CONTENTS

80 Canterbury Revisited: The Blake-Cromek Controversy
   by Aileen Ward

93 The Shifting Characterization of Tharmas and Enion in Pages 3–7 of Blake's Vala or The Four Zoas
   by John B. Pierce

REVIEWS


105 David Bindman, ed., William Blake's Illustrations to the Book of Job, and Colour Versions of William Blake's Book of Job Designs from the Circle of John Linnell, reviewed by Martin Butlin

DISCUSSION

110 An Island in the Moon
   Michael Phillips

CONTRIBUTORS

G. E. BENTLEY, JR., University of Toronto, will be at the Department of English, University of Hyderabad, India, through November 1988, and at the National Library of Australia, Canberra, from January–April 1989. Blake Books Supplement is forthcoming.

MARTIN BUTLIN is Keeper of the Historic British Collection at the Tate Gallery in London and author of The Paintings and Drawings of William Blake (Yale, 1981).

MICHAEL PHILLIPS teaches English literature at Edinburgh University. A monograph on the creation in manuscript and "Illuminated Printing" of the Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience is to be published in 1989 by the Collège de France.

JOHN B. PIERCE, Assistant Professor in English at the University of Toronto, is currently at work on the manuscript of The Four Zoas.


©1988 Morris Eaves and Morton D. Paley
EDITORS

Editors: Morris Eaves, University of Rochester, and Morton D. Paley, University of California, Berkeley.

Bibliographer: Detlef W. Dörrebecker, Universität Trier, West Germany.

Review Editor: Nelson Hilton, University of Georgia, Athens.

Associate Editor for Great Britain: David Worrall, St. Mary's College.

Production Office: Morris Eaves, Department of English, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627, Telephone 716/275-3820.

Morton D. Paley, Department of English, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

Detlef W. Dörrebecker, Universität Trier, FB III Kunstgeschichte, Postfach 3825, 5500 Trier, West Germany.

Nelson Hilton, Department of English, University of Georgia, Athens, GA 30602.

David Worrall, St. Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, Waldegrave Road, Twickenham TW1 4SX, England.

INFORMATION

Managing Editor: Patricia Neill.

Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly is published under the sponsorship of the Department of English, University of Rochester.

Subscriptions are $18 for institutions, $15 for individuals. All subscriptions are by the volume (1 year, 4 issues) and begin with the summer issue. Subscription payments received after the summer issue will be applied to the 4 issues of the current volume. Foreign addresses (except Canada and Mexico) require a $3 per volume postal surcharge for surface mail, a $10 per volume surcharge for air mail delivery. U.S. currency or international money order necessary. Make checks payable to Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly. Address all subscription orders and related communications to Patricia Neill, Blake, Department of English, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627, USA.

Many back issues are available at a reduced price. Address Patricia Neill for a list of issues and prices.

Manuscripts are welcome. Send two copies, typed and documented according to the forms suggested in the MLA Style Sheet, 2nd ed., to either of the editors: Morris Eaves, Dept. of English, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627; Morton D. Paley, Dept. of English, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

International Standard Serial Number: 0006-453x. Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly is indexed in the Modern Language Association's International Bibliography, the Modern Humanities Research Association's Annual Bibliography of English Language and Literature, English Language Notes' annual Romantic Bibliography, American Humanities Index, the Arts and Humanities Citation Index, and Current Contents.
Canterbury Revisited: 
The Blake-Cromek Controversy

BY AILEEN WARD

If crooked roads without improvement are the ways of genius, the road Blake took to Canterbury was a veritable Pilgrim’s Progress. For of all his works of art, the one that cost him the most grief and stirred up the greatest controversy during his lifetime was the large “fresco” painting of Sir Jeffery Chaucer and the Nine and Twenty Pilgrims on their Journey to Canterbury. This painting, dated 1808, was the major work in Blake’s 1809 Exhibition and the first to be attacked in Robert Hunt’s scathing review in The Examiner. It also caused a bitter falling-out between Blake and his old friend Thomas Stothard, who in May 1807 had exhibited an immensely successful oil painting of the same subject, similar in size and basic design to Blake’s own. Blake’s engraving from his fresco, entitled Chaucer’s Canterbury Pilgrims, was published in October 1810; the engraving of Stothard’s painting was delayed, through a series of mishaps, till 1817. Stothard protested that Blake had “commenced his picture in rivalry” to Stothard’s own, since, he reported, Blake had seen and admired his Procession of Chaucer’s Pilgrims to Canterbury while it was still in progress. Blake on his side claimed that he had sketched the design for his Pilgrims even earlier and had shown the drawing to Robert Cromek, his erstwhile agent, who, while appearing to be delighted with it, had taken the idea to Stothard and engaged him to paint it instead.

Such are the outlines of the controversy as described by Blake’s earliest biographers, quite evenhandedly by John Thomas Smith in 1828 and, with obvious bias against Blake, by Allan Cunningham in 1830. But since the appearance of Alexander Gilchrist’s Life of William Blake in 1863, the controversy has been regarded as settled: virtually every twentieth-century biographer or critic who has discussed the matter has, despite minor uncertainties over points of fact, followed Gilchrist in taking sides with Blake and accusing Cromek of treachery. Yet it must be borne in mind that the story of Blake’s life as hitherto received is based in very large part on Blake’s own testimony, supported by a modicum of corroboratory evidence—that is, on Blake’s recollections during his sixties which he passed on to the disciples who became Gilchrist’s informants some three decades later. A fresh look at the evidence in the dispute over The Canterbury Pilgrims may not merely suggest a different interpretation of a central episode in Blake’s life but also serve as example of the need for a critical re-examination of his life as a whole. In the process the critic must scrutinize the minutest particulars of fact, weigh conflicting testimony, and keep constantly in mind the ambiguity of interpretation and the fallibility of memory. The remembrance of things past is a voyage over shifting sands.

Gilchrist based his account largely on John Linnell’s notes on Smith’s memoir, which he wrote in 1855 drawing on conversations with Blake over thirty years earlier. According to Linnell, Cromek actually commissioned Blake to finish the Canterbury fresco for twenty guineas with the promise that he would also receive the much more lucrative fee for engraving it—the identical arrangement he had made with Blake for his designs for Blair’s Grave two or three months earlier. But, Linnell states, Cromek secretly negotiated with William Bromley to engrave Blake’s design; meanwhile Blake became suspicious and refused to give Cromek his drawing when requested; whereupon Cromek took the idea and the commission to Stothard without informing either painter of the other’s involvement. Gilchrist like Linnell clears Stothard of complicity in Cromek’s scheme; he also quotes an insulting letter that Cromek wrote to Blake in May 1807 which contains the only known reference to the dispute by either of the two principals. The letter consists mainly of Cromek’s abusive response to Blake’s “furious rage” at the success of Stothard’s Procession (then being exhibited in London) by challenging Blake “to send [him] a better”; whereupon, Gilchrist adds, “the indignant painter acted in executing, hereafter, his

This article is an expanded version of a paper delivered in the symposium “William Blake: His Art and Times,” The Yale Center for British Art, 11 September 1982.
Gilchrist's suggestion, that Blake painted, exhibited, and engraved his *Pilgrims* only after seeing Stothard's painting and in response to Cromek's challenge in 1807, is curiously inconsistent with his earlier statement (following Linnell) that Cromek first saw a sketch of the *Pilgrims* by Blake and then, after negotiations between them broke down, went to Stothard and "suggested the subject as a novelty." Indeed, the precise chronology of the whole affair is a puzzle. If, as it is generally assumed, Blake had begun work on his fresco (or even his engraving) sometime late in 1805 or early in 1806, his delay in meeting the threat to his own project till 1808 is inexplicable: the subject had never been painted before, and priority was an important concern. It is also difficult to understand why Blake, on seeing Stothard's half-finished painting in 1806, would have failed to mention his own work in progress to his friend, who was surprised and angered on learning later of Blake's rival version. Finally, it is striking that Cromek's letter of May 1807 nowhere mentions any drawing or painting of Chaucer's *Pilgrims* by Blake, or replies to any charge by Blake of the theft of his idea; rather it suggests that Blake's rage was directed against the extraordinary success of Stothard's painting and what he felt was Stothard's contemptible treatment of the subject. The earliest accounts of the affair are vague about dates and mutually contradictory on certain points, and it is hardly surprising that recent discussions also give a confused picture of the entire controversy. A survey of the relationship between Blake and Cromek from the beginning may help to clarify matters.

We should start by recalling the depressed state of the craft of engraving in the 1800's as well as the low ebb of Blake's fortunes at that time. Partly this was a matter of economics—the decay of the crafts system in general, the low state of the economy, the development of new techniques of reproduction, and the collapse of the European market for English prints as a result of the war with Napoleon. The bank crash of 1797, which had contributed to the failure of Blake's illustrated edition of *Night Thoughts*, had also bankrupted Boydell's ambitious *Shakespeare Gallery*; the imperilled state of engraving in England during the 1800's led to the founding of a short-lived Society for the Encouragement of the Art of Engraving by the Chaleographic Society in 1810.
But Blake’s precarious circumstances around 1805—when he was apparently living on a guinea a week—must also be seen in terms of changing fashions in graphics. All during his career English taste in printmaking had been shifting away from traditional line engraving to the newer tonal processes of mezzotint, stipple, and aquatint. For Blake, trained primarily in the linear tradition, pure line remained his chosen medium; the “old Hard Stiff & Dry” effects that his teachers at the Royal Academy reproved him for admiring were the very qualities that turned prospective buyers away from Night Thoughts and toward the softer more painterly style of Bartolozzi and his disciples. Contemporary critics found Blake’s engraving technique “defective,” “completely inferior” to such rivals as Schiavonetti, and condemned his designs as “deformity and extravagance.” Boydell, Macklin, and Bowyer had passed him over in their ambitious publishing projects, and even Hayley and Flaxman were withdrawing their support. By the autumn of 1805, then, Blake seemed headed toward failure both as independent designer and as commercial engraver. To gain any recognition from the public, his work emphatically needed promotion.

This is the point at which Robert Hartley Cromek entered the scene. A book collector and moderately successful engraver, Cromek had studied under Bartolozzi at the same time as Schiavonetti; he was a good friend of the Flaxmans and George Cumberland and probably acquainted for some years with both Blake and Stothard. Though his work had won high praise from Flaxman, Cromek decided about this time to give up engraving for the more active life of print-publisher and dealer. With little capital behind him, he conceived of a large illustrated edition of Robert Blair’s popular if lugubrious poem The Grave as his first project, and he showed a courageous taste in choosing Blake in September 1805 to do the designs. In a letter to Hayley of 27 November 1805 enclosing a copy of a Prospectus for the volume, Blake spoke warmly of his friend Cromek’s “liberality” in commissioning a set of drawings (for a fee of twenty guineas) and of his “Spirited Exertions” in securing the recommendations of thirteen Royal Academicians for the work—the high-water mark of recognition by the Academy that he was to receive in his lifetime. Blake added that Cromek was so pleased with the twenty designs he selected “that he with the same liberality with which he set me about the drawings, has now set me to Engrave them.”

However, in a second Prospectus almost identical with the first and like it dated November 1805, the number of plates was reduced to twelve and the name of Schiavonetti substituted for Blake’s as the engraver. This action by Cromek has repeatedly been described as a betrayal of Blake, on the assumption that Cromek had arbitrarily transferred the commission to Schiavonetti and perfidiously issued the second Prospectus without informing Blake of his decision, neither of which seems to be the case. The November 1805 date of the second Prospectus, on which the charge of Cromek’s perfidy rests, now appears to be incorrect; it was evidently issued a month or two later, and there is no reason to think that Cromek concealed his decision from Blake till after it was printed. The decision itself was his reaction to Blake’s first engraving for The Grave, his design for “Death’s Door”—his first plate etched completely in white line, a revolutionary inversion of traditional technique. The potential subscribers who viewed the proofs at Cromek’s place of business were evidently nonplussed or worse; and Cromek, realizing that Blake’s bold ruggedness of treatment would doom the book to failure, hastily turned to Schiavonetti to engrave the designs instead—a move that was within his rights as the originator and financier of the project. This is not to deny Blake’s disappointment and humiliation, or to accept the popular preference for Schiavonetti’s style over Blake’s, or to recast the “Fiends of Commerce” as the heroes of the piece: only to remind ourselves that—as J. T. Smith drily remarked—“it would be unreasonable to expect the booksellers to embark in publications not likely to meet remuneration.”

