

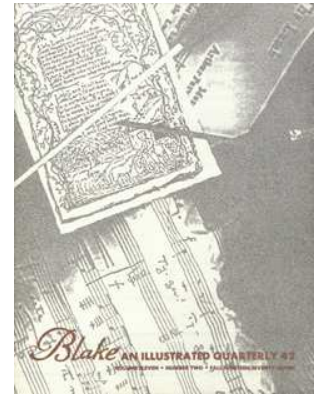
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A R T I C L E

Blake and Zoroastrianism

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BLAKE AND ZOROASTRIANISM

MARY JACKSON

There is considerable evidence that Blake was influenced by Zoroastrian and Mithraic iconography in several illuminations for his and others' poetry. When one compares the figures of god and *daeva* with Blake's drawings and engravings, the sheer number of parallels argues convincingly for some form of influence. Were there no other data than this to prove that Blake may have incorporated elements of representations of the bull-slaying ritual, of Arimanes or Ahriman, god of dark, and Ormazd, god of light, into his visual art, the evidence would seem persuasive. Fortunately, there is a good deal of external evidence to substantiate the case for direct sources. To begin with, we have Blake's own testimony in *A Descriptive Catalogue* of 1809. In his discussion of the spiritual form of Pitt guiding Behemoth, Blake asserts:

These two pictures of Nelson and Pitt are compositions of a mythological cast, similar to those Apotheoses of Persian, Hindoo and Egyptian antiquity which are still preserved on rude monuments, being copies from some stupendous originals now lost or perhaps buried till some happier age. The artist having been taken in vision to those wonderful republics . . . has seen those wonderful Originals . . . some of them were one hundred feet in height; some were painted as pictures, and some carved as basso relievos, and some as groupes of statues, all containing mythological and recondite meaning, where more is meant than meets the eye. (Keynes, 565-66; Erdman, 521-22.)

Several things are suggested: first, that Blake actually saw representations of ancient Persian and other compositions, for he asserts that they *are* preserved on rude monuments and are but copies of the originals; second, that Blake's imagination was keenly touched by what he saw, as his visionary journey

to view the originals attests; third, that he obviously considered his two paintings to resemble Persian design, the most likely element being the snake enfolding portions of creation. Blake's words and the often stunning similarity of his illuminations and "copies" of Ahriman and Ormazd require careful consideration of these analogues and possible direct sources of the Persian or so-called Zoroastrian.

The evidence is corroborated by the existence of a large and diverse body of literature on Zoroaster, which was often accompanied by drawings and engravings, and some of which we know Blake saw. That this material usually contained information on and designs of the cult of Mithras--the religion popular among Roman legions and thus spread even to Britain--is of no real importance, for writers frequently confused the two. Religious and secular commentators contributed volume after volume on the subject. Travelers' accounts of voyages to the East were popular and numerous after mid-seventeenth century and continued to interest philosophers and mythologists in the eighteenth century. These books only occasionally added any really fresh information to what was already known from ancient Greek and Roman sources and from medieval writers, but they sometimes contained line engravings of ruins, temples, rituals, and the like.¹ (Although many travelers were themselves clergymen, they by no means unanimously approved of Persian religion and culture.) To some, the praise of Zoroastrian monotheism and spiritual enlightenment smacked of a heretical failure to appreciate the uniqueness of Christianity's divinely revealed truth. This priestly perception fueled many a dispute, eventually in-

3 "Tornado," published state, from Darwin's *Botanic Garden*. Robert N. Essick Collection.



volving even the philosophes, notably Diderot and Voltaire, who wished to discredit the idea that Christianity was the sole possessor of Truth, which could be discovered, they argued, by man in a natural and reasonable fashion, unaided by the "light of Revelation."² Both groups of partisans entertained hopes that the explorations of a young Frenchman in India would settle the battle in their favor; both were rather disappointed, for the scrupulously non-partisan researcher declined to enter the lists. Interest in Zoroastrianism was greatly stimulated, nonetheless, in 1771 upon the publication of his work, *Zend Avesta, Ouvrages du Zoroastre*.

Anquetil du Perron had spent eight years in India in Pahlavi or Parsee communities learning ancient and modern Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. During these years he also meticulously copied and collated numerous volumes of sacred works, and collected many texts and sorely needed dictionaries in these languages. His two-volume translation, with a lengthy account of his voyage and a seventy page "Vie de Zoroastre," was received with much excitement in Germany and France, where scholars agreed that it superseded all other works. Although English academics knew of du Perron's finds before they were published, for he had visited London and Oxford University before returning to France (*Tome I, cccclviii-ccccviii*), they were slower to accept the Continental judgment. Indeed, du Perron's splendid achievement had little if any effect on English mythologists before 1830: studies continued to pour out and most, like John Bell's *New Pantheon, or Historical Dictionary of the Gods* (1790), rehearsed the established errors and clichés. In addition to such "new" efforts, earlier popular works were readily available. Pierre Bayle's *Dictionnaire historique et critique*, for example, went through four editions in England between 1710 and 1826.

