GREAT DEEDS! WITH DEAD BODIES! (GRANDE HAZAÑA! CON MUERTOS!)

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: DISASTERS OF WAR (PRINTS Y DRAWINGS, 1810-1815) (39/82)

DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	Ca. 1812 - 1815
DIMENSIONES	156 x 208 mm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Etching, lavis and drypoint
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Undisputed work
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	08 Dec 2010 / 24 May 2023
INVENTARIO	836 225

INSCRIPCIONES

Goya (lower left-hand corner), 51 (lower left-hand corner of the plate)

HISTORIA

See *Sad presentiments of what must come to pass* (*Tristes presentimientos de lo que ha de acontecer*).

The title was handwritten on the print by Goya in the first and only series that is known to have been printed at the time the works were created, which the artist gave to his friend

Agustín Ceán Bermúdez. Therefore, the title was etched into the plate at a later date and left unchanged as of the first edition of the *Disasters of War* printed by the San Fernando Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Madrid in 1863, after the printing of the series in the possession of Ceán Bermúdez.

There are no surviving preparatory drawings for this print.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

Great deeds! With dead bodies! is the last image in the series *The Disasters of War* in which Goya depicts a scene of terrible violence. In the middle of a wasteland, three corpses have been tied to a tree. The figure suspended upside down has had his arms and head cut off. The head has been nailed to a branch, while his missing limbs hang from the tree, tied at the wrists. Next to the body is another that has been tied with a rope at the waist, arms behind his back. On the left is a third corpse whose head rests on the floor while his legs have been tied to the tree trunk.

This print is clearly related to print no. 33, *What more can be done? (Qué hai que hacer mas?)* in which soldiers dismember a corpse and print no. 37, *This is worse (Esto es peor)*, showing a mutilated body impaled on a tree. These prints highlight the common practice during war of mutilating corpses to strip them of any dignity, a method that was applied particularly in the case of traitors. Accusing someone of treason was extremely serious, and those who pointed the finger at another who they suspected of being a traitor had to be very sure of their grounds for the accusation. A decree dated 3 February 1809 regulating the punishments meted out for disturbances (*"Penas sobre bullicios y conmociones"*) stated that whoever accused a person of being a traitor had to prove it: if they could not, they could be subject to the punishments stipulated by law, which could even include the death penalty.

Goya was likely to have known about many sentences handed down to traitors, some of which would have been featured in the press at the time. One of the most debated cases was that of General Benito de San Juan, who led the Spanish troops during the Battle of Somosierra on 30 November 1808. The general retreated to Talavera where he was killed on 7 December 1808 by various soldiers who accused him of being a traitor. Not content with his death, the soldiers also stripped the body and mutilated it in a public act.

This print portrays a kind of macabre art work in the middle of nature, a curious composition in which the human remains have been distributed over a tree with almost aesthetic criteria. Despite the fact that the landscape that the painter depicts is an extremely tormented one, it also has a certain beauty. The artist depicts the mutilated body's anatomy with care in a marked classical style: the body that hangs upside down is reminiscent of the sketches Goya produced based on the *Belvedere Torso* in his *Italian Sketchbook*.

As in the case of other works in the series, the title of this print is critical. Goya exclaims *"Great deeds!"* but questions the merit of such a brutal gesture.

CONSERVACIÓN

The plate is stored in the National Chalcography (cat. 290) .

EXPOSICIONES

Goya. Drawings, Etchings and Lithographs
Goya. Drawings London 1954
from June 12th to July 25th 1954
cat. 61

Goya and his times
The Royal Academy of Arts London 1963
cat. 66
cat. 244

Goya. Das Zeitalter der Revolucionen. Kunst um 1800 (1980 – 1981)
Hamburger Kunsthalle Hamburg 1980
cat. 88

Goya y el espíritu de la

Francisco de Goya

Francisco de Goya: Maleri,

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. 89

Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996
exhibition celebrated from September 22nd to November 17th.
cat. 39

Tegning, Grafikk
Nasjonalgalleriet Oslo 1996
from 10th to April 14th 1996
cat. 142

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. 125

Francisco Goya. Capricci, follie e disastri della guerra
San Donato Milanese 2000
Opere grafiche della Fondazione Antonio Mazzotta
cat. 119

Goya. Opera grafica
Pinacoteca del Castello di San Giorgio Legnano 2006
exhibition celebrated from December 16th 2006 to April 1st 2007
p. 70

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. 99

Goya et la modernité
Pinacothèque de Paris París 2013
from October 11st 2013 to March 16th 2014
cat.78

Goya: Order and disorder
Museum of Fine Arts Boston 2014
cat. 2

Madrid 2019
cat. 126

Expérience Goya
Lille 2021
cat. 94

BIBLIOGRAFÍA

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

Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.
HARRIS, Tomás
cat. 159
1964
Bruno Cassirer

Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
cat. 1055
1970
Office du livre

Goya y el espíritu de la Ilustración
PÉREZ SÁNCHEZ, Alfonso E. y SAYRE, Eleanor A. (directores) and MENA, Manuela B. (comisaria)
cat. 89
1988
Museo del Prado

Goya. Arte e condizione umana
PAZ, Alfredo de
lam. 198
1990
Liguori editore

Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional
SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)
cat. 244
1996
Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca Nacional

El Libro de los Desastres de la Guerra
BLAS BENITO, Javier and MATILLA, José Manuel
II, pp. 80-82
2000
Museo del Prado

Goya. Los desastres de la guerra, l
GALLEGO GARCÍA, Raquel
pp. 35, 38
2011
La Central

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA, Wilfredo
p. 139
2013
Pinacoteca de París

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

MATILLA, José Manuel y MENA, Manuela B. (comisarios)
p. 204
2019
Museo Nacional del Prado

Expérience Goya (cat. expo)
COTENTIN, Régis
pp. 169-170
2021
Réunion des Musées Nationaux

ENLACES EXTERNOS