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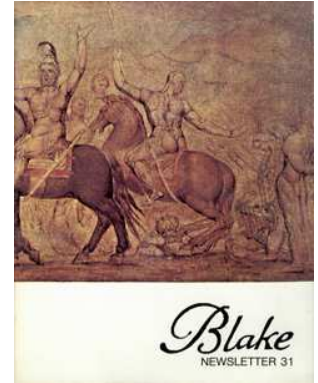
# BLAKE

A R T I C L E

## Blake's Vision of Spenser's Faerie Queene: A Report and Anatomy

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# Blake's Vision of Spenser's *Faerie Queene*: A

by John E. Grant and Robert E. Brown

Blake's tempera called *The Characters in Spenser's Faerie Queene* has attracted less attention than it deserves due in part to its somewhat remote location, its rather poor condition, and its not having been adequately reproduced, though its size, complexity, and finish establish it as one of Blake's major surviving works. With the kind assistance of Martin Butlin, whose forthcoming catalogue raisonné is eagerly awaited, we are able to provide a summary of basic data concerning the painting. We shall also attempt to describe and identify all the figures in the picture.

It is now the property of the National Trust, and is regularly on display at Petworth House, Sussex, about fifty miles from London. The specific media are watercolor with ink on muslin. It has been varnished, mounted on a panel, and closely framed, which causes the edges of the picture to be shadowed; vertical lines at the right and left edges indicate that they were formerly occluded by a frame. Reports that it has been recently cleaned refer only to repairs following a minor accident. The painting measures 18 x 53-1/2 inches (45.7 x 135.8 cm.)--practically the same size as Blake's better known tempera of *Chaucer's Canterbury Pilgrims*. In 1951 Keynes reported that the picture is signed WB, but the signature is not visible in 1974 photographs. The date of execution was conjectured by Keynes to have been ca. 1815, but Butlin and Grant have independently concluded that a date of ca. 1825 is more probable.

The first report of the painting is that it was sold by Mrs. Blake to Lord Egremont for 80 guineas in 1828. It passed by descent to Lord Leconfield and thence to John Wyndham, later Lord Egremont, who gave it to H. M. Treasury in 1957. It was exhibited in London by the Burlington Fine Arts Society in 1876 and the Arts Council in 1951, and in Washington in 1957.

The literature on the picture is sketchy. A few suggestive facts may be gleaned from the Gilchrist *Life of William Blake*, I, 365 (1863; rpt., ed. Todd, 1945, p. 356) and the Rossetti list in Gilchrist, II, 235, no. 208 (1863; rev. ed. 1880, II, 249, no. 235). Additional references are Collins Baker, *Petworth Catalogue* (1920), p. 5, no. 408; Keynes, *The Tempera Paintings* (1951), p. 17, item 6; Bentley, *Blake Records* (1969), p. 363. The only previous color reproduction, that issued by the Blake Society in the 1920's, was quite small and is now rare. The monochrome reproductions in Figgis (1925) and Todd (1971) are too small for detailed study. The reproduction in Damon's *Dictionary* (1965, 1967, pl. 8), however, is somewhat larger, and Damon's discussion is the only attempt at a systematic exposition. Though we disagree (sometimes silently) with Damon in a number of particulars, we have been considerably assisted by his observations.

In a full-scale study of the painting one would wish to consider the relation between Blake and Spenser generally. There are brilliant remarks on this subject in Frye's *Fearful Symmetry* (1947), passim, but no comments on the paintings. A penetrating interpretation of *Gray* 64: *Bard* 12, entitled "Spenser Creating His Faeries," is to be found in Tayler, *Blake's Illustrations to the Poems of Gray* (1971), pp. 103-07; see Keynes,

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# Report and an Anatomy



ed., *William Blake's Water-Colour Designs for the Poems of Thomas Gray* (1971), p. 59. Apart from what can be inferred from Blake's "Imitation of Spenser" in *Poetical Sketches* and the inscription from *The Faerie Queene* II, ii, 2 on p. 19 of the *Notebook*--see Erdman and Moore, *The Notebook of William Blake: A Photographic and Typographic Facsimile* (1973), pp. 16-17--there is no verbal evidence of what Blake thought of his great predecessor. More substantial inferences can be gathered from the "Head of Spenser" which Blake painted about 1800: see the catalogue of William Wells, *William Blake's "Heads of the Poets" for Turret House, The Residence of William Hayley, Felpham* (1969), pp. 21-22.

Another important basis for inference is Blake's tempera *Sir Geoffrey Chaucer and the Nine and Twenty Pilgrims on their Journey to Canterbury* (1808), for which Blake wrote expositions, particularly in the *Descriptive Catalogue* (1809). Blake also issued as many as five engraved states of this picture, and the later states are accompanied by identifying and interpretational inscriptions; see Keynes, *The Engraved Designs of William Blake: The Separate Plates*, no. 17, pp. 45-49. For expositions of the *Chaucer* see Damon's *Dictionary* and especially Karl Kiralis, "William Blake as an Intellectual and Spiritual Guide to Chaucer's *Canterbury Pilgrims*," *Blake Studies*, I (1969), 139-90. The fact that the Spenser cavalcade is almost exactly the same size as the tempera Chaucer cavalcade and the similarity of arrangements of the figures in both paintings imply that Blake intended them to be companion pictures. Since Butts owned the *Chaucer* until his death in 1845 while Lord Egremont purchased the *Spenser* in 1828, however, it is not evident how the two pictures could have been displayed together.

The color reproduction of *The Characters in Spenser's Faerie Queene* which accompanies this

exposition is practically the first of clarity adequate for study without reference to the original. It is based on photographs of A. C. Cooper, Ltd., London, taken by Gordon H. Robertson at Petworth in Spring, 1974. Though the reproduction is about two-thirds as long as the painting, the picture area is less than half that of the painting. Thus the viewer should be cautioned against expecting that the reproduction will have the same impact as the original. The edges of the color reproduction have been cropped to eliminate shadows and color printing has produced a general reddish cast that is not true to the painting. The blowups and sketches that illustrate our exposition should enable the viewer to attain a more secure grasp of the picture than could have been gotten from a brief look at the original which has seriously decayed, particularly in the upper corners. We have also provided a coded key of all figures in the picture and for convenience will refer to it even before it is systematically explained.

Our detailed exposition is based on two periods of study: in the spring of 1969 Grant spent several hours intensively looking at the picture as it was displayed at Petworth, without benefit of special lighting. Later Grant and Brown studied various projections of a black and white photograph of the picture that was procured from the Courtauld Institute at the suggestion of the National Trust. Black and white and color photographs from Cooper were not available until the last stages of the preparation of the manuscript.

These studies have been rewarded by discoveries comparable to those made in excavating various levels of an archaeological site. Repeatedly, additional study of areas in the picture that seem to contain nothing has revealed details of undoubted if uncertain significance. Some of these, such as the Spread-winged Presence, "Nature" (B 11),



are unquestionably present, and can be recognized by anyone once they have been pointed out. Other details are more dubious, such as a transparent architectural feature just above the figure we identify as Florimell (A 16). In other areas, such as B 14 and 15, the shapes *per se* are almost imperceptible but the light patterns indicate there must have been figures. Clouds, frame-shading, deterioration, and, perhaps, pentimenti, all contribute to producing indefinite areas, particularly at the upper right edge of the picture. The validity of assertions about such areas can only be confirmed or rejected as a result of study of the original freed from the frame and under special lighting conditions.

In this analysis a thorough report of all perceptible details has been our primary concern, even when the details seem peculiar or unaccountable. We have provided enlargements or adapted tracings of details that are too small or faint for clear viewing: there are blowups of A 26, A 27, A 28, A 29, A I, A II, A IV, B 1, B 5, B 6, B 7, B 19, B 20; there are adapted tracings of A VIII, A IX, A XII, B 5, B 6, B 7, B 11, B 12, B 14, B 15, B 19, B 20, B 21. In both our visual and verbal renditions of the painting, it has seemed better to risk supererogation than incompleteness.

Our fundamental aim of descriptive accuracy shades over into the problem of illustrative correspondence with figures and topographic features in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. One is able to see more clearly when one understands what may be seen. The vast, intricate design of Spenser's epic poses a formidable challenge to the expositor who wishes to give a thorough account of the correspondences between the poem and Blake's very detailed picture for it. Brown has particularly addressed himself to this problem. The best basis for identification of details is specific reference in *The Faerie Queene* to the appearance, features or clothing of any figure in the painting. When such references do not occur, we have worked from other suppositions. One is that the figures Blake presents are likely to be among the most important in *The Faerie Queene*; another is that many of the evil human figures are not represented except for those few relegated to the rear of the procession. It seems likely that Blake presents the figures more or less in the order that they appear in the poem, so that figures around the Redcrosse Knight, for example, probably appear in or near Book I. Variations from this arrangement are duly noted. The elaborate eye- and hand-framings in the picture tend to set off some groups of figures from others and also to form a system of pairings of figures (see Analysis I). Spenserian narrative affinities often seem reliable guidance for identifying the problematic member of a pair: for example, it would seem likely that a haloed female companion to the Redcrosse Knight (A 3) would certainly be Una (A 4), even if she were not identifiable by specific textual descriptions. Finally, it was noticed that the same number of women appear in the procession as are really important in *The Faerie Queene* itself (see Analysis II). These clues have aided in identification of all female figures, and have



led to some speculation as to the meaning of their arrangement.

A number of the figures, particularly those in the supernal region above the clouds, however, seem less to illustrate texts in *The Faerie Queene* than to function as Blakean criticisms of the quality of Spenserian vision. Damon was correct in identifying the central figure of the divinity as "The God of this World"; a deity who superintends the bellicose moral virtues must be "my vision's greatest enemy." Yet Blake was certainly prompted by Spenser's "Jove" (*Mut.* VI. 15 ff.) in delineating this figure. To recognize and evaluate the proportions of illustration and criticism in a Blake picture is a challenging task. In his pictorial comments on other writers from Young and Gray to Milton, Bunyan, and Dante, Blake the artist sought to reveal the strengths as well as limitations perceptible to his prophetic criticism. Though all were susceptible to error, all possessed redemptive imagination. Probably not all of Blake's thoughts about Chaucer are contained in his rather extensive verbal comments on his picture. Other dimensions of consideration are implied in Blake's picture of the *Pilgrims*, but Chaucer is a this-worldly author and gives his illustrator little explicit guidance as to how his supernal regions should be conceived. Thus Blake was free to provide only birds and a few other pictorial details as auguries of supernal design in Chaucer. Of course, Spenser differs from Chaucer in that he gives a more explicit account of his divine machinery and Blake could follow his author in rendering the heavenly regions visually.

Comparison with the Chaucer *Pilgrims* cannot but suggest other ways in which the Spenser may be interpreted. The similarities in the depictions of the Prioress and Una (A 4) and the Wife of Bath and the figure we identify as Britomart (A 14) are striking, and the further similarity between the gestures and positions of Harry Bailey and Britomart (A 14) must be meaningful. More extended comparative study will lead the viewer to consider



that Chaucer's *Pilgrims* are, for the most part, making progress. It is possible to question whether they are going in exactly the right direction, but, with a few exceptions, they are certainly moving ahead. Not so with Spenser's *Characters*. The Lion (A 2) and Una's Ass are stepping forward and Guyon's horse is probably strutting ahead, but of the other chief mounts, three are rearing and two are shying. If their destination really is the Gothic Jerusalem at the upper left as, following Damon, we suppose to be the case, Spenser's *Characters* are going to have to get moving, overcome external and internal impediments, and, circuitously, redirect their route. Whether they can be imagined able to accomplish this exploit, either as a group or individually, depends on what the viewer is able to gather about the proportions of Good and Evil revealed in the heavens of Spenser.

What we offer in this detailed analysis of the *Characters in Spenser's Faerie Queene* is not primarily interpretive. Our chief concerns are accurate description and identification of the Spenserian characters and scenes in the picture. If we have generally succeeded, we will have tended to obviate a number of interpretive possibilities, but in general we have only tried to touch on these matters in an allusive or suggestive manner. For purposes of clarity, we have presented a numbered schematic version of the Spenser picture somewhat like that of Blake's drawing of *A Vision of the Last Judgment* employed by Damon in his *Dictionary*. When this and the other pictorial aids are compared with the color reproduction of the picture, the viewer can easily locate the area being referred to. The Spenser procession differs from *The Last Judgment*, however, in that the figures in the foreground seldom interact with those in the background, and both are sharply separated from those in the supernal regions. Thus, we have not employed a consecutive numbering system, such as is suitable for *The Last Judgment*, but have preferred to label characters and places on the Earth as figures of Row A, either in arabic or roman numerals, depending upon whether they are near or far, and those in the supernal region above the clouds as figures of Row B, always in arabic numerals. Cross-referenced figures within each row are usually identified by code key identification whenever they are mentioned in the exposition; when the row is not explicitly designated, it will be understood that the figure in question is in the same row as is being discussed at that point. We have first provided lists in which all the numbered figures are identified either with characters in *The Faerie Queene* or other details from that poem, or else briefly described when there seems to be no Spenserian text that elucidates them.

