

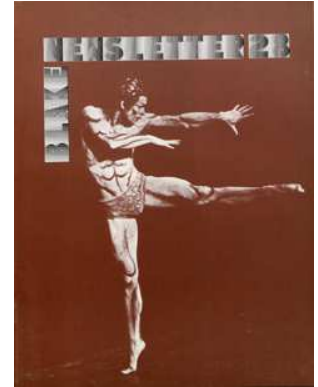
AN ILLUSTRATED QUARTERLY
BLAKE

M I N U T E
P A R T I C U L A R

Songs of Innocence, Keynes 1921 Copy U,
Keynes-Wolf 1953 Copy U

Thomas E. Connolly

Blake/An Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 7, Issue 4, Spring 1974, pp. 88-89



Thomas E. Connolly

Songs of Innocence, Keynes (1921) Copy U, Keynes-Wolf (1953) Copy U

This copy of *Songs of Innocence*, in the Houghton Library, Harvard University (see *Newsletter* 19, p. 214, and *Newsletter* 24, p. 96) requires, perhaps, just one more note to present it properly to contemporary students of Blake. Physical examination of the volume as it now exists reveals the following details to be added to the standard bibliographical descriptions cited above:

(1) pl. 29, the first of two plates of "The Little Black Boy." For this copy two pulls were made from this plate. Consequently two leaves for pl. 29 appear in this copy. The leaves were not numbered by Blake, but numbers in pencil have been added in the upper right-hand corners of the leaves. Because of the extra print of or pull from pl. 29, these numbers run from 1-32, not from 1-31 as the bibliographies cited above declare.

(2) Included in this copy, but unnoticed in either of the bibliographies cited in my title are three leaves from *Songs of Experience* numbered in pencil in the upper right-hand corners 1a, 2a, 3a. These are:

(a) *Experience* pl. 29,¹ Title page to *Experience* on which is written in pencil: "Taken in 1838: From the original plates in possession of Mr. Tatham."

(b) *Experience* pl. 30, "Introduction" to *Experience*.

(c) *Experience* pl. 37, "The Chimney Sweeper" of *Experience*.

(3) Also originally bound into this copy are many leaves containing excerpts from the "Prologue" to *The Canterbury Tales* with modernized versions on facing leaves.

A corrected description of this copy of *Songs of Innocence* reads as follows:

U 31 plates on [32]² leaves. Watermark WHATMAN, on one leaf. Printed in black. Uncoloured.

Formerly arranged: 2, 1, 3, 10-11, 29-30, 9, 22, 28, 13, 14, 8, 20, 21, 16-17, 27, 24, 18-19, 12, 23, 25-26, 31, 4, 15, 5-7. Size: 19 x 11.7 cm. Now loose in binding together with the *Descriptive Catalogue*, 1809, and the *Canterbury Pilgrims*, 1812; fly-leaf with watermark dated 1818. [Uncoloured prints of pls. 29, 30, 37 of *Songs of Experience* bound in after *Songs of Innocence*. The following notation in pencil appears on pl. 29 (*Experience*), Title page to *Experience*: "Taken in 1838: From the original plates in possession of Mr. Tatham." Excerpts from Chaucer's "Prologue" with modernized texts facing the originals have also been bound into this copy.]

Formerly in the possession of Robert Balmanno, an English journalist, who emigrated to New York. He had been friendly with Stothard and Fuseli and other artists who knew Blake, and may have had the books direct from him. Afterwards in the collection of E.W. Hooper, of Boston. Reproduced in 1883 by Little, Brown, and Co. For many years in

- 1 The Keynes-Wolf *Census* uses one set of plate numbers for extant copies of *Songs of Innocence* (p. 9) and another set of plate numbers for extant copies of *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (p. 50). A certain amount of confusion will always arise in referring to the plates of individual poems in *Songs of Innocence*. One must be careful always to indicate whether one is citing the plate number for a poem of *Innocence* as it appears in the single anthology (*Innocence* only) or in the double anthology (*Innocence and Experience*): For example, Keynes-Wolf number the plate for "A Dream" 4 in the former and 26 in the latter; they number the two plates for "The Little Black Boy" 29 and 30 in the former and 9 and 10 in the latter.
- 2 Material in square brackets is either a correction of or an addition to the bibliographic description in the Keynes-Wolf *Census* (pp. 17-18).

