

AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY  
**BLAKE**

N O T E

Two Problems in The Four Zoas (continued)

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Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 1, Issue 4, March 15, 1968, pp. 6-8



## NOTES

### 1. TWO PROBLEMS IN THE FOUR ZOAS (continued)

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My second problem is the place of VIIb, if any. The argument here is well known; is VIIb earlier than VIIa, contemporary, or later? More important; was it rejected or not? On the first question, my conclusions tie in with Margoliouth's - that VIIb is of the same period as the first, early part of VIIa, and consecutive upon it; and that the later part of VIIa, from the middle of p.85, is an insertion, or a series of insertions, between p.85: 25 and VIIb. The famous stitch-marks, which end at p.85 (not counting the tail-piece design, now p.112) fit this theory, though they do not confirm it. Margoliouth says (Vala, p.xiii) "But when the accretions have been removed and VIIb\* printed in Blake's original order (i.e. as on the MS, beginning on p.91, "Thus in the Caverns of the Grave... .. it appears that VIIb follows straight on VIIa". That is to say: VIIa ended when (85:6-7) "Enitharmon's Shadow pregnant in the deeps beneath/Brought forth a wonder horrible", a "nameless shadowy" female - Vala, in fact (p.91:14) - who is given "Charge over the howling Orc" (85:22). Night VIIb continues this scene - "The Shadow reard her dismal head over the flaming youth" (p.91:3). (It may be noted that Blake here follows his usual technique of changing a scene, not as the Night begins, but soon afterwards. Nights IV to VIIa all begin with the scene of the previous Night, though sometimes this is obscured by the ending of a Night with a lament, so that the actual setting is to be found some little way back.)

The real question, however, is: Did Blake reject VIIb when he enlarged VIIa? The new VIIa ends with the reconciled Los and Enitharmon working together to redeem the dead; VIII now begins with this (after a few lines, not entirely detached, about the Council of God); and my argument in the last paragraph may be taken to apply here also. On the other hand, there is the simple fact that, although large parts of I are clearly cancelled, Blake left VIIb in the MS, and still unmarked. If he had wished to reject VIIb nothing would have been easier than to remove the four sheets and either throw them away (as presumably the very first drafts of the poem were thrown away) or put them somewhere separate. That they are still with the MS suggests that, though they might have been an embarrassment, he had not determined to reject them. At any rate, we must be very sure of our ground before we reject them on his behalf.

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\* I have altered H.M.M.'s VII and VIIbis to conform with the now accepted labelling.

I suspect that the beginning of VIII, as it now is, forms an attempt to reconcile the new narrative of the end of VIIa and the old of VIIb. The old narrative was simple; the "nameless shadowy female" - named as Vala - produces Orc's release, and a war ensues which covers the rest of VIIb and most of VIII, resulting in the collapse of all the warring powers in a stupor and the triumph of Vala, whose subtlety has undermined the vast structure of Urizen's power. But Blake's interest has been taken by other matters, as the additions show. In VIII these are various and complex, developing the theme of the Council of God and its guidance of the catastrophic situation through the confrontation of the forces of evil by Jesus. In VIIa, which more closely concerns us, the new interest is the study of Los and Enitharmon. They have quarrelled ever since I, although half-reconciled in V: but in the new VIIa, helped by the benevolent Spectre of Urthona, their reconciliation is complete and therefore manifests itself in new and wonderful powers. They are privileged together to take part in the redemption of the dead, a work which is going on even when the war of Urizen and Orc - for which Los and Enitharmon have no little responsibility - is coming to its tragic climax.

