

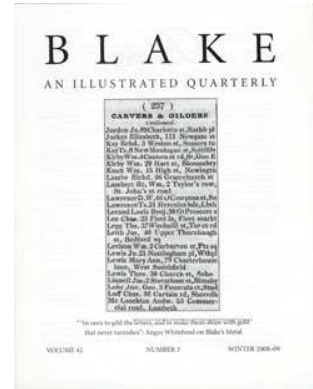
## AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY

# A R T I C L E

# “this extraordinary performance”: William Blake’s Use of Gold and Silver in the Creation of His Paintings and Illuminated Books

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"this extraordinary performance":  
William Blake's Use of Gold and Silver  
in the Creation of His Paintings  
and Illuminated Books

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*Author's note: Illustrations showing Blake's use of gold in Jerusalem copy E pls. 14, 63, and 97, as well as color photographs demonstrating the gilding process, are online at the journal's web site <<http://www.blakequarterly.org>>.*

EVIDENCE of how William and Catherine Blake displayed their watercolors, temperas, and intaglio and relief-etched prints at their final residence together, two rooms on the first floor of 3 Fountain Court, Strand, is all but non-

An earlier version of this paper was read at the William Blake at Work conference, Tate Britain, 30 Apr. 2004. Much of the material derives from my MA dissertation, "my present precincts," and my PhD thesis, "New Discoveries." For help of various kinds I wish to thank Anna Lou Ashby, Keri Davies, Sarah Jones, Tim Linnell, Bronwyn Ormsby, Hattie Parry-Williams, Troy Patenaude, Carole Towers, Alex Watson, and Scott Wilcox, and especially Martin Butlin, Rebecca Donnan, Robert N. Essick, Michael Gregory, Joyce Townsend, Joseph Viscomi, and my generous thesis supervisor, Michael Phillips.

I have had the opportunity to examine carefully the plates of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* copy W at King's College Library, Cambridge, the tempera panel *Winter* during the William Blake: Inspiration and Illustration exhibition at the Graves Art Gallery, Sheffield, 9 Aug.-1 Nov. 2003, and *Jerusalem* copy E and the tempera *The Virgin and Child* at the Yale Center for British Art, New Haven. However, both my arguments concerning Blake's use of metal-based paints in parts 1 and 2 and the tabulated information in tables 1 and 2 are largely derived from earlier Blake scholarship and published and unpublished research at the Tate and elsewhere. *William Blake: The Painter at Work*, ed. Joyce Townsend, senior conservation scientist at the Tate, provides important new information concerning Blake's use of metal-based paints in the temperas, based upon detailed materials analysis of a number of works.

Although similarly thorough analysis of Blake's use of metal-based materials in the creation and finishing of his illuminated books has yet to be carried out, several scholars have briefly discussed the finishing of specific works. See Phillips 108; Paley, *William Blake: Jerusalem* 15-16; Lincoln 22; Essick and Viscomi, *William Blake: Milton a Poem* 38, 41; and the *William Blake Archive*, "Update on the William Blake Archive" entries dated 17 Apr. 2000, 5 Mar. 2001, Mar. 2003 <<http://www.blakearchive.org/blake/public/all-updates.html>>. In *Blake Books*, Bentley has recorded the majority of the illuminated books Blake finished in gold and silver. For the dating in table 2, I have consulted Joseph Viscomi's chronological table in his *Blake and the Idea of the Book*. This essay discusses metal material Blake applied to the designs and/or texts of his illuminated books during his lifetime, not gilding of the cut edges of books or the posthumous

existent.<sup>1</sup> However, a marginal annotation by a member of their circle may provide some clues concerning the Blakes' last public viewing space. Almost forty years ago, G. E. Bentley, Jr., discussed a faintly sketched plan of the Blakes' rooms drawn by George Richmond, a regular visitor between 1825 and 1827, in his copy of Gilchrist's 1863 biography of Blake.<sup>2</sup> Bentley interprets the two rectangles on a wall in the front room as the front windows of the flat. However, as Frederick William Fairholt's 1858 woodcut indicates, 3 Fountain Court was an early Georgian terrace, built with two rooms on each floor, one directly behind, rather than adjacent to, the other.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the wall in question, rather than being the front of the house, must have been the supporting wall between 3 and 4 Fountain Court, and could not have featured windows.<sup>4</sup> The rectangles probably represent two of the "frescos, temperas, and drawings of Blake's" which, according to Gilchrist, hung on the paneled walls of the front room.<sup>5</sup> If this is the case, then the larger rectangle may represent a lost painting and one of the few works identified as hanging on the walls at Fountain Court, Blake's seven-foot-high tempera of *The Last Judgment* (c. 1810-27?).<sup>6</sup> Blake may have chosen to hang it adjacent to the right of the two front windows in order to capitalize on what northeastern light there was available in this reportedly rather dark reception room and showroom.<sup>7</sup>

In the months following Blake's death, John Thomas Smith, keeper of prints and drawings at the British Museum, called upon Catherine perhaps at Fountain Court or, more probably, at her lodgings from mid-September 1827 until mid-1828 at the artist John Linnell's town house and studio, 6 Cirencester Place, Fitzroy Square. During his visit, Smith examined *The*

application of gold and/or silver. Morton Paley is judiciously cautious in his description of the nature of the metal used on *Jerusalem* copy E, but cites the analytical research of Theresa Fairbanks, paper conservator at the Yale Center for British Art, which indicates that "both gold coloured metal leaf and silver coloured metal leaf were employed, as well as gold coloured powder" (*William Blake: Jerusalem* 15). Although my discovery discussed in part 3 suggests that Blake could indeed have used gold and silver material in a number of illuminated books, further materials analysis is required to establish this conclusively.

1. In a letter to Alexander Gilchrist dated 23 Aug. 1855, Samuel Palmer recalls that "[Blake] delighted in Ovid, and, as a labour of love, had executed a finished picture from the *Metamorphoses*, after Giulio Romano. This design hung in his [back] room, and, close by his engraving table, Albert Dürer's *Melancholy the Mother of Invention* ..." (quoted in Bentley, *Blake Records* [hereafter *BR*(2)] 752fn). However, no reliable account of works hanging in the Blakes' front room survives.

2. Bentley, "William Blake" 44-45. Richmond's plan is reproduced in Whitehead, "No. 3 Fountain Court, Strand" 22 (pl. 4).

3. See *BR*(2) pl. 67.

4. For further information concerning the Blakes' last living space, see Whitehead, "No. 3 Fountain Court, Strand."

5. A. Gilchrist 305.

6. Whitehead, "No. 3 Fountain Court, Strand" 28 and n55.

7. See Richmond's comment to Herbert Harlakenden Gilchrist (c. 1885), quoted in *BR*(2) 753. The houses on the opposite side of this narrow court also limited the light reaching the front room; see Whitehead, "No. 3 Fountain Court, Strand" 22 (pl. 3).

*Last Judgment*. In the second volume of his biography of the sculptor Joseph Nollekens, published the following year, he observes:

Had [Blake] fortunately lived till the next year's exhibition at Somerset-house, the public would then have been astonished at his exquisite finishing of a Fresco picture of the Last Judgment, containing upwards of one thousand figures, many of them wonderfully conceived and grandly drawn. The lights of this extraordinary performance have the appearance of silver and gold; but upon Mrs. Blake's assuring me that there was no silver used, I found, upon a closer examination, that a blue wash had been passed over those parts of the gilding which receded, and the lights of the forward objects, which were also of gold, were heightened with a warm colour, to give the appearance of the two metals.<sup>8</sup>

Catherine was clearly in a position to speak knowledgeably of the materials her husband had used. However, research carried out at the Tate and discussed in *William Blake: The Painter at Work* demonstrates that Blake *did* use silver, gold-silver alloy, and other metal-based paints as well as gold in a number of his paintings.

### 1. Blake's Use of Gold and Other Metals, 1775-1827

Henry Fuseli, writing around 1820, alludes to "Fresco" as "a method of painting almost as much out of use as public encouragement ...."<sup>9</sup> Similarly, gold and other metal-based paints appear rarely to have been utilized by British artists from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century.<sup>10</sup> However, Blake used such materials in a variety of works throughout his artistic career. According to Martin Butlin, gold appears in Blake's work as early as c. 1775. It features in six of the designs for illustrations to Joseph Ayloffe's *Some Ancient Monuments in Westminster Abbey* (1780), and has also been traced in four of the drawings for Richard Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments of Great Britain* part 1 (1786) (see table 1a). He produced both sets of designs while still an apprentice to James Basire, official engraver to the Society of Antiquaries.<sup>11</sup> Gold appears in Blake's own designs in the mid-to-late 1790s, towards the end of what appears to have been a rare period of relative financial indepen-

dence for the poet-artist and his wife, while they resided at 13 Hercules Buildings, Lambeth (see table 1b). Traces of gold leaf and shell gold (powdered gold leaf mixed with honey and ox-gall and applied as a paint) are evident on the first pull of the large color print *Naomi Entreating Ruth and Orpah to Return to the Land of Moab* (c. 1795).<sup>12</sup> Blake appears first to have used gold material on a painting when creating one of the fifty-four surviving temperas on a biblical theme painted for his patron Thomas Butts, *Eve Tempted by the Serpent* (c. 1799-1800).<sup>13</sup>

Blake may also have used gold during his residence at Felpham, Sussex, in 1800-03 under the poet and biographer William Hayley's patronage. In that period he probably painted three works believed to have been created as mantels for a fireplace at Cowper's cousin and Hayley's friend Rev. John Johnson's rectory at Yaxham, Norfolk. In his catalogue, Butlin dates the three panel paintings, *Winter* (illus. 1), *Evening* (illus. 2), and *Olney Bridge*, c. 1820-25.<sup>14</sup> Ormsby, Singer, and Dean cite these works as examples of Blake's "improved confidence and skill in the handling of paint" in the period 1821-26.<sup>15</sup> However, in response to my query, and drawing upon stylistic and biographical evidence, Butlin now admits the possibility that all three works were painted twenty years earlier, during Blake's years at Felpham.<sup>16</sup> The materials of *Winter*, acquired

12. Cahaner McManus and Townsend note that gold leaf was applied "to the still-wet paint soon after printing. ... the shell gold ... used more extensively in this print contains a gold-silver alloy.... This would not have been as expensive as pure gold" ("The Large Colour Prints" 94). Although this has yet to be verified, gold-silver alloy appears to have been used on several of the plates in *Jerusalem* copy E (for example, pl. 23, reclining winged figure).

13. Ormsby, Townsend, Singer, and Dean, "Blake's Use" 137.

14. Butlin, *Paintings and Drawings* [hereafter B] #808-10; see also Butlin, *William Blake* 167.

15. Ormsby, Singer, and Dean 131-32.

16. "Looking at the reproductions of *Winter* and *Evening* again I am not quite so absolutely definite that the pictures must be as late as I stated. There was a curious period in 1803 when Blake's technique became very loose and it is just possible, given the difference in technique and the present state of the temperas, that they could have been painted at about the same time as such watercolours as *The Angel of the Divine Presence Clothing Adam and Eve with Coats of Skins* and *The Dutiful Daughter-in-Law*, both of which are signed and dated 1803 (my numbers B. 436 and 456). This of course would put the paintings nearer to Blake's known contacts with [John] Johnson" (letter to the author, 20 Oct. 2003).

According to a letter from Mary Barham Johnson, great-granddaughter of John Johnson, to her cousin(?) Charles, 8 Mar. 1971,

Yaxham Rectory was built in 1820-21, but as Johnny had been hoping to build for 20 years, Blake may have done the panels years earlier—They are never mentioned in the letters we have. The only hint is in one from Johnny to his wife when the house was nearly finished saying that he agreed that plain mantels were best. The ones erected were of black marble I think ... I wonder if [William] Hayley commissioned them [i.e., Blake's paintings] & they were sent after his death [1820].

My thanks to Martin Butlin for this information. His tentatively revised dating concurs with Bentley; see BR(2) 116fn. The present owner of Yaxham rectory, David Wright, recalls a conversation with the previous owner, who said that before structural modifications took place in the second half of the twentieth century, the fireplaces were of black marble,

8. BR(2) 617.

9. Royal Academy "Lecture IX.—Colour.—Oil Painting," reprinted in Wornum 515.

10. One exception appears to have been Joseph Wright of Derby. Jones describes Wright's use of gold and silver leaf, with oil paint applied on top, to depict a lamp and glowing metal in two pictures from the period 1768-71 (268). However, unlike Blake's works featuring gold or silver, "in neither case is one meant to be aware of the gold with the naked eye." Jones suggests that Wright "did not think the experiment worth pursuing." She also cites a 1795 treatise on painting which describes the use of metal leaf.

11. Although staff at the Society of Antiquaries (Ayloffe) and the Bodleian Library (Gough) have been unable to confirm this, the gold in these works was almost certainly applied as shell gold (see Lister 56; Mason and Gregory).



1. William Blake, *Winter* (1800-03?), tempera on pine. Tate T02387. © Tate, London.

by the Tate in 1979, have not been analyzed, but a 2003 condition report records "numerous ... gilding ... losses."<sup>17</sup> My own examination, in October 2003, suggests that significant traces of gold material remain on nine areas of the panel support, and that a great deal more had originally been applied to the work.<sup>18</sup> In 1999 Rebecca Donnan, then Andrew W. Mellon fellow in advanced paper conservation at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, examined the companion work, *Evening*. She observed that it also bears evidence of an application of a considerable amount of gold, much of which appears to have dislodged from the surface of the poor-quality pine support.<sup>19</sup> It seems likely that Blake also applied a similar quantity

as Mary Barham Johnson remembered (telephone conversation with the author, 12 June 2005).

The possibility that these paintings were executed c. 1803 potentially complicates any theory of uninterrupted progress in the development of Blake's painting technique. The revised dating suggests that he had used a successful technique in the creation of his temperas twenty years earlier than previously thought and then apparently abandoned it until the last years of his life. This anomaly was perhaps born out of the unique nature of Johnson's commission and the consequent necessity of using a pine support.

Johnson was a cousin of Cowper, who had died at Johnson's house in East Dereham on 25 Apr. 1800. The three works allude explicitly to sections of book 4 of Cowper's *The Task*. Between 1800 and 1802 Hayley researched his biography of Cowper; during the new year of 1802 Johnson visited Hayley at Felpham and met Blake, who painted a miniature of him (*BR*(2) 116-17). It is therefore likely that Johnson commissioned the works in early Jan. 1802.

17. Susan Breen, condition report on *Winter* for loan to Graves Gallery, Sheffield, summer 2003, Tate Conservation Department records.

18. I noted what appeared to be thick shell gold on the top left-hand corner and at intervals along the left-hand edge of the support. Gold-based paint was also evident on the top right-hand fork and the base of the leafless branch/quill held by Winter, on both of his sleeves, the rim of his hood, on the coils of the serpent enveloping him, and on the hem of his robe. There are also prominent traces of gold-based paint around the base of his throne, described by Cowper as "A sliding car indebted to no wheels, / But urged by storms along its slipp'ry way" (see *The Task* 4:120-29).

