On 34, immediately bear to the right; get off at Exit 1. Quick right turn on to Orange St. Next right on George St., next right on State St., bear to the left to enter the museum parking garage.

Driving South on I-91, just before the I-95 connections, take Exit 1 (Route 34 West, Downtown New Haven). On 34, immediately get off at Exit 1 and follow the same directions as above.



Cover Image:
Jaffa, Looking South
After completing their pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1838, Polish Jews await departure at the port of Jaffa which is now part of modern Tel-Aviv.

Jerusalem and the Holy Land Rediscovered

The Prints of David Roberts (1796–1864)

Knights of
Columbus
Museum





The Golden Gate
Walled up by the Muslims, tradition holds that Jesus entered Jerusalem through this gate.

Hebron
One of the oldest cities in the world, Hebron is the site of many historic and Biblical events, and the royal city of King David.

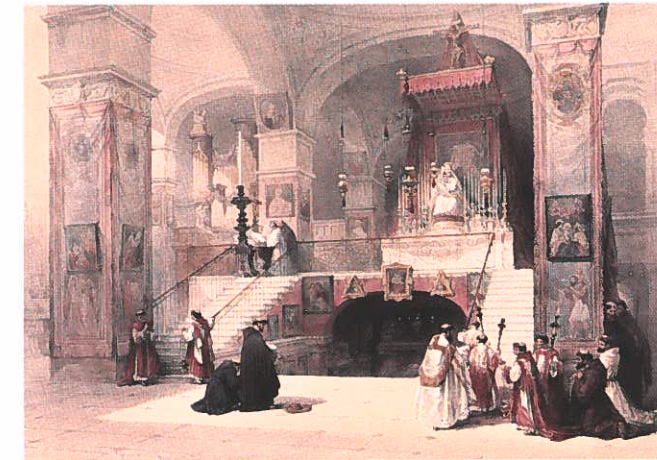


The Church of the Purification
Jerusalem's 1830s skyline shows two Islamic mosques. To the right is the Mosque of Omar, built on the ruins of the ancient Jewish Temple. At the left is the Mosque El-Aksa, believed to be the Christian Church of the Purification built in honor of Mary.

Mar Saba
Southeast of Jerusalem, the Monastery of St. Saba is dramatically carved into the steep walls of a gorge for protection against marauders.



The Site of Petra
Artist David Roberts was spellbound by the remarkable panorama of the ruins of the city of Petra, located near Mount Hor. He exquisitely detailed many of the buildings carved out of the cliffs.



Church of the Annunciation
Lavish interior of the church built in Nazareth, on the site where the Scriptures say that the birth of Jesus was announced to Mary.

Jerusalem and the Holy Land Rediscovered

The Prints of David Roberts (1796–1864)

A loan exhibition from the
Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University



David Roberts Biography

Sarah Schroth and Faith Tomases

David Roberts is rare among artists in that he achieved recognition for his talent and the financial rewards that go with it during his lifetime. He received international fame and fortune through private clients who commissioned pieces, and by the trading of his work among collectors. The publication of his hand-tinted lithographic views of the Holy Land was the talk of the town in London and gained for him a great deal of visibility, along with some significant patrons, including Queen Victoria. The volumes have since been called a “best seller of the 19th century.”

Roberts came from a humble background and was largely self-taught. He was born in 1796 in Stockbridge, Scotland, near Edinburgh, the eldest son of a cobbler. As a boy he started sketching the castles, churches and ruins in the area, including the famous cathedral and monastery in his mother’s native St. Andrews. Very early he developed his pattern of rendering a site from every possible angle.

Although he showed a natural talent and was encouraged, the family’s poor economic circumstances prohibited their giving him a formal artistic education. At the age of twelve, Roberts was apprenticed to a local decorative house painter who provided him with his only real instruction. From him he mastered the then popular trompe l’oeil effect for marble and wood.

After seven years, with this experience in rendering architecture and building materials, he found work as

a scene painter for a local traveling theater company. The demands of working on the road in that position — creating large canvases quickly in makeshift studios that were assembled and broken down with great frequency, and keeping meticulous records — were skills that would serve him later during his formal travels. That job was followed by positions at the Royal Theater of Glasgow and the Royal Theater of Edinburgh, and finally, about 1822, London’s Drury Lane and prestigious Covent Garden.

Commercial theater allowed Roberts to deal with fantasy and consider the exoticism of distant lands: *Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves* was an early production that gave him his first exposure to the costumes and architecture of Baghdad. Traveling theater also allowed him to develop his expertise in two of the factors that contributed to his later success. First, topographical painting in the field required great speed due to rapidly changing light conditions and the short stops of his itinerary. Second, good set design required a sense of public taste and the ability to provide “strong dramatic effects that would give audiences immediate delight.”

David Roberts’ first love was sketching out of doors. He wrote during his time with the strolling theater: “Day after day I made the most careful drawings of every buttress, canopy bar and crocket, with all a lover’s first love and devotion. Is there an old abbey or village church within a dozen miles that I have not visited?”

It was during this period, in 1820, that Roberts married Margaret McLachlan. The marriage did not last long but did produce his daughter, Christine, to whom he was devoted. Roberts maintained close contact with her throughout his life and she later organized her father's work and copied his travel journals.

In the 1820s, topographical painting, where the artist was more concerned with describing landscape in terms of what he saw and the specific details of the physical place, rather than an idealized version or emotional response to them, became very popular. Roberts, who objectively recorded a scene without spiritual or theological reflection, naturally fit into this artistic camp.

