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NEWSLETTER

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EMBLEMATIC TRADITION IN
BLAKE’S THE GATES OF PARADISE

JOSEPH S. SALEMI

If only in its brevity and reticence, William Blake's The Gates of Paradise differs noticeably from the expansiveness and epic scope of his later prophetic works. Critics have marked the terseness and elliptical style of this small book which, symbolically enough, appeared at both the beginning and the end of Blake's career. In a very detailed and carefully considered study of The Gates of Paradise, George Wingfield Digby states that "its concise and epigrammatic style makes it difficult to understand," and John Beer prefaces his discussion of the plates by saying that their obscurity "is partly due to the compression of thought which lies beneath them." Any serious study of The Gates of Paradise must not only try to illuminate the meaning of Blake's work, but must also try to account for his choice of a clipped and almost hieroglyphic form, and one depending so heavily on the reader's intuitive perception of that very meaning.

Although commentators have casually mentioned the similarity between The Gates of Paradise and traditional emblem books, no systematic study of the plates in relation to emblematic motifs has been attempted. The faults of emblem books are many: their one-to-one symbolism is tiresome and predictable, their poetry is often mediocre and banal, and their intention is to moralize in the worst sense of the word. It is difficult to think of an artist of Blake's stature as doing anything other than transcending such a genre if he chose to work with it. In fact he does so, as I hope to demonstrate. But many great things have humble beginnings, and the question that must occupy us here is this: Does emblem literature provide a background of reference for The Gates of Paradise? I suggest that Blake's small volume shows a close relation with early emblem books, and I propose to consider both the structure and the content of The Gates of Paradise by seeking out specific parallels in emblem literature for some of its engravings.

At first glance, The Gates of Paradise appears to be the quintessential emblem book. In both outward appearance and composition it is remarkably similar to many of the small volumes of symbolic woodcuts and engravings so popular throughout Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. As with emblem books, the primary impact of The Gates of Paradise is visual, deriving its evocative power from the dominance of the engravings rather than their textual accompaniment. Most of the plates do not reveal their meaning immediately; rather, by themselves they are of uncertain interpretation. This suggests that hieroglyphical quality so characteristic of emblem literature, wherein meaning is embedded in visual metaphor and analogy, Moreover, each engraving is accompanied by a small, terse phrase or sentence beneath it, sometimes only cryptically or obliquely related to the illustration. Such a phrase or sentence corresponds to the motto of the conventional emblem: a short proverb, tag, or quotation which provided a key to the meaning of the symbolic picture. And finally, the verse "Keys" or poetic elaborations of each engraving which Blake appended to For the Sexes serve the same function as the explanatory verse accompanying traditional emblems.
In content, The Gates of Paradise is also reminiscent of emblems. An important function of the emblem book was to be a mirror of the life of man; it depicted graphically the vices, follies, virtues and strengths of the human race, along with appropriate admonitions and judgments. In a similar manner, the central concern of The Gates of Paradise is man's predicament qua man. Blake's engravings are a sequential representation of human experience from infancy to death, designed to illuminate the reader with moral and spiritual insights. In this respect The Gates of Paradise resembles Francis Quarles's Hieroglyphikes of the Life of Man (1638), an emblem book which traces in a series of fifteen small engravings the progress of life from birth to extinction.1 Like all emblem books, Quarles's work is deliberately didactic, and given to pious moralizings which are absent from The Gates of Paradise. Yet Blake's book is subtly propagandistic in many ways. Its very title in both versions (For Children, For the Sex) suggests that Blake was consciously directing his effort to the illumination of his readers, and although his engravings are appreciable as examples of art in themselves, the fact that Blake provided "Keys" in the later version indicates that he thought it important for people to disengage some kind of meaning from them. In short, The Gates of Paradise was meant to teach certain truths about the human condition, and this is a purpose that it shares with earlier emblem literature.

One easy way of looking at The Gates of Paradise (surely too easy a way) is to see it as a sequential unfolding of the human soul's struggle to break free from the cycle of disordered desire, thereby coming to an acceptance of mortality and mortal limits. Traditional emblem literature could offer many precedents and parallels to such a conventional reading. But a critic always walks on thin ice whenever he imagines that Blake can be reduced to a moralist or sermonizer, even in those places where, to the casual reader, he seems to be offering the blankest sort of sentimental piety. Blake's angel was always ready to become a devil. Northrop Frye has pointed out that The Gates of Paradise does indeed attempt to end a futile struggle, but that it is precisely the vicious circle of unthinking orthodoxy and raging rebellion from which Blake wishes to free the soul.2 The lesson of The Gates of Paradise is not fatalistic acceptance of the world as it is, but a call "to transform the world into a human and imaginative form."3 According to Frye, "The natural tendency of desire . . . in itself is to find its object. Hence the effect of the creative impulse on desire is bound to be restrictive until the release of desire becomes the inevitable by-product of creation."4 Such a reading of The Gates of Paradise is miles away from the conventional: Blake is not arguing for the cessation or even the control of "evil" desire, but for its transmutation into art. Similarly David Erdman in his detailed study of Blake's Notebook points out that although the emblems in The Gates of Paradise series all focus on human mortality, the series as a whole shows an irresistible impulse to break free from the mechanical finality of a birth-to-grave cycle.5 Echoes of the traditional momento mori run through The Gates of Paradise, but for Blake that motif is only a convenient framework in which his own ideas can move, and out of which they finally burst.

The frontispiece and Plate 1 of The Gates of Paradise6-9 are imaginative portrayals of human birth, but this birth must be understood in more than the physical sense. The frontispiece shows two leaves stemming from a single branch; a dark leaf bearing a caterpillar arches over a lighter one on which a larva-like infant sleeps. Plate 1 reveals a woman stooping to pluck a living child out of the earth by his hair; she carries an infant in her other arm. We see in these plates two phases corresponding not only to fetal growth and to birth, but to the psychological states which gestation and birth symbolize. The chrysalis-child sleeps in a world totally submerged in unconscious, vegetative existence; hence the dominance of the dark leaf in the plate. Like the caterpillar he is segmented (although this may be a deliberate ambiguity, suggesting swaddling clothes as well), showing his unbreakable link to the world of matter, but he bears incipient wings5-10 which hold the promise of flight, i.e. the transcending of purely physical existence. It seems that what is symbolized here is the eternal possibility of human consciousness, hidden in the dark sleep of matter. Similarly, the birth of the child in Plate 1 is only secondarily by way of a woman, but primarily from the earth. This birth is an eruption of consciousness from ageless roots, one which is only paralleled in physical parturition. Moreover, the child pulled from the earth has hair but the carried child has little or none; the face of the child in the earth bears a look of independence and strength while the carried child is helpless and dependent. If we take these children to be one and the same child—as I think the "Key" compels us to do—then the interpretation seems to be that although through physical birth we are subjected to the dominance of "feminine" reality, our actual origins are in an impersonal matrix of existence in reference to which our true strength and independence must develop. Both plates demand that the reader go beyond the actual illustration; they are clearly allegorical in the sense that they point obliquely toward some not immediately apparent meaning. This is an emblematic technique which Blake employed frequently, but which seems to be particularly evident in The Gates of Paradise, where so little text accompanies the engravings.

Just how emblematic the two plates are can be judged by comparing them with emblems from two well-known texts. An illustration from Andrea Alciati's Emblemata Liber shows an infant in swaddling clothes lying beneath an almond tree. The emblem's intent is to use the early bloom and flowering of the almond as a metaphor for precocious children: both bear fruit early, but are subject to untimely extinction as well. An illustration from Philip Ayres's Emblemata Amatoria (1683) shows the god Love scattering his "seed" over the earth in the form of children. As in Blake's plate, these children are half-buried in the earth, where they seem to grow like plants. Although one would be hard put to establish any connection (either thematic or derivational) between these emblems and Blake's engravings, the curious similarity in conception deserves to be noted. But it should
also be noted—and this point comes up again and again when considering *The Gates of Paradise* in the light of superficially similar emblems—that Alciati and Ayres attempt merely to visualize a simile or metaphor, whereas Blake never allows any of his plates to be so easily reduced to a simple figure of speech.

The following four plates in the series (2, 3, 4, and 5) are thematically related as elements, but it is useful to consider them individually. Plate 2 ("Water") presents a man inundated with rain and stricken with sorrow. Critics have suggested a number of interpretations, from a simple "vale of tears" motif to a neoplatonic symbolism of water as illusory matter. From Blake's *Notebook* it is clear that Hamlet's grief and Scriptural allusions have gone into the picture's conception, but along with these valid considerations we must include, I suggest, the emblematic convention of the weeping sky or heaven. An emblem from Henry Peacham's *Minerva Britannia* (1612) is a good example of this motif, and the connection is supported by Blake's caption "Thou Waterest him with Tears," which suggests that, as an image, the falling rain in Plate 2 is an hypostatization of sorrow.

Plate 3 of the series depicts "Earth," but Blake's verse "Key" to the later version speaks of this figure as "Struggling Thro Earths Melancholy." It is clear, I think, that Blake had in mind not simply the physical elements of the Ionian tradition but also the states of the human psyche for which these elements are metaphoric equivalents. The figure in Plate 3 is somehow restrained in dark stone or earth, and his torment is as much mental
as it is physical. Blake may be allegorizing here the spirit of man trapped in its "garment of flesh," struggling to assert itself against the body's ponderous limitations. It is interesting to compare the plate with another emblem from Peacham, one of many stock representations of "Melancholia" in emblem literature. Here a gagged, solitary figure sits holding a full purse, with his foot on a stone block. Although a merely casual comparison reveals no resemblance, what connects the woodcut and Blake's engraving is the atmosphere of heaviness and restraint that pervades both pictures. Plate 3, I believe, draws on both a visual and verbal tradition of the sluggish and oppressive qualities of "black bile."

This is not to say that there is no important difference between Blake and Peacham. On the contrary, the two plates also demonstrate how Blake can use an emblematic commonplace while at the same time standing it on its head. Emblematic depictions of melancholy or grief tend to be static; that is, they portray images of immobility. Blake's plate, however, suggests an irrepressible energy breaking through oppressive limitations. The caption "He struggles into Life" implies as much, and the composition of Plate 3 follows an upwardly rising thrust into light and freedom that is a key to the whole thematic movement of The Gates of Paradise. Thus the old melancholia of the emblematists is transformed from a disorder of the bodily humors into a symbol of those material and psychic shackles from which the spirit of man must be freed. As is the case with other plates in The Gates of Paradise, the characteristically Blakean theme nearly overwhelms any residual memory of the emblematic antecedent.

1 Blake, frontispiece, "What is Man?".
3 Blake, Plate 1, "I found him beneath a Tree."
5 Blake, Plate 2 (Water), "Thou Waterest him with Tears."
Plate 4 shows a naked figure in a somewhat contorted pose, sitting amid clouds and stars. According to Blake's Notebook, the engraving is connected with the Book of Ezekiel, and it may represent the tyranny of sterile, Urizenic "reason." If this is a correct interpretation, we might well consider that the use of stars and constellations in the depiction of overweening intellectual pride is common in emblem literature. Alciati's emblem "In Astrologos," for example, shows an astrologer gazing upward at the stars just as he is about to take a false step and fall. The joke is an old one, as the pejorative connotations of phrases such as "star-gazing," "starry-eyed," and "star-struck" attest.

The last plate in the series of elements seems to bring to a climax the ascent that is so notice-

able in the progression from Water to Fire. Plate 5 has undergone a metamorphosis between the two versions of The Gates of Paradise. Blake apparently having decided to emphasize the Miltonic genesis of his "Fire" image. Here a raging figure stands in flames which mirror his own defiance and anger, and the Satanic touch Blake gave the plate in For the Beza is notable as the only change of significant detail between the earlier and later versions. It should also be noted that the "Key" speaks of this figure as a Hermaphrodite, and that there is a deliberate ambiguity in the depiction of the sexual organs, especially in the earlier plate.

Plate 5 is notable for another reason as well. Certainly the image of "Fire" is purely Blakean in some ways (it recalls the Orc figure in all its various meanings, and the figure's posture echoes "Albion Rose"), but it may also derive some of its connotations—and even its visual composition—from traditional emblematic depictions of "Choler" or "Anger." Compare Plate 5, for instance, with two emblems from Peacham and Whitney. Peacham's device shows a man with weapon and shield, and the explanatory verse specifically mentions that he is a youth. On his shield is a flame, and the verse speaks of the resemblance of rage to an uncontrollable fire. The emblem from Geoffrey Whitney's A Choice of Emblemes (1586) depicting the same passion presents a king—again with weapon and shield—who stands with a burning city behind him. Flame and fire are mentioned in the explanatory verse for this emblem also. In both pictures the figure raises his weapon as if threatening to strike, and symbolizes the eruptive irascible aspect of human nature in all its "fiery" manifestations. Blake's conflation of the element and the temperament
(which we have noted in Plate 3 as well) was not original with him, but finds its parallel in these early devices.

Plate 7, which shows a youth raising his hat to capture or strike down a small flying creature, may be directly linked to an emblem book published during Blake's lifetime. David Erdman reproduces an emblem from John Wynne's *Choice Emblems* (1772) as a probable source for Blake's design. Wynne's woodcut depicts a boy chasing a butterfly, and the emblem allegorizes "Vain Pursuits." Wynne may have been the source for Plate 7, even though Blake was interested in depicting futility and frustration as inner states of the soul, and not in moralizing about vanity. But I think it more likely that two emblems from Whitney can provide clues to Blake's meaning. One shows a man with a winged arm reaching skyward, while his other arm is weighed down by a heavy stone. The emblem is an image of human desire and aspiration held in check by want and necessity. Another emblem depicts a man unsuccessfully striving to catch a bird that flies from his grasp, and it allegorizes our inability to recall a word spoken hastily. Both emblems share something of the despair and helplessness that Blake's plate conveys. The contrast of upwardly aspiring desire and downwardly fatal despair, combined with the notion of irrevocable consequences, might be useful starting points for the interpretation of Plate 7.

Other plates in the series also show curiously emblematic reminiscences. In Blake's eighth engraving a youth aims a dart at his father, who sits in resigned carelessness; this perhaps allegorizes the rebellion of youth against aged authority. At any rate, the plate hints at a psychic imbalance that

7 Blake, Plate 3 (Earth), "He struggles into Life."
9 Blake, Plate 4 (Air), "On Cloudy Doubts and Reasoning Cares."
11 Blake, Plate 5 (Fire), "That end in endless Strife."
has disrupted the human personality. It is strikingly similar in composition to an emblem from Guillaume de la Perrière's *Le Théâtre des bons engins* (1539). In both cases a young man's energy and impetuosity are contrasted with the slugginess and languor of old age. Both young men carry weapons, held aloft, and both old men are seated on thrones in positions suggesting incapacity or irresolution. In Blake's plate, of course, the anger of the youth (along with his weapon) is aimed at the old man, and the reference in the caption to the story of David and Absalom gives a more certain context to the engraving. But the close resemblance that Blake's plate bears to Perrière's woodcut makes it tempting to believe that Blake saw a copy of *Le Théâtre*.19

Plate 9 shows a man about to ascend a ladder to the moon. Erdman has pointed out that Blake may have taken this image from a political cartoon of his day,20 but the idea of representing hopeless aspiration with an inaccessible moon or stars is common in emblem books. Alciati's emblem "Inanis impetus" is a good example: it shows a dog baying fruitlessly at the moon. This same emblem reappears in Whitney's book. Plate 10, which shows a figure drowning in a tempestuous sea, has the caption "Help! Help!" This engraving seems closely related in meaning to Plate 9, where the caption "I want! I want!" is similarly urgent. Both plates describe a desire that overshadows its subject, and Plate 10 is an image of unbridled desire at its catastrophic conclusion. Compare it with an emblem from Whitney showing a shipwrecked merchant tossed in the waves. The explanatory verse to Whitney's emblem is as follows:

Desire to have, dothe make vs muche indure,  
In travaile, toile, and labour void of reste:  
The marchant man is caried with this lure,
Through scorching heat, to regions of the East:
Oh thirst of gold, what not? but thou canst do:
And make men's hearts for to consent thereto.

A negative comment, to be sure, on the evil effects of uncontrolled desire.

Plate 12 of *The Gates of Paradise* is unusual in that it is the only one of the series to deal with a specific historical event. The engraving in question depicts the brutal starvation-murder of Count Ugolino and his family in the dungeon at Pisa, and Keynes, in his commentary on *The Gates of Paradise*, suggests that Blake must have been familiar with Dante's *Inferno* prior to the publication of *For Children*. But even if Blake had come across the story elsewhere, he made use of it in a way that would have been familiar to emblem writers. The portrayal of cruel and historically infamous punishments for the purpose of edification or to provide vivid *exempla* was a stock-in-trade of emblem literature, as two emblems from Whitney demonstrate. In one, a legendary tyrant orders a living man to be bound to a corpse and thrown into a "denne" to


17 Blake, Plate 8, "My Son! My Son!".

die; in the other, the story of the barbarous execution of Regulus Attilius is recounted. In either case, the device serves to promote something apart from its own frightful imagery—the second emblem illustrates the virtue of disinterested patriotism; the first, the drawbacks of arranged marriages! Here is where Blake differs radically from the emblem tradition. In The Gates of Paradise Plate 12 primarily communicates the horror of its subject matter; its "moral" (Does thy God, O Priest, take such vengeance as this?) is virtually inseparable from the image of human cruelty that the engraving represents. Blake's refusal to use either illustration or text as a mere instrument for elucidation of the other is one important way in which his art transcends the moralizing apparatus of the emblem books, and part of the compelling power of certain engravings in The Gates of Paradise rests in the fact that their meanings are simply not reducible to complete "explanations."

