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N E W S

The Blake-Varley Sketchbook

Martin Butlin

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NEWS

We report with regret the death of Professor Vivian de Sola Pinto.

An annotated catalogue of the Fitzwilliam Museum's Blake collection is being made by Mr. David Bindman, who has kindly given us an excerpt, on Blake's life mask, for publication in this issue of the *Newsletter*.

Recent publications: David Piper, "Blake Ghosts" [review of the Blake-Varley Sketchbook], *The Guardian*, 2 October 1969, p. 9 [1 ill.]; Robert D. Hume, "The Development of Blake's Psychology," *Revue des langues vivantes*, XXXV (1969), 240-258; M.D. Paley, ed., *Twentieth-Century Interpretations of Blake's Song of Innocence and Experience* (Prentice-Hall, 1969); *Blake Studies*, 1, 2 (Spring 1969); John Crowe Ransom, "Blake Triumphant" [review of *Blake and Tradition* by Kathleen Raine], *New York Review of Books*, 23 October 1969, pp. 4-5; Winston Weathers, ed., *A Casebook on 'The Tyger,'* (Charles E. Merrill, 1969).

-MDP

Seminar 23: Methods of Studying the Illustrations of William Blake, will meet Sunday, 28 December from 10:30-11:45 a.m. in the Georgetown Room of the Brown Palace Hotel at the 1969 Meeting of the Modern Language Association to be held in Denver. As is usual for MLA Seminars, the rubric will include the following information: Attendance limited to 35. Members wishing to participate should write in advance to Professor John E. Grant, Discussion Leader for Seminar 23, Department of English, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52240. He will grant requests for admission up to the level of accommodations.

The subject this year will be the Arlington Court Picture. Mrs. Janet A. Warner of Glendon College, York University, will make a presentation based on an essay in progress.

Those who plan to attend are reminded of the chief interpretations of the picture which have been written by Digby, Keynes, and Miss Raine. Probably a slide of the picture will be shown to facilitate the discussion. Those not particularly gifted with retentive eidetic imaginations may also wish to have another reproduction available to them. The largest in color is included as pl xvi in Geoffrey Keynes, ed., *Blake, The Masters Series no. 6*, Paulton and London, 1965.

-John E. Grant

THE BLAKE-VARLEY SKETCHBOOK

In the facsimile recently published by Heinemann's a number of the pages have been inadvertently bound the wrong way round (the order is correct). Blake and Varley used the sketchbook both ways up so some of the oblong composition should in fact appear "upside-down". Vertical compositions, as a general rule, were done with the bottom of the drawing at the outside edge of the page.

The pages concerned are 9-10, 19-20, 35-6, 63-6, 71-98, 107-10, and 131-2.

-Martin Butlin

- NOTES -

I. Further Observations on William Rossetti's Annotations to Gilchrist's *Life of Blake*

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Martin Butlin has recently drawn attention to William Michael Rossetti's copy of Gilchrist's *Life of William Blake* (1863), now in the Houghton Library, Harvard University, Catalogue No. *EC75 / B5815 / W863g (B);¹ and he has suggested, on the basis of annotations to the "Descriptive Catalogue" in Volume II, that these notes -- perhaps written over a period of years² -- were begun before 1872 and completed by 1876. Rossetti's annotations to the biography and poems provide evidence in support of different time-limits for these marginalia. A note on "The Crystal Cabinet," referring to Swinburne's explanation of the poem, indicates that these jottings were begun after the appearance of *William Blake: A Critical Study* in 1868. The fact that the annotation to Volume II, p. 106, is printed almost verbatim in Rossetti's *The Poetical Works of William Blake* and that the annotation to the same volume, p. 77, is greatly expanded in this edition suggests that the marginalia to the biography and poems, at least, were completed by the Autumn of 1873 when Rossetti's edition with "Prefatory Memoir" was being put together.³

A librarian's note, inserted into the Houghton copy, indicates that "some annotations & revisions" from the first volume are "included in ed. 2; many more not" (the marginalia referring to Tatham's manuscript are uniformly ignored); also ignored are the many emendations to the second volume, although "revisions in the Descriptive Catalogue of Blake's pictures" are "generally included; and these marginalia are very numerous." Moreover, Rossetti's annotation to Volume II, p. 243, provides a clue as to what occasioned him to reread and heavily annotate this copy. He says, "It would be as well in a second edition, to put these heads into something a little more like order." The librarian's inference that these marginalia "arise from someone's request for advice concerning a possible 2nd edition" seems correct.⁴ The annotations are clearly suggestions, and indeed very few were carried into execution. For the most part, Rossetti is concerned with textual emendation and correction of printing errors and some biographical facts; however, a very few of his marginalia have a critical orientation, and those are printed below.⁵