

# WHAT DISEASE WILL HE DIE OF?

CLASIFICACIÓN: PRINTS

SERIE: CAPRICHOS (PRINTS AND DRAWINGS, 1797-1799) (40/85)



## DATOS GENERALES

CRONOLOGÍA

Ca. 1797 - 1799

DIMENSIONES

216 x 152 mm

TÉCNICA Y SOPORTE

Aguafuerte, aguatinta bruñida, punta seca y buril

RECONOCIMIENTO DE LA AUTORÍA DE GOYA

Undisputed work

FICHA: REALIZACIÓN/REVISIÓN

14 Dec 2010 / 29 May 2024

INVENTARIO

836 225

## INSCRIPCIONES

*De que mal morira?* (at the bottom) 40. (in the upper right-hand corner)

## HISTORIA

See *Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, Painter*.

In the first printings the title appears without a question mark until the error was corrected.

Two preparatory drawings for this engraving have survived (1) and (2).

## ANÁLISIS ARTÍSTICO

A donkey dressed in a suit takes care of a dying man who has his mouth ajar, as if he were in agony. He grasps the man's wrist with his hoof on which an ostentatious ring can be seen. The animal seems to be really concentrating on what he is doing, his expression is serious and meditative, although he has not removed the jewel that could prevent him from carrying out his task properly. In the background, Goya has depicted the shadows of two figures awaiting the doctor's verdict for the sick man who has little chance of overcoming his illness.

The manuscript in the National Library provides a clear and concise reading of this engraving, which reads as follows: "It is not necessary to ask what ailment the sick person who pays attention to beastly and ignorant doctors has died of".

Francisco Gómez de Quevedo (Madrid, 1580 - Villanueva de los Infantes, 1645) had already pointed out the lack of training with which doctors approached their profession in his *Sueño, Visita de los Chistes*: "(...) dealing more with mules than with Doctors, they graduated as Doctors". Somewhat further on, he insists: "If these others are made of these, it is not much that these others will unmake us".

The 18th century was a time of great advances in medicine. It was precisely at this time that figures such as the Englishman William Cullen (Hamilton, Lanarkshire, 1710-Edinburgh, 1790) and the Danish Hermann Boerhaave (Voorhout, 1668-Leiden, 1738) emerged. In Spain, the contributions of Andrés Piquer y Arrufat (Fórnoles, 1711-Madrid, 1772) should be highlighted. In addition, during the reign of Charles III, in 1771, the medical teaching at the University of Salamanca was revised and updated on the basis of Boerhaave's contributions.

In this engraving Goya lashes out harshly against doctors and the ignorant, but also against the imprudence of those who put themselves in their hands. Thus, the title of the print questions whether the cause of death was the illness or the incompetence of the doctor.

In some cases this image has been interpreted as a veiled reference to Manuel Godoy (Badajoz, 1767 - Paris, 1851) and the nefarious manner in which he governed the country.

This engraving forms part of the group of prints known as "asnerías", between 37 and 42, in which the images feature donkeys that serve to censure human stupidity.

## CONSERVACIÓN

The plate has a scratch on the upper part from the first edition (National Chalcography, no. 211).

## EXPOSICIONES

### **Goya dans les collections suisses**

Fundación Pierre Gianadda Martigny 1982  
consultant editor Pierre Gassier.  
From June 12th to August 29th  
1982  
cat. 51

### **Francisco Goya. Sein leben im spiegel der graphik. Fuendetodos 1746-1828 Bordeaux. 1746-1996**

Galerie Kornfeld Bern 1996

from November 21st 1996 to

### **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. 138

### **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

### **Francisco de Goya**

Museo d'Arte Moderna Lugano 1996  
exhibition celebrated from September 22nd to November 17th.  
cat. 40, p.67

### **Goya. Opera grafica**

Pinacoteca del Castello di San Giorgio Legnano 2006  
exhibition celebrated from December 16th 2006 to April 1st 2007

January 1997

cat. 46

### **Goya et la modernité**

Pinacothèque de Paris Paris 2013

from October 11st 2013 to March  
16th 2014

cat. 145

December 3th 2006

cat. 40, p.155

p.33

#### **BIBLIOGRAFÍA**

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

HARRIS, Tomás

p.112, cat. 75

1964

Bruno Cassirer

### **Vie et oeuvre de Francisco de Goya**

GASSIER, Pierre y WILSON, Juliet

p.181, cat. 529

1970

Office du livre

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

WILSON BAREAU, Juliet

pp.228-231, cat. 136-138

1992

Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San  
Fernando

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

SANTIAGO, Elena M. (coordinadora)

p.95, cat. 129

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.226-229

1999

Museo Nacional del Prado

### **Francisco Goya. Los Caprichos**

POU, Anna

pp.46-47

2011

Ediciones de la Central

OROPESA, Marisa and RINCÓN GARCÍA,  
Wilfredo

p. 207

2013

Pinacoteca de París

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

WILSON BAREAU, Juliet

pp. 42-75

2016

Norton Simon Museum

#### **PALABRAS CLAVE**

### **CAPRICCIO ENFERMEDAD MÉDICO**

#### **ENLACES EXTERNOS**