Blake in the Marketplace, 1987

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Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 22, Issue 1, Summer 1988, pp. 4-15
The 1987 Blake market came in like a lamb and went out like a tyger. The spring auctions and dealers' catalogues offered no Blake drawings, no important separate plates, and only a single posthumous impression from one of Blake's illuminated books (see illus. 1). In contrast, November and December brought forth the rediscovery and sale of America copy R and a previously unrecorded copy of that curious broadside, Little Tom the Sailor. The fall of 1988 promises an equal display of treasures, for Christie's New York will place on the auction block three Blake rarities from the Edward L. Doheny Memorial Library: Songs of Innocence copy N, Blake's letter to John Linnell of 2 July 1826, and a water color Blake painted for Thomas Butts c. 1805, The Infant Jesus Saying His Prayers (Butlin #473).

The market's response to artists associated with Blake showed exceptional strength for most high quality items, but a weaker performance in the middle and lower ranges. What are very probably modern auction records were set for a print by James Barry (£935 — see illus. 6), a sketch by J. H. Mortimer (Salvator Rosa, £4620), an erotic sketch by Fuseli (Callipyga, sold in November 1986 for £24,200), a painting by Linnell (Harvest Dinner and Noonday Rest, each at £46,200), and a post-Shoreham water color by Palmer (The Brothers in Comus Lingerling Under the Vine, £63,800). Yet, within the same auction season, several oil sketches by Linnell failed to find buyers and Palmer's lovely water color of c. 1851, Sheep in the Shade, failed to exceed its reserve (i.e., the price below which an auction lot will not be sold).

Books with Blake's commercial illustrations continued to appear with reasonable regularity. Complete copies of the Job engravings are increasingly rare and dear, as demonstrated by the eye-popping auction record established by a published "proof" set on laid India at Christie's on the first of December, £30,800. The market also provided at least a scrutinizable prophecy: the only two copies of Blake's Night Thoughts offered at auction were purchased by Japanese dealers.

The year of all sales and catalogue s in the following lists is 1987 unless noted otherwise. The auction houses listed in the Abbreviations add their purchaser's surcharge to the hammer price in their price lists. These net amounts are given here, following the official price lists. Several late 1987 auctions, for which price lists are not yet available, will appear in the 1988 review. Copy designations and plate numbers for the illuminated books follow G. E. Bentley, Jr., Blake Books (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977). "Butlin #___" refers by entry number to Martin Butlin, The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake (New Haven & London: Yale Univ. Press, 1981), 2 vols.

I am grateful for help in compiling this list to Shelley Bennett, G. E. Bentley, Jr., Detlef Dörrecker, Edwin Epps, Richard Godfrey of Sotheby's, Alexander Gourlay, Robert Halsband, William Plomer of Agnew's, Justin Schiller, David Weinglass, and especially Thomas Lange.
ILLUMINATED BOOKS

America, copy R. CNY, 13 Nov., #46, pls. 1, 2, 10 illus. color ($176,000 to the London dealer Libby Howie, apparently for an anonymous client). For an illustrated description of this copy, see Essick, "The Resurrection of America Copy R," Blake (spring, 1988): 138–42.

America, pl. 7 only. Posthumous impression in pale brick red; not listed in Bentley, Blake Books. SL, 29 June, #314, slight surface dirt, "laid down at edges to support sheet, . . . bound in modern marbled boards, morocco spine," illus. (bought-in at £5000 on an estimate of £8000–10,000). See illus. 1.

DRAWINGS AND PAINTINGS

Head of a Young Man, possibly Antinous. From the Blake-Varley sketchbook. Pencil, sheet 15.5 x 20.5 cm. Butlin #692.86. Given by Robert Halsband to the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, in 1986.

SEPARATE PLATES & PLATES IN SERIES, INCLUDING PLATES EXTRACTED FROM PRINTED BOOKS

"Beggar's Opera, Act III." The Print Room, London, Aug. private offer, 4th st., image trimmed approx. 7 mm. at top (£2 to Edwin Epps).


