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Blake and the Hutchinsonians

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any other known to me, and it is in most respects far harder to distinguish from Blake's originals than any other facsimile. Indeed, without the 1885 watermark and the duplication of plates with identically wiped borders, I should have found it extremely difficult to distinguish this from a Blake original.

There is a troubling parallel to this facsimile. In *Blake*, 16 (1983), 212–23, Joseph Viscomi and Thomas Lange described two facsimile plates (pls. 4 and 9) previously undetected among the genuine plates of the Pierpont Morgan copy of *America*, Copy B. Only three other copies of those two plates are known, in the collections of Robert N. Essick (pls. 4 and 9—see illus. 2 & 5 here) and Thomas Lange (pl. 9), and Essick's came through the hands of Walter T. Spencer, who is known to have forged the coloring of *America* Copy Q and *Europe* Copy L about 1913. It seems at least possible, then, that pls. 4 and 9 were made for Walter T. Spencer for purposes of commercial deception.

However, the "new" *America* is distinct from the facsimile plates in Copy B. Essick and Lange generously compared reproductions of the "new" *America* with their copies of the facsimile pls. 4 and 9 and concluded that their prints were made from different stereotypes than the corresponding "new" plates.* They believe that the stereotypes for the "new" plates were made from lithographs (stone, rather than zinc) onto which the *America* outlines were carefully but not flawlessly copied—there are too many minute differences in proportions and in flourishes of letter-forms and tendrils to make photography seem likely. The grainy areas were probably traced with a lithographic crayon and the solid areas with tusche applied with a pen or brush.

They also point out that pl. 1 in the "new" *America* seems to be imitated from the proof in Copy a, with all its unique qualities including the framing-line round the plate, on the backing-mat, of Copy a—and this may have been made photographically. Copy a, however, includes only pls. 1, 4, 11–12, and 15, and consequently the "new" *America*, which reproduces all the plates save pl. 18, must have been based on models beyond those in Copy a. Copy a was in the hands of Quaritch and Muir in 1880, and Muir made facsimiles from other prints which were in the same collection as Copy a (see *Blake Books* [1977], p. 339). The "new" facsimile seems therefore to be eclectic, choosing plates from at least two different copies.

*I must depend, with confidence and gratitude, upon the comparisons made by Essick and Lange, for though I have examined in detail the genuine *America* plates, the "new" prints, and the Morgan-Essick-Lange facsimiles of pls. 4 and 9, I have never been able to examine the "new" plates (or reproductions of them) and the Morgan-Essick-Lange facsimiles together.

The existence of this excellent facsimile should make us extremely cautious in judging the authenticity of Blake's works in Illuminated Printing, particularly unwatermarked plates of *America* printed in Green: Copy C, pls. 10, 12, 14, 15; Copy D, pls. 12, 14, 16, 18; Copy E, pls. 1–12, 15–16; Copy F; Copy G, pls. 2, 5–6, 9–18; Copy I, pls. 1–2, 7–12, 15–18; Copy K, pls. 1–2, 5–18; Copy L (sold as "a facsimile" in 1927); Copy M, pls. 10, 14–16; Copy R (the basis of the Muir facsimile); Copy a, pls. 11–12; pl. 1 (Lister); and pl. 4 (Morgan). Perhaps they too are hitherto unidentified copies of this late nineteenth century facsimile. Perhaps those copies indifferently printed or colored are not by Blake or his wife at all; perhaps some of them are facsimiles so good that they have fooled us all—just as, for almost a hundred years, pls. 4 and 9 in *America* Copy B fooled all who saw it, including myself, until their spuriousness was noticed for reasons other than the inaccuracy of the printed images by Joseph Viscomi and Thomas Lange. Caveat emptor!