In the expository commentary are more detailed, though hardly exhaustive, discussions of the pictures: some aspects are not at all thoroughly considered. Much the most important of these is color: when seen by Grant in 1969, much color was visible and was noted, but many of the blues in particular had faded badly and there were many

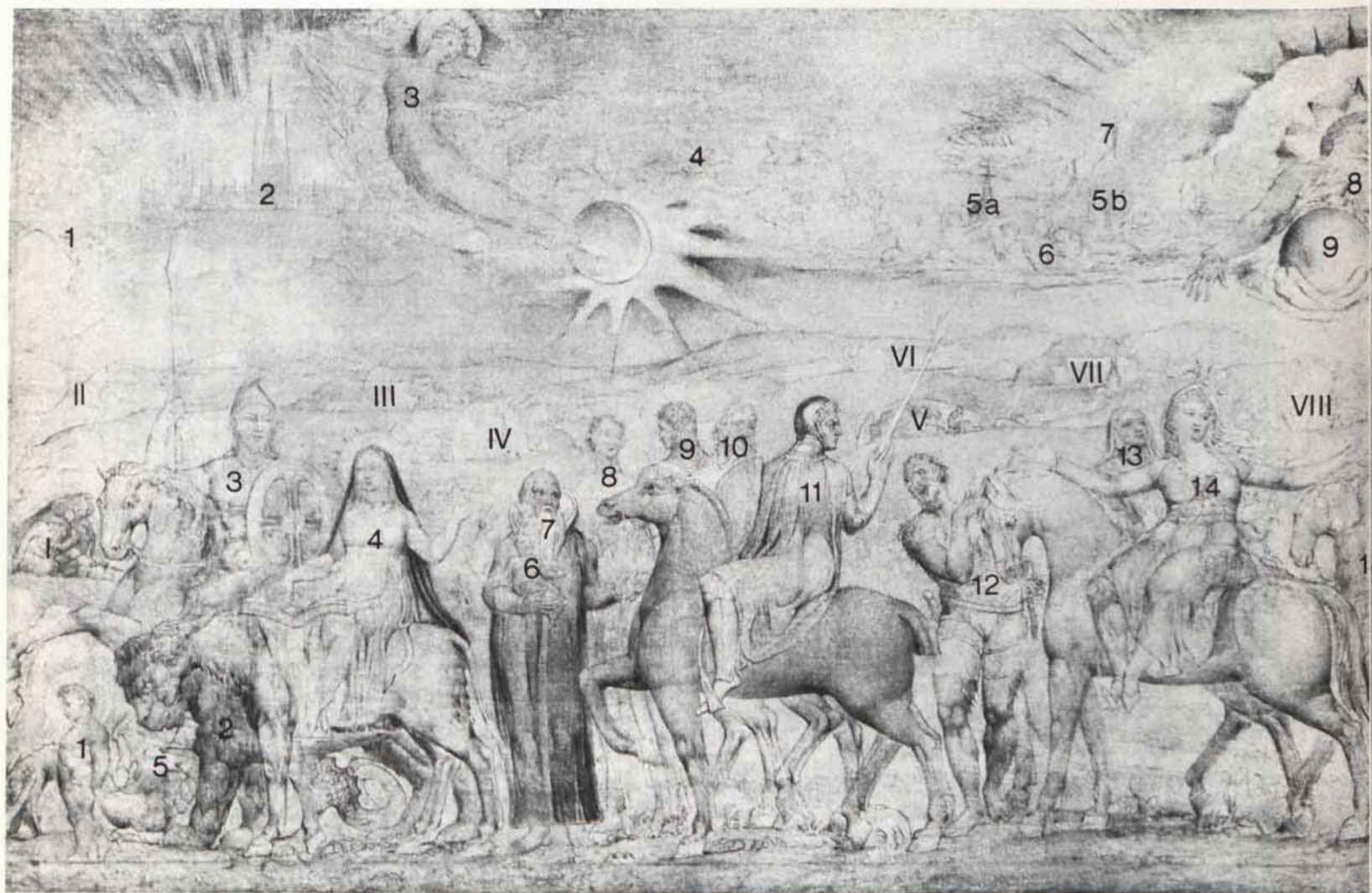
disfiguring white spots, particularly in the supernal regions. How much these spots were due to the white ground paint showing through in an unintended way was not determined. Because we have been unable to compare our notes with the present condition of the painting, it did not seem helpful to include a full report on the colors as they appeared in 1969. The reader will probably prefer not to be flooded with a mass of uncoordinated data. The other class of information deliberately omitted from this commentary is the flowers and plants that are seen at the feet of many figures in the foreground procession. It is quite possible that these flora had particular significance for Blake but, despite work on this aspect of Blake's symbolism begun by Kauver and Erdman, we are not at present able to identify the species of the plants in this picture. Moreover, since we have eschewed most color notes, we could at best provide tedious verbal descriptions of the flora that would not be more informative than what the reader could make out for himself, particularly with the use of a magnifying glass.

Our commentary does attempt to provide a quite thorough account of such factors as distinguishable topographic details, and the postures, gestures, sight-lines, clothing, and mounts (where there are any) of all the human figures, together with a certain number of cross-references to some other Blake works which contain figures that seem to have resemblances to those in the Spenser procession. On the whole, the analogies that seem most suggestively similar to those in this picture occur in Blake's late works, such as the series for *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* and *Paradise Regained*, *Jerusalem*, the *Book of Job*, and the *Divine Comedy*. We are grateful to Mary Lynn Johnson for pointing out a number of the most interesting analogies, as well as for making an acute critique of our manuscript. Without her help we would have overlooked many important details. It is hoped that such lacunae as remain will stimulate other scholars to make necessary corrections and amplifications. Anyone who studies this picture for an evening will find himself drawn into further reflections on how Blake read Spenser.





## Row B



## Row A

### KEY

#### Row A: Arabic Numerals: The Procession

- A1 The Dwarf
- A2 Una's Lion
- A3 The Redcrosse Knight
- A4 Una
- A5 The Dragon
- A6 Ruddymane
- A7 The Palmer
- A8 Belpheobe
- A9 Timias
- A10 Sylvanus
- A11 Guyon
- A12 Satyrane
- A13 Glauce
- A14 Britomart
- A15 Marinell(?)
- A16 Florimell
- A17 Arthegall
- A18 Amoretta
- A19 Scudamore
- A20 Talus
- A21 Arthur
- A22 The Salvage Man



## Row B



## Row A

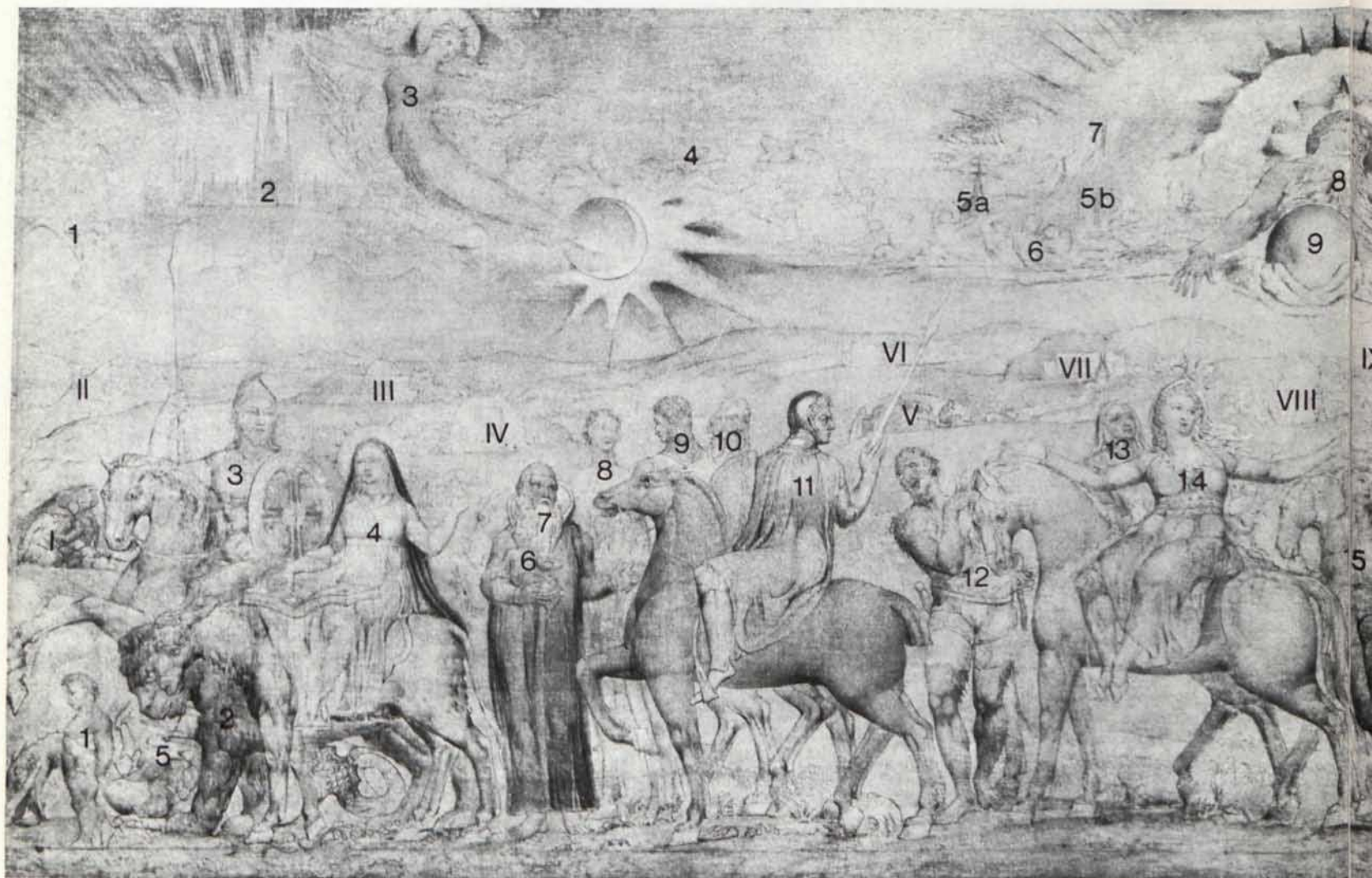
- A23 Pastorella
- A24 Calidore
- A25 The Captain of the Brigants, or Braggadocchio
- A26 Flying figures with leading strings to 29
- A27 Flying figures with leading strings to 30
- A28 The Blatant Beast, led by a small figure, 28a, with another on its muzzle, 28b, and a third, 28c, on its collar
- A29 Duesse, with a figure standing on her head
- A30 Archimago bound, with a figure, 30a, seated on his shoulder

### Row A: Roman Numerals: The Background

- AI Despaire's Cave, with the figures of Despaire and Trevisan
- AII Idle Lake, or the Gulfe of Greedinesse
- AIII A domed building, perhaps Celia's castle
- AIV A haloed building with a Gothic portall, perhaps Eden
- AV Mammon's Cave, with the figure of Mammon kneeling
- AVI An architectural feature, perhaps Alma's castle
- AVII Busyrane's palace, with a prolonged flame before it
- AVIII Colin Clout with a pipe, and nude figures
- AIX Tree on the horizon, IXa, next to a large, indistinct structure, IXb
- AX A small house, perhaps that of the Hermit
- AXI A range of trees
- AXII Hills and mountains, with various indistinct figures



## Row B

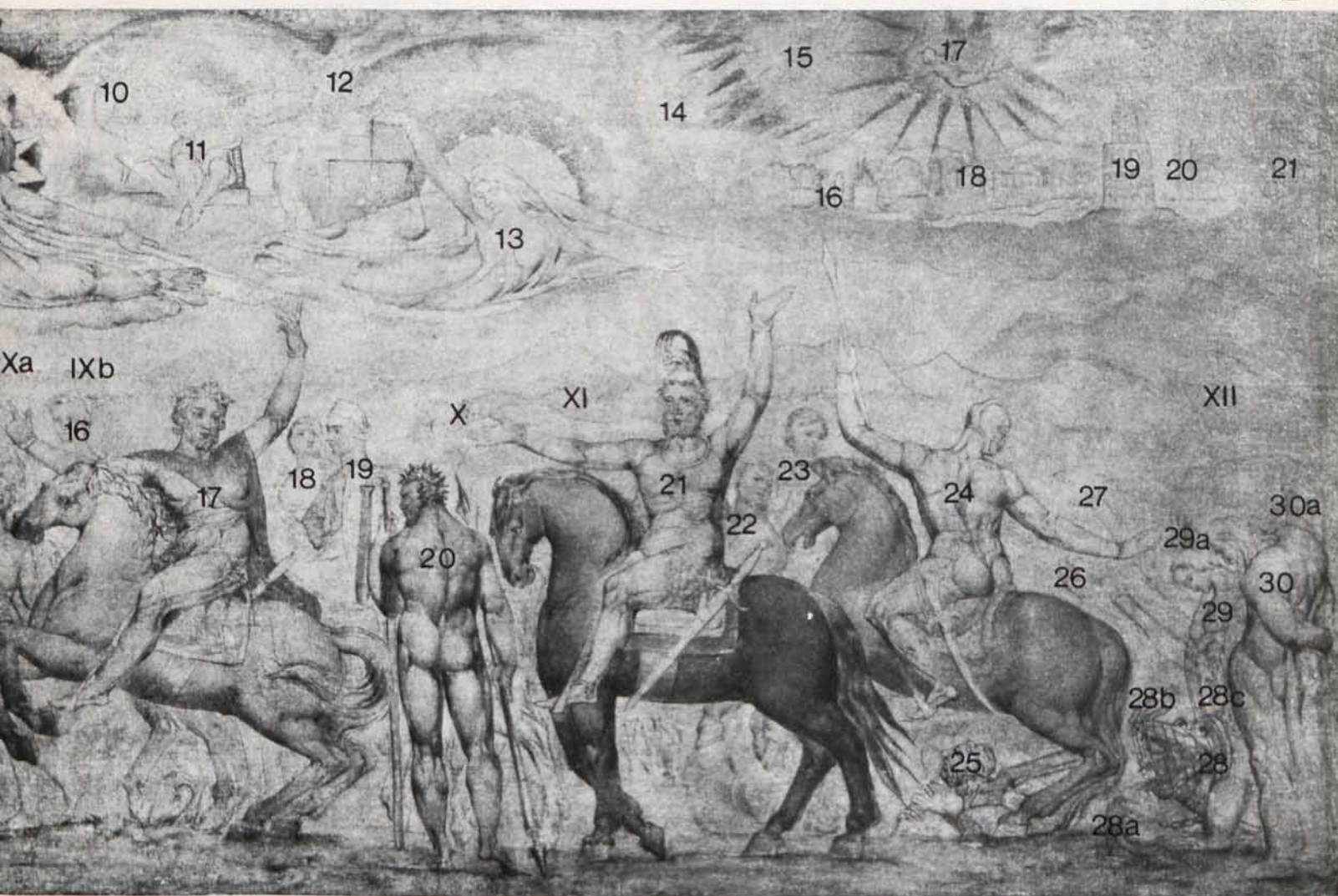


## Row A

### Row B: Arabic Numerals: The Supernal Regions

- B1 A Gothic arched bridge, with vines, and trees above
- B2 A Gothic cathedral
- B3 "Cynthia," haloed, with her toe on the crescent beaming Moon, accompanied by an entourage of spirits
- B4 Airy spirits
- B5 A dome with spire, 5a, probably St. Paul's; riders fly by it. A Gothic portal, 5b
- B6 Seated figures, embracing; others agitated or in repose
- B7 Spirits ascend above a portal
- B8 "Jove" as "The God of This World," with complex halos and a sceptre
- B9 The Globe of "This World," supported by three angels
- B10 Angel ascending above a stand; smaller figures above
- B11 The Artist seated by a stand, perhaps with another figure in his lap, flanked by a book; smaller figures streaming from them
- B12 "Nature," as a Spread-winged Presence, whose over-arching wings cover the areas of 11 and 13
- B13 "Astroea" or Justice as a haloed woman, upholding scales in a starry sky
- B14 Four or more figures descending a cloud
- B15 Possible seated figure
- B16 Two figures between two burning altars; others to the left
- B17 An Archer within the Sun, discharging his beaming bow
- B18 Buildings and trees
- B19 A tower, probably the Tower of Babel
- B20 An obelisk, possibly connected with another to the right
- B21 A tower, possibly with a figure on top