Job. SL, 4 Dec. 1986, #165, proofs on laid India complete, bound in half morocco, pl. 3 illus. (Davidson, £6930). Swann, 18 Dec. 1986, #9, pls. 3 and 16 only, 1874 issue ($375). Weston Gallery, Feb. cat. 1, #96–99, 4 pls. only, published proofs on French paper (pls. 6, 21) or laid India (pls. 7, 19), all illus. ($1340 each). CL, 14 April, #13, pl. 18 only, published proof on wove paper, minor defects (£220). Craddock & Barnard, Aug. private offer, pl. 9 only on laid India (£370). F. Mulder Prints, Oct. cat. 10, #32, published proofs on laid India, original (?) green boards, "old label on spine," foxed, title-page and pl. 13 illus. ($24,000). CL, 1 Dec., #201, complete published proofs on laid India, few foxmarks in margins, later blue cloth boards, scuffed, pl. 13 illus. (£30,800 on an estimate of £8000–12,000).

Virgil wood engravings. SL, 12 Oct., #570, Blake's 11th cut only (Colinet by a stream), mounted on a card, with 14 pls. for Aesop's Fables by other hands (Fogg, £88). SL, 29 Oct, #117, Blake's 4th and 9th cuts only, on laid India (i.e., the Linnell reprints), slight surface dirt (£330).

BOOKS WITH ENGRAVINGS BY & AFTER BLAKE

Allen, New and Improved History of England, 1798. C. R. Johnson, Aug. cat. 21, #9, with the engraved chart (not by Blake) usually absent, contemporary sheep, worn, pl. 3 illus. (£325).

Ariosto, Orlando Furioso, 1783. Jeffrey Stern, Aug. cat. 6, #214, 5 vols., "sumptuous contemporary red morocco" binding (£350).


Bonycastle, Introduction to Mensuration, 1794. Anthony Laywood, Jan. cat. 52, #23 (£48); same copy(?), W. & V. Dailey, May private offer (£200).

1. Blake. America, pl. 7. Relief etching, posthumous impression in pale brick red ink, 24 x 17 cm. Photo courtesy of Sotheby’s, London.

It is unusual to find a posthumous pull of any relief etching with the borders wiped, but circumstantial evidence suggests that this impression was pulled by Frederick Tatham after Blake’s death. The sheet is signed on the verso by J. Deffett Francis and dated 1834.

Thus, the print can be associated with impressions of America pls. 2, 5, and 15, given by Francis in 1878 to the Glynn Vivian Gallery, Swansea. These three impressions are also printed in “reddish-Brown” (according to Bentley, Blake Books, 89) and have wiped borders (according to information kindly supplied by G. E. Bentley, Jr.). Pl. 5 in this group has a Whatman 1831 watermark. Thus, it seems likely that all four impressions are posthumous.


James Burrmester, April cat. 6, #A (£3500). Burmester speculates interestingly on the possibility that the first pl., showing a statue of a “River God,” was engraved by Blake, as S. B. Hamilton claims in the Architectural Review, vol. 116, no. 695, on the basis of unstated evidence. Like hundreds of other unsigned pls. of the period, this one, etched in a free style similar to pls. by and after J. H. Mortimer, may be by Blake, but there is simply no evidence for such an attribution.

Cumberland, Thoughts on Outline, 1796. Blackwell’s, Oct. cat. A89, #120, slight foxing, modern quarter leather (£300).


Enfield, Speaker, 1797. Charles Cox, June cat. 34, #28, rebacked, lightly foxed (£85).


Flaxman, Iliad illustrations, 1805. SL, 17 Nov. 1986, #655, with Odyssey illustrations, 1805, both spotted (Philadelphia, £49); same copies, Philadelphia Rare Books, Feb. private offer ($300). Sevin Seydi, May cat., #332, with Odyssey illustrations, 1805, foxed, rubbed (£50). BBA, 16 July, #390, foxed, with Dante illustrations, "1793" (i.e., 1807?), disbound, spotted (D. & G. Dawson, £55).

Fuseli, Lectures on Painting, 1801. BBA, 3 Sept., #20, browned, rubbed (Fort, £93).


Hamilton, English School. Charles Cox, June cat. 34, #30, vols. 1–2 dated 1833, vols. 3–4 dated 1832 (£120).

