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BLAKE

N E W S

Blake at Princeton

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NEWS

1. ENGLISH INSTITUTE PROGRAM September 3-6, 1968 at Columbia University

One of the topics this year is

BLAKE: "VISIONARY FORMS DRAMATIC" (Chairman, David V. Erdman).

Prize money of \$200.00 will be awarded by the Institute for the best essays on this or any of the topics. In this topic the focal word is "forms"; essays may consider any aspect or aspects of the form or style of Blake's illuminated works (counting "Tiriel" as such a work). Slides may be included; yet the pictorial aspect need not be treated.

Essays, which will be judged by members of the Supervising Committee, must be sent before July 1, 1968 to Professor Roy Harvey Pearce, University of California at San Diego, the chairman of the 1968 session. They must be no longer than 6000 words, typed double-spaced, and accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope, or, if submitted from abroad, by the appropriate international postage coupons. If slides are to be used, transparencies or small prints should accompany the typescript.

2. BLAKE AT PRINCETON

The keen eye of Virginia Erdman detected the following item in Princeton Town Topics for November 9, 1967:

BLAKE BOOK HERE

Gift to Princeton: A rare copy of William Blake's book, "Songs of Innocence and of Experience" has been given to Princeton University and is now on exhibition in Firestone Library.

Hours are 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday, and 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sundays.

The volume was probably printed in 1815 according to Charles A. Ryskamp, curator of English and American literature for the library. It was printed in red-brown ink, and contains 54 copper-engraved plates, elaborately and brilliantly colored with watercolors and gold.

"Blake's book is considered by many to be the most beautiful book in the history of English art and poetry and this is certainly one of the finest copies," says Professor Ryskamp. The volume was the gift of Miss Caroline Newton of Berwyn, Pennsylvania. It was included in the Grolier Club exhibition of Blake's works in 1905 in New York and at the Philadelphia Museum of Art exhibit in 1939.

The history of the Princeton book can be traced to 1824, when it was sold to the publisher, Edwards. It was subsequently bought by William Beckford the novelist, who assembled the first important Blake collection, and then by Quaritch, the British booksellers, who used it for a

facsimile edition in the 1890's. Shortly after, it was acquired by William A. White, one of the greatest Blake collectors.

Professor Ryskamp points out that Princeton's copy is complete, with 54 leaves; other existing volumes are incomplete. It is identified as copy "U" in the census of Blake's illuminated books compiled by Sir Geoffrey Keynes and Edwin Wolf II.

We went to see this copy and found that the Firestone Library was also exhibiting a number of other works, most of them on loan from Miss Newton. The following items were included:

Illuminated books: In addition to copy U, copy j of the Songs of Innocence and of Experience (posthumous); copy D of America; copy L of Visions of the Daughters of Albion (probably colored by Mrs. Blake).

Engraved sets: Illustrations of the Book of Job (large-paper page proofs); For the Sexes: the Gates of Paradise (title page, frontispiece, plates 1, 7-13, 18-19).

Engravings from books: 4 plates after Fuseli from A New and Improved Roman History by Charles Allen (1798); Wilson Lowry (proof copy of fourth state, engraved with Lowry for Rees' Cyclopeda); "Tornado", after Fuseli, from the third edition (1795) of Erasmus Darwin's Botanic Garden, Part II.

Engraving: Canterbury Pilgrims, fourth state.

Books: Poetical Sketches, Blair's Grave illustrated by Blake, Botanic Garden Part I (five engravings by Blake after Fuseli), and Hayley's Ballads and Little Tom the Sailor, both with illustrations designed and engraved by Blake.

Drawings: Watercolor of Hayley's design for the Cowper monument (one of three copies made by Blake); wash drawing "Job and His Family Restored to Prosperity"; and four pencil drawings. One of these showing a male and a female figure, is identified as "for a rejected illustration for Comus." One of the others is a sketch of what seems to be a theatrical production, with a male figure wearing a plumed hat or helmet. Another shows several horses, one of which wears a plumed headdress of some kind and is harnessed to something (a chariot?) unshown. Another horse appears to be reading a book opened on the ground while a woman wearing a bandana milks her; a third is unmistakably horselaughing.

Manuscript: Fair copy in Blake's hand of "I asked a thief to steal me a peach."

Color prints: From A Small Book of Designs (copy B)--plate 9 of The First Book of Urizen, inscribed "Eternally I labour on"; and plate 11 of The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, inscribed "Death & Hell"/Teem with Life". [In both inscriptions, the quotation marks are in the original.]

Also: Rivington and Cochrane's catalog for 1824, advertising the Songs (copy U) at 8 guineas and The Grave at £1 16s.

--MDP