# Analysis I: The System of Pairings in Row A, Arabic Numerals

## Row A

- 1+2 The Dwarf and the Lion
- 3+4 The Redcrosse Knight and Una
- 6+(7)+11 The Palmer, (Ruddymane) and Guyon
- 8+9 Belpheobe and Timias
- 10+12 Sylvanus and Satyrane
- 13+14 Glaucé and Britomart
- 15+16 Marinell and Florimell
- 17+20 Arthegall and Talus
- 18+19 Amoretta and Scudamore
- 21+22 Arthur and the Salvage Man
- 23+24 Pastorella and Calidore
- 5+28 The Dragon and the Blatant Beast
- (7+25) Possible connection: Ruddymane and Braggadocchio
- 29+30 Duessa and Archimago

## Analysis II: Components of The Female Character

- 4 Una (holiness)
  - 8 Belpheobe (prowess)
  - 13 Glaucé (experience; necromancy)
  - 14 Britomart (central; synthesis)
  - 16 Florimell (meekness)
  - 18 Amoretta (beauty; chastity)
  - 23 Pastorella (innocence)
  - 30 Duessa (the negation of all the others)
- Belpheobe and Amoretta, the twin sisters: the opposite aspects of the Diana-Venus dichotomy



## Row A:

## Arabic Numerals: The Procession

1. The Dwarf: he is first described as lagging behind in I, i, 6, but later he leads Una (4) and Arthur (21) to the place of imprisonment of the Redcrosse Knight (3) in Orgoglio's castle (see I, viii, 1-2). In Blake's representation, the Dwarf, who leads the procession, is given a plate halo and knotted loincloth; he holds a leading string attached to Una's Ass.

2. Una's Lion makes his appearance at I, iii, 5-6, when he rushes out to eat her, but is tamed by her virtue. By the end of the same canto (see I, iii, 42) he is dead, slain by Sansloy. In Blake's picture he is shaggy as a bison as he matches steps with Una's Ass and the Dragon (5).

3. The Redcrosse Knight is described in the first lines: I, i, 1-2. Blake's figure is long-haired and short-bearded, wears a conical helmet with a crest, and gazes at Una (4). The interlined flared red cross on his shield is rather dim. On his short-sleeved shirt the right arm and bottom of another red cross is visible. His spear points up toward the left wing of the Gothic Cathedral, B2. He holds his own reins (extensions of which account for marks on his belly) as his horse rears at the sight of the Dragon (5). In I, x, 61ff., it is prophesied that Redcrosse will be recognized as St. George of England. The famous coin design by Benedetto Pistrucci represents St. George's horse rearing above the Dragon while trampling it with one hind foot (as Calidore's [24] horse does on figure 25).

4. Una's costume is notably lacking the veil described by Spenser, but is otherwise similar (see I, i, 4) with a simple dress, long dark wimple, and long hair. In *The Faerie Queene* she is said to lead a "milke white lambe," but no book is mentioned. Her mount is a "lowly asse more white than snow" and she rides sidesaddle with both toes resting on a broad stirrup. Her halo shows eleven main beams; she seems to be speaking as she looks forward and indicates a text with her right hand in her large open book, which has a red decoration in the upper left recto page and a red letter in the upper left verso, as well as two ties hanging from the front cover. With her left she gestures, probably up towards A IV, the castle of Eden, rather than to the indistinct vegetation in the middle distance. Blake would have been wryly amused to learn that in 1839 a gold £5 coin was designed (actually issued in 1887) in which Queen Victoria appears in the character of Una, in company with her tame British lion. Blake's Una must be searching the Book of Life for better things in the Spenserian legacy.

5. The Dragon is described in detail by Spenser: I, xi, 8-15. Blake's delineation presents a problem with respect to size: see I, xii, 11: "how many acres." His variegated shape appears in three places: his head leads the procession as he bites the dust; his left foot and scaled shoulder are just in advance of that of the Lion (2) and the Ass and his hooked wings are beneath the Lion's muzzle; his scaled rump and looped tail are visible between the legs of the Ass and the Lion. The significance of the Dragon in the total design is appreciated when the uncropped left edge of the picture is studied: this creature is almost certainly the source of the clouds that rise up the left edge of the picture and then extend horizontally across the picture to delimit the Supernal Regions (see the headnote to Row B below). In this way Blake's representation accounts for the vastness of Spenser's Dragon: among the many Blakean analogies to this Dragon are those that pull the cars of Cotytto-Hecate in *Comus* 4, Cynthia in *II Penseroso*, and Diana in *Job* 14, as well as the energetic serpents in *The* 6 and *America* 11 who transport infants to joy. Instead of acting as vehicular power, however, Spenser's Dragon is killed, and with the smoke of his dying breath covers the earth, leaving only dim evidences of heaven to those who hope to move to realms of day. This is one of many signs of Blake's reservations as to the clarity of Spenserian vision.

6. Ruddymane, the child of Amavia and Mordant, is introduced in II, i, 40, playing in his mother's blood. The Palmer carries him (see II, ii, 11) to the castle of Medina, where the child is eventually left (see II, iii, 2) to receive instruction. It seems Ruddymane should have red hands, because all attempts to wash his mother's blood from them (see II, ii, 2 ff.) fail; Blake's small nude figure holds out his hands, but they are not reddened. Though he lacks a halo, he closely resembles the figure of the infant Christ in Blake's *Black Madonna*, while Una (4) closely resembles Mary in that picture. The position of the child in the arms of an elderly man recalls the child and St. Simeon depicted on the first page of *Night the Ninth* of Blake's illustrations to Young's *Night Thoughts* (NT 417); there is also a watercolor of this subject in the Fogg Art Museum.

7. Guyon's attendant, the Palmer, is described in II, i, 7. Blake's figure, in a cowled robe, is bald and barefoot; instead of carrying "a staffe," he holds a strap wound on his left hand, with which he leads the horse of Guyon (11). He gazes intensely, and perhaps with a frown, toward Guyon, but the child in his right hand looks at the viewer.

8. Belphebe is introduced in II, iii, and described at length, 21-30. She is dressed in "lilly white," and has long blond hair. Blake's figure evidently has short curly yellow hair and looks rather masculine; the plain white top of her gown only is visible. Belphebe is a huntress: the Diana product of a Diana-Venus uprearing with



her twin sister, Amoretta (18). These two sisters, as female counterparts, are almost equidistant in Blake's picture from the integral figure of Britomart (14). Belphoebe is located directly beneath the moon of B 3 (as befits her upbringing by Diana), and appears to exchange looks with Timias (9). Only the eye and muzzle of her horse is visible, to the left of the Palmer's (7) right elbow and beneath Una's (4) left.

9. Timias, Arthur's squire, might be expected to be located back with Arthur (21), but he also appears in Book II, in cantos 8-11, and must have been advanced in the procession because of his later love for Belphoebe (see III, v, and IV, vii-viii). The first description of Timias by Spenser (I, vii, 37) is not helpful for identification. He is most clearly described when Belphoebe finds him wounded by the Foster and his brothers after having pursued the Foster for an offense he had given to Florimell. Timias wears a hooded "mayled haberieon" with a jerkin over it, but has no "heavy burganet" (III, 5, 31) on his head; this helmet was removed by Belphoebe. He looks intently at Belphoebe (8). The head of his horse is visible by the Palmer's (7) right shoulder near Una's (4) left forearm.

10. Sylvanus is also out of his Spenserian location, which is in Book I. But, since the back-to-back attitude of figures 9 and 10 indicates that these two are not together, and since the intersecting eye-lines between figures 10 and 12 could well imply a connection, and, furthermore, since the only other elderly figures likely to be near Guyon would be the Palmer, or possibly Archimago (7 and 31), this identification is proposed. While Spenser does not describe Sylvanus as being mounted, neither are the other possible characters equestrians. Sylvanus is not distinctly described by Spenser, and none of the details pertain to the head; Blake's figure 10 is distinguished only by a white gown with raised collar, a sober demeanor, and a white beard. These features are appropriate for Sylvanus, who is described by Spenser merely as "aged" and "old" (see I, vi, 14-16). The shaggy mane of the horse of figure 10 is visible beneath the head of the horse of Guyon (11) and above the left forearm of the Palmer (7).

11. Guyon, the central character to Book II, is seen covered from head to foot in his "harnesse" (see II, i, 5) and wearing a black helmet with yellowish flowery decorations; his clinging pale blue cloak does not cover his right arm or left calf. Like all the equestrians whose feet are visible in the Spenser (but unlike some in the Chaucer), he wears no spurs. He is the only equestrian in the front line who has no visible saddle. Guyon's shield is curiously flattened concave; it has a distinct rib and rim and it may have been decorated. His facial expression might be described as "demure" and "temperate," not to mention "sterne" and "terrible" (see II, i, 6). He looks resolutely backward, presumably at Britomart (14), and his spear is pointed diagonally up toward the group at B 5. Guyon's high-stepping

A 6 & A 7 Palmer and Ruddymane





## A 12 Satyrane



horse (with uplifted eyes), Brigadore, which is led by the Palmer (7), has a docked tail. Guyon is also depicted, in one of the two episodes from *The Faerie Queene* in *Gray* 64: *Bard* 12, within the cloudy Cave of Mammon. The fact that the shaft of Guyon's spear crosses the cave at A V is thus probably not accidental.

12. Damon refers to this figure as Guyon's "own animal nature"; on one level this interpretation may be sustained. The framing of Guyon between the eye-beams of Sylvanus and figure 12, undoubtedly Sir Satyrane, has the effect of undercutting Guyon's "temperance" with suggestions of animality. This seems more persuasive because Satyrane is depicted without armor, and scantily clothed in trunks only. His origin and training to emulate wild animals is described at length by Spenser (see I, vi, 20-30). The animality of Blake's figure is expressed in his powerful physique, his exceedingly hairy shoulders and thighs, and his uncouth short-bearded face and open mouth (all the other human figures, with the possible exception of 15, are close-mouthed) as he leers at Guyon. There seems to be a cloud over his thighs; perhaps it is dust stirred up by Britomart's (14) horse. Satyrane holds the red lead of her horse wrapped around his left hand, and is probably causing the horse to shy by the gesture he makes with his raised right hand: perhaps he is pointing up toward the embracing figures at B 6. Satyrane's only visible accoutrement of knighthood is a sword, the handle of which is seen on his right hip. That Satyrane should be holding Britomart's horse is explained by the episode in which they are companions on the road (see III, x, 1; III, xi, 1-20). Despite his lineage from a lusty Satyr, on his first appearance in *The Faerie Queene* he assists Una and fights the Paynim, Sansloy (see I, vi, 21 ff.). Coleridge's alter-ego "Satyrane" was a Poet and Philosopher, albeit an iconoclast: see "A Tombless Epitaph," ca. 1809.

13. This figure must be Britomart's "squire," Glaucé. Glaucé is described by Spenser only as an "aged nurse" (see III, ii, 30). When Britomart dons armor, so does Glaucé, and thus she serves her function as travelling companion to Britomart, and, later, to Sir Scudamore. Glaucé's right hand, upraised at Britomart's right side, seems to express reverence, as does her gaze, which is apparently directed above the hat of Britomart into the supernal realm. Glaucé's left hand, outstretched at Britomart's left side, indicates support of Britomart, rather than reverence. Glaucé wears a blue gown, apparently over an armored coat, the collar of which is visible. Her wimple resembles both those of Una (4) and Britomart (14).