Hayley, Ballads, 1805. SL, 6 Oct. 1986, #770, spotted, bound with Gessner, Death of Abel, 1803, and sold with Blair, Grave, 1808 "folio" (but actually the quarto), spotted (Stern, £165); same copy of the Ballads, Jeffrey Stern, Jan. cat. 5, #457 (£550).


Shakespeare, *Plays*. Howes, Jan. cat. 233, #95, 10 vol. issue of 1805, extra-illus. with 175 pls. from other eds. (£1250). BBA, 14 May, #68, 9 vol. issue of 1805, browned, spotted, worn (R. Clark, £77); same copy, Robert Clark, June cat. 9, #189 (£140). Spelman’s Bookshop, Dec. cat. 12, #159, 9 vol. reissue of 1812, spines cracked (£450).


2. Blake after Henry Fuseli. Frontispiece to J. C. Lavater, *Aphorisms on Man*. Intaglio etching/engraving, 12.2 x 7.6 cm., first state appearing in the first (1788) and second (1789) editions. Essick collection.


Young, *Night Thoughts*, 1797, uncolored. SL, 4 Dec. 1986, #106, with Explanation leaf, pls. trimmed, worn, title page to Night the Third illus. (Shobo, £1100). SL, 17 June, #208, with Explanation leaf (repaired), leaves soiled, some gatherings misbound, title page to Night the Fourth illus. (Subunso, £1870).

3. Blake after Fuseli, *Aphorisms* frontispiece (see illus. 2). Previously unrecorded second state appearing in some copies of the third (1794) edition. Essick collection. Blake has added crossing strokes to create crosshatching patterns on the fore-edge of the book's leaves, lower right, and on the floor just to the left of the hourglass. The crosshatchings on the sky-borne figure's neck, and on the cloud below the lower right corner of the tablet he (she?) holds, have been extended upwards a few millimeters.

**UNIQUE BLAKEANA**

A leather folding screen in 4 panels, approx. 7 ft. high. Embossed and painted decorations based on Blake's "Chaucers Canterbury Pilgrims," 2 sections on each panel. C. 1815–1850? Justin Schiller, Sept. private offer (price on request only).
4. Blake after Fuseli, *Aphorisms* frontispiece (see illus. 2). Third state appearing in some copies of the third (1794) edition. Essick collection. The crossing lines on the floor have been extended to the left edge of the image. Crosshatching now appears on the side of the bench on which the man sits (just right of his right ankle), on the lower edge of the man's left forearm and on both legs (particularly evident from ankle to knee), across the upper portion of his left hip, and on the right side of his chest. The many fine hatching lines on his left shoulder have been replaced by fewer and bolder strokes. A series of horizontal crossing lines have been cut in the man's cloak just to the right of his right calf.

Scott, William Bell. *St. Matthew*, a water color copy of Blake's tempera painting (Butlin #396). Perhaps to be associated with Scott's preparations for *William Blake: Etchings from His Works* (1878), in which this design, etched by Scott, appears as the 5th pl. Stone Gallery, Burford, Aug. private offer, now collection of Edwin Epps. See illus. 5.

*Songs of Innocence and of Experience*, the beta copy of the early water color manuscript facsimile. Sold June 1986 by Justin Schiller to Colin Franklin, who soon after sold it to a private client.

**BLAKE'S CIRCLE & FOLLOWERS**

*Works are listed under artists' names in the following order: untitled paintings and drawings sold in groups, single paintings and drawings, letters and manuscripts, separate plates, books with plates by or after the artist.*

**BARRY, JAMES**

*Study of a Male Nude on Horseback.* Pencil, pen, 45 x 31 cm. SL, 16 July, #50, illus. (£4180 on an estimate of £1200-1800).


**BASIRE, JAMES**

Rogers, *Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings*, 1778. CL, 22 July, #180 (Sims, Reed & Fogg, £3520).

**CALVERT, EDWARD**

*Sheep Grazing.* Oil, 15 x 24 cm., c. 1830? Agnew, June cat., #63 (not priced). See illus. 7.


Study of Miss Denman with Children of the Tulk Family. Pencil, 24 x 20 cm. SL, 19 Nov., #60, illus. (£1210).

Study of Struggling Figures. Pencil, pen, gray wash, 16 x 17 cm. SL, 16 July, #14, illus. (£495).