Blake and the Hutchinsonians

Edward Larrissy

Albert J. Kuhn was the first and perhaps the only person to notice Blake's debt to the Hutchinsonians.¹ These "thinkers," followers of John Hutchinson (1674–1737) were the main school of anti-Newtonians with any claim to scientific method in eighteenth-century England.² Kuhn, whose article is not confined to a study of them, is chiefly concerned with their notion that the "cherubim" had originally represented the Trinity, and that "heathens" had debased those "cherubim" into their gods and idols.³ Clearly, such a notion might well have contributed to Blake's idea that "the Grecian gods were the ancient Cherubim of Phoenicia" (*Descriptive Catalogue*, E536/K571). But Kuhn's case is not conclusively made. It is, however, possible to demonstrate quite clearly Blake's indebtedness to Hutchinsonian ideas, for there are precise verbal echoes as well as general resemblances; nor is this indebtedness confined to the matter of the "cherubim," for it appears to be evident in a number of Blake's later ideas.

Hutchinson, like Blake, believed that the original faith was Christian, and that it had been perverted by the Jews, and stolen in a corrupt form by the Greeks

and the Druids. The Trinity had been emblemized in the Cherubim, but were in themselves better thought of as "Elohim" (or "Aleim," as Hutchinson often spells it). In accordance with his belief in primeval Christianity Hutchinson insisted that the idea of Man was included in the Trinity.

These ideas may be illustrated from the following passage, obscure though it is:

As the . . . *cherubim*, was a similitude of the Divinity, and of man taken into the Essence, and becoming . . . *one Mighty to save*; so the supreme [*rbym*, i.e., "rubim"] are the *Great ones*, of whom we are allow'd to take ideas from . . . the *names*, or the heavens. They, ere the world began, became confederates under the band of an oath, and so [*alnym*, i.e., "Elohim"].⁴

Compare the passage from the *Descriptive Catalogue*:

Visions of these eternal principles or characters of human life appear to poets, in all ages; the Grecian gods were the ancient Cherubim of Phoenicia; but the Greeks, and since them the Moderns, have neglected to subdue the gods of Priam. These Gods are visions of the eternal attributes, or divine *names*, which, when erected into gods, become destructive to humanity. (E536/K571; my emphasis)

Hutchinson held that the cherubim were emblems of aspects of God. These aspects became the objects of idolatrous worship:

The human head and body, the wings, hands, *corona*, and other *insignia* of the *Cherubim*, appear so frequently among the idolatrous symbols of worship, that a very small attention may serve to convince one, by comparing particulars, that the whole heathen *cultus* had a plain resemblance to the sacred institutions, from which it was originally stolen.⁵

In modern times, according to Hutchinson,

the cause of *Christianity* is betray'd, *revelation* disbelieved, and men trust to their own merit, morality, repentance, &c. to intitle them to the joys of another world: youth have their heads early filled with heathen authors, mythology &c. but are never taught to understand them by a comparison with the perfect original from whence they are *stolen and perverted*. . . .⁶ (my emphasis)

Blake, using the same words, stated that "the Poetry of the Heathen" was "Stolen & Perverted from the Bible" (notes on Dante illustrations, E689/K785). As for modern philosophy, Hutchinson says (in what may be an allusion to his hatred of Newton) that it is "made up of senseless Words for Non-Entities, instead of the Agents, their Powers and Actions, described in the Bible."⁷

The "oath" or "covenant" referred to above is that of "JEHOVAH ALEIM" (i.e., Jehovah Elohim).⁸ The covenant is that Jehovah Aleim will become a man, Christ, and redeem men by forgiveness of sins. This goes a long way towards explaining certain obscure passages in Blake's *The Ghost of Abel*. Thus Hutchinson says:

The heathens were never so stupid as to think their crimes could be blotted out, unless their ALEIM were propitiated: and so they could listen to our Almighty Saviour without prejudice, when he declared his merciful intentions, that himself was as ready as able to forgive sins. . . .⁹

This refers to the idea that the heathens, or gentiles, although they made sacrifices, were ready to give up "their" Elohim (i.e., the corrupt forms they worshipped) and listen to Christ; whereas the Jews, according to Hutchinson, were complacent enough to believe they could utterly propitiate their Elohim, and did not feel the need of Christ. Neither heathens nor Jews believed in forgiveness of sins once the original "covenant" of forgiveness was forgotten.