19. Archibald G. B. Russell writes that "between [*Evening*]'s breasts is a crescent moon of gold, and around her are many golden stars" (*William Blake* [1947] 25). Russell's observations are confirmed by Donnan's findings (telephone conversation, 21 Oct. 2002); her unpublished research is our most authoritative source of information on gold-based materials in this work. According to Pamela Betts, then Culpeper fellow in painting conservation at the National Gallery of Art, "there is no existing conservation file on the painting" (email, 22 Nov. 2004). In an examination of the work in Mar. 1990, conservator Ann Hoenigswald concluded, "there seems to have been very extensive loss of the gold" (email from Betts, 12 May 2005). Blake appears to have used gold to enhance his illustration of lines 251-58 from book 4 of *The Task*, in which Cowper describes *Evening* as

Not sumptuously adorn'd, nor needing aid  
Like homely featur'd night, of clust'ring gems,  
A star or two just twinkling on thy brow  
Suffices thee; save that the moon is thine  
No less than hers, not worn indeed on high  
With ostentatious pageantry, but set  
With modest grandeur in thy purple zone,  
Resplendent less, but of an ampler round.

of gold to the lost companion frieze, *Olney Bridge*.<sup>20</sup> *Winter, Evening, and Olney Bridge* may therefore be some of Blake's earlier, if not altogether successful, experiments in a relatively extensive use of gold in tempera painting.

Metal leaf has also been traced on six of Blake's surviving temperas on canvas and one watercolor from the period c. 1800-09. He showed five of the six temperas at his 1809-10 one-man exhibition on the vacant first floor of the home and hosiery shop of his brother James at 28 Broad Street, Golden Square.<sup>21</sup> In his commentary on *The Spiritual Form of Pitt* in the *Descriptive Catalogue* which accompanied the exhibition, Blake wrote:

This Picture also is a proof of the power of colours unsullied with oil or with any cloggy vehicle. ... All the genuine old little Pictures, called Cabinet Pictures, are in fresco and not in oil. Oil was not used except by blundering ignorance, till after Vandyke's time, but the art of fresco painting being lost, oil became a fetter to genius, and a dungeon to art. But one convincing proof among many others, that these assertions are true is, that real gold and silver cannot be used with oil, as they are in all the old pictures and in Mr. B.'s frescos. (E 530, 531)

The paintings in the exhibition featuring "real gold and silver"<sup>22</sup> were *The Spiritual Form of Nelson*, *The Spiritual Form of Pitt*, *Sir Jeffery Chaucer and the Nine and Twenty Pilgrims on Their Journey to Canterbury*, *The Bard, from Gray*, and *Satan Calling Up His Legions—An Experiment Picture*.<sup>23</sup> In *Nelson*

Tate records suggest losses of gold leaf and other metal on other works by Blake. In her analysis of *The Bard*, Bronwyn Ormsby records that gold leaf "does not seem to have adhered well anywhere on the surface" (conservation report, 2001, Tate Conservation Department records).

20. *Olney Bridge* was "apparently painted in a long format to run across the top of the same chimney-piece as was flanked by [*Winter and Evening*]" (B #810). It may have resembled the engraving and description of the bridge in [E. W. Brayley,] *Cowper, Illustrated by a Series of Views, in, or near, the Park of Weston-Underwood, Bucks* (London, 1803), which Blake may have seen and used as his source. See Wright 1:131; Whitehead, "William Blake's Subsidiary Design" 319.

21. The sixth tempera is the Petworth House version of *Satan Calling Up His Legions*. This has "a more restrained use of gold" than the earlier version (Ormsby, Singer, and Dean 126). Another work which may have featured gold is the untraced *Spiritual Form of Napoleon* (c. 1809?/1822?). Palmer may have purchased the work from Blake or his widow c. 1825-31.

For a demonstration of the likelihood that "Blake had two exhibitions: one in 1809 and another in 1810," see Patenaude 63n44.

22. With the exception of *Chaucer*, silver-based material is present in these works only in the form of the cheaper gold-silver alloy Blake appears to have been using during this period (see Townsend, appendix 6).

23. In a note following the entry for *Satan Calling Up His Legions* in the *Descriptive Catalogue*, Blake claims that this and other "experiment Pictures have been bruized and knocked about ... to try all experiments" (E 548). The fact that he was willing to or indeed could afford to use gold-based materials on this "experiment Picture" with little hope of finally selling the painting is interesting. It also anticipates his later use of gold-based materials on works that appear to have had no certain patron or market, such as the *Genesis* manuscript and *Jerusalem* copy E (see below).



2. William Blake, *Evening* (1800-03?), tempera on pine. 1990.22.1./PA, gift of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Hanes. Courtesy of the Board of Trustees, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

and Chaucer a limited use of metal leaf is evident. By contrast, a considerably more generous application is apparent in *Pitt, The Bard*, and *Satan Calling Up His Legions*. Around the time of the exhibition, *Nelson* and *Chaucer* were purchased by Butts, along with a watercolor featuring a similarly restrained use of gold.<sup>24</sup> The likelihood that *Pitt, The Bard*, and *Satan Calling Up His Legions* remained in Blake's studio until his death suggests the possibility that he added more gold material to these paintings sometime during the period 1810-27.

Troy Patenaude has recently attempted to recreate the arrangement of the sixteen pictures in the exhibition. He suggests that it began with *Pitt* and *Nelson*, hanging next to one another, taking up most of the available horizontal space on the partition wall in the smaller of the two rooms. They directly faced *Chaucer*. Patenaude concludes that *Pitt* and *Nelson* "were meant to be hung together as companion pieces."<sup>25</sup> Pigment analysis undertaken at the Tate and tabulated in appendix 6 of *The Painter at Work* indicates that Blake used very similar materials in the creation of these two temperas. For these reasons it seems likely that the pair appeared more similar when exhibited side by side in 1809-10 than they do today. The difference may be explained in part by the subsequent histories and present poor condition of the two works.<sup>26</sup> However, it is also possible that Blake altered the appearance of *Pitt* and added metal leaf sometime after the exhibition.<sup>27</sup> About 1809 he also painted a number of miniatures on enamel supports for Butts and his family,<sup>28</sup> and it is very likely that he followed the common practice of adding gold leaf to paint media in order to enhance the luster of each miniature.<sup>29</sup>

During the period 1810-15 Blake appears to have used metal-based paints and leaf less frequently in the creation of his paintings (see tables 1b and 1c).<sup>30</sup> In just one instance, the

large tempera *An Allegory of the Spiritual Condition of Man* (1811?), he made use of shell gold to sign the work.<sup>31</sup> The few surviving biographical records relating to the Blakes' remaining years at 17 South Molton Street suggest that this time of national economic depression was also a period of considerable poverty and isolation for the couple.<sup>32</sup> One contemporary record gives some indication of just how expensive gold leaf would have been. In 1812 the leading framemaker and carver and gilder John Smith of Swallow Street, Piccadilly, recorded in his day book that fourteen books of gold leaf (each comprising twenty-five sheets measuring three-and-a-quarter inches square) had cost him £1.6.0.<sup>33</sup> According to Bentley's estimates of Blake's accounts during this period, such a figure is likely to have amounted to more than a week's income.<sup>34</sup> For those temperas and drawings with gold and other metal leaf, Blake must have used only a fraction of the material Smith needed to gild a picture frame. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely

31. See Keynes, *Tempera Paintings* 11; Bindman, *William Blake* 32. This work, along with several others featuring gold, appears to have been commissioned by Butts (see tables 1b and 1c).

32. George Cumberland called on Blake on the afternoon of Friday 3 June 1813 and described him in his pocket book as "still poor still Dirty" (BL Add. MSS. 36,520D, f. 182, quoted in BR(2) 316). On the evening of Thursday 20 Apr. 1815 Cumberland's sons George and Sydney found the Blakes "drinking Tea, dirtier than ever" (BL Add. MSS. 36,505, f. 63, quoted in BR(2) 320). Anthony Dyson observes that "life was to be difficult for many artists throughout the Napoleonic Wars [1800-15] and beyond," partly due to the "general economic depression [and] ... popularity of 'old masters'—or pictures which would pass for them" (11-12). Linnell recalled that in 1818 "everything in Art was at a low ebb then" (manuscript "Autobiography of John Linnell," quoted in BR(2) 341).

33. V&A National Art Library, 86.CC.1, John Smith day book, entry for 17 Mar. 1812, cited in Simon 144. I am grateful to Hattie Parry-Williams at Arnold Wiggins and Sons for bringing this information to my attention. In Aug. 1827 Smith made a frame for William Collins's *Scene at Folkestone*, and noted that to gild the frame in oil and burnished gold required twelve books of gold and twelve leaves of another book (Simon 144).

In his prospectus of 10 Oct. 1793, Blake advertises copies of "Songs of Innocence" and "Songs of Experience" at 5 shillings each (E 692). A quarter of a century later, in his letter to Dawson Turner of 9 June 1818 (E 771), he offers copies of the same works at 3 guineas each. In a letter to Cumberland dated 12 Apr. 1827, Blake gives the price of a copy of "Songs of Inn. & Exp." as 10 guineas (E 784). This is not merely, as is the case with other illuminated books priced for Cumberland, "one to two pounds higher than in 1818," as Visconti suggests (363). Rather, the work has almost doubled in price. This is the price that a customer, probably Thomas Griffiths Wainwright, paid for copy X of *Songs*, finished in gold, after Apr. 1827 (E 784; Bentley, *Blake Books* [hereafter BB] 423). Ten guineas is also the amount that John Jebb, Bishop of Limerick, paid Catherine for *Songs* copy W, also finished in gold-based paint, on 3 Mar. 1830 (BR(2) 509). It is possible but by no means certain that the dramatic rise in price for *Songs* partly reflects Blake's regular use of metal-based paint in the finishing of copies during this period. However, this theory is countered, or at least complicated, by the fact that Henry Crabb Robinson's and Elizabeth Aders's copies of *Songs* Z (featuring gold-based paint) and AA (featuring no gold), purchased in Apr. and July 1826 respectively, both appear to have cost 5 guineas (BR(2) 704, 776).

34. BR(2) 810. Of course, some records of his income during this period are likely to have been lost.

24. *Satan, Sin and Death: Satan Comes to the Gates of Hell*, one of the twelve illustrations to Milton's *Paradise Lost*: the large Butts set.

25. Patenaude 54. His findings therefore support Paley's earlier assertion concerning the two paintings; see *Energy* chapter 7: "The World without Imagination: Blake's Visions of Leviathan and Behemoth."

26. Much of the original paint on *Nelson* was lost due to damage during the Millbank flood in 1928 (Ormsby, technical report, 2002, Tate Conservation Department records).

27. According to Ormsby, Singer, and Dean, Blake "applied [gold leaf] to an oil size and worked [it] into the surface, probably with a brush" (124). They also observe that "significant periods of time must have passed between paint applications, which is not surprising, as Blake is reported to have returned to his works for periods of years after they were commenced" (125). Blake may also have added gold material to his temperas years later.

David Fallon suggests that the use of gold and silver in *Pitt* and *Nelson* is significant "because of the critique [Blake] seems to be making regarding the idolatry of these public figures" (email, 16 Jan. 2006). He adds that through the use of gold and silver Blake may be making a biblical allusion to Nebuchadnezzar's golden statue; see also Fallon.

28. See B #376-78; for evidence of all three miniatures' having been executed about 1809, see Crosby.

29. Lister 49.

30. However, gold material can be traced in two illuminated books from this period (see table 2).

that Blake often had the means to use gold and silver extensively during this time.<sup>35</sup>

However, from about 1815 Blake began to use metal leaf, and especially gold, in his paintings and illuminated books with unprecedented frequency. Six temperas, five watercolors, two separate relief-etched plates, and the second version of a title page of a manuscript feature either small pieces of gold or silver leaf or shell gold or silver or gold-silver alloy (see table 1c). Such works include the temperas *The Ghost of a Flea*, *The Virgin and Child*, *The Body of Abel Found by Adam and Eve*, and the watercolor *Epitome of James Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs*. In addition, Blake's *Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins* is signed in gold.<sup>36</sup> Nineteen illuminated books lavishly colored and finished c. 1818-27 also have metal material, almost certainly gold and occasionally silver (see table 2).<sup>37</sup> Such works include one copy each of *America*, *Europe*, *Jerusalem*, *The Book of Thel*, and *The First Book of Urizen*, two copies of *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* and *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*, three copies of *Milton*, and six (or possibly seven) copies of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience*. The metals appear to have been applied quite distinctively on a number of works. On *Marriage* copy I, which Blake appears to have produced for the writer, painter, and poisoner Thomas Griffiths Wainewright,

35. From 1812 until 1818 Blake appears to have ceased printing his illuminated books (Viscomi 379). Viscomi identifies ten copies printed in 1818; of these, six were finished in gold (see table 2). However, it is possible that these works were colored and finished several years after they were printed. Two illuminated books probably finished in gold-based paint before 1818 are *Innocence* copies R/Y and S. In the early 1820s the financial situation became so extreme for Blake that he sold his print collection. In late June 1822 the Royal Academy described Blake as "an able Designer & Engraver laboring under great distress" and shortly afterwards awarded him the sum of £25 (see Bentley, *Stranger* 395 and fn).

36. See B #480.

37. Some are works probably printed at 13 Hercules Buildings, Lambeth, three decades earlier (for example, *Marriage* copy H, printed 1790/93; *Songs* copies R and N, printed 1795), or at 17 South Molton Street (for example, *Milton* copies B, C, and D; *Thel* copy O; *Urizen* copy G; *Visions* copies N and O). Such works may have been hand colored and finished at a later date. Essick and Viscomi suggest that "the use of liquified gold in the colouring of [*Milton*] copy D may have stimulated Blake's return to copy C to add both gold and silver highlights" (*William Blake: Milton a Poem* 41n19). However, there is evidence that metal-based paint was applied posthumously on the leaves of *Songs* copy K (Viscomi 299-302). Townsend has observed that the term "liquified gold" used by several Blake scholars is potentially misleading; liquified gold would cool and set to metal at room temperature (email, 5 Mar. 2005).

The metals appear to have been applied to Blake's illuminated books in the form of shell gold. However, Blake occasionally used crushed gold leaf (for example, *Milton* copy D, where gold leaf has been crushed into the color-printed surface of areas of the title page and pls. 13, 18, 32, and 37; see *A Catalogue of the Gifts of Lessing J. Rosenwald*, no. 1810; Phillips 108).