The essential power of Blake's treatment of the Ugolino episode lies in the unanswered question of the caption of Plate 12, and the disquieting implications concerning human depravity and divine forbearance that such a question brings to mind. For a traditional emblemmatist to raise this issue would have been virtually unthinkable; emblems deal not in doubt, but in the reinforcement of orthodox wisdom. In the emblematic tradition, cruelty and pain and suffering are merely aspects of the human condition to be explained, catalogued, and moralized; they are never occasions for the questioning of conventional beliefs. But for Blake the reality

19 Blake, Plate 9, "I want! I want!".
20 "Inanis Impetus," Alciati, Emblemata Liber (1531).
21 Blake, Plate 10, "Help! Help!".
of extreme torment shatters whatever comforting illusions we might place between ourselves and the brute fact of human bestiality. And Plate 12 is uncompromising not only in its depiction of evil, but also in its refusal to supply any easy answer to the doubts that such an undistorted vision raises.

Plate 13 has no specific emblematic antecedent, although mystical and visionary experiences are sometimes depicted in religious emblems. The plate shows a family gathered around the bedside of a dying man, whose spirit rises up majestically from his mortal remains. This engraving comes as the high point of The Gates of Paradise. The disturbing tension and disorder that have been building up in the previous plates give way to a cathartic release of energy, one in which fear and hope reach a pitch of intensity that resolves itself in Vision. Plate 13 may have its source in a painful moment for Blake—the death of his brother Robert in 1787. Blake's early biographer Alexander Gilchrist mentions that Blake, at Robert's deathbed, had a vision of his brother's soul rising heavenwards. Plate 13's power and intensity may derive from the personal catharsis Blake experienced at that moment.

Plate 14 is one of the least troublesome of the series; it clearly symbolizes the approaching end of life's journey, and Keynes suggests that it may represent a conscious acceptance of the necessity of death following the spiritual vision of Plate 13. In any case, the engraving is certainly one of the most traditionally emblematic in The Gates of Paradise, as comparison with an emblem from Whitney will show. Both pictures reveal a traveller with hat, cloak, and walking stick hastening on his way, and in both the sun seems to


23 Blake, Plate 12, "Does thy God O Priest take such vengeance as this?".

set in the background as the traveller proceeds with fixed determination. The most important similarity, however, lies in the practically identical meaning of the two pictures. Blake and Whitney both present the image of a man taking leave of life and this world for a higher reality. He is a man whom experience has instructed regarding the transience of sublunary things, and one who willingly accepts his mortality. Nonetheless, there is an added dimension in Blake's picture; taken in context with the rest of the engravings in The Gates of Paradise, Plate 14 seems to suggest that the traveller has been made aware not so much of the impermanence of the world as of its illusory quality. But despite Blake's expansion of the conventional device to accommodate his own ideas about the "veil" of mundane reality, Plate 14 remains solidly rooted in the emblematic tradition. Although the traveller on the road of life is a conceit which has been a part of the common vocabulary of metaphors since the middle ages, the very close resemblance between Whitney's emblem and Plate 14 leads me to think that Blake saw A Choice of Emblemes—or some derivative emblem book—before producing The Gates of Paradise.

Plates 15 and 16 end the series. The former is a representation of an old man at death's door, and has numerous thematic antecedents in emblem
Hans Holbein's popular *Dance of Death* (although not an emblem book in the strict sense) contains many possible parallels. Plate 16, on the other hand, is an extremely thought-provoking picture that has bedeviled many commentators. It shows a figure of indeterminate sex—perhaps the traveller—sitting on the ground in a mesmerized state. Some critics have suggested that the figure is actually dead, or representative of death. Around and behind the figure a large worm coils, while the faces of buried corpses protrude from the earth. Blake's caption ("I have said to the Worm: Thou art my mother and my sister") intensifies this rather disquieting intimacy of human being and worm.

George Wingfield Digby sees the plate as a representation of an archetypal "Worm-Mother" whose dominion must be escaped by regenerate man. One's immediate reaction to this picture usually colors all future judgment; to me it suggests an unearthly detachment from phenomenal reality, a kind of trance-like *nirvana* that follows long experience.

All commentators on *The Gates of Paradise* have correctly identified the source of the caption of Plate 16 as a passage in the Book of Job. The complete context of the quotation is an extended lament by Job during his dispute with Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar concerning divine justice:
31 Blake, Plate 16, "I have said to the Worm: Thou art my mother and my sister."

32 "Flateurs de court . . .," Perrière, Le Théâtre des bons engins (1539).

I have said to corruption, Thou art my father: to the worm, Thou art my mother, and my sister. And where is now my hope? as for my hope, who shall see it? They shall go down to the bars of the pit, where our rest together is in the dust.

Job 17:14-16 (AV)

The pain which these lines convey in the biblical text is absent from Blake's emblem. In The Gates of Paradise the icon of death is inseparable (at the completion of the emblem series) from a sense of wisdom achieved after the long journey of life. For this reason I am inclined to believe that another biblical passage has a bearing on Plate 16. This passage is from the Book of Proverbs, in a chapter which warns against the blandishments of an adulteress:

Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman: That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.

Proverbs 7:4-5 (AV)

The similarity of phrasing between this verse and the passage from Job which Blake used as his caption is notable. This particular section of the Book of Proverbs praises the personified feminine Wisdom (Sophia), and contrasts her with the guileful and seductive harlot who leads men to their destruction. The quoted verse is part of a chapter that concludes with this final admonition against the whorish temptress:

Let not thine heart decline to her ways, go not astray in her paths. For she hath cast down many wounded: yea, many strong men have been slain by her. Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers of death.

Proverbs 7:25-7 (AV)

As in the Job passage, the reference to a descent into death and hell is related to Blake's basic concern in Plate 16—the meaning of human mortality. But once again Blake has radically transcended his sources. He has conflated the anguish of Job and the wisdom of Proverbs into a powerfully evocative image, just as he has done in Plate 13, where fear and hope unite in vision. Moreover, the quoted passages from Proverbs invoke precisely the sort of heaven-hell duality that Blake was so fond of undermining, and part of the difficulty of Plate 16 may lie in the deliberate fusion of death, wisdom, corruption, understanding, and harlotry that Blake has made out of his sources.

The form and meaning of Plate 16 should be examined in the light of three older emblems. The first two are from Perrière's Le Théâtre, and both depict a dead man lying on the earth. One shows a body attacked by crows that pick and tear at its flesh; the other a corpse from which lice and similar
In each of these emblems animal or insect life serves as an image of the evil, the corrupt, or the anti-human. By using the insect or the reptile as a vehicle for derogatory metaphor and invidious comparison, the emblematists deliberately keep clear the traditional distinction between high and low, life and death, good and evil. Blake, however, transcends these orthodox divisions; he has reached the point in Plate 16 where simple dualities do not represent true vision. Snake and worm are not the repulsive blights familiar in traditional iconography --they are "mother and sister" to the traveller, whose perspective on life and death has been infinitely deepened to include even the darker side of existence.

33 "Puces et pouz . . .," Perrieré, Le Théâtre des bons engins (1539).
34 "Icon Peccati," Peacham, Minerva Britanna (1612).

Insects flee. Both emblems are visualizations of the evils of flattery: flatterers are worse than crows, since crows only attack dead men while flatterers devour the living, and like lice they desert a corpse once all its vital substance is gone. The third emblem (from Peacham) shows a blind youth girt about the middle with a snake, while a smaller snake gnaws at his heart. This device represents the enslavement of a youth to his follies, the "serpents" of bad conscience and bondage to sin.

Blake re-engraved all the plates of For Children when he reissued his book with the new title For the Sexes, and he added a page of verses and the final engraving "To the Accuser." In simple appearance, the plates in For the Sexes almost all show a sharper contrast of light and dark than is seen in For Children. Commentators have pointed out several changes of detail in the new plates, but none affects our argument here. There are some visible differences between paired plates (as in the two versions of Plates 5 and 13), but whether the aggregate of these alterations allows for significant changes of interpretation is a matter of debate.

Anne K. Mellor believes that For Children betrays Blake's nascent pessimism about the possibility of human redemption, either earthly or spiritual, while the later For the Sexes reasserts the possibility of both.

Erdman mentions that the earlier For Children was "considerably revised" when it became For the Sexes, though he does not say whether the changes in any way affected the "universal allegory of creation, growth, and death" that he sees in the series. Whatever his reason for reissuing The Gates of Paradise, Blake did not substantially alter the composition of his engravings. However much or little Blake's opinions may have changed between 1793 and 1818 has no bearing on how he may have been influenced by emblematic sources in his original designs.

The new engraving "To the Accuser" is not simply another emblem added to the original series. It illustrates some final epilogue-like verses that Blake appended to For the Sexes:

To the Accuser who is the God of this World

Truly, my Satan, thou art but a dunce
And dost not know the garment from the man:
Every harlot was a virgin once,
Nor canst thou ever change Kate into Nan.

Though thou art worshipped by the names divine
Of Jesus and Jehovah, thou art still
The Son of Morn in weary night's decline,
The lost traveller's dream under the hill.

Blake's engraving shows a bat-like creature (presumably a Satanic spectre) hovering over a sleeping traveller. The traveller is only momentarily troubled by the bad "dream" of Satan, who is essentially powerless to harm the inner immortal man. This emphasis on Satan's imotence recalls an
emblem from Whitney with a curiously similar resonance. Whitney's device shows Satan shaking the chain of Divine Law in a futile attempt to break it. He is powerless against the mighty force of Truth, just as Blake's Satan is helpless against the interior truth that the traveller has gained at the end of The Gates of Paradise. But Blake's identification of Satan with "the God of this World" (the judging, accusing, law-giving God whose commandments are raised up on the "altars high" of Christians) is a reversal that would truly shock the orthodoxy of the ordinary emblematist.

I hope I have suggested some possible emblematic backgrounds to specific plates in The Gates of Paradise. It would be easy to exaggerate the similarities between individual plates and emblems, and I trust that in my enthusiasm for my subject I have not overstepped the bounds of probability. Coincidence can account for at least some of the parallels noted here—the vast corpus of emblem literature almost guarantees that. But others seem more than fortuitous, especially in those cases where emblems and plates coincide in both pictorial composition and thematic meaning. In such an instance I am fairly certain that we find Blake unconsciously remembering an old emblem, or deliberately reshaping it for his own purposes. In any case, the mere fact that engravings in The Gates of Paradise may have emblematic antecedents is not my main concern. As Peter M. Daly has written concerning the relation of emblem literature to poetry, "The emblematic way of thinking and the emblematic method of composition are undoubtedly more important and more pervasive than the instances of exact parallels with emblem-books." For it is not so much the light which some few emblems can cast on The Gates of Paradise that I am concerned with, as with the discovery that a singularly difficult work of art has been constructed with at least some of the techniques, tools, and materials of an earlier and simpler art.

W. J. T. Mitchell, in an essay that discusses Blake's union of poetry and painting, contrasts the emblem book's perception of the relationship of those two arts with Blake's perception:

The emblem book enjoyed a particularly privileged position because it not only fulfilled the classical ideal of uniting the arts, but also could be seen as a means of providing the most comprehensive possible imitation of a bifurcated reality. Blake would agree with the attempt of the emblematists to unite the two arts, not, however, as a means of presenting the full range of reality, but as a means of exposing as a fiction the bifurcated organization of that reality.

Here may be the "key" that can unlock the emblematic origins of The Gates of Paradise. Blake may have used the emblem tradition only to undermine its orthodoxy, but he depended nevertheless on its structure and characteristic modes to achieve at least some of his effects.

If emblem literature had one overriding purpose, it was to say a great deal within a limited compass. The emblematist used a small detail to speak about something of infinitely wider significance. That this technique was often used to reiterate commonplace ideas and sentiments does not make the emblematist any less visionary—his aim was to move from the senses to abstract and ideal knowledge. So too does The Gates of Paradise strive for spiritual vision through the medium of its little pictures. Each plate suggests to the intuitive reader so much more than its appearance to the sensible organ of sight might indicate. It is this that compresses the book, that gives such a haunting aura to its plates, for The Gates of Paradise is an attempt to put into microcosm an entire visionary outlook on the world and reality. That it succeeds independent of mechanical analogies or labored comparisons is a testimony to Blake's stature as a creator of potent symbols.

The author wishes to thank the following publishers for allowing illustrations from their books to be reprinted in this article: Scolar Press of 90/91 Great Russell Street, London; Dover Publications of 180 Varick Street, New York; and Garland Publications of 136 Madison Avenue, New York.

35 Blake, "To the Accuser."
ET VS QUAEANT NUBES TVA
This small volume was issued in 1793 with the title For Children: The Gates of Paradise. It was reissued with a number of alterations and additions around 1818, with the new title For the Senses: The Gates of Paradise (see Keynes, introductory Volume in The Blake Trust facsimile, London: Trianon Press, 1968). In this paper, a reference to the Gates of Paradise indicates an unchanged aspect of both versions, while significant differences are referred to under the rubrics of For Children and For the Senses.

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5 This effect was even more pronounced in Blake's earlier version For Children, where the engravings had no textual elaboration apart from their short captions.


7 David V. Erdman, in his edition of Blake's Notebook (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), pp. 223 and 92, points out that Blake included a design from Quarles's earlier book Emblemata (1635) among his sketches for the Gates series, although he did not choose to engrave that particular sketch in his final selection.


9 Frye, p. 35.

10 Frye, p. 38.

11 Erdman, Notebook, pp. 40-44.


13 As far as I can tell, the plate in For Children shows no wings, but they are clearly visible in For the Senses. Blake may have wished to emphasize the embryonic, unrealized potential of the chrysalis-child, and did so by giving him wings when he re-engraved the plate.

14 The relation of the Book of Job to The Gates of Paradise is a subject that deserves scrutiny. In the same year (1818) that Blake reissued his emblem book under the title For the Senses, he began a series of watercolors for Thomas Butts illustrating the Book of Job. Blake must have felt a special affinity between the Bible's evocations and additions around 1818--including the ethical implications of that misery--and his own little work. Cfr. Job 14:19 and 27:20 to Plate 2.

15 The emblematic image of the "weeping heavens" occurs also in Henry Hawkins's Paraphema Sionem, 1633 (Menton, Yorks.: Scoiar Press, 1971), pp. 59-60. Hawkins explains that "as the showers were wrung and drawn from Magdalens through contrition of her sad and cowdie hart: so these Dewers are wrung and strauned from heaven, through compression and mutual collision of the clouds."

16 See Erdman, The Illuminated Blake, p. 270.


18 Erdman, Notebook, p. 92.

19 This is not as farfetched as it may seem. W. Schrickx, in Shakespeare's Early Contemporaries (Antwerp: De Nederlandsche Boekhandel, 1956), pp. 9-10, notes that English translations of Le Théâtre were prepared in 1590 and 1593.


21 Keynes, p. 17. The story of Ugolino is in Inferno, Canto XXXIII. A variant of Plate 12 appeared in Blake's The Harriage of Heaven and Bell, which was printed at about the same time as For Children or perhaps somewhat earlier.

22 Common motifs are the finger of God writing on a wall, a saint with the stigmata, or allegorical depictions of the Godhead.

23 I am indebted to Aileen Ward for this suggestion. The death of his brother Robert was crucial in Blake's life and art. For Children was published in 1793, six years after his brother's death and after Blake inherited Robert's drawing book, in which he sketched the emblems that became The Gates of Paradise. As late as 1800 Blake would write to William Hayley: "Thirteen years ago I lost a brother & with his spirit I converse daily & hourly in the Spirit & See him in my remembrance in the regions of my Imagination. I hear his advice & even now write from his Dictate" (6 May 1800, E 678).

24 Keynes, p. 18.

25 A variant of Plate 15 appeared in Blake's America, A Prophecy (1793).

26 Erdman in The Illuminated Blake, pp. 276-77, calls this figure "the human form of natural death."

27 Digby, p. 50.

28 Erdman suggests another emblem from Wynne (an image of a traveller being bitten by a snake) as a possible source for Plate 16. See his edition of the Notebook, Appendix II, pp. 76 and 92.


30 Erdman, Blake: Prophet Against Empire, p. 204.


33 I have not dealt with two plates in The Gates of Paradise sequence (6 and 11), because I have found no likely emblematic parallels for them. It is obvious that Blake did not depend slavishly on prototypes for his designs, and even when he did borrow a design his art transmuted it into a new thing all his own.
The year 1980 has already been described with numerous epithets. For those interested in the graphic work of William Blake it has been a year of unexpected rediscoveries. This is especially true of Blake's best known work in illuminated printing, the *Songs of Innocence* and of *Experience*.

Some time in Spring 1980, Copy BB of the *Songs* reappeared in a sale at Sotheby's, and in autumn a series of coincidences led me to the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum (WRM), Cologne, where in the collection of Dr. Walter Neuerburg I found a fragmented copy of the *Songs of Innocence* which has never been available to the scholarly or non-scholarly public before.

The following description of what I believe to be *Songs of Innocence*, Copy Y, attempts to supply a few new details about this particular copy and thus to supplement G. E. Bentley, Jr.'s bibliographical notes on entry no. 139 in his *Blake Books*.