3 autograph letters signed, to Prince Hoare, 1803–1805. CNY, 19 Dec. 1986, #17, with 59 other letters by British artists ($3740).


Aeschylus illustrations, 1795. BBA, 18 June, light soiling, disbound (Maggs, £93).

Dante illustrations, 1807. Plandome Book Auction, 3 Dec., #146, foxed in margins, worn (estimate $125–175).

Eight Illustrations of the Lord’s Prayer, 1835. Ximenes, Feb. cat. 77, #226, rebound, some margins stained ($150).

The Keepsake for 1831. Claude Cox, Nov. cat. 35, #9, scarlet watered silk (£21).


FUSELI, HENRY

Callipyga. Pen and brown ink, 16 x 9.5 cm. SL, 20 Nov. 1986, #44, illus. color (£24,000).

Portrait of Lavinia de Irujo. Pencil, black chalk, 6 1/8 x 7 1/4 in. CL, 17 Nov., #10, illus. (not sold; estimate £4000–6000).

Study of the Prophet Joel. Pen and brown ink, 10.5 x 6.5 cm. SL, 20 Nov. 1986, #56, illus. (£2420).

Woman in Chains (recto); A Figure (verso). Pencil and pen, 47.5 x 28 cm., a preliminary for “Inquisition,” one of Fuseli’s unpublished illustrations to Joel Barlow, Columbiad, 1807. SL, 16 July, #73, illus. color (£12,100).

Autograph manuscript, 2 pp. SL, 18 Dec. 1986, #311 (Wilson, £825). David Weinglass informs me that this is the manuscript of Fuseli’s comments on which Du Roveray based some of the statements on art in his edition of Gray’s Poems (1800), pp. xvii–xviii, xxiii–xxv.


Bell’s British Theatre, 1791–1798. Walford, Jan. cat. H1/46, #61, vols. 2–9, 11, 12, 14–20, 22–34 only, with all pls. after Fuseli but lacking some by Stothard (£125).

Boydeil, *Collection of Prints... Illustrating... Shakespeare*. 1803. BBA, 16 July, #384, marginal waterstaining (Henderson, £1760).


Spelman's Bookshop, Dec. cat. 12, #160, 15 vols., original cloth (£80).


Young, *Catalogue of the... Collection of... Angerstein*. 1823. Sims, Reed & Fogg, Jan. cat. 88, #439 (£45).

LINNELL, JOHN

Folio of 16 drawings attributed to Linnell and William Dixon. SL, 19 Feb., #124, 1 Linnell illus. (£1540).

Folio of drawings, water colors, and an oil sketch, 9 in all, attributed to John and James Thomas Linnell. SL, 19 Feb., #129 (£660).


*Gleaner's Return*. Oil, 33 x 45.5 cm., signed and dated 1855–7. SL, 11 March, #81, illus. color (£17,600 on an estimate of £3000–5000).

*Harvest Dinner*. Oil, 99 x 135 cm., signed and dated 1860. SL, 23 June, #15, illus. color (£46,200).

*Hoppers—Evening*. Oil, 29 x 52 cm., signed and dated 1849. SL, 18 Feb., #338, illus. (£1430).

*Meadow: Shepherds with their Flocks in a Field*, by John and Elizabeth Ann Linnell. Oil, 35.6 x 45.4 cm., signed and dated 1860. CL, 5 June, #66, illus. (not sold).

*Mountain Track*. Oil, 70.5 x 98.5 cm., signed and dated 1869–75. SL, 11 March, #86, illus. color (£13,200).

Noonday Rest. Oil, 100.3 x 138.5 cm., signed and dated 1862. CL, 24 April, #50A, illus. color (McConnal-Mason Gallery, £46,200 on an estimate of £15,000–25,000). Advertised by McConnal-Mason in *Country Life*, 1 Oct., p. 114, illus. color (not priced).

*Opening the Gate, or Changing Pastures on Hampstead Heath*. Oil, 69 x 90 cm., signed and dated 1849. SL, 11 March, #80, illus. color (£15,400).

*Passing the Orchard*. SL, 11 March, #82, illus. color (£4400). The illus. makes one slightly suspicious of the attribution to Linnell.

