THE WAY IS HARD! (DURO ES EL PASO!)

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: DISASTERS OF WAR (PRINTS Y DRAWINGS, 1810-1815) (14/82)

DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	Ca. 1810 - 1815
DIMENSIONES	143 x 168 mm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Etching, burnished lavis, drypoint and burin
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Undisputed work
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	29 Nov 2010 / 02 Jun 2023
INVENTARIO	836 225

INSCRIPCIONES

23 (lower left-hand corner of plate).

HISTORIA

See*Sad presentiments of what must come to pass.*

There exist two state proofs for this etching. The first of these shows some drypoint work on the right leg of the hanged man closest to the viewer. The second proof has some burnished lavis extending up to the edge of the plate.

The title was handwritten by Goya on the first and only print run that we know to have been made at the time, and which the painter gave to his friend Agustín Ceán Bermúdez. The title was engraved on to the copperplate at a later date, and no other modifications were made to the image for the first edition of the *Disasters of War*, which was printed by the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, Madrid, in 1863.

There is a *preparatory drawing* in the Prado Museum in Madrid.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

Three executioners are leading a man, his hands tied, to the gallows, where they are helping him to shuffle backwards up the ladder. The condemned man is looking down at the ground, his head slumped forward, as if pleading for mercy. At his side, a monk is attempting to comfort him. As he speaks, he raises his hand, the index finger pointing towards the sky, suggesting that he is perhaps explaining what awaits the man after death. The prisoner is not paying the monk much attention but one of the executioners is turning his head to look at the speaker.

Behind this group are two recently hanged men, their lifeless bodies swinging to and fro. On the right-hand side, a little further back, several men are getting another prisoner ready for the gallows. Goya has in this way set before us the complete sequence of a hanging, from the preparation of the prisoner through to the moment when the execution has taken place.

Eleanor Sayre, Mélida, Brunet and the Count of La Viñaza all agree that this scene depicts a real-life event, the executions that were carried out in Valencia in 1808, when the Spanish murdered 300 French residents accused of collaborating with the enemy. However, Dérozier believes that this etching may in fact show the execution of Spaniards accused of collaborating with the French.

Goya may have drawn inspiration from the print entitled *The Hanging (La Pendaison)* by Jacques Callot, number 11 in his series *Les Misères et les Malheurs de la guerre*, published in 1633. In that print we see a tree in the centre of the scene and, dangling from its wide leafy branches, a large number of hanged men. Crowds of attentive onlookers bear witness to the scene. In his print, however, Goya has opted for a scene on a more intimate scale, and the execution he depicts does not appear to be a public one.

This etching can be related to many others in the series, such as no. 31, *That's tough!*, no. 32, *Why?*, no. 33, *What more can one do?*, no. 34, *On account of a knife*, no. 35, *One can't tell why*, no. 36, *Not in this case either*, no. 37, *This is worse* and no. 39, *Great deeds! With dead bodies!*, all of which deal with capital punishment. Mention should also be made of *The Hanged Monk* and the story of the murder of the husband of María Vicenta Mendieta, as told within the series of paintings belonging to the Marquis of La Romana, which concludes with the execution of the murderess.

In around 1806 Andrés Rossi (1771-?) made a print depicting the execution of Pedro Piñero "el maragato" (National Library, Madrid). That work displays some interesting similarities with this one by Goya. In the image by Rossi we see the prisoner sitting on a ladder while the noose is tied around his neck, just as in print no. 14 of Goya's *Disasters of War*. Goya must have known of this execution since he himself produced a series of paintings telling the story of "El maragato".

Throughout his artistic career, and in particular in this series of prints, Goya showed his repugnance for capital punishment. He was probably familiar with Cesare Beccaria's (Milan, 1738-Milan, 1794) text on the subject, *On Crimes and Punishments* (*Dei delitti e delle pene*)

(1764). In this treatise, the Italian author called for the abolition of the death penalty and proposed measures to humanize the punishments employed in prisons. He believed in the creation of policies focused on preventing crime rather than on dishing out - sometimes inhumane - punishment.

CONSERVACIÓN

The etching plate is conserved in the National Chalcography Museum (cat. 265).

The copperplate for this etching reused half of the plate which Goya used for his Landscape with Cliff and Waterfall

EXPOSICIONES

De grafiek van Goya
Rijksmuseum Rijksprentenkabinet Amsterdam 1970
from November 13th 1970 to January 17th 1971
cat. 63

Goya. Das Zeitalter der Revolucionen. Kunst um 1800 (1980 – 1981)
Hamburger Kunsthalle Hamburg 1980
cat. 75

Francisco de Goya
Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996
exhibition celebrated from September 22nd to November 17th.
cat. 14

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. 102

Ydioma universal: Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional
Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 1996
from September 19th to December 15th 1996
cat. 203

Francisco Goya. Capricci, follie e disastri della guerra
San Donato Milanese 2000
Opere grafiche della Fondazione Antonio Mazzotta
cat. 94

Goya. Opera grafica
Pinacoteca del Castello di San Giorgio Legnano 2006
exhibition celebrated from December 16th 2006 to April 1st 2007
p. 58

Goya en tiempos de guerra
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 2008
consultant editor Manuela B. Mena Marqués, from April 14th to July 13th 2008
cat. 93

Goya et la modernité
Pinacothèque de Paris París 2013
from October 11st 2013 to March 16th 2014
cat. 53

BIBLIOGRAFÍA

Goya, grabador
BERUETE Y MONET, Aureliano de
cat. 116
1918
Blass S.A.

Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.
HARRIS, Tomás
cat. 134
1964
Bruno Cassirer

Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
cat. 1013
1970
Office du livre

Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional
SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)
cat. 204
1996
Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca Nacional

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA, Wilfredo
p. 126
2013
Pinacoteca de París

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

ENLACES EXTERNOS