The private collector's typewritten catalogue mistakenly assumes that the fifteen handcolored prints which are now preserved at the Cologne museum once formed "Seiten 3-17 [. . . ] der kombinierten Ausgabe aus den beiden Titeln 'Songs of Innocence, 1789' und 'Songs of Experience, 1794'." Since all the designs, however, belong to the *Innocence* series, and since the authentic foliation leaves no room for the combined titlepage of the *Songs*--which in most cases was numbered as page 1 by Blake--I think it is much more likely that this copy in its original integrity consisted of the *Innocence* plates only. Yet Dr. Neuerburg was correct when he stated that this copy was still missing from the Keynes and Wolf Census, and that the year 1802 is the approximate terminus post quem for its execution.

The Cologne copy consists of fifteen plates, printed on fifteen leaves with relatively wide margins. The leaves have been foliated consecutively 3-17 by Blake in the upper right corners, just outside the framing lines of the designs. Their arrangement coincides with the "standard order" of plates 4-18 as established in Bentley's *Blake Books*, which of course corresponds with Blake's own date order.

Two of the leaves show a distinct, though fragmentary, watermark. Plate 7 as well as plate 16 have "BUTTA" in the lower right corner of the sheet and in both the original watermark certainly read "BUTTANSHAW" before the leaves were cut down to their present size. Buttanshaw wove paper without at least portions of a date has not been recorded otherwise in Blake's oeuvre. Buttanshaw paper with the first two digits of a date, "18[ ]", was employed by the artist for his euphoric letter to John Flaxman of 19 October 1801. The same make, and three digits of a date, "180[ ]," appear to be visible in three of the leaves of Copy 0 of *Innocence* (University of Texas), whereas only two copies of the combined *Songs* (P in an anonymous private collection in Britain, and Q in the collection of Mrs. Dennis of New York, N.Y.) seem to have preserved both the name and date intact: "BUTTANSHAW / 1802." Obviously, Blake made use of Buttanshaw paper during a comparatively short period of time. The Buttanshaw watermark in the present copy of *Innocence* thus points to the Felpham period and the years immediately following (up to c. 1807) for an approximate date of the printing.

Two other facts seem to support 1801-02 as the terminus post quem for the production of the Cologne
copy: unlike the early copies, the plates were (1) printed on one side of the leaves only, and (2) foliated by the artist. At the same time, however, the arrangement of the designs as confirmed by the autograph pagination in this case poses a new problem. While Blake "began numbering his copies" of Innocence and the Songs from "at least 1806," the sequence of the fifteen plates at the WRM is that of the late, post-1818 copies of the combined edition.9

The contradiction between the extrinsic evidence of the watermarks and the plate order might be explained if we assume that the copy with which our fragment once belonged had been printed (and colored) by about 1802-06, but was foliated, bound, and sold at a much later date (or, very simply, by assuming that the pagination was not the work of the artist himself). In this situation, intrinsic evidence that only stylistic analyses of the coloring can supply becomes crucial. A close comparison of the Cologne copy, especially with the other "Buttanshaw copies," may yield the decisive clue. Unfortunately, however, I have never seen the Songs (0) and Songs (P-Q), and therefore cannot offer more than a few cursory remarks on the use of color in the present example.

THE COLOGNE COPY OF INNOCENCE, PLATE BY PLATE

Note: The printing color is a pale, somewhat sepia­like brown, unless stated otherwise. All the strengthening of outlines has been executed with pen and gray or black ink. Generally, this pen work and the coloring follow closely the etched lines of the designs. There is no colorprinting, of course, and the following glosses all apply to watercolor washes which have been added to the printed design by hand. Blake's foliation, running from 3 to 17, is to be found in the upper right corners of each page and has been written with grayish ink. In the measurements height precedes width.

Pl. 4: "Introduction." Leaf-size 20.1 x 14.5 cm.
At three sides the design is surrounded by a light blue wash; at the bottom, however, there is no indication of "the water clear" (as, e.g., in Copies T and Z of the Songs), but a simple horizontal strip of brown color from which the Tree-of-Jesse foliage shoots up into the margins. These vines are colored green and yellow, and, from the tiny panels they enclose, streaks of rose color are drawn horizontally into the area of the text. On both sides the figures in the third vignette from the bottom, as well as the foliation itself, have been strengthened with pen and ink.

Pl. 5 (illus. 1): "The Shepherd." Leaf-size 20.1 x 14.0 cm. Elaborately colored, with much modulation of the various hues, creating a completely convincing image of an Arcadian sunset. Behind the ochre colored flock extends a line of bushes in varied tones of green; the hill in the background is of a saturated dark blue. Above, pink washes have been laid over some gray shading. Behind the text panel the sky has been tinted with a light blue which also reappears at the top of the design where it has been applied in a darker pigmentation. The plant twining up the trunk of the tree in other copies has been partly eliminated by a brown watercolor wash except for its lower portion; there it shows three red calyces. The Shepherd's clothes are of a light brown. His face and hair, some of the folds of his gown, his crook, and the foremost of his sheep have all been reworked with the pen. Necessitated by poor inking and/or printing the text of 11. 1-4 had occasionally to be strengthened too.

Pl. 6: "The Ecchoing Green," I. Leaf-size 19.8 x 14.0 cm. Behind the green and yellow foliage of the central tree (which seems to cast light, not shadow, on the scene below) and the group of playing children, the sky is a mixture of pink and bright blue. These hues return in the foreground where they dominate, slightly more saturated and in an a-b-a-b-like rhythm the colors of the various costumes. The ground is divided into areas of lime­green and warm orange which is composed—in an almost "divisionist" manner—of red and yellow washes. The outlines of the tree and of most of the figures have been strengthened with pen and ink. Bright yellow, blue, and pink washes (i.e. the classic trias of primary colors) have been used to structure the lower half of the page. The title line, having been thinly inked, had to be painted over (with dark brown watercolor).

Pl. 7: "The Ecchoing Green," II. Leaf-size 20.9 x 14.7 cm. The group of figures is set against a blue background which changes first to pink, and then to yellow, with some orange added in the upper part of the design. As in many other copies, the two grape-plucking figures are clothed in pink and blue dress. Below them, the man wears a gray-green overcoat, and the surrounding figures are clad in dresses of pink, yellow, and orange. Some of the contours and faces of the figures have been worked over with pen and ink. The large vine has a brown stem and green leaves (which, with Blake, is not a matter-of-fact).

Pl. 8: "The Lamb." Leaf-size 20.5 x 14.3 cm., printed in a somewhat darker brown than the rest of the plates. All in all, the coloring here is more subdued; there are yellowish greens for the foreground and the tree's foliage in mid-distance, a warm quality of yellow for the upper and rose color for the lower portion of the sky. The same hue of pink has also been employed for the child's skin. The outlines of the child's arms, its hands, and the central lamb have all been reworked with the pen, and the child's right hand even shows some pentimenti.

Pl. 9: "The Little Black Boy," I. Leaf-size 20.6 x 14.2 cm., printed in brown. The mother and child are the usual dark brown; the mother's skirt, though partly shaded, is of the same color in a brighter, nougat-like mixture. The foliage of the tree, printed in brown, has been enriched by yellow and green washes. These contrast with the blue and reddish tints which have been employed for the sky. The orb of the sun on the horizon of the green hills does not at all act as a source of light (here then, the sun itself appears to be "bereav'd of light")

Its dull yellowish-brown color seems to belie the luminosity of both the sky in the design, and the bright yellow, pink, and blue washes which streak
horizontally across the text panel. The contours of the tree to the left and the mother's right arm have been hastily re-worked with pen.

Pl. 10 (illus. 2): "The Little Black Boy," II. Leaf-size 20.7 x 13.7 cm. The whole of the page seems to be bathed in a silvery light; this light, of course, emanates from the paper which has been covered with particularly delicate layers of paint. The Christ-like shepherd's garment, the skin of the English boy, and the flock of sheep have all been treated with only a few gray washes; in a more saturated, darker pigmentation the same gray has been used for the black boy and the tree. The water in the immediate foreground is of a steel-like blue-gray. The landscape scenery makes a colorful contrast with this almost monochrome center of the picture; there is green, yellow, and bright cinnabar in the foreground, green and blue (with an inlaid strip of red) in the background hills and foliage. For the sky, the primary colors have again been employed in their most luminous state; the halo-like sun emanates rose colored rays into the blue (right), bright gray-blue (area of the text), and orange-yellow "atmosphere." Pen work is to be seen on the outlines of the three figures, strengthening especially the shepherd's profile, and on the branches of the arching tree.

Pl. 11: "The Blossom." Leaf-size 20.8 x 14.4 cm., printed in dark blue. The blossoming plant is colored carmine red and blue, with some brown near the right-hand border of the design. The six children have pink skin and light brown wings; the wings of the central maiden are blue. A warm quality of yellow, tending distinctly towards orange to the right of the second stanza, has been washed in for a background. No additional outlining with the pen, but some of the text (the title, 11. 4-6, and especially 11. 11-12) has been strengthened with watercolor in beige. 10

Pl. 12: "The Chimney Sweeper." Leaf-size 21.3 x 14.8 cm. The printed design leaves little room for coloring in this case. There are some blue (11. 1-12, 20-24 [to the left of the page]), bright salmon and carmine red (11. 15-20), and yellow (11. 20-24 [washed in from the right]) lanciform washes between the lines of the text. The flourishes between the stanzas and the background of the design at the bottom of the page are of a pale yellowish green; also, some brown is interspersed, which has been used for the trunk of the tree to the right as well. The long-robed figure, the child rising from the

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1 "The Shepherd," Songs of Innocence, Copy Y. Relief etching, hand-colored with additional pen and ink work. Neuerburg Collection at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne.

2 "The Little Black Boy," plate 2, Songs of Innocence, Copy Y. Relief etching, hand-colored with additional pen and ink work. Neuerburg Collection at the WRM, Cologne.
dark brown earth, nine of the ten dancing and running children, and the title line at the top of the page have been firmly outlined in pen.

Pl. 13: "The Little Boy lost." Leaf-size 20.3 x 14.4 cm.; the lettering of the text has been re-worked with pen and gray ink, thus considerably darkening the original pale brown of the printing. As in most other copies, the design is dominated by a strong chiaroscuro contrast between the dark, in this case blue-gray, background on one side, the uncolored and only lightly shaded dress of the boy, and the bright yellow and red of the will-o'-the-wisp-like gleam on the other. The same pink which has been used on the boy's face and bare forearms serves to set off the text from the ground. The floating angels are colored yellow, so that together with the blue washes at the bottom of the page and between the stanzas the trias of primary colors is present once more in the lower portion of this page. The outlines and drapery of the boy as well as those of the three angels to the right of the text, and the contours of the tree have been worked over with the pen.

Pl. 14 (illus. 3): "The Little Boy found." Leaf-size 20.7 x 14.5 cm. The text panel has been treated in much the same way as in the preceding page, with the addition of some blue-green for the twining plants that surround the two stanzas of the poem. The setting of the scene with its dark brown tree trunks, brownish green bushes, and marine blue sky is sombre but nevertheless colorful. Thus, patches of red, creating the effect of reflected sunset light, have been introduced on the branches of the tree to the right. The two figures, however, have been left almost uncolored, with only a few gray washes to indicate light, shade, and relief of their white robes. The adult figure does not have the disc-like halo of the late copies, though when washing in the blue sky, the artist left uncolored an oval circlet above the head. The faces and hands of both figures show some pink flesh-color; the boy's hair is a dark blonde, and the brim of his hat is dark gray. The pen has been used to define more clearly the faces and the outlines of the figures (including the angel to the right of the text), as well as the contours of the three trees.

Pl. 15: "Laughing Song." Leaf-size 20.6 x 14.8 cm., printed in a darker brown than most of the other plates in this copy. Again, the text panel shows the primary colors: from the left a bright blue, from the right a luminous red, and at the bottom a warm quality of yellow has been washed in. There the birds with their red bodies and blue wings take up once more the colors of the upper part of the text area, and of the dresses of the figures in the design above. The same three colors, with the addition of some green and orange-red, are arranged round the white of the uncolored table-cloth. The dress of the woman on the left, sitting in front of the table, is mainly of a bright blue, but has been sprinkled with pinkish red. Her male pendant at the right (facing the table in this copy) is dressed in blue, and two of the women behind the table wear pinkish red gowns. The central figure, seen from the back, is colored orange-red and thus corresponds with the autumn-like splendor of the tree's yellow, orange, and even red foliage. Only a few details like the shoulders of the man with arms upraised and the chair at the right have been strengthened in pen and ink.

Pl. 16: "A Cradle Song." I. Leaf-size 20.7 x 14.8 cm. The flourishing branches are either brown (i.e. the printing color), or a lusterless green; the tiny figures have not been hand-colored. The text is set off against yellow, blue, and rose colored washes which run down the margins (at the left: yellow; at the upper right: blue; and at the lower right: pinkish red); these have also been extended horizontally between the lines of the text. To the left of the title and of the fourth stanza a few of the plant ornaments have been worked over with pen and ink.

Pl. 17 (illus. 4): "A Cradle Song," II. Leaf-size 20.8 x 14.3 cm. The plant-like flourishes above, below, and between the two remaining stanzas on this page have been colored green, modulating towards yellow; they, as well as the woman carrying a child to the left of 11. 26-28, have been given stronger outlines with the pen. The design below is composed of only three different hues: the floor, chair, and cradle, as well as the mother's hair, are colored a light brown; the curtain is blue and vividly structured by the printed lineament in pale brown; at the left—behind the woman's back—it is covered with dark gray-blue shading; finally, the woman's dress is tinted with the bright pinkish carmine red that has been observed so often in this copy. The faces of mother and child, the outlines and drapery folds of the woman's dress, the chair, and even some of the folds in the curtain have all been forcefully strengthened with pen and black ink.

Pl. 18: "The Divine Image." Leaf-size 20.0 x 13.6 cm., printed in blue-gray. Text and design have been equally set off against washes of pink (left margin and top left), bright blue (top right), yellow and orange (lower right-hand portion), the latter two gaining in intensity near the "raising" scene with the haloed Christ-like figure. Yellow, cinnabar red, and the orange which is the product when these two are applied on top of each other, are the colors of the flaming plant. The figures have been touched with pink for their carnations. There is no additional pen work on this design.

It should be evident from these glosses that the Cologne copy of Songs of Innocence is characterized by a particularly luminous transparency of all the various hues of watercolor that have been employed in its hand-coloring. The combined use of the three primary colors (often together with green as the fourth), or at least two of them in weak saturation, is an essential aspect of the formal unity of the complete set. Also, the extensive use of pen and ink on the figures and other important details belongs with the characteristic qualities of this copy. Throughout, the basic rule of traditional color perspective has been observed; wherever the printed design allowed for it, "warm" colors and especially reds have been employed in the foreground whereas dark blue tones have been reserved for the background, and the brighter blues mostly for the "distant" sky.

It should be evident from these glosses that...
Though the following paraphernalia certainly give no clue for either the dating and the early history of the Neuerburg copy, or for an estimation of its aesthetic value, a bibliographical account would be incomplete without it. So let me briefly mention that the leaves have apparently been trimmed offhand; their slightly varying sizes, which range from 19.8 to 21.3 cm. in height, and 13.6 to 14.8 cm. in width, indicate that a pair of scissors instead of a chopper was probably used for cutting them to their present size.13

Whereas today the prints are mounted separately with perspex guard sheets, they were originally stabbed with three holes in preparation for binding.14 These stitch-holes are about 5.0 to 6.0 cm. from the top of the pages, and about 3.0 cm. apart from each other; they have been closed in the course of the restoration of the prints (see below), but are still visible on close examination.

As regards the history and identification of the Cologne copy, only a few details are known. On 12 March 1962, "a gentleman" sold an incomplete copy of *Innocence* for £1000 through Sotheby's to "Fairbrother." This copy had not been recorded before, and it was described in the respective Sotheby catalogue under lot 151.15 "Fairbrother," according to Bentley was the pseudonym of the art dealer Nicolas Rauch of Geneva, whose "sale records [--unfortunately--] were not preserved after his death by his successor."16 Thus, shortly after the illuminated book had made its first appearance on the art market, we lost track of *Songs of Innocence*, Copy Y, once again. The description in the sales catalogue was detailed enough, however, to allow for future identification. The data supplied by the catalogue—and since then incorporated into *Blake Books*—included the number of plates and their contents, watermarks, foliation details, approximate leaf-sizes, and printing color. With the help of Bentley's superb tables it is easy to find that these details all suit the Cologne copy, which, in

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3 "The Little Boy found," *Songs of Innocence*, Copy Y. Relief etching, hand-colored with additional pen and ink work. Neuerburg Collection at the WRM, Cologne.

turn, cannot be identified with any other of the untraced copies of either the Songs of Innocence or the combined Songs of Innocence and of Experience.