Two volumes contain crucial evidence about Blake's possible sources. The first is familiar to Blake critics. Jacob Bryant's *A New System, an Analysis of Ancient Mythology* (1774-1776) contains several fine line engravings of Ormazd, the god of light, and Mithraic devices. The plates were engraved in Basire's shop while Blake was an apprentice there, as is well known. Almost certainly, they are a direct source for one of Blake's most important illuminations. The second work may have been seen by Blake, though it is impossible to be certain. Prior to 1771 (and long after in England) the treatise on the Persian religion most widely known and influential was by the English scholar Thomas Hyde, whose *Historia Religionis Veterum Persarum* [sic] was first published in 1700 and reissued in a second edition, which I have used, in 1760. On the continent it had been the subject of heated debate and controversy because of the English cleric's high esteem for the Zoroastrian religion. In England it remained a major source for "speculative mythologists," like Jacob Bryant, as his numerous references to it in *A New System* reveal.

Historia Persarum contains several reproductions, including a four-panelled tauroctone (illus. 1), which is from the 1760 edition. The progress of the panels is from the lower left, where the stage is set for the sacrifice; to the upper left, where the key characters are positioned (Mithra, the bull, Cautes,

1 Tauroctone. Hyde's *Historica*.

Cautopates, dog, sun, moon, snake and scorpion); to the upper right, in which the arrows, whip and stylized thunderbolts indicate the world turbulence the sacrifice will rectify; to the lower right panel, where the bull's blood and semen are shed, and, though they try, neither scorpion nor snake will steal the precious life-renewing fluids. Located between the two right panels is a minute particular which, if Blake saw this book, he might not have overlooked. Illustration 2 is an enlargement of the center right scene. Between the Apollo-like figure guiding four horses (which resembles the upper left hand figure in *Marriage*, plate 11) and the chariot of seven fire altars drawn by two horses, there are two figures of special interest. The main, winged one is serpent entwined and holds a sceptre in his left hand. This small engraving of Ahriman, taken from a gem-stone carving, is accompanied by another, less frequently seen version of the god or *daeva*, one which depicts him without lion features and wings, as an entirely human form which is serpent encoiled.

In this illustration from the 1760 work much alluded to by Bryant we find two major elements which are paralleled in Blake drawings and engravings: first, those in the tauroctone in which Mithra sacrifices the sacred bull; second, the winged, serpent-bound god, Ahriman, ruler of the corporeal world and guardian of the means of ingress and egress. There is little difficulty tracing sources for the bull-slaying scene, which was frequently described and illustrated. Examples of the Mithraic ritual, identical in the main to its Zoroastrian counterpart, are housed in museums throughout Britain. Some were imported, like the magnificent marble statue of the sacrifice in the British Museum (#1720), taken to England from Rome in 1815 by one C. Standish, Esq. But in reality that was a case of coals-to-Newcastle, for the country was dotted by archaeological sites containing tauroctones and a number of these were reported in "Transactions of the Philosophical Society," starting as early as 1743.³ The representation of Ahriman, however, is rarer. These two figures in Hyde are the only possible direct links I have yet discovered between Blake and images of the Mithraic god who is the Zoroastrian devil, except for Fuseli's drawing of Tornado, which we know only through Blake's engraving (illus. 3). While it cannot be stated unequivocally that the figures in *Historica* constitute a direct influence, it can justly be said that Blake at least could have known through Bryant of this widely influential work. I suggest that these minute particulars are very possible sources and that such close analogues may in fact indicate direct influence, especially in the light of Blake's own comments in *A Descriptive Catalogue*.

The figure of Ahriman in Hyde contains all the vital components commonly found in representations of the god except one, the lion's head. Curiously, Blake's engraving of "Tornado" after Fuseli, depict-

2 Enlargement of right center panel.



4 Mithraic God (190 AD), Vatican Museum.
Alinari 35666.

ing a lion-headed, winged demon, is both an analogue to the tradition and evidence of a direct source. We do not have the original drawing and cannot guess how Blake may have treated its contents. But his engraving for the third edition of Erasmus Darwin's *The Botanic Garden* (1795) bears a great mechanical resemblance to more often seen versions of the god, the human face being a late development. Both forms were accessible in Europe during the eighteenth century. Though strikingly alike, the engraving does not precisely reproduce the symbolic features of the Mithraic god. For one thing, Tornado is encircled by a dragon with bat-like wings and a snaky body and tail; the wings are not his own. However, the leonine head is notable as are the flashes of lightning which recall the Mithraic tradition in which Ahriman's two keys frame a thunderbolt, an emblem associated with Jupiter. Perhaps the interesting parallels in the plate raise questions less about Blake than about what Fuseli might have seen, or about what he actually drew, for that matter. For we do not know what details, if any, Blake added or altered. The most we can say is that the engraving is significant because it points to a now lost source which, in some respects