However, Cromek has been depicted as an unscrupulous publisher, a “printjobber” who “jockeyed Blake out of his copyright” and made windfall profits on the venture. But Blake would not have retained the copyright even if he had done the engravings for The Grave; as with his arrangement in 1796 with Richard Edwards for Night Thoughts, once he sold his designs the copyright passed automatically to the purchaser, who assumed the costs of publication (including the engraving) in the hope of making a profit. Incidentally, paid Blake a mere twenty guineas—or 9 1/2d. each—for his 537 folio-size watercolor designs for Night Thoughts, though probably five pounds (Blake’s usual fee) for each of his forty-three engravings. By May 1807, it is true, Cromek’s twenty-guinea fee for the twenty designs to The Grave no longer seemed liberal to Blake, who had evidently heard that Cromek had paid Stothard a hundred guineas for his Chaucer painting and was making huge profits on the exhibition: hence his angry demand of four guineas for the dedication page which elicited Cromek’s angry reply. But Cromek’s
profits on *The Grave* have been vastly exaggerated, from Kathleen Raine's figure of 'about £1800' down to Bentley's more cautious estimate of £900.18 Even this latter figure needs correcting. First, it underestimates Cromek's fee to Schiavonetti by almost £300; second, it computes the sales figures in terms of the post-publication price of two and a half guineas instead of the subscription price of two guineas; and third, it does not take into account Cromek's travel expenses for over two years throughout England and Scotland, drumming up subscriptions and then delivering the finished books, which he had packed himself.19 A revised estimate of his profits for nearly three years' work on the edition comes to about £295—not including travel expenses.20 And Cromek's "Spirited Exertions" did not cease after securing the recommendations of the Academicians. He persuaded Fuseli to write a glowing endorsement of Blake's designs, exhibited the drawings in London and the provinces, found subscribers for almost 700 copies, advertised the book repeatedly, and finally arranged for the volume to be dedicated to the Queen.21

With this first episode of the Blake-Cromek relationship in mind we may turn back to the quarrel over the *Canterbury Pilgrims* project. The first point at issue is whether the idea for the painting originated with Blake or with Cromek. Both Smith and Linnell state that it was Blake's; but this ascription is unlikely, even though it has been almost universally accepted. In the first place, both Smith and Linnell erroneously credit Blake with the original idea for the *Grave* designs, and they may be in similar error about the Chaucer project. More important, it was Blake's habit as an engraver to work on "tasks happily prescribed by others," as Gilchrist put it, especially with ambitious undertakings such as *Night Thoughts* and *The Grave*. Living largely on publishers' advances, continually short of cash, Blake simply could not afford to embark on a long-term independent project in 1805; in fact, with the exception of his illustrations to Hayley's *Ballads*, he had not published any engravings of his own design for over ten years.22 Furthermore, it is striking that Blake never evinced an interest in Chaucer prior to his 1808 painting and his 1809 *Descriptive Catalogue*. Only one reference to Chaucer occurs in all his poetry, on the next-to-last page of *Jerusalem* (98:9), and his discussion of Chaucer's universality in the *Catalogue* is heavily indebted to Dryden's comments in his preface to the *Fables*.23 Indeed, from all we know of Blake's preoccupations in 1805, a painting of Chaucer's Pilgrims seems one of the least likely projects he could have undertaken. In the absence of any expressed concern with Chaucer by Blake before 1808, there seems no reason, then, to doubt Cromek's word when he congratulated himself "for thinking of such a glorious Subject" in a letter to James Montgomery of April 1807.24 Cromek's own interest in Chaucer—like that of many other readers including Coleridge—may have been kindled by William Godwin's popular biography of 1803, the first attempt at a full-length life. His account of picking up a copy of the *Tales* in Halifax in the summer of 1806 while waiting for the London coach and conceiving of the idea for a painting of the Pilgrims which he then took to Stothard, is at least as circumstantial as Blake's story preserved by Smith and Linnell.25

The second question in dispute is whether, as Blake asserted to Linnell, Cromek actually commissioned him to design the *Canterbury Pilgrims*, with the promise of the engraving fee to follow. The issue is largely academic since, if the idea was Cromek's to begin with, he would have been within his rights to take the subject to Stothard if, after first proposing it to Blake, he had been dissatisfied with Blake's initial treatment of it—as indeed he would have been bewildered by the consciously archaic style Blake adopted for his design. However, it is significant that J. T. Smith, whose record of the affair in 1828 was based on first-hand discussion with a number of Blake's friends, made no reference to a commission; it was Allan Cunningham who first mentioned it two years later, simply to record Cromek's denial that he had ever given one.26 A third question is whether Blake in fact made a pencil sketch of the subject in 1805 or early 1806, which would bolster though not clinch his claim that Cromek stole his idea. No drawing that can be so dated survives, though Gilchrist recounts a curious story con-
cerning such a sketch. Blake, as he tells it, hung his original design for the Pilgrims on his sitting room wall for perhaps a year before the appearance of Stothard's Procession in 1807; then on taking it down to use for his own fresco "he found it nearly effaced: the result of some malignant spell of Stothard's," as he insisted later to Flaxman, who naturally pooh-poohed the suggestion. Since neither Smith nor Linnell mentioned this incident in his account of the affair, it may be another piece of the Blake apocrypha; but even if Blake made the charge to Flaxman, the story itself does not prove that an 1805 sketch ever existed. Yet interestingly enough, a drawing of the Pilgrims does survive whose appearance clearly indicates that it was hung on the wall as Gilchrist describes. This is the drawing of 1809 or 1810, soiled and faded and showing tack marks at top and bottom, which Blake made to reduce the design of his painting to the dimensions of his plate for engraving. So Gilchrist's story may recall an actual conversation, though it is misleadingly vague as to the date. Either the exchange took place, as Gilchrist suggests, in 1807 or 1808, and Blake invoked Stothard's "malignant spell" to explain to Flaxman the absence of an earlier sketch of the subject that would prove his priority; or possibly the incident occurred some years later, when Blake could have pointed to the 1809-10 drawing as the "original design" from which Stothard had stolen his theme. In either event, the drawing remained as concrete evidence for Linnell or another informant to later convince Gilchrist of the truth of Blake's version of the case. One more point at issue, Crabb Robinson's vague recollection in 1852 of hearing some thirty years earlier of a prospectus for Blake's engraving circulated in 1806, proves a red herring on close inspection.

Beyond the unlikelihood of Blake's conceiving of the Canterbury Pilgrims in 1805, however, there are more positive reasons for linking the project to 1808, the date recorded on the painting. The first is Blake's probable motive in undertaking the Chaucer painting at this time. Nothing in Blake's art of 1805—predominantly Biblical themes in a recreation of his earlier neoclassic manner—provides a context for the Gothic style and realistic subject matter of the Pilgrims. But in 1807, his simmering resentment against Cromek and Schiavonetti over the Blair project, the success of Stothard's painting (which Schiavonetti had now been appointed to engrave), and Cromek's insolent challenge to "send me a better" evidently roused Blake to indignant protest, not only against Stothard's treatment of the subject but also against the whole system that produced it. For the Pilgrims is not simply the most consciously archaic of all Blake's works: its archaism is not merely a style but a statement. The unholy alliance of publisher, painter, and engraver—Cromek, Stothard, and Schiavonetti—was to Blake the cause of the corruption of art in his time, in which increasingly the conception of a design was isolated from both its execution and, at one more remove, its reproduction, and the role of the artist increasingly subordinated to that of the entrepreneur. This system of production, which Morris Eaves has aptly named "the artistic machine," Blake saw reflected in the "broken lines" and mechanical techniques of Schiavonetti's stipple and mezzotint, to which Blake scornfully contrasted the integrity of his own linear style, the unbroken line which is the test of true artistry. As he wrote years later, "A Line is a Line in its Minutest Subdivision[s] Strait or Crooked It is Itsel & Not Intermeasurable with or by any Thing Else" (E 783). Thus his choice of the style he had learned from "Alb. Durer and the old Engravers" (E 572) was not a simple quest of historical accuracy, like the "antiquarian exactness" of Stothard's painting based on patient research in the British Museum; more significantly it was a return to the spirit of his uncorrupted youth, the Gothic world of Westminster Abbey and the medieval master craftsmen. Integrity of style was to be matched by integrity of production: Blake conceived his own vision of the Pilgrims, painted it, exhibited it, engraved it, advertised and sold it all on his own. "If a man is master of his profession," he wrote at the end of the Descriptive Catalogue, "and if he is not employed by
those who pretend to encourage art, he will employ himself and laugh in secret at the pretences of the ignorant” — thus gaining “a reward for the labours of the day, such as the world cannot give” (E 550). The Canterbury Pilgrims must be read as Blake’s answer to Schiavonetti’s facile virtuosity, Stothard’s inauthentic medievalism, and Cromek’s crass commercialism.

The most concrete evidence against the received account of the controversy, however, is found in Blake’s published remarks on the affair. It is striking to note that nowhere in the Descriptive Catalogue of 1809 does he charge Cromek with stealing his idea for the Canterbury Pilgrims. Rather, Blake tells us, his picture was painted “in self-defence against the insolent and envious imputation of unfitness for finished and scientific art.” Cromek’s rejection of his engraving for The Grave now seemed a slander on his abilities which, he hints, Cromek has “artfully and industriously endeavoured to be propagated among the public by ignorant hirelings,” i.e., reviewers. He “courts comparison” with his competitors (Cromek and Stothard) and accuses Cromek of having reaped enormous profits from his designs for The Grave by employing another more docile engraver (Schiavonetti) to produce a work which has gained both of them “public patronage,” while Blake’s designs “which gained them that patronage are cried down as eccentricity and madness” (E 537–38). These outbursts spring partly from Blake’s rage at the reviews of The Grave in the latter half of 1808 — first and foremost the Hunts’ Examiner—which attacked his designs as “indecent,” “absurd,” “the offspring of a morbid fancy” which “has totally failed” in its aim, while commending “the unrivalled graver of L. Schiavonetti.” However, these were only salt in the wounds Blake was still nursing over Cromek’s substitution of Schiavonetti as engraver, his failure to pay Blake what he now thought he deserved for his designs, his outrageous letter of May 1807, and a number of other grievances — now climaxcd in Blake’s imagination by Cromek’s complicity in the reviewers’ attacks. But to all such aspersions and calumnies, he asserts, “the works now exhibited will give the lie.” Following this defense with an attack, Blake links Stothard with “a class of men” — Reynolds and his followers in the Royal Academy — “whose whole art and science is fabricated for the purpose of destroying art,” as Blake saw it, by promoting Venetian over Florentine principles, coloring over drawing; he then convicts such painters of “Stupidity” by a withering analysis of Stothard’s Procession as described in his Prospectus (E 538–40).

In the Public Address of 1810 Blake extends these lines of attack and defense to his engraving of the Pilgrims, decrying the modern style of engraving of Bartolozzi and his followers as contaminated by painterly principles of tone, and upholding his own work as founded firmly on line. He rails especially against “the artfully propagated pretence” that “Great Inventors” such as himself “cannot Execute,” or that “A Translation or a Copy of any kind” can be as good as “An Original Invention” — in short, that an engraver such as Schiavonetti can do justice to Blake’s own designs (E 572, 576, 582). Clearly his humiliation over the Blair illustrations is still as much on his mind as his need to promote his Chaucer engraving; but even if his protest against his competitors’ “Calumny & the Arts of Trading Combination” (E 577) is read as referring to the dispute over the Pilgrims rather than to The Grave, still it attacks Cromek not for stealing his original idea but for maligning his abilities and for promoting Stothard’s painting far more successfully than Blake did his own.

The failure of the 1809 Exhibition, followed by that of the Chaucer engraving (of which he may have sold only seven or eight copies out of a printing of thirty or so), was a staggering blow, the climax of a long series of disappointments and (as he saw them) betrayals since the end of 1805. In the epigrams Blake began scribbling in his Notebook at about this time, Cromek is prominent among the “foes” on whom he vents his rage: but the terms of his attack deserve close scrutiny. Cromek is
denounced as "a petty sneaking knave," who loves the art only of cheating, and who in trying "to please everybody" has "set to work Both ignorance and skill"—i.e., has employed Schiavonetti to engrave Blake's designs for *The Grave* rather than Blake himself. The one possible reference to the *Canterbury Pilgrims* affair—and a murky one at that—occurs in the enigmatic poem "And his legs carried it like a long fork" (E 503-04). This poem, begun late in 1810, apparently celebrates Blake's publication of his Chaucer engraving ahead of Stothard's, thereby frustrating the schemes of Screwmuch (Cromek), Steward (Stothard), and Assassinetti (Schiavonetti) to cheat Blake out of a just reward for his talents. Though Cromek has peddled Stothard's painting the length and breadth of Great Britain, it has been to no avail. His "eggs" (the profits from the exhibition of Stothard's painting) have been "addled and decayed" by Schiavonetti's death in June 1810 before finishing the engraving which would have proved still more lucrative to Cromek, while at the same time he has failed to turn "the wretched soul of William Blake" into "eggs of gold" for his own profit. And when Cromek, almost penniless, died of tuberculosis in 1812, Blake added some lines savagely exulting over his demise as well as the deaths or misfortunes of other enemies and some former friends—an alarming index to his state of mind at the time. 

Yet it is striking that Stothard, Flaxman, and Hayley come in for more frequent and violent abuse in the Notebook poems than Cromek. Stothard is compared to "The Fox, the Owl, the Beetle & the Bat" and is attacked as "the golden fool" who has "grown old and rich" by observing "the golden rule," the seeming "friend of all mankind" who is in truth iron-hearted, wooden-headed, brazen-faced (E 508, 503). These verses express Blake's resentment of Stothard's financial success and his coolness to an old friend, however, rather than raise any charge of plagiarism. The animus against Stothard seems excessive, especially in the light of Stothard's cordiality in 1806, when he is said to have promised to include a portrait of Blake among his Pilgrims "as a mark of esteem for him and his works." When his painting appeared in 1807 it contained no such portrait: but this would hardly account for Blake's anger. Perhaps Stothard in an expansive moment actually promised Blake the commission for engraving his work—a promise that Cromek would have forced him to withdraw. Such a hypothesis would at least account for the mysterious commission of a Chaucer engraving which Blake believed he had received but which Cromek denied he had ever given. Blake goes on in the Notebook to link Stothard with Flaxman as his two Calibans, treacherous "old acquaintance" whom he "taught to see" but who now "have shewn their backsides," and who spread the poisonous rumor that "Blakified drawing spoils painter & engraver" (E 508, 505). The assault on Flaxman, the innocent bystander, is surprising. Like Stothard he is accused of copying Blake; but a more frequent accusation is that he has refused to believe Blake and demanded "a proof of what he can't perceive," mocking Blake as a "madman"—who replies by calling him a "blockhead" (E 507, 501). Perhaps this exchange of insults was precipitated by Flaxman's refusal to believe Blake's improbable story of Stothard's casting a "malignant spell" on his original sketch of the Pilgrims when Flaxman quizzed him, as he must have done, on his reason for apparently copying Stothard's design.

Thus we are faced like Flaxman, and later J. T. Smith, with the difficult question of how far we can take Blake's word against Cromek and Stothard's in the matter. Discounting the story of supernatural influences on the mysterious pencil sketch of 1805, how much can we believe of the account Blake gave Linnell that Cromek saw his drawing of the Pilgrims, commissioned him to paint it for twenty guineas, promised him the engraving fee in addition while secretly negotiating with another
engraver, then “sneaked” the idea to Stothard when Blake refused to surrender his design? This account, as we have seen, is backed by no external evidence and indeed conflicts with most of the facts surrounding the matter. It is possible, of course, that Linnell’s recollection in 1855 of his conversations with Blake around 1820 is at fault. Like Smith’s memoir of 1828 his note on the affair contains some factual inaccuracies, and in certain details—notably the promise of the engraving commission subsequently withdrawn—it suspiciously resembles the episode of the Grave illustrations, belonging also to the fall of 1805, which may have fused with it in Linnell’s memory. But, given Blake’s emotional state around 1809 and after, it seems more likely that this fusion or confusion had already taken place in Blake’s mind when he talked with Linnell a decade or so after the event, and that this is the real origin of the story. Blake’s version of the affair is thus probably a gradual reconfiguration of the events during his years of obscurity after 1810, when he had alienated all of his old friends and was left to brood over their injustices in isolation. In either case, when all the contemporary evidence is taken into account the contemporary understanding of the coincidence between the two Chaucer paintings seems the probable one—that Blake commenced his picture in rivalry to Stothard’s (BR 492, 209, 243–44). No disinterested witness at the time supports Blake’s claim to priority, and the factual evidence all points in the other direction.

