

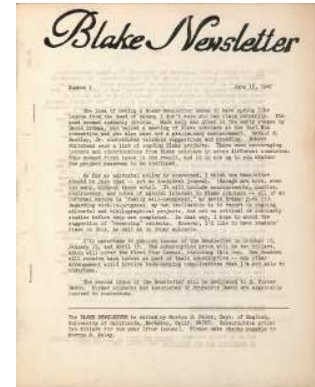
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N O T E

Blake's parody of a couplet from Dryden's
Absalom and Achitophel

Robert P. Kolker

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NOTES

From Professor W. H. Stevenson, University of Ibadan, Nigeria:

1. Dura (Jerusalem 90:62) is probably Jura. The Gaelic spelling is Dhura; the island is famous for its rocky sea-caves.
2. No-one seems to have noticed that the Countess of Egremont to whom Blake dedicated his Vision of the Last Judgement did not exist, according to the Peerages and standard biographies! In fact, the Earl married secretly a woman he had lived with for some time. She was not publicly acknowledged as Countess, but she did exist.
3. Cratelos (Erdman-Bloom p. 493, Keyens '57 p. 555) should read Cratetos: the verses are a translation from the Creek of Crates of Thebes, via Stobaeus' Anthology.

From Robert P. Kolker, Columbia University:

In his annotations to the Dedication to the King section of Reynold's Discourses, Blake parodies a couplet which Malone attributes to Pope. The couplet is 'They led their wild desires to woods and caves, / And thought that all but SAVAGES were slaves.' Blake's parody is 'When France got free Europe 'twixt Fools & Knaves / Were Savage firt to France, & after; Slaves.' Both Keynes and Erdman keep Malone's original attribution which is, as it turns out, incorrect. The couplet is not from Pope, but from Dryden's Absalom and Achitophel, lines 55-56.

From Mrs. Suzanne R. Hoover, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Mass.:

References to Blake in print in the 1790's are so rare that virtually any item, however slight, is of interest to us today. It should therefore be noted that the British Critic for November 1796 (VIII, 536-540) reviewed a work with engravings by Blake: Captain John Steadman's Narrative, of a five years' expedition, against the Revolted Negroes of Surinam. (Another review, of an Englished edition of Burger's Leonore with three plates by Blake, appeared in the British Critic two months earlier and is listed in the Bentley and Nurmi Blake Bibliography, pp. 5, 230).

Blake had engraved at least thirteen, and possibly sixteen, of Steadman's eighty-six designs for his book. (For the attribution of three unsigned plates to Blake, see Bentley and Nurmi, p. 159). The reviewer for the November, 1796, British Critic was on the whole pleased with the text, but thought the plates "very unequal; some would do honour to the most elegant, whilst others would disgrace the meanest, performances." As in