5 Mithraic God (c. 2nd C.), Vatican Museum.
Alinari 35667.

was like the more widely available representations of the lion-headed, winged god holding his sceptre.

I have included examples of statues and bas-reliefs of the two main Mithraic traditions without intending to suggest, naturally, that they are to be used for anything other than comparisons. As striking as some of the correspondences are, there is no reason to believe they are more than coincidence. To facilitate the discussion, I offer a brief account of the major Ahrimanic visual traits and their symbolism.

In the statues, "basso-relievos," and gem-stone engravings, Ahriman is most frequently depicted as having the body of a man, the head of a lion, and one or two sets of wings (illus. 4, 5, and 6). His body is entwined by a serpent--usually in two to three or five to seven coils--whose head rests on the crown of the god's head. In Mithraism, the serpent represents the world serpent believed to have been coiled around the body of the cosmos. The four wings attached at the shoulders and hips (broken in illus. 4 but clearly visible in 6) represent the



6 Eone, Villa Albani, Rome. Alinari 27619.

winds of the four seasons and are "symbols of Pneuma, the hot breath that rules the seasons of life." In his aspect as *Deus aeternus*, Ahriman holds two keys (illus. 4 and 5), or less frequently one (illus. 6), emblems of his cosmic powers in his role as demi-urge or creator of the natural world and lord of men's fortunes. He is not merely prince of *this* world, for the keys unlock one of the seven doors barring the soul's path to heaven. His rod or sceptre usually held in the left hand (illus. 4 and 6) is another emblem of his sovereignty over this world, as is the globe on which his feet rest. The zodiacal and planetary signs on the body of the god (illus. 5) or surrounding him (illus. 10) became increasingly popular and had important implications. Whether in his role as *daeva* or *Deus aeternus*, Ahriman is thus shown to have control over the cycle of the months as well as the movements of planets and other heavenly bodies.⁴

Although there is a good deal of variety in the representations of the god, most of them contain the symbolic elements described, with two noteworthy exceptions. There is a not very common tradition in



7 Deus Arimanius (c. 2nd C.), Florence. Courtesy of E.J. Brill, Leiden.

which Ahriman is depicted solely as a serpent encircled human figure, with none of the features usually given him. Second, many of the standard traits appear in illus. 7, as well as another unusual, intriguing detail. To the lower left, attached to the lowest two coils of the serpent, is what appears to be a cocoon-like structure with the head and shoulders of a tiny human form breaking through its top. The cocoon is similar to the design in the center of the god's chest in illus. 4. Its progress down the snake's body toward its tail suggests the movement of the soul toward material or bodily existence. This appears to be a symbol of creation specifically as a fall into the mortal world.⁵

There are numerous Blake illuminations which closely parallel these versions of Ahriman's form and meaning in Mithraism and Zoroastrianism. Perhaps the most well known are the variants of plate 6 of *The Book of Urizen*. In copy D in the Fitzwilliam, a single serpent entwined human figure is shown falling, head downwards, arms in a cruciform position. The more frequently published version of that detail contains two additional snake-coiled figures on either



