

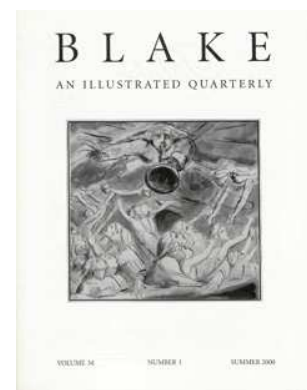
AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY BLAKE

M I N U T E
P A R T I C U L A R

A Blake Drawing Rediscovered and Redated

Martin Butlin

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MINUTE PARTICULARS

A Blake Drawing Rediscovered and Redated

BY MARTIN BUTLIN

William Michael Rossetti's "Annotated Lists of Blake's Paintings, Drawings and Engravings," added as an appendix to Alexander Gilchrist's *The Life of William Blake*, 1863, and revised for the second edition of 1880, are invaluable in listing Blake's works when they were still in the hands of a relatively small number of owners, and in helping identify particular works through the almost naive specificity of some of his descriptions. However, unless the work is actually dated (and not even then in every case), Rossetti rarely gives any indication as to the period of a work, nor of its connection to any specific series of designs or set of illustrations. Remarks such as "A sketch for a design afterwards executed" is tantalizing to say the least (1863, p. 247, list 2, no. 78, and 1880, p. 266, list 2, no. 103; this drawing, listed as untraced in my catalogue, Martin Butlin, *The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*, 1981, pp. 455-56, no. 610, has still not been identified). Hence it is not altogether unforgivable that the drawing entitled by Rossetti "The Last Trumpet" (illus. 1: see cover) should have been listed by me as a possible illustration to [Robert] Blair's *The Grave*, "c.

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2 Sketches for Hayley's *Ballads*, and other works, c. 1802-03. Pencil, 8 1/16 x 8 3/8 in. (20.4 x 21.2 cm). Newly recorded verso of Butlin #617. Photo courtesy of Sotheby's, London.



1805 (?)” (Butlin, p. 458, no. 617). Nor, at first sight, W. Graham Robertson in his edition of Gilchrist's *Life*, incorporating Rossetti's Lists of 1907, now available in a welcome reprint by Dover Publications, 1998, should identify it with the drawing in the British Museum of *An Angel Awakening the Dead with a Trumpet* (Butlin, p. 456, no. 612, repr. pl. 853A), possibly done for the “Characteristic Frontispiece” intended for *The Grave*.

However, a comparison between the British Museum drawing and Rossetti's description had already demonstrated that Robertson's identification was incorrect, the most specific part of Rossetti's description failing to be matched in the drawing: “An Angel in the upper mid-plane of the design is blowing the trumpet, the tube of which comes forward in a conspicuous way. Souls, chiefly of women and children, are rising from the earth, and received by angels” (Rossetti 1863, p. 248, list 2, no. 86, and 1880, p. 266, list 2, no. 112; Robertson 1907, p. 473, list 2, no. 86; emphasis mine). The trumpet in the British Museum drawing is unmistakably facing more or less directly downwards, but in the drawing here illustrated it does come forward in a conspicuous way.

This drawing, for sight and information of which I am indebted to Henry Wemyss of Sotheby's, fits Rossetti's description exactly and is clearly one of that large group of pen and wash drawings to be dated to the early 1780s; in particular, the heads of the resurrected souls are very close

to those of Joseph's brethren in the drawing for the watercolor of *Joseph Making Himself Known to His Brethren* exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1785 (see B 159 recto and verso; the finished work, in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, is B 157). The drawing is probably, therefore, from late in the group, about 1785 and, as if in justification of my misidentification, may be linked in subject to two illustrations to *The Grave* not of 1805 but of c. 1780-85, *The Counsellor, King, Warrior, Mother and Child* (not in Rossetti; B 136, pl. 153) and the *Burial Scene* entitled by Rossetti “Young burying Narcissa (?)” and related by him to two lines from *Night 3* (1863, list 2, no. 102, and 1880, list 2, no. 130; B 137 recto, pl. 154). In any case, it is one of the strongest of this group of early drawings and deserves more than Rossetti's dismissive “A moderately good design, having no salient qualities of execution.”