Between c. 1811 and 1812 and between c. 1818 and 1827 Blake finished twenty-two copies of his illuminated books in gold and/or other metals (see table 2). At least two copies were sold posthumously. Eight identified customers purchased fifteen copies, and four of these customers purchased more than one: John Linnell (four), Thomas Griffiths Wainewright (three), James Vine (two), and Henry Crabb Robinson

and *Urizen* copy G, the application of gold is obvious.<sup>38</sup> In *Marriage* copy I, thick shell gold has been applied (perhaps smeared) in places almost indiscriminately. However, in *Songs* copy W, unsold at Blake's death and characterized by Catherine as Blake's own copy, grains of shell gold have been applied in what Andrew Lincoln describes as "light granular washes" on all fifty-four plates.<sup>39</sup> Such finishing is often only perceptible in reflected natural sunlight and has yet to be captured fully in reproduction.

Blake even utilized gold on the unfinished second title page of the *Genesis* manuscript (c. 1826-27). This suggests either that the potential supply was plentiful enough for use on an unfinished manuscript or that he had already decided that this page was to be part of the final work. In either case, Blake appears to be using gold not merely as a finishing touch, but as an integral element in at least one work with no prospective buyer. This also reinforces the argument that a limited amount of metal leaf was freely available to Blake during this period.<sup>40</sup>

However, the work on which Blake used metal material with the most ingenuity and variety was *Jerusalem* copy E: he applied shell gold to fifteen of the one hundred plates.<sup>41</sup> A careful examination of the first two plates under magnification suggests that in some areas he applied shell gold using a pen as if it were ink.<sup>42</sup> Although in places the application seems as

(two). Often copies were finished in the same style for the same customer. For example, *Milton* copy D and *Thel* copy O were similarly colored and finished in gold for Vine, and *America* copy O and *Europe* copy K for Linnell. Perhaps Blake offered Vine, Linnell, and other customers the option of gold finishing when discussing the commission. Interestingly, the earliest buyer of an illuminated book featuring gold we can identify with some confidence, John, second Baron Dimsdale (probable purchaser of *Innocence* copy R/Y, c. 1811), appears to have had antiquarian interests; see John Leigh Corfield, "Oldfield, Henry George (fl. c. 1785-1805)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [hereafter ODNB].

38. *Songs* copy U, apparently sold before Feb. 1822 to the barrister and Shakespeare scholar James Boswell, Jr. (BB 383n7), appears to feature a similar amount of gold. According to Margaret Sherry Rich, reference library archivist, Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Library, copy U "is lavishly decorated in gold .... The gold is easily visible, thus I would say thickly applied" (email, 22 Nov. 2004).

39. Lincoln 22.

40. In response to my inquiry, Robert Essick observed: "I very much doubt that Blake would start the *Genesis* MS project late in his life without a specific commission, very probably from Linnell. As with the *Job* and *Dante* projects, payment from Linnell was not 'on completion' but throughout the project, with some up-front money for basic costs. Thus, Linnell may have provided enough up-front funds to pay for the gold—or any other needed supplies; he may even have specified the use of gold. I can't recall any payments for the *Genesis* MS in the Linnell accounts [there are none], but I don't think that absolutely rules out Linnell's financial involvement" (email, 30 July 2004). However, Essick also noted that "the use of gold in *Jerusalem* copy E does indicate that Blake was capable of using that material in an 'on spec' project—that is, one for which he had no specific patron or customer prior to completion."

41. Pls. 1, 2, 14, 23, 25, 47, 59, 63, 75, 76, 81, 84, 94, 97, 100.

42. See, for example, the ruled gold lines radiating from the lamp in pl. 1, of the same width as the pen marks Blake uses to highlight the plate, and the title written partly in gold (pl. 2) (observed under magnification,

clumsy and as indiscriminate as in plates of *Marriage* copy I,<sup>43</sup> on other plates gold material is applied with dazzlingly innovative care.<sup>44</sup> In addition, it is evident that Blake utilized at least four distinct shades of metal leaf in this work.<sup>45</sup>

Beyond *Jerusalem* copy E and possibly the Genesis manuscript there may have been other "on spec" projects with gold-based paint. As noted, Blake's tempera *The Last Judgment* featuring gold was still in his widow's possession after August 1827. This is particularly significant if, as Smith suggests, Blake intended to show the work at the Royal Academy exhibition in May 1828, after not exhibiting at Somerset House for almost two decades. At his death Blake also left *Songs* copy W finished in gold with no customer. After his death Palmer may even have purchased from Catherine or from Frederick Tatham three works featuring metal material: *Pitt, The Bard*, and the "experiment Picture" *Satan Calling Up His Legions*.<sup>46</sup> Each of these works has metal-based paint, some of which may have been added as late as the 1820s.

## 2. Blake and Contemporary Gilding Techniques<sup>47</sup>

In his study of Blake's techniques, Raymond Lister suggests that to apply gold to his works Blake would have needed to

Department of Prints and Drawings, Yale Center for British Art, 11-12 Apr. 2006).

43. See, for example, pls. 1, 23.

44. See the profusion of carefully placed highlights in the hair of the recumbent figure at the bottom of pl. 2. On the same figure the middle section of her right wing features parallel pen marks in gold which echo the effects of the line engraving from the etched copperplate. See also pl. 47 where, in the space between the right-hand figure's left hand and head, Blake has gone over a larger patch of lighter gold with a blue watercolor wash, producing a silvery-blue effect. This is the only instance I have discovered of Blake's painting over gold material in an illuminated book.

45. These are gold leaf, the metal color used most frequently (see plates listed in note 41). Paley suggests that Blake uses gold and silver in this work (*William Blake: Jerusalem* 15), but Blake appears to use a variety of colored metals. In some plates a distinctly lighter gold (in some cases perhaps a gold-silver alloy) is utilized (pls. 23, 25, 47, 59, 97). He also uses silver (pls. 23, 75, and perhaps 97) and occasionally a reddish gold (pls. 25, 59). In pl. 25 three small red-tinged specks, flame-like in shape, have been applied just above the right-hand figure's pubic region. These specks appear to echo the vegetal-looking lines in the background revealed in the space between her waist and the back of her upper left arm.

46. Between c. 1831 and 1863 the Cumbrian barrister, landowner, and collector George Blamire (1788-1863) purchased *The Ancient of Days* copy F from Tatham, who had acquired the work from Blake just before the latter's death (BB 109). In addition to *Jerusalem* copy E, Blamire also owned two other works by Blake which feature metal material, the color print *Naomi Entreating Ruth and Orpah* and the tempera *The Virgin and Child*, the latter acquired after Blake's death, almost certainly via Catherine or Tatham (see B #299, 674). Tatham appears to have acquired another work featuring gold, *The First Temptation*, from Catherine on her death in Oct. 1831 (B #546).

47. Much of this section draws upon the most reliable late-twentieth-century account of traditional gilding methods, Mason and Gregory's *Of Gilding*.

be a reasonably proficient gilder.<sup>48</sup> However, in most cases, Blake's metal-based material appears to have been applied as small pieces of leaf or as shell gold, and not as full sheets of metal leaf as used by a trained carver and gilder of wooden furniture or picture frames. Donnan's examination of a number of works suggests that Blake often used metal-based paints in an idiosyncratic manner hardly resembling the methods of a professional gilder.<sup>49</sup> According to Donnan, he could have applied scraps of metal leaf to a work's surface with a moistened brush, or even by hand, while the paint was still tacky.

Nevertheless, according to recent research conducted at the Tate, Blake does appear to have emulated traditional gilding practices in several works. Analysis of *The Ghost of a Flea*, *Pitt, The Bard*, and *The Body of Abel* suggests that Blake, like a carver and gilder, gilded onto a preparatory surface of bole (or oil size) over gesso.<sup>50</sup> He also appears to have used a technique of both gilders and watercolor painters, applying an underlayer of pigment such as vermilion before the metal material in shell or leaf form in order to affect the appearance of the gold.<sup>51</sup> An examination of other works indicates that Blake also occasionally used two recognizable gilding techniques after he had applied gold leaf.

The first is glazing, as described above in Smith's account of *The Last Judgment*. Ormsby, Singer, and Dean suggest that the identification of a gold-silver alloy in *The Bard* and *Satan Calling Up His Legions* "renders Smith's rejection of Blake's use of silver leaf in ... *The Last Judgment* ... a little less certain."<sup>52</sup> However, several factors suggest that Smith was correct in asserting that "there was no silver used." First, Catherine Blake, who informed Smith that what he had mistaken for silver was actually gold, should be considered a reliable source. She had lived and worked closely with Blake for almost half a century, taking responsibility for printing from their rolling press and preparing colors as well as coloring and finishing a number of copies of the illuminated books. As Tatham, who knew her well, especially during the last five years of her life, describes in his "Life of Blake" (c. 1832):

She even laboured upon his Works[,] those parts of them where powers of Drawing & form were not necessary, which

48. Lister 56.

49. Donnan examined *Evening* and *The Overthrow of Apollo* in 1999, while Mellon fellow in advanced paper conservation, National Gallery of Art, Washington. Blake's experimentation is also evident in his unorthodox use of materials when color printing his illuminated books in the 1790s (see Phillips chapter 5: "Colour-Printing *Songs of Experience*"; Essick and Visconti, "An Inquiry" part 3: "Blake's Color Printing Methods").

50. Ormsby, Singer, and Dean 124. See also energy-dispersive X-ray analysis (EDX) notes by Ormsby for *The Bard* and *The Body of Abel*, 2002, Tate Conservation Department records.

51. Ormsby, Singer, and Dean 124; Mason and Gregory. Applying a vermilion underlayer would give the gold a reddish appearance.

52. Ormsby, Singer, and Dean 125; see also Lister 56.

from her excellent Idea of Colouring, was of no small use in the completion of his labourious designs. This she did to a much greater extent than is usually credited.<sup>53</sup>

Therefore it is quite possible that Catherine assisted her husband in applying metal leaf, powder, and shell gold and silver before glazing over the gilded area as Smith describes. Second, there is evidence that Blake used this technique elsewhere. Ormsby, Singer, and Dean observe that in *The Ghost of a Flea* Blake "glazed the metal leaf with both warm and cool paints in order to alter their tone."<sup>54</sup> He also appears to have glazed several areas of works from the period 1805-09 that feature gold.<sup>55</sup>

Carvers and gilders would have utilized a similar process. Robert Dossie, in his craftsman's manual *The Handmaid to the Arts* (1764), describes how yellow lacquer "when spread on silver, gives it a colour greatly similar to that of gold."<sup>56</sup> However, if Smith was correct in his observation of glazing on the surface of *The Last Judgment*, here Blake reversed the process by glazing the metal material with a cool color in order to produce the appearance of silver. He may have learned through reading *The Handmaid to the Arts* or through conversations with a carver and gilder that exposed silver leaf tarnishes rapidly.<sup>57</sup> Glazing gold leaf with a cool color would

have been a failsafe, if relatively costly, method of producing the appearance of silver without the risk of tarnishing.<sup>58</sup>

The second gilding technique, probably used by Blake in at least two works, is burnishing, in which gold leaf, after drying upon a support surface for twenty-four hours, was "polished with the dog's tooth, or with the burnishers of agate or flint ...."<sup>59</sup> Donnan has suggested that areas of gold leaf in *The Ghost of a Flea*, such as the larger falling star to the left of the ghost's right knee, could be the result of burnishing.<sup>60</sup> Ormsby, Singer, and Dean observe that the appearance of an area of gold leaf on *Pitt* resembles "surface burnishing."<sup>61</sup> It is unclear whether this effect was added at the time the work was painted (1805?) or considerably later, perhaps as one of the "many finishing touches" that Blake lavished on works such as *The Last Judgment* during his last years.<sup>62</sup>

### 3. A Possible Source of Blake's Metal Leaf, c. 1821-27

Ormsby, Townsend, Singer, and Dean state that "two features that most of [Blake's] pigments have in common are cheapness and constant availability."<sup>63</sup> However, Viscomi and Paley have separately observed that his use of gold leaf on *Jerusalem* copy E "may have been a considerable expense."<sup>64</sup> Viscomi suggests that this expense was "possibly underwritten by the commissions of *Songs* copy V by [James] Vine and *America* copy O and *Europe* copy K by Linnell."<sup>65</sup> Indeed, the commissions Blake received from 1821 onwards suggest that he may have been able to afford occasionally to purchase books of metal leaf from a local gold beater or artists' colorman.<sup>66</sup> However, it is unlikely that he would have required such large amounts of metal leaf. Donnan has observed that on the temperas she examined Blake used only scraps of metal leaf.<sup>67</sup> Similarly, in many later copies of the illuminated books

53. BR(2) 690. See also Smith, *Nollekens and His Times* (1828), vol. 2, quoted in BR(2) 609; Allan Cunningham, *The Lives of the Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, 2nd ed. (1830), vol. 2, quoted in BR(2) 633. Hayley, in a letter to Lady Hesketh dated 15 July 1802, writes that Catherine "draws, ... engraves, & sings delightfully" (quoted in BR(2) 140). Blake alludes to Catherine's press work in a letter to Hayley of 26 Nov. 1800, "my wife's illness not being quite gone off, she has not printed any more since you went to London. ... We mean to begin printing again to-morrow" (E 714). For references to Catherine's printing from a rolling press before and after her husband's death, see BR(2) 131, 151, 482, 610fn, 676.

Catherine had technical knowledge of the materials used by her husband (see BR(2) 294, 321fn, 622). The pigment "Blake's white" is discussed by Ormsby, Townsend, Singer, and Dean, who cite Palmer's reference in a letter to Henry Wentworth Acland of 29 Oct. 1866 ("State of Knowledge" 42 and n25). Almost forty years earlier, a year after Blake's death and during Catherine's lifetime, Palmer refers to the same pigment in a letter to Richmond as "Mrs Blake's white" (Ormsby, Singer, and Dean 118 and n32). This suggests that Catherine had learned how to manufacture this pigment successfully and that, in 1828, the recipe was considered her own. In Aug. 1829 she advised Lord Egremont regarding the varnishing of Blake's late watercolor drawing *The Characters of Spenser's Faerie Queene*, which he had recently purchased from her (see BR(2) 498). Gilchrist claims that Catherine also designed and executed her own drawings (A. Gilchrist 315-16). She appears to have produced at least two paintings of her own: the tempera *Agnes* dated c. 1800 (B #C1) and the watercolor *Head "Taken from Something She Saw in the Fire"* dated c. 1830 (B #C2). Gilchrist refers to a further (untraced) painting by Catherine owned by Butts (A. Gilchrist 315-16).

54. Ormsby, Singer, and Dean 129.

55. Ormsby, Singer, and Dean 123-27. Blake also glazed metal on at least one illuminated book: *Jerusalem* copy E, pl. 47 (see note 44).

56. Dossie 1:465.

57. Dossie 1:471.

58. Blake appears to have used silver-based paint (shell silver) in the finishing of *Urizen* copy G, *Milton* copy C, and *Jerusalem* copy E. Michael Gregory believes that despite the unpopularity of silver among gilders in the early nineteenth century (for the reason just cited), it would not have been difficult for Blake to acquire (telephone conversation, 1 Oct. 2002).