14. This figure is identified by Damon as Amoretta, but several considerations make such an identification highly unlikely. First, on a story level, Blake clearly intends figure 14 to be connected with figure 17, who is identified by Damon as Arthegall. All eye-framings (especially those of figures 13 and 19) and arm-framings



(especially those of figures 11 and 21, as well as of figures 14 and 17 themselves, and also of figure B 8) imply this connection. There is no important relationship in *The Faerie Queene* between Amoretta and Arthegall, whereas Arthegall's love is Britomart. Secondly, as a character, Amoretta is too skittish and timid to assume the wide-open and easily confident posture of figure 14, a posture well suiting the courageous Britomart. Thirdly, Damon's justification of his identification by arguing that Britomart is replaced by her more pacific "twin" is factually erroneous: Amoretta's twin sister is Belphebe, not Britomart. Fourthly, Damon's justification of his view by reference to the "lodestarre" passage (III, vi, 52) does not prove Amoretta's centrality, for it is matched and topped in this panegyric of Britomart: "That peerelesse paterne of Dame natures pride,/ And heuently image of perfection . . ." (IV, vi, 24). It must, however, be admitted that the elaborate costume Blake gives to Britomart is not described by Spenser; but she does appear without armor in episodes dealing with both present and past events. There is the episode with Malecasta, in which Britomart undresses (III, i, 58-67), and her "locks unbound" (stanza 63) must indicate that she has long hair; this is later confirmed (see IV, i, 13). This passage also describes her as blond (also see IV, vi, 20). Blake's figure has yellow hair so long it flows down onto the back of her horse. In flashback manner, Britomart is described before she took up arms (see III, ii, 17 to iii, 58). She is said to be "tall, and large of limbe" (III, iii, 53). Though a metaphorical reference, Spenser's mention of "the feather in her loftie crest" (III, ii, 27) may be the inspiration for the elaborate headdress of figure 14: it has three chief white leaves or feathers on top and the white wimple blows to the right. There is, by the way, no text that describes Amoretta as wearing such a curious headdress. The probability that this figure is Britomart is further strengthened by her position as the third frontline mounted figure in the procession, where we would expect to find the central character of Book III. Thus Blake is revealing Britomart either as she was before she took up arms, or as she appears when unarmed, or even possibly as she may appear at some future time when her questing is over. It must be admitted that the points of the collar of her pale pink dress, together with her elaborate girdle and pointed-toed shoes may well imply ethical reservations. One observes that though she is riding sidesaddle, her stirrup, like those of the knights (and unlike that of Una, 4), is for riding astraddle. Blake is not usually fond of high-style people, as evidenced by the Wife of Bath in the *Canterbury Pilgrims*. Indeed, a close look at her costume reveals that Blake's Britomart is not as committed to the arts of peace as she at first appears. What seems to be a garter above her right knee may be taken with another below the knee and other lines on her heavy calf to indicate that she is actually wearing armor beneath her light dress. The lines on her upper arms and midriff similarly imply that armor is the undergarment. Britomart seems to be vaguely smiling and the

object of her backward glance is somewhat uncertain; she must be looking either at Arthegall (17) or at Talus (20). With her cuffed right hand, she gestures in the particular direction of Sylvanus (10). With her uncuffed left hand she seems to be reaching for a thong dangling from Arthegall's (17) right hand.

15. This is one of the most problematic identifications: the best guess is that it is Marinell. When he is introduced, Marinell is armed and on horseback (see III, iv, 12 ff.), but he is soon unhorsed by Britomart (III, iv, 16) and is then disarmed by his mother, Cymoent, and her sister nymphs (III, iv, 40). He later appears, healthy and afoot, when he comes upon Florimell making her lament (see IV, xii, 4 ff.). In Blake's picture Marinell is on foot among the three figures to whom he is subjected: Britomart (14), for unseating him and humbling his pride; Florimell (16), for purifying him through her love; and Arthegall (17), for helping to restore him to a position as a respected, competent and victorious knight (see V, iii, 10 ff.). He could be holding the lead (a detail variously drawn and never neatly finished by Blake) to Arthegall's rearing horse as a sign of favor owed, for the help given him by Arthegall at the tournament. On his naked chest he wears a small cross attached to a string around his neck. He wears white tight knickers or shorts, is barefooted, and has a rather effeminate appearance. Though afoot, his position at the very center of the procession makes him a significant figure. Marinell is looking up reverently, possibly at Arthegall (17), but more probably at the figure of Justice, B 13, in the supernal realm. Facially Marinell closely resembles the nude man who looks up as he is being healed by Christ in *Night Thoughts* 148 (IV, 39), i.e. 40 E, p. 90. In Blakean symbolism, Marinell's central position among the grooms indicates that he is the Beautiful Man, balanced by Satyrane (12), the Ugly Man, and Talus (20), the Strong Man.

16. The principal characteristic of Florimell seems to be her whiteness--her fairness (see III, i, 15; III, v, 5; etc.). These passages describe her horse as being very white: "more white than snow" (III, v, 5). From the construction of the False Florimell, it is learned that Florimell's eyes are very bright, like "burning lampes," and that her hair is three times as yellow as gold wire (see III, vii, 7). The figure in the procession has a pretty face and braided yellowish hair. She gazes steadfastly at Britomart (14), and is chiefly distinguished by what appears to be a peculiar conical hat on the left side of her head. The bottom of the transparent structure A IX is just above her head, but it has no connection with her peculiar hat.

17. This identification constitutes one of the most serious displacement problems in Blake's *Faerie Queene* procession. Though Arthegall is present, even important, in Book IV, he is really more central to Book V. Of the trappings given Arthegall by Blake, the one actually described by Spenser is the prophesied crown (see III, iii, 29);





A 17 Arthegall



otherwise, Spenser never really describes Arthegall's person, only his armor, shield and helmet with the "couchant hound" (III, ii, 25). He is first introduced as the vision in Britomart's father's mirror in Book III. It is said that he is "portly" (III, ii, 24) and that he has a "lovely face," "tempered with sternesse and stout maiestie" (IV, vi, 26). These characteristics appear sufficiently evident in Blake's figure to identify him as Arthegall; moreover, such an identification is practically a necessity. Arthur, never a titular character, and present in all Books, establishes his most vivid presence, perhaps, in Book V. Thus, it is he who takes the fifth prominent position (21) in the painting, thereby displacing Arthegall from the Book that bears his name. Consequently, Arthegall is advanced to the fourth position of prominence, where he can be joined with Britomart and also hailed by Arthur. It is also unlikely that Arthegall's "squire," Talus (20), would be present without his master. Arthegall's positioning, however, completely displaces the titular figures of Book IV, Cambell and Triamond. Perhaps Blake felt that although these characters are emblematic of friendship, their actual roles in *The Faerie Queene* are too insignificant (they are only really important to IV, ii and IV, iii) to justify giving them such a prominent position.

Arthegall gestures up toward the supernal projection of this world (B 9) with his right hand, while with his left he points to the supernal scales of Justice (B 13). He looks at Talus (20) as his horse, which has a braided mane, rears and lashes its tail; presumably his horse rears to signify regal gallantry and its braided mane alludes to the weavings of statecraft. Arthegall's saddle is very bright with varied areas of red and yellow and has gems studding the blue cinch. The muslin of the picture in the area of the saddle and the horse's haunch was mended before paint was applied. Behind the rider the handle and hilt of his sword ("Chrysaor," V, i, 9) is visible, presumably on the right side of the horse. With his long orange-red cloak and such characteristics as orange hair, a short curly beard, and yellow leotards, as well as what is either the hemline of a transparent overskirt or a garter above the knee on his left leg (see Britomart's [14] right leg "garter"), he is the most ornate and kingly figure in the procession. In Blakean symbolism Arthegall closely resembles the figure of the King or Beautiful Man in design viii for Blair's *Grave*. In the Blair picture this figure is accompanied by the Warrior, a Strong Man much like Calidore (24), and the Counsellor, an Ugly Man much like the God of this World (B 8).

18. Though Amoretta is "Of grace and beautie noble Paragon," and "Lodestarre of all chaste affectione" (III, vi, 52), she is not necessarily central to the picture, as Damon implied. She would be correctly positioned as figure 18 because her story, particularly as it forms a unit with Scudamore's, is important to Book IV, though her primary appearances are in Book III. Except for mentions of her exceeding radiance and beauty, particulars

concerning her are rare. In III, xii, 19-21, however, Amoretta, in the Masque of Cupid, appears bare-breasted, and the apparent décolleté of figure 18 is very distinctive; nevertheless, there is a slight suggestion of a higher v-neckline on her garment. She seems to be looking above Scudamore (19); in this respect she is comparable to Glauce (13) and Marinell (15), whose attentions are also directed on high. Amoretta seems to wear two curious antennae on her forehead. Figures 18 and 19 are to be identified as Amoretta and Scudamore for these additional reasons: this pair would be in proper chronological and physical location; they form the most prominent couple not otherwise accounted for; the presence of Amoretta is necessary to complete the "female character"; here Amoretta would be about as far, on one side, from the central figure of Britomart as her sister, Belphoebe, is on the other side.

19. The identification of this figure as Scudamore is likewise problematic. Scudamore is described by Spenser (III, xi, 7), but Blake shows only a few features of a knightly personage. Spenser rarely describes facial characteristics, so the dark eyes and lightly bearded chin of figure 19 offer no clue. He has a resolutely frontal point of attention and his right hand is raised to his waist and held in a position of rejection toward Talus (20), or possibly Arthur (21). Scudamore's shield is described by Spenser as having on it the "winged boy," Cupid, but the rounded triangular shield held by 19 is obscured and no device is discernible. He wears a slightly crested cap, and his resolute attention forward balances that of Guyon (11) backward.

20. Talus is easy to identify, though his strong pink-touched blue body is humanly iron-like, being fully muscular, rather than a construct of sheet metal. He is left with Arthegall by Astroea (V, i, 12); in the picture he is holding his characteristic "yron flae" in his left hand. In his right hand he holds, in addition to the leash of Arthur's (21) horse, a long lance that has a broad point held up, a tapered shaft, and a smaller point (or end handle) that is grounded. His iron-ness may be expressed by his black spiked hair and short beard. He appears to be looking at Arthegall's waist with a troubled expression. He bears some resemblance to the foreground figure in *Milton* 8 (especially the bearded one in copy D, pl. 10), and his flail recalls that of the Goblin in the fifth design for *L'Allegro*.

21. Prince Arthur is also easy to identify, not only because his most distinctive exploits occur in Book V, but also because his helmet is described in detail by Spenser (I, vii, 31-32): both the "haire" and the "Dragon" (with a long tongue--which perhaps supports a crouching figure on its tip--and distended lower jaw) mentioned by Spenser are represented. Missing, however, is his "shield" of diamond. He wears a form-fitting garment with a rounded neckline and perhaps a decoration on his chest. There are suggestions of armor here and there, and the fact that his loins are covered

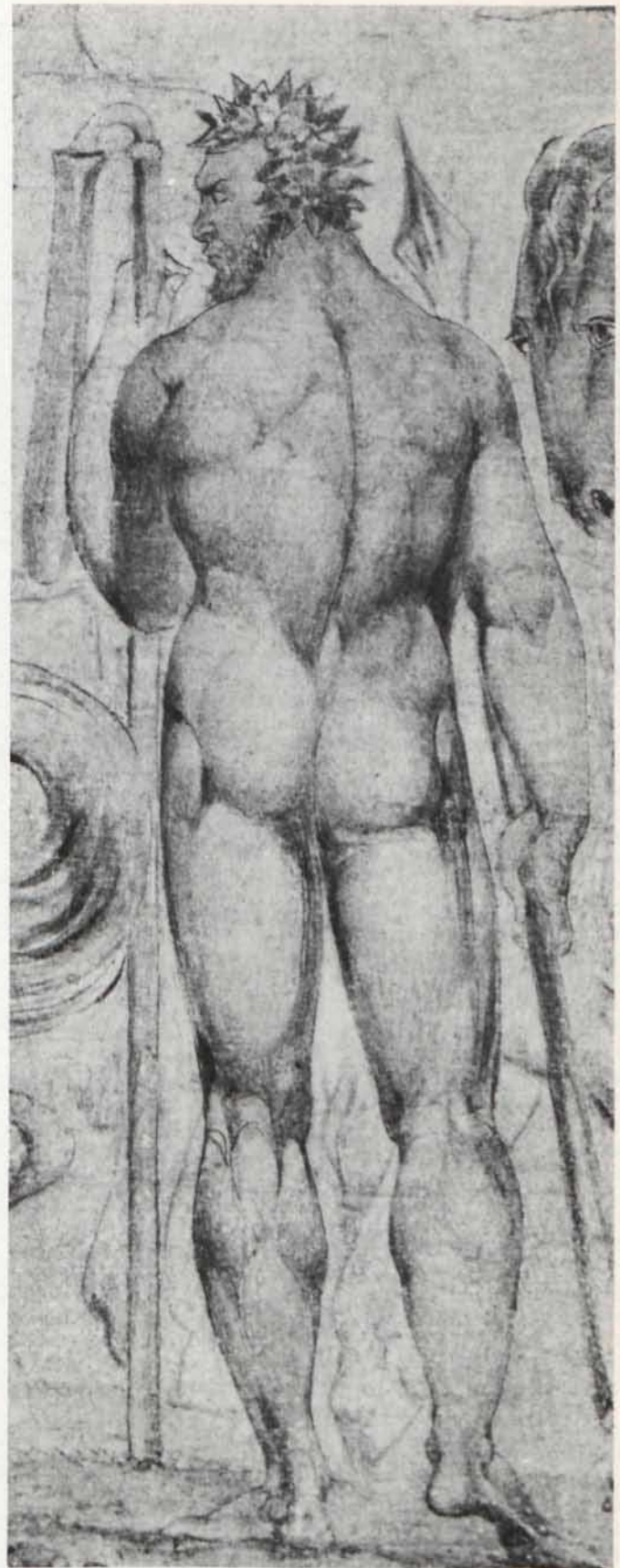


with a skirt of scaly mail implies a criticism. Like Arthegall (17), he has what appears to be a garter above his left knee. His saddle is bright red with a yellowish seat, and his large sword is prominently attached to his saddle. With his right hand he gestures toward Arthegall (17), and with his left in the direction of the supernal figure B 15. His grey eyes are reverently upcast. His horse is much the darkest in the procession; it is led by a tether held in the right hand of Talus, and it seems to be curiously reluctant to move as it drags its right forefoot. The clump of two or more tree trunks visible beneath the horse's belly must have been designed as a further clue to meaning since it is the largest vegetable detail related to the cavalcade.

