

	<p>Object: King Roderick</p> <p>Museum: Kunsthalle Bremen Am Wall 207 28195 Bremen (04 21) 3 29 08-0 info@kunsthalle-bremen.de</p> <p>Collection: Von der Romantik zum Impressionismus, Gemälde und Skulpturen</p> <p>Inventory number: 178-1914/3</p>
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Description

In 1833, King Louis Philippe held a costume ball, to which all of Paris was invited—with the exception of artists. Consequently, the poet Alexandre Dumas organized a sort of counter-celebration of his own, asking his famous artist friends to paint the festive rooms with scenes from contemporary Romantic literature. Eugène Delacroix did not show up until the morning of the celebration, by which time everyone else had long since finished their decorations. But in only “two or three hours”—using no models and freely improvising—he painted the equestrian portrait of legendary King Roderick, much to the admiration of his fellow artists. Thus, he proved his artistic prowess as “Rubens,” as Dumas reports in his memoirs. The Roderick legend had come down through history in the *Crónica del Rey don Roderigo*, written around 1430. The legend had been taken up again in 1811 by Sir Walter Scott in his *Vision of Don Roderick*, and may have been used by Delacroix as a literary source. Delacroix presents the fate of Roderick as the antithesis of the traditional portraiture of rulers astride their steeds. Mortally wounded in battle against the Arabs, Roderick slumps down on his horse, which stumbles over a fallen soldier. His crown and scepter lie on the ground. Roderick’s defeat led to the fall of the Visigothic empire in AD 711.

Basic data

Material/Technique:	Tempera on pieces of paper glued together on canvas
Measurements:	192.0 x 95.0 cm

Events

Painted	When	1833
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Who	Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863)
Where	

Keywords

- Painting