The difficult question remains of how Blake arrived at his conviction that the idea for the Chaucer painting was originally his; and an answer here must be almost completely speculative. It must start from the premise that Blake lived in an eidetic world, thronged with precise visual images having the force of reality, with a visual memory developed to an unusual degree by his training in art and well-stocked with years of study of the work of other artists. Many of his apparently original designs have been shown to be based on (probably unconscious) recollections of other works, both contemporary and ancient, from a wide range of sources—which is not to deny that what he borrowed from other artists he transmuted into something wholly his own. Like many of his other paintings, then, the Pilgrims may well have been an amalgamation of half-conscious memories of other works under the pressure of some immediate stimulus. It may well be that, as has been suggested, Blake saw the Elgin Marbles not long after they were placed on exhibition in 1807 and this visual experience—especially in conjunction with his view of Stothard’s Procession around the same time—was the seed of his own conception. The sight of the actual Marbles would certainly have brought to the surface of his memory the line engravings of the Panathenaic Procession reproduced in Stuart and Revett’s Antiquities of Athens, which he had studied as a young man and which are closer in feeling to his own work than the sculptures themselves. But quite apart from the Marbles, Stothard’s procession evidently triggered a recollection of two other cavalcades—those of two outsized engravings by Basire which have been claimed were the primary influences on both the scale and the archaic style of his Pilgrims—“The Field of the Cloth of Gold” (1774) and “The Procession of Edward VI” (1787), the latter of which was especially close to Blake’s design. It seems, then, that from all these recollections fusing in his visual memory arose a new image of the same compelling vividness as the spiritual publications he described years later to Crabb Robinson, to which the existence of actual manuscripts was irrelevant—one of “those wonderful Originals seen in my visions” before he ever set pencil to paper. Thus Stothard’s cavalcade would have appeared to him as a copy of an idea he had long had in mind, which he gradually became convinced he had sketched a year or two before seeing Stothard’s painting in progress.

In conclusion, two points must be made. First, it appears that Cromek has been “much maligned,” as William Bell Scott, a Victorian collector and editor of Blake’s engravings, later opined. From Gilchrist onward he has been described as “slippery,” “greedy,” “treacherous,” an opportunist who “picked the brains of his proteges and stopped the pay.” Partly this may be due to the fact that the role of artistic and literary entre-
preneur was still relatively new and not highly regarded in Blake's time; it is also true that Cromek, who seems to have operated on a very narrow margin of cash, was not generous in his dealings and engaged in sharp and perhaps shady practices. Cromek was no hero: he was quick-tempered, brash, disingenuous, and drove a hard bargain though to no great financial return. Yet it has been claimed in the light of recent evidence that he also showed "a surprising breadth of aesthetic and intellectual sympathy" with Blake in the earlier stage of their relationship; moreover, that he was the most reliable and conscientious of Robert Burns's nineteenth-century editors as well as an enterprising and energetic collector of unpublished material. Cromek's career as a whole awaits reassessment; in his relationship with Blake he should at the very least be given credit for introducing Blake's art to the widest public he was to have in his lifetime with the designs to The Grave, and doing everything in his power to ensure the success of the work.

Yet a more significant point emerges when we shift from looking at the quarrel with Cromek through the eyes of Blake to viewing Blake through the perspective of the quarrel. Blake seems to have been driven to the edge of sanity in the years surrounding his exhibition. As Bentley has suggested, between 1807 and 1812 the visionary world seemed often to supplant rather than to supplement the ordinary world of causality in Blake's mind, or—to put it another way— "a firm persuasion that a thing is so, [seemed to] make it so." His relationship with Cromek is perhaps the most telling example of his loosening grip on reality during those years, though few of his readers have been willing to see it thus. Yet the belief which apparently began to grow on him after 1810 that Cromek and Stothard had stolen his idea for a painting from Chaucer is no more delusive than a number of other suspicions of his friends and foes that he vented at the time. But there is more to it than this. If Blake was in his Spectre's power in his dealings with Cromek, his Humanity was also awake and struggling, like Los, to subdue it to the ends of art. It is one of the mysteries of creativity that the imagination feeds on contraries, is stirred by the experience of hate as well as love, by scorn and rivalry as well as admiration and brotherhood, perhaps even by the petty as well as the sublime. We know what the years at Felpham with Hayley contributed to the making of Milton. Robert Cromek must have appeared to Blake as "the Age's Knave," the reincarnation of Chaucer's Pardoner, the man "sent in every age for a rod and scourge," but "suffered by Providence for wise ends." It is then a providential irony that Blake's conviction of Cromek's villainy prompted him to paint one of his grandest "Visions of the eternal principles or characters of human life [which] appear to poets, in all ages" (E 535–36). Seen thus, Cromek indeed had "his great use, and his grand leading destiny."


3 Life 225–25; BR 184–87, 464n1. The letter was published by Allan Cunningham's son in 1852 (BR 187n2), and thereby prompted Gilchrist to cast Cromek as the villain of the piece. Stothard's painting was the sensation of the 1807 season in London, drawing crowds of thousands at a shilling admission, and subsequently toured the provinces with similar success. The engraving, despite its delayed appearance, became the best-selling print of the first half of the nineteenth century (Anna E. Bray, Life of Thomas Stothard [London, 1851] 140).

4 Erdman 439; BR 179; see also Life 220.

5 BR 465–66 and n1, and see 179n3. On the novelty of the subject, which—pace Gilchrist (Life 221)—greatly intensified the rivalry, see Richard D. Altick, Paintings from Books (Columbus: Ohio State UP, 1985) 339. Betsy Bowden in "The Artistic and Interpretive Context of Blake's 'Canterbury Pilgrims'" (BR 13 [1980]: 164–90) examines in detail a number of analogues to Blake's design in previous illustrations of the Tales; but the single illustration she cites (172, 174–75) of the Pilgrims setting out on their journey, from Urry's 1721 edition of Chaucer, barely qualifies as a source for Blake's painting, even though Blake may have known of this edition. Only
11 of the tiny figures in the 7 ¾" x 3 ¾" engraving are identifiable, much less individualized, and the overall design and graphic style are completely different from Blake's. The figures of the Merchant and the Wife of Bath in the Chaucer portrait of the "Heads of the Poets" (Butlin, vol. 2, pl. 440), which she cites as "faithful copies" from Urry, are totally unlike their counterparts in the Pilgrims.

On Linnell and Smith's inaccuracies, see note 37 below. Butlin, citing Bentley (BR 220), states that Stothard's engraving appeared before Blake's "in about November 1809" (1:475), while Anthony Blunt (The Art of William Blake [New York: Columbia UP. 1959] 77), followed by Kathleen Raine (William Blake [New York: Prager, 1970] 169), states that Cromek "published an engraving after Stothard's painting, with great profit to himself." But only the preliminary etching was completed by Schiavonetti in 1809, a few months before his death, and the engraving did not appear till five years after Cromek's death in 1812.


8Cromek's figure, disputed by Bentley, whose claim that Blake was "riding the crest of a wave of prosperity" in the autumn of 1805 (BR 173) must, however, be questioned. He estimates Blake's income for the first ten months of 1805 at £98, or £2.3 a week (186nl). But apart from payments by Flaxman and Butts totalling £37.18 (571-72) there is only a very doubtful commission of 10 guineas from Joseph Thomas in September (166, 606 and G. E. Bentley, Jr., Blake Books [Oxford: Clarendon, 1977], hereafter cited as BB 420nl) beside a still more doubtful 50 guineas for the plates to the 1805 edition of the Ballads promised him by the publisher Phillips under a profit-sharing agreement. (The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake, ed. David V. Erdman [hereafter cited as E] 762-65). To prove this was actually paid Bentley cites a letter of 25 April 1805 (BR 161, 186nl—actually by Phillips not Blake), but the payment is not mentioned in the letter as quoted (161-62). Blake's letters from June to December 1805 (E 765-67) indicate he was in constant want of cash and had heard nothing from Phillips since the Ballads were published in June: the 1805 venture was apparently as much of a financial loss as the 1802 Ballads had been (BR 116-17). His final word on the subject is the epigram on Phillips: "He loved me and for no Gain at all / But to rejoice & triumph in my fall" (E 505). It seems, then, that Blake's income for the ten months leading up to Cromek's offer was probably not much over £40. From Bentley's figures for the following year (BR 574-75, 606, 617), his income for 1806 came to about £53. Blake's increasing poverty was an important factor in his state of mind in 1807 and afterward.


10BR 193-94 and n1, 197, 200, 54-55, 173-74. Blake was commissioned to engrave only one plate out of the 100 included in Boydell's illustrated Shakespeare (BB 535-36). Between April 1805 and 1813 he received only one single engraving commission—the plate for Prince Hoare's Inquiry into the . . . Arts (1806) BR 571, 616-17 and n1.

11On Cromek's background, see DNB 5: 144 and the "Biographical Sketch of Robert Hartley Cromek" in Robert Blair, The Grave, A Poem (London, 1813) 45-54. On his friendship with the Flaxmans, see Irwin 189; on his friendship with Cumberland, see BR 198. Flaxman thought his engravings from Stothard "in beauty far exceed any other prints from that Artist's works" (Wilson 222n)—i.e., including Blake's; see also BR 154-55.

12BR 168. Contrary to the usual interpretation of the agreement, Blake's letter implies that in September 1805 Cromek merely commissioned "a set of drawings," and that the engraving was not agreed on till November. On the other hand, a letter by Flaxman to Hayley of 18 October 1805 (BR 168-67) reports that Cromek had proposed that Blake engrave 20 of his original 40 drawings, but it is not clear whether Flaxman had this information from Cromek or from Blake. Cromek's fee of a guinea for each finished drawing is what Blake was receiving from Butts for his tempera frescoes at this time.

13See BR 168-71 for the second prospectus; the first prospectus of November 1805, naming Blake as the engraver, was not discovered and printed till G. E. Bentley, Jr.'s article "Blake and Cromek: The Wheat and the Tares" Modern Philology 71 (1974): 367-69. This discovery, along with a letter by Cromek to James Montgomery of April 1807 speaking warmly of Blake (372-75), considerably softened Bentley's earlier criticism of Cromek (BR 168-71 et passim). Butlin, who like Bentley notes that the type of the second prospectus was only partly reset (in fact only three lines were altered and three added), suggests (1: 454) that it was issued some time after Blake's letter to Hayley of 11 December 1805, which thanked him for his "kind Reception" of the "New Projected Work" and said nothing of the commission being given to Schiavonetti (E 766-67). Since the first proof of Schiavonetti's first etching (also of "Death's Door") was dated 12 February 1806, it appears that Schiavonetti was appointed and the prospectus revised in late December or January.


15BR 468. Even Gilchrist, who was mainly responsible for the blackening of Cromek's character, admits that the change was "a happy choice of engravers on Cromek's part . . . indeed, Schiavonetti's engravings introduced Blake's designs to a wider public than himself could ever have done" (Life 219). Todd 84 suggests that in refusing to work in a more acceptable style Blake "may have been more blameworthy than has usually been admitted."


17BR 52. On the "not unusual" disproportion between the designer's and engraver's fees and the publisher's profits, Alexander and Godfrey cite the example of the highly successful print of The Destruction of the Children of Niobe, in which Richard Wilson received 80 guineas for his 1761 painting, Woollett £150 for the engraving, and Boydell collected £2,000 for the sale of the prints (Painters and Engravers 24). As for the 537 Night Thoughts watercolors, Edward's brother Thomas tried to sell them for 50 guineas in 1826 and 1828, but without success (BR 442nl).
On Schiaponetti's fee, see Bentley's corrected figure in "Blake and Cromek" 378; on the subscription price, BR 171 and Dennis M. Read, "Cromek's Provincial Advertisements for Blake's Grave" Notes and Queries ns 27 (1980) 75; on Cromek's travels, ibid. 73–75 and Bentley "Blake and Cromek" 378–79.

Using Bentley's estimates of printing, advertising, and selling costs (BR 184n3), plus an additional £280 for the engraving fee, gives total costs for The Grave of £1,209.2.6. Sales of 680 subscriptions at two guineas and 20 nonsubscription copies at 2½ guineas, with perhaps five proof copies at four guineas (BR 191), yield a total of 1430 guineas or £1501.10, making an estimated net profit of £292.7.6 (not counting travel expenses). Some copies remained unsold at least five months after publication (BR 213–14).

See G. E. Bentley, Jr., "The Promotion of Blake's Grave Designs" University of Toronto Quarterly 31 (1962): 34–53; Read, "Advertisements" 73–75. To these efforts should be added Cromek's persuading Mallkin to include an encomium of Blake's art and poetry and a puff for The Grave in the preface to his Father's Memoir of His Child (Bentley "Promotion" 348), as well as commissioning Thomas Phillips to paint Blake's portrait (engraved by Schiaponetti) for a frontispiece to the volume. And in 1807 and 1808 Cromek, professing admiration of his "Noble though extravagant Flights" ("Blake and Cromek" 372), was apparently trying to find buyers for some of Blake's earlier books (BR 191 and n1). However, as Essick and Paley point out, all Cromek's "bulsting and puffing" could not produce favorable reviews of The Grave: only one mildly positive one and two long negative ones are known (The Grave 25; BR 195ff., 199ff., 201ff.).

See Life 95. Excepting the illuminated books and The Gates of Paradise, only 17 or 18 of the more than 600 plates engraved by Blake during his lifetime were done on his own initiative, not on commission; and of these he published under his own copyright only five: "Edward & Eleanor," "Job," "Ezekiel," and "The Accusers" (all dated 1793–94), and in 1810 "Chaucers Canterbury Pilgrims" (Essick Plates 3–122 passim.). Milton and possibly Jerusalem, begun probably about this time, were of course independent large-scale projects from which Blake expected no financial reward proportionate to his investment of time; presumably they would have occupied all the attention he had left for unremunerative work.


