

# THIS IS WHAT READING IS ALL ABOUT

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: CAPRICHOS (PRINTS AND DRAWINGS, 1797-1799) (29/85)



## DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA

Ca. 1797 - 1799

DIMENSIONES

219 x 148 mm

TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE

Etching, burnished aquatint and drypoint

RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA

Undisputed work

FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN

08 Dec 2010 / 29 May 2024

INVENTARIO

836 225

## INSCRIPCIONES

*This is what reading is all about.* (at the bottom)

98. (in the upper right-hand corner)

## HISTORIA

See *Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, Painter.*

*A preparatory drawing of this engraving has survived.*

## ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

A grotesque old man is sitting on a low chair with his legs crossed. One of his feet is placed on a brazier while the knee that is raised supports the book he seems to be reading, although his eyes are closed. Behind him a servant is sprinkling powder on his head while another kneeling man is putting on his shoes.

The scene is very dark, and it is even difficult to make out what the two servants look like, while the figure of the old man pretending to read captures all the light in the engraving. The painter has left a large, lighter surface on his clothes and on his white-haired head. The aquatint used is two grains of different thicknesses. Goya obtains a wide variety of tones, although in later editions the aquatint and pale tones gradually disappear.

Ayala's manuscript notes about this engraving that "the ministers wait until the last minute to find out about business. This one has his hair combed, is shod and sleeps. Who wastes time? This meaning is reiterated in the other two manuscripts, the one in the Prado Museum and the one in the National Library.

In this print Goya openly criticises the frivolity and ignorance of the upper classes and the country's leaders. He describes their approach to culture as superficial, as a mere appearance, and as a low priority in their lives.

This type of reproach is also found in some satirical pamphlets of the time, such as Benito Cano's *The Inoculation of the Understanding* (1789), which satirises those who own books but do not read them.

## CONSERVACIÓN

The aquatint is somewhat weakened (National Chalcography, no. 200)

## EXPOSICIONES

### **Goya. Gemälde Zeichnungen. Graphik. Tapisserien**

Kunsthalle Basel Basle 1953

from January 23th to April 12th  
1953

cat. 219

### **De grafiek van Goya**

Rijksmuseum Rijksprentenkabinet Amsterdam  
1970

from November 13th 1970 to  
January 17th 1971

cat. 28

### **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. 118

### **Francisco de Goya**

Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996

exhibition celebrated from  
September 22nd to November  
17th.

cat. 29, p.56

### **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. 35

### **Francisco Goya. Capricci, follie e disastri della guerra**

San Donato Milanese 2000

Opere grafiche della Fondazione  
Antonio Mazzotta

p.28, cat. 29

### **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. 29, p.153

### **Goya. Opera grafica**

Pinacoteca del Castello di San Giorgio Legnano  
2006

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

p.31

### **Goya e Italia**

Museo de Zaragoza Zaragoza 2008

organized by the Fundación Goya  
en Aragóna, consultant editor  
Joan Sureda Pons. From June  
1st to September 15th 2008

cat. 324

### **Goya et la modernité**

Pinacothèque de Paris Paris 2013

from October 11st 2013 to March  
16th 2014

cat. 153

#### BIBLIOGRAFÍA

##### **Goya engravings and lithographs, vol. I y II.**

HARRIS, Tomás

p.99, cat. 64

1964

Bruno Cassirer

##### **Vie et ouvre de Francisco de Goya**

GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet

p.179, cat. 508

1970

Office du livre

##### **Goya, la década de los caprichos: dibujos y aguafuertes**

WILSON BAREAU, Juliet

pp.200-201, cat. 118

1992

Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando

##### **Catálogo de las estampas de Goya en la Biblioteca Nacional**

SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)

p.89, cat. 118

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.180-183

1999

Museo Nacional del Prado

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA, Wilfredo

p. 218

2013

Pinacoteca de París

##### **Goya. In the Norton Simon Museum**

WILSON BAREAU, Juliet

pp. 42-75

2016

Norton Simon Museum

#### PALABRAS CLAVE

**CAPRICCIO ERUDITO FALSEDAD CRÍTICA**

#### ENLACES EXTERNOS