

ENGRAVINGS
AFTER BURNE-JONES

Edward Burne-Jones

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ENGRAVINGS

AFTER SIR EDWARD COLEY BURNE-JONES, BART., ARA
1833–1898

Burne-Jones took as much care and interest in the engravings after his work as he did in everything he undertook, retaining control of the process instead of leaving it to his dealers. He didn't simply pocket the huge profits available to the popular painter by permitting his work to be reproduced *en masse*; in fact, he didn't consider engravings at all until 1882, when, already famous, he let Agnew's publish *The Cumæan Sybil*, by Charles Edward Waltner, who was Professor of Etching at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. Next, wanting an English engraver, Burne-Jones chose Charles William Campbell who produced two beautiful mezzotints, *The Birth of Galatea* in 1885 and *Pan and Psyche* in 1887, before his untimely death at the age of only 32. Campbell's death left a long vacancy in Burne-Jones's fastidious mind, for he did not collaborate with another engraver until his discovery of Félix Jasiński, a Pole, naturalised as a Frenchman, working in Paris where most of the good etchers were.

Jasiński's first essay after Burne-Jones was probably unauthorised, a small and exquisite etching after *Perseus and the Graiae* for Jules Hautecoeur's *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* in 1893. At this time Hautecoeur commissioned Jasiński to engrave Botticelli's *Primavera*, but when Jasiński attempted to etch the subject, it struck him with the force of revelation that he could not do justice to the painting on the small scale imposed upon him by the magazine format of the *Gazette*, nor in the indirect technique of etching. Instead he took a sabbatical and engraved a large plate directly with line using the burin. He began each line from both ends, meeting precisely in the middle, so that the lines tailed in and out gently, without an ugly break at the end as the burin came out of the copper; it took him an entire day to engrave each half square inch. When he saw the finished engraving at the house of his friend and patron George Howard, Earl of Carlisle, Burne-Jones was

convinced that Jasiński was the right man to engrave his pictures. His clear and linear technique suited Burne-Jones's hard-edged line. Jasiński's first engraving after Burne-Jones for the British market was *The Golden Stairs* with Tooth's in 1893. Still hankering after an English engraver, Burne-Jones had The Fine Art Society publish Robert Walker Macbeth's bold etching, heavily inked, of *Chant d'Amour* in 1896 - but he was disappointed with it in comparison with Jasiński's fine and delicate *Mirror of Venus*, published the same year. In all, Jasiński made five line engravings after Burne-Jones.

Alison Smith has written in the catalogue to Tate's Burne-Jones exhibition (24 October 2018 - 24 February 2019):

'Jasiński's prints did much to establish Burne-Jones's reputation outside Britain as the greatest Pre-Raphaelite and as an essentially black-and-white artist, the absence of colour in the engravings reinforcing the remoteness and perfection of his vision'.

Lady Battersea, who owned the painting *The Golden Stairs*, remembered chatting to two French ladies on a train in Norway in 1911:

'We talked of art in England and in France; they were quite modern in their tastes, and proclaimed their allegiance to Rossetti, Watts, and, above all others, Burne-Jones.

"Ah, how beautiful is his picture called *The Golden Stairs*!" said the older lady of the two.

"I am so glad," I replied, "for I have it."

"Indeed!" said the lady, "and what may be the size of the engraving?"

"Oh," I answered ... "I have the picture itself."

"You have the original?" screamed the lady — "the very original? Impossible!"

"Yes, indeed."

"*O je vous en félicite!*" She jumped up and shook me by the hand.

"Yes," I said, much amused, "Burne-Jones painted it expressly for us."

"Then you knew him — you knew the master?"

"Yes, of course; he was a very great friend of ours."