22. The Salvage Man is more properly a personage of Book VI than Book V, and this may be one reason that Blake's figure looks back over his shoulder towards Calidore (24); his apparently disapproving expression might, however, be directed at the captives (29 and 30). Being somewhat advanced in the procession he is in the position of Arthur's companion (a role which he fulfills in *The Faerie Queene*: see VI, vi and vii) which was vacated by the advance of Timias (9) to accompany Belphebe (8). This broad-faced, short-bearded figure not only has a savage or uncouth look, but is also "naked without needful vestiments" (VI, iv, 4). Since he is on foot one might expect him to be leading Calidore's horse, but there is no evidence of any reins.

23. This must be Pastorella, although Spenser provides only a vague description of her exceeding beauty (see VI, ix, 9). She has an important role in Book VI, and represents a final positive component of the "female character." She is also the only likely female companion for Sir Calidore. The other possible candidate for figure 23 might be Serena, but her presence would almost necessitate that of Calepine, who is not depicted. Blake's Pastorella is mounted, has short hair and a round face; she looks back at Calidore (24) or the captives (28-30) and has her right hand raised in an attitude of prayer or consternation. She wears an orange hat and has curly hair.

24. Calidore is not precisely described by Spenser, but must be represented as the central figure in Book VI, and the binder of the Blatant Beast (28). Calidore is said to be "stout and tall" (VI, i, 2) and to have armor that is "bright" (VI, ix, 36) and to carry a "stealehead speare" (VI, ix, 36). Blake represents the shaft of his spear as extending down behind the neck on the right side of his horse, while its tip is directed up toward the supernal figures B 16 or B 15. The muscular Calidore, in a complete suit of grey armor, which shows only his face, is the most complete soldier in the procession. Blake can hardly have been attempting to represent in him a beneficent "courtesie"; he would have expected courtiers to be either exploiters or militarists. Calidore is twisted backwards to direct the captives (28-30) with his outstretched right



A 20 Talus



## A 22 &amp; A 23 Salvage Man and Pastorella



hand and perhaps particularly to signal the small figure who stands on the head of Duessa (29). His unusual curved "Saracen" sword may be that of the "meanest sort" (VI, xi, 42) which he adopted for his fight with the Brigants. His beautiful reddish, apparently unbridled, "Greek" horse is rearing and stirring up clouds of dust as with its right rear foot it tramples figure 25. The Calidore Blake delineates enacts the ambitions of classical militarism to trample down the proud: however noble the purposes of this warrior, his success looks like a Roman triumph.

25. This figure resists certain identification. No character in *The Faerie Queene* is said to occupy a pit or to be stepped on by a horse. The leading candidates for figure 25 are the Brigant chief and Braggadocchio; a third possibility is Malbecco, "Gealousee," (III, x, 55 ff.), which we shall not here discuss. If seen as a Book VI personage, this figure must be the Brigant chief. After claiming the captive Pastorella (23), he is slain by his own men and "buried" under the pile of bodies that fall about him (see VI, xi, 19 ff.). In Blake's picture, the figure might be clutching pieces of booty. If, however, he is understood to be one of the "evil" figures relegated to the rear of the procession, he can be identified as Braggadocchio, being trampled for being a false knight. He is introduced in Book II (II, iii, 4) when he steals Guyon's horse, Brigadore, and makes his last appearance in Book V (V, iii, 29 ff.) when Guyon reclaims Brigadore, and Braggadocchio is stripped of his knightly trappings and affectations and is dishonored. It might be suggestive that Braggadocchio, a horse thief, should be trampled in clouds of dust by a

horse. Figure 25 wears a curious redrawn hat with brim curved up; it is perhaps attached to two diagonal tethers. He has a long white moustache and short jowl beard and he looks up while backhandedly holding what can perhaps most satisfactorily be construed as an open book. Damon conjectured that this figure was among stones but the position of the figure's hands makes this seem unlikely. Bearing in mind that his left shoulder is being trampled by the right foot of the horse, it is evident that figure 25 is able to look up as far as the Supernal Regions, either at the God of this World (B 9) or, perhaps, at the Artist (B 11). Ill-favored as he is, figure 25 is a kind of Thersites, perhaps, though possibly one given to reading the Book of Life, like Una (A 4), rather than the Book of Death, like Despaire (A 1). Being trampled down is, to be sure, the ultimate fate of Hypocrisy in *The Everlasting Gospel*, but it was also the fortune of Jerusalem (J 62:3) when she could hardly tell herself from Babylon (J 61:35).

26. Beneath Calidore's right arm fly three or more small figures. They hold leading strings, one attached possibly to Archimago's (30) loins, the other probably to his right hand.

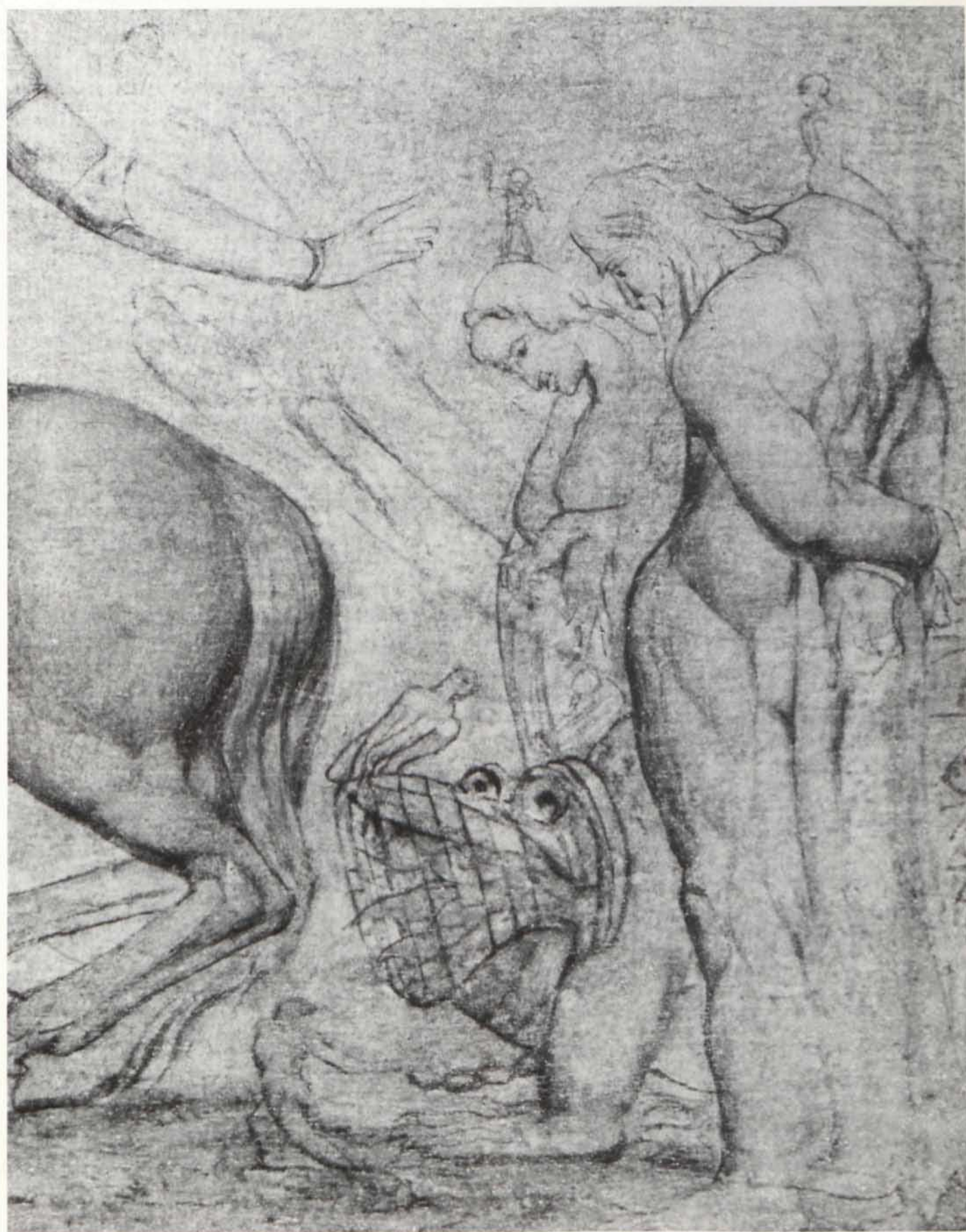
27. Above Calidore's right arm, also, fly two or more small figures, the clearest of whom looks back. They hold two leading strings, with which they lead Duessa (29). The motif of a flying creature in leading strings is memorably depicted in *Vala*, p. 42.

28. The Blatant Beast is represented as having human hands, instead of animal feet, and possibly a pair of eyes within its mouth, characteristics not mentioned by Spenser. The most striking characteristic attributed to it by Spenser is its multiplicity of tongues (see V, xii, 41, "hundred");



A 25 Capt. of the Brigants, or Braggadocchio

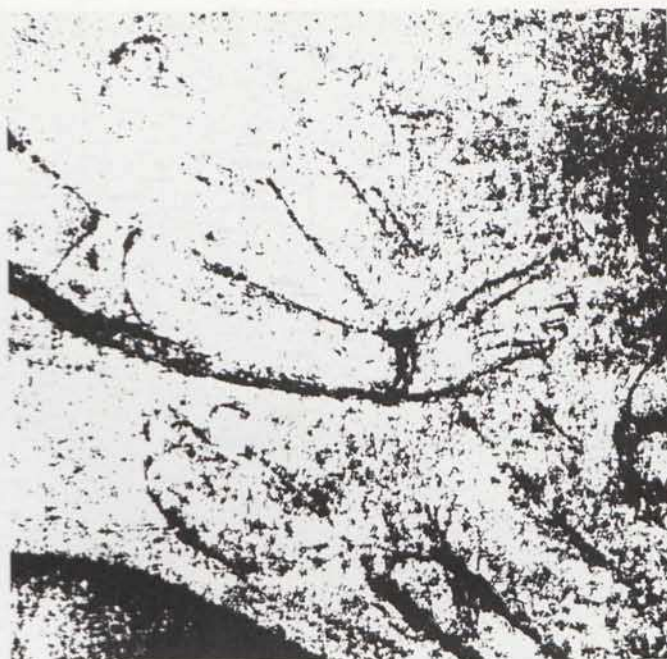






left: A 28, A 28a, A 28b, A 28c, A 29, A 29a,  
A 30, A 30a

right: A 26 & A 27 Flying figures (photographed  
without a halftone screen for high contrast)



VI, i, 9, "did seeme a thousand"; VI, xii, 33, "hundred"). In Blake's picture, three or more red flame-like tongues are shown. The Beast is represented after its mouth has been bound by Calidore (VI, xii, 34-35). The human hands of this monster recall both those of Blake's Nebuchadnezzar who crawls through the forests of night on all fours and the fantastic crocodile with human hands and gaping mouth in *Vala* 70. Behind Archimago (30) four webbed points are visible: these must be the ends of wings or spines on the Beast. One small human figure, 28a (which is related to figure #44, "The Inquisition," in Damon's Key to *The Last Judgment*), that is kneeling on the Beast's snout strains to draw its mouth shut with the cords of a net. Another, 28 b, with blowing yellow hair, leads the beast by a chain, probably attached to his collar behind its left foreleg. A third small spirit, 28 c, leaning on the Beast's shoulders, is tightening its collar.

29. The two prime evil-doers are relegated to the rear of the procession. Duessa's perhaps doubled figure sags strangely: her appearance corresponds to her duplicitous nature. In Spenser she is stripped nude by the Redcrosse Knight and Arthur (see I, viii, 46 ff.). In Blake she is clothed in a white dress, recalling her trial by Mercilla, Arthur, and Arthegall (see V, ix, 38 ff.). Blake's Duessa has a curiously curled lower lip, probably because of her toothlessness mentioned in I, viii, 47. She has a receding hairline and short white hair. Spenser describes Duessa as having "wrizzled" and "scabby" skin. Her left hand, possibly crippled, seems oddly connected with her body; it is crossed over her gnarled right hand as she perhaps tries to cover over an aperture on her

front. Blake shows her being led by two strings attached to two or more flying figures (27). Another small figure (29 a), who wears a long gown, stands on Duessa's bent head. Many details connected with this figure cannot be clearly distinguished: a diagonal jagged line, which might represent stairs or lightning, connects this figure to what may be a portal visible above figures 27. The standing figure may hold something in its left hand.

30. Archimago, like Duessa, has the power to change forms. In his first appearance he is an "aged sire," "his beard all hoarie gray" (I, i, 29). In his "proper" form, he is recognized by Atin (see II, vi, 47), and there too he has "hoarie locks." The image of Archimago bound occurs where he intrudes as a messenger into the court of Una's parents (see I, xii, 35). In Blake's picture this hunchbacked white-bearded figure in a pinkish gown has his forearms bound behind him, probably by one of the leading strings from figures 26, and his gown is gathered into folds at the lower back. The curved and horizontal lines visible behind Archimago are, as said, the wing edges of his companion, the Blatant Beast (28). Archimago's head is much bent over, despite his misshapen but powerful back. A small nude figure, 30 a, seated on his right shoulder seems to point to the rear as it looks back over its left shoulder at the figure standing on Duessa's head. The first of three exactly drawn curved lines crosses the outstretched right arm of this figure and then continues to the left of the figure's head into the background to join with yet a third curve; together these lines may delineate the culverts of a bridge only coincidentally connected with Archimago's rider.