Obviously, Dr. Walter Neuruberg bought Copy Y from Rauch (who may well have acted on behalf of the distinguished German collector) or some intermediary agent soon after the sale at Sotheby's was over. This is confirmed by the correspondence between the collector and Mr. and Mrs. Kästner of Wolfenbüttel which is still preserved with the prints at the WRM. The first of these letters is dated 6 April 1962, and it refers to the projected restoration of Blake's newly acquired prints. This restoration had been brought to a successful end by 19 May 1962.7 The present owner himself, however, was reluctant to supply me with further information about the provenance of his treasure; yet he was kind enough to tell me that--"all in all"--the reconstruction of the last stage in the history of his copy, as offered here, is correct.8

Songs, Copy BB, and Innocence, Copy Y, have been merely re-discovered. And yet, the first of Blake's illuminated books ever to appear in a collection on the Continent, outside of the English-speaking world, may raise hopes for more and even bigger surprises in the future. I do not expect the "Ancient Britons," or the painted version of the "Last Judgement" stored away on the backstairs of some provincial museum on the Continent. But the unexpected finding at Cologne certainly highlights another "work needed" in the field of Blake studies which is missing from Gerald Bentley's list. Our knowledge of the entire corpus of the graphic work of William Blake will be limited in an almost inexusable way until a thorough investigation into the holdings of at least the major public collections in France, Germany, Italy, and the Scandinavian countries has been undertaken.9


2 The private collection of Dr. Walter and Marlis Neuruberg, which since 1976 has been on permanent loan at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, covers European printmaking from Goya to the Brücke masters. Among many other English illustrated books of this period it also includes a proof copy of Blake's Illuminations to the Book of Job. A preliminary review of the holdings of the collection is given by Barbara Catoir, "Panorama der europäischen Graphik: Die Sammlung Neuruberg in Köln." Wallraf-Richartz-Museum/Von der Bauernleihgabe zum Besitz", Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 29 July 1980, p. 19. -I am much indebted to Dr. Neuruberg for his imprimatur; at the same time, I would like to thank Dr. Heila Robels, curator of prints and drawings at the WRM, and her staff for organizational help. Neither the "rediscovery" nor this publication of the Innocence series at Cologne would have been possible without Horst Möllner of the Dept. of English at the University of Heidelberg and Robert N. Essick, who both played a vital part in the series of coincidences mentioned above. The reproductions were supplied by the Rheinisches Bildarchiv, Cologne (where prints can be ordered, quoting their negative nos. 180629-180643).

3 G. E. Bentley, Jr., Blake Books (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), pp. 364-432. My paramount indebtedness to this work will be evident throughout the following pages.

4 The xerographed TS of the catalogue is available at the WRM Prints Dept.; it lists the set from Innocence as inv. nos. 1561-1575.

5 As in other copies of the illuminated books which are generally assumed to have been numbered by Blake himself, the formation of the Neuruberg copy has been executed in ink. The color of the ink is of the same light gray which was employed for the single framing lines in most of the plates. The initials themselves have been compared with those in fascimiles of the Notebooks, the "Pickering Manuscript" of post-1803, and copies of the illuminated books where the hand has been accepted as Blake's own. Since the character of the script of the Collected Works of Innocence strongly resembles that in the other examples, I see no reason to doubt the authenticity of the present pagination.

6 See Bentley 1977, pp. 375-76; according to the Keynes & Wolfe ordering of Innocence, the Cologne copy shows the following sequence of plates: 3. 15. 10-11. 8. 29-30. 9. 13. 20-21, 28. 16-19. 12.

7 Bentley's entry under the respective heading in his table of watermarks, "Songs (3 pls.)," refers to the three plates in Innocence (Y), i.e. our copy (see Bentley 1977, p. 71; Professor Bentley agreed to this correction in correspondence). The watermark fragments of the Neuruberg copy both appear in the lower right corner of the sheet, and it seems likely that with the edge of the paper not just half of the maker's name (to the right) but also a date—which originally may have been visible elsewhere—has been trimmed off. At the same time it ought to point out that Bentley's source for the description of Innocence Copy Y (see below) mentioned the Buttenshaw watermark for plates 6, 15, 28, and see Bentley 1977 (p. 366); I cannot provide any efficient explanation for this discrepancy, but I hope that the remaining evidence will prove to be strong enough to confirm my identification of Innocence (Y) with the fifteen prints at Cologne.

8 Ibid., pp. 71, 366, 368.

9 Ibid., p. 383. An interpretation of the plate numbers in the Cologne copy that concludes that the sequence here chosen by the poet-printer actually anticipated the order of the late copies in full, must remain hypothetical. The fragment, and the order of plates 4-18 does not necessarily imply that the sequence of the remaining Innocence pages, now lacking from it, must also have been the same as in the late copies. In this context it is of particular importance that plates 2-27 (with plates 53 and 54 interpolated) in Copy S of Innocence—within an 1808 khatman watermark—really are in the same order as in the late copies and in the fragmented Copy Y (Ibid., p. 377). Thus, the existing evidence certainly makes the Cologne copy and Innocence (S) the most likely candidates to testify for a much earlier date of the so-called "standard order."

10 In the left margin of this sheet the fragment of a lower case roman letter, probably a "d," is visible. At first glance it looks as if printed, but in fact it appears to be the only surviving part of an ink inscription which was cut off when the leaves were prepared for binding.

11 Blake's reason for doing this must have been the weak legibility of the text in this impression of plate 13, not the decision to color the words themselves (as, e.g., in the late Copy B of the Marriage at the Fitzwilliam Museum). I could detect no textual variants caused by this reworking except the commas after the "fathers" in 11. 1 and 3, at the end of 1. 4, and after "deep" in 1. 7, and the colon at the end of 1. 8, which found no consideration in the "strengthened version."

12 Copy P of Innocence (now at Yale) was printed on different makes of paper, which, however, are dated 1802 and 1804. The copy was given by Malkin to one of his friends in 1805, and thus it was evidently produced at about the same time when Blake probably also executed the present copy (see Bentley 1977, pp. 366-369). The sheets of the uncut copy of the Fragments were cut from that of the Cologne fragment, yet the coloring of the two copies may have a lot in common. David Bindman in Blake as an Artist (Oxford: Phaidon Press, 1977), p. 299, describes the coloring as follows: "... the outlines are firmly outlined in pen. The predominant color note is a cerulean blue, which acts illusionistically, usually over the whole page, giving the suggestion that the text is floating in the sky. The effects of luminosity are correspondingly more subtle."

13 This becomes even more evident when the leaves are measured at all four sides. In most cases the measurements provided above, which have been taken at the left and bottom edges of the paper, do not exactly match those of the opposite sides. For plate 8, e.g., I noted 20.4 (left) x 14.6 (bottom) cm., and 20.8 (right) x 14.1 (top) cm.
The original paper covers or any other remains of a former binding have not been preserved with the prints.

I have not been able to obtain a copy of this particular sales catalogue from a German library. The sale was probably devoted exclusively to books, since there is also no copy of a Sotheby's catalogue with this date in the Dept. of Prints and Drawings of the British Museum. I did not go any further; I have relied entirely on Bentley's account of the first surfacing of *Innocence* (Y); see Bentley 1977, p. 412.

Ibid., p. 412, n. 1.

The restoration was executed by Mrs. Anita Kästner, who has done expert work for the Herzog-August-Bibliothek at Wolfenbüttel. From her report—which is still inserted in the respective box at the WRM—and from the prints themselves one gets the impression that she treated the fragment of Blake's illuminated book with all the care and knowledge that are required for a difficult job like this. From her correspondence with the owner it is clear that Mrs. Kästner knew beforehand how much special care must be taken with both the fragile printing relief and the delicate layers of paint. Consequently her restoration concentrated on cleaning the paper in the margins, leaving the actual printing surface unaffected.

Each of the fifteen leaves has been blind stamped with a collector's mark (showing the Neuerburg coat of arms) in the lower right corner of the sheets. This mark is basically the same as the one described for Heinrich Neuerburg, the present owner's father, under no. 1344a in Frits Lugt's *Les collections de dessins et d'estampes*, supplement [i.e. vol. 2] (La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1956), p. 190.

This attempt at bibliographic exactness and its amateur author have profited enormously from the help of three friends who are professionals in the field. Without the questions and suggestions of G. E. Bentley, Jr., Robert N. Essick, and Sir Geoffrey Keynes my description would have lacked much relevant information. Those flaws in the argument which certainly remain, however, are entirely my own.
A NEW ACQUISITION FOR THE TATE
AND A NEW ADDITION TO
THE BLAKE CATALOGUE

Martin Butlin

It was perhaps to be expected that even in the short time between the last possibility of making corrections and additions and the actual publication of my catalogue of The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake, there would be changes of ownership and new discoveries. Given that this had to happen, it is gratifying that the Tate Gallery is the beneficiary in both respects.

The delicate pencil and watercolor sketch for the alternative composition of "Every Man also gave him a Piece of Money" has led a chequered career since it was sold from the collection of Kerrison Preston at Sotheby's in 1974. Bought by Colnaghi's and included in their exhibition of English Drawings, Watercolours and Paintings in 1976, it was stolen only to be recovered two years later in a veritable Aladdin's Cave of stolen works of art. The drawing had been acquired by Kerrison Preston at the sale of the famous Blake collection of W. Graham Robertson and its history before that can be traced, with near-certainty, back to Frederick Tatham and Blake's widow. However, this good and exciting history seems not to have enhanced its interest; the work failed to attract a single bid when offered again at Sotheby's in 1979. It was at this point in its history that it was recorded in my catalogue, somewhat disin­
genuously, as being in a "Private Collection, Great Britain." Thanks to the help of Mr. James Miller of Sotheby's, the sketch has now been bought by the Friends of the Tate Gallery for presentation to the Tate. Considerably improved in appearance by conservation treatment, it is now on view in the Tate's Blake gallery, hanging with the companion watercolor of "Job and his Daughters" on long loan to the Tate from Dr. R. E. Hemphill; both works were executed in the early 1820s at the time when Blake was repeating his series of Job watercolors for John Linnell and preparing the engravings from them.

However, in addition to improving the sketch's appearance conservation treatment has also revealed a hitherto unknown pencil sketch on the back. This, measuring about 3 1/4 x 6 in. (9.5 x 15 cm.), is a variant of the group on the recto of God the Father and attendant angels. God the Father is shown holding a scroll that forms a great arc above his head, and the number of supporting angels is reduced. Altogether the group lacks the dynamic centrifugal force of the recto and of subsequent developments to be seen in the pen and wash drawing in the British Museum and the pencil sketch in the Fitzwilliam Museum sketchbook. The group of figures is placed relatively low on the paper which suggests that this is an alternative try-out for the group by itself rather than the beginning of an alternative sketch for the whole design with figures below.

One mystery remains. Graham Robertson, as reported by Kerrison Preston, states that "behind the earthly group the sky glows faintly with tender gold and rose, till rising higher it frames the Angelic Vision in softest blue." Only the blue can now be seen and not even a trace of the tender gold and rose could be detected by the Tate's Conservation Department. Similarly with "Job and his Daughters" in which Graham Robertson described the colors of the figures as follows: "The maiden on his [Job's] left is robed in pale pink, she on his right in yellow, while the third, who sits facing him upon the ground, is in palest blue." Again only the blue can be seen. However, in the third of the group, "Job's Sacrifice," most of the colors described by Graham Robertson can still be discerned, as has been kindly confirmed by Miss Miranda Strickland-Constable and Mr. Alexander W. Robertson of the City Art Gallery, Leeds. Blue is usually the first color to fade from Blake watercolors, so the presence of this color and the absence of those described by Graham Robertson in the first two watercolors is all the more mysterious.

While updating my catalogue I should perhaps point out that three names of owners, if not more, are missing from the general Index: Besterman, Dr. Theodore, for catalogue nos. 119 and 179A; Bindman, David, for nos. 147 and 232, with an indirect reference under no. 152; and Clayton-Stamm, M. D. E., for no. 692. I should be most grateful for any further errors or omissions to be pointed out to me; obviously, if they are of importance, they should be published in Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly.

1 Martin Butlin, The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake, 1981. I. 423-24 no. 553, reproduced in color, II pl. 718; re-examination under ideal conditions in the Tate Gallery Conservation Department has revealed that Blake began to reinforce some of the outlines in pen, and has also slightly modified the dimensions which should read, "framing line 8 x 7 (22.8 x 17.8) on paper 9 1/2 x 7 1/2 (24.2 x 19)."
2 Butlin no. 556, repr. pl. 757.
3 Butlin nos. 554 and 557/3, repr. pis. 755 and 779.
4 Kerrison Preston, The Blake Collection of W. Graham Robertson described by the Collector, 1952, p. 138 no. 50.
5 Preston, p. 140 no. 51.
6 Preston, p. 136 no. 49; Butlin p. 423 no. 552.
I dreamt a Dream: what can it mean?
And that I was a maiden Queen:
Guarded by an Angel mild:
Witless woe was neer beguil'd!

And I wept both night and day
And he wip'd my tears away
And I wept both day and night
And hid from him my hearts delight

So he took his wings and fled:
Then the morn blush'd rosy red:
I dried my tears and armd my fears
With ten thousand shields and spears.

Soon my Angel came again;
I was arm'd, he came in vain:
For the time of youth was fled
And grey hairs were on my head.


On the interpretation of "The Angel" from Blake's Songs of Experience there is substantial agreement amongst commentators (notably Wicksteed, Damon, Hirsch, Adams, Keynes, Bateson, Gleckner, Gillham, Stevenson). The poem is appropriately grouped with "An old maid early" and "The Golden Net" as an illustration of the theme of "ungratified desires." The dreamer enjoys the angel's affections but hides from him her "hearts delight" and plays upon his sympathy by weeping. When he eventually flies away she resorts to coquetry to entice him back, but by the time he returns it is too late. Some such paraphrase, and a footnote or two (to lines 4 and 12), will satisfy most readers, but some may still want to linger over the second line and ask: why a "maiden Queen"?

So far as I am aware, two rather different explanations have been offered: Joseph Wicksteed (Blake's Innocence and Experience, 1928, p. 158) describes the dreamer as a "petted child always being made a queen of," which suggests a degree of vanity and assertiveness, while Robert Gleckner (The Piper and the Bard, 1959, p. 263) likens her to Thei, who is both a virgin and, in the words of the lily and the matron clay, "Queen of the Vales," and this comparison suggests a character rather more timid and fragile.

I would like to add a third perspective on the phrase, one which I believe reinforces the poem's theme of hidden love. There are two famous "maiden
Queens in history, Elizabeth I of England and Christina of Sweden, both of whom withstood much pressure and some inclination to marry. The remarkable life of Queen Christina was the inspiration of Mme. de Scudéry's romance The History of Cleobuline, Queen of Corinth in volume II of Le Grand Cythere (1649-53), which in turn became the basis of Dryden's play Secret Love, or The Maiden Queen (1668). The nameless Sicilian Queen of this play is secretly in love with Philocles, whom she affects to rebuff one moment and entice the next. Inflamed by jealousy of Philocles' love for Candiope, and unwilling to reveal her own love, she so completely baffles Philocles with her erratic moods that he decides to flee, but a series of twists in the plot sees him return to court, by now aware of her true feelings and half-inclined to woo her. Honor, however, and the conventions of comedy, determine otherwise, and at the end of the play the Queen resigns herself to remaining a maid.

The parallels between poem and play are naturally limited, yet Dryden's maiden Queen and Blake's share the same basic predicament:

And I wept both day and night, And hid from him my hearts delight . . .

("The Angel," 7-8)

... I have conceal'd my passion With such care from him, that he knows not yet I love . . .

(Secret Love, III, i, 48-50, in Beaurline and Bowers, eds., John Dryden: Four Comedies, 1967)

Philocles is not exactly an "Angel mild," yet when he contemplates union with the maiden Queen he is moved to remark:

Sure I had of the fallen Angels Dreams; All Heav'n within this hour was mine!

(V, i, 448-49)

But the lines from Dryden's play which might provide the most enlightening gloss on Blake's poem are the words of the maiden Queen's song in IV, ii, of which I quote here the opening stanza:

I feed a flame within which so torments me That it both pains my heart, and yet contents me: 'Tis such a pleasing smart, and I so love it, That I had rather die, than once remove it.

(IV, ii, 23-26)

Witness woe, if you like, but not without bewilderment! The "hearts delight" that causes Blake's dreamer to weep is clearly akin to the "pleasing smart" of this little song of secret love, and Blake's one and only use of the phrase "maiden Queen," I suggest, is a deliberate nod in this direction.

A REDISCOVERED COLORED COPY
OF YOUNG'S NIGHT THOUGHTS

Thomas V. Lange

In their exhaustive research, the editors of William Blake's Designs for Edward Young's Night Thoughts (1980) were able to add four "new" copies to the two earlier censuses of colored copies of the engraved work, and they state, "At present twenty-three coloured copies are believed to exist, all but one of which have recently been studied by one or more of the editors of the present edition." Somewhat later in their commentary they continue, "Still untraced is the well-attested Gaisford-Macgeorge copy, called G in the Bentley census and last located in 1926." The editors obscure this "well-attested" copy, since they choose to omit all mention of it from their census of colored copies. The only physical description appears in footnote 81, some forty pages after the census.

While engaged in research quite unrelated to Blake for the Lutheran Church in America, I discovered this untraced colored copy of Night Thoughts in a disused closet, among the books bequeathed to the Church by Mrs. William T. Tonner in 1971. Upon her death, a portion of Mrs. Tonner's distinguished Blake collection passed to the Lutheran Church, including one of the two recorded impressions of the color-print "Newton" (Butlin 307), an early state of the copper engraving, "The Canterbury Pilgrims," and a drawing, "Moses striking the rock" (Butlin 445). The remainder of the Tonner Blake collection was given to the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and was described by Martin Butlin in the Museum's Bulletin. Hereafter I will refer to the Gaisford-Macgeorge copy as the Tonner-Lutheran Church copy.

The purpose of this brief note is to describe this newly discovered copy of Night Thoughts and to correct and update the provenance information. The following entry follows the format used by the editors of the recently published edition of Night Thoughts:

I-12A (Moss-Bentley S). White Death.

Bound in three-quarter red-brown morocco over greenish-blue marbled paper by Riviere, marbled end-papers. The spine is tooled in the style of Roger Payne. Top edge gilt, others uncut. Lacks the Explanation of the Engravings, which is, however, supplied in 19th century type-facsimile. Watermarks on twelve leaves. 16 3/4 x 12-3/4 inches. (42.5 x 32.8 cm.). Grotesque color on p. 10 (6E), p. 31 (18E), p. 35 (20E). No JC monogram.