59. Dossie 1:437, quoted in Mason and Gregory.

60. Telephone conversation, 22 Oct. 2002.

61. Ormsby, Singer, and Dean 124, fig. 97.

62. A. Gilchrist 349.

63. "Blake's Use" 137. The sole exception appears to be natural ultramarine (Cahner McManus and Townsend, "Watercolour Methods" 69).

64. Viscomi 356; see also Paley, *William Blake: Jerusalem* 15.

65. Viscomi 356. However, according to Anna Lou Ashby, Andrew W. Mellon curator of printed books at the Morgan Library, *Songs* V does not feature gold (email, 3 Dec. 2004); see also BB 386.

66. Using the "Blake Accounts" section of BR(2) (757-812) as a guide, I calculated Blake's finances during this period. Surviving records of his income for 1821 amount to £5.19.0. The following year (with a Royal Academy award and possible support from Thomas Lawrence) the figure rises to £40. In 1823, the year of Linnell's commencement of payments for *Job*, £42. For the final years of his life the figures are as follows: 1824: £69.12.9; 1825: £57.8.0; 1826: £76.18.3; 1827 (until Blake's death, 12 Aug.): £58.16.0.

67. Telephone conversation, 22 Oct. 2002.

where shell gold or silver and occasionally crushed gold or silver leaf or gold or silver powder were applied, only a small quantity of gold or silver leaf must have been used at any one time. Blake, therefore, using limited amounts of material over a period of perhaps six years, is unlikely to have needed to outlay a large amount of money. Nevertheless, he appears to have had access to a steady, if modest, supply of gold and silver leaf during the 1820s, which he may have acquired from a neighboring craftsman.

When gilding picture frames and other furniture, carvers and gilders often needed to cut sheets of leaf to size. Perhaps, as Michael Gregory—director of the last surviving traditional gilding firm in London, Arnold Wiggins and Sons—has suggested, a neighboring bookbinder or gilder may have agreed to sell Blake his offcuts, if not the odd sheet, of metal leaf at a modest price.<sup>68</sup>

Little evidence survives of the identity of those tradesmen who supplied Blake's materials. The branded stamp on the verso of the mahogany support of Blake's late tempera, *The Virgin and Child (The Black Madonna)* (1825?), discussed in *The Painter at Work*, bears the name of Robert Davy of Wardour Street and Newman Street, artists' colorman, mill-board manufacturer, and restorer of pictures. Davy is also listed in contemporary London trade directories as a carver and gilder and so could have supplied Blake with gold and other metal leaf.<sup>69</sup>

Other sources suggest themselves. During Blake's apprenticeship, Basire must have provided the gold used in the Westminster Abbey commissions for Ayloffe and Gough. During the 1790s patrons such as Butts probably paid for the material on the few paintings which feature gold. The proposed new dating of the three temperas *Evening*, *Winter*, and *Olney Bridge* suggests that they were executed around the time of Johnson's visit to Felpham (1802), when Blake painted his miniature. Hayley is likely to have had leaf to hand, or would have had the funds to procure it. On his return to London in autumn 1803 and while assisting Hayley with his biography of George Romney, Blake was in regular contact with Romney's framer and picture dealer, the carver and gilder William Saunders

of 10 Great Castle Street.<sup>70</sup> As mentioned above, about 1809 Blake would probably have followed the common practice of using gold in his miniatures to enhance their color and finish; if so, perhaps Saunders supplied him with gold leaf. Around the time of Blake's move to South Molton Street, the carver and gilder William Sloper conducted business virtually opposite, at no. 59.<sup>71</sup> Between 1812 and 1821, William Goslett ran a carver and gilder's workshop at 32 South Molton Street, an establishment Blake would regularly have passed when walking to and from nearby Oxford Street.<sup>72</sup> From 1818, Blake is likely to have been on familiar terms with another carver and gilder, John Linnell's father James, who framed Blake's 1821 tempera *The Sea of Time and Space* in a plain gilt frame.<sup>73</sup> He also appears to have taken a marginal role in the printing and marketing of Blake's twenty-one *Illustrations of the Book of Job*.<sup>74</sup> John Linnell commissioned several works featuring gold material: *America* copy O, *Europe* copy K, *Marriage* copy H, and *Songs* copy R.<sup>75</sup> James, via his son, may have been a source for the gold material used to decorate them.<sup>76</sup>

Blake may have known one more gilder at South Molton Street. In April 1815 George Cumberland, Jr., wrote to his father of a visit to Blake's rooms during which Blake "shewed his

70. See Bentley, *Stranger* 267; BR(2) 178 and fn; Blake's letters to Hayley of 26 Oct. and 13 Dec. 1803 (E 737, 739). Saunders is also included in trade directories of the period: see the 1805-06-07 (1805) and 1805-06-07, including the year 1808 (1808) editions of *Holden's Triennial Directory* (n. pag.) and *Johnstone's London Commercial Guide and Street Directory* for 1817 (102). Great Castle Street was six blocks east of Blake's new residence in South Molton Street along Oxford Street. Gregory has described the picture-framing community in London in the early nineteenth century as a small fraternity who were all likely to have known one another (telephone conversation, 1 Oct. 2002).

71. There are entries for William Sloper, carver and gilder, conducting business at 59 South Molton Street in *Holden's Triennial Directory* for 1799 (665) and 1802-03-04 (1802) (n. pag.). See also composite rate books for St. George's, Hanover Square, Brook Street Ward, 28 Mar. 1795 and 28 Mar. 1803 (City of Westminster Archive Centre [hereafter COWAC] C 588 and C 596).

72. There is an entry for Goslett conducting business at 32 South Molton Street in *Johnstone's London Commercial Guide and Street Directory* for 1817 (459). See also composite rate book entries for St. George's, Hanover Square, Brook Street Ward, 30 Mar. 1809 and 31 Mar. 1821 (COWAC C 603 and C 617).

73. Keynes, *Blake Studies* 197. The frame in which this work was discovered in 1949, along with its original packing (a copy of the *Times* dated Jan. 1820), is probably original. See Whitehead, "The Arlington Court Picture." Linnell may have consulted Blake as to how to frame this work. James Linnell, framemaker, carver and gilder, printseller and picture dealer, resided and worked at 2 Streatham Street, Bloomsbury (see *Pigot and Co.'s Directory* 1823-24 [88]). John was apprenticed to his father as carver and gilder in 1806, presumably as security in the event of his failure as an artist; see David Linnell 13-14, 36, 132.

74. BR(2) 433, 775.

75. See BB 105, 300, 420.

76. However, John Linnell is unlikely to have provided gold for projects in which he had no financial interest. If he had been involved, he would likely have recorded his supplying Blake in his account book. As we shall see, from c. 1821 onwards there was a constant supply of metal material potentially available to Blake.

68. Telephone conversation, 1 Oct. 2002.

69. Ormsby, Singer, and Dean 131. Davy makes his first appearance in trade directories as "Robert Davy, Carver and gilder, 16 Wardour St, Soho" in *Holden's Triennial Directory* 1805-06-07, including the year 1808 (1808) (n. pag.). He is "restorer of pictures" at 16 Wardour Street, Oxford Street, in *Robson's Directory* 1819 (139); "Carver & gilder, 16 Wardour St. [Soho]" in *Robson's* 1820 (155). *Kent's Directory* 1822 (25) and 1824 (95) give the address as "16 Wardour St. & 83 Newman St." *Robson's* 1823 (n. pag.) lists him as carver and gilder at 83 Newman Street. In *Pigot and Co.'s Directory* 1823-24 Davy is given at 83 Newman Street under "colourman" (101) and "carver and gilder" (88). He is also listed as "Carver, gilder and panel preparer, 83 Newman Street, Oxford Street," *Underhill Triennial* 1822-23-24 (n. pag.); "carver [same address]," *Pigot's* 1826-27; "Millboard Manufacturer, 83 Newman St.," *Kent's* 1827 and 1828 and *Robson's* 1828 (n. pag.). In *Pigot's* for 1827 (113) Davy is referred to as "Carver and gilder, artist's colourman and picture repairer," whilst in the same directory for 1828-29 he returns to merely "Carver and gilder" (113).

large drawing in Water Colors of the last Judgement[;] he has been labouring at it till it is nearly as black as your Hat—the only lights are those of a *Hellish Purple*.<sup>77</sup> Gilchrist records that on another occasion “Blake, on looking up one day at this fresco, which hung in his front room, candidly exclaimed, as one who was present tells me: ‘I spoiled that—made it darker; it was much finer, but a Frenchwoman here (a fellow lodger) didn’t like it.’” He adds that Blake was “ill-advised, indeed, to alter colour at a fellow lodger and Frenchwoman’s suggestion!”<sup>78</sup> New evidence suggests that this maligned fellow lodger was Eleanor Martin, née Larché, the wife of Blake’s second landlord at 17 South Molton Street, Mark Martin.<sup>79</sup> One of the witnesses at their wedding in 1806 was Peter Larché, almost certainly the Peter Larché who ran a gilder’s shop at Rathbone Place during this period. Any of these five gilders might have supplied Blake with scraps or the odd metal leaf at one time or another, if not a whole book of gold or silver leaf. However, it appears that during the last seven years of his life, Blake had a potential supplier even closer to home.

In *Blake Studies*, Geoffrey Keynes suggests that when the Blakes moved to the first floor of 3 Fountain Court, the landlord Henry Banes, Catherine Blake’s sister’s husband, occupied the remaining four stories of living space.<sup>80</sup> However, there is evidence of at least one other lodger, possibly as early as 1821, and certainly between 1823 and 1827. In his biography of his father, the artist and “Ancient” Edward Calvert, Samuel Calvert records an incident that occurred while his father was visiting Blake in Fountain Court:

On one occasion, as my father has told the story, there came lumbering up the stairs with heavy tread an uncouth visitor who bumped at the door. Blake, somewhat disturbed, rose to open it, but with no ungentlemanly impatience, for he never knew in what shape, or under what circumstances his angels might appear. It was, however, “the man with the coals,” who, humped up with sack, gigantic and grimy, muttered out, “Are these ’ere coals for you?” The gentle and commiserating voice of Blake replied, “I believe not, my good man, but I’ll enquire,” and, as my father regretfully said: “they were *not* poor Blake’s coals—they were for the lodger on the floor above.”<sup>81</sup>

The “lodger on the floor above” was a carver and gilder named John George Lohr. He is first recorded as ratepayer of nearby 1 Fountain Court, Strand, in 1803,<sup>82</sup> and between 1805

and 1819 he is listed as a carver and gilder conducting business at this address in several London trade directories.<sup>83</sup> Lohr remained ratepayer at 1 Fountain Court until 1829, which suggests that he continued to live there with his wife Letitia and their seven children.<sup>84</sup> However, sometime between 1819 and 1823 he moved his workshop two doors south.<sup>85</sup>

In fact the house stood on the southwestern corner of Fountain Court and Herbert’s Passage; see Richard Horwood, *The A to Z of Regency London*, London Topographical Society publication no. 131 (London: London Topographical Society, 1985) 13 Cd.

Both Banes and Lohr are first recorded as ratepayers for properties in Fountain Court for the spring 1803 poor rate collection for Savoy Ward, Parish of St. Clement Danes (COWAC B 224). “Henry Baines” replaces the previous ratepayer for no. 3, “Mary Wood,” widow of John Wood, who was last recorded as ratepayer in 1784 (COWAC B 203). “Lohr” replaces “Jas. Carstairs” for no. 1. Banes’s and Lohr’s added names are just visible in the 1803 St. Clement Danes rate book entries for Fountain Court reproduced in Whitehead, “I also beg Mr Blakes acceptance” 81 (illus. 2).

83. See *Holden’s Triennial Directory* 1805-06-07 (1805) (n. pag.); *Holden’s* 1805-06-07, including the year 1808 (1808) (n. pag.); *Johnstone’s London Commercial Guide and Street Directory* 1817 (210); *Robson’s Directory* 1819 (322).

84. Lohr may have been a first or second-generation immigrant from the Alsace region of northeastern France. The only John George Lohr in the records of Familysearch (*International Genealogical Index*) of the right age to have been Banes’s neighbor in 1803 is a Johann Georg Lohr, baptized 5 Mar. 1776, Dettwiller, Bas Rhin, France. The contemporary English taste for gilding had been influenced by French fashions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Lohr (or perhaps his father) may therefore have arrived in London attracted by this potentially lucrative market.

Lohr married Letitia Lewis on 18 Jan. 1801 at St. Clement Danes Church, Strand (St. Clement Danes [SCD] marriage register, vol. 37, COWAC) (see illus. 3). Their first child, Letitia, was baptized 14 Nov. 1802, St. Martin-in-the-Fields (St. Martin-in-the-Fields [SMIF] baptismal register, vol. 18, COWAC). There followed Rosetta Rebecca, baptized 4 Sept. 1808 (SCD baptismal register, vol. 14, COWAC); William Lewis, baptized 16 Apr. 1810 (SMIF baptismal register, vol. 19, COWAC); Susanna Caroline, baptized 14 Mar. 1813 (SMIF baptismal register, vol. 20, COWAC); Emma, baptized 17 Dec. 1815 (SCD baptismal register, vol. 22, COWAC); Hester Sophia, baptized 30 July 1818 (SCD baptismal register, vol. 22, COWAC); and John George, baptized 10 Sept. 1820 (SCD baptismal register, vol. 23, COWAC). A search of the burial records for St. Clement Danes, St. Martin-in-the-Fields, and Bunhill Fields for 1801-27 reveals no evidence of burials of any member of the Lohr family. By the mid-1820s, therefore, the Lohrs were probably a family of nine. However, Letitia junior and perhaps Rosetta may have married and/or lived elsewhere by this date. Lohr’s wife Letitia (née Lewis) may have been related to John Ford Lewis, who appears to have run a tailor’s shop from 12 Fountain Court, directly opposite no. 3, during this period (Whitehead, “New Discoveries” 1:207). John Ford Lewis’s wife Lucy was the daughter of the landlord of the Coalhole Tavern (16 Fountain Court), William John Rhodes (“New Discoveries” 1:208). This may explain the signature of “W. Rhodes” as witness on the Lohrs’ entry in the marriage register.

85. This may have been due to his growing family, or perhaps the need to expand a prospering business. There is evidence that another household lived at no. 1, presumably lodgers of the Lohrs. William Burbidge, clerk in the Excise Office, Old Broad Street, his wife Rachel, and their sons Robert Josiah and James William lodged there between 1821 and 1824 (see entries for 7 Jan. 1821 and 29 Dec. 1824, SCD baptismal register, vol. 23, COWAC). Lohr may therefore have moved his workshop to no. 3 in order to take in lodgers in his own house.