Bentley "Blake and Cromek" 372. Bentley's discovery of this letter prompted both Erdman (518) and Lindsay (193) to raise the possibility that the original idea for the Pilgrims was indeed Cromek's.

"Biographical Sketch" in Blair (1813) xlviii. On Godwin's biography see Caroline Spurgeon, Five Hundred Years of Chaucer Criticism and Allusion (Cambridge UP, 1925) i: ciii, cxi and Collect­ ed Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, ed. E. L. Griggs (Oxford: Clarendon, 1956) 2: 951, 1054. It is significant that the minutely detailed description of the social-historical background for which Godwin's work was generally praised (Spurgeon 2: 9–19, 31–37) is the same "antiquarian exactness" for which Stothard's painting was acclaimed (see the "Prospectus" for the engraving of Stothard's Pro­ cession in Blair The Grave [London: 1808] 38)—to which Blake's rather Johnsonian praise of Chaucer's universality was diametrically opposed.

BR 464–65, 491. While Cunningham's memoir of Blake is unreliable in a number of details, it is likely to be accurate in his ac­count of Cromek, whom he knew well from his mildly discreditable part in the Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song, published by Cromek in 1809–10 (Life 250–52).

Life 241. Wilson insists (235) that Blake was jesting when he made this remark, if indeed he did: but it is in keeping with other wild accusations Blake made during these years (see note 46 below).

BR 10. Cunningham's memoir of Blake is unreliable in a number of details, it is likely to be accurate in his ac­count of Cromek, whom he knew well from his mildly discreditable part in the Remains of Nithsdale and Galloway Song, published by Cromek in 1809–10 (Life 250–52).

BR 24. Wilson insists (235) that Blake was jesting when he made this remark, if indeed he did: but it is in keeping with other wild accusations Blake made during these years (see note 46 below).
The one allusion to "robbery" in the Public Address is a veiled reference to alleged borrowings much earlier in his career by Stothard and Flaxman (E 582; see 508, 540). Other references in the Descriptive Catalogue and Public Address to "imitation," "copy," "original," "thieves," and "plagiarism" are not directed at Cromek or Stothard at all, nor are there any to "steal" or "cheat."  

Essick (Plates 60-70) lists 29 prints made during Blake's lifetime. Actual sales in Blake's lifetime are recorded for only about seven copies (BR 592 and 594, and Essick Plates 63, 64, 75, 76). The price was set at four guineas to subscribers in the 1809 prospectus ("to be considerably raised to Non-subscribers," E 567), lowered to three guineas in 1810, and sold for two or 2½ guineas in 1826-28 (BR 592, 594-95, 607). The first three obituaries of Blake failed to mention the Pilgrims among his other works; the fourth described it as though it were unknown (BR 348-50, 351-53, 354-55, 357). Other references in the text to "original," "thieves," and "plagiarism" are not directed at Cromek in 11 each (under their respective aliases (BR 592, 594-95, 607). The first three obituaries of Blake failed to mention the Pilgrims among his other works; the fourth described it as though it were unknown (BR 348-50, 351-53, 354-55, 357). The "enemies" include "Billy's Lawyer" Rose—"Sweet Rose," (E 759)—his old friend Flaxman, and his erstwhile employer Prince Hoare as well as the brothers Hunt and the villainous dragon Schofield, who died in 1812 (BR 669). "Dady Jack Hemps Parson" may be the Rev. Joseph Thomas, a friend of Flaxman's and a generous patron to Blake, who died in 1811 (BR 674). "Dady" or "daddy" was a current term of contempt for a prim old man (see BR 33). "Cut, my Lawyer" is probably Charles Ker, a barrister with whom Blake was embroiled in a lawsuit in 1810, and whose father lost a famous and expensive lawsuit in 1812 (see BR 227-28 and n3).  

Cromek is mentioned in nine of the epigrams, Hayley in 10, and Stothard and Flaxman in 11 each (under their respective aliases "And his legs carried it like a long fork.") (Erdman Concordance sw.)  

Life 221.  

Flaxman evidently had a falling-out with Blake in 1808, which seems to have lasted till 1814 or 1815: see BR 190, 241-422, 235, 239 and BB 419.  

Linnell accepts Smith's misstatement that Blake himself had the original idea for the Grave illustrations and has Blake starting work on his Chaucer engraving in 1806 (BR 464 and n1), two years before completing his painting and three years before he started to engrave it (E 567-68). The coincidences between the Blair and the Chaucer projects in Linnell's account are the commission with the 20 guinea fee for the designs; the promise on which Cromek reneged that Blake would do the engraving; and the negotiations behind Blake's back with another engraver.  

Gilchrist's statement (Life 247) that "to the end of his life" Blake would abuse Stothard to strangers with "unaccountable vehemence," while keeping silent to friends and sympathizers about the affair, suggests that he sensed his side of the story would not bear close examination.  


Laurence Binyon, The Engraved Designs of William Blake (London: Benn, 1926) 62, and Essick Printmaker 189-90, which provides a detailed comparison of Basire's and Blake's engraving technique. As is apparent from the reproduction, the compositional similarities between Basire's print and Blake's are far closer than those suggested to the Elgin Marbles (see note 1 above). In addition to the frieze-like arrangement of the figures with near-isocophy noted by Essick, Blake's design closely parallels Basire's in the gently rolling hills and dense foliage of the trees in the background; in the architectural details of diamond-paned windows, Gothic spires and gateway, and pillars enclosing sculptures of ecclesiastics; and most of all in the horses and their trappings, an unlikely subject for Blake. The similarities to the Parthenon frieze adduced by Macmillan (see note 1 above) are generalized and remote by comparison—not only the human figures but especially the horses. In the Panathenaic procession the horses with their bare-back riders move from right to left in a bounding canter, tossing their heads, with both forefeet usually off the ground; the London cavalcade moves from left to right at a dignified walk or slow trot. Blake's improbable rendition of Chaucer's horse with both forefeet off the ground at the same moment may result from his amalgamation of the front and rear ends of two horses at the rear of the mounted procession in Basire's print, each partly obscured by a pillar: which suggests that he may have refreshed his memory by another view of the print. Its heroic dimensions (22½ x 52½ inches) are only slightly larger than those of Blake's engraving (18¾ x 35½ inches).  

BR 322; E 531. On the indebtedness of such "original" visions to recollections of earlier images, see Morton D. Paley, ""Wonderful Originals"—Blake and Ancient Sculpture" in Blake In His Time 170-97.  

Life 221, 250, 244, 252. See Wilson 227 ("a second-rate engraver"). Bernard Blackstone, English Blake (Cambridge UP, 1949) 37 ("an exploiter more unscrupulous and more cunning than Hayley"), and so forth. Essick and Paley give evidence of his hard dealings with other business associates (Blair's Grave 18), and Bentley even blames "the obscurity and poverty of Blake's last years" on Cromek for discouraging Blake "from appealing directly to the public" ("Blake and Cromek" 375-76). Dennis M. Read, who has published valuable research on Cromek's career, has raised doubts in correspondence about several of the charges leveled against him by Gilchrist, such as Cromek's stealing an autograph letter by Ben Jonson from Sir Walter Scott (Life 252-53) and failing to pay Stothard the extra £40 promised for his Procession (253). On Cromek's financial difficulties over the engraving of Stothard's picture, see Read, "Engraving" 60-65; on W. B. Scott see BR 193 and Todd in Life 384, 386.  

The first recorded use of the term entrepreneur in the sense of "manager" occurs in 1828: "an animal whom it is supposed lawful and commendable to bleed at every vein" (OED Supplement).  

It is significant that the idiosyncratic word "delusion" in its several forms occurs only twice in Blake's work before The Four Zoas and 54 times thereafter (Concordance s.v.). It appears that Blake recognized in his own experience the power of hallucinatory images to take on the force of reality.

Blake's complaint that his designs have been rejected by the Royal Academy merely because they were painted in watercolor (E 527; see Erdman 455n57); his statement that Cromek made over 1400 guineas profit on The Grave (E 537); his insinuation that Cromek was responsible for the death of Schiavonetti (E 505); his claim that Flaxman "was blasting my character as an Artist to Macklin, my Employer" in 1782–83 (E 572; see BR 610–11), the very time at which Flaxman was finding influential patrons for Blake, arranging for the printing of Poetical Sketches, assisting in a plan to send Blake abroad, and generally promoting his reputation (ibid. 24–27). Blake's sneer at Hayley for "being a friend just in the nick" to Cowper (E 507)—i.e., for neglecting Cowper's needs and doubting his genius while alive but capitalizing on his fame after his death by writing his biography on a commission from "some bookseller"—is unfair and inaccurate; see Morchard Bishop, Blake's Hayley (London: Gollancz, 1951) 152–65, 217–25, 252–53 on Hayley's long drawn-out campaign to secure a pension for Cowper, his extraordinary efforts to rescue Cowper from depression, and his attempts to persuade the Rev. John Johnson and Lady Hesketh to write Cowper's biography until Lady Hesketh, Cowper's cousin, insisted that he was the proper person to do it. Blake's accusation that Hayley "when he could not act upon my wife / Hired a Villain to bereave my Life" (E 506) is, in the light of Hayley's generous assistance to Blake at the time of his trial, paranoid.
The Shifting Characterization of Tharmas and Enion in Pages 3–7 of Blake’s *Vala* or *The Four Zoas*

BY JOHN B. PIERCE

The opening pages of the *Vala* or *The Four Zoas* manuscript present perhaps the most difficult bibliographical and interpretive cruxes in the entire manuscript. These pages have been described as “one of the most heavily revised parts of the poem” in which “the physical evidence in the manuscript is sometimes highly confusing.” Indeed, the “thicket of erased and deleted original and additional lines” has caused one critic to remark “Certainly no creation myth has ever done a better job of conveying a sense of the initial chaos out of which the world began.” The chaotic state of pages 3 through 7 has made a definitive text of the Tharmas-Enion conflict difficult to establish; however, recently Andrew Lincoln and David Erdman have reexamined the opening pages of *The Four Zoas* and, as a result, helped our bibliographical understanding of the stages in the genesis and growth of this text. Yet beyond the difficulties of establishing a faithful rendering of Blake’s textual intentions, the extensive erasures and rewritings which fill these pages reveal the process of composition in *The Four Zoas*. The extensive revisions suggest that the Tharmas character gradually evolved even as Blake transcribed his manuscript and that the significance of the character developed and in some cases shifted as he wrote and revised the first pages of *Vala* or *The Four Zoas*. In Tharmas’ shifting characterization we can see a specific example of Blake’s poetic process as he revised the tone, symbolism, and form of his narrative. Indeed, as we shall see, the development of Tharmas seems tied to the stress created within *The Four Zoas* as it moves from a linear to non-linear narrative.

Blake seems to have invented Tharmas and Enion while writing *The Four Zoas*, since they do not appear in his earlier works. It is not altogether certain, however, that Tharmas, in particular, played a significant role in Blake’s plan of the poem even at the time he began to transcribe it. Pages 4–6, those in which the narrative first introduces Tharmas and Enion, are a mass of erasures and rewritings in which different layers of text may be seen but not easily distinguished from one another. The earliest text, the transcription in Blake’s “copperplate hand,” is almost entirely obscured. Indeed, the extent of these erasures suggests a radical departure by Blake from his original text on these pages. As the existence of two Nights VII indicates, Blake was loath to discard any text if he thought he could salvage anything from it. Thus, it seems possible that the revised text differs radically in tone, image, or perhaps even character from the original transcription. Such a complete change in the story could help to explain why such radical revisions were brought to these opening pages. Margoliouth, the only critic to speculate at length on this problem, argues that

There is evidence that Vala originally played a larger part in Night I. . . . How Vala came into the lost eighty or so lines of the beginning of . . . [the earliest erased text of *Vala*] I cannot even conjecture, but somehow she must be identifiable with the Woman-Serpent which Enion becomes at the moment of her mating . . . [7]. The Woman-Serpent in the text there, in the drawing below and in the drawing on . . . [13], must be identifiable with the Woman-Serpent (*Woman-Dragon*) of the drawing on . . . [26], which represents Vala as described by Luvah.
The exact nature of this earlier story remains and may always remain in question. It does seem likely, though, that the top layer of text was written considerably later than the rest of the copperplate text and perhaps even later than pages 43–84 of the Night Thoughts proof sheets. The surface text contains references to characters and ideas such as Jerusalem, the Daughters of Beulah, and sin and atonement not present in the basic transcription of pages 43–84. This text also contains passages used in Jerusalem, and thus it seems likely that the surface layer of pages 4–6 is a relatively late addition to the manuscript.

The only surviving copperplate appearances of Tharmas occur in two brief instances where he is little more than a name. In Night I, Los alludes to the “cold expanse where watry Tharmas mourns” (11:27), and in Night II Blake writes that the windows in the “golden Building” (32:10) raised by Urizen and his sons lookd out into the world of Tharmas, where in ceaseless torrents

His billows roll where monsters wander in the foamy paths.

(33:6–7)

Here Tharmas seems merely a ruler over a watery chaos set in contrast to Urizen’s ordered world. His world, with its “ceaseless torrents” and “monsters [that] wander in the foamy paths,” seems to be an imminent threat to that of Urizen. Tharmas, thus, appears to be a sea god, like Poseidon, set in opposition to a Zeus-like sky god.9 The juxtaposition of Tharmas’ chaotic world against Urizen’s world of light and order seems to say more about Urizen than Tharmas. It is designed to emphasize the precarious nature of Urizen’s endeavors and remind the reader that Urizen has not conquered the chaos of matter on which his world is built, but only circumscribed a portion of it. Blake may also have intended, however, that the brief appearance of Tharmas’ world of “ceaseless torrents” would adumbrate the world of disorder that follows the collapse of Urizen’s world of order.