"A friend! then you belong to us, you belong to *le monde bohémien!*"

(Lady Battersea, *Reminiscences*, 1922, p 312)

Burne-Jones and Jasiński were careful to have their publishers limit editions to small numbers, believing engravings to be rare and beautiful things - works of art in their own right. Burne-Jones also worked with several of the best French etchers, amongst them Boilvin, Sulpis and Mignon, all of whom made distinctive and delicate prints after his paintings. Burne-Jones refused to allow steel engravings, which, the plates being harder, made much larger editions. After the death of Campbell and before his partnership with Jasiński, Burne-Jones did countenance the making of an extraordinarily fine set of four photogravures, the *Briar Rose* series, made by the Berlin Photographic Company, which are amongst the best photogravures ever made. By the late 1890s hard alloy-faced photogravure plates were proving the death of the old ways, cheap prints from them flooding the market, but there remained for a while a world of difference between photogravures produced by the best German companies - with their high production values, superior optics and hand finishing of the plates - and cheap photogravures, which were poorly made, pale grey smudges by comparison. Other photographic processes were important to Burne-Jones, as the extraordinarily clear set of photographs of *The Six Days of Creation* testify, while platinotypes by his friend and neighbour Frederick Hollyer were particularly well suited to reproducing drawings in facsimile.

The engravings after Burne-Jones are not 'shadows of a dream', but living works of art.

Catalogue Notes:

Dimensions are of the image sizes unless otherwise stated.
All engravings are after Burne-Jones unless otherwise indicated.



1 *The Days of Creation*

Set of six photographs framed as one.

19¼ x 6½ inches each; framed dimensions 35 x 60 inches





2 *Psyche's Wedding*

Line engraving printed on vellum; signed by engraver.

By Félix Jasiński (1862-1902)

13½ x 24¾ inches

Published by Arthur Tooth and Sons, 1900. Printed by A. Salmon & Ardail.





AFTER SANDRO BOTTICELLI (1445-1510)

3 *Primavera*

Line engraving on vellum by Félix Jasiński (1862-1901)

Signed by engraver. Bears *remarque* of crossed trumpets.

13 x 20¼ inches

Published by Jules Hauteouer, 1892.

NB This impression is as published, but we also have a fine trial proof of this engraving (see online).





MANNA

- 4 *A Sibyl*
Etching printed on
paper; signed by artist
and engraver.
By Charles Albert
Waltner (1846-1925)
17¼ x 7 inches
Published by Thomas
Agnew & Sons, 1882.





5 *Vespertina Quies*

Etching printed on vellum; signed by artist and engraver.

By Émile Boilvin (1845-1899); 15¾ x 9 inches

Published by Arthur Tooth and Sons, 1897. Printed by A. Salmon & Ardail.





UNFRAMED PHOTOGRAVURES

From *The Work of Edward Burne-Jones, Ninety-One Photo-Gravures produced from the Original Paintings*, by the Berlin Photographic Company, published in London in 1901, limited edition of 200 copies. These are a few loose engravings from a disbound copy. Reproduced clockwise opposite.

Autumn, and, *Winter*, 13¾ x 5 inches

Chaucer's Dream of Good Women, 7½ x 10¼ inches

Day, and, *Night*, 13¾ x 4¾ inches

St George Slaying the Dragon, 8 x 9½ inches

Dorigen of Bretagne, 7 x 9¾ inches

The Wizard, 10¾ x 6½ inches

Princess Sabra Drawing the Lot, 10¾ x 18¾ inches

The Altar of Hymen, 9½ x 6½ inches

The Princess Tied to the Tree, 11 x 9½ inches

The Audience, 11 x 18¾ inches

Sir Edward Burne-Jones, after Philip Burne-Jones, 30¾ x 21 inches

Theophilus and the Angel, 7¾ x 10½ inches

The Backgammon Players, 6 x 9¼ inches

Autumn, 11½ x 4¼ inches

Winter, 11½ x 4¼ inches

Princess Sabra Drawing the Lot, 11 x 13½ inches

Sir Edward Burne-Jones, after GF Watts, 9¼ x 7¾ inches

Saint Cecilia, 10½ x 5 inches

The Council Chamber, 8¾ x 19¾ inches

Spring, and, *Summer*, 13¾ x 5 inches

Venus Concordia, 7½ x 12½ inches



6 *Pan and Psyche*

Mezzotint printed on paper; signed by the artist.

