NOTE

Blake in the Marketplace, 1974-75

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It is difficult to make any completely false generalization about the Blake market in 1974 and 1975. Prices were up; prices were down. It was a good market for buyers (of certain types of materials); it was a good market for sellers (of other types of materials). New record prices were set, while important works failed to find buyers even at moderate prices. It was the worst of times; it was the best of times. A combination of economic difficulties, particularly in Britain, and a strong book and print market over the last ten years drove a number of medium-priced items out of hiding. In his 1921 Bibliography of William Blake, Geoffrey Keynes noted that the third edition of Erasmus Darwin's *Botanic Garden* (1795) was "considerably scarcer than the other two." In the last two years, no fewer than ten copies of this edition appeared on the market, three more than the first edition and eight more than the second. In the 1920s, the *Botanic Garden* was not traded primarily as a Blake item. But now it is, and thus the third edition, containing an additional plate by Blake after Fuseli, is more valuable than the earlier editions. The third was never any rarer, in absolute terms, than the others, but the market made it seem that way until dealers began to ferret out what is now the most profitable edition. A similar deluge of etchings by Samuel Palmer rumbled through the auction and print dealers' catalogues. In the face of all this activity, book and print prices did not continue to accelerate quite as rapidly as in previous years, but no significant backsliding occurred. Collectors who were willing to meet the market prices had many opportunities to expand their holdings, particularly of books with Blake's commercial engravings, but true bargains were scarcer than ever. Book and print prices rarely fall dramatically, in part because the inner circle of larger dealers is able to keep auction prices up and hold items for long periods without cutting the retail price.

The most expensive works are more subject to pressures growing from the condition of the general economy. On 21 March 1974, the "Preston" colored proof of *Jerusalem* pl. 41 brought £13,000 at a Sotheby's auction--no doubt a world record for a single leaf from one of Blake's illuminated books. The other end of the market was reached on 28 November 1974 in the same rooms, when two of Blake's 1795 color printed drawings (illus. 1, 2) failed to attract serious bidders and were bought-in far below the minimum estimates. Both "Pity" and "La-
mech and his Two Wives" had unfairly acquired reputations as little better than ruins, partly through comparison with the magnificent Butts copies in the Tate, but that any work executed in one of Blake's most interesting techniques should be ignored by major dealers and collectors is surprising. In the past, Blake's drawings regularly sold at auction for as much as twice the estimate, but we can no longer assume that this will happen without fail. "War Unchained" failed to meet the reserve at Christie's on 17 June 1975, and "Theotormon Woven" sold for only £20 over estimate at Sotheby's on 27 November 1975. The drawings market will probably continue to bounce about over the next few years, but high reserves and the stabilizing maneuvers of the major dealers will prevent the small collector from picking up important works at bargain prices.

The following list of 1974-75 Blake sales, arranged by item (rather than sale) and divided into four parts, includes only original materials by Blake and unique works directly concerned with him. The final section covers sales of works by artists in Blake's circle. I have not included late works by people such as Linnell and Richmond which have little connection with Blake's own styles and interests. Dealers' catalogues are listed following all auction sales of each item. In many cases, there is no longer much difference between the dealers' "retail" prices and the "wholesale" auction prices. In the 1972-73 survey in Newsletter 27, pp. 52-59, I included many secondary works and modern facsimiles. Such inclusiveness would have tripled the length of the present survey. On the whole, prices for these materials have risen since the 1972-73 period about 5 to 10% more than the general rate of inflation. The only noticeable exceptions to this rule of thumb are the most sought-after Blake Trust facsimiles now out of print.

I have made no attempt to search out every minor auction catalogue or dealer's list for inclusion here. All Sotheby, Sotheby Parke-Bernet, and Christie's sales have been covered, as have the catalogues of the major book dealers and art galleries who regularly deal in original Blake materials. I would very much appreciate Newsletter readers informing me of any sales, particularly from obscure corners, during 1976 and 1977.