1) Acquired by Thomas Gaisford (1779-1855) of Offington, Worthing. He added his engraved book-
plate and the volume was sold with his library at Sotheby’s, 23 April 1890, lot 192, for £40.10.0 to Quaritch for;
2) Bernard Buchanan Macgeorge and listed in his privately-printed library catalogues of 1892 (p. 9--not listed as colored) and 1906 (p. 14--as colored); sold with his library at Sotheby’s, 1 July 1924, lot 118, for £125 to Quaritch;
3) Offered by Quaritch in their catalogue 388 (October 1924), item 326, and again in their catalogue 401 (May 1926), item 218, for £175;
4) Sold to Cortlandt F. Bishop, who added his red leather bookplate; sold at the Bishop sale at American Art Association, Anderson Galleries (part III, 14-15 November 1938), to Charles Sessler for $325;
5) Sold in December 1938 to Florence Foerderer Tonner for $357.50; she added her distinctive bookplate and bequeathed the volume in 1971 to 6) The Lutheran Church in America.

Certain details of the provenance and physical description do not exactly correspond to those published by Bentley and Moss, neither of whom ever examined the actual volume. The most obvious of these differences is the absence of the Explanation leaf. As late as the Bishop sale, and when the volume was sold by Sessler to Mrs. Tonner, the accompanying bibliographical descriptions noted, “Laid in at the end is the scarce leaf of ‘Explanation of the Engravings,’” and pencilled in an unidentified hand on the front binder’s blank is the statement, “At the end is Blake’s explanation of the Engravings, often wanting.” The leaf included in the Tonner-Lutheran Church copy is, however, a curious and apparently unrecorded facsimile printed from type and loosely inserted in the volume, the source of which has not been traced. The text of this leaf is a column-for-column and page-for-page reprint of the original, is printed on both sides of the sheet (as the original), but is in a much-reduced format: 11-1/4 x 8-5/8 inches. There are no stubs in the volume (other than modern binder’s stubs) to suggest that the original leaf of Explanation was ever present. Nor are there marks at any point to indicate where the facsimile leaf was “laid in at the end,” but modern stains from pressure-sensitive tape show that the leaf was crudely stuck facing the titlepage some time after the Bishop sale, since the catalogue entry for that sale was taped below the facsimile, and has left identical stains.

Three further bits of penciled notes have not yet been identified; they may belong to the above-mentioned owners, or may indicate still further owners. On the verso of the front free endpaper is the notation “Cat/3759”; on the front binder’s blank is the price code “puuacy” and beneath that can be seen the erased price “1200.00”; and on the final free endpaper is written “c990.” None of these notations is in Quaritch’s form; the volume also lacks that firm’s usual collation note. Sessler’s cost code, written by Mabel Zahn but now erased, can also be clearly read.

This newly-located copy of Night Thoughts is textually complete with all engravings colored and printed in their correct locations. Neither “JC” monograms nor any other notes appear on the plates. The coloring of this copy of Night Thoughts has been compared with that of copy 1-13 (New York Public Library, Print Room of the Art, Prints, and Photographs Division), and has been found to be reasonably consistent. The only notable difference (other than predictable variations in intensity) is found on the figure of Death on the titlepage to the Second Night. In the NYPL and in other copies, the long flowing beard and shoulder are clearly visible; in this newly discovered copy that figure has been overpainted with a black hood and cloak, obscuring both hair and shoulder. Copies 1-8 and 1-11 seem to have this same feature. The engraving of this plate is, as usual, in the later state with added work. The question of placing the Tonner-Lutheran Church copy of Night Thoughts correctly in the census prepared by Grant, Rose, Tolley, and Erdman, is somewhat problematical since those editors are themselves inconsistent and somewhat arbitrary in their arrangement. They note, “There is no indication as to whether [this newly-discovered copy] is a White or Green Death copy. If it is of the former type and should prove not to have been tinted by Blake, it will fit well enough as copy 1-16, yet
stand somewhat apart since it uniquely contains the 'Explanations' sheet unbound, whereas all other coloured copies that include this sheet have it bound in one of three positions." Now that it is recognized that this copy does not contain the Explanation leaf, it cannot be located as copy I-16. Even if it did contain this leaf it would not, according to the editorial criteria presented on pp. 60-62, be appropriately placed as copy I-16 since the surrounding copies, I-13 through I-15, are all seriously imperfect in one regard or another.

Copies I-2 through I-14 have been arranged together by Grant-Rose-Tolley-Erdman, since all those copies contain what the editors have optimistically labeled "grotesque colouring" or "grotesque painting"; within this group copies I-2 through I-7 are arranged together since they contain the leaf of Explanation bound after p. 95. These copies are further arranged "according to the earliness of provenance," that is, they can be established with some certainty." Copies I-8 to I-10 have the Explanation leaf bound after the Advertisement, and copies I-11 and I-12 lack the Explanation leaf entirely. Copies I-13 through I-15 also lack that leaf, and are further deficient in lacking either text or colored engravings. The newly-discovered copy of Night Thoughts cannot be placed as copy I-16 since that would put it in the midst of seriously defective copies. Since it contains "grotesque colouring," lacks the Explanation leaf, and has demonstrable provenance closest to copy I-12, this new copy can best be located as copy I-12A. It must be pointed out that the editors of Night Thoughts are inconsistent in the arrangement by earliness of provenance, and one might at the same time question the wisdom of organizing a census in part on such slight grounds as the binder's location of the Explanation leaf.

It may well be that this colored copy of Night Thoughts has escaped the notice of Blake bibliographers since it appeared in the Bishop sale under Young's name at the very end of the last catalogue volume, and was not mentioned under the general Blake heading. When one considers the prices fetched by other Blake works at that sale, it seems that this copy of Night Thoughts might well have brought more if catalogued with the other Blakeana earlier in the sale.


4 I am grateful to Mr. Donald Trued, Lutheran Church in America (New York), for permission to publish this note. Inquiries concerning this volume should be addressed to him at 231 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10001.

5 It is possible that this leaf was printed to complete this copy of the book, and that it is not therefore otherwise recorded.

6 It is perhaps worth mentioning that plates vary from copy to copy in the presence or absence of engraved imprint lines, a point mentioned by Lasson and Essick. Grant-Rose-Tolley-Erdman are right to suggest that uncolored copies exist in which the engraved titlepage to the Second Night appears in the earlier state, one such copy was presented to The Pierpont Morgan Library by Miss Louise Crane in memory of her mother, Mrs. W. Murray Crane, and I have examined two further copies in private collections.

7 The explanation of this phenomenon will be discussed in a future article in Blake/Ian Illustrated Quarterly.

MARS AND THE PLANETS THREE IN AMERICA

Michael Ferber

We are still very far from understanding the passage about Mars in plate 5 of America, despite the recent proposal, put forth by Rodney M. and Mary R. Baine in English Language Notes, 13 (1975), 14-15, that Swedenborg is behind it. I have been puzzling for several years over the Swedenborg quotations they offer, but I cannot see their bearing, however interesting they may be in themselves, on the meaning of the America passage. The idea that the spirits of Mars are the best spirits, the notion that Mars represents a balance of intellect and emotions, and the other odd Swedenborgian speculations seem at best only vaguely relevant and at worst quite contrary to the tenor of the rest of the poem. They come up first against our inevitable association of Mars with warfare, an association Blake gives no suggestion we should break. As the Baines admit, moreover, Swedenborg cannot account for "the planets three." Even, finally, if we somehow knew that Swedenborg's Earths in our Solar System were the "source," we would still be faced with the problem, worse than the one we had before, of how its meanings fit together with the rest of the poem.

In any case, I have a few tentative suggestions about the passage. I cannot make it all coherent, but the connections I offer are the sort of thing we ought to do to it; someone with a fresher eye will doubtless recast these suggestions to make better sense of the passage.

When the wrathful Prince of Albion arises dragon-like at midnight, he "flam'd red meteors" (3:14-16); this alone would make him resemble the red planet with its terrible wandering comets (5:2-3). When Albion's Angel sees the terrible Orc rising over the Atlantic, Orc first seems a comet and then seems the red planet Mars which once enclosed such terrible comets in its sphere. At that time "the planets three" flew round the crimson disk. I take it that Blake is not distinguishing comets from planets, except for the planet red itself; the terrible comets are "wandering," after all, and "wanderer" is what
"planet" means. To be enclosed in Mars's sphere, as the comets are, and to fly round the disk, as the three planets do, are the same thing, for "sphere" probably has something of its older cosmological meaning as one of the concentric transparent globes around the earth; it can mean "orb" or "orbit" but probably not "disk." So we have the suggestion that Orc was once one of these three planets revolving about Mars.

But then the Sun becomes a problem. It too seems to have been orbiting Mars, either as one of the three or, as I think, a fourth planet-comet, before it was "rent" from the red sphere. Two lines later a voice comes forth and gives the great speech on plate 6 beginning "The morning comes." Isn't this speech about the arrival of the sun from its orbit about Mars? True, the song the redeemed captives sing begins "The Sun has left his blackness," not "redness," but from an earthly vantage the former age seemed black, a dark age of Empire dominated by warfare, or Mars, which of course is only visible at night. Since Orc presides over this dawn, we may associate him with the Sun, once of Mars's sphere. Now he seems to, Albion's Angel or Prince, to be Mars, because he rises warlike against him, but it is the wrathful Prince himself who is the original Mars. It is he who "burns in his nightly tent" before he rises at midnight flaming the red meteors like comets (3:1, 3:14-16).

When Orc the Sun (and son) leaves Mars the wrathful Prince, Orc presumably takes the three planets with him, or threatens to. Who are they? Since Orc-America is wandering out of the British Empire, we should look to see who else may be drawn into orbit around him. I think Blake tells us: it is "Ireland and Scotland and Wales" (15:13), who made up the original Empire. (A less likely threesome is "France Spain & Italy" (16:16), but they seem to be little empires themselves.) The "burning winds" of revolutionary fervor driven by Orc and the fierce Americans cause the Guardians of the three original colonies to forsake their frontiers (abandon the original Empire) and "deform their ancient heavens" (15:11-15). "Ancient heavens," which brings back the astronomical theme, is a phrase we have met before, when the frightened Angel of Albion addresses Orc: "An rebel form that rent the ancient / Heavens" (9:14-15). And "rent" we have met once before this, when "the Sun was rent from thy red sphere." The connections seem clear enough. America is the new center, the new sun, for the satellite nations that once revolved around warlike, imperial England, but in erupting out of England's sphere of influence America has taken on the features of its father, at least from the father's point of view.

We need resort to no arcane source to map things thus far, but a few reminders of the common tradition may help fill in the map. The "Archetype of mighty Emperies" may be the ancient palace of Ariston (10:8), but the prototype of mighty Emperies is certainly Rome, which worshipped Mars and waged almost constant war. Rome even set its calendar by Mars, beginning each year on March first: "now the times are return'd upon thee" (9:19). Of course Rome learned from Greece, and especially Troy, to follow after "the detestable Gods of Priam" (Milton 14:15); Mars, as Ares, took Priam's side in the Trojan War. In his first appearance in western literature, in fact, Ares arrives on the plain of Troy with three companions about him, Phobos, Deimos, and Eris, or Fear, Terror, and Strife (Iliad 4.439-41). Britain, founded by a son of a royal Trojan who founded Rome, became, in John of Gaunt's words, "this seat of Mars" (Richard II, ii, i, 41), and Gaunt should know, having fought beside the Black Prince, whom Blake portrays in his King Edward the Third as insatiably battle-hungry: "It is my sin to love the noise of war" (3:232).

Whether the passage in America 5 can be brought into line with other astronomical passages in Blake I am not sure. In cancelled plate b of America itself there are some difficult lines about a comparable eruption, but they bring in the stars and the moon as well. The cancelled lines seem less susceptible of a political reading than the Mars section, and may be about the altering of perceptions when reason subjugates the stars and creates a theory of a heliocentric system governed by laws of gravity. Whatever the lines mean, Blake did cancel them.

I think Blake did not care very much about astronomy or astrology or cosmological speculations of the Swedenborgian sort. All of his astronomical passages seem to be functions of his phenomenology of consciousness or his political and historical myth. The Mars passage has an ad hoc character that tempts one to seek a source, but that character is due to its nonce role as a political allegory. Whatever the details of this allegory, the language of stars and planets has been the common vehicle since ancient times of discourse about political events, as the phrase "sphere of influence" should doubly remind us. In Blake's day "revolution" still had more to do with "revolving" than with "revolting," and the vast wheels of blood over the Atlantic (4:6) may alert us to the cyclical paradigm that governed most of Blake's thinking about political change. The American colonists themselves were happy to evoke ancient astronomical terms for their revolution. The "Novus Ordo Saeculorum" on the back of our dollar bill hearkens to the theory of the Apepatozës or cosmic renewal in Virgil's Fourth Eclogue, and with each new state we add a new star to the blue firmament of our flag.
The Letters of William Blake

Reviewed by G. E. Bentley, Jr.

There have been separate editions of William Blake's letters edited by A. G. B. Russell in 1906 and by Geoffrey Keynes in 1926 (facsimiles of those to Butts), 1956, 1968 (second edition), and now 1980 (third edition), and of course all the letters are printed in Writings of William Blake, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (1925 ff.) and William Blake's Writings, ed. G. E. Bentley, Jr. (1978).

What are the differences among the Keynes editions of the Letters? Well, the 1956 edition had 261 pages, 13 plates, and 151 numbered related letters and documents; the 1968 edition had 224 smaller, denser pages, 13 plates, and 151 letters etc.; the 1980 edition has 235 yet denser pages, 28 reproductions, and 183 numbered letters etc. In each there are Blake's surviving receipts as well as his letters, plus an elaborate Register of Documents (pp. 181-227 in 1980), giving, normally, address, date, description ("A single leaf, written on one side. No watermark"), size (occasionally), location, where printed, and source of text, though the edition omits the postmark and whether sealed with wax or a wafer, and missing letters are a...
I have followed Russell [1906] in supplying punctuation where it seems to help the sense, even though Blake so frequently omitted it. To humour him in this respect seemed to place an unnecessary obstacle in the way of his readers. 1

When a sentence seems to require a full stop, Sir Geoffrey capitalizes the next word as well, even if Blake left it lower-case. He has both added punctuation extensively and changed it, added apostrophes ("arriv'd"), lowered some but not all superscript letters ("M"), and generally normalized the accidental features of Blake's text. For instance, in the poem in Blake's letter of 14 September 1800 Blake offers not a single mark of punctuation, and Sir Geoffrey has supplied twenty-four. In no case, it seems to me, does the added punctuation significantly alter Blake's meaning, and for many general readers it will be a real convenience. But the main purpose of the addition is aimed at scholars, and the best practice of scholars, today and for many years past, has been to let the author's punctuation stand or to identify it in detail where and how it has been changed. Judged by the standard of the general public, the 1890 edition is considerably richer than that of 1968 (though at $55.00 it should be very rich indeed--its English price of £18.50 is a good deal cheaper). For the scholar, most of this material is easily available elsewhere, though some is new.

The work is handsomely produced and a pleasure to handle, and the typographical blemishes are rare. 3

Many of the footnotes are improved commendably from the earlier editions, but some of the information is rather out of date. For example: (1) Blake's transcript of Tasso, said to be "now in private hands in America" (p. 43), was given by Grace Lambert to Princeton University in 1960. (2) The 1 April 1800 letter, which is here last traced in 1934 (p. 185), has been for years in The British Library (see Blake Books [1977], 275). (3) The letter of 16 July 1804, said to be "Now in the collection of Prof. F. W. Hilles" (p. 201), was bequeathed by Professor Hilles to Yale in 1976. (4) The prospectus for Blair's Grave "presumably naming Blake as the engraver" (which is referred to in Blake's letter of 27 November 1805) is "not... known" to Sir Geoffrey (p. 119 n. 1), though he cites (p. 208) the article in Modern Philology (1971) in which this prospectus was reprinted. (5) The receipt of 9 September 1806, said merely to have belonged to Ruthven Todd "In 1942" (p. 207), was sold at Parke Bernet on 23 May 1979, lot 1 ($2,500), and offered in 1980 in The Rendells Catalogue 152, lot 3 ($25,000.00). (6) The untraced (indeed, unmentioned) address leaf for Blake's letter to Ozias Humphry [May 1809] has been in the Huntington Library since 1926. (7) The letter of 26 July 1826 "Now in the possession of Mrs. Edward L. Doheny" (p. 221) was given by Countess Doheny to St. John's Seminary, Camarillo, California, in 1940. (8) George Richmond's eloquent letter of 15 August 1827 about Blake's death is scarcely traced since 1928 (p. 226), but it has long been in the collection of Mr. Joseph Holland (see Blake Records [1969], 347 n. 1). (9) Parts of "John Linnell's Cash Account Book" (printed on pp. 147-150) are said to be "now first printed" (p. 218), but all are in Blake Books (1969), pp. 584-97. Further, the readings here from the Cash Account Book are sometimes rather approximate. The entries for payments to Blake in 1818-1821 are omitted, as are a number of receipts from customers for Job; "M" Bohnes" (p. 149) should be "M" Bohnes", i.e., John Bohn, who offered the copy of Job he bought here in his Catalogue (1829) for £3.3.0; the entry for 5 May 1825 ("of coals to be sent to M. Blake") should read "to M. Palmer for one chaldron of Coals to be sent to M. Blake---" (and a similar entry for 27 January 1826 is omitted entirely). In sum, there is valuable information here, but its currency and completeness are sometimes uncertain.