77. BR(2) 320; see also Tatham’s annotation to a tracing of a drawing of the Last Judgment (BR(2) 320fn).

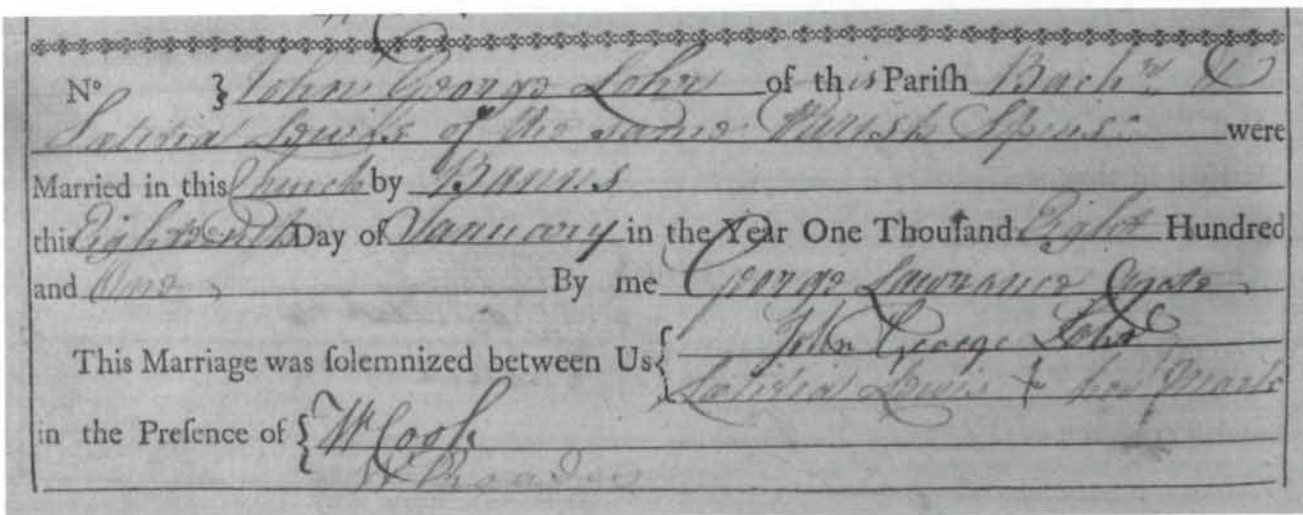
78. A. Gilchrist 350.

79. Whitehead, “New Discoveries” 1:95.

80. Keynes, *Blake Studies* 176.

81. [Samuel Calvert,] *A Memoir of Edward Calvert Artist* (London, 1893) 21-22, quoted in BR(2) 439. A condensed version is in Gilchrist (A. Gilchrist 308). Bentley suggests that the incident could have occurred in “the winter of 1826” (BR(2) 438).

82. In several rate books of the period (for example, entry for Herbert’s Passage, Parish of St. Clement Danes poor rate ledger, 3 Jan. 1822, COWAC B 244) this building is listed as part of nearby Herbert’s Passage.



3. Entry for the marriage of John George Lohr and Letitia Lewis, 18 January 1801, St. Clement Danes marriage register, vol. 37. Image by kind permission of the City of Westminster Archives Centre.

From 1823 until 1828, trade directories record the address of Lohr's workshop as 3 Fountain Court, William and Catherine Blake's last residence.<sup>86</sup> Between 1823 and 1827, living space at no. 3 was probably apportioned as follows. Henry Banes and (until her death in March 1824) his wife Sarah utilized the ground and basement floors.<sup>87</sup> The location of the Blakes' two-room flat on the first floor is well documented.<sup>88</sup> Lohr's

86. See *Pigot and Co.'s Directory 1823-24* (1823) 88. In the section listing carvers and gilders "Lohr [sic] Jno. Geo. 3 Fountain-ct, Stnd" is listed directly below "Linnell Jas. 2 Streatham st. Blmsby." Of course, Lohr may have moved his workshop to no. 3 as early as 1819. See also *Pigot's 1826-27* (114) (cover illustration); *Robson's Directory 1828* (n. pag.). His workshop appears to have remained at no. 3 for about eighteen months after Catherine's departure. In 1828 he is recorded as ratepayer for both nos. 1 and 2 (see poor rate overseers' accounts book, St. Clement Danes, Savoy Ward, 1828, COWAC B 126). In 1829, the year Henry Banes died and therefore ceased to be ratepayer at no. 3, Lohr, by now probably in his fifties, was no longer ratepayer for either nos. 1 or 2 (poor rate book for St. Clement Danes, Savoy Ward, 1 Jan. 1829, COWAC B 249). In 1829 Lohr appears to have moved his workshop from 3 to 2 Fountain Court (*Robson's 1829* [93]). According to the following year's edition, he again moved his studio, this time directly opposite, to no. 13 (*Robson's 1830* [n. pag.]). I have been unable to trace either Lohr or any member of his family after this date. However, *Robson's* for 1826 (231) lists a "Lohr and son, Bombazine Manufacturers" at nearby 1 Mitre Court, Fleet Street. Lohr's increasingly rapid movement within the court and then disappearance from 1830 could suggest a decline in prosperity. Perhaps the likely failure of his cottage industry reflected the new economic pressures of competition from technological advances and a shift in taste away from gilt furniture in the early 1830s. However, by 1834 another carver and gilder was at no. 3: Edwin Robbins lived and presumably worked here (or nearby) until 1837 (see 3 Aug. 1834 [which records Robbins and his family residing at no. 3] and 9 July 1837 [which records them at no. 2], SCD baptismal register, vols. 24 and 25, COWAC).

87. For information concerning Henry Banes and Sarah Banes, née Boucher, see Whitehead, "I also beg Mr Blakes acceptance."

88. Linnell, in his letter to the Quaker poet Bernard Barton dated 3 Apr. 1830, describes Blake as having "occupied the first floor" (quoted in

workshop, therefore, must have been located either in the two rooms on the second floor, directly above the Blakes' flat, or in the garret rooms above.<sup>89</sup> Although he and his family did not actually live on the upper floor, Lohr, and probably at least one fellow carver and gilder or apprentice, may have been employed in the workshop, as were other artisans of the period, up to fourteen hours a day, six days a week.<sup>90</sup> His younger children are likely to have played either in the court between the family home and their father's workshop two doors down or in the communal yard at the back of the terrace. Susanna, Emma, Hester, and John George Lohr, Jr., may therefore have been among the group of "little children" at play that Blake and a companion, probably Palmer, observed from a window and of whom Blake said, "that is heaven."<sup>91</sup>

A gilder was employed to "cover [objects] entirely or partially with a thin layer of gold ... in the form of gold-leaf ...."<sup>92</sup> However, Lohr is listed in directories as a carver and gilder, a designation explained by the contemporary demand for gilt-

BR(2) 526). John Varley also gives a specific reference to Blake's last address on his tracing of Blake's visionary head of *The Egyptian Taskmaster Killed by Moses* (B #696A; Bentley, *Stranger* 372fn).

89. George Bloomfield, brother of the laboring-class poet Robert, recalled that about 1781 he ran a shoemaker's business at "Mr. Simm's, No. 7, Pitcher's-court, Bell-alley, Coleman-street" in a garret "where we had two turn-up beds, and five of us worked ..." (Robert Bloomfield, preface, *The Poems of Robert Bloomfield*, 2 vols. [London: Robert Bloomfield, Vernor, Hood and Sharpe, and Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme, 1809] 1:vi).

90. According to *A General Description of All Trades* (103), an apprentice gilder's working hours would be from six o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock in the evening.

91. A. Gilchrist 301. For references to Blake's kindness to and popularity with children, see also BR(2) 382-83, 412, 415 and fn, 752.

92. *Compact Oxford English Dictionary*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971) 1:1142.



4. Laying the gold. Image courtesy of Arnold Wiggins and Sons.

wood furniture. He would have carved and gilded furniture and picture frames. From the late seventeenth century until the middle of the nineteenth century, gilding was used to enhance carved furniture and decoration in the houses of the wealthy. In his *Memoirs* (1807), the dramatist Richard Cumberland recalls visiting such a home: "Its magnificent owner had gilt and furnished the apartments with a profusion of luxury."<sup>93</sup> In an age still largely reliant upon candlelight or oil lamps for domestic lighting, gilding could also contribute to the illumination of a room. Few gilders of the period would have been unable to carve.

Although gold and silver were expensive commodities, Lohr, prosperous enough to pay the rates on one property and rent a floor in a neighbor's house, is likely to have been able to provide Blake with scraps of gold leaf and other metal leaf at a price the poet-artist could afford. He may have been happy to do so—he and Blake must have been on familiar and probably friendly terms. Lohr and Blake's brother-in-law and landlord Henry Banes had been neighbors for twenty years. In addition, from 1823 (and possibly earlier) until Blake's death

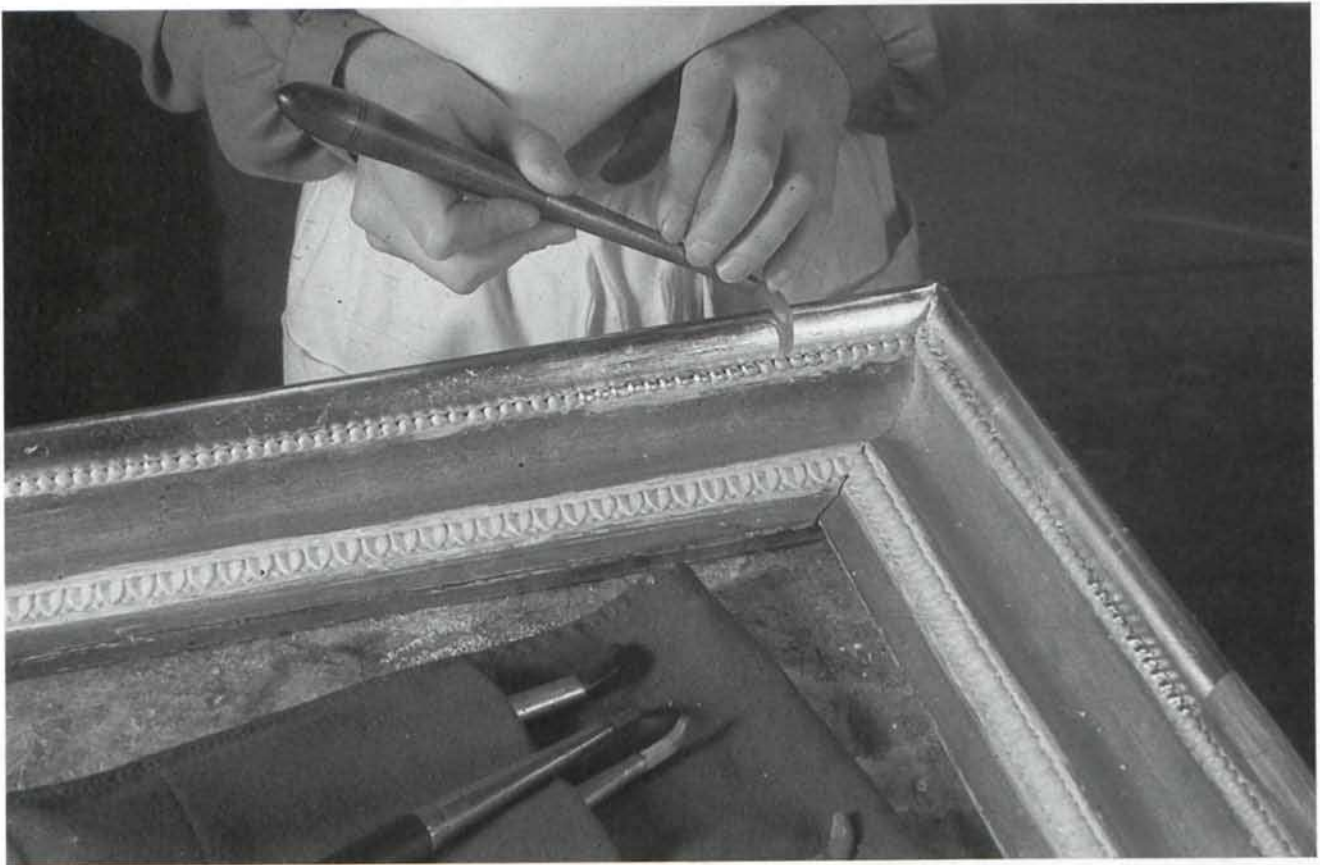
in August 1827, Lohr, his employees, and perhaps members of his family would have passed the two doors of the Blakes' first-floor apartment several times a day on their way to and from the workshop above.

A number of the tools and materials in Lohr's workshop would have been familiar to Blake. Lohr would have used size or bole as a base for gilding. This was often mixed with red or yellow ochre to give a warm or cool appearance before the application of gold leaf.<sup>94</sup> Blake was familiar with these materials: he had used them in his 1795 color prints as well as his temperas for Butts (c. 1799-1800). Like Blake as he engraved the copperplates for *Job* in his back room below, Lohr would spend a significant portion of his working day seated at a table. Here he would prepare and cut gold leaf on a gilder's cushion and apply it to picture frames or furniture (illus. 4-6). Stalker and Parker suggest that a gilder use

a Cushion made of Leather stufft very even with Tow, and strained on a board 10 inches one way, and 14 the other. On this you are to cut the gold and silver with a thin, broad, sharp, and smooth-edged knife: To these, three or four Pencils of finer hair than ordinary ... the Artists use also the end

93. Richard Cumberland, *Memoirs* (1807), quoted in the *Compact Oxford English Dictionary* 1:1142. In the mid-eighteenth century Campbell noted that "gilders are generally Carvers ... there is Employment but for few Hands who do not understand Carving" (108).

