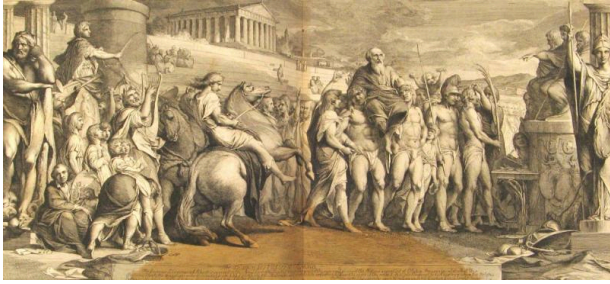


Basic Detail Report



The Diagorides Victors at Olympia [4 of 17 Prints]

Date

1791

Primary Maker

James Barry

Medium

Engraving on paper

Dimensions

Image Size: 41.6 x 92.5 cm

Description

Fourth print of seventeen in 'A series of etchings by James Barry Esq. From his Original and Justly Celebrated Paintings in the Great Room of the Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.' Although the prints have been bound with the title 'A Series of Etchings ...' They are in fact engravings (intaglio prints). A detailed and in-depth description is transcribed below. This description is taken from the bound version of Barry's etchings and printed on the page following the actual print. 'The Victors at Olympia. In the superb painting, from which this Print is taken, the Artist has happily chosen the point of time, when the victors, in the several games, are passing in procession before the hellanodicks, or judges, where they are crowned with olive, in the presence of all the Grecians. At the right-hand corner of the piece, the three judges are seated on a throne, ornamented with medallions of Solon, Lycurgus, and other legislators, and with trophies of the victories of Salamis, Marathon, and Thermopylæ. Near the foot of the throne is a table, at which the scribe appears writing, in the Olympic records of noble deeds, the name, family and country of the conqueror; near this table, a victor in the foot-race, having already received a branch of palm, which he holds in his hand, is crowning by an inferior hellanodick; next [to] him is a foot-racer, who ran armed with a helmet, spear, and shield. Close following is seen a manly group, formed of two young athletic figures, bearing on their shoulders their aged father; one of these represents a pancratiast, the other the victor at the cestus. The old man is Diagoras of Rhodes, who, having in his youth been celebrated for his victories in the games, has, in his advanced age, the additional felicity of enjoying the fruit of the virtuous education he had given his sons, amidst the acclamations of the people of Greece; some of whom are strewing flowers around the old man's head, while one of his friends is grasping his right hand, and supposed to be making the celebrated speech recorded on this occasion, "Now, Diagoras, die; for thou canst not be made a God." The climax of this domestic felicity is well pointed out by a child holding the arm of one of the victors, and looking up with joy in his countenance at the honours conferred on his grandfather. Near this beautiful group are seen a number of persons, the chief of whom represents Pericles, speaking to Cymon. Socrates, Euripides, and Sophocles are earnestly attending to what is said by

Pericles, whilst the malignant buffoon, Aristophanes, is ridiculously laughing and pointing to the deformity of the cranium of the speaker, which was unusually long. The painter has in the person of Pericles, introduced the likeness of the late Earl of Chatham. Next appears, in front of the Picture, a horse-racer, and close to him, a chariot drawn by four horses, in which is represented, in basso relievo, the triumph of Minerva over Neptune, emblematical of the advantages of peace. In the chariot is Hiero of Syracuse; and round the chariot are several persons, with musical instruments, accompanied by many youths, forming a chorus, which is led by Pindar, singing one of his odes, which he accompanies with his lyre. As at one end of the Picture, there is represented a statue of Minerva, so at the other is that of Hercules trampling on Envy, which are comprehensive exemplars of that strength of body and strength of mind, which were the great objects of Grecian education. On the base of the statue of Hercules, the Artist has introduced his own portrait, in the character of Timanthus, holding in his hand a picture of the Cyclops and Satyrs, as related by ancient writers. Behind the stadium, at a distance, is a view of the beautiful Grecian temple of Jupiter Olympus in the Altis, the town of Elis, and the river Alpheus, as truly characteristic of the spot on which the ceremony that forms the subject of the picture may be supposed to have been performed. The procession approaching the distant temple with a sacrifice, leads the mind to contemplate the numberless blessings which society derives, and can only derive, from the exercise of religious worship, and the happy opportunity it affords, on such solemn occasions, of pacifying the minds of a belligerent people, so composed as were the different states of Greece.' Below the image is an inscription. For the full inscription, see the Inscription field.