In her first copperplate appearance, Enion is described as brooding “oer the rocks, the rough rocks” (8:12) of the barren world Los and Enitharmon are born into. Her brooding causes “the rough rocks” to “vegetate” and give rise to the forms of nature which protect “the bright Infants from the desolating winds” (8:20) of a hostile world. Her laments emphasize her role as a nurturing earth-mother figure; unfortunately, Enion is forced to substitute tares for crops, pestilence and famine for nourishment, hypocrisy for truth in fallen nature:
victim, bending his "innocent head" from the clouds, turning the "circle of Destiny" and falling into the sea where he is woven into a spectrous form by Enion; on the other, we have the proud, malicious, Spectre-like Tharmas who asserts his will over Enion and finally rapes her. Though Lincoln's argument is compelling, it rests in part upon the idea that the earliest text on these opening pages always referred to the union of Tharmas and Enion. While this is possible, it is by no means inevitable. The text reconstructed by Erdman does not name the male or female figures, and not until this passage is moved to page 5 are their identities firmly established as Enion and Tharmas. Furthermore, from my own examination of the manuscript in the British museum, I have found that it is not always possible to tell which erased text is the earliest copperplate one.

However, once Blake had decided to transfer his text from page 7 to page 5, for whatever reason and at whatever stage of composition, he began to rework the intervening pages in two fairly distinct phases. It seems that the lines 4:7-11, 18-16, 5:6-12, 14, 16-19, 23-28, 46-55, 57 and 6:5-27, 32-37 represent a single phase of rewriting, since they seem to be centered over the erased text, appear in the same writing style and are consistent in tone, image and narrative setting. The emphasis on fear, terror, jealousy, hatred and delusive beauty characterizes these passages as much later than the copperplate transcription of Night I. I suspect that this stage of revision is concurrent with or follows the revision of the Los-Enitharmon and Urizen-Ahania stories in Nights I and II. An almost cynical emphasis on love and jealousy as motive forces in male-female relationships and a tendency to place the female in the more sinister role seem characteristic of the revision in both stories. References to love and jealousy are far less pronounced in the basic copperplate text; for the most part, Blake's later revisions of this text tend to magnify these elements only suggested in the early transcription of The Four Zoas. It is probable, then, that the passages in the Tharmas-Enion conflict were added as a unit while Blake worked on the rest of the poem, heightening "The torments of Love & Jealousy," and were intended to introduce Tharmas and Enion more fully earlier in the narrative in preparation for Tharmas' appearances, in particular, in the text after page 43.

The structure of this text seems fairly simple. Tharmas laments the loss of his Emanations and calls for Enion to "come forth" (4:8). She appears and proclaims that "All love is lost Terror succeeds & Hatred instead of Love / And stern demands of Right & Duty instead of Liberty" (4:19-20). Then, in an attempt to shield herself from his terrifying appearance, she begins to weave a "tabernacle of delight" (5:7) for herself which upon its completion becomes "the circle of Destiny" (5:11). Tharmas subsequently emerges from Enion's loom in the form of a Spectre and after glorying in his own beauty, torments and finally rapes Enion. The relative lateness of this text is suggested by the fact that specific terms such as "Emanation" and "Spectre" are not used in the text before revisions: "Emanation" is not found in the base text of The Four Zoas nor is the term "Spectre" applied to Tharmas in the narrative of the following Nights. Moreover, the weaving imagery used as a specifically feminine evil activity only appears in arguably late portions of The Four Zoas and thus would add to the evidence that this text on pages 5-6 is relatively late.

Lines 4:12-15, 16-17, 27-41, 5:13, 15, 20-22 and 6:27-31, apparently all added at the time of Blake's work on Jerusalem, seem significantly later than the preceding phase of rewriting. They introduce the ideas of sin and repentance common in Jerusalem but found only in the added pages 86–90 of The Four Zoas. Moreover, this language of sin and repentance is further allied with feminine delusiveness and weaving imagery—Enion states, "I thought to weave a Covering [from] < for > my Sins from wrath of Tharmas" (6:38) —as it is in Milton and Jerusalem. Blake also revised specific lines in his earlier text to include these new ideas of sin and repentance. "Jealous Despair" becomes "Silent Contrition" in 4:10 and the "Seas of Trouble & rocks of sorrow" become "Seas of < Doubt > & rocks of < Repentance >" in 5:51. Furthermore, Blake changed "false woven bliss" to "Repentance & Contrition" in 5:28.

Throughout these two phases of revision, however, the source of Tharmas and Enion's strife shifts at least three times, and as it shifts, so does the characterization of Tharmas and Enion. In the first stage, strife exists solely between Tharmas and Enion with no third party involved. Moreover, Tharmas is clearly the oppressor of Enion. Tharmas, in the earliest surviving reading of lines 10-11 on page 4, states, "I have hidden thee Enion in Jealous Despair / I will build thee a Labyrinth where we
may remain for ever alone. ” These lines begin a story of Tharmas’ jealousy and possessiveness that prepares for his later appearance as the domineering Spectre with Enion as his victim. Enion’s response, after their initial argument, is to weave “A tabernacle of delight” (5:7) which entraps Tharmas, but there is no suggestion that she weaves it for Enitharmon or Jerusalem, as later revisions show.

While modifying the first phase of rewriting pages 4 through 7, Blake complicates the Tharmas-Enion conflict by the addition of Enitharmon as a source of strife. Enitharmon’s presence in the story gives an external object for the story of jealousy. As a result, blame for strife in the Tharmas-Enion relationship shifts over to Enion. Blake revises Tharmas’ opening speech to read

I have hidden <Enitharmon> in Jealous Despair
O Pity Me
I will build thee a Labyrinth <also O pity me O
Enion>
<Why hast thou taken Enitharmon from my inmost
Soul
Let her Lay secret in the Soft recess of darkness
& silence
It is not Love I bear to Enitharmon It is Pity
She hath taken refuge in my bosom & I cannot cast
her out >

(4:10–15)

In revision Blake brings out the pitying quality that Tharmas is generally noted for but that was virtually nonexistent in the first stage of revision. The cry for pity, even the wrong kind of pity, tends to make Tharmas a little more sympathetic; at the same time, Enion’s jealousy towards Enitharmon may now qualify our sympathy for her.

The myth, as told here, is elaborated in one of the last additions to Night I and indeed the entire poem. On page 22, thought by Bentley to be added sometime after 1805 and the transcription of Night VIII (B 165), Blake tells of Urthona’s experience of the fall and how

dividing from his aking bosom fled
A portion of his life shrieking upon the wind she
fled
And Tharmas took her in pitying Then Enion in
jealous fear
Murderd her & hid her in her bosom embalming her
for fear
She should arise again to life Embalmd in Enions
bosom
Enitharmon remains a corsse such thing was never
known
<In Eden that one died a death never to be
revivd >

(22:20–26)

Blake had used the idea of the love triangle as early as The Visions of the Daughters of Albion, but this mythic mode of expressing it was part of a later development. In particular, the interchangeable nature of the female Emanation, fleeing from one Zoa to seek refuge with another, is a later development very important to Milton and Jerusalem. Before the composition of The Four Zoas, Blake had written of Enitharmon splitting from Los’ side or of Ahania “Cast out from thy [Urizen’s] lovelv bosom” (Book of Ahania 5:40; E 90), but he had not yet fully developed the idea that Emanations could leave one male figure’s bosom and enter another. Not until Jerusalem does Blake present the most highly developed explication of the Emanative function:

When in Eternity Man converses with Man they enter
Into each others Bosom (which are Universes of
delight)
In mutual interchange. and first their Emanations
meet
Surrounded by their Children. if they embrace &
comingle
The Human Four-fold Forms mingle also in thunders
of Intellect
But if the Emanations mingle not; with storms &
agitations
Of earthquakes & consuming fires they roll apart
in fear
For Man cannot unite with Man but by their
Emanations
Which stand both Male & Female at the Gates of
each Humanity.

(788:3–11; E 246)

In the Lambeth books, after leaving the male source, the female Emanation either becomes highly assertive over the male, as Enitharmon ultimately does or, like Ahania, becomes “a faint shadow wandring / . . . / As the moon anguishd circles the earth” (Book of Ahania 2:38, 40; E 85). There is never any mention of one Emanation fleeing into the bosom of a male figure who is not her place of origin (e.g., Enitharmon entering Urizen’s bosom or Ahania fleeing to Los).

As Blake revises the story of Tharmas and Enion, he connects the source of their strife to a breakdown in the free movement of Emanations. At the end of Tharmas’ opening speech, Blake adds, “The Men have received their death wounds & their Emanations are fled / ‘To me for refuge & I cannot turn them out for Pitys Sake’” (4:16–17). Blake anticipates (or repeats?) his own idea developed in Jerusalem that Jerusalem herself is an Emanation comprised of the Emanations of all men just as Albion is seen as the composite form of the human imagination. Thus the “Emanations” which flee to Thar-
mas for refuge are symbolized by the figure of Jerusalem who hides in Tharmas’ bosom. We see here that Tharmas has begun to take on a fairly significant role as the repository of the creative emanative power of humanity which survives the fall. Unfortunately, Tharmas’ secretive and deceptive protection of these Emanations demonstrates that his attitudes to the emanative process are perverted by the fall. By hiding these Emanations, he begins separating himself from his own Emanation and falls further into the chaos of fallen existence.

Yet the idea that Tharmas acts as a repository for man’s redemptive Emanations suggests that Blake saw him as an increasingly important figure or quality to be tapped in the process of undoing the effects of the fall. The Circle of Destiny is composed, at least in part, from the fibers of his being, and although it may be a constraining force of destiny, it does help put a limit to the chaos existing at the beginning of the poem. Moreover, when Tharmas reemerges from the chaos resulting from the collapse of Urizen’s world in Night IV, he is instrumental in initiating the reconstruction of the collapsed universe. Ultimately, Tharmas, along with the Spectre of Urthona, infuses power into Los which enables him to tear down the sun and moon, bringing about the Last Judgement (107:32-35). These features point to Tharmas’ potential importance in the poem as the “Parent Power,” as a kind of encompassing form, central to the substructure of the poem’s mythology. Blake was later able to exploit these features in the revisions to Night I, making Tharmas a figure containing the seeds of destruction and recreation. These changes seem designed to make him an increasingly more central figure.

In the basic development of female-male relationships, however, many elements of the Enion-Tharmas story as Blake revises it in pages 3–7 resemble the interactions in the notebook poem, “My Spectre around me night & day,”16 and “The Mental Traveller” of the 1800–04 period.17 In “My Spectre around me,” the Spectre, like Tharmas, complains that his Emanation, like Enion, murders his sweet Loves and seems to have the power of life or death over them and him: he pleads

When wilt thou return & view
My loves & them to life renew
When wilt thou return & live
When wilt thou pity as I forgive. (29–32; E 476)

The note of lament for the absent loved one who causes such pain is also typical of Tharmas’ complaints. Further, the counter accusations of sin by Tharmas (6:29–31) and Enion (4:27–41) are paralleled in what appears to be a postscript to “My Spectre around me”:

| Oer my Sins Thou sit & moan
| Hast thou no Sins of thy own
| Oer my Sins thou sit & weep
| And lull thy own Sins fast asleep. |

(1–4; E 477)

In addition, Enion resembles the “Woman Old” of “The Mental Traveller”—a poem written in the same period as “My Spectre” and which describes a similar relationship—who binds her love and

Her fingers number every Nerve
Just as a Miser counts his gold
She lives upon his shrieks & cries
And she grows young as he grows old.

(17–20; E 484)

Enion torments Tharmas in similar terms:

In [dismal] gnawing pain drawn out by her loved fingers every nerve
She counted, every vein & lacteal threading them among
Her woof of terror. Terrified & drinking tears of woe
Shuddring she wove nine days & nights Sleepless
her food was tears

A Frowning Continent appeard Where Enion in the desart
Terrified in her own Creation viewing her woven shadow
Sat in a sweet intoxication of false woven bliss.

(5:16-19, 26–28)

Only the added note of terror differentiates the picture of Enion from that of the “Woman Old”; yet the “sweet intoxication” of her actions seems to mitigate Enion’s terror. Thus, it appears that the changing face of the Tharmas-Enion story is linked to a widespread development in Blake’s presentation of the male-female conflict in terms of what he would ultimately depict between the Spectre and Female Will. Although his latest revisions were not thoroughly consistent, Blake eventually replaced “Enitharmon” with “Jerusalem” in Tharmas’ opening speech. It seems probable that Blake made this change around the time he added the ideas of language of Sin and Repentance to his text. The concurrence of these additions is by no means certain; however, their thematic congruency could not be overlooked by Blake.
Throughout these lines, we see Blake developing the most negative aspects of the Spectre which he later called Thus, he decides “In my jealous wings / I evermore will hold thee when thou goest out or comest in” (15-16).

In her first speech in this section (5:46-55, 57), Enion repents of weaving Tharmas into a Spectre, an act in which “Love is changed to deadly Hate” (48) and laments the feeling that her “Soul has lost its splendor & a brooding Fear / Shadows me o'er & drives me outward to a world of woe” (53-54). Following the description of Tharmas’ “self admiring raptures,” Enion laments her solitude and calls out for Tharmas whom she does not recognize in his Spectre form (6:16-25). And finally, she repents for slaying Tharmas’ Emanations and defies the Spectre’s perceived temptation that she “murder my own soul & wipe my tears & smile” (6:36-7:11). In Blake’s rather patchy narrative here, it appears that the victimized Tharmas sinks beneath the waves of Enion’s “filmy Woof” (5:14) after turning “round the circle of Destiny” (5:11). This “innocent” Tharmas does not reappear until pages 43–44 where he arises from the watery ruin of Urizen’s world. Enion, through her weaving, draws out the Spectre of Tharmas from the nerves and veins of the innocent Tharmas. The narrative then follows the Spectre’s rape of Enion, after which he seems to disappear from the narrative. Blake leaves some clues suggesting that, in mingling with Enion, the Spectre becomes one with her in a perverse attempt to dominate and at the same time unify with her. His influence continues in the birth of Los and Enitharmon and the “Spectrous Life” (9:4) they draw from Enion. Ultimately, this spectrous quality would seem to emerge in the Spectre of Urthona. In a sense, this chronicle reinforces the connection between Tharmas and Urthona as brothers in Eternity and allies in the war against Urizen while trapped in the fallen world. Again, the revisions of these opening pages make Tharmas a more central figure. In his Spectre form, he stands as the starting point for the spectrous qualities which enter the fallen world.