94. See "Water Gilding" in Mason and Gregory.



5. Burnishing the gold. Image courtesy of Arnold Wiggins and Sons.

of a Squirrels tail spread abroad, and fastened to a flat pencil-stick, which is broad at one end, and split, just like an house-painter's Graining-tool, but less; it serves for taking up and laying on whole Leaves at a time, and is by them called a Pal-let: Cotton is also requisite, and some use nothing else.<sup>95</sup>

Near-transparent sheets of gold, silver, and gold-silver alloy leaf would be kept in books interleaved with tissue paper purchased from a nearby gold-beater's.<sup>96</sup> Although demanding less physical effort than a number of crafts of the time, gilding required great skill, care, and patience. The slightest draft could carry away the translucent sheets on the end of the gilder's brush. Stalker and Parker observe that

the Guilders commonly border their Cushion at one end, and four or five inches down each side, with a strip of parchment two inches high, intending by this fence and bulwark to preserve their Gold from the assaults of Wind, and Air, which if moved never so gently, carries away this light body, which willingly complies with its uncertain motions.<sup>97</sup>

95. Stalker and Parker 55, quoted by Mason and Gregory.

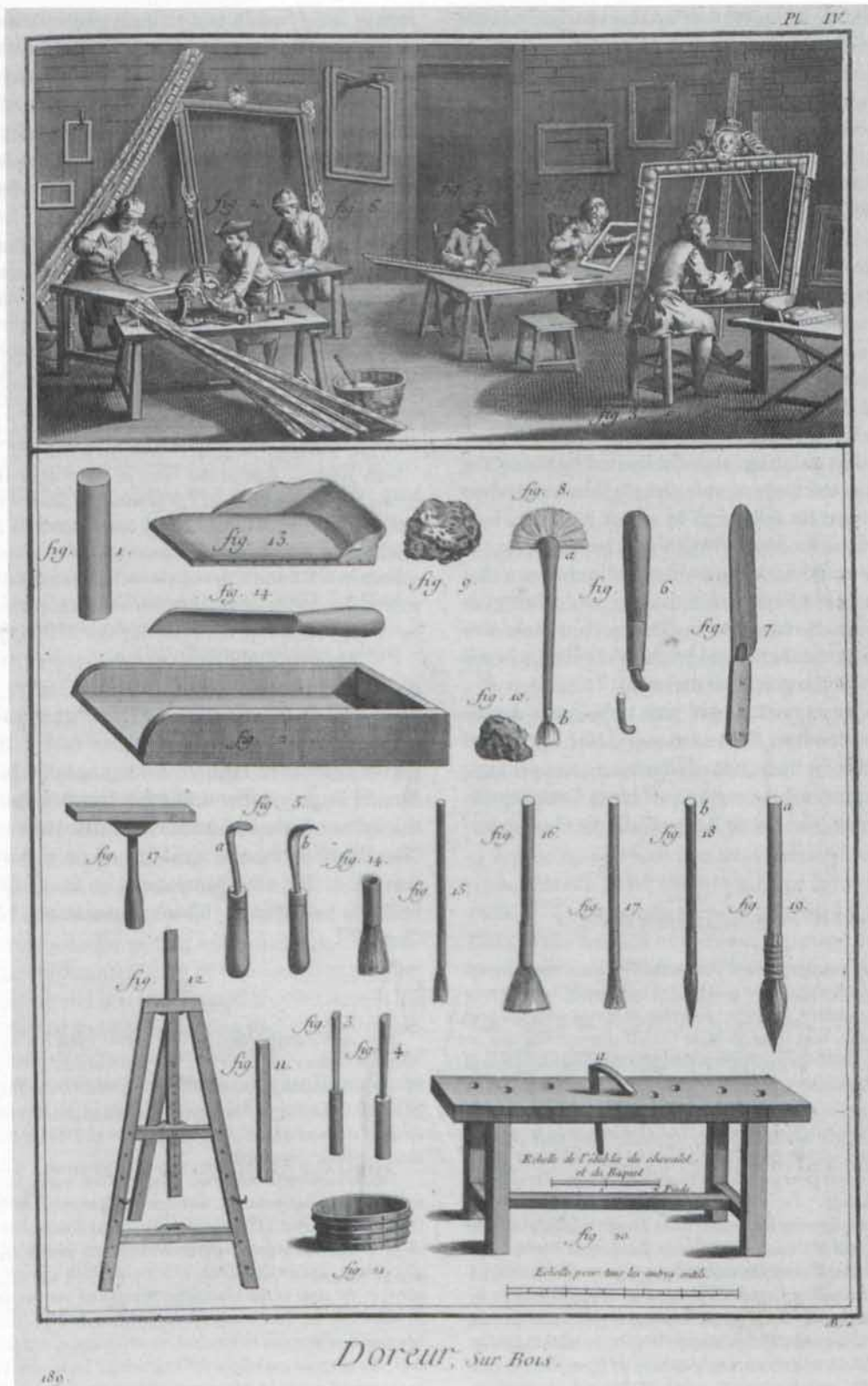
96. For example, the firms of John Jeffrey and J. S. Vandenberg were both in Shoe Lane, Fleet Street (*Pigot and Co.'s Directory 1824* [86]).

97. Stalker and Parker 55-56.

It may have been for the sake of a peaceful and draft-free environment that Lohr moved his workshop to an upper floor at Henry Banes's house. The habits of the middle-aged Banes and Blakes are likely to have been more conducive to his professional requirements than those of his own crowded domestic space. The proximity of Lohr's workshop suggests that Blake may have had regular access to metal leaf during the 1820s. This fact alone may explain the profusion of gold in his work of the period, but there may be a further reason why he decided to use an unprecedented amount of metal leaf in his later years.

*Di Cennino Cennini trattato della pittura* was first published in Rome in 1821. Over a quarter of a century earlier, Cumberland had told Blake of the manuscript of Cennino's craftsman's handbook and provided him with some of the recipes for mixing pigments.<sup>98</sup> However, Blake is likely first to have examined the full text in 1822, when Linnell presented him with a copy of the Tambroni edition. Years later, on 10 December 1862, Linnell wrote to Anne Gilchrist: "the first copy of Cennino Cennini seen in England was the copy I obtained from Italy & gave to Blake who soon made it out & was gratified to find that he had been using the same materials &

98. Stemmler 145.



6. "Doreur, Sur Bois," *Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers*, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean d'Alembert, 3rd ed., 17 vols. (1770-75), accompanied by *Recueil de planches, sur les sciences, les arts libéraux, et les arts mécaniques, avec leur explication*, 3rd ed., 11 vols. (1771-78). The illustration is from the second part of vol. 2 of the *Recueil de planches*. Image courtesy of the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, University of Rochester Library.

methods in painting as Cennini describes—particularly the Carpenters glue.<sup>99</sup> Cennino introduces his work,

Here begins the craftsman's handbook, made and composed by Cennino of Colle, in the reverence of God, and of The Virgin Mary ... and in the reverence of Giotto, of Taddeo and of Agnolo, Cennino's master; and for the use and good and profit of anyone who wants to enter this profession.<sup>100</sup>

As Blake leafed through his copy we know that he read the several short chapters on different kinds of glue. Within a dozen pages more he would have found an even greater number of chapters on the various uses and applications of gold in painting and decoration, a hallmark of the art of fifteenth-century Florence that he held in the highest regard.<sup>101</sup> In the light of this evidence, is it coincidence only that gold features in such profusion in Blake's paintings and illuminated books during the years in which there was a professional gilder's workshop in the rooms above his own, and in which he finally read Cennino's handbook for himself? With an accessible source of metal leaf, Blake could not only emulate the techniques that the medieval and early Renaissance masters used when gilding panel paintings, as recounted in Cennino, but could also potentially attempt to enhance and brighten earlier works still in his possession whose paint had darkened.<sup>102</sup>

He appears to have practiced one such technique a decade before moving to Fountain Court: around 1810, he produced a series of temperas for Butts, two of which were on linen supports.<sup>103</sup> He had executed the majority of his earlier temperas for Butts on canvas. The use of linen recalls the cloth paint-

ings of late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth-century artists such as Andrea Mantegna and Dieric Bouts.<sup>104</sup> Blake was familiar with engravings of their works.<sup>105</sup> However, in 1825 he was given the opportunity to examine Charles and Mary Aders' impressive collection of fifteenth-century paintings from northern Europe.<sup>106</sup> In many of these works, later catalogued by Johann David Passavant, gold leaf is featured:

Hubert, or Johann van Eyck. Head of John the Baptist on a golden dish; a circular picture of about a foot in diameter; the gold ground is shaded as to form the dish. ... *Petrus Christophorus*. The Virgin seated on a red throne, embroidered with gold, with the infant Jesus .... *From the School of van Eyck*. The Adoration of the Kings ... the elder King ... attired in ... a purple vest embroidered with gold ... on the floor stands the golden dish containing frankincense. ... the Moorish King ... dressed in a red vest, embroidered with gold .... Round the head of the Virgin and Child, are rays, painted with gold .... [From the School of van Eyck:] An "Ecce Homo" ... [Christ's] open mantle is fastened with a clasp of gold ... the gold ground so shaded with spots and lines in black and red, as to form a glory round the Saviour's head. ... *Antonello da Messina*. The Virgin and Child seated in a garden, with two little cherubs hovering in the air, supporting a golden crown.<sup>107</sup>

Blake is likely to have encountered other paintings with gold material. In 1856 the *Art Journal* reported on the sale by auction of a collection formerly belonging to the banker and poet Samuel Rogers, a friend of John Flaxman and Thomas Stothard: "two works by Cimabue, consisted of a small picture of 'The Virgin enthroned amid Saints,' on a characteristic gold ground. ... The other represented 'an Evangelist writing,' and formerly belonged to [Blake's acquaintance William Young] Otley."<sup>108</sup>

99. Linnell, ms. with the Ivimy mss., quoted in BB 684.

100. Cennino 1.

101. Chapters 132-40 are specifically concerned with gilding processes (Cennino 79-86). His description of gilding and burnishing suggests how Lohr is likely to have worked. Cennino recommends saving scraps of gold such as those Lohr may have given to Blake (82). It is interesting that he suggests burnishing gold with precious stones (82). Blake may have found the environment Cennino recommends for summer burnishing (83) in Henry Banes's basement or "Kitchen" (for "Kitchen," see letter to Linnell, 25 Nov. 1825). Cennino suggests that two trestle tables would be needed (84). Blake could have found the space required for burnishing in either his first-floor front-room printing studio, Banes's basement "Kitchen," or perhaps Lohr's workshop.

102. In the years following his return from Sussex, Blake wished to learn to execute, as well as design, paintings in the style of Raphael and other fifteenth to sixteenth-century artists (annotations to Reynolds, E 639). However, until reading Cennino's manual in 1822, he was probably unaware that many early Renaissance artists used oil mixed with egg tempera in the production of panel paintings. Writing in 1809 in his *Descriptive Catalogue*, Blake was also unlikely to have foreseen that his own media for many of the temperas would rapidly darken in a way reminiscent of his descriptions of the deterioration of oil paintings.

103. The four surviving paintings from this series are *Adam Naming the Beasts* (on linen), *Eve Naming the Birds* (on linen), *The Virgin and Child in Egypt*, and *Christ Blessing* (B #667-70). According to Butlin, *Christ Blessing* is on "fine canvas." The late watercolor *The Characters in Spenser's Faerie Queene* (c. 1825) was executed on a muslin support (B #811).

104. See Mantegna, *Samson and Delilah* (glue size on linen) (c. 1490), National Gallery cat. no. 1145; *The Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome* (glue size on linen) (1505-06), NG902; Bouts, *The Entombment* (c. 1450-60) (glue size on linen, painted surface), NG664. Bouts produced a series of cloth paintings (see Dunkerton et al. 296); he may therefore have inspired Blake's own series.

105. According to Bindman, "Cumberland was an enthusiastic collector of early Italian prints ... he owned ... a number of Mantegna prints" (*Blake as an Artist* 212). Mantegna's *Christ Descending into Limbo* is a likely source for the frontispiece for *Jerusalem* (see Paley, *Continuing City* pls. 14 and 15). See also Kraus 155-56, in which Visconti draws a parallel between the style of the Dante engravings and Mantegna: "Job has Dürer in mind, but the Dante engravings are simpler still, more Raimondi and Mantegna, with more untouched, or white space, that is, more like drawings, the original paradigm for engraving." Blake and Linnell may have encountered works by Mantegna when they visited the British Museum on 24 Apr. 1823 (see BR(2) 386).

106. Blake and Linnell visited the Aders at 11 Euston Square on Saturday 6 Aug. and Saturday 10 Dec. 1825 (BR(2) 411, 419). For more information on the Aders' collection, see Paley, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge* 83-92.

107. Passavant 201-16.

108. "The Collection of the Late Samuel Rogers" 188.

Linnell's journal records that he and Blake visited the art dealer Samuel Woodburn on 26 August 1821.<sup>109</sup> Blake may therefore have seen the latter's gallery at 112 St. Martin's Lane. The remarkable preservation of the surface of one work in Woodburn's collection, Leonardo da Vinci's *Holy Family*, as noted by Passavant, may have influenced Blake's creation of late temperas, discussed below, such as *Satan Smiting Job with Sore Boils*, which have retained near-perfect surfaces.<sup>110</sup> Perhaps Blake also visited the museum of the East India Company, where he would have seen gilded images of Hindu gods.<sup>111</sup> In addition, he encountered medieval manuscripts featuring gold.<sup>112</sup>

As Mason and Gregory observe, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries "the crafts of painting and gilding were closely allied." Lohr, if indeed he served his apprenticeship in London, would not have been a member of a gilders' guild, but would have joined the Painter-Stainers' Company, incorporated in 1502. However, gilding had not been widely used in paintings in England since the sixteenth century. In his use of gilding materials and techniques, particularly in his later paintings, Blake reunified the two crafts. It should be remembered that he received no formal training in either painting or gilding, having been obliged to serve his apprenticeship as an engraver, almost certainly due to financial constraints.<sup>113</sup>

The discovery that Lohr had a carving and gilding workshop on a floor above William and Catherine Blake's at 3 Fountain Court between c. 1823 and 1829 reveals a possible relationship between the Blakes and one household of "humble but respectable"<sup>114</sup> neighbors. Significantly, Lohr must now be considered a credible source for the metal leaf used so distinctively in Blake's late temperas, watercolors, and illuminated works. Blake's potential interaction with his fellow lodger may have played an instrumental role in enabling him to follow closely the instructions for gilding and panel-painting techniques in his newly acquired copy of Cennino. The proximity of the workshop and materials, coupled with Linnell's gift of Cennino's manual in 1822 and access to the Aders' collection in 1825, may therefore have provided the environment in which Blake could finally create enduring temperas in the style of the early masters he admired.

#### 4. Blake and the Ancients' Use of Gold, Silver, and Other Metals, c. 1824-27

Around 1826, Blake produced three temperas: *Count Ugolino and His Sons in Prison*, *The Body of Abel Found by Adam and Eve*, and *Satan Smiting Job with Sore Boils*. He appears to

refer to them in a letter to Linnell dated 25 April 1827: "as to Ugolino & I never supposed that I should sell them my Wife alone is answerable for their having Existed in any finished State—I am too much attachd to Dante to think much of any thing else ..." (E 784). These late temperas share the theme of suffering, are versions of earlier works by Blake, have almost exactly the same dimensions, and are all on mahogany supports. In addition, they have a unique style of signature: in the bottom right-hand corner of each panel, Blake incised through the paint surface to the support. Finally, and of special relevance for this paper, all three feature gold.<sup>115</sup> Butlin has concluded that they form a series.<sup>116</sup>

Donnan has closely examined *Count Ugolino* out of its frame, and describes it as possessing a "perfect surface," probably because Blake, informed by Cennino's manual, began to use egg tempera.<sup>117</sup> She believes that the uniquely "perfect surface[s]" of *Count Ugolino* and its two companion panels are explained by Blake's use of pure pigments mixed with egg yolk and then applied as thin washes of watercolor. Such materials and techniques produced a very different effect from his earlier "thick" paint medium.<sup>118</sup> These temperas are three examples of the few Blake paintings which have survived in excellent condition and which therefore are of key importance to scholars in understanding his developing use of materials.