At the same time, interest in the Near East was growing among Europeans and Americans. The region was becoming more accessible because of the decline of the Ottoman Empire, Napoleon's military exploits, the colonization and expansion of the British Empire, and the West's commercial entry into the area. Industrialization fueled people's desire to escape, through pictures, to undiscovered, exotic territories. In addition, fascination with the world of Antiquity motivated many Westerners to make their own pilgrimages and the area became a destination for tourists, artists and scholars.

These trends provided patrons for realistic painting and a need for the artist to leave England for more exotic locales. After showing his first oil painting at the British Institution in 1824, Roberts made his first foreign trip to France that same year. The fruit of that journey produced "View of Rouen Cathedral," which was the first picture he exhibited at the British Royal Academy in 1826.

With the critical praise and positive public response he received, Roberts saw that this arena of studio painting was more lucrative than set design, and shifted his professional focus. He mingled with the leading circle of British painters of the day, including J.M.W. Turner and John Constable, and was a founding member of the Society of British Artists, serving as that body's chairman in 1830. He subsequently made many trips to Europe and developed sketches in France, Germany, the Netherlands, and his native Scotland that served as models for later paintings.

Based on the successful reception of the work from his early Continental travels, Roberts spent 1832–33 recording the relatively undocumented countryside of Spain. Here he was introduced to Islamic culture, gypsy costumes and the architecture of the East. He recorded Moorish temples as well as Christian churches.

Although he had created finished watercolors and oil paintings, he decided to produce *Picturesque Sketches of Spain* in the new technique of lithography (writing on stone), that had been invented in Germany in 1798.

The book was so well received in 1837—over 1,200 sets were sold in the first two months—that Roberts was elected an Associate Member of the prestigious British Royal Academy in 1838. It also generated the financing needed for his trip to the Middle East.

Following months of planning, Roberts set out for Egypt, the first artist to travel there independently, without a patron. Even with official letters of introduction from the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Consuls of Egypt and Syria, the political conditions in the region required that he travel dressed as an Arab and with armed escort. One of his objectives was to improve on the visual records and documentation of Napoleon's French engineers, whose 1809–1822 surveys were felt to contain some inaccuracies.

He arrived in the Middle East in August of 1838 and, starting in Egypt, spent several weeks in Cairo. There, he was one of the first Western artists allowed to work inside a Mosque and could do so on the condition that his brushes not contain bristles made of hog or boar's hair.

The journey totaled eleven months, taking him through Egypt, across the Sinai Desert into Petra in Jordan, up the entire length of Israel (then Palestine), and ending in Syria (now also Lebanon), through several mountain ranges, two major deserts, three Arab countries and a few encounters with the Plague. He experienced the rigors of the climate, hostile peoples, theft, and severe fever. He witnessed first hand the actual locations of many of the events described in both the Old and New Testaments, as well as the ruins of several ancient civilizations including the Greek, Roman, Assyrian, Nabatean, Phoenician, and Egyptian. And he visited every major biblical site, comprehensively sketching important ones from several vantage points.

Roberts returned to England in May 1839 with a vast body of work that included three full sketchbooks and some 272 watercolors. After much searching, he entered into a relationship with publisher Francis Graham Moon, who paid him 3,000 pounds sterling for copyright to the work. This amount was not large given the extent and cost of his travels and the time involved in publishing the drawings.

Roberts and Moon agreed that the work would best be reproduced as lithographs and required the skill of the

leading reproductive lithographer of the day and specialist in the tinted lithograph, Belgian Louis Haghe (1806–85). Then 34, Haghe had come to Britain several years earlier. He worked from Roberts' sketches and detailed written notes on the light, color, terrain, local customs and dress.

The final prints were passed through the etched lithographic plates twice: once to capture the black and white lines, and a second time to apply the color tints. They were then finished by hand with the rich, saturated colors used on the figures and costumes. This process, although then the cutting edge of lithographic technology, was very laborious and the two men worked together for eight years to prepare the art for publication.

The completed folios, which appeared 1842–48, were bound in three volumes. There were errors in the dates listed for each print and they did not reflect the trip's true chronology. This was due to various factors including poor record keeping, lapses in memory, and the time involved in the project. The works from the first part of Roberts' trip, in Egypt, were released around the same time but under a separate title.

Shortly after the publication of *The Holy Land, Syria, Idumea, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia*, in 1844, at the age of 48, David Roberts was elected a full member of the Royal Academy. In the years following, he received numerous other awards, most notably the International Exposition in Paris of 1855. He was kept busy with a significant number of commissions from customers including the Queen and members of the nobility. He made other topographical working journeys, primarily to Italy and Northern Europe, and most of his work was sold after completion.

Despite his success, topographical painters such as Roberts did have their critics. Some people held the genre in low esteem, along with still life painting, because the subject was provided for the artist, not invented by him. Others said his work lacked a spiritual quality. But what made Roberts' images so amazing to his audience and why he had such great impact at that time (as well as today) was that, since the 16th century, visual representation of the Holy Land, its people and events, had been embellished and idealized. The barren desert shown by topographical painters shocked viewers who were accustomed to the Italian Renaissance and Southern Baroque religious paintings with their lush green foliage and colorful landscapes. Interestingly, the daguerreotype, forerunner of photography, was introduced in France while Roberts was on this trip.

When he died of a stroke in 1864 at the age of 68, David Roberts was described as a "brave and hearty artist... (who) earned a star on the art historical map as both the *first* professional artist of talent to render the Holy Land visible and one of the Near East's *last* painters in the topographical tradition."