WHAT A MADNESS!

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: DISASTERS OF WAR (PRINTS Y DRAWINGS, 1810-1815) (68/82)



DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	Ca. 1820 - 1823
DIMENSIONES	160 x 220 mm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Etching, lavis and burin
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Undisputed work
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	22 Dec 2010 / 24 May 2023
INVENTARIO	836 225

INSCRIPCIONES

68 (in the top left-hand corner)

HISTORIA

See *Sad forebodings of what is to come*.

In the second state proof, touches of burin can be seen on the monk's left sandal.

The title of the print was handwritten by Goya on the first and only series known to us at the time of its production, which the painter gave to his friend Agustín Ceán Bermúdez. Thus the title was subsequently engraved on the plate without any modification from Ceán Bermúdez's copy for the first edition of the *Disasters of War* published by the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando in Madrid in 1863.

A *preparatory drawing* is kept in the Prado Museum.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

In the foreground, Goya depicts a figure dressed as a friar, holding a plate in his lap and a spoon in his hand. He is surrounded by objects; on the right are sacred images, votive offerings, holy cards, etc., while on the left are a number of masks. In the background, in the darkness, several hooded figures, perhaps other friars like himself, are in procession.

This engraving seems to illustrate the expression "eating the soup" or, in other words, living off the backs of others. The image of the crouching monk serves as a mechanism for Goya to censure certain sectors of the Church which, by manipulating popular devotion, obtained certain economic and material benefits that enabled them to improve their living conditions. In this way, the group of objects with religious content can be related to the masks on the left of the print, as the Aragonese painter is establishing a comparison between the two groups of objects. The sacral objects used by the monk are like the masks with which he characterises himself in order to obtain his own interest.

It is also possible that the painter was aware of the part of Quevedo's text *Dreams* in which he says: "The faces they had, and they were astonished that they had so many to spare, having lived shamelessly". In *What a madness!* he was thus referring to the shameless way in which certain members of the clergy lived at the time.

At the same time, in this engraving Goya criticises the proliferation of false healers who promised help or salvation in exchange for a financial reward, as well as the circulation of apocryphal legends. This aspect had also been highlighted by Antonio Bernabeu in his work *Spain's Fortunate Spain through the Life of the Constitution and the Death of the Inquisition* written in 1820 (National Library of Madrid, R 60.122), which forms part of a current of anticlerical literature that sought to demythologise the Church. In his work Antonio Bernabeu says the following about the usefulness of false healers and the circulation of apocryphal legends: "(...) either to attract offerings with the opinion of miraculous cures, or to preserve acquired goods".

For his part, Jesusa Vega draws a parallel between this print by Goya and what Martínez de la Rosa (Granada, 1787-Madrid, 1862) points out in his work Lo que se puede un empleo (1820): "The strong desire to present in the theatre a certain class of hypocrites who under colour of religion oppose the beneficial reforms among us stimulated me to undertake, as a mere pastime, the composition of this comedy".

What a madness! is the third of the prints in the *Emphatic Caprices* in which certain religious practices are criticised and in which the retrograde nature of Ferdinand VII's reign is questioned in a hidden way.

CONSERVACIÓN

The plate is in the National Chalcography (cat. 319).

EXPOSICIONES

Goya. Das Zeitalter der Revolucionen. Kunst um 1800 (1980 – 1981)
Hamburger Kunsthalle Hamburg 1980
cat. 94

Goya y el espíritu de la Ilustración
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1988
from October 6th to December 18th 1988. Exhibited also at Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, January 18th to March 26th 1989; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Nueva York, May 9th to July 16th 1989, Madrid curator Manuela B. Mena Marqués, scientific directors Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez and Eleanor A. Sayre
cat. 155

Francisco Goya. Sein leben im spiegel der graphik. Fuendetodos 1746-1828 Bordeaux. 1746-1996
Galerie Kornfeld Bern 1996
from November 21st 1996 to January 1997
cat. 158

Francisco Goya. Capricci, follie

Goya et la modernité

Francisco Goya. Capricci, follie e disastri della guerra
San Donato Milanese 2000
Opere grafiche della Fondazione Antonio Mazzotta
cat. 148

Goya et la modernité
Pinacothèque de Paris París 2013
from October 11st 2013 to March 16th 2014
cat. 107

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1918
Blass S.A.

Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.
HARRIS, Tomás
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1964
Bruno Cassirer

Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
cat. 1110
1970
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A solution to the enigma of Goya's emphatic caprices nº 65-80 of The Disasters of War
Apollo
GLENDINNING, Nigel
pp.186-191
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1978

Goya y el espíritu de la Ilustración
PÉREZ SÁNCHEZ, Alfonso E. y SAYRE, Eleanor A. (directores) and MENA, Manuela B. (comisaria)
pp.434-436, cat. 155
1988
Museo del Prado

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Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca Nacional

Goya en tiempos de guerra
MENA MARQUÉS, Manuela B.
p.335, fig. 112.1
2008
Museo Nacional del Prado

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA, Wilfredo
p. 153
2013
Pinacoteca de París

Goya. In the Norton Simon Museum
WILSON BAREAU, Juliet
pp. 114-151
2016
Norton Simon Museum

ENLACES EXTERNOS