In the mid-1820s the Ancients, a group of young artists including Richmond and Palmer, congregated around Blake. Richmond also appears to have worked closely with Blake in the production of his own first (panel) painting, *Abel the Shepherd* (1825, tempera on oak). Bentley observes that "Blake not only inspired the young men, but he taught them as well, as may be seen in a little sketch which Richmond inscribed 'drawn by W<sup>m</sup> Blake to help me in my picture of 'Abel.' 1825."<sup>119</sup> The Ancients seem to have used similar material to Blake in the creation of their works during this period. Essick has asked, "might Blake have been influenced, in some sense, by his ... youthful followers?"<sup>120</sup> Two prominent members also began to experiment with metal: Richmond executed a tempera featuring metal leaf, *The Creation of Light* (1826, gold on mahogany), and also used gold on his *Christ and the Woman of Samaria* (1828). It has been observed that Palmer makes two references to the projected use of silver in annotations to sketches for paintings of "A monastic figure with

109. BR(2) 379.

110. Passavant 245-46.

111. Passavant 264.

112. See Davies 19, 24, 27; Blunt 45; Hagstrum chapter 2: "The Art of Illumination."

113. See BR(2) 12, 665.

114. A. Gilchrist 308.

115. Although Butlin identifies gold on *The Body of Abel* and *Count Ugolino*, he detects no gold on *Satan Smiting Job*. However, Russell states that "there is gold upon the wings of Satan and upon the arrows in his hand and upon the blue flames behind them" (*William Blake* [1947] 12). Donnan has confirmed that there is "a considerable amount of gold" on *Satan Smiting Job* (telephone conversation, 21 Oct. 2002). This work was not examined in Townsend's study for *The Painter at Work* (email, 3 Dec. 2004).

116. See B #805.

117. See, for example, Cennino 87-89.

118. Telephone conversation, 21 Oct. 2002.

119. See Bentley, "Blake and the Ancients" 8; B #802.1; H. H. Gilchrist 261.

120. Essick 28.

much background of Gothic Cathedral" and "S. Hieronymus" in his 1824 sketchbook.<sup>121</sup> He also uses gold paint in a sketch of a pastoral landscape, to depict the disk and rays of a setting sun,<sup>122</sup> as well as in his paintings *A Hilly Scene* (c. 1826) and *Coming from Evening Church* (1830).<sup>123</sup> Richmond's and Palmer's similar choice of materials and support<sup>124</sup> suggests that around 1826, in the light of Blake's reading of Cennino, they and Blake discussed and shared techniques such as experimenting with metal leaf and with wood rather than canvas supports.

The three artists' use of gold and silver in the panel paintings of this period—often containing a biblical or early Christian subject—seems reminiscent of fifteenth-century panel paintings, icons, or altarpieces. In such works, "gilding ... serves to glorify the subject-matter and, because of the cost and effort involved, symbolizes an act of devotion on the part of the patron or artist."<sup>125</sup> The notion of gilding as a form of worship may have appealed to Blake, Richmond, and Palmer. Almost twenty years earlier, in the *Descriptive Catalogue*, Blake had written, "the above four drawings [*The Body of Abel Found by Adam and Eve: Cain, Who Was about to Bury It, Fleeing from the Face of His Parents; The Soldiers Casting Lots for Christ's Garment; Jacob's Ladder; The Angels Hovering over the Body of Jesus in the Sepulchre*] the Artist wishes were in Fresco, on an enlarged scale to ornament the altars of churches, and to make England like Italy, respected by respectable men of other countries on account of Art" (E 549). Significantly, Richmond is likely to have been the owner of most, if not all three, of Blake's final panel paintings: he owned *Satan Smiting Job* and might have owned *The Body of Abel*. The early provenance of *Count Ugolino* is unknown.<sup>126</sup>

## 5. The Significance of Blake's Use of Gold and Other Metals

Essick has suggested that "the modern student of the graphic arts should respond with a ... sense of the unity of an artist's

vision and the specific material and technical means he uses to communicate that vision to us."<sup>127</sup> I will conclude with a consideration of Blake's intentions in his use of metals as a means of artistic expression in the 1820s. Since his earliest experiments with relief etching in the mid-1780s, and probably earlier, Blake had freely experimented with materials in the expression of his vision. The evolution of tempera media, his Virgil woodcuts, and his return to pure line engraving in the plates for *Job* and *Dante* are evidence of experimentation even in his final years. His use of gold and other metals on new as well as on previously painted or printed works is another example of his willingness to experiment, to reinvent, and to employ materials in unorthodox ways. However, Blake's late and frequent application of gold and other metal at Fountain Court parallels his use of pure line engraving in *Job* and of egg tempera in the last three temperas in that each involves a conscious return to older techniques.<sup>128</sup> His use of gold, silver, and other metals is another instance of his antiquarianism as an artist.

In his temperas and in the late pure line engravings Blake attempted to return to what he believed to be much earlier forms, almost certainly the art of the medieval and Renaissance painters he had encountered at the Aders' collection and elsewhere.<sup>129</sup> However, in his use of metals he may have been looking far beyond the fifteenth-century painters to earlier sources of inspiration. In an inscription on the *Laocoön* plate (c. 1826), Blake states that "What we call Antique Gems are the Gems of Aarons Breast Plate" (E 274). The aphorism recalls Exodus 28.15-21: "And thou shalt make the breastplate of judgment with cunning work .... And thou shalt set in it settings of stones .... And the stones shall be with the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names, like the engravings of a signet; every one with his name shall they be according to the twelve tribes."<sup>130</sup> As Essick and Viscomi have demonstrated, in the light of contemporary theories concerning the origin of the art of antique gems, the aphorism is in itself uncontroversial.<sup>131</sup> However, it also reflects Blake's substitution of the biblical for the classical as a source of inspiration.<sup>132</sup> As Paley has established, the original classical title of the *Laocoön* was replaced by "א & his two Sons Satan & Adam as they were copied from the Cherubim of Solomons Temple

121. Palmer 1:6, 18, 46. The second of these was kindly pointed out to me by Martin Butlin (letter to the author, 13 Jan. 2005).

122. Palmer 1:163. Significantly, about 1826 Blake uses gold material on two representations of the setting sun in *Jerusalem* copy E (pls. 84, 94). Butlin suggests that "the idea of using silver for the highlights in the architectural background [see Palmer 1:18] may have been suggested [to Palmer] by the German and Flemish primitives admired by Palmer in the Aders collection" (Palmer 2:27). Linnell had also taken Palmer to the Aders' c. 1822-24 (Palmer 2:17).

123. Ormsby, Townsend, Singer, and Dean, "Blake's Use" 145-49; Townsend, email, 2 June 2005.

124. Palmer executed the following works on panel supports: *The Rest on the Flight to Egypt* (original title: *Repose of the Holy Family*) (1824-25), *A Hilly Scene* (c. 1826), and slightly later, *The Gleaning Field* (c. 1833), *The Bright Cloud* (c. 1833-34), *The Shearers* (c. 1833-34), *Scene at Underriver* (c. 1833-34), *The Sleeping Shepherd* (c. 1833-34), *A Pastoral Scene* (1835). Linnell produced the following works on panel during this period: *Isle of Wight from Lymington Quay* (1825), *Mid-day* (1826), *Mercury and Argus* (1828), *Milling* (1828), *Christ and the Woman of Samaria* (1829).

125. See Stephenson.

126. See B #805-07.

127. Essick 29.

128. In 1810 Cumberland recorded in his pocket book that "[Thomas] Stothard shewed me a Picture long ago painted in yolk of Egg—instead of oil that looked crisp ..." (BL Add. MSS. 36,520A v. 17). He is likely to have shared this information with Blake sometime between 1810 and 1827.

129. Several plates in the illuminated books such as the *Songs* suggest the stylistic influence of medieval illuminated manuscripts. See Blunt 45; Hagstrum chapter 2: "The Art of Illumination."

130. King James version.

131. Essick and Viscomi, *William Blake: Milton a Poem* 276.

132. He had substituted the classical for the biblical from about the time of the *Descriptive Catalogue* (1809) (see E 530-31, 536). See Eaves part 3, "Religion: A Christian History of Engraving," especially 109, 111-12, 118.

by three Rhodians & applied to Natural Fact, or History of Illum.<sup>133</sup> Blake etched elsewhere on the same plate "The Old & New Testaments are the Great Code of Art" (E 274), expressing his belief in an equation between art and Christianity: a divine art.<sup>134</sup> Therefore, a biblical reference to gold may have inspired him to decorate his watercolors, temperas, and illuminated books with gold and other metals in his final years.

In Exodus the gems on Aaron's breastplate are set in gold, the ark of the covenant is overlaid with gold, and the mercy seat, the place of the Divine Presence, decorated with cherubs at either end, is made of pure gold (28.20, 25.10-21). However, Blake's biblical allusions to gold can be traced even further back. In a letter to Hayley of 12 March 1804 referring to two commissioned plates for volume 3 of Hayley's *Life of Cowper*, he writes:

the two plates are almost finishd You will recieve proofs of them for Lady Hesketh whose copy of Cowpers letters ought to be printed in letters of Gold & ornamented with Jewels of Heaven Havilah Eden & all the countries where Jewels abound. (E 743)<sup>135</sup>

The allusion to Havilah can be traced to Genesis 2.10-12:

And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold; And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.<sup>136</sup>

In *Jerusalem* Havilah is referred to four times. For Blake, gold appears to have had associations with the land of Havilah, and by implication with Eden or Paradise.<sup>137</sup> The verses above are transcribed on page six of Blake's unfinished Genesis manuscript, the second title page of which he had begun to decorate

133. See Paley, *Traveller* chapter 2: "7" & his two Sons Satan & Adam."

134. See Essick and Visconti, *William Blake: Milton a Poem* 269-70 (*Laocoön*, lines 40, 50, and 97).

135. This sentiment echoes Blake's use of shell gold on *Winter*, where the nib of Winter's quill (a detail not included in Cowper's description in *The Task*) is tipped with gold. As observed above, Blake literally wrote in gold when finishing *Jerusalem* copy E.

In his annotations to Lavater's *Aphorisms on Man* (translated by Fuseli), Blake praises a passage in which Lavater quotes Jesus's words (Matthew 6.21; Luke 12.34), "Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also," and comments "The object of your love is your God." In his annotation, Blake asserts that "this should be written in gold letters on our temples" (E 584).

136. Onyx is a semiprecious agate with different colors in layers, often used in the creation of antique gems. Blake's technique of painting transparent glazes over both temperas and color prints, reminiscent of onyx stone, is the reason for the jewel-like quality of some of his illuminated books and temperas. Bdelium is not a precious stone but a fragrant tree resin used in perfumes.

137. *Jerusalem* 49:15 (E 198); see also 19:42 (E 164), 55:22 (E 204), and 68:38 (E 222). *Vala*, or *The Four Zoas* also includes a reference to "gold of Eden" (E 376); "an old Prophecy in Eden recorded in gold" is referred to in *Milton* (E 119).

with gold. Little has been written concerning the significance of Blake's use of gold in this work, but the subject has recently been explored by Rosamund Paice, who notes that

A ... deviation from the muted hues of this title-page is present in the gold highlights that have been added to the lettering—or rather to some of the lettering. Given that Blake left this design in an unfinished state, it may be simply that he never got around to adding these touches to the last three letters of "G E / N E / S I S" or that he ran out of this more expensive colour. Neither of these hypotheses seems particularly convincing, however: the placement of the gold within the lettering is determined in the letters "G E / N E", and it would have been a very quick task to continue on in this pattern; moreover, given the small quantity of gold required for the letters already decorated, it is hardly plausible that this would have exhausted Blake's supply. We must, therefore, consider another possibility, one that has a justification within the design itself. The letters "G E / N E" appear above the division created by the ... grey path or pavement that seems to signify the line dividing the heavenly from the earthly; the letters "S I S" inhabit the earthly space below. In this context, the use of gold for only the first four letters seems a reasonable device for emphasising the superior status of the heavenly realm.<sup>138</sup>

Paice's findings suggest a way to interpret Blake's application of gold to titles in other illuminated books, including the words written partly in gold on the title page of *Jerusalem* copy E. On plate 2, gold is applied to the letters of the word "Jerusalem", but not to "The"; in the next line, to "Ema" and the left-hand side of "n" but not to "ation of" or the second "The." There is gold on the "G" of "Giant," but not on the rest of the word, and on "Albi" and the left-hand side of "o," but not on "n." This is only apparent on examining the plate in direct natural light; Blake used a yellow pigment on the letters which do not feature gold. As Paice asks, in his selective use of gold material, is Blake merely economizing, or attempting to convey a message?<sup>139</sup>

Despite criticizing the teachings of Swedenborg in the 1790s, most vigorously in *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Blake came to reevaluate them in the early nineteenth century. He also adopted (or adapted) a number of teachings such as the concept of Jesus as God, rather than a facet of the trinity.<sup>140</sup> Most importantly in the context of the present

138. Excerpt from an unpublished paper; my thanks to Rosamund Paice for allowing me to quote from it here. Paice continues,

... gold-embellished letters have a long history in the production of illuminated manuscripts—particularly Bibles and prayer books—for rich patrons. Blake's colouring here, then, not only serves a meaningful function within the context of the design and subject matter, but also gestures to previous works of this type, and, by implication, acknowledges the status of his own patron in this commission, John Linnell.

139. One might ask the same question of the gilded titles in *Innocence* copy Y, where some titles have been gilded with shell gold (for example, "Introduction," "Little Black Boy") while other titles feature no gold (for example, "Divine Image," "The Shepherd"). My thanks to Robert Essick for this information (email, 5 Dec. 2008).

