

TANTALUM

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: CAPRICHOS (PRINTS AND DRAWINGS, 1797-1799) (9/85)



DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA

Ca. 1797 - 1799

DIMENSIONES

210 x 152 mm

TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE

Etching and burnished aquatint

RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA

Undisputed work

FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN

21 Nov 2010 / 29 May 2024

INVENTARIO

836 225

INSCRIPCIONES

Tántalo. (at the bottom)

9. (in the upper right-hand corner)

HISTORIA

See *Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, Painter.*

In the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York there is a proof of state before the handwriting, on which is handwritten and crossed out *So that you try?* underneath it reads, *Tantalum.*

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

ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

A man stands in front of a pyramid of which we can only see the base and in which the ashlar that make up the pyramid have been delimited. He clasps his hands in front of his face in a gesture of supplication, while holding the body of a woman on his knees. The woman's torso is uncovered and her breasts are visible, her head is thrown back and her face appears inanimate.

This engraving is somewhat brighter than other prints from *Los Caprichos*. Goya used aquatint to create the surface of the pyramid, while the male figure's clothing is rendered by etching. One of the main points of light in this picture is the young woman's body, which is partially uncovered at the chest and leg. For this part of the woman's anatomy, Goya used an aquatint so pale and delicately burnished that it is barely visible in the earlier, more inky prints.

The title of this print is an obvious allusion to Greek mythology, in which Tantalus was a son of Zeus and the Oceanid Pluto, who was invited to a banquet by the gods, to whom he responded with another invitation. For them he butchered and cooked his own son, Pelops, which earned him an eternal punishment consisting of lying in a lake with chin-deep water under a tree full of fruit that was removed from his reach whenever he wished to eat. In many cases, scholars have seen in this mythological character the rejection of the Olympian religion of human sacrifice, which was carried out especially in the early cults.

The manuscripts we have preserved explain this engraving by Goya; Ayala's says that "if he were more gallant, she would revive. This happens to old men who marry wenches". In the manuscript of the Prado Museum we can read about this engraving that "if he were more gallant and less fastidious, she would come back to life". Slightly more extensive is the explanation given in the manuscript of the Biblioteca Nacional, which states that "a good female next to an old man who does not satisfy her, has delicacies, is like one who is thirsty, is next to water and cannot taste it".

It is precisely the text in the National Library that leads us to the title of this print, *Tantalus*, in which Goya criticises unequal marriages that lead to the dissatisfaction of both spouses. He draws a parallel between the condemnation of the mythological character and the circumstances of those who have to satisfy a younger woman, which creates an enormous sense of frustration.

CONSERVACIÓN

The plate of this engraving is in poor condition (National Chalcography, no. 180).

EXPOSICIONES

**Goya. Gemälde
Zeichnungen. Graphik.
Tapisserien**
Kunsthalle Basel Basle 1953
from January 23th to April 12th
1953
cat. 201

**Goya. Das Zeitalter der
Revolutionen. Kunst um
1800 (1980 - 1981)**
Hamburger Kunsthalle Hamburg 1980
cat. 24

**Goya. La década de Los
Caprichos**
Madrid 1992
organized by Real Academia de
Bellas Artes de San Fernando
sponsored by Fundación Central
Hispano, Madrid, consultant
editor Nigel Glendinnig. From
October 26th 1992 to January
10th 1993
cat. 15

Francisco de Goya
Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996
exhibition celebrated from
September 22nd to November
17th.
cat. 9, p.36

**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

**Das Capriccio als
Kunstprinzip**
Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, 1996
from December 8th 1996 to
February 16th 1997, exhibited
also in Zurich, Kunsthhaus, from
March 14th marzo 1997 to June

1st 1997 and in Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum mi Palais Harrach, from June 29th 1997 to September 21st 1997.

cat. G. 38

Francisco Goya. Capricci, follie e disastri della guerra

San Donato Milanese 2000

Opere grafiche della Fondazione Antonio Mazzotta

cat. 11, p.19

Goya e la tradizione italiana

Fondazione Magnani Rocca Mamiano di Traversetolo (Parma) 2006

consultant editors Fred Licht and Simona Tosini Pizzetti. From September 9th to December 3th 2006

cat. 9, p.148

Goya. Opera grafica

Pinacoteca del Castello di San Giorgio Legnano 2006

exhibition celebrated from December 16th 2006 to April 1st 2007

p.24

Goya et la modernité

Pinacothèque de Paris Paris 2013

from October 11st 2013 to March 16th 2014

cat. 132

2022

BIBLIOGRAFÍA

Some undescribed states of Goya's Caprichos

HOFFER, Philip

p.179

1945

Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.

HARRIS, Tomás

p.79, cat. 44

1964

Bruno Cassirer

Vie et oeuvre de Francisco de Goya

GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet

p.177, cat. 467

1970

Office du livre

Goya, la década de los caprichos: dibujos y aguafuertes

WILSON BAREAU, Juliet

pp.26-28, cat. 15-16

1992

Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando

Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional

SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)

p.78, cat. 97

1996

Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Biblioteca Nacional

El libro de los caprichos: dos siglos de interpretaciones (1799-1999). Catálogo de los dibujos, pruebas de estado, láminas de cobre y estampas de la primera edición

BLAS BENITO, Javier, MATILLA RODRÍGUEZ, José Manuel y MEDRANO, José Miguel

pp.92-95

1999

Museo Nacional del Prado

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA, Wilfredo

p. 193

2013

Pinacoteca de París

Goya. In the Norton Simon Museum

WILSON BAREAU, Juliet

pp. 42-75

2016

Norton Simon Museum

TORAL OROPESA, María and MARTÍN

MEDINA, Víctor

p. 32

2022

Museo de Bellas Artes de Badajoz y Diputación de Badajoz

PALABRAS CLAVE

CAPRICCIO MATRIMONIO DE CONVENIENCIA MITOLOGÍA GRIEGA

ENLACES EXTERNOS