Thomas E. Connolly is Professor of English at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He is currently at work on a book on Blake's Songs.

(Ryan, continued from page 87)

chemist, Karl Wilhelm Scheele, and he performed a series of experiments attempting to analyze the "coloring principle" in Prussian blue.³ Scheele was successful in isolating the chemical, and four years later the French *Encyclopédie* gave it the name "*l'acide prussique*."⁴ Prussic acid is today more generally known as hydrocyanic acid or hydrogen cyanide, and it is recognized as one of the most poisonous substances in existence. Scheele himself was apparently not aware of the dangerous qualities of the acid he had discovered: it was not until 1803 that its highly poisonous character was fully understood.⁵ Since then the chemical has had an inglorious history: the Zyklon-B used at Auschwitz and the gas released in execution chambers in this country were both forms of hydrocyanic acid.

What was Blake's point in alluding to Prussian blue in this passage? David Erdman suggests that Plate 65 was revised at about the time of Napoleon's Hundred Days.⁶ In the Belgian campaign--that final assault by the sons of Albion against Luvah--England's chief ally was Prussia. It was the arrival of Prussian troops under Blücher that determined the outcome of the battle at Waterloo. In describing the sacrificial death of Luvah, Blake saw the appropriateness of identifying the blue dye of the Druids with the poison-based color named for Prussia.

the possession of Hooper's daughter, Mrs. Greely S. Curtis, Jr., of Boston, and given by her sister, Mrs. Ward Thoron to the Houghton Library, Harvard University, in 1951 in memory of her father.

Further pencil notations, that are not necessarily essential to the physical description of Copy U, appear as follows:

(1) On the verso of pl. 3 "Introduction" to *Innocence* appears the following notation: "Typ 6500 (50-208-210)".

(2) Inside the front cover is a history of the ownership of this copy.

(3) On the verso of pl. 21 ("The Little Boy found") appears the notation: "H.D. Chapin 60 Beacon St. Boston High 3-4 40 inches - 11246".

(4) On p. 30 of the *Descriptive Catalogue* in the margin opposite "H. _____ says" in the text appears the name, "Hoppner".

(5) On p. 32 of the *Descriptive Catalogue* in the margin opposite "Mr. S. _____" appears the name, "Stothard".

(6) On the end paper appears the note: "A copy of the *Descriptive Catalogue* of 1809/Sold in the Beckford Libr^y/Hamilton Palace Sale for £9/E.W.H."

One does not know when the pages of this copy became loose. They may have been loosened sometime between 1921 and 1953. The extra leaf for "The Little Black Boy" may have been inserted after Keynes originally described this copy, but it is unlikely. Similarly, the three leaves from *Experience* may have been added subsequent to 1921, again unlikely. If the three leaves from *Experience* were actually added to this copy in 1838 or shortly thereafter, as the pencil note indicates, the pages of this copy may have been loosened before Keynes originally described it in 1921.

³ His account of the experiments is included in *The Chemical Essays of Charles-William Scheele*, trans. Thomas Beddoes (London: John Murray, 1786).

⁴ J. R. Partington, *A History of Chemistry*, III (London: Macmillan, 1962), 527.

⁵ Partington, III, 234. In 1803, the poison derived from laurel leaves was identified as prussic acid. Was it coincidental that in this year (probably) Blake wrote: "The Strongest Poison ever known / Came from Caesar's Laurel Crown"? (K 433) Or had he read somewhere an account of the discovery?

⁶ Blake, *Prophet Against Empire*, 2nd ed., rev. (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1969), p. 466n.

(Morkan, continued from page 87)

guard Aberdeen, Berwick, and Dumfries. Finally, in Blake, Edom is a fallen land (*Milton* 17:20; *Jerusalem* 49:43; 92:23; 96:9), but is also both the giant who must recover his lost inheritance and the land that must be transformed before the apocalypse (*Marriage of Heaven and Hell* 2:14-20, 3:5-6).

One hesitates to put more weight on these parallels than they will bear; however, they do point in a direction that could be fruitful in further explorations of both Blakes's mythic geography and history in the prophetic Books, that is Milton's historical and polemical prose and his native antecedents in the use of allegorical geography: Spenser, Drayton, Phineus Fletcher, and William Browne of Tavistock.