By Charles William Campbell (1855-1887)

14 x 11¾ inches

Published by Robert Dunthorne, 1887.





Frederick Hollyer with his family and staff, and an enormous cat, amongst a display of his platinotypes in about 1892 (Maas Archive)



7 *The Birth of Galatea*

Mezzotint on laid india; inscribed 'trial proof'.

By Charles William Campbell (1855-1887)

14 x 11 inches

Eventually published by Robert Dunthorne, 1885.



8 *The Briar Rose Series*

A set of four



a) The Briar Wood 16½ x 32¾ inches



b) The Council Chamber 16¾ x 33¼ inches



c) The Garden Court 16½ x 30½ inches



d) The Rose Bower 16½ x 30¾ inches

Photogravures; each signed by artist.

Published by Thomas Agnew & Sons, 1892. Printed in Paris.





9 *Flora*

Etching printed on
paper; signed by
artist and engraver.
By Eugène Gaujean
(1850-1900)
17 x 16½ inches

Published by Thomas
Agnew & Sons, 1894.
Printed by A. Salmon &
Ardail.





10 *Le Chant d'Amour*

Etching on vellum by Robert W. Macbeth (1848-1910)

Published by the Fine Art Society, 1896.

15¼ x 20¾ inches

NB This engraving is not on view at The Maas Gallery but may be viewed unframed at Tate's Burne-Jones exhibition, to which it has been loaned until 24 February 2019.







11 *The Golden Stairs*

Line engraving on
vellum; signed by artist
and engraver.

By Félix Jasiński
(1862-1901)

24¾ x 10¼ inches

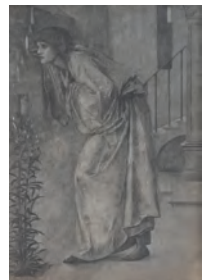
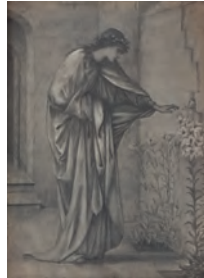
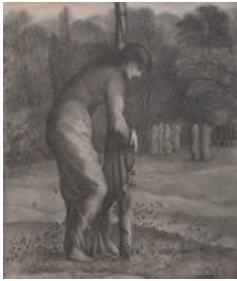
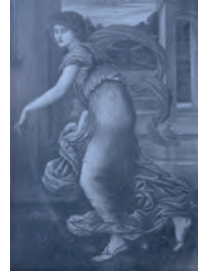
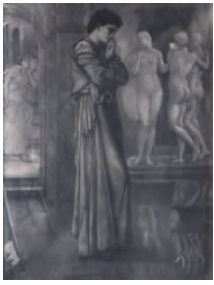
Published by Arthur Tooth
and Sons, 1894. Printed by
A. Salmon & Ardail.



12 *Olive Maxse*

Platinotype; initialled, dated 1895 and inscribed 'Olive' in the image.
19 x 13 inches





UNFRAMED PLATINOTYPES

PLATINOTYPES AFTER BURNE-JONES BY FREDERICK HOLLYER (1837-1933)

The photographer Frederick Hollyer (1837-1933) was a friend and neighbour of Burne-Jones, and had privileged access to the artist's studio, full of drawings and paintings that he was permitted to photograph and reproduce as platinotypes.

Hollyer's obituary in *The Times*, November 24th, 1933 gives insight into the artist's importance as a pioneer: 'He may be said to have done as much for their popularity by reproducing their work as Ruskin did with the pen ... In workmanship he was extremely fastidious, giving personal attention to every stage of the process, so that the final result was not so much a photograph of a painting as a translation of its qualities into photographic terms'. Reproduced clockwise opposite.