Abbreviations

C    Christie, Manson & Woods Ltd., London
cat. catalogue or sales list issued by a dealer or auction house (usually followed by a number or letter designation)
illus. the item or a part thereof is reproduced in the catalogue
SB    Sotheby Belgravia, Motcomb St., London
SBLA  Sotheby Parke-Bernet, Los Angeles
SBNY  Sotheby Parke-Bernet, New York
SH    Sotheby & Co., Hodgson's Rooms, Chancery Lane, London
SL    Sotheby & Co., Main Rooms, Bond St., London
#     auction lot or catalogue item number

I wish to thank Prof. G. E. Bentley, Jr., and Ruth Lehrer for their help in compiling this survey.

Blake Sales 1974-75

Drawings, Watercolors, and Color Printed Drawings

"The Battle of Hastings." Pencil & wash, signed. 26 x 36.2 cm. Agnew & Sons, July 1974, #163 (Lakeside Studio, €1900). From the M. Chidson collection. The full name of the artist (thus, "William Blake") means that the auction house believes that the work is by, or at least after, the artist. The forename (W.) Blake means that the work is by another hand or is a copy made by another hand. The surname only (Blake) attributions. The full name of an artist (thus, "William Blake") means that the auction house believes that the work is of the period of the artist, in his style, and may be wholly or in part his work. The surname only (Blake) means that the auction is of the period of the artist, in his style, and may be from his hand, or by another hand after his hand, or from his school.

"The Battle of Hastings." Pencil & wash, signed. 26 x 36.2 cm. Agnew & Sons, July 1974, #163 (Lakeside Studio, €1900). From the M. Chidson collection. The full name of the artist (thus, "William Blake") means that the auction house believes that the work is by, or at least after, the artist. The forename (W.) Blake means that the work is by another hand or is a copy made by another hand. The surname only (Blake) attributions. The full name of an artist (thus, "William Blake") means that the auction house believes that the work is of the period of the artist, in his style, and may be wholly or in part his work. The surname only (Blake) means that the auction is of the period of the artist, in his style, and may be from his hand, or by another hand after his hand, or from his school.

Notebook vol. 7 no. 2, pp. 55-58.

Prints

Allen, Charles. A New and Improved History of England, 1798. Plates extracted from, by Blake after Fuseli. SBLA, 8 May 1975, #454, with "Tornado" and "Fertilization of Egypt" by Blake after Fuseli, and an etching by Goya ($375).


"Fertilization of Egypt." Blake after Fuseli, extracted from Darwin's Botanic Garden. SB, 30 April 1974, #21 (Lakeside Studio, £20); 2 July 1974, #180 (Lakeside Studio, £35); #182 (Lakeside Studio, £30).

Dante, illustrations to. Complete set of 7 pls. on laid india paper in portfolio with original cover label. SL, 11 July 1974, #174, one pl. illus. (Edmunds, £3700). The first complete Dante set to come to auction in many years. Although the sale catalogue describes these as "one of 100 sets pulled in 1892," they are excellent impressions.

Dante illustrations, pl. 5 only ("He saw the serpent and the serpent him"). C. & J. Goodfriend. Summer 1975 cat. 2, #24 ($2000).

Dante Illustrations, pl. 7 only ("wherefore Oft Bruise Me?"). SBNY, 8 May 1975, #453, foxed ($750).

Jerusalem, pl. 25, design only; portion of frontispiece to Europe on verso. The Preston colored proof. 16.5 x 16 cm. SL, 21 March 1974, #18, illus. (W. R. Cummings, £13000).

Jerusalem, pl. 32, design only; trial proof of Europe title-page on verso with figures drawn in. The Preston colored proof. 17 x 16 cm. SL, 21 March 1974, #19, illus. (W. R. Cummings, £12000).

Jerusalem, pl. 41, design only; portion of Europe frontispiece on verso. The Preston colored proof. 16.5 x 16 cm. SL, 21 March 1974, #21 (W. R. Cummings, £11000).