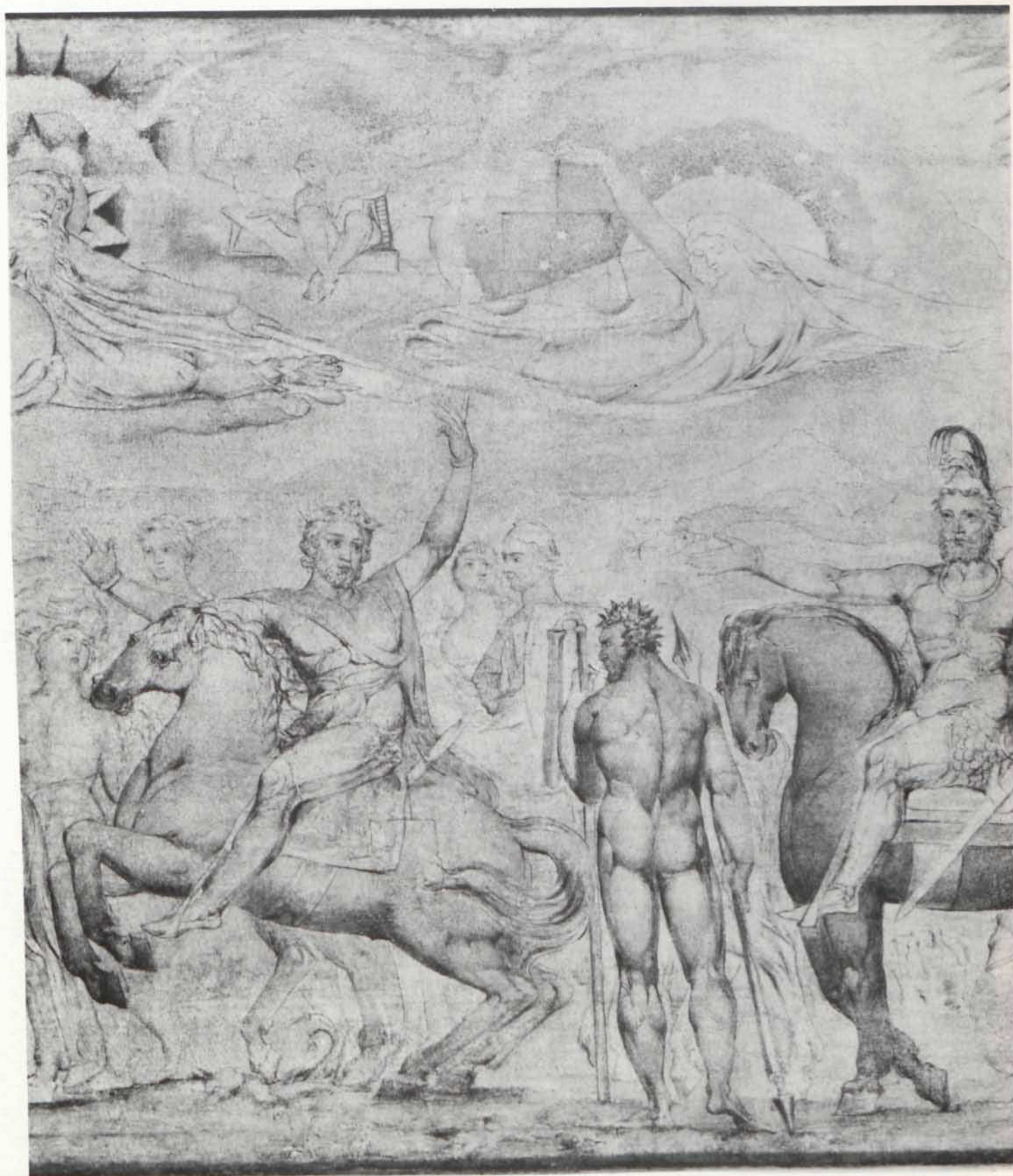


On pp. 74-77: halftone reproductions of the painting, quarter by quarter from left to right, made from large black and white negatives. See p. 86, col. 2, para. 2 for details. The photographs have been cropped only enough to eliminate the picture frame; thus shadows remain at the edges of the picture.















## Row A: Roman Numerals: The Background

I. This is Despaire's Cave, as described by Spenser in I, ix. The long-haired and bearded figure is Despaire (see I, ix, 35-36), who kneels at the left with his right arm at his back and his left pointing upward as he consults a large open book. This book is probably the "Booke of fate," I, ix, 42, that Despaire claims he possesses. Possibly Blake depicted Despaire as reading because he interpreted Spenser's word "areedes," I, ix, 28, as "reads," rather than "advise." To the right of the book are three objects, perhaps stones, and a horizontal dark object that might be the dagger reserved for Redcrosse (see I, ix, 51). Above the bearded Despaire is a dark figure, bent over and with arms raised in what may be a despairing gesture. There is a suggestion of a collar or rope around his neck. This is probably Trevisan (see I, ix, 22) dismayed both by the council of Despaire and the vision of his dead comrade, Sir Terwin, a suicide. The figure of Terwin (see I, ix, 36) seems partly beneath Despaire's book; it is evidenced only by a vertical "knife" at the upper right corner of the book and the top of the head of the victim visible just to the right of it and to the left of the muzzle of Redcrosse's horse (A 3). The cloudy Cave of Despaire, complete with stabbed victim, is one of the two main episodes from *The Faerie Queene* depicted in Gray 64: *Bard* 12. There is no likelihood that any of the figures in this cave represents Spenser, as Damon suggests.

II. A body of water. This could be either the Idle Lake (II, vi) or the Gulfe of Greedinesse (II, xii). The object near Redcrosse's gloved right hand (A 3) is a small sailboat; it might

be either Phaedria's boat or the one that takes Guyon to the Bowre of Bliss. It resembles the boat of Phlegyas in *Dante* 17 for *Hell* 7. There are objects in the background on either side of Redcrosse's spear: at the left is an island, which is likely to contain Acrasia's Bowre of Bliss; at the right are distant mountains, perhaps fronted by structures and even a causeway near the head of Redcrosse. A swirl of smoke covers most of the visible left side of the lake.

III. This domed doorless building, with a wing at the left and vegetation on both sides, is perhaps the castle of Celia (I, ix). Here Redcrosse is restored after his experience in Despaire's Cave. The cave-problem, castle-resolution formula also pertains in Guyon's story. If Despaire's Cave is a sign of affliction, it is possible that Celia's castle appears as a sign of healing resolution. The fact that the foremost tree at the right has a peculiar spot of shade makes it look somewhat like the head of an animal--perhaps accidentally. As many as three figures may be seated beside the building and another may be on the dome.

IV. This haloed building has a flat central tower with set back upper section and a Gothic portal. There is a slight suggestion of decoration on the wings on either side. There are trees on both sides, outside the beams of light from the halo. The two dark spots in the right wing, above the head of the Palmer (A 7), may be accidental. Because Una (A 4) gestures toward the building and because both she and it are haloed, the building is probably to be identified as the castle of her parents, "Eden" (I, xii, 26). Part of the halo effect can be accounted for as reflection from Eden's brazen tower and gate (I, xi, 3 and I, xii, 3). As mentioned, some



left: A I Despaire's Cave

above: A II Idle Lake, or Gulfe of Greedinesse

right: A III & A IV Domed building and haloed building



indistinct objects are visible in front of the building and above the gesturing left hand of Una (A 4).

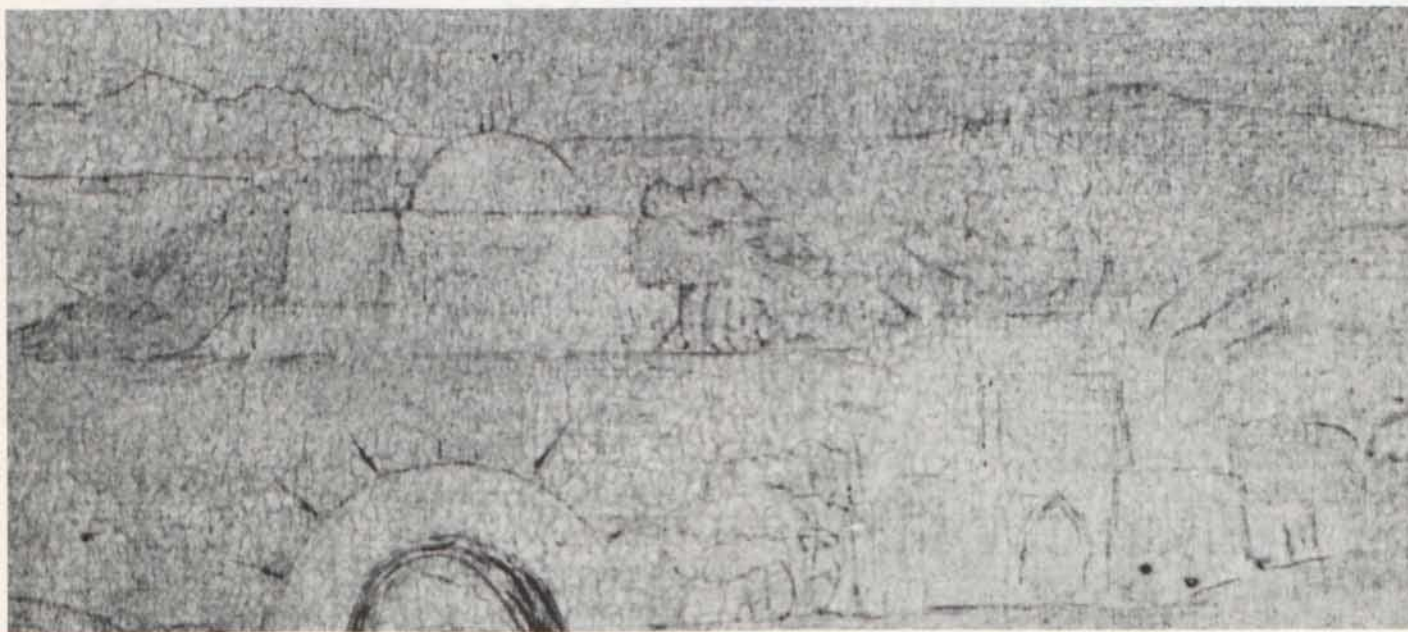
V. A cave, with a dark kneeling figure at the right. Three dark pointed objects of uncertain significance are in evidence on the upper back wall of this cave. Another dark area is at the left edge and indistinct objects are indicated within. While there is no close resemblance between this cave and the Mammon episode as depicted at the lower left of *Gray* 64: *Bard* 12, "Spenser Creating his Fairies," the crouching figure at the right is probably identifiable as Mammon, who hoards "in his lap a masse of coyne" (II, vii, 4). In posture he closely resembles a miser in *NT* 115 (IV, 6), who is twisted to protect his money bag. Clouds or vegetation and three boulders separate Mammon from the path to the flame in front of VII. The object behind Mammon may be taken to be Guyon's sword, for Guyon swoons upon leaving Mammon's cave, and his shield is subsequently taken by Pyrocles, although his sword is held back by the Palmer, and is later used by Arthur (see II, viii, 23 ff.). The fact that the shaft of Guyon's spear crosses the cave is suggestive in this context. The object at the left of the cave may be a robed figure, seen from behind and carrying a burden on its right shoulder; the dark spot would be the shadow it cast. As such the figure would resemble the undraped victim of Oppression who labors at the lower right in the mines of "Oppression" in *NT* 22 (I, 17). To the right of the shadowed figure in Mammon's cave a tongue of red flame indicates a small bonfire, which is being tended by this figure. For a fire and a figure resembling these in the cave see "A Little Boy Lost," *Songs* 50.

VI. A vague architectural feature with trees, on a distant hillside. This is perhaps the antidote to Mammon's Cave--the place where Guyon is restored--the castle of Alma. Spenser says it is a "goodly castle, plast / Foreby a river in a pleasaunt dale" (II, ix, 10). This feature is also crossed by Guyon's spear shaft.

VII. A large building set on a plinth, with four columns in the front, a pitched roof and pediment on the portico, and a lower wing at the left. Vegetation grows up behind and on both sides of it. This is Busyrane's palace, where Britomart (A 14) achieves her crowning glory, which is guarded by a protective flame (see III, xi, 21). The cleavage at the top of the flame is indicative that it "did it selfe divide" (III, xi, 25) at the stroke of Britomart's sword.

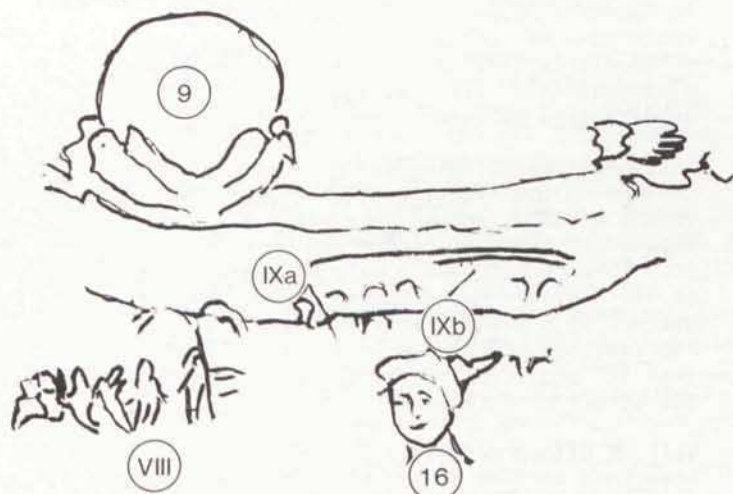
VIII. A haloed or hatted piper leaning against a tree in a sort of bower, plays for four or more nude dancers. Another cluster of nude figures may be to the left of these. Though Colin Clout is properly a personage of Book IV where his encounter with a company of nude "maidens" and the Graces takes place (see VI, x, 10 ff.), two considerations might explain his advancement. It would put a "poet" in the center of the A-line, not far from the figure of the artist, B 11. Or, possibly, Colin is advanced to help celebrate the conjunction of Britomart and Arthegall. This figure of the piper, in less enchanting company, is familiar from the title page of *Songs of Innocence* and "On Another's Sorrow," *Songs* 3 and 27.

IX a. An indistinct object, either a tree or a small building, is on the horizon above Arthegall's (A 17) left hand.