Pygmalion, 13½ x 10 inches

The Romance of the Rose, 9¾ x 12¾ inches

Nativity with Angels, 8¾ x 13½ inches

Borgia, 10 x 11¼ inches

The Call of Perseus, 12 x 10 inches

The Salutation of Beatrice on Earth, 10 x 11¼ inches

Spring, 10¾ x 7¼ inches

The Princess Tied to the Tree, 8¼ x 7 inches

Wood Nymph, 7 x 7 inches

Nativity, 14½ x 11¾

The King told of his Daughter's Fate, 8 x 14 inches

The Entombment - study for a bronze relief, 7¾ x 12½ inches

Caritas, 13½ x 6¼ inches

Pyramus and Thisbe - a set of three, 12 x 4¼, 12 x 8½, 12 x 8½ inches

Dante and Beatrice in Eden, 10 x 11¼ inches

The Return of the Princess, 8 x 9¾



13 *The Mill*

Etching printed on vellum; signed by engraver.

By Émile Sulpis (1856-1943)

9½ x 20¾ inches

Published by Arthur Tooth and Sons, 1899. Printed by A. Salmon & Ardail.







14 *The Mirror of Venus*

Line engraving printed on vellum; signed by artist and engraver.

By Félix Jasiński (1862-1901)

13 x 20¾ inches

Published by Arthur Tooth and Sons, 1896. Printed by A. Salmon & Ardail.





15 *Love among the Ruins*

Line engraving printed on vellum; signed by engraver.

By Félix Jasiński (1862-1901)

13½ x 20 inches

Published by Arthur Tooth and Sons, 1899. Printed by A. Salmon & Ardail.



16 *Le Chant d'Amour*

Large platinotype by Frederick Hollyer (1837-1933)

15 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 20 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches



17 *The Pygmalion Series 1*



a) *The Heart Desires*
Platinotype, 13 x 10 inches



b) *The Hand Refrains*
Platinotype, 13 x 10 inches



c) The Godhead Fires
Platinotype, 13 x 10 inches



d) The Soul Attains
Platinotype, 13 x 10 inches

Set of four platinotypes by Frederick Hollyer (1837-1933)
Framed as one; 19 x 57 inches







18 *Spring*

Etching printed on vellum; signed by engraver.

By Abel Mignon (1861-1920); 17¾ x 11¾ inches

Published by Arthur Tooth and Sons, 1900. Printed by A. Salmon & Ardail.

GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS

ENGRAVING

In engraving, the plate is cut into and the ink lies inside the grooves, as opposed to relief processes, such as woodcuts, where the ink lies on top of the ridges. The various ‘species’ of engraving relevant here include etching, photogravure, line and mezzotint. Engravings were often made from a combination of several of these techniques; these are known as mixed method engravings. The plates are usually made of copper, which is soft and easily worked. When the engraver was finished with his work, the plate was occasionally coated with a hard alloy by electrolysis to make it last longer. However, some engravings were made straight onto steel plates, and some smaller ones for illustrated publications were made onto wood.

PLATE

The engraved metal plate used to print from, the edge of which often leaves an indentation in the paper beyond the image, known as a plate mark.

ETCHING

A method of engraving. Etching depends on acid to engrave the plate. A coating of resin is laid onto the plate and a line pushed with a steel point through the coating to expose the metal. When the image has thus been drawn, the plate is engraved by immersion in acid. Protected by the resin, only the exposed metal of the drawing is etched. Etching is very fine, and the technique could produce the most delicate effects. It was often applied before other techniques in mixed method engravings.

LINE ENGRAVING

A method of engraving. Line engravings are made by working directly onto the plate with a burin, a small v-shaped chisel. The harder the tool is applied the deeper it cuts, the more ink the groove holds, and the heavier it prints. Line engraving can produce very clean and draughtsman-like engravings.

MEZZOTINT

A method of engraving. The subtlest technique

of engraving to produce tone is mezzotint, for all others rely on marks close together, such as crosshatching, to render tone. It is virtually the only technique whereby the engraver may work from dark to light instead of from light to dark. Mezzotints are made by completely or partially covering the plate with thousands of very fine dents, applied with a steel tool called a rocker. If a plate that has been completely rocked is printed from, a deep blackness is all that can be seen. It is a particularly rich black because extra ink lies in the burr thrown up by the rocker as it dents the soft metal. An image is then created by scraping out the dents completely for white, and burnishing down the burr for tone. Very fine graduations of tone can be obtained by rubbing with a soft cloth. Mezzotint can produce rich and soft engravings of great subtlety. It was supposedly introduced into Britain by Prince Rupert of the Rhine in the 17th century, establishing a tradition. The best mezzotint engravers were British.