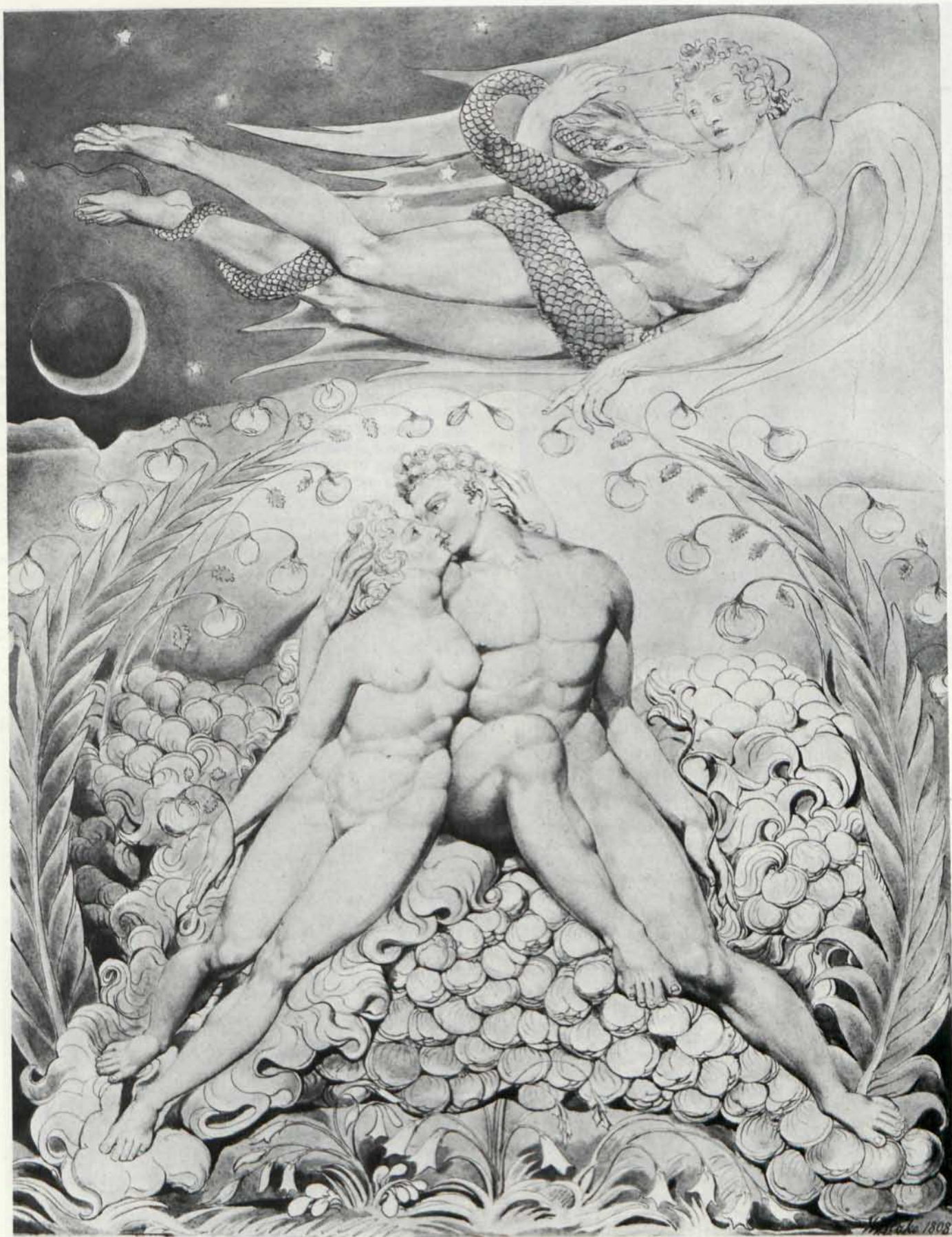
8 Elohim Creating Adam. Courtesy Tate Gallery.

side.⁶ Blake has clearly incorporated his own rec-
ondite mythological meaning. The cruciform male
with his falling companions simultaneously fore-
shadows and parodies Christ's crucifixion, an in-
evitable though distant consequence of Urizen's error,
which leads to fallenness or creation. But also the
falling, serpent-bound bodies are symbolic forms
being thrown headlong toward the abyss or, more
mercifully, toward the fixed forms that will limit
their fallen condition, which may then be temporary.
Although the cruciform position of the figure is
unique, I think, to *Urizen*, the motive is certainly
utilized increasingly in Blake's visual art after
1795, paralleling perhaps his growing view of the
peril and horror of corporeality, despite its merci-
ful quality or even its beauty. Examples abound,

from the detail in plate 13 of the early prophetic
book, *America*, to major individual creations such
as "The Spiritual Form of Nelson Guiding Leviathan,"
"Laocoon," or "A Vision of the Last Judgment."

Blake's "Elohim Creating Adam" (1795) is a rich-
ly imaginative analogue to the icons of Ahriman, de-
spite, or perhaps because of, the fact that the
critical elements--wings, lion's head, man's naked
body, and serpent--are dispersed, so to speak, divid-
ed between the two figures (illus. 8). God or the
Elohim is given the wings (which closely resemble
those of Ahriman in illus. 4) and a lion-like face
with flowing, mane-like hair. Adam's body, serpent
encoiled, is being created, given fixed form. The