In *The Ghost of Abel* Satan says:

I will have Human Blood & not the blood
of Bulls or Goats
And no Atonement O Jehovah the Elohim
live on Sacrifice
Of Men: hence I am God of Men. . . .
(E272/K780)

But Jehovah says that Satan must go to Eternal Death. And then a chorus of angels enters singing:

The Elohim of the Heathen Swore Vengeance for
Sin! Then Thou stoodst
Forth O Elohim Jehovah! in the midst of the
darkness of the Oath! All Clothed
In Thy Covenant of the Forgiveness of Sins. . . .
(E272/K781)

The correspondences are very close, even to the distinction between Elohim Jehovah on the one hand and the "Elohim of the Heathen" on the other.

"The emblem of this grand adjuration [i.e., the covenant] between the ALEIM," says Hutchinson, "was . . . an *oak-tree*," signifying peace. He adds that "This memorial was not lost even among the latter heathens."¹⁰ He quotes Homer, where Hector signifies the antagonism between himself and Achilles by saying, "There's now no way from th' *oak*, or from the *rock* / To hold discourse with him."¹¹ For Hutchinson, the rock is the pillar of a supposed Druid temple. And he adds that "Maximus Tyrius observes of the *Druids*, that they worshipped *Jupiter* under the form of a tall oak."¹² This is the oak as object of idolatry, where it was once merely an emblem of the covenant. These two types of oak are to be found in Blake. Thus at the introduction to chapter 2 of *Jerusalem* he addresses the Jews:

Your ancestors derived their origin from Abraham, Heber, Shem, and Noah, who were Druids: as the Druid Temples (which are the Patriarchal Pillars & Oak Groves) over the whole Earth Witness to this day. (E171/K649)

But, on the other hand, in *The Ghost of Abel* Satan promises to crucify Christ "By the rock & Oak of the Druid" (E272/K781): this refers to that period of fallen Druidism when the Elohim have become externalized gods, and the Divine Humanity is sacrificed on the Tree of Mystery. The Rock and the Oak become the "serpent temple" at Avebury.

Speaking of Avebury, William Cooke (d.1780), who

was interested in Hutchinson, provides important clues about the nature of that "temple," and of the religion practiced there, in his *Enquiry into the Patriarchal and Druidical Religion*. This is an ingeniously eclectic selection of plagiarisms, mostly culled from Stukeley's pages. Explaining the name "Abury" Cooke maintains that "such as were the ABIRI worshiped in Britain; such also originally were the CABIRI worshiped in the East."¹³ He agrees with the opinion that "the Cabiri were the Gods of the Phoenicians" (cf. "Cherubim of the Phoenicians") and claims, arguing from Hebrew and Arabic, that "Cabiri in the plural are THE GREAT or MIGHTY ONES."¹⁴ It will be recalled that Hutchinson referred to his Cherubim as "Great ones." Cooke uses Hutchinson's description of the Cherubim to support his own argument.¹⁵ But what should particularly interest the scholar of Blake is the graphic way in which the decline from "Cherubim" to "Abiri"—a decline of vision—can be illustrated from these sources. The difference between the imagined splendors of the Phoenician temples and the "geometric" crudity of Avebury's "Druid" rocks is very suggestive.

The fussiness of the Hutchinsonians about the terms "Elohim" and "Jehovah" might also serve to illuminate Blake's own use of these terms. It should be clear from his writings that the tendency to talk about Urizen as a kind of "Jehovah" is at best a guide to the novice. In fact Blake seems to have regarded Elohim as more normally the evil Demiurge. The distinction between Jehovah as visible and Elohim as invisible God, which was based on the distinction between "Elohim" and "Jehovah Elohim" in the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1–10, was well known. The two were commonly interpreted as God the Father and the Logos respectively. Hutchinson's claim that "In a special manner CHRIST was JEHOVAH" was not especially radical.¹⁶ Nor is Blake's that "after Christs death, he became Jehovah" (*Marriage*, pl. 6). The novel thing about this passage is the claim that "the Jehovah of the Bible" is "no other than he, who dwells in flaming fire"—that is, Jehovah is Energy. Elohim, the hidden God, is its deprivation.

