THE FLIGHT TO EGYPT (LA HUIDA A EGIPTO)

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: RELIGIOUS SUBJECTS (PRINTS AND DRAWINGS, 1774-1782) (1/3)

DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA	1771 - 1774
DIMENSIONES	130 x 95 mm
TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE	Etching
RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA	Undisputed work
FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN	07 Nov 2010 / 12 Sep 2024
INVENTARIO	836 225

INSCRIPCIONES

Goya inv.t et fecit (lower right-hand corner).

HISTORIA

This print is part of a small series made up of three etchings and two preparatory drawings that Francisco de Goya worked on throughout the 1770s and into the early 1780s.

Seven or eight copies of this print have survived, all of them sharing the same characteristics, suggesting that they were a small print run rather than state proofs.

In 2024, the Spanish State acquired a copy of this print that has become part of the

collection of the National Prado Museum.

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

This set of images by Goya, all on religious themes, consists of three prints, *The Flight to Egypt*, *Saint Isidore the Labourer* and *Saint Francis of Paola*, and the two preparatory drawings for these last two prints. The fact that they were executed quite some time apart reveals the progress made by the painter, thanks both to his increasing maturity as an artist and to his gradually growing knowledge of the technique of etching.

It is likely that Goya's first foray into printmaking was made at the workshop of José Luzán (Zaragoza, 1710-Zaragoza, 1785), although we can safely assume that his earlier stay in Italy (1769-1771) would have given him the opportunity to see the work of Battista Piranesi (Mogliano Veneto, Treviso, 1720-Rome, 1778), who had a studio permanently set up on Rome's Via Felice, now the Via Sistina. The central location of this space - very close to the Piazza di Spagna, a place well known to the Spanish artists training in Rome - makes it fairly likely that the young Goya would have been able to see in person the working methods of the Venetian artist. Equally active on the Roman scene at the time were two other printmakers: Domenico Cunego (Verona, 1724/1725-Rome, 1803) and Giuseppe Vasi (Corleone, Sicily, 1710-Rome, 1782), with whom Piranesi himself had trained. It was almost certainly this creative atmosphere that inspired Goya's first prints, which he started to work on soon after returning to Spain, in the second half of 1771. As such, we can state that the present religious images represent the genesis of Goya's graphical work, and his first contact with the technique of etching, which he was to work with throughout his life, exploring the technical and the expressive possibilities that the medium had to offer.

We do not know why Goya decided to make this collection of religious images. It could be that he decided to do some work on commission for one of the fraternities, churches or convents that often requested these kinds of devotional images, which they later sold in their sacristies and entranceways. This would have made a sensible working arrangement for Goya at the beginning of his career, since devotional images like these were always in demand. If he had continued in this line of work, Goya would have been able to gain a foothold in a market which was giving work to many of the first artists who had trained at Madrid's Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando.

The Flight to Egypt, the first known print by Goya, is signed by the artist in the Italian style, thus reinforcing the suspicion that it may have been executed during his stay in that country, just as Harris proposes. In the work, the Virgin is sat sideways on a donkey, holding the Infant Christ in her arms. Despite being positioned in the centre of the scene, the child is shown in shadow. Saint Joseph, in profile, is holding the donkey's halter as he looks up at Mary. Goya uses only a few lines to construct the figures, leaving both the drapery and the faces of the figures only superficially finished. The shadows and the body of the animal are created using a grid-like pattern of short, confident - though somewhat regular and monotonous - lines, and hardly any reference is made to the landscape in which the scene is taking place. The clumsiness of Goya's technique betrays his inexperience and well as how difficult he has found it to give the figures any real sense of volume. This first print epitomizes his status as an apprentice printmaker.

