The Siege of Zion 1787 [Zion Besieged and Attacked] political cartoon

PERMANENT ID:
11731

CALL NUMBER:
Bc 612 Z67

LANGUAGE:
English

DATE:
1787

IMAGE DESCRIPTION:
The editors of Made in America: Printmaking 1760-1860 (Philadelphia, 1973) described this etching as "perhaps the most complex and labyrinthine political cartoon ever made." On the right side of this chaotic image is "Zion," a citadel and encampment on a mountain, guarded by figures holding banners labeled "Franklin & Liberty." Zion is under siege by groups of bankers and devils who attempt to scale the mountain, and by hordes of devils, witches, satyrs, and other fantastical man-animal hybrid creatures, and some prominent politicians and philosophers, including Robert Morris, Thomas Paine, Alexander Hamilton, and Benjamin Rush. At left, birds attack air balloons as the battle continues in the air. "Zion" in this case is the 1776 Constitution of Pennsylvania, which in 1787 was criticized by reformers from across the political spectrum as debate raged over ratification of the federal Constitution. The Historical Society of Pennsylvania's copy of this cartoon (perhaps the original etching) is clearly titled "The Siege of Zion 1787"; however, other reproductions of this image are often catalogued under the title "Zion Besieg'd and Attack'd."

FORMAT:
Etchings; Political cartoons
DIMENSIONS:
Width: 50.5 cm, Height: 39 cm

PUBLISHER:
Historical Society of Pennsylvania

ARTIST:
Unknown Artist; Moloshok, Rachel; Moloshok, Rachel; Historical Society of Pennsylvania; Robert Morris, 1734-1806; Benjamin Rush, 1746-1813; Thomas Paine, 1737-1809; Alexander Hamilton, 1757-1804; Benjamin Franklin, 1706-1790; William Poyntell, 1756-1811