Blake's *Elohim Creating Adam* belongs with his *Newton*: and the Hutchinsonians had much to say about Sir Isaac. Many of their remarks have a distinctly Blakean ring:

Prodigious fabricator! who wanted only an air-pump to make a vacuum, and a pendulum or swing to prove it; a loadstone, a bit of amber or jet, to form a philosophy; a spyglass, and a pair of compasses, to find out infinite worlds. . . .

It will be recalled that the Application of *No Natural Religion* (series 2) reads: "He who sees the Infinite in all things sees God. He who sees the Ratio only sees himself only." And the illumination for this aphorism shows a bearded man on hands and knees drawing a triangle with the aid of a pair of compasses. The Hutchinsonian description of Newton contains much the same sense of

a ludicrous disparity between ends and means. And according to Hutchinson Newton's God was really "the heathen Jupiter."¹⁸ He, as we know, was the "iron-hearted tyrant, the ruiner of ancient Greece" mentioned by Blake in his letter to Hayley of 23 October 1804; and whom he seems, with some reason perhaps, to have regarded as the God of the Deists.

It may be that Blake was not alone in including John Hutchinson, along with Paracelsus, Boehme and Swedenborg, among his interests. The Behmenist John Byrom is the source of some of the fascinating information in Désirée Hirst's *Hidden Riches* about eighteenth-century English Behmenists.¹⁹ He, like Blake, attacked the "Selfhood."²⁰ And like Blake he was interested in Hutchinson, though he did not like his system.²¹ And he corresponded with the Hutchinsonian William Jones of Nayland.²² Possibly John Wood of Bath had come across Hutchinson's ideas, but in any case he was concerned to show "the Plagiarism of the Heathens" from the Jews in his work on *The Origin of Building*.²³ Blake had likeminded antecedents and contemporaries: there is still much to discover about their world.

¹ Albert J. Kuhn, "Blake on the Nature and Origins of Pagan Gods and Myths," *Modern Language Notes*, 72 (Dec., 1957), 569–72.

² Robert E. Schofield, *Mechanism and Materialism: British Natural Philosophy in an Age of Reason* (Princeton, 1970), pp. 122–28.

³ Kuhn, p. 570.

⁴ Anon., *An Abstract from the Works of John Hutchinson* (Edinburgh, 1753), p. 221. This work (henceforth *Abstract*) is cited frequently because there is evidence that Blake had read it. Its formulations are more concise than those of Hutchinson's unreduced works, and lend themselves more readily to selective quotation. Hebrew script is transliterated in square brackets according to the conventional notation. I am grateful to Richard Judd, recently of Keble College, for helping me with this.

⁵ *Abstract*, p. 229.

⁶ *Abstract*, p. 244.

⁷ J.H. [John Hutchinson], *The Religion of Satan, or Antichrist, Delineated* (London, 1736), p. 114.

⁸ *Abstract*, p. 136.

⁹ *Abstract*, p. 124.

¹⁰ *Abstract*, p. 222.

¹¹ *Abstract*, p. 222.

¹² *Abstract*, pp. 222–23.

¹³ (London, 1754), p. 53.

¹⁴ *Enquiry*, p. 54.

¹⁵ *Enquiry*, p. 65 n.

¹⁶ *Abstract*, p. 224.

¹⁷ *Abstract*, p. 157.

¹⁸ *Abstract*, p. 165.

¹⁹ *Hidden Riches: Traditional Symbolism from the Renaissance to Blake* (London, 1964), pp. 192, 198.

²⁰ John Byrom, *Miscellaneous Poems*, 2 vols. (Manchester, 1773), 2: 160–62.

²¹ *The Private Journal and Literary Remains of John Byrom*, ed. Richard Parkinson, D.D., F.S.A., 2 vols. in 2 parts each (being vols. 32, 34, 40 and 44 of *Remains Historical and Literary Connected with the Palatine Counties of Lancaster and Chester*, published by

the Chetham Society [Manchester 1854, 1855, 1856 and 1857]), 2: 23, 26, 131.

²² *Private Journal*, 2: 573–78.

²³ John Wood, *The Origin of Building; Or, The Plagiarism of the Heathens Detected* (Bath, 1741), p. 11. I am grateful to Morton Paley for reminding me about this work. Wood was also interested in Stonehenge, and believed that Druidism had spread across the world from Britain; *Choir Gaure, Vulgarly called Stonehenge* (Oxford, 1747), p. 12.