No edition of Blake's letters is ever complete. The letter (or rather sentence of gift) from Catherine Blake to C. H. Tatham [of 74 August 1824] is omitted here (see Blake Records [1969], 288). And of course each new edition of Blake's letters appears on the eve of the discovery of more letters; Dr. Stanley Gardner has recently found an important letter from Blake's brother James which he will publish in his new book on Blake's Songs.

Sir Geoffrey has been publishing editions of Blake for almost three quarters of a century, and each has added something to our knowledge. For such endless labor, no praise and honor can be enough. For at least fifty years his name has been synonymous with Blake scholarship. Long may they both flourish.

1 P. xviii. Indeed, in a letter from Hayley about Blake, "omissions and... mispellings... have been silently formalised" (p. 94).

2 The index leaves a great deal to be desired; most of the proper names checked in the Register of Documents were not in the index.

3 E.g., p. 31, n. 1 ("This refers to a water-colour painting"); p. 207 (No. 99: "reduced"; No. 100: "BLAKE [letter] to THOMAS BUTTS") for "BLAKE [account] with THOMAS BUTTS"; p. 209 (No. 106, the leading has risen type-high); pp. 209, 210 n. 1 ("J. T. Smith" for "J. T. Smith").

Reviewed by Bo Ossian Lindberg

A 283-page study of Blake's graphical methods by an American professor of English? Hardly seems possible. Yet, such a thing does exist, profusely illustrated with 236 reproductions, including some from Professor Essick's own experimental plates. On first learning of such a production one is tempted to quote Dr. Johnson on female preachers and dancing dogs ("It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all") and look no further. Essick's work deserves a better fate. It is a major contribution to the literature on Blake, and the first serious study of Blake's engraving and etching techniques since Todd's and Hayter's works of the 1940s. In my view it is the best work on the subject so far published. Essick's practical experience of printmaking equals that of the best of his predecessors, and he surpasses them in his knowledge of the history of graphical methods, and of the minutiae of Blake's productions in graphical media.

The book is divided into five parts, tracing Blake's development as a graphical artist: "Connoisseur and Apprentice, 1768-1779," "Artist and Craftsman, 1780-1800," "Graphic Experiments, 1788-1822," "Prints, Patronage and Poetry, 1800-1818," and "Synthesis and Mastery, 1818-1827." Each part is divided into three or four chapters. The notes and the lists of illustrations are surprisingly rich in information, and there are two very useful appendices, namely a catalogue of states and impressions of Blake's political prints of 1793-1794, and an analysis of the medium of a 1795 colorprinted drawing. There are eight pages of bibliography, and two indexes. The reproductions are good (only one in color), the paper, printing and binding are first-rate, and the book is a joy to handle.

Essick's study is very thorough, almost exhaustive, as far as Blake's methods of engraving and etching are concerned, and it contains, also, interesting sections on lithography and xylography. His treatment of printing techniques, however, is less thorough, and there are a few glaring inconsistencies in Essick's calculation of the niveau of his readers. He finds it necessary, for instance, to inform us that a copper-plate is purchased from the plate-maker, who in turn has acquired the copper from the brass-founder, and he also describes in detail the conventional methods for polishing the plates, laying the grounds for etching, etc. Good. The book is addressed to an audience professionally interested in Blake, and this audience includes people with a scanty knowledge of graphic techniques. But he does not explain what an India proof is, nor does he try to establish when printing on laid India paper was invented, although he has found evidence that Blake did not take up the technique until the 1820s. How many scholars have noticed the India papers, larger than the designs, but smaller than
the plate-marks, in the Job India proofs? How many know that this paper is of extremely smooth surface, capable of receiving more detailed and brilliant impressions than ordinary copper printer's papers, but too brittle to allow printing, unless it is laid on top of an ordinary paper, both wetted, and pulled through the press, thereby pasting the India paper to the supporting paper? I have asked about 15 trained art historians, some of them experts in graphic techniques, and only the late Arnold Fawcus knew anything about the process, and he was the one who informed me about it.

Generally, Essick does not go very deep into the technology of papermaking. Watermarks are dealt with in many places, but there is no attempt at a general estimation of the information offered by them. The same is true of wetting, and the reason why wetting is necessary is not sufficiently explained. All these omissions are not necessarily defects (although I think that the omission of the India proofs is); they are mentioned mainly in order to indicate along which lines further research might be profitable.

The binding media used in printing are hardly mentioned at all. This needs special consideration, because the neglect of binders occasionally leads Essick into error. On p. 24 Essick writes, quoting Dossie's Handmaid to the Arts (1764), that the engraver could make his own printing ink from "burnt 'nut oil' ... and 'Frankfort black,'" and explains the "nut oil" as "oil rendered from kernels of hazel or walnut." As far as I am aware, hazelnut oil is a non-drier, and I do not know of any method of making it drying. It could be added in small quantities to oil paint in order to facilitate painting wet in wet over a long period—though olive oil or oil of cloves is more commonly used for that purpose—but in printing every retarding of drying times would be undesirable. If Essick knows of any method of making hazelnut oil suitable for printing he should have quoted the evidence. To my knowledge, whenever "nut oil" is mentioned in connection with painting or printing, walnut oil is meant.

When Essick adds that the "manufacture of colored inks required only the substitution of another pigment for the Frankfort black," I doubt the practicability of this simple recipe. First it must be realized that the normal binder for printing ink in the west was and is oil, mostly linseed and walnut oil, which are the best driers. If oil color is printed on paper, the paper will absorb more or less of the oil. This would hinder the printing and also make the paper stained and discolored, and in the end brown and brittle, since oil accelerates the decomposition of the cellulose fibers in the paper to oxycellulose.

In order to make the oil suitable for printing on paper it is necessary to increase its viscosity beyond the point where the paper ceases to imbibe it. The established method for doing so was, as Dossie explicitly writes, to burn it; that is, to cook it in an open vessel for a long time and, in the end, to set it afire. Theodore de Mayerne gives the following directions, said to be those of Callot: "Burn also some nut oil (try that of linseed) in an iron pot. Let it boil until it fumes and gives off smoke, then set fire to it with a match and let it burn, stir until the oil becomes so thick that you have great difficulty in grinding it." After this the pigment, lampblack burnt without the access of air, should be mixed with a decoct of gall apples in water, and allowed to dry. Ultimately the lamp-black should be ground into the burnt oil.

This process of burning will make the oil as thick as honey, but at the same time as black as coffee. Such a binding medium is sure to discolor every delicate tint mixed with it. It is suitable only for blacks and other dark pigments. This is why color printing has been rare in the west until quite recent times. Today it is possible to increase the viscosity of an oil without discoloring it, by boiling the oil in vacuo. Such stand oil is used in modern color printing, but it was not available in Dossie's or Blake's time. It is, however, much slower in drying than the burnt oil, and a siccative must be added to it for printing.

The binder used, for instance, for Japanese color woodcuts is starch size. Such a binder is of light color and moreover does not attack the paper. I strongly suspect that whenever Blake wanted to print in colors he used an aqueous binder. This problem will have to be dealt with more fully later.

Since color printing was practiced in the eighteenth century, printers and engravers must have had recipes—more or less secret ones—for suitable binders. Some of the pioneers of color printing published their methods. In the 1720s Jacob Christoph Le Blon's Coloritto appeared, and in 1753-57 Jacques Fabien Gautier d'Agoty's Observations sur l'histoire naturelle, sur la physique, et sur la peinture. George Baxter described his process of color printing in his Pictorial Album or Cabinet of Paintings, 1837. I cannot here attempt any identification of binders used by the above mentioned writers. Be it sufficient to say that none of them is mentioned in Essick's book.

One should consider especially the possibility of making a light-colored, viscous, fastdrying oil by cooking it over white lead in the sun. Such oils are mentioned in medieval sources, though they are there recommended for painting rather than for printing.

For black-and-white prints Blake probably preferred the customary burnt-oil binder, especially for intaglio printing. In this case printing would have to be done on wet paper, and then a water-soluble binder would easily cause blurring of the outlines. I have never seen this effect in any of Blake's intaglio engravings. In intaglio printing wetting is necessary; otherwise it would be very difficult to force the paper into the incised lines to receive the ink. In stereotype printing wetting is often omitted, especially when the ink contains a water-soluble binder.

It is likely that Blake used aqueous binders for most of his stereotype prints. Printed surfaces in the illuminated books seem to have taken water-color washes remarkably well, which would hardly be
the case if an oily vehicle had been used (it is, of course, possible to paint in watercolor on oil, if only the oily surface is prepared beforehand with ox gall or the juice of garlic, onions or potatoes, but there is no indication that Blake ever did this). The reticulation of the surface in many of Blake's stereotype prints indicates that the paper was not wetted. Why? Most probably because the binder was soluble in water, and would have caused blurring on moist paper.

It seems that Essick in passing over the difficulties of color printing was misled by the light-colored stand oils available today.

It should be noted that Essick on p. 102 says that "well soaked paper usually tends to absorb the ink." This is what many experienced practitioners believe, but it is only what seems to happen. Actually the reverse is true, as long as oily binders are used. The wet paper assists the effect of the viscous oil and hinders absorption of ink. It is common knowledge that oil and water do not mix easily. For this reason printing on wet paper gives a smoother result. It is just because dry paper absorbs some of the oily binder that printing in oil on dry paper results in rough reticulation of the printed surface. Part of the binder leaves the pigment, and the ink gets so stiff that it adheres to the plate. It should also be noted, as already pointed out, that the dry paper is more difficult to bring into uniform contact with the plate. For these two reasons the plate regularly remains dirtier after printing on dry paper, than if well soaked paper is used.

Essick's chapter 8 deals admirably with technical evidence for dating some of Blake's intaglio engravings. I am happy to see that he dates the first state of the Job (the companion of Ezekiel) 1793, and I think that his redating of the second state probably after 1820 is a great improvement on my own tentative dating 1797-98. Especially valuable is Essick's remark (p. 220) that no datable prints by Blake are on laid India paper until the published proofs of the Job series printed in the winter of 1825-26. But four of the six known copies of Job and its companion Ezekiel are on that paper. Essick also thinks, rightly, that all extant states of Ezekiel are second states, and that the date 1794 is a survival from the lost first state. The two companion plates seem to have been reworked at about the time Blake was engraving the Job set.

Essick's remark on p. 67 about the bevelling of the edges of copperplates is a memento to anyone who, by measuring the plate-marks, tries to establish which prints were done from the recto or verso of the same plate. Since the necessary bevelling could vary, the platemarks from both sides of a bevelled plate are unlikely to correspond exactly. Printing from unbevelled plates is not safe, because the sharp edges are then likely to damage the paper—in fact they often cut off the margins.

I would like to add that the use of both sides of the plate for works meant to be printed in intaglio would preclude the usual way of making corrections by cutting away the copper around defective lines and levelling the hollows by hammering from the back—this process would disfigure the back. It would have been very difficult for Blake to use both sides of the same plate for such extensively reworked engravings as the second states of Job and Ezekiel. In that case Blake would have had to spoil the first state of one of them, say, the Job, in order to rework the Ezekiel; pull all the prints needed, and then destroy it, in order to rework the Job. Very cumbersome! And how get rid of the plate-maker's stamp? He would have had to remove it in the same way as above, alternately from the back and from the front, and that already in the first states, even if he did no other corrections at this early stage. For this reason I cannot agree with Essick's suggestion that the companions Ezekiel and Job were done on both sides of the same plate.

The use of both sides of the plate is rational only for stereotype etchings, and only in this case can it be proved that Blake did so. Whenever he did intaglio work on the back of a used plate, his original design is lost, and anything that could be sacrificed without loss—in some cases inartistic illustrations done by others than Blake, such as plates 14 and 16 of the Job series.

Essick's solution of the difficult problem of dating Albion Rose is a great improvement upon previous attempts (pp. 70 ff.). The ruled sky is recognized as a survivor from the lost first state, and the final state is dated after 1803. The colorprints, printed in stereotype from the intaglio plate 1794-95, show much of the intaglio work in white line against the color. This fact has made possible the reconstruction of the appearance of the plate before the work that was added after 1803. The worm and the moth are missing in this state, and, of course, the caption. Yet Essick has missed the fact that the BM color print does show a "worm," or what looks like a worm, below Albion's left foot. It is not engraved in the plate, and it is probably only an accident of color printing. I think that this accident is the origin of the introduction of the worm in the final intaglio state. The date 1780 belongs, according to Essick, to the invention of the design, not to the execution. I would like to suggest another possibility: that the date and the ruled sky belong to a lost first state, actually executed in 1780, that the lines underlying the colorprints of 1794-95 show added work from an otherwise lost second state, and that the final state is the third. The radical juxtapositions of style visible in Essick's "second" state are as much a part of his "first" state. This indicates that there was a state earlier than Essick's first. Notice also that the signature "WB inv" is not on a line with the date, and that spacing indicates that it is a later addition. Therefore I believe that the date is a survivor from the first state, and that the signature was added in the third.

A minor carelessness on pp. 70, 71, should be pointed out. Blake certainly did not print with "pigment" alone, without a binder; an expert on technique of Essick's capacity should write "ink" or "paint."
I feel that Essick is right when he says that the illustrations for Young were published in an unfinished state. I also agree with him that most of them are unsuccessful.

Essick's chapter on Blake's relief and white-line etching (pp. 85-120) is by far the best treatment of the subject so far published: excellent research along both historical and experimental paths. Appropriate quotes from manuals and treatises that were known to Blake and his contemporaries are followed by a step-by-step reconstruction of Blake's methods. Essick has scrutinized Blake's prints and the one surviving plate fragment for technical evidence, and has himself executed graphic works according to the processes likely to have been employed by Blake. He is able to show that Blake could step-etch his stereotype plates in order to hinder underbitten and insure sufficient depth of biting, that he could make corrections by building up letters, etc., on bitten-down areas, that he could print successfully from extremely low reliefs, that he could control the effects of granulation in printing, and much more. There is also an excellent account of how electrolyte replicas of copperplates are made, which explains why the electrolyte Songa cannot be used as evidence for estimating the depth of biting in Blake's stereotype plates: the hollows were deepened in order to facilitate clean inking.

Yet I still think that Blake did not write the lettering backwards as Essick maintains, and I believe that more could be made of Cumberland's letters and Blake's own technical memoranda than Essick does.

According to John Linnell, in a later-deleted annotation in his copy of J. T. Smith, an "extraordinary facility seems to have been attained by Blake in writing backwards." Notice the force of the word "seems": Linnell was not sure about Blake's way of working. Cumberland wrote that Blake excelled in the art of "perusing backwards"—whatever that may mean. Essick thinks that Blake in Cumberland's view wrote backwards—but why did Cumberland not say so?

Whatever Blake's method, he was luckier than Cumberland himself, whose invention of etching text on copper-plates later to be printed in intaglio produced reversed lettering, which had to be read with the aid of a mirror. It is interesting to see that Cumberland had a remedy for this: to offset the lettering by taking counter-proofs of the reversed prints before they had dried. This was, of course, a makeshift: such counter-proofs look weak and thin, and have no artistic value, as Hind points out. Blake would not have found this method satisfactory.

It would be better to put in the offset stage earlier, in transferring the text to the plate. I agree that this second offset process, suggested by Hayter and Todd in their attempt at reconstructing Blake's methods, is to some degree hypothetical. In their opinion, the writing was done with an asphaltum-based medium rightways on a sheet of paper which had been previously soaked in a solution of gum arabic and allowed to dry. Then the sheet was placed, face down, on a hot copper plate and passed through the press. The stopping melted and stuck to the plate. After this the plate was immersed in water, the gum was dissolved and the paper floated off, leaving the lettering in reverse on the plate. Then the design could be drawn with the stopping directly on the copper and the text could be corrected if necessary. Finally the flats were etched down, leaving lettering and design in stereotype. It should be noted that in some early prints the text is slightly slanted compared to the design, which seems to support the hypothesis that the lettering was not transferred to the copper at the same time as the design.11

There is no direct documentary evidence in support of this reconstruction, but it is clear that Blake knew an offset process for transferring a drawing to a metal plate. In his Note-Book Blake wrote a memorandum on how to "Engrave on Pewter. Let there be first a drawing made correctly with black lead pencil [on a sheet of paper]. Let nothing be to seek. Then rub it off on the plate covered with white wax, or perhaps pass it through the press. This will produce certain & determin'd forms on the plate & time will not be wasted in seeking them afterwards."12 The offset tracing would then serve as a guide for the graver. The same process could be used on copper, and the traced lines either followed with the etching needle, which would cut through the wax ground and lay the copper bare, exposing it to the subsequent action of the acid, or cut with the graver directly into the metal. Lettering could be transferred in this way as well as design, but in the case of lettering the printing would appear uncolored against an inked background, which would make them difficult to read.

We are thus brought back to Cumberland's method of printing text in intaglio, but with the essential addition of a reliable method for transferring lettering, written rightways on a sheet of paper, to the etching ground, thus overcoming the difficulty Cumberland experienced in getting the printed text reversed. It is only natural that Blake should inform Cumberland of this method, which he did in his letter of 9 December 1795: "Take a cake of Virgin's Wax (I don't know what animal produces it) & stroke it regularly over the surface of a warm plate (the Plate must be warm enough to melt the Wax as it passes over), then immediately draw a feather over it & you will get an even surface which, when cooled, will receive any impression minutely."13 This is certainly how Blake did those of his illuminated books which were printed in intaglio, namely The Book of Ahania, The Book of Los (both etched), For Children (etched) and For the Seizes (engraved). These works were therefore done in Cumberland's method, perfected by Blake.