9 Satan Watching the Caresses of Adam and Eve.
Courtesy the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.



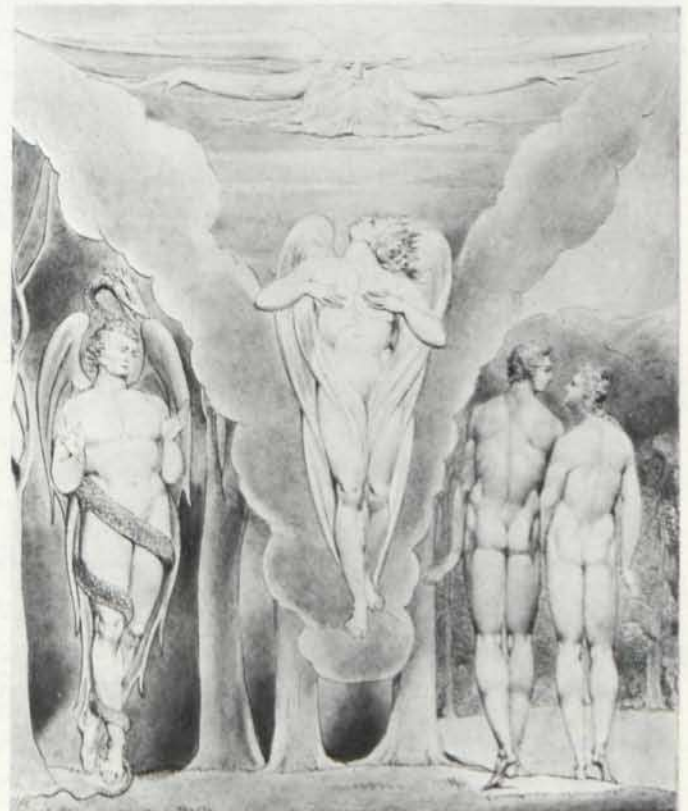


10 Deus Arimanius (c. 3rd C.), Modena. Courtesy E.J. Brill, Leiden.

the tiny human form in the cocoon progresses down the snake's body toward existence in this world.⁷

Ahriman was an ambiguous figure partly because of his innately paradoxical attributes and partly because of the early confusion of two discrete traditions. In Mithraism he was a *deus* whose awesome powers necessitated supplicating him for release from earthly existence and safe passage to heaven; in Zoroastrianism he was a *daeva* (diabolical spirit) with a ferocity, cruelty, and fondness for wantonly destroying men's fortunes and spiritual hopes. This latter tradition predominated in Western culture, where he was identified with Baal, Pluto, the anti-Christ and Satan.⁸ Blake's watercolor, "Satan Watching the Caresses of Adam and Eve" (1808) for *Paradise Lost* (illus. 9), is part of that tradition, to the extent that we can allow that he was influenced by representations of Ahriman. It is also an analogue to a late Roman visual development. The transformation in the bas-relief (illus. 10) represents a late trend in which Ahriman has fully human features, though the symbolic lion is retained, appearing on his chest. As in the other icons, he is serpent entwined and bears the sceptre of sovereignty in his left hand. Signs of the zodiac adorn the ovular frame of the relief, and that structure is echoed by the egg--note its flaming halves at his feet and above his head--from which the god is born.

snake encircles the lower half of his body, as God's hands reach out to touch or gesture over Adam's head; and Adam's feet (less completely articulated or metamorphosed than his head and torso?) seem to blend or bend into the last two coils of the snake's body. Blake may have intended to suggest in vision that Adam was created out of the serpent's body--the serpent symbolizing the senses, corporeality, and nature. The wings no less than the serpent suggest to me the ambiguity of this scene, for wings recall the immortal psyche, but also angels who are often representatives of mistaken or fallen vision (and at least one important devil, as we shall see). The four parallel forms, the wings, God's and Adam's and the snake's bodies, emphasize the paradox, as do the mirrorings in the plate. The curling of the serpent's tail above Adam's lower legs mirrors the swirling robe of God, and the facial expressions, particularly the somberness and the open mouths, are deliberate visual echoes designed to shadow forth the truth that Creator and created are inescapably bound together in this paradoxical moment: the momentous beginning is an end to eternal life; creation is fall. The senses are vital in corporeal existence but simultaneously signal the closing off of the soul from immortality. The vision records the moment and the shape of the process that are both profoundly sad and merciful. Blake's illumination calls to mind the statue (illus. 6) in which



Blake's Satan, winged and serpent bound like the god, also has fully human features. In the foliage just left of and slightly above Eve's right wrist, however, one may see a shape created by the configuration of the leaves, flame-like leaves, which suggests perhaps the head of a lion. It is coincidence undoubtedly that there is so great a similarity between the drawing and bas-relief so removed from each other in time and place. Yet the resemblance is even more striking in "Satan's and Raphael's Entries into Paradise" (1807) for *Paradise Lost* (illus. 11). One can only marvel at what appears to be one of those fortuitous similarities whose exactness is suggestive of the powerful, universal appeal of certain visual symbols.

