

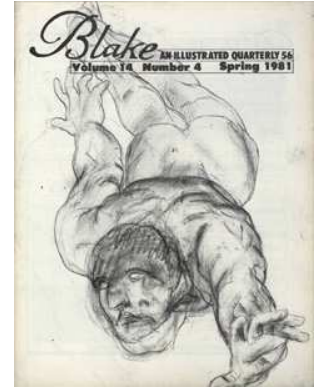
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D I S C U S S I O N

The Dead Ardours Revisited

David Bindman

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¹ (New York: The Grolier Club, 1921), pp. 328-31. Keynes erroneously lists a Linton cut on II, 1, and II, 2; they are on II, ix (unnumbered page), and II, 1, respectively. The frontispiece of Linnell's 1827 portrait of Blake is apparently the only engraving not done by Linton: it is by C. H. Jeens.

² None of these appears in the 1880 edition of Gilchrist's *Life*.

³ On 20 April 1861 Rossetti had written to Alexander Gilchrist to suggest a friend of his to work on the Blake illustrations: "I have been thinking that if you are still unprovided with a satisfactory copyist (or a sufficiency of such) for the Blakes,-- Mrs. Edward [Burne] Jones would be very likely to succeed. This occurred to me shortly after seeing you the other day, but I did not see her till today, when I mentioned the matter to her. I hope I did not do wrong, but she is too intimate a friend to make it awkward for me if you and Linton cannot entertain the idea"--*Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. Oswald Doughty and John R. Wahl (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965), II, 396. This seems to suggest that Linton originally may have planned (or been hired) only to supervise (and/or execute a few of) the engravings for the *Life*. In any case, nothing seems to have come of the matter.

⁴ This is an assumption on my part. Rossetti's words, in the letter to Mrs. Gilchrist quoted below, are "the Job Plates which he [Linton] copied." It is possible, then, that these plates are the five I have already noted--though Linton's pillaging of the border design of Plate 12 argues that he did more than five.

⁵ Letter from Rossetti to Mrs. Gilchrist, dated only "Feb. 1863," in *Letters*, II, 477. There is a hint, however, that there was some earlier difficulty over the Job project. On 13 December 1862 William Michael Rossetti, who was also very much a part of

the Gilchrist *Life* enterprise, wrote to Mrs. Gilchrist: "I am truly sorry that so much anxiety to you has been involved in the Job affair"--*Letters of William Michael Rossetti*, ed. Clarence Gohdes and Paul F. Baum (Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1934), p. 11. I can find no other reference to an apparent problem--though, of course, Linton may have been the cause. Dante Gabriel once said of him, "He keeps stomach-aches for you" even if he was the best engraver around--Oswald Doughty, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti: A Victorian Romantic* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1949), p. 215.

⁶ Another letter of February 1863 from Rossetti to Mrs. Gilchrist, in *Letters*, II, 477.

⁷ Letter from Rossetti to Mrs. Gilchrist, dated only "1863" but apparently later than those already cited, in *Letters*, II, 482.

⁸ Letter of 1863 from Rossetti to Mrs. Gilchrist, in *Letters*, II, 483.

⁹ *Letters*, II, 489. This "list" was perhaps that from which the "List of Illustrations" (Gilchrist, *Life*, I, xiii-xiv) was to be made, for earlier Rossetti had written to Mrs. Gilchrist that "Mr. Linton has sent me a list of the illustrations [n.b.: not his] which must come in somewhere. I will see with the Printer" (*Letters*, II, 488). I have been unable to learn whether the list has survived.

¹⁰ The listing of Linton's Job plates in the "List of Illustrations" following the contents pages of the *Life* is accompanied by the notation: "Two only the centres the same size as the originals [i.e. Job 5 and 14], and one reduced to show border [i.e. Job 8]. These Plates are given in duplicate in the Series rendered by Photolithography." There is no notation accompanying the listing of Linton's engravings of Job 15 and 18.

DISCUSSION

WITH INTELLECTUAL SPEARS & LONG WINGED ARROWS OF THOUGHT

THE DEAD ARDOURS REVISITED

David Bindman

Before "The Dead Ardours Perry" enters the canon of Blake's writings [see David V. Erdman, "Leonora, Laodamia, and the Dead Ardours," *Blake* 54, Fall 1980, pp. 96-98] and becomes part of the intellectual heritage of the English-speaking peoples it might be of interest for me to describe what I can make of the words on the drawing with it in front of me. To begin with, the letters 'W B' on the left are *below* the level of the disputed text, therefore David Erdman's assumption that they belong with it is doubtful: more to the point, perhaps, is that the letters 'W B' do not look as if they are in Blake's hand, and they are not in the same type of script as the other text. There can be no doubt about the initial words 'The dead' nor, I believe, that they are in Blake's own formal script, but it is still not even clear how many words follow. I agree with Erdman that 'bad-doers' does not work but I would dispute it because there appear to be

four letters where he reads the 'ard' of 'ardours'; in fact I see a faint 'b' or another letter with a long vertical stroke before his conjectured 'ard'. That final 'd' is certain, the 'ar' at least possible, in which case we are left with 'bard', which makes sense but can only be regarded as a tentative suggestion. The four letters read by Erdman as 'ours' may complete the word as he suggests (in which case it would be unlikely to begin with 'bard'); there could be a hyphen between them and the previous word (as in 'bad-doers'), or they could form a separate word. What makes it especially difficult is that they seem to have been gone over and altered in pencil, most likely by Blake himself. As for the word read by Erdman as 'Perry' it looks very much to me and to others who have looked at it as if it begins with an elaborate 'l' and it could end with a 'g' and not a 'y'. I can make nothing of the letters in between. I should also say that it seems very improbable that Blake would have brought in the name of such an obscure engraver in this way, in the same formal script as the title, even if there were other evidence to connect it with the *Leonora* engravings.

I am sorry to have thrown the question open again, but anyone who wants to have another try is always welcome to look at the drawing in London. David V. Erdman's response will appear in the summer 1981 issue. Eds.