The present beginning of VIII shows what seem to me deliberate attempts to introduce both the old and new elements. VIIb now ends with twelve lines about the Daughters of Beulah. (It is interesting but irrelevant to this question, to note that these lines, though apparently of the same date as the added lines at IV, p.55:10 to 56:27, are an original part of this MS. This should stand as a warning, to those inclined to presuppose a "non-Christian" MS with "Christian" additions, and those inclined to assume that similar themes mean passages of similar date, that the matter is not as simple as it may seem.) The beginning of VIII contains the following references specifically to VIIb: line 3, "Upon the Limit of Contraction" (ref.VIIb 95:13, "Limit of Translucence"; Blake is naming both Limits, as he usually does, together). Line 4, "The Fallen Man stretchd like a Corse" is of course part of Blake's whole later myth, but is also relevant to the "Promise Divine" of the Lazarus story (John 11:23) referred to in VIIb, 95:4-8. Line 20: the "Shadowy female" barely appears in VIIa and is not so named until VIIb. Line 21, "the Daughters of Beulah" are not mentioned in VIIa or, indeed, anywhere between IV and the end of VIIb. The descent of the dead "away from" them is derived from the end of VIIb, 95:10-11. Line 22: "Urizens temple" was erected in VIIb, 95:31ff. Finally, 100:1, "the War of Urizen & Tharmas" broke out in VIIb. It is indeed mentioned in the last lines of VIIa (90:29,44,59); yet this can only be a slip of memory on Blake's part, since he had not started the war in VIIa - the threat at the end of VI evaporated.

Thus VIII in its late form is clearly connected to VIIb. It is equally clearly connected to the new end of VIIa, which makes me think that Blake was deliberately trying to reconcile the two states of the narrative. VIII, 99:15 brings back the scene at the end of VIIa where Los and Enitharmon are working together to redeem and remake "the spectrous dead". 99:19-20, already referred to, brings together VIIb (as shown above) and the work of Los and Enitharmon with the dead. 99:24 refers to "The broken heart Gate of Enitharmon from VIIa 85:13 and 87:41-2; this is an essential part of the story

since the shattering of the "obdurate gates" made Enitharmon capable of love and sympathy so that she could join Los's work (VIIa 87: 40-45, 90:6, VIII, 99:22-27). In p.100 the material of the end of VIIa and the end of VIIb - Enitharmon and the Daughters of Beulah - is mixed and intertwined. As the Night goes on into p.101 the mixture extends to include material from the whole of Nights VIIa and VIIb.

Thus I conclude that Blake had decided to keep VIIb somehow; but had not solved the problem of the quart of inspiration and the pint pot of nine Nights. The numbering of the Nights was, after all the least of his problems.

## 2. Blake's Terrible Ease!

David V. Erdman

Through an accident of photographic ordering, a second infra-red print of Notebook page 5 has come from the B.M. (in connection with preparations for a new facsimile edition, still some years off); and on this page the bottom lines are surprisingly darker and more legible than had seemed possible from earlier infra and other photographs. One can, in fact, see everything, i.e. complete lines of squiggle for words; the writing is Blake at his unsteady (he was probably writing on one knee); and it is now possible to be well nigh definitive in the reading of these deathless lines. (Doubleday pp. 491-2; 781)

I can see now that the apparently random pair of scratches at the bottom of the page are intended to cancel lines 31-32, to be replaced by lines 33-34-- with what can be now read as the same rhyme words. Page 492 in a new printing will thus be emended to conclude:

From pity then he redend round  
And the Spell removed unwound  
If Blake could do this when he rose up from shite  
What might he not do if he sat down to write

The textual notes on p. 781 will read:

29 From pity then] Then after 1st rdg del "Then" was mended to "From", "after" was canceled, "pity then" was written above the line; in a faint photograph of this very rubbed pencil page, at one time the outside page of the Notebook, the "pi" looks like a "B", and "then" combining with the ascending stroke of "he" looks like "thing" or "shing" (thus "Blushing" in my earlier (reading). In a better photograph this and the following lines are distinctly legible.

30 removed] inserted above the line

31 rose up from] sat down to 1st rdg del

31-32 written in margin to replace the following two lines, cancelled with two slanting strokes:

If thus Blake could Shite  
What Klopstock did write