Wood-Engraving Print - The Magot, or Barbary Ape

Object: Wood-Engraving Print

Place of origin: Newcastle upon Tyne (printed and published)

Date: 1824 (printed)

Artist/Maker: Bewick, Thomas, born 1753 - died 1828 (print-maker)

Materials and Techniques: Wood-engraving print on paper

Museum number: CIRC.571-1965

Gallery location: Prints & Drawings Study Room, level E, case Z, shelf 2, box A

Descriptive line


Physical description

A Barbary Macaque monkey on a tree branch, viewed in profile, facing to the left of the image.

Dimensions

Height: 11.6 cm of sheet, Width: 14.5 cm of sheet

Museum number

CIRC.571-1965

Object history note

This engraving is from the eighth edition (1824) of Thomas Bewick’s first major independent publication, A General History of Quadrupeds, that was first printed and published in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1790. The volume contains illustrations of animals, alongside brief descriptions of their appearance, habits and habitats, accompanied by a number of illustrative vignettes, used mainly as tailpieces.

Historical significance: The first engraver to exploit fully the advantages of end-grain wood (the wood is cut across, rather than along, the grain) was Thomas Bewick. Once it had been proved that the technique could rival the fine effects of metal engraving, the advantages of wood engraving to the book trade were quickly recognised. Allowing both text and illustration to be printed in one operation, it ousted the intaglio process as the favourite for book illustration and was only superseded at the end of the nineteenth century when methods of photomechanical reproduction were developed.

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1107616/the-magot-or-barbary-ape-wood-engraving-print-bewick-thomas/