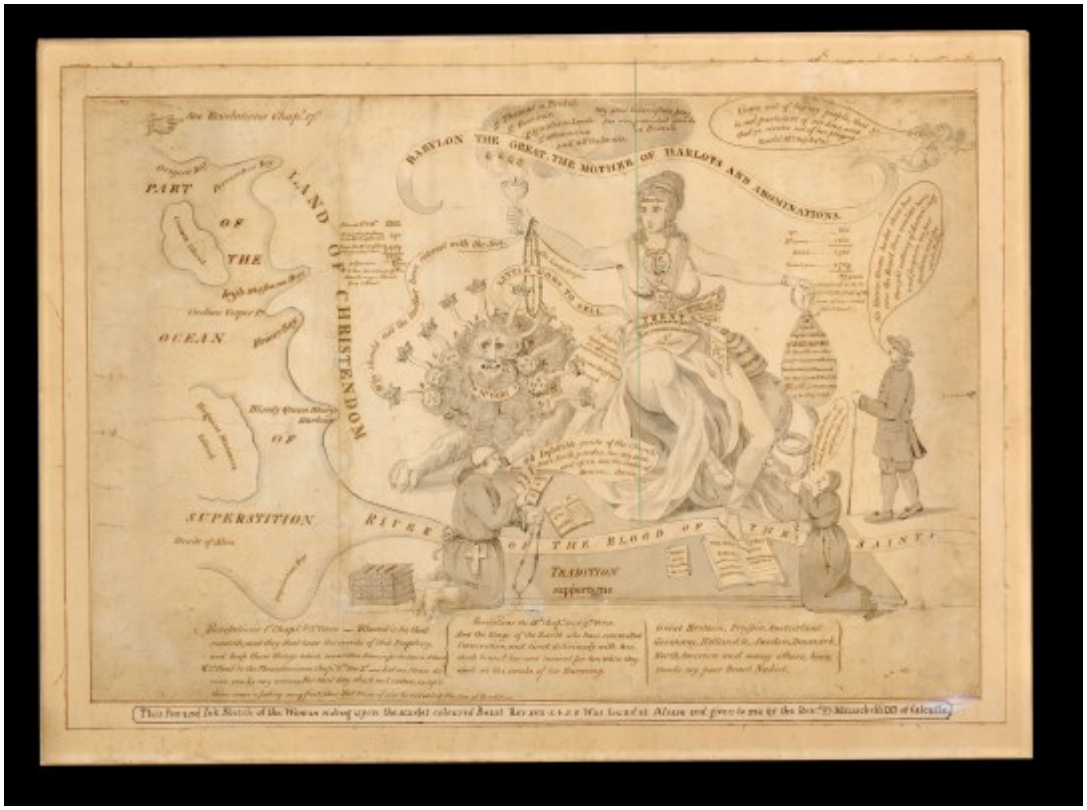


Pen and ink, with wash, on three sheets joined, mounted on cloth, and then on board, with later ownership in manuscript to border, a few tears and small areas of loss.

THE WHORE OF BABYLON

Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations.

Author
[ANONYMOUS]

Publication date
1789.

Publisher

Publication place

Physical description
Pen and ink, with wash, on three sheets joined, mounted on cloth, and then on board, with later ownership in manuscript to border, a few tears and small areas of loss.

Dimensions
445 by 650mm (17.5 by 25.5 inches).

Notes
Manuscript satire, produced at the height of anti-Catholic feeling in England.

Babylon the Great, also known as the “Whore” or “Idolatress” of Babylon, appears in the Book of Revelations, the final book of the New Testament, which describes in a series of prophetic visions the lead-up to the Second Coming of Christ. She is often depicted, as here, riding a seven headed

beast with ten horns, and has, since the Reformation, been associated by Protestants with the Catholic Church.

This pen and ink drawing is replete with anti-Catholic references and imagery. Babylon appears bare-breasted riding the many-headed beast; in her left hand she holds a bag full of saints' relics for sale; in her right incense burns, with the names of prominent Catholic saints, such as Thomas Becket, appearing in the smoke; a rosary hangs from her wrist; and around her waist is tied a bag of indulgences, a dispensation for the Queen of Portugal, Infanta Benedita of Braganza, for marrying her nephew, dated 1779 (though she married him in 1777), and a bottle of Holy Water. At her feet, two monks pray, surrounded by books, among them Alban Butler's 'Lives of the Saints'. Below the monks are several verses from the Book of Revelations. To the left of the drawing is the "Land of Christendom" and the "Ocean of Superstition", where "Crusader Island" and "Hugonot Massacre Island" reside. Several bays are marked, including: "Irish Massacre Bay", "Friars Bay", and "Bloody Queen Mary's Harbour".

The drawing can be dated to 1789, as the date is mentioned in the calculation for the Second Coming, to the left of the seven-headed beast. The late eighteenth century saw a rise in anti-Catholic sentiment in England, with many Protestants, such as the rabble-rouser Lord George Gordon (instigator of the Gordon Riots of 1780), protesting against the laws (such as the Papists Act of 1778 and the Roman Catholic Relief Act of 1791) which sought to allow Catholics access to areas of public life, such as the law and the army, from which they had previously been barred.

Below the drawing is an inscription:

"This Pen and Ink Sketch of the Woman riding upon the scarlet coloured Beast Rev xvii – 3.4.5.6. Was found at Assam and given to me by the Revd. F. F. Mazuchelli DD of Calcutta".

Francis Felix Mazuchelli was the husband of travel writer Elizabeth Sarah Mazuchelli. A Chaplain in H.M. Indian Service, he was posted to Darjeeling in 1869.

Bibliography

Provenance

Price:

Inventory reference: 24170

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