It would, of course, be possible to print plates of this nature as woodcuts, in stereotype, to produce a white-line print. Examples are frequent especially in America, Europe, Milton and Jerusalem, but only for designs, not for lettering. The only notable exceptions to this rule are the title of Milton and pl. 26 of Jerusalem, bearing only short texts in large lettering; while the white-line lettering in the first state of the frontispiece for
Jerusalem is almost illegible, as witnessed by a surviving trial proof;¹⁴ the texts were wisely suppressed in the final state.

In two memoranda in the Note Book Blake described the method of such "woodcuts on pewter" and "woodcuts on copper": "To Woodcut on Pewter. Lay a ground on the Plate & smoke it as for Etching, then trace your outlines [& draw them in with a needle del.], and beginning with the spots of light on each object with an oval pointed needle scrape off the ground, [§ instead of etching the shadowy strokes del.] as a direction for your graver then proceed to graving with the ground on the plate being as careful as possible not to hurt the ground because it being black will show perfectly what is wanted [wood del.]." "To Woodcut on Copper Lay a ground as for Etching, trace &c & instead of Etching the blacks Etch the whites & bite it in."¹⁵

Evidently the tracing on the black ground was to be done in the same way as on the white ground. In that case red chalk lines would show better than black lead pencil lines, but also black lead lines would be plainly visible, especially facing the light—and it is known that Blake worked facing the light.¹⁶ Both of the processes described are meant for white line work, that is, stereotype. But Blake almost never used the process for etching lettering, for obvious reasons: since the whole plate was covered with a wax ground, inked lettering of the kind forming the bulk of Blake's illuminated printing could have been done only by removing the ground around the letters. Considering the amount of text in most of Blake's books, and its minute size, this would have been impossible. The processes described in the two memoranda quoted above were suitable only for making designs. I think that most of Blake's white line etchings were made according to his recipe for "woodcut on copper": the frontispiece of America, most of the whole-page designs for Milton and Jerusalem, etc. It would also be possible to cover only part of a plate with the wax ground and execute plates combining white-line designs with inked lettering done with the asphaltum stopper.

Whichever combinations were used or not used, for work on the plates, the plate was printed in stereotype, and had to go through the press only once.

I know of only two possible examples of lettering to be printed black from a stereotype plate, and not painted on the plate but picked out by removing the black-printing ground around the letters. One is the title of Jerusalem, showing large lettering, and the other is the line afterwards added to the top of plate 33 [37]: "And One stood forth from the Divine Family & said." In this case Blake etched the black-printing text free of the ground as far as the word "the," the rest of the line being in white on black. Thus we know that Blake found it too cumbersome to pick out even a single line of normal-sized lettering. For other such additions he preferred simple white-line against black: the words "SHEEP" "GOATS" on pl. 3, the quotation "Movos o Iesous" on pl. 4, and the line added at the bottom of pl. 40 [45]. This should make it clear that none of Blake's surviving recipes for etching gives us any information about his main technical invention, that of etching text and design in stereotype. The bare mentioning of the process in The Marriage and in his Prospectus 1793 betrays no details.¹⁷

We still do not know if he wrote the text directly on the copper backwards, or if he used an offset process similar to that reconstructed by Todd and Hayter, and also, it should be noted, similar to the transfer process Blake used for etching on a wax ground. We only know that he could not have used the wax ground for the lettering of works printed in stereotype.

Personally I doubt that Blake wrote the bulk of the lettering directly on the plates. There are no mistakes characteristic of backwards writing in, for instance, the 50 plates of Milton and the 100 plates of Jerusalem. But there are reversed letters in short texts, such as titles. The "Y" is reversed in the title of AMERICA A PROPHECY (Y instead of Y), likewise in Europe pl. 3 "A PROPHECY," and in the title of Job the "A" in "ILLUSTRATIONS" is reversed (A instead of A). The most likely explanation is that these texts requiring only a few letters were done directly on the copper, with the result that Blake got a few letters reversed, but that the bulk of the lettering of Blake's illuminated books, not showing any reversed letters, was written rightways on paper and transferred to the plates in an offset process.

My main reason for supposing that Blake used a transfer process for lettering is that the bulk of text in his illuminated books does not have the characteristics of reversed writing. The uniform right-hand slant typical of his mature penmanship never occurs in texts known to have been executed directly on the copper (e.g., Job marginalia of the 1820s). It does not occur, either, in his earliest experiments with illuminated printing, such as the tractates on religion (1788) or The Song of Innocence (1789). It is first seen in The Marriage of 1789, and from then on remains a constant feature of his work. Therefore I think that Blake's illuminated printing, invented in 1788, was perfected in 1789, when he added a method for transferring lettering to the plates.¹⁸

I agree that we cannot be one hundred percent sure about how Blake proceeded, but in the light of the evidence available today I would prefer the above interpretation to Essick's.

To summarize the preceding discussion: Blake used two types of ground for his stereotype plates: (1) an ordinary wax etching ground, white or smoked, capable of receiving a counterproof impression of a pencil study, mainly used for the execution of pictorial designs in white line etching, and (2) a stopper of asphaltum and linseed oil, much more fluid, and, after drying, harder than the wax ground, intended for lettering and black line illustrations for Blake's poems.

That Blake's work was divided thus is made clear by the appearance of his books. In Milton the white-line etching is reserved for separate plates bearing whole-page designs similar to the America frontispiece, in Jerusalem for clearly defined parts of plates (4, 11, 28, 31 [35], 33 [37], 41 [46], 50,}
The interpenetration of white line and black line work occurs only in the period 1789-94, in some of the Songs, and, notably, in America and Europe. Here Blake has used white line work on areas covered with the stopper, in order to add modelling and definition to the blacks. That his stopping medium did not easily yield itself to the etching needle is witnessed by the fact that most of this work was done with the graver (America 8, 9, 11, Europe 2, 3, 4, 8).

The poems printed in intaglio (Ahania, Book of Los) were done on a wax ground onto which the text had been counterproofed in accordance with Blake's memorandum.

In chapter 10, on coloring, Essick ignores the properties of some aqueous binders, namely gum and glue. On p. 122 he quotes J. T. Smith who wrote--rightly—that gum has a tendency to crack and peel off after drying. But Essick does not mention the fact that gum is the normal binding medium in western transparent watercolor painting (including wash drawing in ink), and that the paint layer in such watercolors never cracks. This is so because of the extreme thinness of layers in transparent watercolor. As soon as the layers achieve any appreciable thickness they will crack more or less, depending upon the thickness of the layers and the nature of the support. The rougher and more absorbent the latter is, the better.

Thus gum is an excellent binder for thin aquarelle, but unsafe for opaque painting. For such work glue has always been preferred, but since glue water has to be used hot (otherwise it would gelatinize and become unmanageable), painting in glue size is somewhat cumbersome. The pot with the binding medium must be kept over coals continually, yet it must not be allowed to boil. Boiling would diminish the binding power erratically. The pigment has to be ground beforehand with pure water, and the pigment pastes should be heated, too, especially in cold weather. It is true that fish glue is known to remain liquid at room temperature, but Blake never mentions such glues, and all grades of fish glue, save Russian sturgeon's glue, are considered inferior as media for artistic painting. They are highly hygroscopic, and Blake's glue was not, as J. T. Smith informs us.

For this reason I think that Blake used glue only when he had to, for opaque painting. The thin washes employed for finishing prints by hand were most probably executed with the more convenient gum medium.

Essick has correctly identified the passage in Cennino Cennini which Linnell had in mind when he said that Blake had found his own binder mentioned in Tamburini's edition of Cennini's tractate. In his note 6, p. 122, Essick queries Rossetti's mention of an 1822 edition of Cennini and writes that he had been unable to find it. I can inform him that none exists. Rossetti's reference is a simple mistake for 1821.

On p. 123 there is an excellent quote from Rees' Cyclopaedia on "distemper": "all ancient pictures are said to have been painted before the year 1410" in that medium. It is interesting to see that Blake's view was shared by his contemporaries, though in this context one should have wished for a reference to Vasari's story of Jan van Eyck inventing oil colors about 1410.

On p. 124 Essick says that Blake could have made his colors more opaque by adding "less water or more size." This is an oversight. More size would effect the opposite, namely greater transparency, as anyone knows who has tried it. What is needed is more pigment. This, of course, is easily accomplished by adding less water.

Very interesting is Essick's account of Blake's color printing process (pp. 126 ff.). The shallow etching of the plates permitted Blake to print simultaneously from bitten and relief surfaces, that is, in stereotype and intaglio at the same time. In using this process Blake seems to have been more than 100 years ahead of his time. It is often employed in modern color etching. He was also one of the first to employ consciously the chance effects of inking and printing.

Essick's criticisms of Tatham's account of the color printing process and of W. Graham Robertson's experiments in color printing with pigments bound with egg yolk are valuable. That Tatham was wrong in assuming that Blake printed in oil is clear. Both the colorprints pulled from copper plates and the large prints pulled from cardboards have taken watercolor washes well, and Blake inscribed some of the latter "fresco," which with him meant watercolor.

These inscriptions do not allow us to identify the binder with certainty; Blake would have called any watermiscible paint "fresco." The thickness of application in some of the color prints would exclude gum arabic and tragacanth, which would have cracked and scaled off if so applied. Glue size would have been good, but would have needed heating. This would not be very difficult when printing from copperplates, but how heat the cardboards which Blake used for the large color prints? Here a third type of binder would be needed. I think this is the reason why Graham Robertson assumed that Blake printed with yolk of egg—but it is also evident that his suggestion was wrong.

In this context it is of great interest to read the analysis by John W. Twilley (Department of Chemistry, University of California, Riverside), of the binding medium in Essick's color print of Lamenak. It was found to be gum, but none of the ordinary gums. It was either of Cochlospermum gossypium, of Astra-galus verus or of a Sterculia species. These gums respond to chemical tests in the same way, so further identification was impossible. These gums can be dissolved in water only with strong heating, remain liquid after cooling, become almost insoluble in water after drying, are not hygroscopic, do not crack easily, and do not discolor delicate tints. They are exactly the right type of binder for a large print in opaque colors.

Essick warns the reader that more tests have to be made before we can be sure about which media

53) or for whole-page designs (frontispiece, title, 26, 51, 76).
Blake employed for his colorprints; Blake could have used other binders for other prints. Yet I cannot resist the temptation to jump to conclusions: that the binder in Essick's 'Landscape' was used for all the large colorprints, and for the color prints from copper plates either this same gum or an ordinary glue size. At least technical evidence favors this assumption. But I wonder where Blake obtained these exotic gums. They do not seem to have been in ordinary use by artists.

On p. 161 Essick quotes an inscription, probably by Cumberland, from the back of the Croft-Murray copy of the lithograph "Snooth". It begins: "White Lyas--is the Block / draw with Ink composed of Asphaltum dissolved in dry? / Linseed Oil..." I have not seen the print, but I think that the queried "dry" should read "drying." No one could draw with dry linseed oil—not to speak of dissolving asphaltum in it—while drying linseed oil means an oil, made more drying by boiling, perhaps even burning, with or without the addition of a siccative (lead oxide or white lead). Such an oil is commonly called a varnish, and since asphaltum is often used as a dark brown pigment, Blake's composition is closer to J. T. Smith's lithographic ink "compounded of black mixed with varnish" than Essick thinks. Blake further powdered "roten stone" to the wet design. I think in order to raise the lines over the surface of the stone, which would make inking easier. He did no etching: the Lias stone is porous enough unetched. This is of great interest, because Essick rightly assumes that this lithographic ink was similar in composition to Blake's stopping varnish for making stereotypes on copper. Whether a burnt oil works better than a boiled one remains to be tested. Personally I doubt the necessity of adding a drier.

Incidentally, some of the text on the verso of the Croft-Murray copy shows through the reproduction of the recto in pl. 166. I have tried to read it with the aid of a mirror, but failed. The verso should have been reproduced, too, especially since the correct reading of the annotation is in doubt.

Part four (chapters 12-15) covers Blake's career as a graphic artist 1800-1818.

Desideratum in chapter 13: that a specialist would analyze thoroughly Blake's penmanship—the short notes appended to Mona Wilson's 'Life' are not enough.

On p. 204 Blake's notes on "Demonstration Similitude & Harmony" as "Objects of Reasoning" opposed to "Invention Identity & Melody [which] are Objects of Intuition" are misunderstood. "Similitude" signifies similitude within a work of art: all lines, for instance, are similar, and do not discriminate character. It does not mean similitude between model and copy, as Essick thinks. "Identity" means identity of execution and character. Moreover, Blake did not organize the elements of his execution into "a rhythmic whole," which would necessitate repetitive patterns and monotony. The whole he aimed at was, to use his own word, "melodious." It appears from p. 206 that Essick understands this. Perhaps his remarks above are merely slips of the pen.

Chapter 15, "Printmaker as Poet," deals with graphic allegories in Blake's poetry, and is on the whole the least convincing part of the book. Essick manages to prove his point only by not distinguishing between hammering and casting (p. 209) and between ploughing and harrowing (p. 212).

Part 5, "Synthesis and Mastery 1818-1827" is excellent. In chapter 16, "Linnell," Essick demonstrates the extent and nature of Linnell's influence on Blake, underrated or ignored by previous writers. He shows that the style of Blake's final intaglio masterpieces such as the Job and Dante engravings evolved out of Linnell's and Blake's collaboration on Linnell's portrait plates. This chapter was a real eye-opener to me: I am now convinced that Linnell helped Blake to realize his own powers and surpass his previous achievements in intaglio engraving.

In the chapter on the Virgil wood engravings Essick justly remarks that "even some modern admirers of the Virgil blocks [Raymond Lister] have found them technically deficient, but nothing could be further from the truth" (p. 227). Yet, on p. 226, he himself comes close to the error he criticizes, in his comment on the two versions of cut 3, one by Blake, the other by a journeyman engraver. He writes of the "great difference between the highly dramatic original and the competent but dull copy," and adds that all "the journeyman's care . . . cannot retain the vigor and intensity of Blake's work." I would like two corrections here: "incompetent and dull" for "competent but dull!" and "the journeyman's look of care" for "the journeyman's care."

These prints really offer the best opportunity for demonstrating that invention and execution are one, or, more properly, that execution is the organization of form that makes the invention visible.

Look carefully at the journeyman version (Essick, pl. 206)! Begin with the details: the hands and feet, and the lineaments of the countenances. Examine Thenot's right hand: it has been squeezed out of shape, the little finger and the index finger are dislocated, the thumb cut away, the palm is too thin and too concave. The other hands and feet are too small; Colinet's feet are badly formed out of some kind of too sloppy dough. In the original all these details are perfect; hands and feet are correctly formed; the relationship between their parts is right, the members are solid, give a sense of volume, and seem alive. The same is true of the faces. In the copy Colinet's head is supported by his hand; he is tired. In the original his hand is under his chin: he is brooding. And consider Thenot's change of gesture: in the copy he is shown speaking about some unspecified topic to Colinet; in the original his body and arms are one with the tree laden with fruit and with the sun; they express most eloquently the message of his speech: look, I am like an old tree in the autumn...

Now examine the execution of the whole: the figures of the original have volume, look solid, monumental and grand, and also give the impression of having real bodies circumscribed by the folds of
their garments. In the journeyman version they look flat and disintegrated, like sheets of cardboard strewn across with printer's ink. And notice, in the original, the effect of strong light shining in darkness, while the copy is grey, and lacking in contrast.

Blake's own wood engraving is not only more spirited than the copy: it is the only one that can be praised for any mechanical correctness. This is made clear if we imagine both designs blown up to the size of a wall: the original would make a wood design for a monumental fresco, while the copy would look ludicrous, like a matchbox ticket of elephantine size.

I find it inconceivable that anyone at any time could have preferred anything in the journeyman version to Blake's original. I would have liked to see this comparison made in Essick's book, to silence forever those who think that Blake's execution of the Virgil wood engravings is amateurish, or at least to make them examine the works carefully before they pass their judgment. In my view it is very difficult to find woodcuts that equal Blake's in mechanical excellence.

What is at issue here is not Blake's Virgil woodcuts alone. It is a question of the way we look at art. The idea that execution is different from inferior to invention or conception is a product of academical art school ideology, which Blake combated in his marginalia to Reynolds and his Public Address. To no avail: Expressions such as "correctness," "technical brilliancy" and "mechanical excellence" are still considered pejorative, and artists we like are rather praised for their "dramatic quality," their "intensity of feeling" or something like that. This abuse of language has influenced even the strongest minds of our day. Conceptual art has finally divorced the brain from the hand and left the former alone without adequate means of articulation. Blake knew that the essence of art is the fusion of intellect and handicraft, and we should consider his message carefully: "Daughters of Beulah! Muses who inspire the Poets Song /.../. Come into my hand / By your mild power descending down the Nerves of my right arm / From out the Portals of my Brain where by your ministry / The Eternal Great Humanity Divine planted his Paradise." 26

Essick's final chapters on the Job and Dante are among the best in the book. The use of the stipple for the first lines in the Job and of the drypoint in the Dante is carefully analyzed. Essick further identifies the burin in the margin of Job pl. 18 as an eighteenth century knife tool of the type Blake was accustomed to from his apprenticeship at Basire's. Incidentally, I think that the gravers Blake used for his wood engravings were of this type, and it is therefore interesting to know that he owned such a tool. They work better on wood than lozenge gravers, and modern tools for work on end wood are generally of the same type.