Examples abound of Blake's incorporation of two Ahrimanic details, perhaps from Hyde and certainly from Fuseli, into his own visual symbolism, bat-like wings and serpent-encoiled forms. Any one even a little familiar with his illuminations and paintings can call to mind an impressive number of serpent-bound bodies, emblematic of Blake's vision of the paradox of corporeal existence. Though essential to life and often the portals of joy, the senses, especially touch, are perilous and can easily become a bog in which mortals flounder and are lost. They are simultaneously the tangible, outward bound of the process by which the spirit is benighted and the mode in this life of experiencing potentially redemptive bliss. Touch (particularly sexuality), the most threatening of all, is appropriately symbolized by the serpent. And, though the condition of being either female or male bespeaks to Blake the spirit's descent and diminution, sexual delight is a reflection, if only a pale one, of the imagination's delight which is Eternity. As such it lies at the heart of the dilemma of mortality--the unavoidable need to surrender to that which in Eternity is horrific because in corporeality it is a staff of life to the soul.

In few instances indeed does Blake's pictorial imagery more succinctly delineate this quandary than in "Comus with the Lady Spellbound" for *Comus* (illus. 12). The patterns on the chair to which the enchanted Lady is riveted are unique adaptations of the serpent-bound Ahriman, with and without wings. The two wingless figures decorating the legs of the chair and the winged one on its back are women, not girls, as their full breasts indicate. Unlike the Lady, whose hands fold protectively across her breasts, the winged, serpent-coiled female's arms are raised, perhaps suggesting her openness to experience, as in plate 99 of *Jerusalem*. The sinuous coils of the serpents are rigidly circumscribed by the moldings of the chair, a potentially compressed metaphor of the Lady's condition as she confronts the problem of successfully negotiating her way from childhood to a womanhood which includes wholesome sexuality. The nightmare enchantment, the phallic threatening Comus, and the serpent-dominated females who are further imprisoned in the frame represent the Lady's own spiritual state as she approaches and resists adult sexuality. The



12 Comus with the Lady Spellbound at the Banquet. Courtesy the Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

tension between living, flowing line and the inanimate, geometric one underscores the virgin's perplexity: budding desire hemmed in, repressed, and thus distorted by her mingled fear and shame. The bestialized serpent coils belong within the rigid, wooden frame, for together they symbolize obverse sides of a fundamental process, the impulse-repression mechanism of her mind. Once the Lady can forgive and accept her own sensuality, she will transcend the entrapping process and no longer see sex as bestial. The wings and uplifted arms of one of the females suggest that she shall succeed.⁹

We have examined at some length the ambiguities of the serpent, but wings too have their paradoxical emblematic value. They may be those of the eagle who is strong enough to fly near the sun, emblem of the life of the imagination which is Eternity; or those of the bat, symbol of the long night of the soul and dormancy of the imagination. But both are after all wings, where withal for passage from one point or state to another, image of the capability during the season of mortal existence of transforming consciousness into either the divinely human state of Man that approaches eternal bliss or the sub-human, visionless state of misery that Blake called Satan. So consistently did Blake use the bat-like dragon wings of his Tornado engraving that they constitute a visual code for destructive fallenness or demonic vision. With a few exceptions (like the early, ironic use of the emblem in some copies of *Marriage*, plate 10, where a devil-liberator at-

11 Satan's and Raphael's Entries into Paradise. Courtesy the Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.

tempts to instruct the human from the bible of Hell) the bat wings signify vision so narrow as to constitute evil, the hindrance of life. In plate 11 of *Europe*; plate 19 of *For the Sexes: The Gates of Paradise*, added after 1815, when *For the Children* was enlarged and renamed, according to Erdman (*Poetry and Prose*, p. 734); in several illustrations for the *Divine Comedy*; *Job* engravings and paintings, and "Sullen Moloch" for *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, we have instances of the adaptation from Fuseli of Ahriman's demon wings to Blake's own symbolic cosmos.¹⁰

I wish to call attention briefly to three last motives from Zoroastrian and Mithraic statuary and bas-reliefs which may have influenced Blake's illuminations of *Jerusalem*. The first we have already examined in the reproduction from Hyde's *Historica* (illus. 1), but as I pointed out, tauroctones were frequently unearthed in, and even brought to, England during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The bull slaying, sacred to Zoroaster and Mithras, is analogous to plates 25, 69, and 85 of *Jerusalem*.¹¹ Of course, Blake's symbolism stresses the cruelty and dubious value of the living sacrifice. The second feature, noticed originally by Anthony Blunt, is the near mirroring in what he calls Blake's "human-headed bulls" in plate 41 of *Jerusalem* of an engrav-

ing from *Ouseley's Travels*.¹² I think Erdman's idea that they are "ox-hooved, lion-maned, man-headed unicorns" is convincing.¹³ Although I have not found any source to which Blake may have had access, I have recently come across examples from Susa of the winged bull figure, single-horned like the fabulous unicorn. In some cases such figures have even been called sphinxes, perhaps in acknowledgement of their likeness to the human-headed offspring of Chimaera, herself part serpent and lion. In any event, the similarity between Blake's beasts in harness and the Persepolis reliefs is so great that it hardly seems accidental, especially since the figure in *Ouseley* is also reproduced in *A New System*, source for the final device in *Jerusalem* that I wish to discuss.