Job, pl. 14 of the 22 pls., published proofs. SBLA, 29 June 1975, #83 ($3200).

Job, pls. 1, 3, 4, 6, 9, 17, 18, final states. SB, 2 July 1974, #185 (Louise King, £1300).

Job, title-page. SBNY, 7 Nov. 1974, #196, with 3 other prints by Bauer and Gigoupex (£150).

Job, pl. 6, SB, one July 1974, #184, final state (Lakeside Studio, £1630). SL, 11 July 1974, #17, published proof (Crockett & Barnard, £150); subsequently offered for sale by Craddock & Barnard, July 1975 cat. 131, #126 ($260). SBLA, 29 June 1975, #106, final state (£35).

Job, pl. 8, Weston Gallery, May 1975 cat. 5, #3, published proof. illus. (£708).

Job, pl. 9, SBNY, 8 May 1975, #452, final state (£350).

Job, pl. 10, SBNY, 7 Feb. 1975, #315, final state on laid India paper (£375); 13 Nov. 1975, #19, final state on laid India paper (£350).

Job, pl. 20, Weston Gallery, Jan. 1975 cat. 12, #3, published proof, illus. (£597.50).

"Mrs. O." Blake after Villerius, and "Winden Castle." G. Maile & Sons, 30 June 1974, #174 (Sanders, £176).

Boydell's
Virgil


Tod, Ruthven. Typescript, presented by Tod to Robertson, of a catalogue of the latter's Blake collection. 1942. SL, 10 March 1975, #4 (Mags, £7). Now in the author's collection.

Manuscripts


The "Flood," lithograph, only state. SB, 30 April 1974, #102 (Garton, £90); 15 April 1975, #18 (£200).


Flaxman, John. (See also under Blake Books, above). Design for the base of a statue to commemorate British victories, pencil & gray ink, 14 x 25.5 cm. SL, 19 June 1975, #54 (£2).

This is the same monument presented in Flaxman's A Letter to the Committee for Raising the Naval Pillar, 1799, but it is not directly related to any of the three pls. by Blake in that publication.


"Joseph's Dream," pen & ink, gray wash, 7 1/8 x 2 1/4 in. Sabin Gallery, Spring Exhibition April-May 1975, #59.

These mythological figures, ink & wash, 47 x 62 cm. SL, 26 March 1975, #204, 11lus. (£420). The reproduction makes me a bit suspicious of the attribution. A scene from the Odyssey, Bk. VI, gray ink, inscribed 06.6-319. 20 x 31 cm. SL, 26 March 1975, #143 (£100).

Figure studies, ink & wash on 2 sheets each 19 x 13.5 cm. SL, 26 March 1975, #141 (£30).

Study for a memorial to Lord Rodney, ink & wash, 19.5 x 13.5 cm. With a study of two girls, ink & wash, 21 x 14 cm. SL, 26 March 1975, #142 (£50).


9 A.L.s.s. by Palmer, and one by his father, to George Rich-
mond, 10 May 1827-16/20 Oct. 1834. SL, 24 June 1975,
#241 (Seven Gables Bookshop, £1300); #241A, autograph MS.
entitled "How to choose Teas" (D. A. Heald, £66). These
are all printed in Raymond Lister, ed., The Letters of
Samuel Palmer, vol. I.

A.L.s., 19 Aug. 1835, to George Richmond. SL, 29 Oct. 1975,
#125. The letter is printed in Lister, ed., Letters of Palmer,
I, 71-3, where "not" is erroneously inserted in one sentence.

A.L.s., 5 June 1836, to George Richmond. SL, 29 Oct. 1975,

4 A.L.s.s., 2 June 1836-19 Sept. 1839, to George and Julia Rich-
mond. SL, 29 Oct. 1975, #137. All are printed in Lister,
ed., Letters of Palmer,

51 A.L.s.s., 1 typed L.s., 1 A.L.

Palmer, the artist's son, to F.
pp. concerning Samuel Palmer.

Graffy, £300).