The drawing is on a sheet of paper 8 1/16 by 8 3/8 in. (20.4 x 21.2 cm) which has been folded slightly to the left of center. On the reverse (illus. 2) are a number of drawings, those which can be identified being probably related to Blake's illustrations to William Hayley's *Ballads* and in particular to the first edition of 1802-03 rather than to that of 1805. The agonized face in profile in the upper right-hand corner seems to be a sketch for the young man about to be saved from being eaten by a crocodile by the self sacrifice of his dog, used for the frontispiece to “The Dog” (David Bindman,

The Complete Graphic Works of William Blake, 1978, pl. 396). The head of the eagle, center left, was presumably done in connection with the frontispiece, and less directly the headpiece, to "The Eagle" (Bindman pls. 390, 391). The lion, for such it seems to be, particularly on account of its large claws, in the center right is not directly related to the depiction of the lion in "The Lion" (Bindman pl. 393) but could well be a study. In the upper left-hand corner of the drawing there are two distinct studies for a human right eye which call to mind the child in Blake's frontispiece to B. J. Malkin's *A Father's Memoirs of His Child*, 1806, though it is impossible to make any specific identification.

The basic information in my catalogue entry seems to be correct given a misdating of some 20 years, with the addition to the provenance of the drawing of Iolo Aneurin Williams, the well-known collector of English drawings and watercolors, about which he wrote an important book, *Early English Water-Colours, and Some Cognate Drawings by Artists Born Not Later Than 1785*, published by *The Connoisseur* in 1952.

Whose Head?

BY HANS-ULRICH MÖHRING

Translating "A Vision of the Last Judgment" into German, and working with the editions of Blake's works by David Erdman (1988) and Geoffrey Keynes (1985), I came upon three words that didn't seem to make sense. Consider the following passage (E 558/K 609): "He is Albion our Ancestor patriarch of the Atlantic Continent whose History Preceded that of the Hebrews & in whose Sleep or Chaos Creation began, [his Emanation or Wife is Jerusalem who is about to be recieved like the Bride of the] at their head the Aged Woman is Brittania the Wife of Albion Jerusalem is their Daughter little Infants creep out of the flowery mould into the Green fields of the blessed . . ." The words "at their head" don't relate to anyone. But placed before "little Infants" they would be part of a meaningful sentence.

Looking at David Erdman's and Donald Moore's facsimile edition of *The Notebook of William Blake* (rev. ed. 1977), we see (N 81) that Blake continued the inserted sentence "He is Albion . . ." down the right margin with "& in whose Sleep or Chaos Creation began." Then he wrote "his Emanation or Wife is Jerusalem," while he must have meant the following "at their head" to link up with the main text "little Infants creep. . . ." He later amended the short remark about the Emanation with "who is about to be recieved like the Bride of the," but then, obviously having changed his mind, he erased both remark and addendum and replaced them with the line written upside down at the top of the page "the Aged Woman is Brittani[c]a the Wife of Albion Jerusalem is their Daughter." This does not, however, alter the connection between "at their head" and "little Infants creep. . . ."

We find this confirmed in the picture of "The Last Judgment" in the Rosenwald Collection (Butlin 645), where the Infants can be seen creeping out of the mould—"at their head," i.e., Albion's and Brittania's. It seems to me that the placement of these three words in the text editions of Blake's works needs to be corrected.

R E V I E W S

Morton D. Paley, *Apocalypse and Millennium in English Romantic Poetry*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999. x + 323 pp. \$72.

Reviewed by CARL WOODRING

This book marks still another peak in Morton Paley's studies of Blake, Coleridge, and other English poets and painters sublime and romantic. Although Paley knows enough about the subject to produce an encyclopedia or to qualify as one of James Thurber's "get ready" men, *Apocalypse and Millennium in English Romantic Poetry* is a trim book with a compact argument. Taking apocalypse to be an uncovering of ultimate truths, with associated imagery of entrenched evil destructively removed; taking *millenarian* to refer specifically to the Second Coming of Christ; and considering the millennium as—for the Romantics—a less specifically defined final regenerate utopia of social or spiritual peace, Paley attests that the six major English Romantic poets all readily conceived works on apocalyptic revelation, but none found an unproblematic way to continue the narrative into utopian millennium.

An introduction surveys the pertinent biblical materials and such notable influences on the Romantics as *Paradise Lost* and Thomas Burnet's *Theory of the Earth*. Early pages on Blake add the Swedenborgians, the notorious Richard Brothers, the lesser known Ralph Maher, and the provocation from Burke's excoriation of Price's tribute to the "false apocalypse" in France, with the lesser provocation of Malthus's rebuttal to Godwin's belief in progress. Thereafter, the book follows the main road of significant poems by the six major poets. The method is exegesis, line by line when needed, with attention to the figurative, thematic, and recurrent, such as plague, serpent, and chains, and to allusions explainable by historical context. For each work, early reviews are cited when informative.

Blake and Coleridge occupy the first half of the study, partly because they wrestled longest and hardest with the relation of Christianity to ultimate human destiny, partly