*Portrait of Thomas Cadby*. Oil, 28 x 22.2 cm. Agnew, June cat., #47, illus. (not priced).

*Portrait of John Chin*. Oil, 28.8 x 22.2 cm., signed and dated 1816. CL, 5 June, #152, illus. (not sold).

*Portrait of Henry Colman*. Oil, 29 x 14 in. Martyn Gregory, April cat. 46, #21, illus. color (£25,000).
Portrait of Thomas Hill. Oil, 22 x 19 cm., 1831. Agnew, June cat., #43 (not priced).

Portrait of Sarah Jackson. Oil, 5 1/4 x 4 1/4 in. Martyn Gregory, April cat. 46, #22, illus. (£1500).

Portrait of Miss Knighton. Oil, 15 x 12 in., signed and dated 1827. Martyn Gregory, April cat. 46, #19, illus. (not priced).


Portrait of Miss Otway. Oil, 11 x 8 1/2 in., signed and dated 1821. Martyn Gregory, April cat. 46, #20, illus. (£4500).


Potato Field on the Isle of Wight. Oil, 26 x 35 cm., signed, probably c. 1816. SL, 20 July, #122, illus. (not sold).

Shallows. Oil, 31 x 43 cm., signed. SL, 18 Nov., #73, illus. color (£13,200).

View of Mouse Bridge at the Foot of Hanson Toot, Derbyshire. Watercolor, 15 x 22.5 cm. SL, 19 Feb. #128, illus. (not sold).

Woodcutters near Redhill. Oil, signed, 39.5 x 68.5 cm. SL, 20 July, #120, illus. (£2200).

Young Harvester. Oil, 19 x 14.5 cm., signed and dated 1826. SL, 15 July, #117, illus. color (not sold).

Group of 6 prints, including lithograph portrait of a lady, hand colored "probably" by the artist, 1845; "Esparto," 1846; and portrait of R. Gooch. SL, 16 April, #269 (not sold); same group, SL, 29 Oct., #242 (not sold).

MORTIMER, JOHN HAMILTON

Man Attacking Monster. Pen and ink, 28 x 21 cm. SL, 19 Feb., #47, illus. (£1870).

Salvator Rosa. Pen and ink, 28 x 21 cm., signed and dated 1776. SL, 19 Feb., #46, illus. (£4620 on an estimate of £1000-1500).

Study of a Pilgrim, with the Head of an Old Man Behind. Pen and ink, 13 in. diameter circle, in the style and format of Mortimer's Shakespeare heads. CL, 14 July, #14, illus. (£1155).

Shakespeare's Characters. A folio of 11 ink drawings after Mortimer's engravings, manuscript title page dated 1833, with 2 of the original 12 engravings. Marlborough Rare Books, Nov. cat. 124, #46, "Richard II" illus. (£1100).


PALMER, SAMUEL


The Brothers, Guided by the Attendant Spirit, Discover the Palace and Bowers of Comus. Watercolor, 53 x 75 cm., exhibited 1856. SL, 19 Nov., #144, illus. color (£55,000).


Shanklin Church, Isle of Wight. Pencil, extensively inscribed, 7 1/2 x 9 1/4 in. CL, 25 Nov. 1986, #135 (not sold).

Sheep in the Shade. Watercolor, 14 3/4 x 20 7/8 in., signed, exhibited 1851. CL, 17 Nov., #212, illus. color (not sold; estimate £20,000-25,000).

View of Box Hill, Surrey. Oil, 24 x 41 cm. SL, 19 Feb., #123, illus. (£1450).

Will O' the Wisp. Watercolor, 4 1/2 x 8 3/8 in. CL, 14 July, #232, illus. color (£13,200 on an estimate of £5000-7000). A very lovely small watercolor, dated by Raymond Lister to c. 1865.


"Weary Ploughman," etching. SL, 29 Oct., #440, 8th st. on laid India, discolored (£308).


*Selection of Etchings by the Etching Club*, 1865, including Palmer's "Herdsman's Cottage." SL, 30 Oct. 1986, #444 (not sold).

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RICHMOND, GEORGE (I have made one exception to my usual rule of not listing later portraits)

*Self-Portrait*. Oil, 76 x 63.5 cm. Agnew, June cat., #57, illus. (not priced). See illus. 8.