140. See E 274.

discussion, he apparently accepted Swedenborg's selection of inspired books of the Bible which may be understood symbolically.<sup>141</sup> It is clear that Blake carefully read a number of translations of Swedenborg's works.<sup>142</sup> For example, in the *Descriptive Catalogue*, Blake describes his "experiment Picture," *The Spiritual Preceptor*, as a "subject ... taken from the visions of Emanuel Swedenborg. Universal Theology ..." (E 546). As Bentley demonstrates, he is alluding to Rev. John Clowes's translation of *True Christian Religion: Containing the Universal Theology of the New Church*, published in 1781.<sup>143</sup> Blake notes that "the works of this visionary are well worthy the attention of Painters and Poets; they are foundations for grand things ..." (E 546). He appears to have drawn from the same volume in his portrayal of the Ijim in his manuscript poem *Tiriel* (1789?).<sup>144</sup> By 1809-10, he had also consulted Clowes's translations of Swedenborg's *Of the Earths in the Universe and of Their Inhabitants* (1787)<sup>145</sup> and *The Delights of Wisdom concerning Conjugal Love* (1794) when composing *The Four Zoas* (c. 1796-1807?).<sup>146</sup>

Clowes was a Church of England minister and Swedenborgian preacher who, significantly, remained within the communion of the established church and opposed the formation of the New Church. In 1796-97 he had also translated the Quietist Archbishop François de Salignac de la Mothe-Fénelon's *Pious Reflections for Every Day of the Month*. In *Jerusalem*, "Fénelon, Guion, Teresa, / Whitefield & Hervey, guard that Gate [towards Beulah]; with all the gentle Souls / Who guide the great Wine-press of Love ..." (E 227). Paley has suggested that Blake's friend and patron Charles Augustus Tulk may have been involved in Blake's renewed interest in Swedenborg.<sup>147</sup> In 1806 Clowes established the Hawkstone meeting, an annual meeting of Swedenborgians (both "separatists" in the New Jerusalem Church and "non-separatists") at Hawkstone Park in Shropshire. It was through these meetings that Tulk originally became involved in the church.<sup>148</sup> Clowes had sided with the printer Robert Hindmarsh, a figure probably known to Blake, against the engraver and minister Samuel Noble over the nature of the resurrection,<sup>149</sup> and was also a personal friend of Flaxman, Blake's close friend, also a Swedenborgian (though only briefly a member of the New Jerusalem Church, 1797-99) and co-founder of a project to publish translations of Swedenborg's works.<sup>150</sup>

Swedenborg's biblical exegesis *Arcana Coelestia* was first published in London in 1749. Significantly, the eight volumes deal only with Genesis and Exodus. According to Marsha Keith Schuchard, Blake would have been present at meetings of the Swedenborg Society in the 1780s when passages of *Arcana Coelestia* were orally translated and discussed.<sup>151</sup> S. Foster Damon first cites evidence of Blake's having read *Arcana Coelestia*.<sup>152</sup> From 1784 Clowes had published a translation, and it seems likely that Blake's reference to Swedenborg's canon of works<sup>153</sup> derived from his reading of this translation. If so, Blake may also have read in the same work Swedenborg's discussion of the varied symbolism of gold in the first two books in the Bible. For Genesis 2.11, 12, Swedenborg states:

The first river, or Pison, signifieth the intelligence of faith, originating in love; the land of Havilah signifieth the mind; gold goodness; bdellium and the onyx-stone truth; the reason why gold is twice mentioned is, because it signifies the good of love and the good of faith originating in love; and the reason why bdellium and the onyx-stone are mentioned is because one signifies the truth of love, and the other the truth of faith originating in love. Such is the celestial man.<sup>154</sup>

Such passages suggest that Blake's late use of gold and other metals may have a biblical origin influenced by his renewed interest in Swedenborg. If so, it might also signify "the good of love and the good of faith originating in love." However, it would be untypical for Blake's use of gold to have one source and one meaning. As Paley has observed, the gold in *Jerusalem* copy E has both positive and negative connotations.<sup>155</sup>

In this paper, I have provided a chronological overview of Blake's use of metal material in the creation of his paintings and illuminated books during the five decades of his working career as artist and printmaker, and especially during his final years in which he used gold and silver with unprecedented frequency, despite modest finances. Building upon the work of Mason and Gregory, Donnan, and Townsend, Ormsby, and other conservation scientists at the Tate, I have discussed Blake's emulation of gilding techniques traditionally employed by carvers and gilders. The paper has also explored Blake's possible sources of metal material, such as his rediscovered neighbor and fellow lodger at 3 Fountain Court,

141. Damon, *Philosophy* 454.

142. See Damon, *Dictionary* 392-94 (entry for Swedenborg).

143. Bentley, *William Blake's Writings* 2:855n.

144. Bentley, *William Blake's Writings* 2:909n.

145. Bentley, *William Blake's Writings* 2:1349n.

146. See Damon, *Dictionary* 393; Otto 65 and n16.

147. Paley, *William Blake: Jerusalem* 207.

148. Alexander Gordon, "Tulk, Charles Augustus (1786-1849)," rev. Timothy C. F. Stunt (ODNB).

149. Tulk had also clashed with Noble (ODNB). Clowes had desperately urged Hindmarsh not to make the move into sectarianism of founding the New Church.

150. Jon Mee, "Clowes, John (1743-1831)" (ODNB).

151. Email, 4 June 2005. It is possible that Blake derived some of the animal imagery deployed in his writings from the same source (see Paley, *Energy* 77).

152. Damon, *Philosophy* 454.

153. *Jerusalem* 48:8-11 (E 196).

154. Swedenborg 2:49. See also 1:2, 115.

155. Paley, *William Blake: Jerusalem* 15-16. Some of Blake's applications of gold material are idiosyncratic and perplexing. For instance, what is to be made of the patches of gold surrounding and within the spokes of both spinning wheels on pl. 59 of *Jerusalem* copy E?

the carver and gilder John George Lohr. I have discussed apparent similarities between Blake's use of gold, silver, and other metal material and that of his younger followers, the Ancients. Finally, while recognizing the complex motivations for Blake's application of gold, I have demonstrated that one

likely source of inspiration for his renewed use of gold material appears to lie at the very beginning of his "Great Code of Art": the first chapters of Genesis as illuminated by Emanuel Swedenborg.

**Table 1**  
**Temperas, Watercolors, and Separate Plates**  
**Featuring Metal Material, 1775-1827**

1a: Works Executed under James Basire, c. 1775<sup>1</sup>

Title	Date	Metal	Commission	Reference
<i>Countess Aveline, Three Details from Her Tomb</i>	c. 1775	Shell gold	Society of Antiquaries	Butlin #5
<i>Countess Aveline, Detail from Her Tomb</i>	c. 1775	Shell gold	Society of Antiquaries	Butlin #6
<i>King Sebert, the North Front of His Monument</i>	1775	Shell gold	Society of Antiquaries	Butlin #7
<i>King Sebert, from the Wall-Painting in the Sedilia above His Monument</i>	c. 1775	Shell gold	Society of Antiquaries	Butlin #8
<i>Henry III, from the Wall-Painting in the Sedilia above the Monument of King Sebert</i>	c. 1775	Shell gold	Society of Antiquaries	Butlin #9
<i>King Sebert, Heads and Ornaments from His Monument</i>	c. 1775	Shell gold	Society of Antiquaries	Butlin #10
<i>Countess Aveline, Three Details from Her Tomb</i>	c. 1775	Shell gold	Richard Gough	Butlin #14
<i>King Sebert, from the Wall-Painting above His Monument</i>	c. 1775	Shell gold	Richard Gough	Butlin #16
<i>Henry III, from the Wall-Painting above the Monument of King Sebert</i>	c. 1775	Shell gold	Richard Gough	Butlin #17
<i>King Sebert, Heads and Ornaments from His Monument</i>	c. 1775	Shell gold	Richard Gough	Butlin #18

1. The Society of Antiquaries owns the works executed for its commission; those for Gough are in the Bodleian Library.

## 1b: Works Executed c. 1795-1811

Title	Date	Location	Metal	Source of commission/ purchaser/first owner	Reference
<i>Naomi Entreating Ruth and Orpah</i>	c. 1795	V&A	Shell gold, gold leaf	Unknown	Butlin #299
<i>Satan Calling Up His Legions— An Experiment Picture</i>	c. 1795-1800	V&A	Gold-silver alloy leaf	Samuel Palmer	Butlin #661
<i>Eve Tempted by the Serpent</i>	c. 1799-1800	V&A	Shell gold	Thomas Butts	Butlin #379
<i>Winter</i>	1800-03?	Tate	Shell gold	John Johnson	Butlin #808
<i>Evening</i>	1800-03?	NGA	Shell gold	John Johnson	Butlin #809
<i>Olney Bridge</i>	1800-03?	Untraced	Shell gold?	John Johnson	Butlin #810
<i>Satan Calling Up His Legions</i>	c. 1800-05	Petworth House	Shell gold, gold- silver alloy leaf	Countess of Egremont	Butlin #662
<i>The Spiritual Form of Pitt</i>	1805?	Tate	Shell gold, gold leaf, gold-silver alloy	Samuel Palmer	Butlin #651
<i>The Spiritual Form of Nelson</i>	c. 1805-09	Tate	Shell gold	Thomas Butts	Butlin #649
<i>Satan, Sin and Death</i>	c. 1806?	Huntington	Gold	Thomas Butts	Butlin #536.2
<i>Sir Jeffery Chaucer and the Nine and Twenty Pilgrims on Their Journey to Canterbury</i>	1808?	Pollok House	Shell gold, pure silver leaf, shell silver	Thomas Butts	Butlin #653
<i>The Bard, from Gray</i>	1809?	Tate	Gold-silver alloy leaf, shell gold	Samuel Palmer	Butlin #655
<i>The Spiritual Form of Napoleon</i>	c. 1809?/1822?	Untraced	Gold?	Samuel Palmer	Butlin #652
<i>An Allegory of the Spiritual Condition of Man</i>	1811?	Fitzwilliam	Shell gold	Thomas Butts	Butlin #673

Ic: Later Works, c. 1815-27

Title	Date	Location	Metal	Source of commission/ purchaser/first owner	Reference
<i>The Ancient of Days</i> copy F	c. 1794/ 1824 or 1827?	Whitworth Gallery	Gold	Frederick Tatham	Butlin #271
<i>The Last Judgment</i>	c. 1810-27?	Untraced	Gold leaf?	Mrs. Blake?	Butlin #648
<i>The Overthrow of Apollo and the Pagan Gods</i>	c. 1815	Huntington	Gold	Thomas Butts	Butlin #542.4
<i>The Night of Peace</i>	c. 1815	Huntington	Gold	Thomas Butts	Butlin #542.6
<i>The Ghost of a Flea</i>	c. 1819-20	Tate	Gold-silver alloy leaf, shell gold	John Varley	Butlin #750
<i>Epitome of James Hervey's Meditations among the Tombs</i>	c. 1820	Tate	Shell gold	Thomas Butts	Butlin #770
<i>The First Temptation</i>	c. 1820-25	Private collection	Gold	Mrs. Blake?	Butlin #546
<i>Jerusalem</i> pl. 51	c. 1821	National Gallery of Victoria	Gold	John Linnell?	BB 264
<i>The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins</i>	c. 1825	YCBA	Gold	William Haines	Butlin #480
<i>The Vision of Queen Katherine</i>	c. 1825	NGA	Gold over pencil	Sir Thomas Lawrence	Butlin #549
<i>The Virgin and Child</i>	1825?	YCBA	Shell gold	Mrs. Blake? Frederick Tatham?	Butlin #674
<i>Count Ugolino and His Sons in Prison</i>	c. 1826	Fitzwilliam	Gold	Unknown (George Richmond?)	Butlin #805
<i>The Body of Abel Found by Adam and Eve</i>	c. 1826	Tate	Gold	Thomas Butts? George Richmond?	Butlin #806
<i>Satan Smiting Job with Sore Boils</i>	c. 1826	Tate	Gold	George Richmond	Butlin #807
Genesis manuscript: second title page	c. 1826-27	Huntington	Gold	John Linnell	Butlin #828.2

Table 2: Illuminated Books Finished in Metal Material by Blake

Copy	Dates of printing/ finishing <sup>1</sup>	Location	Metal	Source of commission/ purchaser/first owner
America copy O	1821/c. 1822-26	Fitzwilliam	Gold	John Linnell
Europe copy A	1795/? <sup>2</sup>	YCBA	Gold leaf	George Romney?
Europe copy K	1821/c. 1822-26	Fitzwilliam	Gold	John Linnell
Jerusalem copy E	1821/c. 1826-27	YCBA	Shell silver, shell gold, shell gold-silver alloy	Frederick Tatham
Marriage copy H	1790 or 1793/ by May 1821	Fitzwilliam	Gold	John Linnell
Marriage copy I	1827/1827	Fitzwilliam	Shell gold	Thomas Griffiths Wainewright
Milton copy B	1811/c. 1826	Huntington	Gold	Thomas Griffiths Wainewright
Milton copy C	1811/c. 1818	NYPL	Silver, gold	William Beckford
Milton copy D	1818/c. 1818	LC	Crushed gold leaf	James Vine
Songs of Innocence copy R/Y	c. 1802-07/ c. 1811	Fitzwilliam/Neuerburg/ Essick/Parker	Shell gold	John, second Baron Dimsdale <sup>5</sup>
Songs of Innocence copy S	c. 1811/c. 1811	Cincinnati	Shell gold?	Thomas Frognall Dibdin?
Songs copy N (Experience only)	1795/?	Huntington	Gold	Unknown
Songs copy R	1795/ c. 1819 or 1824	Fitzwilliam	Gold	John Linnell
Songs copy S	1811, 1795/ before 1822	Cincinnati	Gold	Francis Chantry?
Songs copy U	1818/c. 1818-22	Princeton	Shell gold	James Boswell, Jr.
Songs copy W	1825/c. 1825-27	King's College	Diluted shell gold applied in washes?	John Jebb
Songs copy X	1827/1827	Anonymous	Shell gold	Thomas Griffiths Wainewright
Songs copy Y	1825/c. 1825-27	Metropolitan	Gold	Edward Calvert
Songs copy Z	1826/c. 1826	LC	Gold	Henry Crabb Robinson
Thel copy O	1818/c. 1818-22	LC	Gold	James Vine
Urizen copy G	1818/ 1818 or later	LC	Shell silver, shell gold	Unknown
Visions copy N	1818/ 1818 or later	Private collection	Gold	James Ferguson?
Visions copy O	1818/c. 1818-25	BM	Gold	Henry Crabb Robinson

1. The first (printing) date follows the appendix, "Extant and Known Copies of Illuminated Books" (375-81), in Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the Book*; the second (finishing and adding of metal material) date is my suggestion based upon evidence in *Blake Books* and *Blake and the Idea of the Book* as to when the work was finally purchased.

2. Both Bindman and Viscomi are suspicious of the coloring of this copy (see Bindman, *William Blake: His Art and Times* [London: Thames and Hudson, 1982] 106, and Viscomi, "The Myth of Commissioned Illuminated Books: George Romney, Isaac D'Israeli, and 'One Hundred and Sixty designs ... of Blake's,'" *Blake* 23.2 [fall 1989]: 71n35). The gold finishing may therefore be posthumous.

3. In his forthcoming facsimile edition of *Marriage* copy B (Bodleian Library), Michael Phillips reopens the question of the date of publication,

presenting new evidence for 1793, nearer to the announcement in the prospectus of 10 October 1793.

4. See Essick, "Blake in the Marketplace, 2007," *Blake* 41.4 [spring 2008]: 143.

5. Bentley and Essick have recently suggested that the first Baron Dimsdale, who died in 1800, is unlikely to have been the purchaser/first owner of copy R/Y (Essick, "Blake in the Marketplace, 2007," *Blake* 41.4 [spring 2008]: 144; Bentley, "William Blake and His Circle," *Blake* 42.1 [summer 2008]: 16n53). The first owner was probably his son, John, second Baron Dimsdale of Hampstead (1744-1820). Further information concerning the second Baron Dimsdale will be provided in a forthcoming note.

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