Print - The Blinding of Elymas

Object: Print
Place of origin: Italy (made)
Date: 1516 (made)
Artist/Maker: Musi, Agostino dei (engraver)
Raphael, born 1483 - died 1520 (artist)
Materials and Techniques: engraving on paper
Credit Line: Bequeathed by Rev. Alexander Dyce
Museum number: DYCE.1066

Gallery location: Prints & Drawings Study Room, level H, case DG, shelf 48

Public access description

This picture represents Saint Paul's first miracle, performed in the presence of the Proconsul Sergius Paulus. Elymas, who was adviser to the Proconsul, and had previously ordered Paul to be whipped for his Christian faith, was struck blind by words spoken to him by Saint Paul. This event led to the Proconsul's conversion to Christianity.

This print is in reverse of Raphael's Cartoon of the same subject. The so-called Raphael Cartoons are seven full size designs for tapestries by the great Italian Renaissance artist Raphael (1483-1520). They illustrate passages from the Bible concerning the lives of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. None of them is smaller than ten feet high by thirteen feet wide. They belong to Her Majesty the Queen and have been on loan to this museum since 1865. The earliest print relating to the Raphael Cartoons dates from 1516, the year in which Raphael received final payment for the commission. It inaugurates an extraordinary case study in the history of printmaking, stretching over more than four hundred and fifty years and across a wide range of printmaking techniques.

This print is dated 1516, the year in which Raphael received final payment for the commission to provide designs for tapestries for the Pope. Seven of the tapestries first went up in the Sistine Chapel in time for the 26th December 1519. Prints of the Cartoons' subjects were therefore in circulation before anyone in Rome had seen the tapestries. In the sixteenth century the two main markets for prints were art lovers and artists. By July 1517, the painter Andrea del Sarto had used this engraving as the inspiration for a fresco in Florence.

Descriptive line
The Blinding of Elymas; Elymas struck blind by St. Paul; from a design by Raphael for the tapestries in the Sistine Chapel; engraving by Agostino Veneziano (Agostino dei Musi); Italian School; 1516.

Physical description
An interior with marble floor and columns. Elymas is front left of the image, Saint Paul, with a halo, to the front right holding a book. The Proconsul L Sergius Paulus sits on his throne on a platform wearing a laurel crown, and surrounded by followers, two of whom hold large scrolls. The platform has stone carving, a military trophy decoration and an inscription. Through the left arch in the background a hilly landscape can be seen (in outline).

This print is in reverse of the design from which it is derived and differs from Raphael's final Cartoon in some details; there are no carvings represented in the panels of the architecture, the landscape in this is only sketched in, and Sergius Paulus is barefoot. The lettering though is still the right way round.

Dimensions
Height: 25.9 cm trimmed, Width: 33.5 cm trimmed

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URL
http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O239660/the-blinding-of-elymas-print-musi-agostino-dei/