PHOTOGRAVURE

A method of engraving. This method, as with etching, depends on acid to engrave the plate. In photogravure, the same basic technique was employed photographically. Instead of resin, a light-sensitive gelatine coated the plate. A photograph was taken of a painting, and light was shone through the negative to expose the gelatine on the plate. Where the light reached the gelatine, it hardened. The soft remaining gelatine was then washed off the plate, leaving the light-exposed hard areas still protecting the plate. The plate was then etched with acid and an image of the painting was printed from it. Photogravures varied enormously in quality, because during the exposure of the plate a net screen was used to break up the light into dots, and it was a difficult process to control. The best photogravures were made in Germany.

LITHOGRAPH

A method of planographic printing. An image was made upon a flat limestone (zinc or aluminium could also be used) using an oily,

greasy, waxy or resinous stick. The surface, which could then be etched to roughen it where not protected by the marks, was then dampened with water, and rolled over with an oil-based ink, which adhered to the drawn marks, being elsewhere repelled by the water. The image could thus be printed onto paper.

PLATINOTYPE

A platinotype is a type of photograph made by a process derived from that invented by William Willis in 1873, but perfected to the degree of facsimile by Frederick Hollyer when photographing drawings. The paper was impregnated (not coated, as is the usual case) with light-sensitive compounds of iron. After exposure through a negative, a fine layer of platinum was deposited on the exposed areas by means of a chemical reaction. The temperature when the reaction took place determined the colour of the image. Cold, the colour was a soft, rich black. Hot, and the image tended towards sepia. Hollyer was able to achieve such fine control of the whole process, that some of his platinotypes are almost indistinguishable from drawings.

PRINTSELLERS' ASSOCIATION (PSA)

The Printsellers' Association was an independent regulatory body created by the engravings trade which kept close control over the size of each edition by stamping each print with its official stamp. It was formed in 1847 by a cartel of publishers to protect the market from fraud.

PROOF

An individual impression of an engraving. Proof is a term used commonly for trial proofs or early impression, but confusingly the Victorians used it for a system of the various states after publication. The Printsellers' Association's rules define them (see below), in the order of their printing from the plate (because copper plates wore out quite quickly there is often a dramatic difference in quality between the earlier proofs and the later). Sometimes the various proof stages were further sub-divided according to the support on which they were printed. These were, in order of quality: satin, vellum, and then paper from the Orient known as 'India', (sometimes actually China, a misnomer caused

by the fact that it was imported by the East India Company), 'Dutch', or 'plain'. Each proof state was limited to the size declared to the PSA by the publisher, unless it was declared unlimited.

TRIAL PROOFS are the impressions taken by the engraver so that he could see how his work was progressing, and exist outside declared editions. Engravers had to work in the negative on the plate, and it was necessary for them to see the effect of their toil as they worked. Trial proofs are very rare and often unique, and because they are the earliest impressions from the plate they are often the strongest.

PRESENTATION PROOFS, if taken at all, were the first from the plate after it was finished; usually less than 25 were made, and they were for presenting to the owner of the picture or copyright, or to influential people to help sales.

ARTIST'S PROOFS were the first impressions made freely for sale. They were limited in number and are usually identified by being signed in pencil by the artist and the engraver as well, unless it is a photogravure. The PSA stamp is in the bottom left corner.

REMARQUE ARTIST'S PROOFS were as above, bearing a remarque. If their prices from the publishers were more than Artist's proofs then they had to have been printed before.

PROOFS BEFORE LETTERS were unsigned, limited in number, without the title. The PSA stamp is in the bottom right corner.

LETTERED PROOFS were as above but with the title added.

REMARQUE

A small design etched in the margin of the plate.

STATE

Each time a change is made in the plate by the engraver, the resulting impression is termed a later state to the preceding. If a Catalogue Raisonné lists the state it is given a number (first, second, etc.). See also 'Proof'.