Blake seems uncertain, however, about the degree of malevolence to attribute to the Spectre of Tharmas. Like the Spectre of Urthona — perhaps the first use of the idea of a Spectre — the Spectre of Tharmas arises as the product of sexual dissension and division, a perverted dopplegänger for an eternal identity, and represents a
spirit of despair and self-destruction. In particular, the Spectre of Tharmas seems an inversion of Tharmas' unanswered desire for pity into a tyrannical attempt to instill terror and dominate or destroy the appearance of weakness in others, especially Enion. This entirely negative presentation of the Spectre seems more in keeping with the bat-winged, devouring figure in Jerusalem and lacks the potentially redemptive memory of eternity that we see in the Spectre of Urthona in Night VIIa. Thus at some point, Blake sought to moderate this confrontation of extremes and deleted all of the above passages with grey wash, diagonal ink strokes or both. The result of this deletion was to neutralize the characterization of Tharmas somewhat and to confine his violent nature to the union with Enion (7:21-26). But another problem arises as a result of such extensive deletions. Enion has now lost much of the sympathetic quality that her laments gave her, and the keynote of her repentance is entirely lost. She is now merely a character acting out of sorrow and terror, weaving her lover into a terrible Spectre. Therefore, Blake may have decided to circle certain passages to be readmitted to the final version of Night I.

At one time the ink circles around certain passages on pages 5, 6 and 7 were seen as part of Blake's process of deletion, but Andrew Lincoln has demonstrated that these circles were actually used by Blake to set off material that was to be saved from the mass of deletions on the page and that Blake had added to these passages after they were struck out and circled. Blake leaves the passage concerning Tharmas' "self admiring raptures" deleted, possibly because the line preceding it—"Glorying in his own eyes Exalted in terrific Pride" (6:8)—carries the essential significance of the 7 deleted lines (6:9-15). Blake also leaves out the previously deleted passage in which Tharmas condemns Enion as a temptress (7:12-17). This passage is useful in offering a clear explanation for Tharmas' violent attack, but perhaps Blake felt that the venom in the one passage he returned to the text was strong enough to get his point across. Thus, Tharmas' rebuke of Enion and his proclamation of himself as a god of moral purity over her tortured soul (6:26-35) is circled in order to be retained for a later version of the poem. The modified version of these lines (6:26-27, 29-35) expands Tharmas' accusation that Enion is a "sinful Woman" (the deleted line 7:12), and perhaps this is another partial explanation for leaving 7:12-17 deleted. Further, Blake probably retained these lines because they present an essential expression of the Spectre of Tharmas' character and also because they establish an aspiration to godhood and moral purity that is characteristic of Tharmas and the rest of the Zoas and increasingly becomes a central concern for Blake. In these respects, this passage seems to supersede the characterization developed in the passages which Blake did not circle to retain for later use.

Of the three Enion passages, Blake circled two and left the other one deleted. He retains most of Enion's first lament, "What have I done . . . accursed wretch! What deed . . ." (5:46-57), but drops the last two lines. This passage is of importance in returning the sympathetic and lamenting quality to Enion. It establishes her realization of error that drives her "outward to a world of woe" (5:54) where she wanders throughout the course of the poem. Also, a modified form of the passage at the top of page 7 is retained in part as a continuation of the circled passage at the bottom of page 6 (Tharmas' assertion of godhood over Enion). "The final text at the top of page 7," argues Lincoln, "should probably include lines 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, & 11." This passage expands on the sense of realization within Enion about the murder of Tharmas' Emanations and adds a heightened pathos to her character with her realization "now I find that all those Emanations were my Childrens Souls / And I have murderd them with cruelty above atonement" (7:5-6). The depth of pathos here puts her characterization quite in line with that of her other laments at 17:2-18:7 and 35:1-36:13, and her sense of murder without atonement gives an added explanation for the fact that she never answers to Tharmas' call as she wanders in the "dark deep" (34:98).

This passage also strengthens Enion's connection with her mythological antecedent, Demeter, who wanders the earth in search of her child Persephone. Enion's laments show her wandering through a spiritual wasteland, lamenting for her surviving children who flee from her "cruelty into the desarts / Among wild beasts to roam" (7:7-8). Yet Blake goes beyond his Greek sources to depict a mother who drives all love from her life and thereby exiles her creative potential as represented by her offspring. Indeed, her own self-absorption creates children who draw away her own life and vitality. Blake, however, remains unwilling to condemn Enion whole-heartedly. The one passage Blake did not circle to be reclaimed (6:16-25) does not evoke the same degree of pathos as the two circled passages nor does it contain any statement of self-realization or repentance. Indeed, Enion seems to show less awareness in this than in the...
previous speech. This deleted passage is merely a lament in solitude and a call for Tharmas that does not really fill out the narrative. In fact, some confusion seems to remain in the setting, since Enion first stands “on the Rocks” before “her woven shadow glowing bright” (5:57), then hides “in the darksom Cave” (6:15) and then sits “among the Rocks” (6:22) and finally sleeps “in a Chasm of the Valley” (6:24). I may perhaps be seeking a greater degree of consistency here than Blake saw necessary; however, because of the deletion of the material around this passage, it does not seem that it could be easily refitted into the narrative at this point. Yet just as importantly, Blake could not logically undermine Enion’s laments at the ends of Nights I and II; she makes a central statement about the actual effect of the fall in these laments that is true not only for the world of the poem but also the failings in contemporary British life that Blake attacked throughout his career. The pathos in her laments represents the spirit of pathos shut out from the sublime at the fall.27

Throughout this process of revision, however, we can see a tendency in Blake’s writing, first, to fill out the symbolic and conceptual elements in his character and then revise these elements to fit the character they apply to. Thus, he works out the Spectre-like aspect of Tharmas to its fullest and then attempts to revise it in this case to limit the singular evil that the Tharmas character seems to take on. With Enion, Blake shifts the degree and expression of her pathos in relation to the ferocity of Tharmas. The result of such a process of revision seems to bring a balance between the two characters. Of course, the fact that Blake revised the opening of Night I long after he had already written most of the poem also means that he had to consider whether he should accommodate his revisions to make later appearances of Tharmas consistent. It is not clear whether he was wholly committed to abandoning the consistency necessary to the relatively linear narrative of The Four Zoas in favor of a more nonlinear form such as that used in Jerusalem.

IV

Although Blake worked extensively with the Tharmas-Enion story in Night I, I suspect that this painstaking work eventually contributed to his abandonment of the manuscript. It seems that Tharmas’ significance began to outstrip his role as one of the Four Zoas. Even as Blake elaborates on the identity of Tharmas, he develops him beyond the immediate needs of the narrative. In the poem’s narrative, he stands at the nodal point of the fall into the chaotic sea of time and space and acts as a source for the conditions of fallen existence. Enion’s weaving of Tharmas into the Circle of Destiny and the form of the Spectre suggests that Tharmas’ fall introduces fate and error. The weaving imagery also suggests Tharmas’ incarnation into the limitations of the physical body, while the notion that he holds the Emanation Jerusalem within suggests the potential for redemption of the body when it contains the City of God. These associations suggest that Tharmas is analogous to the universal human form of the One Man, Jesus Christ. Such associations give Tharmas a symbolic equivalence with Albion. Indeed, as he developed the Tharmas character more fully, while, at the same time, working on Jerusalem, Blake may have begun to transfer some of his characteristics to Albion. In the design on plate 25 of Jerusalem, Albion’s fibers, like Tharmas’, are drawn out by female figures to create the vegetated world. Also, Albion’s Spectre, like Tharmas’, emerges at the opening of the poem and moves to the west—Tharmas’ dark domain (4:6)—where he remains “a black Horror.” (J. 5:68; E 148). The influence of these Spectres symbolically overshadows events in their respective poems. Moreover, the action of Tharmas’ hiding Jerusalem “in the Soft recess of darkness & silence” (4:13) from Enion may be compared to Albion’s hiding of Jerusalem “in jealous fears” (J 4:33; E 147) “From the vision and fruition of the Holy-one” (J 4:17; E 146). In addition, lines addressed by Enion to Tharmas in The Four Zoas (4:18–21) are transferred to Jerusalem where they are spoken by Vala to Albion (J 22:1, 10–12; E 167).28 Of these lines, Paley remarks that “Although it cannot be proved that the traffic goes from FZ to J here, it seems as if Blake were quarrying material from his nearly abandoned Zoas myth for the later myth of Jerusalem and Albion.”29 The suggestion that Tharmas became a model for Blake’s development of Albion thus seems quite possible; the outcome of such revision would render Tharmas a redundant character in Jerusalem and explain his relative absence from that poem.

Yet the shifting portrayal of Tharmas, in particular, suggests that Blake conceived of his characters’ significances as more fluid than many critics have yet suggested. He seems more than willing to experiment freely with a character in a particular episode. Indeed, in the case of Tharmas, Blake seems to become obsessed with the scene before him, giving it a greater immediacy by straining certain attributes to their limits. Under this obsession, Blake relaxes concerns with narrative con-
sistency (whatever value that term may have to a poet who often undermines consistency) for the immediacy of effect. Yet with *The Four Zoas*, Blake seems again to modify the immediacy of a scene to fit with the consistency of the thematic whole. Blake perhaps felt uncertain about how to resolve the tension emerging in the revisions to *The Four Zoas* between a sequentially coherent and consistent narrative structure — what Donald Ault has called the “Newtonian” narrative — and a subversive-ly disjunctive and disruptive narrative — “anti-Newtonian,” in Ault’s terms.30 The Newtonian narrative is necessary in conveying a fixity of events which may be understood and interpreted by the reader. Interpretation of such narrative, however, involves a rational assemblage and comparison of events along a temporally and spatially limited schema, but the anti-Newtonian narrative offers expanded possibilities in educating the reader. The anti-Newtonian narrative, with its lack of explicitness and interpretive closure,31 exerts pressure on the reader, forcing him to use his own imaginative vision to unify rather than assemble potential meaning in the text. Blake found his answer to this tension in *Jerusalem*. In reading *Jerusalem*, we find that Blake seems to demonstrate that immediacy of scene is all; overall effect seems derived from the imaginative unification of disparate parts. Thus, meaning derives from an accretion of disjunctive parts rather than from a linear narrative imposed by the consistencies of time and space. In *The Four Zoas*, Blake still seems to feel a certain stress between sequential and disjunctive narratives and does yet not fully abandon one for the other. Perhaps the stress between these two forces caused additional delays in Blake’s work on the poem, and created fractures in the framework of his epic that he found he could never completely or satisfactorily repair.

3Tharmas and Enion seldom appear in Blake’s later writings. The *Concordance to the Writings of William Blake*, David V. Erdman, ed., 2 vols. (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1967) reveals that Tharmas and Enion’s names do not appear in Blake’s work before *Vala*, and they only appear infrequently in * Milton and Jerusalem*. Tharmas’ name appears 6 times in *Milton* and 11 times in *Jerusalem*. Enion’s, once in *Milton* and 6 times in *Jerusalem*. This absence may reflect Blake’s later change of focus to the struggle of specific universal characters such as Milton and Albion.


6All quotations from *Vala* or *The Four Zoas* are taken from Bentley’s facsimile. Quotations from Blake’s other works are taken from Erdman’s *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*. References to Erdman’s textual notes will be cited parenthetically by an E followed by the page number. Text in square brackets [thus] is that added by myself or Blake’s editors; italicized text in square brackets [thus] is that deleted by Blake; and angle brackets <> indicate text added by Blake. David Erdman and Cettino Tramontano Magni’s recently published edition of *The Four Zoas*: A Photographic Facsimile of the Manuscript with Commentary on the Illuminations (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1987) makes available a new photographic reproduction of the poem. While it offers a useful commentary on the designs in the poems, it does not, as the editors point out, comment extensively on the poem’s textual development:

—This opposition is played out more fully in Night IV where Tharmas enlists the help of Los to rebuild his watery world after the collapse of Urizen’s golden one. It should be remembered that Tharmas’ names do not appear in Blake’s later writings. They are taken from Jennerus; William Blake’s *Vala*: A Facsimile of the Manuscript, A Transcript of the Text and an E followed by the page number. Text in square brackets [thus] is that added by myself or Blake’s editors; italicized text in square brackets [thus] is that deleted by Blake; and angle brackets <> indicate text added by Blake. David Erdman and Cettino Tramontano Magni’s recently published edition of *The Four Zoas*: A Photographic Facsimile of the Manuscript with Commentary on the Illuminations (Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1987) makes available a new photographic reproduction of the poem. While it offers a useful commentary on the designs in the poems, it does not, as the editors point out, comment extensively on the poem’s textual development:

1Andrew Lincoln, “*The Four Zoas*: The Text of Pages 5, 6, & 7, Night the First,” *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 12 (1978): 91.


4I will return to this idea later in my essay, but for a more extensive discussion of nonlinear narrative in *The Four Zoas* see Donald Ault, “Re-Visioning *The Four Zoas*,” *Unnamed Forms: Blake and Textuality*, Nelson Hilton and Thomas A. Vogler, eds. (Berkeley: U of California P, 1986) 105–39. For a more detailed study of Ault’s argument, see his recent full-length study, *Narrative Unbound: Re-visioning William Blake’s *The Four Zoas* (Barrytown: Station Hill, 1987)* esp. 3–58. Because his approach is structural rather than developmental, it does not impinge directly on my approach to the evolution of the Tharmas-Enion conflict.

9Tharmas and Enion seldom appear in Blake’s later writings. The *Concordance to the Writings of William Blake*, David V. Erdman, ed., 2 vols. (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1967) reveals that Tharmas’ and Enion’s names do not appear in Blake’s work before *Vala*, and they only appear infrequently in *Milton and Jerusalem*. Tharmas’ name appears 6 times in *Milton* and 11 times in *Jerusalem*. Enion’s, once in *Milton* and 6 times in *Jerusalem*. This absence may reflect Blake’s later change of focus to the struggle of specific universal characters such as Milton and Albion.

10Andrew Lincoln, “*The Four Zoas*” 91.


12I do have some reservations about 6:5–8 in this grouping. They appear to be written higher on the page than the erased portion of text on page 6 and may have been added slightly later than the other lines 1 have included here. This idea is supported by the narrative connection between 5:57 — “But standing on the Rocks her wov en shadow glowing bright” — and 6:11 — “Searching for glory wishing that the heavens had eyes to See.” Perhaps, then, the text on page 6 during this phase of rewriting began at line 6:11; however, lines 6:5–8 have little that would characterize them as distinctly later than the rest of this phase of rewriting. Presumably, they were added much earlier than the other obvious additions to pages 3–6.
on Jerusalem. was well into work Spectre of Tharmas until after much of Vala was transcribed, and he (Berkeley: U of California P, 1983) 151.