Richmond, George. "Jesus and the Disciples in the Garden of
Gethsemen." Sepia ink, 23 x 19 cm. SL, 27 Nov. 1975, #16,
illus. (£50). Also in this sale were 20 other, less Blake-
like, drawings by Richmond & 4 by Henry Walter.

(Baskett & Day, £520). C, 25 March 1975, #165, with "Proof"
in lower right margin, illus. (Somerville, £106). An im-
pression of this rare work, plus Richmond's "The Shepherd,"
were recently acquired by the Huntington Library.

Robertson, W. Graham. Color printed drawings by Robertson in
imitation of Blake's technique. SL, 10 March 1975, #121,
"Orc or Flames of Desire," the block and first impression
(Magg, £122, now in the author's collection); #122, a woman
and five girls, block and four variant impressions (N. A.
Milton, £20); #123, "Anemone's Ball," block and three
 impressions (Abbott & Holder, £10); #124, "Redlands Farm,
block and two impressions (Abbott & Holder, £10); #125, girl
in a landscape, two impressions, plus a "print after a de-
sign by Blake" (Abbott & Holder, £6).

Smetham, James. 10 small watercolors, C, 21 Oct. 1975, #147-
156, two illus. (£336-£68).

Tatham, Frederick. Portrait of a man seated at a writing desk,
and a portrait of a woman seated on a balcony. Signed and
dated 1846. Watercolors. 23 x 16 1/8 in. C, 7 Oct. 1975,
#76 (L-47).

"Cain and Abel," and "The Deluge," a pair, wash drawings each
21.5 x 18 cm. By a "follower of William Blake." SL, 16
July 1975, #241 (L40).

A CheckList of Recent Blak e Scholarship

BY THOMAS MINNICK

Bibliographi es and Bibliographical Essays

Curran, Stuart. "Recent Studies in the Nineteenth Century."-

Erdman, David V., comp., with the assistance of Robert R.
Mollenauer and James S. Patty. "The Romantic Movement: A
Selective and Critical Bibliography for 1974." English
Language Notes, 13 (1975), supplement to no. 1.

Essick, Robert N. "Corrections of the BMPR Handlist." Blake
Newsletter, 8 (Winter 1974-75), 90-91. [Corrects and adds
to Bentley's Handlist, Blake Newsletter, 5 (Spring 1972),
whole no. 20.]

Frost, Everett, comp. "A Checklist of Blake Slides." Blake
Newsletter, 9 (Summer 1975), 4-28.

Lemer, Ruth Fine. "A Checklist of Blake Material in The
Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection, Alverthorpe Gallery,
Jenkintown, Pennsylvania." Blake Newsletter, 9 (Winter
1975-76), 58-85.

Oliver, Barbara and K. E. Robinson, "The Eighteenth Century"
in James Redmond, ed., The Year's Work in English Studies,
54 (1973), 276-300.

Taylor, Ron. "A Checklist of Recent Blake Scholarship." Blake
Newsletter, 8 (Spring 1975), 146-158.

Editions, Facsimiles, Reproductions

Press of Willow Dene, 1975. £50. [Illus. with modern
woodcuts; edition limited to 100 copies.]

Newsletter, 1975. $2.50. [Black and white repro-
duction of copy E, 2 plates from a, and the 4 cancelled
plates, all from the Rosenwald Collection; designed for
classroom use.]


Erdman, David V. The Illuminated Blake: All of William
Blake's Illuminated Works with a Plate-by-Plate Commentary.
1974; slightly revised in the second printing, 1975
(New York: Doubleday) and in the Oxford: Clarendon Press,
1975 printing. $7.95.

Essick, Robert and Jenijoy La Belle, eds. Night Thoughts or
The Complaint and The Consolation. Illustrations by
William Blake. Text by Edward Young. New York: Dover,
1975. $4.00. [Reprints the 1797 edition at 63% of
original size, 43 engravings by Blake.]

Keysen, Geoffrey, ed. Auguries of Innocence. Burford,