Essick's description of the progress of work in the different states of the Job makes full use of the rich material—in no other instance have so many unfinished states been preserved. Here we come closer to the actual labors of Blake the engraver than ever before.

Some of my criticisms above may seem bulky, but this does not mean that I have not enjoyed the book immensely. It should be realized that most of the disagreements are about a single topic, the binding media used for printing and painting. If Essick's treatment of binding media is not quite satisfactory, there is much in his book to make up for the deficiency.

Essick's prose is vivid, powerful and clear, his argument sound, his pages tightly packed with information, his way of thinking new, original and closely knit to artistic practice. In technical enthusiasm he goes further and deeper than any professional art historian I know of.

1. "Brusiles aussi de l'huile de noix (essayés celle de lin) dans un pot de fer la faisant bouillir tant qu'elle s'exale & face fumée, alors avec vne allumette mettes y le feu en le remuant brusiles jusques a tant que l'huile devienne fort espaisse de sorte que vous aurés beaucoup de peine a brayer." Theodore Turquet de Mayerne, Plastoria Sculptorum & quaer subalternorum artium (1620), S. M. Sloane Ms. 2052, fol. 36 verso, quoted from the ed. by Ernst Berger, Beitrage zur Botanik und Geschichte der Maltechnik, IV Folge (Munich, 1901), p. 166. See also p. 160, where de Mayerne says that he had the Callot recipes from Jehan Pettiot, who in turn had obtained them from "Vignon excellent graveur qui a longtemps servi Calot."

2. The particulars of the invention do not seem to be definitely known, but it is assumed that the Dutch introduced this oil in the last century. See Ralph Mayer, A Dictionary of Art Terms and Techniques, (London, 1959), p. 375.

3. Le Blon's Colorito: or the Harmony of Colouring in Painting: Reduced to Mechanical Precepts, under Easy Precepts, and Infallible Rules, London, n.d., is inaccessible to me. Gauthier d'Aptoy's Observations mentions no technical details—the binder is only described as "une colle & un vernis" (I, n. 139). Its working properties are praised, but nothing further is said about its composition. There is a reference on II, p. 127 to an article explaining "l'art d'imprimer des Tableaux en couleur" in Le Mercure, July 1749, but I have been unable to check this reference.

4. The earliest surviving recipe for cooking an oil in the sun over white lead is in Heraclius, De artibus romanorum, Book Three, added about 1200 to the first two books, which are older. For a succinct summary of early recipes see Ralf Rausch, "Die frühen Geschicht der Ölfarbe in der Tafelmalerie nördlich der Alpen," von Farben und Farben (Albert Knoepfl Festschrift) (Zurich, 1980), pp. 21-29.

5. "Absorb" is possibly a mistranscription.


11 See David V. Erdman, The Illuminated Blake (London 1975), pp. 25 (Religion 8), 29 (Religion a7, a9), 29 (Religion b9), 55 (Lesma 14). It should be noted that this tilting only occurs in Blake's earliest attempts at illuminated printing, and that it could have been produced by a number of different accidents.


13 K 790. It is odd that Blake did not know that virgin's wax is produced by the honey bee. It was originally made from honeycombs unused by the bees, and therefore unsold and almost white. Since this grade is very expensive, it is common practice to let the bees use the combs, and afterwards wash the wax by boiling it in water with alum, and eventually bleach it in the sun. This purified bee's wax is commonly, though improperly, sold under the name virgin's wax.


15 Note-Book, p. 10, K 440.

16 See the description of Blake's working room at Fountain Court in H. H. Gilchrist (ed.), Anne Gilchrist Her Life and Writings (London 1887), pp. 261 f. (Bentley, Blake Records, p. 566).

17 K 154, 207.

18 Blake wrote in 1822 that his "Original Stereotype was 1788" (K 781). According to J. T. Smith the recipe was revealed to Blake by the spirit of his brother Robert, who died in 1787 (Blake Records, p. 460). The first dated works in illuminated printing are the Songs of Innocence and Thr, both 1798. The tracts on religion, without date, are stylistically earlier than these, and generally assigned to the year 1788. Thus all evidence supports the year 1788, and nothing but confusion could arise if we suppose that Blake could have invented the method earlier. It is true that part of a recipe for illuminated printing has survived in An Island in the Moon, almost certainly written in the winter of 1784-85, but the reference is clearly to Cumberland's method, not to Blake's own.


20 Blake Records, p. 472.

21 Blake Records, p. 33 n. 3, and p. 472.

22 Giuseppe Tambroni's edition of Cennini was the first, and bears the date 1821 (reprinted 1965). The next was by Carlo and Gaetano Milanesi in 1859, reprinted 1975 a cura di Fernando Tempesti. The third was by Renzo Simi, 1913, reprinted without notes and introduction in 1943; and the second edition of Renzo Simi supplied the text for Franco Brunello's annotated edition of 1971. The most recent edition from the original ms. is by Daniel V. Thompson, 1932. Blake scholars should quote Tambroni. Later editions, based on manuscripts inaccessible to him (he knew of the Biblioteca Laurenziana ms., but had not seen it) are very different from Tambroni's.

23 Giorgio Vasari, Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori ed architettori (ed. Milanesi) (Florence 1878-79), i, 184, x, pp. 565 f., 569.


25 K 562, 563, 577.


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**THE LEAST BLAKE**


Reviewed by G. E. Bentley, Jr.

This little work seems to have been overlooked in the bibliographies of Blake in *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly*, the MLA annual bibliography, The Romantic Movement bibliography, and elsewhere. The reason for such oversight is plain enough, for it is only the size of a thumb-nail: 5/8" x 3/4" (1.5 x 2.0 cm.), and it is "limited to 300 numbered, signed copies," according to the colophon.

The contents are moderately straightforward; an anonymous "Introduction" (pp. 5-6) and "many" (nine) poems from the *Songs*. The "Introduction" says, on the whole truly enough, that the text "retains its archaic spelling and unconventional capitalization where possible." The second most striking feature of the tiny text, however, is the way it has been abbreviated. The title and the word "I" in l. 18 have dropped out of the "Introduction" to *Innocence*, and half of "Infant Joy," the second stanza, has disappeared.

The price of the work, at least the price paid for it to an antiquarian bookseller (£29 = about $70), may make it the most expensive uncolored literary work by Blake per square centimeter ever sold--68¢/cm². It is far beyond the Blake Trust facsimiles and even surpasses uncolored Blake originals; *Songs of Innocence* and *of Experience* copy h, which sold for $15,000 in 1981, comes to only 47¢ per square centimeter.


Reviewed by Donald H. Reiman

As Morton D. Paley has shown, not only did Blake admire William Cowper as a poet, but Blake learned Cowper's life-secrets through his intimacy with William Hayley, Cowper's friend and official biographer, and with the Reverend Joseph Johnson of Norfolk. Indeed, Paley finds Blake portraying Cowper as the pathetic "Spectre" on plate 10 of *Jerusalem* ("Cowper as Blake's Spectre," *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, I [1968], 236-52). Joseph A. Wittreich, Jr., finds that Blake's conception of John Milton had been "sharpened" and "relayed" to him by Cowper and Hayley (Blake's *Sublime Allegory*, ed. Stuart Curran and Wittreich [1973], p. 27). Thus the appearance of new Oxford English Text editions of Cowper's poetry and letters (Blake called them "Certainly, the very best letters that ever were published") cannot be a matter of indifference to serious students viewing Blake within his historical context.

These two editions have not only a common publisher but a common senior partner in Charles Ryskamp, the leading Cowper scholar of our time. The "Textual Introduction" (Poems) and "Textual Principles" (Letters) set an editorial program and stated method for each edition that is sound and conservative (though there are minor differences between them); each edition evidences a law of parsimony. Baird and Ryskamp state this policy of limitation in the first paragraph of their "Textual Introduction" to the Poems:

This is an edition of all Cowper's original poems and translations, with two exceptions: his translation of Homer... and his joint translation with William Hayley of Andreini's *Adamo*... which, as we have it, is certainly more Hayley's than Cowper's. The translation of Homer, however, was Cowper's most ambitious and extended poetical undertaking... It has been passed over on grounds of expediency... To edit this material properly would be a vast labour; to publish the result would be prohibitively expensive. (p. xxvii)

Because both Cowper's letters and poems are superlatively intelligent and entertaining—urbane, polished, kindly, sensitive, and simply wise—the best editorial policy is to introduce Cowper to his readers and tactfully withdraw to the edge of the conversation, explaining and commenting on only those things that the modern reader would have some difficulty comprehending without assistance. Baird and Ryskamp do exactly that. Though the obtuse designers at Clarendon Press—who recently brought us all four cantos of Byron's *Childe Harold* (1812, 1816, and 1818) with the unchanging and unmeaning running heading "Poetical Works 1812"—fail to cross reference the page numbers between the texts of the poems and the "Commentary" at the end of the volume (pages 461-564), the search for the notes to individual poems repays the effort. The King/Ryskamp
much deeper sense of guilt for having taken satisfaction beneath these repressed hatreds, leaving him with a deathbed conscience. Cowper's better nature reemerged from righteously converted to his faith on their painful Unwin and John Cowper, both of whom Cowper self-selected to choose a faith that elevated pious retirement. The deaths of two of his most direct rivals, Morely and his ultimate conviction of damnation. Cowper's psychological-religious turmoils, one could develop a sense how far Cowper's sympathies extended beyond Thurlow long after he stopped associating with him. "Sinful" youth—and to find Cowper still admiring Garland Publishing, 1976-79). To know that there are no errors at all, Baird, King, and Ryskamp seem not to be exempt from the human errors cast doubt upon editorial alertness to matters where the evidence is not as easily available.

The most important omission from the annotation of Letters is any substantial account of Edward Thurlow, later first Baron Thurlow. First mentioned on page 127, he is not identified until his second appearance on page 164, and that footnote merely extracts from—and omits the most important information in—the ZWA account. For Thurlow, besides being "an energetic and tireless man who busied himself with his profession," became legendary as the most irreligious, foul-mouthed, corrupt, and reactionary politician of his time (see my Introduction to the three volumes of the poems of his nephew, Edward, Lord Thurlow, in Romantic Context: Poetry, Garland Publishing, 1976-79). To know Thurlow is to know something about William Cowper's "sinful" youth—and to find Cowper still admiring Thurlow long after he stopped associating with him shows how far Cowper's sympathies extended beyond his evangelical convictions. Indeed, I think that from the evidence of Cowper's letters in this volume and "Adelphi," Cowper's strange account of his early psychological-religious turmoil, one could develop a psycho-biographical explanation for his breakdowns and his ultimate conviction of damnation. Cowper's dead father had never accepted the narrow faith that, Cowper had been persuaded, was requisite for salvation (see Letters, I, 183-84). Cowper's temperamental incapacity to compete in worldly matters with his brother John and with such early rivals as Thurlow and Martin Madan (or even to win the bride of his choice) certainly encouraged him to choose a faith that elevated pious retirement above the activities of such worldly men. But after the deaths of two of his most direct rivals, Morely Unwin and John Cowper, both of whom Cowper self-righteously converted to his faith on their painful deathbeds, Cowper's better nature reemerged from beneath these repressed hatreds, leaving him with a much deeper sense of guilt for having taken satisfaction in the misfortunes of those he should have comforted. Clearly he was a much wittier, kinder, more sensitive, humane person after he felt himself to be damned than when he had tried to save others from damnation. These letters, by the way, reveal John Newton to be a positive rather than a negative influence on Cowper; theories that try to hang the albatross of Cowper's despair on Newton are simply mistaken.

Cowper's early letters and poems are of greatest interest to the student of Romantic poetry. In Cowper's carefully wrought occasional verses and didactic poems and finely articulated letters we find many themes, ideas, and even idioms later employed by the Romantics. Cowper was at least a French Revolution apart from them in political persuasion, yet bound to all but Blake by a common classical education and the social prejudices of the upper middle class and to these and Blake by English patriotism and a common humane literary tradition. Though the tone of Cowper's fables is lighter and more playful, his poem on "The Poet, the Oyster, and the Sensitive Plant" (Poems, I, 435-36) bears comparison with both Blake's "The Clod & the Pebble" and with Shelley's "The Sensitive Plant." Cowper's "Ode to Peace" (I, 406) best illustrates the great differences in focus and in tone that separate Cowper's prediluvian world from that of his successors. As Morse Peckham pointed out in 1961, the Romantics and the poets of Cowper's era "used the same words, but sang them to a different tune." "Peace" in Cowper's ode means only his own peace of mind; he was so eager that Britain not lose its American colonies that, even after Cornwallis' surrender at Yorktown, he welcomed the (false) news that the British government intended to pursue the war "with the utmost vigour," including the use of 40,000 Russian troops (see Letters, I, 556-57 and fn. 3). Cowper—one of the kindliest individuals of his era—would have appeared a positive Cossack even to Coleridge at his height as a Tory spokesman.

Though it would be pleasant when examining textual scholarship (one's own or another's) to find that there are no errors at all, Baird, King, and Ryskamp seem not to be exempt from the human condition. In Letters, the editors have made the dubious decision to employ the printed colon (usually but not always) to represent the two dots Cowper intended to represent the hyphen. See, for example, "to:day" and "to:morrow" (I, 310), and "Grey:headed" and "Giddy:headed" (I, 355). Where the spacing of a line was difficult, we find "Breeches: maker" (I, 349). King and Ryskamp state as principles that even when reproducing holograph letters, they "deliberately "adjust" punctuation "when required for smooth reading," expand abbreviations, raise and lower capital letters, and add (and omit) apostrophes to accord "with modern practice." These decisions are debatable both on theoretical grounds (vide Bowers and Tanselle) and on a practical level, inasmuch as the occurrence of informal abbreviations often provides clues about the intimacy of the correspondents, and capitalization reflects emphasis.

My collations with selected original sources, holograph and printed, suggest that, these technical matters aside, the level of accuracy in the Letters
is very high. I have found a mere handful of oversights in the texts: the most noteworthy were one verbal omission (I, 485, line 28, for "send forth" read "send them forth") and a failure to italicize the last four words on I, 70. The text of Poems also seems to be very accurate, and again my chief concern is the omission of a detailed record of collations (including punctuation and orthography) with authorities other than the copy-text. Otherwise, the few questions I have after spot-collating do not rise above the level of the problems in "Hymn 10" (I, 149), where Baird and Ryskamp give a semi-colon (instead of a colon) at the end of line 20 and fail to capitalize "there" in the collation to line 9. Throughout, their copy-texts are thoughtfully chosen and conservatively followed.

Though the pricing policies of the Clarendon Press seem designed to return us to the early days of Oxford University, when books were chained to library shelves, we can be grateful that the contents of these two volumes will reward the scholar who seeks them out. I am less happy with the quality of binding, which (as was the case with Shelley's Letters, as issued by Clarendon some years ago) seems in danger of coming to pieces as I finish writing this review. The management of a historically great press—one that still attracts some of the world's best scholarship—ought to be able to employ book designers, printers, and binders capable of producing a physical artifact commensurate in quality with its intellectual content.

**NEWSLETTER**

**THE NORTON BLAKE**

The second printing of Blake's Poetry and Designs: A Norton Critical Edition appears to have a secure binding. Anyone whose duly purchased copy of the first printing fell apart may receive a new book by writing to Mr. James L. Mairs, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 500 Fifth Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10036. It is necessary to return the first two pages of any damaged copy (the false title and title pages) for replacement. It would be appreciated if teachers would batch the necessary pages for all students' copies needing replacing and mail in bulk to Mr. Mairs' attention. These pages must be returned so that Norton can back up its complaints to the subcontractor who provided the "Perfect Binding," as the trade name has it. Complimentary copies, except for legitimate desk copies, cannot be replaced. The editors apologize for the inconvenience to all concerned and urge that recipients of replacement copies request the second (corrected) printing from Norton.

**SANTA CRUZ CONFERENCE: BLAKE & CRITICISM**

The conference will take place from Thursday evening, 19 May, through Saturday, 21 May. With the exception of an opening address by Hazard Adams, there will be no formal paper presentations. Instead, papers will be turned in by late March so that they may be circulated among the participants well before the conference. At the conference itself, each author will offer a précis of the paper; this will be followed by the solicited response of another participant, and then general discussion. "Audience" and "participants" will be one and the same.


Accommodations have been arranged at the Holiday Inn in Santa Cruz, which is offering a special rate of $35 single/$40 double for reservations made up to one month before the conference; please specify that you will be attending the conference.

Please address any questions to "Blake & Criticism," Literature Board, UCSC, Santa Cruz, CA 95064 (tel. 408-429-4591).

**HUNTINGTON SYMPOSIUM & EXHIBITION**

In conjunction with an exhibition of "Prints by the Blake Followers" to be held November through February 1982, the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery is holding a symposium on Saturday, 13 February. The tentative program includes papers by G. E. Bentley, Jr. ("Blake and the Blake Followers: Biographical Information"), Robert N. Essick ("John Linnell as a Printmaker"), Shelley M. Bennett ("The Blake Followers in the Context of Contemporary English Art"), and Morton D. Paley ("Samuel Palmer's Illustrations to Milton"). There will be a registration fee of $3.00. For reservations to attend the symposium, write to the Henry E. Huntington Art Gallery, 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, CA 91108, or call (213) 792-6141, ext. 317.

**HELP ME MAKE IT THROUGH THE NIGHT**

According to a notice in Girl About Town magazine, St. James's Church in Piccadilly was to stage "the first ever continuous reading of the complete works of William Blake" on 10-11 November. The reading, called "A Day and a Night in the Life of William Blake," was part of the Piccadilly Festival. Admission was 75p, and food and drink were available.