A VIII, A IXa, A IXb (plus A 16, B 9): adapted tracings



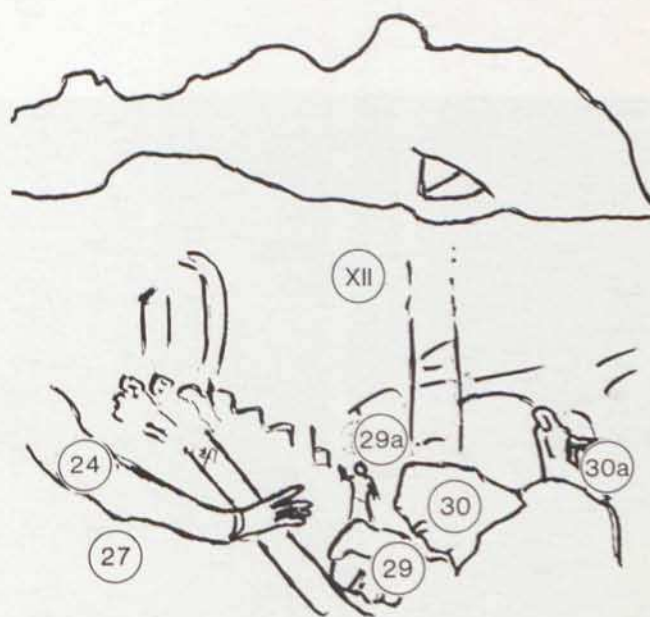
IX b. What may be a large very faint architectural structure looms above the head of Florimell (A 16) and extends up into the bottom of the cloud beneath the figure of the Deity (B 8). It has several tiers at the right edge; the ends of two tiers look like the eyes, noses, and mouths of faces. The structure has a resemblance to the somewhat more arched tiers on B 19, which is probably the Tower of Babel. What this detail is supposed to signify, is perplexing. It is hardly visible in recent photographs, possibly due to further deterioration of the picture in this area. Since IX a may be seen through the right edge of this structure, perhaps this structure is a pentimento. Or perhaps it is an evanescent ideal, "Cleopolis."

X. Visible above Arthur's (A 21) right hand, at the left edge of a copse, is a cottage with a chimney emitting smoke that blows to the left. Trees stand on both sides and behind it. A range of larger trees (the beginning of detail XI) start over the hill to the right, above Arthur's right arm. This small house may not be too humble to function as a "little Chappell," another place of restoration and healing: the Hermit's Hermitage (see VI, v, 35 ff.). Here Arthur found a refuge for victims of the Blatant Beast.

XI. A range of trees extending from the top of the hill above Arthur's (A 21) wrist and perhaps continuing as far as Calidore's (A 24) left forearm.

XII. Various indistinct figures may be discerned among the mountains and clouds at the right. A further range of high reddish mountains rises behind the duller horizon range. If there were originally no other important features in the much-deteriorated area beneath, it would be remarkable in such a detailed picture. Among details still discernible in this area seem to be trees or a building and a crude staircase

or lightning above A 27 and a large bird or kite above the nearer horizon beneath B 20. In connection with the small nude figure (30 a) seated on the shoulder of Archimago (30), we have already mentioned three distinct curves extending to the left: conceivably these could be triple culverts of a bridge. If this feature were indeed delineated, it would balance the large bridge (B 1) at the opposite end of the picture, in the Supernal Regions. These "culvert lines" also cross two much less distinct vertical lines extending upward from Archimago's bent-over head almost to the nearer horizon of hills. The two or more entwining bands on this dimly-suggested column recall the entwining vines or snakes that twist about tree trunks elsewhere in Blake: it would not be surprising, considering the source, if the lines were to adumbrate the Tree of Mystery described in "The Human Abstract," *Songs* 47. But this "tree" is far too shadowy to be recommended to faith. A further complication is that where its foliage would be, above the second horizon, is a curved-edged triangular object that must be flying. Since it seems too triangular to be any bird, it might conceivably be a kite, such as Blake sometimes depicts (e.g., "The Ecchoing Green," 2, *Songs* 7). It might be flown by the small spirit standing on the head of Duessa (29). In *Night Thoughts* 11 (I, 6) Blake showed how kite flying need not detract from the dignity of questing.



A XII (plus A 24, 27, 29, 29a, 30, 30a): adapted tracings



## Row B:

## Arabic Numerals: The Supernal Regions

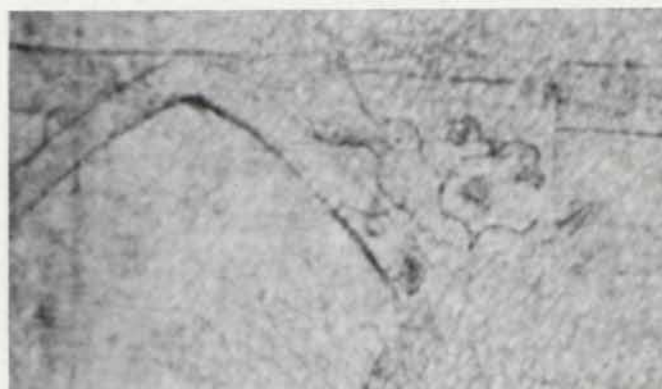
The cloud barrier that delineates the boundary of these regions originates from the open mouth of the Dragon (A 5), billows over the Lake (A II) in such a way as to leave part of the lake visible to the left of this barrier, and, after a diagonal patch, continues horizontally (and perhaps also above some figures) to the right edge of the picture. It is pierced by a few objects above it, notably the Moon (B 3), the right hand of God (B 8), and the left hand of Justice (B 13). Blake appears to be generalizing the dying puff of the Dragon, "that vanisht into smoke and cloudes swift" (I, xi, 54), into a barrier between mundane and supra-mundane levels. Conceivably, this smoke cloud might serve to arrest the progress of Spenser's characters. As was observed in our discussion of the Dragon, such an effect would be proportionate to Spenser's dragon of many acres, though Blake depicts the beast itself as much smaller. This important feature of the pictorial symbolism is not visible in our large color reproduction because the left edge of the painting has been cropped to eliminate the shadow caused by the frame.

1. A distinct "Gothic" arch of undoubted import. The abutments at the right indicate that the structure must be a bridge; perhaps a path leads from it back to the portal of B 2. Conceivably, it is also a culvert related to the lake (A II), but since it is above the clouds that delineate the supernal realm, such a connection would require an explanation. Some water is in evidence at the very edge of the picture. Vines with green leaves are visible on both sides of the arch, especially at the right, and above it are two delicate trees in front of a distant hill.

2. A radiant Gothic cathedral, doubtless Jerusalem, as seen in I, x, 56-57, where it is compared by Redcrosse to Cleopolis, the brightest place on earth. The major tower has three steeples, the minor one at the left has seven, and at least eight others are also visible. Vide J 46 [32] and J 84, where Westminster Abbey is a sign of redemption; also the building in the background of *The Soldiers Casting Lots for Christ's Garments* (Bindman, *Fitzwilliam*, no. 22). The rays above the building are suggestive of the dawn in the East in Blake's *Canterbury Pilgrimage*. Possibly Blake intends to imply that Spenser's characters are going south of West during a sunset. Eventually, at least some of them may return to the open Gothic door.

3. Cynthia (*Mut.*, VI, 8), the moon spirit, wearing a pale yellow skirt, is in an exultant posture as she leaps from the sharply beaming crescent moon with outspread arms. She is honored with a plate halo which is surrounded by clouds and perhaps by multitudes; possibly a large globe was depicted above her left hand and at least one small head is still visible near her cloud-covered left arm.

## B 1 Gothic arch



In the train of her outspread arms many indistinct figures are indicated; three winged spirits under her left arm and three under her right are tolerably distinguishable. Her line of sight extends down to Britomart (A 14), at whom she seems to look disapprovingly, conceivably because of some connection between the warrior maid and Mutability in Spenser. This figure must be related to the figure of Queen Elizabeth as Diana seated in the crescent moon in the Portrait of Spenser in Blake's *Heads of the Poets* (Wells, p. 35). The exuberance of Cynthia with outspread arms, however, bears a more functional resemblance to Ololon on the last page of *Milton*, and to such redemptive figures as the Attendant Spirit in the last design for *Comus* (Huntington version, pl. XXVII), the Lark in *L'Allegro*, illus. 2 (Van Sinderen, p. 63), or Jesus in *The Spiritual Condition of Man* (Bindman, *Fitzwilliam*, no. 22). Damon calls this woman "Mercy," but this is an inference derived from the assumption that she is primarily a contrary to Justice (B 13), rather than, as seems more probable, the Archer Sun God (B 17).

4. Many figures not clearly in Cynthia's entourage are variously positioned in the sky. Only a few are distinctly discernible now, but the presence of others is possible in every brightened area. Two spirits above and to the right of the moon embrace. Two figures kneel above and to the right of them, etc.

5a. A crossed steeple above a dome, certainly intended to recall St. Paul's (see again, J 46 [32] and J 84). Two or more elongated horses with riders blowing horns fly by the steeple to the left. Above them are six distinct nearly vertical lines, presumably of radiance. In the foreground from the clouds beside the right shoulder of Jove (B 8) to the area above the left edge of the Cave of Mammon (A V), ten or more nudes (B 6) in various postures of abandon disport themselves or, agitated, attempt to flee. Some analogies to these may be observed among the Sons and Daughters in *Job* 2 and 3; others in *Paradise Regained* 6 (Bindman, *Fitzwilliam*, no. 28). Damon observes that Guyon's (A 11) spear is pointed toward this supernal grouping and identifies it as





the Bowre of Bliss (see II, xii), which Guyon destroys. The transposition of the Bowre (which is, as was suggested, perhaps more simply located on the island at A II) to the supernal region would not bode well for the purity of Spenser's heaven. But there is also a modified Gothic portal (5 b) well to the right of St. Paul's, which is indicative of the better way.

6. The group of ten or more figures described in connection with detail 5 a, above, as being in front of St. Paul's and the Gothic portal (5 b). The most distinct are three nudes, a male embracing two females, in the center. The female to the left seems constrained, while another female to her left flees in consternation. To the right of the compliant female another female reclines, perhaps beside water, or a patch of blue sky.

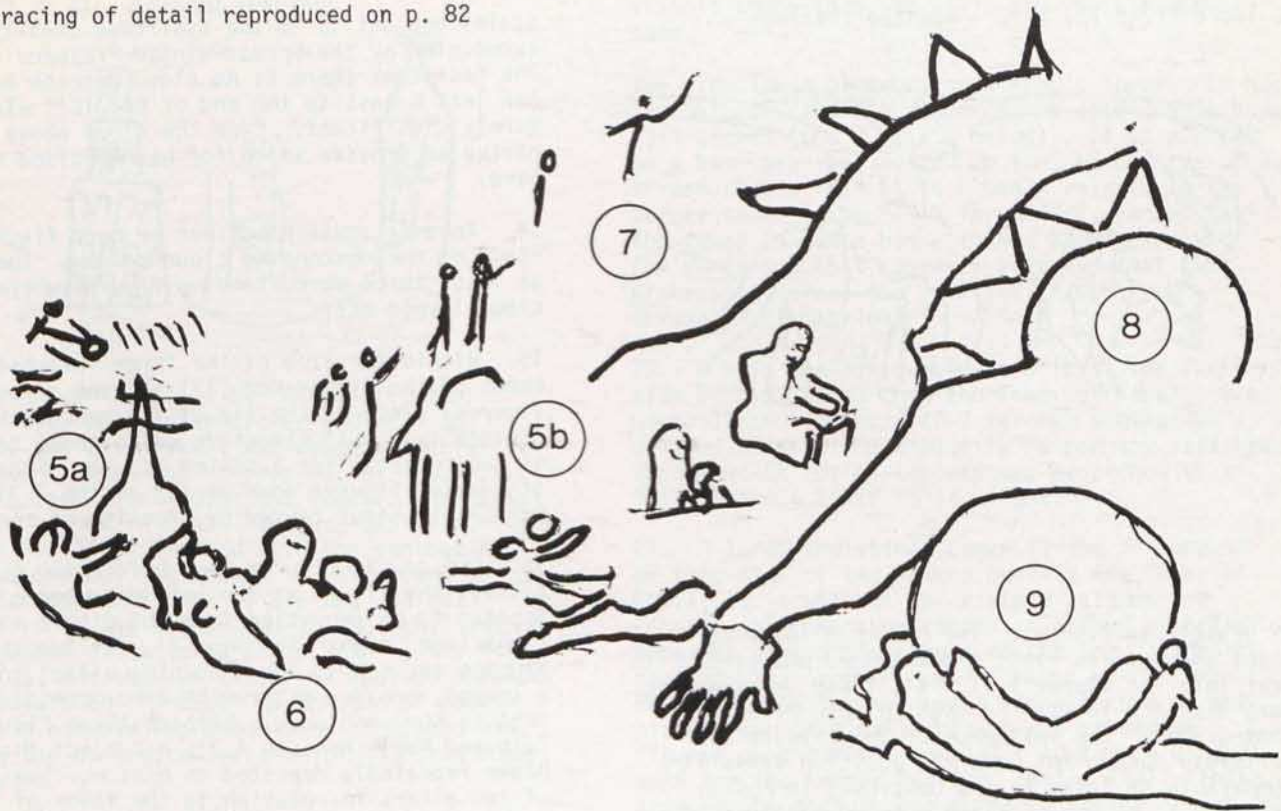
7. A spiritual procession of six or more figures rises through the sky from the vicinity of St. Paul's (5 a), exempted from the sharp beams issuing from the cloud of Jove, the God of this World (B 8), and perhaps aided by the good influence of the dim Gothic portal (5 b) beneath them. Comparable streams of spirits occur in Blake, e.g., *L'Allegro* 4 (Van Sinderen, p. 71), *J* 4, and *Job* 12 (border).