The Visual Context of "Joseph of Arimathea among The Rocks of Albion"

Dena Bain Taylor

When Blake came, later in life, to reengrave his youthful line engraving of Joseph of Arimathea, he added inscriptions which gave it a title, a provenance and an allegorical meaning. The title he engraved in the top right corner, and the provenance he acknowledged beneath the design: "Engraved by W Blake 1773 from an old Italian Drawing . . . Michael Angelo Pinxit." Blake's figure of Joseph derives from an unidentified figure in the bottom right corner of a fresco in the Pauline Chapel entitled "The Crucifixion of St. Peter." We do not know if Blake could also have seen a drawing or engraving of Michelangelo's *The Deposition*, but the figure helping the two Marys to support the fallen Christ—a figure which is very similar to Blake's—is in fact Joseph of Arimathea.¹

The allegorical meaning of the coming of Joseph of Arimathea to Britain Blake gives in his inscription: "This is One of the Gothic Artists who Built the Cathedrals in what we call the Dark Ages / Wandering about in sheep skins & goat skins of whom the World was not worthy/such were the Christians/in all ages. . . ." As David Bindman points out, "His rocky isolation and the grimness of his mission, as the inscription makes clear, are also emblematic of the fate in all ages of the artist, who brings the divine message to an unworthy world, yet is sustained by the light of Eternity, hinted at in the background."² There is, however, another allegory in Blake's engraving, related not to the inscription but to the visual context. For Blake took an unidentified figure out of the crowded context of "The Crucifixion of St. Peter" and placed it on Albion's Ancient Druid Rocky Shore, and in so doing placed the

figure into the context of the visual image of the British Druids which had been built up during the eighteenth century.

The eighteenth-century antiquaries composed their histories of the British Druids from the writings of the classical authors, from later traditions about the Druids, and from a goodly portion of purely imaginative speculation and inference. Aylett Sammes included a drawing depicting a Druid as a bearded sage in his *Britannia Antiqua Restaurata*, published in London, 1676. This was copied by Henry Rowlands in 1723 in his *Mona Antiqua Restaurata*—whose title alone betrays Rowlands' debt to Sammes—with small alterations. The Druid's feet now are shod in sandals; the book of ancient lore becomes a branch of the sacred oak; and prehistoric circular huts adorned with rather gothic spires now dot the background. The background was altered slightly when it was reengraved for the second edition, published in 1766 (illus.). There was a copy of Sammes' *Britannia* in the library of William Stukeley³ and Stukeley's rendition of a Druid sage was drawn in February 1723–24, and thus just after the publication of Rowlands' *Mona*. It was published as the frontispiece to *Stonehenge, A Temple restored to the British Druids* (1740), which we can be fairly certain Blake knew. Stukeley's figure again shows minor alterations—he has a shortened beard and a bronze age axe at his belt. His left hand no longer holds an oak branch, but he is standing beneath an oak tree. The background now contains barrows and a hill-fort appropriate to the Wiltshire downland. The most obvious difference, of course, is the reversal of the direction in which the head is turned.

A comparison of these renditions with Blake's shows many remarkable similarities. In all cases, the general stance and dress are very much alike, as is the expression on the face. Unlike the Druids of the antiquaries, however, Blake's Joseph bears no symbols of power or authority. Similarly, his clothing barely covers his muscular body as he stands by the cold sea against a background of dreary rocks from behind which the rays of the sun barely escape. Unlike the Druids of the antiquaries, he has no warm cloak, no sandals, no rolling hills and established settlement behind him.

To Bindman's assessment of the allegory of Joseph as artist, therefore, we must also add the significance of the Druid context for the engraving. Blake had received from the antiquaries—notably from Stukeley but very likely from others as well—particular ideas about the nature of the Christianity of ancient Britain. The eighteenth-century antiquaries speak of an original patriarchal religion which was the result of the divine knowledge and language given to Adam before the Fall. Adam communicated this knowledge to his posterity, and it was preserved by Noah and his sons after the Flood. The first inhabitants of Britain were Druids, by virtue of the