

Sale Catalogues of Blake's Works

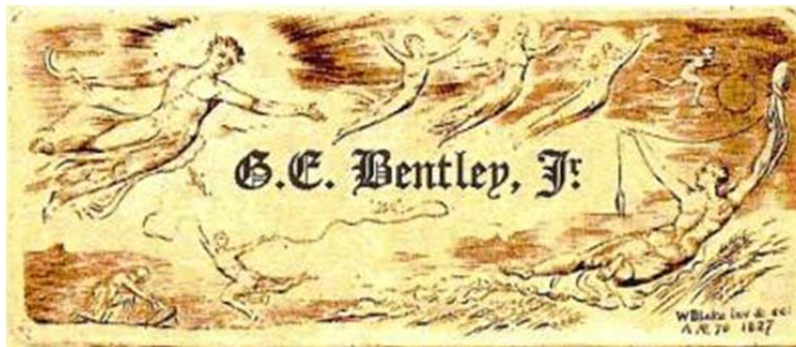
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Sale Catalogues of Blake's Works

1791-2017

A Catalogue Somewhat Raisonné

By



**Toronto
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In Homage to Martin Butlin

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				4,980		

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Introduction

Since 1951 I have been accumulating information about William Blake. Some of the information comes from sources which are ephemeral, such as sale catalogues, or difficult of access, such as archives in Canberra or Stoke-on-Trent.

The information in this list derives chiefly from

- (1) my own records of thousands of catalogues
- (2) G.E. Bentley, Jr, *Blake Books* (1977)
- (3) Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake* (1981)
- (4) Robert N. Essick, *The Separate Plates of William Blake: A Catalogue* (1983)
- (5) G.E. Bentley, Jr, *Blake Book Supplement* (1995)
- (6) G.E. Bentley, Jr, "William Blake and His Circle", *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* (1995 ff.).
- (7) G.E. Bentley, Jr, *Blake Records*, Second Edition (2004)
- (8) Robert N. Essick, "Blake in the Marketplace" for 1971-2013, *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* (1972-2014) for almost all the catalogues of 1971-2013

The list excludes incidental advertisements, announcements,¹ bibliographies, exhibitions,² most Prospectuses for books with Blake's commercial engravings,³ prints extracted from books, and reviews (which often have prices).

The records for Blake's commercial engravings and his pedagogical prints made with Thomas Butts are very irregular until 1971, when Robert Essick began to display them systematically.

I ignore engravings by William Staden Blake of 'Change Alley.

Note that before about 1980 the "British Library" was known as the "British Museum Library" or usually "British Museum".

¹ Such as the 15 announcements traced for Flaxman's *Hesiod* engraved by Blake.

² Such as those at the Royal Academy.

³ Such as that [1781] for Kimpton's *History of the Holy Bible*.

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The locations given for these sometimes very ephemeral catalogues represent only copies I have examined or are reported by Essick.

The authority for auction prices and buyers recorded here is not always clear. The Sotheby catalogues in the British Library, the Christie catalogues in Christie's, and the Quaritch catalogues in Quaritch's are generally the master copies and reliable, but the others may not be as worthy of trust.

Almost all the information here for catalogues of 1972-2015 is derived from Robert N. Essick, "Blake in the Marketplace", 1972 ff. Probably most of the physical catalogues are in his Biblioteca La Solana, but hundreds are online.

Essick's entries are organized, year by year, under works sold (e.g., Hayley, *Ballads*), with the same catalogue appearing in, say, half a dozen places, so a good deal of reorganization has been entailed here. Essick intersperses his own comments (e.g., "cheap") among the vendors' descriptions, and I have not always been confident where the vendor ends and Essick begins. I suspect that the phrase "fancy binding" is his.

I omit single prints taken from books unless they are proofs or otherwise remarkable.

Spelling has been adjusted to British/Canadian norms⁴ except for quotations, which are of course *literatim*.

Note that Enfield, Ritson, and Rees are the editors of the books listed under their names, not the authors.

The auction-prices given here are the hammer-prices; to this the auction-house adds a purchaser's premium varying with the date, auction-house, and the price paid.

⁴ Essick normalized them to U.S. spelling conventions.

