Print - One of ten wood engravings: eight illustrations to 'Thornton's Virgil' by William Blake, <i>The Baccante</i> by Welby Sherman after Edward Calvert and Peace attributed to Samuel Palmer

Object: Print

Place of origin: England (made)

Date: early nineteenth century (made)

Artist/Maker: Calvert, Edward, born 1799 - died 1883 (made by)

Materials and Techniques: Print

Credit Line: Purchased with Art Fund support and assistance from the Friends of the V&A, the Julie and Robert Breckman Print Fund, and the Marks Trust

Museum number: E.1349:9-2001

Gallery location: Paintings, Room 88a, The Edwin and Susan Davies Galleries, case CA2

Descriptive line
Alexander Constantine Ionides Album

Physical description
Figure of Apollo shown from behind in a landscape turning out of the composition while playing a lyre.

Dimensions
Height: 9.2 cm, Width: 5.3 cm

Museum number
E.1349:9-2001

Object history note
Structure and contents of the prints and drawings album of A.C. Ionides

18th or early 19th century album, 54 fols., 235 x 180 mm.

Case binding of half maroon leather with paper sides, blind roll tooled across corners and down board edge at joint, three line gold tooling across spine to make five panels into which a centre decoration of lyres has been tooled in gold. The album is double-sided, to accommodate prints from one end and drawings from the other (stamped PRINTS and DRAWINGS in gold on the spine).

The book block comprises eight gatherings of various coloured papers (ivory, grey, pink, brown, green, buff, blue). Originally each gathering appears to have been made up of three sheets of folio quired with added compensation guards. Some leaves have been cut out and in other instances prints or drawings have been tipped to the compensation guards. The book block has been sewn all along on two parchment tapes and its first and last leaves have been adhered to the case as the pastedown.

Many of the prints in the album have been trimmed. Unless stated as plate sizes, paper sizes are given.

Following its acquisition, the album was foliated continuously from the start of the PRINTS section on fol. 1r to the start of the DESIGNS section on fol. 54v. As a result, the folio sequence appears to run in reverse when approached from the start of the DESIGNS section on fol. 54v. The contents of the album have also been individually inventoried, from E.1349:1-2001 to E.1349:94-2001.


Historical significance: Edward Calvert (1799-1883) served in the navy, taking part in the bombardment of Algiers and visiting the Aegean, where he acquired a lifelong love of Greece and classical antiquity, before moving to London in 1820 with the ambition of becoming an artist. He became a leading figure in the group of young artists known as the 'Ancients'. They were fascinated by the elderly William Blake, and particularly by his wood engravings of The Pastorals of Virgil, from which Calvert printed a series of impressions in September 1828. The fifteen prints which Calvert executed between 1827 and 1831 are major masterpieces of British Romanticism, and early impressions of them are very rare.
William Blake (1757-1827) occupies a pre-eminent position in British Romanticism - as printer, painter and poet. Largely ignored in his lifetime, in the 1820s he was a major influence upon the 'Ancients'.

Alexander Constantine Ionides (1810-90) belonged to a Greek merchant family from Constantinople which came to England in the 1820s. In 1833 he founded the firm of Ionides & Co and his business interests included being Consul-General for Greece and a director of the Crystal Palace. In 1844 Alexander and his family visited Greece, where he and his father founded the first Hellenic grammar school in Athens. He became the first patron of G.F. Watts (1817-1904), who painted several generations of the Ionides family, and in 1843 financed Watts' visit to Italy. Alexander was also a supporter and patron of JM Whistler, and his collection included works by Fantin-Latour, Legros, Rossetti, Poynter, Burne-Jones and Albert Moore.

URL

http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O195888/one-of-ten-wood-engravings-print-calvert-edward/