

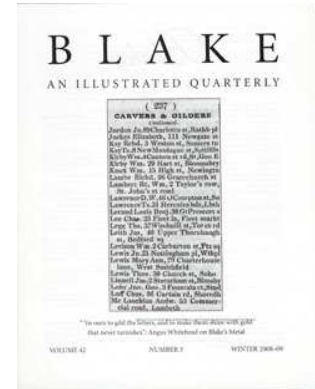
AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
BLAKE

R E V I E W

Christopher Rowland, “Wheels within Wheels”:
William Blake and the Ezekiel’s Merkabah in Text
and Image

Robert M. Ryan

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five?" (E 35) were stenciled the length of an entire wall in the shape of a bird's wings, while other lines ran along the baseboard and around display cases, swirling and diving across other walls. The students working with Scott clearly loved their subject, their playfulness a sure indicator of how much Blake's work became their own. It's not hard to see why. If online images or print reproductions inspire, Blake originals inspire even more. What is now called book history has long occupied Blake scholars; seeing the Muhlenberg exhibit reminded me how much of this history was a labor of love, both for Blake and his readers.

Scott, Grant. *Wings of Fire: The Illuminated Books of William Blake*. Allentown: Martin Art Gallery, 2008. N. pag. [14 pp. + 17 illus., mostly color]

Christopher Rowland. "Wheels within Wheels": *William Blake and the Ezekiel's Merkabah in Text and Image*. Père Marquette Lectures in Theology, 38. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2007. 43 pp. \$15.00, hardcover.

By Robert M. Ryan

IN this installment in a series of annual lectures sponsored by Marquette University, Christopher Rowland, Dean Ireland's Professor of the Exegesis of Holy Scripture at Queen's College, Oxford, examines Blake's response to the introductory chapter of the Book of Ezekiel: the prophet's vision of a God in human form enthroned on a chariot (*merkabah* in Hebrew) that moves on intricate wheels and is borne or accompanied by four living creatures that are simultaneously man and animal. The influence on Blake's conception of the four Zoas has long been recognized, but Rowland finds in Ezekiel a broader inspiration for Blake's confidence in the truth of visionary experience, his conception of the prophet's role in society, his insistence on the divine humanity, and his repudiation of any image of God as a distant monarchical lawgiver. In addition to discussion of *The Four Zoas*, Rowland offers thoughtful commentaries on Blake's reading of Job and the Apocalypse of Enoch and on the similarities between his response to Ezekiel and that of the mystic Joachim of Fiore. The lecture serves as a preview of a forthcoming book on Blake as an interpreter of scripture, a topic to which Rowland brings his impressive knowledge of the history of biblical exegesis.

N E W S L E T T E R

Blake in Paris

The first exhibition in France devoted to William Blake since 1947 will open at the Petit Palais on 1 April 2009 and run to 28 June. Curated by Michael Phillips, it will be composed of more than 150 works and represent Blake as a poet, painter, and artist-printmaker. The accompanying catalogue, in addition to listing the works, will also include over twenty essays by John Barrell, Martin Butlin, Elizabeth Denlinger, Anthony Dyson, Peter France, David Fuller, Suzanne Hoover, Andrew Lincoln, Saree Makdisi, Jon Mee, Martin Myrone, Morton Paley, Martin Postle, and Jon Stallworthy, amongst others. A program of lectures in both English and French is being organized by UFR d'Études Anglophones, Université Paris-Diderot (Paris 7), together with a conference on 30 May. A conference will also take place at the Collège de France on 3 June.

C O R R I G E N D A

The Huntington Library recently published a color reproduction of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* copy E. I served as the volume's editor and provided a commentary on the poems and designs. In the "Acknowledgments" (177), I state that "we show the images on a background based on the original paper." In spite of the production team's best efforts, the paper color in the reproduction does not accurately represent Blake's paper. The reproduction is too brown, with a slight rosy hue, whereas the original is much whiter, with a slight yellow-gray tint. The one exception is "The Tyger," plate 40 in copy E. Because of overexposure to sunlight while on exhibition for many years, the paper has turned brown. The reproduction is accurate in this regard. The representation of Blake's inks and watercolors on all plates is also true to the original.

The following sentence appears on page 12 of the commentary: "We can see outward evidence of such unities in play, a central activity in several *Songs of Innocence*, because of the way the state of innocence promotes a spontaneous marriage of thought and deed, mind and body." The sentence should read as follows: "We can see outward evidence of such unities in childhood play, a central activity in several *Songs of Innocence*, because of the way play promotes a spontaneous marriage of thought and deed, mind and body." — Robert N. Essick