...as follows (the undeleted form of these lines is based on Lincoln's argument enough information to state clearly which Tharmas Blake meant...)

...perhaps the latest addition to the entire poem.

...Blake also mentions the "World of Tharmas" at 33:6. This passage, as part of the early copperplate text, does not contain enough information to state clearly which Tharmas Blake meant here; however, the later narrative context created after the revisions to Night I suggests a logical connection with the innocent Tharmas trapped beneath the waves until he arises in Night III.

...Blake wrote of the sublime and the pathos at the fall:

Possibly, Blake began to see Tharmas and Enion's relationship as an icon of the situation represented by these lines and continued to revise it accordingly in late stages of revising pages 4–7. Tharmas and Enion, as the Sublime and the Pathos, are fixed and separated by virtue of the Spectrous power emerging from mutual distrust and jealousy over Tharmas' relationship with Jerusalem.

...Blake's Four Zoas: The Design of a Dream (Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1978) 74, point out that in Night III, "Urizen's insistence that Ahania is 'diminutive' repeats the pattern of Tharmas's rejection of Enion in Night I; in both instances a domineering character projects his own smallness or sense of it onto his more passive partner." In a note to this discussion, Wilkie and Johnson (268) suggest that 6:27 (and the remaining portion of this deleted passage), in particular, may have been reinstated to strengthen the parallels between the Tharmas-Enion and Urizen-Ahania stories.

...Lincoln, "The Four Zoas" 95.

...Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1969) 279, notes this correspondence between Demeter and Enion. See also Judith Lee, "Ways of Their Own: The Emanations of Blake's Vala or The Four Zoas," ELH, 50 (1983): 134, for a more detailed discussion of this correspondence. Note that Blake strengthened these associations in additions to the poem which show that Enion's lament, at least in part, may be traced to her children, Los and Enitharmon, who draw life and vitality from their parent "And then they wandered far away she sought for them in vain / In weeping blindness stumbling she followed them o'er rocks & mountains" (91–2).

...In a unique version of the frontispiece to Jerusalem (see Geoffrey Keynes, "New Lines from Jerusalem," Blake Studies: Essays on His Life and Work, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971) 115–17, Blake wrote of the sublime and the pathos at the fall:

His [Albion's] Sublime & Pathos become Two Rocks fixed in the Earth
His Reason his Spectrous Power, covers them above Jerusalem his Emanation is a Stone laying beneath O [Albion behold Pitying] behold the Vision of Albion.

(J 1:4–7:144)

...Blake began to see Tharmas and Enion's relationship as an icon of the situation represented by these lines and continued to revise it accordingly in late stages of revising pages 4–7. Tharmas and Enion, as the Sublime and the Pathos, are fixed and separated by virtue of the Spectrous power emerging from mutual distrust and jealousy over Tharmas' relationship with Jerusalem.


...Paley, The Continuing City 80.

...Ault, "Re-Visioning The Four Zoas" 105–9.

...Ault, "Re-Visioning The Four Zoas" 108, sees an "open narrative field in which the past is not closed and complete but open—unfinished and revisable" as one of the prime elements of the anti-Newtonian narrative.
Reviewed by G. E. Bentley, Jr.

This facsimile has been a surprising number of years in gestation, for it was in effect commissioned by Sir Geoffrey Keynes (d. 1982) and Arnold Fawcus (d. 1979) as a continuation of the Blake Trust series of facsimiles. For unexplained reasons, "it fell to the Institute [of *Traditional Science*] to take the work soon after its conception and bring it to completion" (viii). The manuscript in the Fitzwilliam Museum has never been reproduced in its entirety before; it is the longest and most important piece of writing by Blake which has been thus neglected.

The virtues of this edition are all conservative. The reproduction of the manuscript is excellent—true size, on fine wove paper not unlike Blake's, in remarkably faithful color rather than in black and white. The transcription builds carefully upon the accomplishments of its predecessors and extends them a little, and the introduction (3–26) and annotations (67–99) cull the best of what has been written about the *Island in the Moon*. These are great and worthy virtues.

Occasionally the repetitions of the discoveries of the past are somewhat uncritical. Thus the character called "Aradobo, the dean of Morocco" is

conjectured [by Erdman, pp. 507–8] to be one of the sons of William Edwards of Halifax, famous for his Morocco bindings . . . . In 1784, James, thirty, and John, twenty-eight, opened their bookshop at 102 Pall Mall, evidently innovating the exhibition sale room, for which 'Descriptive Catalogues' were issued. (72)

James Edwards (1756–1816) was 27 or 28 (not "thirty") when he moved to London in 1784, and his brother John (23 December 1758–1793) was 25 (not "twenty-eight"). From the Edwards's bookshops at 102 Pall Mall (1784–93) and 77 Pall Mall (1793–1800), shop catalogues of antiquarian books were issued in January 1785, May 1787, 1789, 1790, 1794, and 1796, and they were called either merely *A Catalogue* (1787, 1789, 1794, 1796) or *Edwards's Catalogue* (1785, 1790) and never "Descriptive Catalogue" (like Blake's *Descriptive Catalogue* of 1809). And there seems to be no evidence at all that any of the Edwardses had an "exhibition sale room" in Lon-
don, as did their great rivals in illustrated-book publishing John Boydell, Thomas Macklin, and Robert Bowyer. More important, the branches of the firm of Edwards of Halifax were indeed famous for bindings, but their fame was not based upon morocco bindings. The three styles of bookcover decoration for which the Edwardses of Halifax were particularly known were: (1) their patented method of painting under transparent vellum on the covers; (2) "Etruscan calf," with designs stained with acid (not gilt) on the boards in imitation of Etruscan vase paintings; (3) the fore-edges painted so that, when the leaves are fanned, a scene appears where the closed book shows only gilt or marbled edges. These three techniques were originated or renewed by the Edwardses of Halifax, and these are the ones remarked by contemporaries such as Horace Walpole, Mrs. Piozzi, and T. H. Horne (An Introduction to the Study of Bibliography [1814], I, 309). Of course, as professional bookbinders, they must have commissioned bindings in many materials, such as calf, vellum, goat (morocco), and sheep, but their fame was not particularly associated with morocco bindings, and today it may not be possible to identify any individual examples of a morocco binding as their work.

In short, if Aradobo, the dean of Morocco, is a bookbinder, there is no particular reason to identify him with any of the Edwardses of Halifax because of either their famous styles of binding or their known association with Blake at the time his Island in the Moon was written (1784).

The "Description" of the manuscript itself is brief, one paragraph on page 3, and somewhat strange. The watermark is not identified (fleur de lis with a shield and GR countermark), and there is no notice of the fact that the last leaf was sewn in separately, thus obscuring its relationship with the rest of the leaves. (Indeed, we are told that "The leaves are no longer conjugate, having at an early stage been mounted on guards for binding" [3], but this is not noted in Keynes's Bibliography [1921] or in Blake Books [1977], and one wonders what the evidence is for this "early stage.") There is no reference to the five other leaves with which the Island was bound or to the proofs of the Virgil woodcuts with them or to A. H. Palmer's statement about the provenance of the proofs. And it concludes "that the extant manuscript is complete, but lacking the missing sheet or sheets" after page 16 with an unknown amount of text. This seems to be an odd use of "complete" when the manuscript lacks an undefined amount of text. The Island would have distressed Aristotle because it seems to have a beginning and an end but no middle.

The notes to the transcription scrupulously compare the readings of Erdman (Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake [1982]) and Bentley (William Blake's Writings [1978]) with those given here, and, as an interested party, I have kept score as to who seems to be correct:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phillips</th>
<th>Erdman</th>
<th>Bentley</th>
<th>None of the Former</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In general, both Phillips and Erdman read deletions more confidently than I do—and most of these uncertainties are in deleted passages. Then there are half a dozen points at which the truth seems to be slightly different from what any of these worthies has printed, though the extent and significance of the disputed passages is generally not very great. Thus in chapter 5, line 3, we find:

Erdman, Bentley: Is Chatterton a Mathematician

Phillips: Is Chatterton a Mathematicum

The disputed word does indeed look more like "Mathematicum" than "Mathematician"—but it looks more like "Mathematicune" than either. Unfortunately, neither "Mathematicum" nor "Mathematicune" seems to make sense—neither is in the Oxford English Dictionary. Perhaps it would be best to give "Mathematican[]" here. In many small particulars Michael Phillips has improved the readings of the Island, and this is useful labor.

The annotations incorporate the best work of his predecessors and occasionally extend it as well. I do not remember seeing the operatic passage concluding: "And the Cellar goes down with a Step (Grand Chorus)" (ch. 9, l. 16) compared before to Shadwell's play The Virtuoso (1676) and Dryden's poem Mac Flecknoe (c. 1678) in which the protagonist-buffoon, instead of being translated to heaven, "drops to the cellar through a trapdoor." I'm not sure the analogy is a necessary one, but it has the virtue of making sense of a very puzzling passage. And the account of Steelyard the Lawgiver sitting at his table taking extracts in chapter 8 is usefully identified as "A burlesque of the opening of Act V, Scene i, of Joseph Addison's tragedy Cato (1713, pp. 56–7): 'Cato solus, sitting in a thoughtful Posture: In his Hand Plato's Book on the Immortality of the Soul, ' " for Addison's Cato is later quoted in Blake's manuscript. The song of innocence beginning "O father father where are you going" is connected intriguingly with the fact that "Blake's father died July 1784" (74, 80), for the Island is generally taken to have been written about 1784 or early
For that matter, it is not reproduced in its entirety now, for the original consists of a booklet of 32 pages, of which the first 17 bear the text and the last one has a drawing on it. Only the first 17 pages and the last 1 are reproduced; the 12 blank pages are not reproduced, and the work is therefore not, strictly speaking, a facsimile. Much reduced photographs of the text-pages of the Island are reproduced in William Blake, *En O Pâ Mânen*, ed. Göran Malmqvist (Uppsala, 1979) 133-149.
WILLIAM BLAKE'S Illustrations of the Book of JOB

THE PLATES
with an introduction and plate-by-plate commentary by Bo Lindberg

man and John Commander states, "a more extensive range of discussion, analysis and documentation" has been included. From the simplicity of the original idea this publication has become a multipart, complex production including not only the visual evidence, but also a profusion of analysis and description. For the scholar this has obvious advantages, but it also has two major disadvantages, particularly for the primary market for this publication, the Blake enthusiast.

First, there is no consistency of opinion throughout the publication; different theories as to order of execution and so on are put forward by the different authors. The preface somewhat disingenuously suggests that "this partly reflects the many-layered complexity of Blake's involvement with the Job theme and is also an acknowledgement that the range and depth of Blake studies can no longer be embraced by one scholar." The problem is at its greatest in connection with Keynes's introductory text on "The Development of the Job Designs." This was written some years before Keynes's death and indeed the main substance dates back to the great five-part publication of Illustrations to the Book of Job by William Blake edited by Keynes and Laurence Binyon in 1935, and subsequently republished with emendments in Blake Studies in 1971. The editors were faced with a difficult decision and in the end, "It was decided not to attempt to bring the text up to date but to leave it essentially unchanged. A few minor editorial alterations have been made . . . ." However, this has left not only contradictions between Keynes's text and what is written elsewhere in the publication but even contradictions within Keynes's text itself. On page 18, the date of the first, Thomas Butts set of watercolors, is brought back from the 1820s to the first decade of the nineteenth century but the subsequent text is left largely unaltered, leaving Keynes to suggest at the head of page 19 that, after a few early isolated depictions of subjects from the Book of Job, Blake did not set about "telling the story in his own way . . . . in the series of 'Inventions' until after his second spiritual rebirth following the dark days of 1810–18." On the other hand, it is not just for sentimental and nostalgic reasons that one is glad that Keynes's piece has been retained. There is a characteristic lightness of touch and sense of humor largely lacking from the writings of later writers on Blake, as in the juxtaposi-
tion of the transcription of the entries recording the sale of proofs to the King and to Josiah Taylor, the latter having been "sent to the House of Correction by F. Tatham, Taylor being St. [sent] H. of C. for swindling."

Much the most crucial result of the decision to submit the whole question of Blake's illustrations to the Book of Job to a thorough scholarly review is that it has proved impossible to suppress the doubts concerning the genuineness of the works that had already been printed in expensive color facsimile by the Trianon Press before Fawcus's death, the so-called New Zealand set, the Collins hand colored engravings, and the four hand colored plates in the Fitzwilliam Museum. By the time he died, Keynes must have been the only reputable Blake scholar still to insist on the authenticity of the New Zealand set; even Fawcus, who had previously been persuaded that they were genuine, had begun to have his doubts, which were later reinforced by his widow's researches. Other scholars had doubted them long before. The result is that this fine but expensive publication is largely taken up with what at the best can only be regarded as peripheral material, together with a scholarly apparatus that demonstrates just how peripheral it is. In fact the scholarly apparatus is perhaps almost too damning in its judgement on at least one group of the works.

To make things easier for the impecunious the Blake Trust has made 50 copies of the two main parts of this publication (each in its own box) available separately; however, the 22 deluxe copies and 250 of the standard copies can only be acquired both parts together. Nevertheless it will perhaps be helpful if this review continues with a discussion of the contents of the publication section by section so that people wanting to buy only one part will know what is involved.

The first box, devoted to William Blake's Illustrations to the Book of Job, contains two sections, one a book of most of the introductory texts, the other a box filled with a series of 22 fascicles each devoted to the various treatments of one composition in the series. The text volume starts with a select bibliography which also serves as a list of abbreviations, a page of acknowledgements written by Stephen Keynes, and a foreword, discussing the activities of the William Blake Trust, by Charles Ryskamp. This is followed by the preface by Bindman and Commander, already mentioned, which discusses and explains the complicated evolution of the publication. Then follows Keynes's essay on "The Development of the Job Designs."