The image is imbued with the serene classicism of the paintings of Carlo Maratti (Camerano, Ancona, 1625-Rome, 1713), who tackled the theme of *The Flight to Egypt* for one of his very first commissions in the city, in the church of *Sant'Isidoro* in Rome (Ca. 1652), situated near to the Piazza Barberini. Although Goya has a different take on the scene, the figure of the Virgin and the rendering of the clothes worn by the figures, with their large folds of fabric, have

certain parallels with the work by Maratti. Similarly, Wilson-Bareau points out the analogies between the classicism of the characters who appear in the frescoes at the Carthusian monastery of *Aula Dei*, in Zaragoza, and the figures in this image by Goya.

This same theme also interested one of Goya's contemporaries, the painter José del Castillo (Madrid, 1737-Madrid, 1793), who in 1784 made a print copy of a painting by Luca Giordano (Naples, 1634-Naples, 1705) which, as he himself tells us at the bottom of the image, used to hang in Buen Retiro Palace.

EXPOSICIONES

Exposición de la obra grabada de Goya
Sociedad Española de Amigos del Arte Madrid 1928
catalogue by Miguel Velasco Aguirre
cat. 1

Grabados y dibujos de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional
Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 1946
catalogue Elena Páez Ríos
cat. A 1

Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, 1746-1828: restrospective
Musée Jacquemart-André París 1961
cat. 179

De grafiek van Goya
Rijksmuseum Rijksprentenkabinet Amsterdam 1970
from November 13th 1970 to January 17th 1971
cat. 1

Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional. Exposición de grabados y dibujos en el sesquicentenario de su muerte
Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 1978
May - June 1978
cat. A 1

Goya. Das Zeitalter der Revolucionen. Kunst um 1800 (1980 – 1981)
Hamburger Kunsthalle Hamburg 1980
p. 258, *cat.* 212

Goya. El Capricho y la Invención. Cuadros de gabinete, bocetos y miniaturas
Museo Nacional del Prado Madrid 1993
from November 18th 1993 to February 15th 1994. Exhibited also at the Royal Academy of Arts, London, March 18th to June 12th 1994 and The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, July 16th to October 16th 1994, consultant editors Manuela B. Mena Marqués and Juliet Wilson-Bareau
cat. 1

Ydioma universal: Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional
Biblioteca Nacional Madrid 1996
from September 19th to December 15th 1996
cat. 104

El gabinete de Ceán Bermúdez. Dibujos, estampas y manuscritos de la Biblioteca Nacional
Museo-Casa Natal de Jovellanos Gijón 1997
p. 96, *cat.* 54

Goya artista de su tiempo y Goya artista único
The National Museum of Western Art Tokyo 1999
from December 1st to July 3th 1999
pp. 70-71, *cat.* 3

Goya y Zaragoza (1746-1775). Sus raíces aragonesas
Museo Goya. Colección Ibercaja Zaragoza 2015
cat. 16

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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

Goya: Los aguafuertes
Antonio F. Fuster
pp. 23-24
1964
Goya Hispano-Inglesa de Reaseguros, S.A.

Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya
GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet
cat. 52
1970
Office du livre

L'opera pittorica completa di Goya
ANGELIS, Rita de
p. 10, fig. 1
1974
Rizzoli

Goya's prints: the Tomás Harris Collection in the British Museum
WILSON-BAREU, Juliet
1981
British Museum Press

Museo del Prado. Catálogo de las Estampas

Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional

Goya, obra gráfica completa
CASARIEGO, Rafael

VEGA, Jesusa
1992
Museo del Prado y Ministerio de Cultura

SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)
cat. 1
1996
Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca Nacional

2004
Casariego

Goya y Zaragoza (1746-1775). Sus raíces aragonesas
MENA MARQUÉS, Manuela B. et al.
pp. 138-139
2015
Fundación Goya en Aragón, Ibercaja y Gobierno de Aragón

PALABRAS CLAVE

SAN JOSÉ EGIPTO HUIDA VIRGEN MARÍA NIÑO JESÚS

ENLACES EXTERNOS