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**BLAKE**

D I S C U S S I O N

**The Scholars & A Grain of Sand**

Warren Keith Wright

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ground. The curious aqueous anemone-like effect in the vegetation of the Tate version is not present in the Glen Foerd version where Newton is clearly in a cave through which light passes from the top left.

There are also clear differences in the way the color printing is applied; in the Glen Foerd *Newton* it has a thick and pasty quality, applied in broad dabs with occasional areas of aqueous reticulation as if the pressure was applied fairly gently from the printing surface. In the Tate Gallery version the color printing seems more controlled and concentrated in specific areas like the rocky background. The lack of the fluid kind of reticulation led me at first to wonder if it was color printed at all and built up instead with a dabber in the thicker areas, but this does not seem likely on further examination. The thickness and density of the Glen Foerd color printing aligns it with the Whitney *Good and Evil Angels* (cat. no. 53) and I would propose that these two and the Metropolitan *God Judging Adam* can be dated to about 1795. The *Pity* (cat. no. 52) and the *Hecate* (cat. no. 55) from the Tate, however, present more difficult problems. There can be no doubt from a comparison with the Tate *Newton* that they were at least finished off in 1804–05 for sale to Thomas Butts, but the quality of the color printing underneath, as far as it can be discerned under the final stippled coloring, seems to have the density of the presumed 1795 prints. It is still arguable, then, that these were, as was always thought, printed in 1795 and then finished finally in 1804–05 for Butts. If this is right then it would suggest that when Butts commissioned a set of the prints Blake had a mixed group of impressions of the color prints lying about the studio, most of which could be adapted into a harmonious set while others, including the *Newton* for reasons unknown, had to be made anew. This is probably as far as we can go at the moment but we will be able to fill out the account when the other Tate color prints are examined more closely.

Herewith a few notes on other things in the show:

Cat. no. 2. *Joseph of Arimathea* engraving (Trinity College, Hartford, Ct.). This appears to be a more interesting object than I first thought. Apart from touches of wash it has small areas of scraping out, and most unexpected, what appears to be the expressive use of plate tone on the surface to give a greater richness of texture. If this is deliberate then it suggests the use of yet another printing technique by Blake, and one that was hardly ever used in his time. The use of scraping out suggests a date in the 1820s; it is also used in the Mellon copy of *Jerusalem*, pl. 99.

44. *Europe a Prophecy*, copy A. I had hinted in the catalogue that there might be something wrong with the coloring of this copy, and I am now fully persuaded that most of the color washes, apart from the color printing, have been added by a later hand, perhaps in this century.

70. *The Virgin Hushing the Young John the Baptist*. Though a laboratory report states that this work is on paper it looks as if it is on canvas; certainly the weave is very strongly visible. Perhaps it is on very thin paper applied wet to the canvas?

79. *The Repose of the Holy Family in Egypt*. Though magical in quality and drawing this watercolor can be seen to be very badly faded.

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Other readers no doubt immediately recognized the lines quoted by Nelson Hilton in "The Shock of the New Blake" (*Blake* 58, [Fall 1981], 103), from p. 235 of Robert Hughes' *The Shock of the New* (New York: Knopf, 1981):

Seek those images  
That constitute the Wild,  
The lion and the Virgin,  
The Harlot and the Child.

This is the third of four stanzas from Yeats' "Those Images," published in *Last Poems* and written, so Richard Ellmann tells us (*The Identity of Yeats*, New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1975, p. 294), "before Aug. 10, 1937" — some dozen decades after Blake's major works were composed. (Hughes's capitalization of Virgin, Wild, Harlot, and Child are especially beguiling.)

Scholars have long known how strongly Yeats identified with his precursor; but

Lord, what would William Butler say,  
That Yeats should pass for Blake today?

[The Yeats lines were also identified by F. S. Corlew, *Ashtabula, Ohio*. Eds.]