The rest of this introductory text volume is required reading for the Blake scholar. It begins with an essay on "The Book of Job Designs from Butts series to final engravings" by Bindman, which discusses the evolution of the various series of illustrations and relates them to the evolution of Blake's thought. He starts by establishing the present view that the first set of watercolor illustrations for the Book of Job, those executed for Thomas Butts, were mainly done in the first decade of the nineteenth century rather than at the beginning of the 1820s, and that two of the series are later additions. One small addition can be made to his account of the stages by which this new dating was reached: in the 1971 second edition of my 1957 catalogue of the works by Blake in the Tate Gallery I had already suggested (see page 63) a dating of c. 1810. More important than the question of precedence however is the fact that Bindman makes sense of the redating in the context of Blake's changing opinions as between the first decade of the century and the Indian summer of Blake's last years. He also throws in the interesting speculation that the watercolor illustrations to the Bible, which seem to have immediately preceded the first series of illustrations to the Book of Job, were designed for an extra-illustrated volume. However, my own view is that the Bible watercolors, with their large inscriptions in a copperplate hand, were designed for display; the badly faded condition of many of these shows that they were so displayed and suffered from the ruinous effect of daylight.

Bindman's essay is followed by Essick's on "Blake's Engravings to the Book of Job: An Essay of their Graphic Form with a Catalogue of their States and Printings." This is as detailed and exhaustive as one would expect and includes a lot of new material including, for instance, the fact that glue spots on the reduced size drawings in the Fitzwilliam Museum show that they were actually stuck to the copperplates as an aid to their engraving. Again the factual examination of the evidence, in this case Blake's actual technique, is related to the wider issue of his artistic philosophy. Reading Essick's analysis of the difference between the various states of the engravings is laborious, but well worthwhile in that it gives an insight into Blake's working methods and attention to "minute particulars." One slight disadvantage is that the various sets of pre-publication proofs are not discussed in chronological order but by location, which makes it difficult to follow the progression through from one series of proofs to the next. However a hitherto unknown set of proofs in the University of Texas library is included and, most fascinating of all, there is an analysis, as full as the circumstances allow, of a set of proofs that was last recorded when sold in 1936 (this has already formed the subject of an article in Blake 19 (1985–6): 96–102). These last include evidence, not fully taken into account elsewhere in this publication, that even at this late stage Blake did not regard Job's act of worship in the first design as merely an act of uninspired conformity, an inscription in the margin at the
foot of the altar reading "Prayer to God is the Study of Imaginative Art." Only the fact that this set of proofs has now disappeared can account for the relative calm that has followed the publication of this revolutionary piece of information.

The final section of this first volume of text is that on "The Job designs; a Documentary and Bibliographical Record," compiled by Bryant with introductory notes by Bindman. This sets out all the Linnell accounts that relate to the publication of Job illustrations and includes fascinating short biographical notes on nearly every figure mentioned. These are especially full on lesser known figures and are made readily accessible through an index at the end. Only in amazingly few cases have the authors had to admit total failure in discovering anything about their subject. One small correction must be made: at the top of page 104 it is stated that three watercolors from the John Linnell set are not in the Fogg Art Museum; in fact one is in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, one is in a private collection in Paris, but the third, although parted at one stage from the rest of the Fogg Museum set when it passed through the collection of A. E. Newton, has now rejoined that set (Butlin no. 551 14).

In addition to the introductory volume of text, the first of these two joint publications contains a box of fascicules each containing monochrome reproductions of the various stages in the evolution of each composition in the series: the Butts watercolor, the John Linnell watercolor, the reduced-size Fitzwilliam Museum drawings and the final engraving, together with some of the related tempera paintings, watercolors or drawings, some proof engravings including all those with marginal sketches, and the corresponding composition from the New Zealand set of watercolors. There is an introductory folder containing "The Meaning of Blake's Job" by Lindberg, and each fascicule bears on the front of each folder a plate by plate commentary together with notes on previous interpretations by such writers as Wicksteed and S. Foster Damon. This commentary does not, perhaps thankfully, go into great interpretive detail but is more of a basic introduction of the kind found in earlier Blake Trust publications.

However, the long evolution of this publication has led to certain problems. In the first place Essick's researches have produced rather more states for some of the prints than were known when these fascicules were printed in the 1970s. The new information is available, but only in Essick's catalogue. The short list of contents on the inside of the enclosing page of each fascicule, printed at the same time as the rest, gives the earlier, incorrect information. Certain additional reproductions have been made since the first printing, and these are listed on the back of the introductory folder, but again not at the front of the appropriate fascicule.

More seriously, certain related works are omitted both from this collection of reproductions and indeed, so far as I can discover, from the text as a whole. The tempera painting related to plate 20, Job and his Daughters in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, is reproduced and mentioned in the text with the correct date of c. 1799-1800 (thus correcting the dating in the 1820s of William Rossetti and of Lindberg in his pioneering book on The Illustrations for the Book of Job, 1973). However, there is no mention at all, let alone a reproduction, of the Tate Gallery's tempera on panel of Satan smiting Job with sore Boils, surely the final summation of that composition. Similarly, of the three pencil and watercolor sketches that play an important part in the evolution of certain of the later versions of the composition (Butlin nos. 552, 553 and 556), that showing Job's Sacrifice in the City Art Gallery, Leeds, is mentioned but not reproduced (though there is an acknowledgement for permission to reproduce to the Leeds City Art Gallery). Only the recto of Every Man also gave him a piece of Money, a version of the upright variant of the composition, and now in the Tate Gallery, is reproduced, but not the recently discovered drawing on the reverse. This means that this collection of reproductions, in some ways the most useful part of the whole publication, is maddeningly incomplete; one still has to refer to other publications for certain works essential to the evolution of Blake's designs.

The second of these two joint publications, devoted to Colour versions of William Blake's Book of Job designs from the circle of John Linnell, consists of a large box containing a seventeen-page introduction by Lindberg on "The Authenticity of the New Zealand Set and of the Colour Engravings; Comparisons between the sets," together with the three sets of color facsimiles that were the original raison d'être of this publication: the so-called New Zealand set of watercolors, the size of the engravings though without the margins, including all the compositions together with the title page; the so-called Collins set of hand colored engravings, the complete set with title page; and the four hand colored engravings, of compositions 11, 15, 18 and 20, in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. These facsimiles are of the highest quality, hand colored through stencils by the pochoir process.

Lindberg's introduction is, to put it bluntly, a detailed and, in all but one case perhaps, a convincing demolition job on the authenticity of all three sets of works. In the case of the New Zealand set some of his arguments have been given before, as in his own 1973 publication on the Job illustrations; some are new and include observations made independently by Fawcus's widow Julie. Lindberg kindly acknowledges my contribution, which I can confirm was also arrived at indepen-
dently. Once again, to put the record straight, I should perhaps point out that my suspicions were voiced, if only by omission, in the second edition of my catalogue of the works by Blake in the Tate Gallery: in the first edition I had mentioned the New Zealand set among the authentic works of Blake, while in the second I omitted all reference to it. To sum up the arguments, in every case the New Zealand engravings prior to 1935. That of the colored by Blake himself, from which his wife or whoever made subsequent hand colored copies, it strikes me that Blake himself, whereas Lindberg convincingly places them within the circle of John Linnell and his sons and pupils whom Linnell is known to have instructed by having them copy works by Blake.

For the two sets of hand colored engravings the arguments are less technical and more based on the judgement of the eye. The coloring of both sets is closely related to that of the New Zealand set, as is convincingly demonstrated by Lindberg. Moreover, the hand colored engravings and the New Zealand set are closer to each other than they are to the Linnell set of watercolors. One technical argument against the authenticity of the hand colored engravings, like that of the New Zealand set, is that the coloring of Job’s three friends is wrong in compositions 15 and 18, but this argument is somewhat vitiated by the fact that Blake himself seems to have made a similar mistake in composition 16.

The very quality of the color facsimiles makes this reviewer doubt the almost overwhelming evidence produced by Lindberg, at least in the case of the four Fitzwilliam Museum prints. It is not really correct to say, as Lindberg does, that the coloring in plate 11 is paler because the work has faded, though this argument does perhaps apply in the case of plate 18. In each case, to my eye, the coloring of the Fitzwilliam Museum version is more sensitive than that in either the Collins set or the New Zealand series of watercolors. Given that it is at least arguable that in other cases of hand colored engravings of Blake compositions, for instance the Night Thoughts, there is at least one prime original hand colored by Blake himself, from which his wife or whoever made subsequent hand colored copies, it strikes me that the Fitzwilliam Museum prints could represent either the compositions surviving from a complete set or an incomplete set begun by Blake himself.

Unfortunately there is no provenance for the Fitzwilliam Museum engravings prior to 1935. That of the Collins engravings can be traced back to the middle of the nineteenth century and Lindberg has been able to supply new information about the history of the New Zealand set, two watercolors from which, it has been discovered, were exhibited at the Auckland Society of Arts in 1881 as being by William Blake. This attribution is clearly not enough in itself to authenticate the works. Lindberg dismisses another argument for the authenticity of the Collins set of hand colored engravings, that the monochrome engraving itself was deliberately printed paler to make the coloring more effective: as Linnell seems to have been responsible for much of the early printing, it could have been his intention that the works should be colored, or indeed, if I am correct in assuming that Blake himself was responsible for the Fitzwilliam Museum coloring, Blake himself could have intended the coloring but not actually executed it.

Only in one further, minor point would I wish to disagree with Lindberg’s most thorough analysis of the various problems connected with Blake’s illustrations to the Book of Job. Lindberg suggests that the two compositions added to the Thomas Butts set of watercolors, clearly in the 1820s, were done before the corresponding compositions in the John Linnell set; Bindman and myself hold that they were executed subsequent to the Linnell watercolors. In the case of composition 17, The Vision of Christ, Lindberg argues that the position of the three friends, facing the vision of Christ in the Butts watercolor, is reversed in all the other versions and that this reversal is subtler in effect, particularly in the final engraving. However it could well be that Blake, or perhaps his widow who may have finished at least the coloring of this watercolor, wanted to give Butts, an old patron, something rather different from what had been done for the much younger patron John Linnell. In the case of Job and his Daughters, composition 20, the two preliminary sketches (and significantly there are more such sketches for this composition than for most of the others) and the Linnell watercolor show Blake undecided as between setting his figures in a landscape or in an interior. In the final engraving he reverted to the solution of some 25 years earlier, the composition of the biblical tempera painting now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington. Rather than see the Butts watercolor as a stage in the evolution from a landscape setting towards an interior setting, I would suggest that the landscape solution of the Butts watercolor could again be a deliberate effort to distinguish his watercolor from the composition as evolved for John Linnell.

It is because of the excellence of the reproductions and the thoroughness of the scholarship, that one can argue over such detailed points. Access to the Collins set of hand colored engravings is not easy but I have been fortunate enough to see them in the past (and even more fortunate in being able to examine the Fitzwilliam Museum prints laid out on my own grand piano!). But the quality of the facsimiles, even unaided by memories of the originals, is so high that value judgments can be made to supplement the detailed arguments of the text. Whether the effort and expense is worth it one must leave to the customer. For the scholar of Blake’s work in
the visual arts, both publications will be essential. For somebody willing to be satisfied with the main core of Blake's achievement perhaps the first of the two publications will be sufficient, particularly if one has access to the 1935 Pierpont Morgan Library publication, which contains color facsimiles of the Butts and Linnell set of watercolors (only reproduced here in monochrome), and indeed of the New Zealand set, together with reproductions of the Fitzwilliam Museum drawings, many of the related sketches, and the final engravings.

DISCUSSION

with intellectual spears & long winged arrows of thought

An Island In The Moon
Michael Phillips

G. E. Bentley, Jr., has generously invited my comment on his review of the facsimile of William Blake's *An Island in the Moon*. The only aspect where I feel that it may be appropriate for me to do so is in answer to the questions he raises regarding the "Description" of the manuscript, as these questions may lead some readers to conclude that the edition may not present even a single watercolor, that it was first bound as separate folio leaves in the order given, with the leaf of sketches bound out of order, before the six blank leaves. The narrow inside margins of each of these leaves, of thin and quite brittle paper, showed evidence of being broken, and at the time, I understood this condition to indicate that each leaf had previously been mounted on a guard for binding. As Cockerell's description, "leaves overcast very close to the text," indicates that in fact each leaf had only been "overcast" and then sewn directly onto cords for binding. If any part of the manuscript had been conjugate this would have been noted and the full sheet preserved.

The surviving sixteen leaves contain an equal number of watermarks and countermarks. In this sense the extant manuscript is described as complete, in that what has survived represents eight complete sheets of the original gathering, each sheet containing a watermark and a countermark. However, in absolute terms, the "Description" also makes plain that at least one sheet is missing from the center of the gathering, indicated by the lacuna between the surviving eighth and ninth leaves of an otherwise consecutive text.

There remains the question of the other contents of the volume, as disbound by Cockerell. Understandably, Bentley associates these materials with the manuscript as they were bound together at the time of his inspection, and duly noted in *Blake Books*. As they bear upon the subject of the facsimile, a distinction was made: foremost, that no intrinsic relationship exists between the manuscript and the other materials that were at one time present in the same binding. A consideration was the binding itself and its history. Exactly when and for whom the binding was made could not be determined at the time, and remains unknown. What was clear, from the nature of the binding and its contents, was that the manuscript had only been placed together with the other materials some time after Blake's death.
The Fitzwilliam Museum has now been able to supply further information. The binding was by the firm of Rivière & Son; it contained the bookplate "FROM THE LIBRARY OF / CH. FAIRFAX MURRAY"; and it was in this binding that Charles Fairfax Murray presented the volume to the Fitzwilliam Museum in 1905. The firm of Rivière was started in Bath in 1829, changed to Rivière & Son in 1881, and ceased business in 1939. By 1893 the manuscript belonged to Charles Fairfax Murray, as acknowledged by Ellis and Yeats in their edition of Blake published that year. Their description does not make clear whether the manuscript is bound. Nor does that of John Sampson published in 1905, which is based upon an inspection of the manuscript while it was still in Fairfax Murray's possession. Neither Ellis and Yeats, nor Sampson, make reference to the other materials. It would seem likely therefore that these materials, including the manuscript, were gathered together by Charles Fairfax Murray and bound for him by Rivière & Son, certainly not later than 1905 and possibly, specifically for presentation to the Fitzwilliam Museum.

I hope this clarifies any misunderstanding and assures those who may use the edition. It should perhaps be added that it was for reasons of economy that the six blank leaves which survive, and which were originally conjugate with the leaves of Blake's manuscript, were not reproduced in facsimile. These leaves are clearly referred to in the "Description."