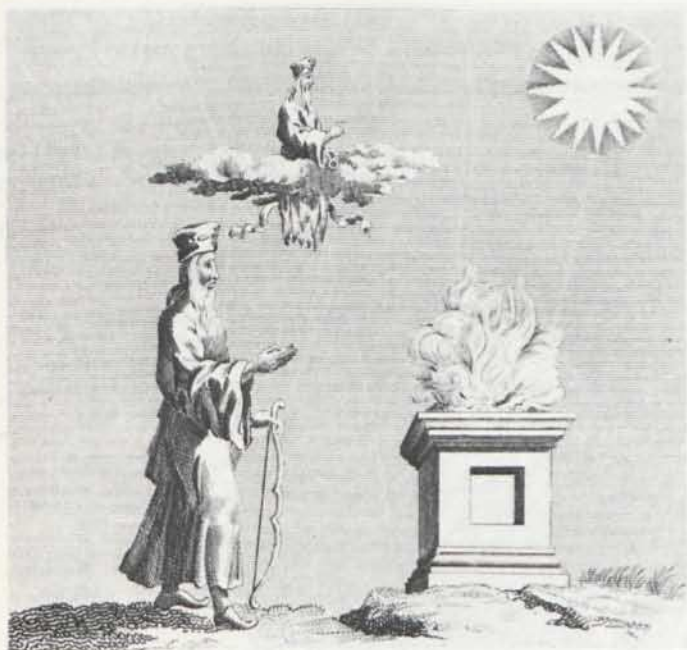
The Zoroastrian god of light, Ormazd, was frequently represented on temples and state buildings in "basso relievos," and copies of them were available in travel accounts and books on mythology. Illustration 13 is taken from an 1807 edition of the second volume of *A New System*. Because of Blake's relationship to Bryant, it is one quite important example of the readily accessible reproductions of Ormazd. In addition to the staple elements, such as the sun and fire altar, we see here the priest and Ormazd looking amazingly like in features and



From Remyer.



From L.



Le Bruyn.



13 Ormazd and the priest, engraving for *A New System*.

14 Enlarged engravings of Ormazd, *A New System*.

15 The Palace Doorway of Darius the Great, Persepolis. Alinari MW207.

clothing (Bryant, II, plate XI). The god floats above his priest in clouds which fan out to either side; he holds a circlet or ring which is symbolic of the sun, the universe, and his eternal realm beyond this life. Scroll- or ribbon-like streamers unfold beneath the clouds to either side of the rather ragged skirt of the god's gown. There are more accurate engravings of this motive in the same volume. A stylized drawing of the god's wings (left, illus. 14) also contains the traditional curving, serpentine appendages below (Bryant, II, plate VIII). The line engraving to the right is a fine reproduction of a portion of the ruins at Persepolis, taken from a travel account as is its fellow. Eagle-like wings, the god's perched hat, the symbolic ring, and--most notably--the circle or cincture, which encloses the god's waist, with its curving lower arms or appendages, are faithfully copied as we can see by comparing the engravings to two photographs of the ruins. The first is the palace doorway of Darius the Great (illus. 15); the second is an earlier, better preserved example from the same ruin (enlarged detail, illus. 16).

I particularly wish to call attention, again, to the cincture about the waist of Ormazd and its two swirling appendages, for there is a precise analogue to this structure in plate 100 of *Jerusalem*. I believe Ruthven Todd was the first to notice that the serpent temple, in front of which we see Los or Urthone, his Spectre and Emanation (illus. 17), is quite similar to a drawing of a Druid temple at Averbury, reproduced (or "reconstructed") in Stukeley's *Abury, A British Druid Temple* (1743).¹⁴ Surely it is also clear that we have here another direct influence, for Blake's serpent temple is exactly like Ormazd's serpentine girdle, as it is shown in Bryant and in the photographs of the ruins of Persepolis.