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Abbreviations and Symbols

ALS	=	Autograph Letter Signed
BB	=	G.E. Bentley, Jr, <i>Blake Books</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977)
BBS	=	G.E. Bentley, Jr, <i>Blake Books Supplement</i> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995)
<i>Blake</i>	=	<i>Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly</i>
<Bodley>		Locations of the catalogues seen are given within angle brackets
BR (2)	=	G.E. Bentley, Jr, <i>Blake Records</i> , Second Edition (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2004)
Butlin #	=	Martin Butlin, <i>The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake</i> (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1981), Vol. I, number
Christie		The master copies of Christie auctions are still in Christie's
Essick, <i>Separate Plates</i>		Robert N. Essick, <i>The Separate Plates of William Blake: A Catalogue</i> (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983)
<i>Europe</i> [B]		Letters following names of books by Blake, usually within square brackets, identifying that copy derive from BB
g.e.		Gilt edges, a standard bookseller's abbreviation
<i>Innocence</i>		<i>Songs of Innocence</i>
<i>Songs</i>		<i>Songs of Innocence and of Experience</i>
Sotheby		The master copies of Sotheby catalogues are in the British Library
Victoria University in the University of Toronto		Most works so identified came from the Bentley Collection
£15		Prices of works sold by auction usually derive from annotations in the copy seen; of course different copies

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may be differently annotated. Some prices derive from other sources, particularly Butlin or *Book Prices Current* or Essick

False Dates

Job (1826)

150 sets of *Job* with "Published as the Act directs March 8: 1825" and "Proof" on each plate were printed by Lahee in March 1826 on india paper, the host leaves watermarked J WHATMAN TURKEY MILL 1825; 65 sets with "Proof" on each plate were printed in March 1826 on French paper watermarked J WHATMAN 1825; the word "Proof" was removed, and 100 sets were printed in March 1826 on drawing paper (*BB* pp. 517-519)

100 sets of *Job* (without "Proof" and without change to the title page) were printed by Holdgate Bros. in March or April 1874 on india paper mounted on very heavy, unwatermarked paper (*BB* pp. 523-524). Copies on india paper lacking the word "Proof" were printed in 1874.

Blair, The Grave (1808, 1813)

The work was printed in
1808 folio
1808 quarto, the same type, leaded less generously, signatures altered
1813 folio, the plates still dated 1808
1813 quarto, the plates dated 1813, watermarked EDMEADS & C^o 1811 and EDMEADS & PINE 1802
1813 folio, i.e., John Camden Hotten, 1870, text reset line-for-line using short "s" for long "f" (*BB* pp. 528-529)

Flaxman, Hesiod (1817)

Longman printed 200 copies of Flaxman's *Hesiod* in February 1817 (*BB* p. 538), and there were still 18 copies left in March 1838, when they were sold with the copper plates to H.G. Bohn (*BB* p. 560). Bohn probably printed the copperplates repeatedly -- he offered reduced-price copies in his 1841 catalogue (*BB* p. 560). The unwatermarked leaves provide little assistance in establishing a date for the (presumed) reprintings.

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Bell & Daldy acquired the copperplates and reprinted them with a title page dated 1870.

Flaxman, *Iliad* (1805)

According to Longman's records, Flaxman's *Iliad* (1805) was reprinted without change of title page date in 1806, 1808, 1809, 1813, 1814, 1815, 1822, and 1829, mostly 50 copies at a time. I do not know how to distinguish one printing from another.

Gay's *Fables* (1793)

It was reprinted with the same date on the title page on paper watermarked 1811. The 1793 edition uses the long "s" ("ſ"), the later one uses the short "s".

Hogarth, *Works* (1822 and n.d.)

The Works of William Hogarth (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1822), 119 plates (BB "C")

The Works of William Hogarth (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, 1822), colophon: "Printed by Jas. Wade", text reset, 116 plates (BB "D")

The Works of William Hogarth (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, n.d.), colophon: "Printed by Jas. Wade", 116 plates (BB "E")

The Works of William Hogarth (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, n.d.), colophon: "Printed by G. Norman", 116 plates (BB "F")

The Works of William Hogarth (London: Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, n.d.), colophon: "Printed by G. Woodfall", 116 plates (BB "G")

Note that there would have been different printers for the typeset text and for the engravings.

Lavater, *Essays on Physiognomy*

Vol. I (1789) was reprinted with the same title page date on paper watermarked 1810 and 1817.

Vol. II (1792) was reprinted with the same title page date on paper watermarked 1810 and 1817.

Vol. III (1798) was reprinted with a title page date of 1792 on paper watermarked 1817.

Only remarkable copies of books with Blake's commercial engravings are reported in catalogues later than 2014. Details may be found in Robert N. Essick, "Blake in the Marketplace" in *Blake: An Illustrate Quarterly* (2016 ff.).