8. Jove (*Mut.*, VI, 15 ff.), the God of this World, in a yellowish and pink gown, looks down to his left toward Arthur (A 21). His eyes are not shut (pace Damon), but distinctly open, and

he holds a blunt sceptre (not a sword, pace Damon) in his left hand which seems to emanate a pointed beam that passes just above the upraised forefinger of Arthegall (A 17) toward Arthur. Only his right foot shows clearly, but a v-shape on his instep and another on his ankle are indicative of character: in two of his most important analogies, the nightmare god of *Job* 11 and Dante's tyrant god, *Dante* 3, God's left foot clearly is revealed to be a cloven hoof. Spenser's God dangles his right open-handed benediction through the clouds over Britomart (A 14). His elaborately compounded headdress is remarkable: his red plate inner halo emanates six major points, four shadow-tipped, two internally rayed, through his shadowed sky blue halo, which is bounded by an irregular wreath of cloud; this, in turn, emits eight dark smaller beams. Those at the viewer's left are broken again by the stream of figures, B 7, but as many as ten thinner dark beams are seen to the left of them. A bright spot at the left of the lowermost of these may have contained still other figures. At the viewer's left of the God's right elbow, in the cloud halo, is a distinct object that at first seems to be a flower or possibly a bird; however, this is probably the second subgroup of the figures centered at B 6 rather than a special attendant of God per se. Above this group, next to God's right shoulder, is the first group of two or more figures, indistinctly blended into the clouds. The fact that this God is *within* a cloudy cavern, though his influence extends both above and beneath it, indicates that



Adapted tracing of detail reproduced on p. 82



he is more in the condition of Job and his companions than of the central regnant God in *Job* 14.

9. This World (see *J* 54 and *J* 57) is supported by three angels, the one at the right wearing a crown or hat and having a short beard. *Mut.*, VI, 3, indicates that the two at the left are Hecate and Bellona, the one at the right (*Mut.*, VI, 14) Mercury.

10. An angel (perhaps in company with other spirits) departs from the drawing board of the Artist (11); these figures are within a rainbow-roofed enclave made up of a cloud streamer from the cloud halo of Jove, the God of this World (8) and the right wing of Nat' the Spread-winged Presence (12). The angel's left wing cuts the rainbow-enclave and the angel looks back at the curly-headed Artist (11).

11. The Artist, a "symbol of the beginning of art," says Damon. He seems to be wearing only a pair of shorts (visible next to the book) as he draws or writes without looking at his work. Perhaps he is looking at the viewer of the picture. He is seated on a plinth with his ankles crossed and he rests his left elbow on an almost vertical book. On his left thigh a slightly smaller "double" figure appears to be seated. The double probably does look at the work. An emanative stream of two or more figures seems to issue from the double and then

go up the cloud-steps, which are on a wall above the scales of Justice (13), to the bent right leg of the Spread-winged Presence (12). It would appear that the Artist does not need a book open before him to do his work; Blake's license with Spenser's text is consistent with this principle. But the appearance of a double (Spectre of Los) in the lap of the Artist, together with the evident stream of figures to figure 12, would imply that the Artist is less liberal than he would like to think. Whether this is Blake's assessment of Spenser's limitation or whether it is Blake's confession of his own shortcomings is hard to decide. (See *Il Penseroso* 11, "Milton's Dream," and *Jerusalem* 37 [41], the small figure at the lower left.) Both contain related symbols that help to clarify details of this enigmatic area of the Spenser picture.

12. This sinister figure, "Nature" (*Mut.*, VII, 5) the Spread-winged Presence, is now difficult to see due to the decay of the picture, but may even originally have been indistinct. Its right wing, together with the cloud trail from the cloudy halo of Jove, the God of this World (8), forms the rainbow-enclave of the Artist (11). Its left wing may also over-arch figures not now distinguishable. The earlier photograph made it appear that a line of arabic numerals extended from the top of its right wing to the top of its left. There was either an architectural detail or a bird flying straight up above the Presence's head. In the color photograph this line of details looks most like a row



B 10, B 11, B 12, B 13 Adapted tracings



of Druidic trilithons. The Presence looks to its right and has its right arm extended but bent. Its bent left leg supports it. All these details were more distinct in earlier than in more recent photographs. The influence of this figure is certainly malevolent, and its position makes it comparable to Satan in the Destroyer in *Job* 3. Probably it is one of Blake's few depictions of the Covering Cherub, most fully described in a text in *J* 89 and elsewhere depicted in more heroic and serviceable form in *The Fall of Man* (*Blake Newsletter* 19, p. 194, pl. 3). The Spread-winged Presence is an amalgamation of the two figures in *J* 6: the head and wings are like those of the Spectre, while the torso and legs are like those of Los (reversed). The same formula, with the Spectre reversed, is used in "The Flight of Moloch," particularly the Whitworth version. The superintendency of Spenser's vision by such a creature as "Nature" in the Mutability Cantos must have been abhorrent to Blake. His late works particularly are filled with denunciations of Nature and her worshippers.

13. Astroea (*V*, i, 5), or Justice, who holds up her yellow scales, is cut off by clouds from the left wing of the Presence (12), but her enclave is within its influence. It is, indeed, a star chamber, since some thirteen stars are distinctly visible in the blue sky. Justice wears a white wimple and a pinked blue gown; she has a great white plate halo and white bird wings. Her delicate left hand is visible just above the head of Arthur (*A* 21). One of her chief analogies is the figure of the female Comforter at the bottom right of the border to *Job* 17, though that woman holds a pen. A more critical vision of a woman with scales attended by a scribal figure is presented in *Night Thoughts* 151 (*IV*, 42), i.e. 41E, p. 92: there "Reason" dictates to "Faith." It may be that the eyes of Spenser's Justice are shut, but they seem to be open; if she is looking down (with the suggestion of a smile), it is toward Talus (*A* 20), who used to be her groom (*V*, i, 12). Possibly a human figure issues from the leftmost pan of her

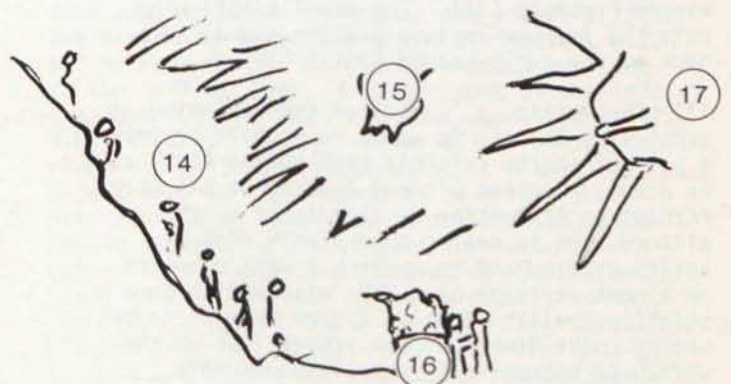
scales and drifts to the staircase that is surmounted by the Spread-winged Presence (12). The fact that there is no cloud beneath her from her left breast to the end of her left wing is surely significant. Even the cloud above her is parted to provide space for her upraised right hand.

14. An area containing four or more figures who stand on the descending cloud column. There are at least three more standing figures where the cloud levels off.

15. Within the area of the three leftmost radiation beams of the Archer God (17) are one or more figures; close to the tip of the beam at 8:30 o'clock is a dual structure which seems to serve as the pedestal for a seated figure. Suggestions of smaller figures down as far as the 7:30 beam may be illusions caused by cracking of the paint.

16. Two gowned figures meet before two burning altars; the figure at the left may wear a hat and appears to be departing from the figure at the right (see "Night" 2: *Songs* 21, for two similar figures and *Job* 18 for a burning altar) toward a second, broader altar with a horizontal flame that is now uncolored. Perhaps these figures are Cain and Abel (*Genesis* 4:3), a subject that Blake repeatedly depicted in *Milton*. The problem of two altars in relation to the favor of the true god is also described in *I Kings* 18, with respect to the powers of Baal. Dual altars, seen in relation to rows of flames and a tower, are to be seen in *Dante* 22 for *Hell* 12, the Minotaur. Three or more other figures stand to the viewer's left of these figures and may interact with the group B 14.

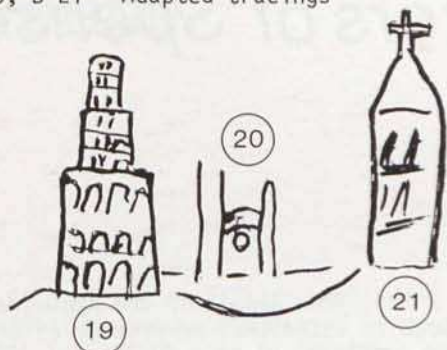
17. The Archer God, nude, discharges his bow, perhaps primarily at the people by the altar (16). There are eleven large red beams and at least seven smaller ones issuing from this figure. What may be a bird is visible between the bolts at 5 and 5:30 o'clock. His beams are interrupted at the left by the indistinct figure 15, but then resume, as a fusillade of cruder black bolts, toward the area of 14. Among the many analogies to figure 17 is "Hyperion," the archer god in



B 14, B 15, B 16, B 17 Adapted tracings



B 19, B 20, B 21 Adapted tracings



the sun in *Gray* 46: *Poesy* 6. Another is the threefold aged equestrian archer god of *J* 35 [39]. One may also recall the vengeful Christ in *The Casting of the Rebel Angels Out of Heaven*, *Paradise Lost* 6 (Huntington and Boston) and Christ the ardent bowman in *Night Thoughts* 325 (VII, 53). Apollo in *Job* 14 is crowned with the sun but is no archer, whereas the bowmen in *Vala*, such as the mischievous Cupid in *Vala* 19 are not radiant. Damon refers to the Archer God as "Moloch," but he is probably a counterpart of Cynthia, the Moon Goddess (3), and thus an avatar of Apollo. Spenser usually refers to "Phoebus" as the god of poets. Blake has a notable representation of Apollo as archer in the Huntington version of *The Overthrow of Apollo*.

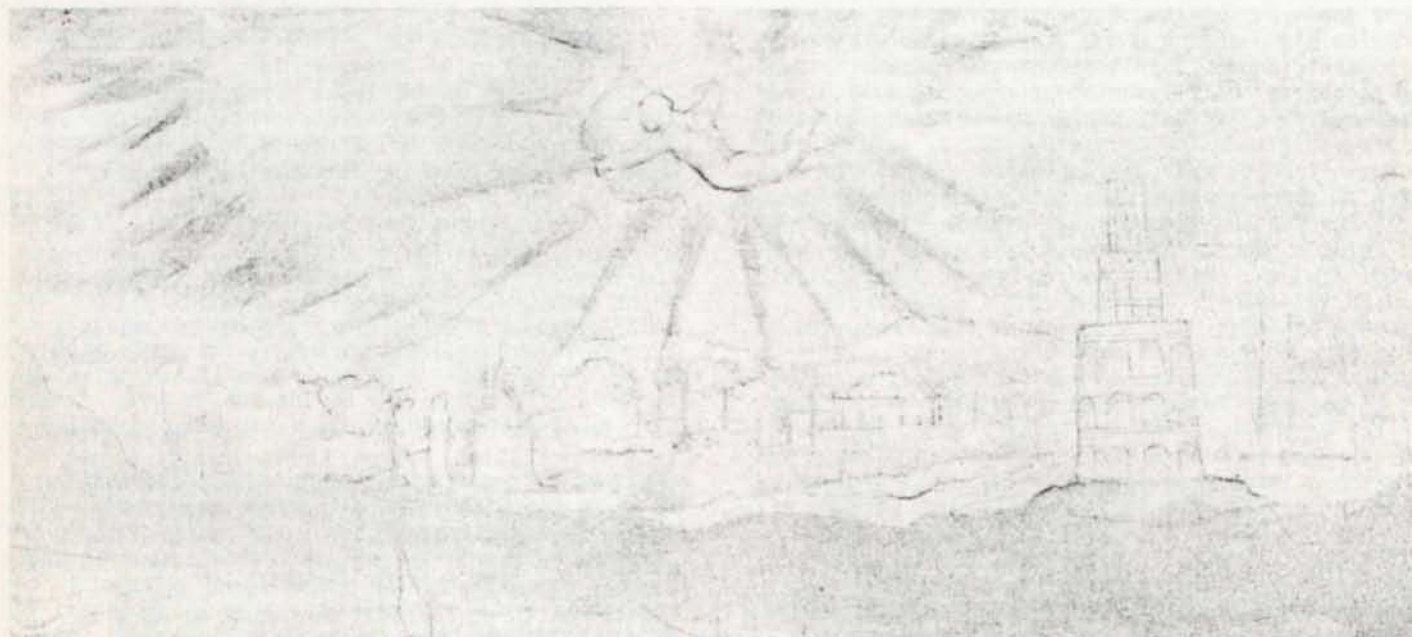
18. A range of seven or more buildings with domes, arches and columns. No distinct people are

visible among them but hills are visible above them.

19. The Tower of Babel or Nimrod's Tower. It has two setbacks and the lower of the nine levels have flat arches (see A VIII b below). It is erected on a base perhaps located on the nearer side of a stream than B 18. It is closely related to the larger tower in *Dante* 17 for *Hell* 7, except that the tower in *Dante* has attached buttresses and few portals. This tower is evidence that the procession covers the spiritual range from Jerusalem to Babylon.

20. A thin obelisk, whose base is on the farther side of the stream than the Tower of Babel. See *Dante* 17 and 18 for *Hell* 7 for two similarly related towers. This obelisk is perhaps attached, about two-thirds of the way up, by arches to a less distinct tower to its right.

21. A large indistinct tower in the foreground on this side of the water, next to the Tower of Babel; it is without perceptible columns and retains only the suggestions of arches. It has separate levels and tapers at the top. It is possible that a cross can be found at the top. The much deteriorated upper right corner of the picture may originally have had a stream of figures that curved diagonally to form a kind of wake for the Archer Sun God, Apollo (17). This area of the picture has suffered further deterioration and the tower is hardly visible in recent photographs.



B 14, B 15, B 16, B 17, B 18, B 19, B 20