Analogues can be vexing, for once they have been produced they sometimes seem little more than curiosities. With Blake, however, it is usually true that they are integral both to his aesthetics and to the practice of his own art, because of his interpretations of the artist, be he poet or painter, and of human nature, which he believed to be a miracle of infinite variety founded on primal, universal patterns and processes. Thus, as we know, it was his conviction that the truth and beauty the artist creates are in a very real sense "discovered." For they represent that rare state of grace in which the artist is in touch with the source of his own being, which is itself a reflection of the soul of the Eternal Man who is the cosmos. And thus whatever an artist produces can be and almost always has been discovered by others before him, with a greater or lesser accuracy and fullness depending upon the freedom from fetters of individual poetic genius and the sureness of individual craft. The existence, for example, of the coincidences we have discussed would only prove to Blake that his beliefs about art, vision and human nature are right. It is accurate though tautological to observe that for him the abundance of correspondences of ideas and visual forms in art and architecture demands his theory of poetic genius as a guide to Truth (*Marriage*, plate 11), which in turn sensitizes one to perceive still more of these fortunate affinities: Ahri-man's and Tornado's wings and those of the Elohim and Raphael, of Satan and Moloch; Ahri-

man's serpent coiling, awesome symbol of the power and terror of corporeality and touch, and the falling soul's taking on a body or Adam and the Lady emerging; the mistaken attempts at a *natural* renovation of the world through the bull slaying, the Druids' human sacrifices, and the sacrifice of Albion in *Jerusalem*, plate 25; Ahura Mazda's fiery serpentine girdle, Abury's Druid temple, and *Jerusalem's* serpent temple--these must have been to Blake a wondrous concordance, proof of the sublime unity and universality of genuine myth or vision, the golden string threaded mercifully through the labyrinth.

¹ Mandelslo, du Mans, Le Bruyn, Wheeler, Hanaway and Kaempfer, for example, are among those traveler-journalists cited, with some engravings reproduced, in Jacob Bryant, *A New System* (1774-76). See also J. Bidez and F. Cumont, *Les Mages Hellénisés* (Paris, 1938); F. Cumont, *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra* (Paris, 1902); J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *The Western Response to Zoroaster* (Oxford, 1958); and A. V. W. Jackson, *Zoroaster, the Prophet of Ancient Iran* (New York, 1898, 1928).

² Duchesne-Guillemin, pp. 2-10, 12-15.

³ Leroy A. Campbell, *Mithraic Iconography and Ideology* (London, 1968). Prof. and Mrs. T. J. King verified data on the holdings in the British Museum.

⁴ Campbell, pp. 211, 300-03, 348, 353. Cumont *Les Mages*, I, 12, 59, 67; II, 145. R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism* (London, 1961), pp. 129-30.

⁵ Campbell, p. 350. Note that the cocoon-like encasing of the human form is analogous to the Frontispiece, "What is Man?", *For the Sexes* and to the ambiguously infantile worm, Plate III, *The Book of Thel*.

⁶ Where it is feasible, I refer readers to published plates, as in this case; see the Micromethods filmstrips for the Fitzwilliam variant. See also David V. Erdman, *The Illuminated Blake* (Garden City, N. Y., 1974), p. 188.

⁷ Blake's "With Dreams upon my bed thou scarest me," Plate XI of *Job*, is indeed a horrific and intensely ironic analogue to his "Elohim Creating Adam." See S. Foster Damon, *Blake's Job* (New York, 1969).

⁸ F. Cumont, *The Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism* (New York, 1956), pp. 153-54; and *Les Mages*, I, 12, 59. Campbell, p. 353.

⁹ And she does, as Irene Talyer so cogently argues in "Say First! What Mov'd Blake? Blake's *Comas* Designs and Milton," [S. Curran and J. A. Wittreich, Jr., eds., *Blake's Sublime Allegory* (Madison, Wisconsin, 1973), pp. 233-58].

¹⁰ *The Illuminated Blake*, pp. 169, 279; Albert S. Roe, *Blake's Illustrations to the Divine Comedy* (Princeton, 1953); Damon, *Blake's Job*. "Sullen Moloch" is reproduced in Ruthven Todd's *William Blake The Artist* (London, 1971).

¹¹ *The Illuminated Blake*, pp. 304, 348, 364. *Blake Newsletter*, 22, Vol. 6, no. 2 (Fall, 1972) note by Deirdre Toomey on the states of Plate 25.

¹² Anthony Blunt, "Blake's Pictorial Imagination," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 6 (1943), 205; and *The Art of William Blake* (New York, [1959]), p. 38, Plates 50a, b.

¹³ *The Illuminated Blake*, p. 320.

¹⁴ Ruthven Todd, *Tracks in the Snow* (London, 1946), pp. 31 ff.

17 *Jerusalem*, plate 100. From the collection of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon.