ROMNEY, GEORGE (excluding portrait paintings)

*A Sketchbook*, with 105 drawings on 59 leaves, 9 x 16 cm., mostly pencil. SL, 19 Feb., #91, with 4 sketchbooks by other artists, 1 Romney illus. (£3520 on an estimate of £500-700).

*Horror* (head of a horrified figure). Pencil, 26 x 40.5 cm. SL, 19 Feb., #88, illus. (£4180 on an estimate of £1000-1500).

*Study for Emma Hart as Thetis Pleading with Achilles before Troy*. Pencil, 28 x 42 cm. SL, 19 Feb., #95, illus. (£418).

*Study of a Lady and Study of Figures with a Chariot* 2. Pencil, pen, 14.5 x 18.5 cm. and slightly smaller. SL, 29 April, #90 (£330).

*Study of a Woman*. Pen and brown ink, 7 x 17.5 cm. SL, 19 Feb., #90 (£264).

*Two Studies for Figures* (a muse and ranting figures). Pencil, pen, 44.5 x 27.5 cm. and 11 x 19 cm. SL, 19 Feb., #89 (£605).

*Waiting Souls*. Brown wash over pencil, 27 x 21 cm. SL, 19 Feb., #92, illus. (£4400).

RUNCIMAN, ALEXANDER


STOTHARD, THOMAS

*The Canterbury Pilgrims*. Oil, 30.5 x 93 cm. SL, 29 Oct. 1986, #270, illus. (£3080). Stothard painted three versions of this subject: one for R. H. Cromek, exhibited in 1807, and later sold to Hart Davis (now in the Tate Gallery); a smaller panel painted in 1813 for Samuel Rogers (sold SL, 14 March 1984, #106 (£7700)); and the present example, originally painted for J. Benson of Doncaster in 1813.

*Design for a Frieze*. Oil, 13.5 x 90.5 cm. SL, 19 Feb., #94, illus. (£990).


*Venus Arising from the Waves*. Water color, 30.5 x 22.5 cm., signed. SL, 12 March, #110, illus. (not sold).

"Distinguishing Characteristics of Masonry," engraving by Bartolozzi, 1802. CL, 19 May, #38 (£77).

"Sailors in a Fight" and "Sailors in a Storm," 2 mezzotints by W. Ward, 1798. CL, 10 Nov., #29, minor defects (not sold).


*Bijou*, 1828. Monk Breton, May cat. 17, #37 (£35). Bookpress, July cat. 32, #95, publisher's leather spine and boards ($95). Jenkins Company, Oct. cat. 204, #363, publisher's leather spine and boards, "spine burned away" ($45).


Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, the suite of 14 pls. after Stothard, imprints of 1788–1797. SL, 6 May, #157 (Chelsea, £93).


Keepsake. Charles Cox, June cat. 34, #4, for 1835, silk covered boards (£20); Nov. cat. 34, #7, for 1829, red watered silk (£35); #8, for 1830, red watered silk (£20); #10, for 1832, red watered silk (£20); #12, for 1834, red watered silk (£35); #13, for 1835, red watered silk (£18).

Milton, Paradise Lost, Pickering ed., 1828 [1835].

Sanders, March cat. Ill, #343 (£22).


Tasso, Jerusalem Delivered, 1797. Blackwell’s, April proof list “Potter,” #50, large paper, extra-illus. with 20 seventeenth-century pls. (£150).


Young, Night Thoughts, 1798. Claude Cox, July cat. 61, #236, rebacked, marginal browning (£40). W. & V. Dailey, Oct. cat. 47, #1262, Hayley’s copy with his auction ticket on the front pastedown, rebacked, marginal staining ($250).

Note: See also FUSELI, above, for some books with illustrations after Stothard.

VON HOLST, THEODORE

Study of a Young Lady, after Fuseli. Pencil, 18 x 20.5 cm. SL, 29 April, #27, illus. (not sold).

Woman Restraining a Warrior and Woman Sewing. 2, pencil and traces of water colors, 29 x 28.5 cm. and 24 x 20 cm., both signed. SL, 19 Feb., #99 (£352).

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