Paintings and Drawings of William Blake (1981): Some Minor Additions

Martin Butlin

major works, his Prophetic Books, can be perceived in Wang Zu-liang and Chen Jia's essays of 1980 and 1981. Wang praises the works particularly highly in terms of intellectual and artistic value.

Even so, the analysis and scholarship of Blake are still elementary and superficial in China. Such critical positions indicate ignorance of Blake criticism and scholarship for at least twenty years.[7] This situation is largely due to the fact that China's intellectual life was virtually shut off from the West for about twenty years. With a new animation in China's intellectual life, and with an enlargement of cultural exchanges with Western countries, there may be a hope of advance in the study of William Blake in China.

Notes

[1] I have examined all the works in the list except the first two. About these two bicentenary notices, "William Blake, The English Revolutionary Poet," and "Blake, The Representative Writer of Early Romanticism," the information comes from *Wai-guo Wen-xue Lun-wen Mu-lu Sue-ying* [*A Bibliographical List of Articles on Foreign Literature, 1920–1978*], ed. Lu Yong-mao, et al. (Kaifeng, China: Chinese Department, Henan Teachers' University, 1979), pp. 262–63, in Chinese. This is prepared as a preliminary list and distributed to many universities in China inviting opinions and advice to be incorporated in a later edition. This is a common Chinese academic practice for some important works. The previous edition was in 1957.

[2] The rendering of Chinese names in my writing is in this order: the first name given is the family name, and the name after the following comma is the personal name.

[3] This is quoted from Cheng's essay, "Wei-lian Bu-lai-ke di yi-su ji-qi Sheng-ping" [The Life and Art of William Blake]. This Congress was sponsored by the World Peace Council, which in 1957 was called the International Institute of Peace—see the *Yearbook on International Communist Affairs*, ed. Richard F. Staar, et al. (Stanford, California: Hoover Institution Press, Stanford University, 1979), p. 446.

[4] This refers to the Lord Gordon No-Popery Riots, whose purposes were quite different, and Blake's part in it was involuntary, according to *The Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (London: Oxford University Press, 1950), II, 643.

[5] The title of this plate is transliterated from Chinese as it appears in Cheng's essay. The plate under the same title is indicated in G.E. Bentley, Jr.'s *Blake Books* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), p. 499, as only engraved, not designed, by Blake (it was designed by J.G. Stedman for his *Surinam* [1796]). Since I now have no access to any reproduction of that plate, I cannot verify my suspicion that Cheng used an engraving after Stedman for his analysis of Blake's power of design.

[6] *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, compiled and edited by Sir Paul Harvey, fourth edition, revised by Dorothy Eagle (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), p. 94.

[7] This statement was confirmed by G.E. Bentley, Jr., bibliographer and Blake scholar, who was a visiting professor in Fudan University, Shanghai, China. I must take this opportunity to express my gratitude for his detailed assistance on my present essay.

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The presence in the *Blake e Dante* exhibition (see Reviews) of some of the watercolors from Melbourne that had not been exhibited in Europe either at the Hamburg and Frankfurt Blake exhibition in 1975 or that held at the Tate Gallery in 1978 gave me the opportunity to examine these for the first time. This and other information has led to some minor additions to information given in my *Paintings and Drawings of William Blake*, 1981.

In my no. 812 *31* the "17" in the inscription b.r. has been written over another figure, apparently "16". No. 812 *99* has been disfigured by a stamp, "Felton Bequest", b.r.

Two updatings of my catalogue continue the saga of the "1795" color prints. "Nebuchadnezzar," my no. 301, is watermarked "JWhatman / 1804". This is not surprising, as it was the companion "Newton" that was first found to have a similar 1804 watermark. On the other hand no. 320, "The House of Death," is watermarked "1794 ITAYLOR". Unfortunately, this color print also having been dated "1795" by Blake, this discovery upsets what one was hoping to establish as "Bindman's Law," that Blake only dated his prints 1795 if they were on paper watermarked 1804! This is in part based on the fact that the Tate Gallery's examples of "Pity" and "Hecate," which are not dated, do not seem to bear dated watermarks. The rest of the examples in the Tate are in the process of being examined, and any new discoveries will be reported in due course.

There are minor corrections concerning a drawing newly back from Australia, my no. 654, the sketch for the engraving "The Canterbury Pilgrims," which is to be sold at Christie's shortly. My own new measurements come out very slightly different from those given in my catalogue: 13 15/16 x 37 11/16 (35.4 x 85.7). In addition there is a roughly drawn framing line which reduces the height of the composition to approximately 13 in. (33 cm.). The paper has been folded a little to the right of center. A few corrections should be made to the transcript of Henry Cunliffe's inscription. In his copy of Frederick Tatham's original inscription "Canterbury" is split by a line break after "Canter-". The word "engraved" is followed by ". —". In the next part of his inscription he does in fact give Blake's address correctly as "3 Fountain Court," though as usual he gives his date of death as 1828. In his reference to Cunningham he spells "extraordinary" "extradordinary". At the end of that sentence, after "Blake", there is a full stop, and in the note on Sotheby's the apostrophe appears to follow the final "s". On actual viewing the drawing on the back, which is upside down in relation to the inscriptions, seems less directly related to the "Canterbury Pilgrims" composition than I tentatively suggested, though there are elements that can be read as figures on horseback. The paper of the drawing is considerably discolored but could almost certainly be bleached, in which case the drawing itself should stand out with much greater clarity.